

A Century of Debate about Regionalism and Metropolitan Government

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Executive Summary

Interest in metropolitan governance arose early in the twentieth century as new technologies made suburbanization possible. Since that time a large interdisciplinary literature has examined a wide range of issues related to metropolitan governance. This paper considers three main bodies of research related to regional governance, analyzing points of agreement and disagreement and identifying gaps in the literature. The central gap that the paper identifies is the literature's failure to systematically connect the processes of regional governance with outcomes. As a result, we have only limited knowledge about the processes that create successful regions. This gap is evident in each of the three main bodies of literature on regional governance.

- **Regional Political Theory** examines the impact of governmental form on regional outcomes. The central debate pits those who claim that a single political unit is more efficient and equitable against those who believe that multiple governments are superior. Despite substantial empirical research, this debate has yielded few unqualified results. Because much of the research is based on correlational analysis, it is difficult to connect governmental form with distinct processes of decisionmaking and specific regional outcomes.
- **Regional Policies and Political Processes** have been studied from the perspective of many different disciplines. This work has produced substantial insights into the way regional policies have developed, assessments about the impact of various policies, and arguments for alternative policies. Effective policies have been identified through this research, but there is little guidance for policymakers about how to develop, implement, and administer these model policies in their political context. Moreover, because most of the work focuses on a single policy, the literature lacks analyses of the way regional efforts in one policy area affect the political prospects for efforts to achieve regional coordination in other areas.

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- **New Regionalists** have attracted broad interest by calling for new forms of metropolitan governance to solve multiple regional problems. They contend that strong regional governance can promote optimal outcomes in three major areas of concern: efficiency, equity, and the environment. New regionalists emphasize the need to develop new forms of governance – formal and informal relationships – that cross metropolitan political boundaries. This literature has been much weaker in showing the impact of such collaboration on regional outcomes. Moreover, the definition of regional governance varies considerably across the literature leaving many open questions about what kinds of governance is most effective for what types of outcomes.

The failure of the literature on metropolitan regionalism to connect processes with outcomes in a systematic way limits the usefulness of this research for practitioners. It also raises questions about whether the current wave of enthusiasm for regionalism is warranted. Future research must be much more attentive to showing how specific types of regional decisionmaking influence particular outcomes and how distinctive local contexts affect possibilities for adopting different forms of regional decisionmaking.

For nearly a century, scholars from diverse disciplines have analyzed the development of American metropolitan areas, puzzling over the causes of distinct development patterns and arguing about the best forms of governance. Scholars have investigated the forces that created the characteristic decentralization of American metropolitan areas and they have considered the implications for governing arrangements and for the appropriate principles to guide a range of local public policies. A recurring theme in these studies is the need for regional coordination. Despite periodic waves of enthusiasm for regionalism as a principle for organizing metropolitan policy and government, there is little agreement among scholars and practitioners on the essential components of successful regional policy. Similarly, there is little consensus on what political processes and institutional forms best promote successful regional policies.

The purpose of this analysis is to survey the existing literature to identify points of agreement and disagreement, and gaps in the study of regional governance. The central gap is the failure of the literature to connect processes of regional decisionmaking to regional outcomes. The paper shows how this gap limits the utility of the three major research areas in the literature. The first section examines regional political theory, showing that extensive empirical research has yielded few unqualified conclusions about whether consolidated or fragmented metropolitan government is superior. A few sentences about how the paper is structured i.e. where are the gaps highlighted. . The second section examines research on specific regional policy issues and related political processes. This work has assessed the impact of existing policies and has proposed alternative approaches, often entailing enhanced regional coordination. However, because this research relies on correlational analysis or individual case studies, it has not produced general propositions about the processes that lead to the recommended policies. It is also inattentive to questions about how action in one policy area affects the prospects for action in others. As a consequence, this research provides limited guidance to policymakers about how to develop, implement and administer these policies in their political context. The third section of the paper highlights the work of “New Regionalists” seeking to promote and analyze the concept of regional governance as a way to build successful regions. The surge of interest in this work indicates that it speaks to widespread concern about the adequacy of current arrangements. Yet new regionalist literature relies on very diverse notions of what constitutes regional governance and it has not systematically shown how regional approaches can produce desirable regional outcomes.

Regional Political Theory: Centralization vs. Fragmentation

Debates about the most effective organizational form for metropolitan areas arose early in the twentieth century. As technological advances in transportation facilitated spatial decentralization, new questions emerged about the appropriate fit between the existing city and newly settled peripheral areas. Since then, the enduring debate in regional political theory has pitted two distinct arguments against one another. The first posits that the most efficient and effective form of government in metropolitan areas is a single political unit that governs the entire metropolitan area; the second view contends that fragmented government is not only more efficient but it also allows residents to

choose the most desirable mix of taxes and services.

A classic statement of the first perspective is found in Victor Jones's 1942 book Metropolitan Government (Jones 1942). Jones argued that the primary problem facing metropolitan areas was the mismatch between the scale of urban problems and the scale of local government. A metropolitan area-wide perspective was needed to address key metropolitan problems, including transportation, zoning, parks and recreation, water, sewage, public health, and housing. Yet in most metropolitan areas, these functions were fragmented among a multitude of local governments. Because political fragmentation nurtured narrow localistic perspectives on metropolitan issues, it was both inefficient and undemocratic. Fragmentation created wasteful duplication and made it impossible to realize economies of scale. For many areas, it created disparities between their service needs and their financial ability to provide those services. Fragmentation also posed obstacles to democratic control: many residents were deeply affected by decisions made by jurisdictions in which they had no voice. According to Jones and a legion of good government advocates, the best solution to all these problems was to consolidate the multiple localities into a single metropolitan government (Gulick 1957).

The contending argument was made by public choice theorists, who argued that political fragmentation was beneficial because it allowed residents to choose the most desirable mix of taxes and services. The major theoretical statement of this argument is Charles Tiebout's 1962 article "A Pure Theory of Local Expenditures" (Tiebout 1962). For Tiebout, competition and choice were the central mechanisms that produced the greatest good for all. Competition among localities would spur local governments to provide the best services at the lowest cost to residents. Choice meant that residents who were dissatisfied with their local government could move to a different locality that provided a more attractive mix of taxes and services.

Public choice analysts also maintained that political fragmentation did not lead to the pathologies that its opponents suggest. In an early influential article, Ostrom, Tiebout, and Warren argued against making a priori judgments about the impact of fragmented vs. centralized governmental forms (Ostrom, Tiebout, and Warren 1961). They posited that a "polycentric political system" was beneficial because it allowed for variation in the scale of the political units appropriate to the function being performed in a way that a single consolidated metropolitan government could not. Moreover, multiple governments offered the best solution because when larger entities were desirable, localities could enter in a variety of cooperative arrangements and agreements for conflict resolution that would allow them to operate interdependently while retaining the benefits of multiple units of government (Bish and Ostrom 1973).

The central areas of inquiry growing out of this debate have sought to illuminate the consequences – both negative and positive – of fragmented vs. consolidated metropolitan government. Large literatures have examined these consequences for a range of issues including: 1.) the impact of government form on efficiency; 2.) the effect on income and racial segregation; 3.) the problems of fiscal disparities across local governments arising from fragmentation; 4.) the economic relationships among

municipalities in a metropolitan region. In addition, research has considered institutional alternatives to fragmentation, including political consolidation, special districts and interlocal agreements. In each of these areas, the original political rift between the proponents of fragmentation and the proponents of consolidation continues to define the debates. Most of the research examining these questions consists of case studies of individual metropolitan areas or quantitative studies that rely on correlational analyses.

Efficiency One of the central disputes between the two perspectives concerned which set of governmental arrangements was more efficient. Those favoring metropolitan consolidation argued that large political units were more efficient because they could realize economies of scale. They also pointed to the irrationality of fragmented government. For example, an influential book in the series of studies sponsored by the Ford Foundation in the 1950s, political scientist Robert Wood's 1400 Governments, outlined the governmental arrangements set up to cope with postwar metropolitan growth (Wood, 1961). Wood detailed the "defensive unpremeditated and parochial" responses of the bewildering array of general purpose governments -- counties, cities, towns villages, boroughs and districts -- charged with governing the New York metropolitan area. By contrast, public choice proponents contended that competition among multiple units would produce greater efficiency as jurisdictions eliminated waste and duplication. The extensive quantitative work on this issue has produced mixed results: evidence supporting the public choice perspective shows that political fragmentation is related to lower government costs for labor-intensive services.¹ However, for capital-intensive services, the research shows that larger units are more cost effective (Altshuler et al. 1999; Foster 1997, Oakerson 1998; Boyne 1992).

Income and racial segregation Researchers have also examined the impact of political fragmentation on a range of issues related to opportunity within metropolitan areas including income and racial segregation. Most studies agree that political fragmentation is associated with higher levels of segregation by political jurisdiction. Some studies find evidence for links between political fragmentation and both income and racial segregation, while others find evidence only for racial segregation. There is wide agreement that jurisdictional fragmentation promotes racial segregation. (Altshuler et al., 1999). For example, Nancy Burns's quantitative analysis of 200 counties found that the desire for racial separation was a central force behind political fragmentation (Burns, 1994). The literature on fragmentation and segregation argues that political boundaries serve as exclusionary mechanisms because localities use their power over land use and their ability to enact housing restrictions to attain the desired population. In addition, Weiher argues that jurisdictional boundaries function as signaling and recruiting devices, providing information to prospective residents about the ongoing character of the community (Weiher, 1991).

Fiscal Disparities: Researchers analyzing the consequences of political fragmentation have produced a large literature on the fiscal disparities among different

¹ See the review of this literature in Altshuler et al. 1999, pp.64-67; 105-106.

political jurisdictions.² Ladd and Yinger's influential 1989 study measured the extent of these disparities, showing how cities were particularly disadvantaged by their limited taxing capabilities and heavy service responsibilities (Ladd and Yinger, 1989). Other research echoed these findings, showing how population sorting had left cities with a disproportionate share of needy populations (Bahl, 1994, Oakland, 1994). Scholars have proposed a variety of different solutions to fiscal disparities. Reflecting the dominance of economists and public finance specialists in this field, solutions have focused more on fiscal adjustments rather than on redistributing the needy populations throughout metropolitan areas, which is the focus of sociologists who study the issue. (As opposed to sociologists who study inequality?) For example, Ladd and Yinger proposed that state government should assume some of the functional responsibilities currently shouldered by cities.

Economic relationship between cities and suburbs: A related body of research examines the economic relationship between cities and their suburbs.³ By the 1980s, as suburbs became active economic centers in their own right, some analysts argued that suburbs had become largely independent of cities (Hartshorn and Muller, 1989; Garreau, 1991). In the early 1990s, a spate of studies challenged this argument with evidence that cities and suburbs are economically interdependent. These studies emphasized the importance of the central city in making infrastructure and human capital investments as well as in providing amenities that benefit the entire region. They also stressed the importance of the central city as the face of the region to the rest of the world (Ihlanfeldt, 1995). Other research claimed interdependence on the basis of correlations between per capita income in central cities and their suburbs (Savitch et al., 1993; Ledebur and Barnes, 1992). Although these studies were criticized for confusing correlation and causation, the consensus in the literature is that the welfare of suburbs is intertwined with that of their cities (Hill, Wolman, and Ford, 1995; Voith, 1995).

Metropolitan Institutional Innovations: Researchers have studied the impact of institutional innovations designed to counter the negative consequences of fragmentation including governmental consolidation, special districts, and interlocal agreements (Pagano, 1999).

Despite the enthusiasm among scholars for metropolitan consolidation, voters have rejected most proposals for consolidating city and county governments, approving only 17.6 percent of these proposals since 1921. A few cases of at least partial city-county consolidations occurred in the early 1960s including Miami, Nashville, Jacksonville, and Indianapolis (Pagano, 1999; Harrigan 1993). In 2000, Louisville merged with Jefferson County (Savitch and Vogel, 2004). The literature on these consolidations provides little guidance about their impact. Most of the work focuses on the political circumstances that lead to consolidation, rather than on consequences. The work that does attempt to evaluate impact suggests mixed results. Consolidation is generally viewed as having failed to reduce costs as the pro-consolidation arguments suggested it would. Several studies showed that consolidation, in fact, increased service

² For a review of this literature see Pagano 1999.

³ See a review of this literature in Altshuler et al. 1999, pp.34-36.

costs⁴ (Altshuler et al., 1999) Nor has consolidation been shown to have a positive impact on equity. Several case studies have concluded that consolidation increased the power of regional elites at the expense of poor central city residents, especially regarding economic development decisions (Blomquist and Parks, 1995, Savitch and Vogel, 2004). There is no research showing the impact of consolidation on segregation and it is important to note that some of the most celebrated consolidations such as Indianapolis's Unigov failed to include education as part of their newly consolidated responsibilities. The consensus from this literature is that consolidated metropolitan governments are most effective at regional infrastructure issues and least effective at redistributive measures (Altshuler et al., 1999).

Special districts emerged as a much more politically acceptable way to achieve regional coordination. By designating a single function to be carried out area-wide, special districts limit the infringements on local autonomy associated with consolidated government. The literature examines both the causes for the creation of special districts and their impact on efficiency, equity, and democracy. In the most comprehensive recent study, Kathryn Foster showed that special districts introduce several biases into metropolitan spending patterns (Foster, 1997). Special districts, she showed, have higher service costs per capita than multi-purpose governments. Moreover, because special districts are almost never created to serve social welfare functions, metropolitan regions with the greatest number of special districts spend disproportionately on developmental objectives rather than on social welfare. Scholars have long criticized special districts as low-visibility political arenas with little democratic accountability (Bollens, Burns, 1994).

A third type institutional arrangement designed to overcome the drawbacks of fragmentation are interlocal agreements. Metropolitan areas rely on a wide array of interlocal agreements to provide or produce services. These agreements are largely entered into as a way to reduce costs. Scholars writing from a public choice perspective see such agreements as an excellent way to combine the advantages of localism with the benefits of large-scale jurisdictions. One example is California's Lakewood Plan adopted in 1954. The plan allowed local governments to contract from the county for key services, such as fire and library services, that would be too expensive for small suburbs to produce on their own. The plan allowed small suburbs such as Lakewood, a suburb of Los Angeles, to become fiscally viable. Yet, the Lakewood Plan has also been the target of critics who have showed that it facilitated the creation of numerous new suburbs, leaving the Los Angeles metropolitan area more stratified by income and race than before contracting for services became possible (Miller, 1981). From the perspective of scholars concerned with equity, the main problem with interlocal agreements is that they are rarely concerned with redistributive issues, such as housing. And by facilitating the existence of small local governments, they may actually increase segregation.

After half a century of research, a few conclusions have been reached but many gray areas remain in assessing the relative advantages of consolidated vs. fragmented metropolitan government. Research has undercut the original efficiency claims for

⁴ See Altshuler, 1999, p.106.

consolidated government but it has also raised new concerns about the consequences of fragmented government for income and racial segregation. Research on fiscal disparities between cities and suburbs has highlighted the heavy burden borne by jurisdictions, often central cities, that have high service costs and limited taxing capabilities. Finally, research on institutional forms has underscored the limits of consolidation, special districts, and interlocal agreements as solutions to the issues of efficiency and equity in metropolitan areas. The inconclusiveness of this literature suggests that, by itself, governmental form is rarely a decisive factor in shaping regional outcomes. Future research needs to consider the relationship between government form, decisionmaking processes, and regional outcomes.

Regional Policies and Political Processes

Researchers from the disciplines of political science, planning, and public administration have examined the variety of political arrangements and policy principles that govern regional transportation systems, land use and zoning regimes, regional economies, labor markets, and education systems. These literatures provide descriptions about how the different policy institutions operate, case studies and quantitative analyses of specific policies, and assessments of the impact of different types of policies.

Regional Economic Growth Studies of regional economic growth have examined the diverse causes of growth and competitiveness and they have studied the impact of suburban development on central city economic growth. Research has also considered how low-income neighborhoods can tap into regional economic growth. This work has sought to provide an alternative to standard microeconomic analysis, which links competitiveness to lowering the costs of production.

During the 1980s, after a decade of intensified global competition had demonstrated vulnerability of metropolitan regions to global economic trends, researchers began to focus on the problem of regional economic development strategies with a fresh perspective. Much of this new work on regional economic development found inspiration in the British economist Alfred Marshall's work on agglomeration economies (Marshall, 1949; Piore and Sabel, 1984). Marshall showed how regions can generate economic success through endogenous development based on location specific advantages. Central to this strategy was the development of industrial clusters, linked sets of firms that flourish due to their proximity to one another. The new approach to regional economic success in the 1980s posited that such regional clusters were essential to maintain competitive advantage in global competition (Porter, 1990).

A prominent example of this type of research is Saxenian's comparison of two high tech regions -- California's Silicon Valley and Boston's Route 128 (Saxenian, 1994). Saxenian argued that internal capabilities make some regions more adaptive than others to global economic change. She contended that Silicon Valley was especially successful because of the multitude of small specialized firms organized with a flat (as opposed to hierarchical) organizational form, and open professional networks. These organizational features of the region created a culture in which learning and innovation

flourished.

Research on other cases of successful cluster development suggests that the factors that create successful clusters vary from region to region. Yet each combines small firms, entrepreneurs, technological change in a self-reinforcing cycle of innovation. The sustainability of clusters is very much influenced by the local environment, especially “the types and quality of resources and the networks and institutions that provide support and further business interests” (Feldman and Francis 2004). Because such institutions coevolve with industrial innovation, this model of development places of premium on adaptability and creativity.

Complementing this work on regional cluster development are studies that show how low income neighborhoods can become linked to the engines of regional growth. This work analyzes specific cases, drawing lessons for the most effective development strategies. Some of this research grew out of a critique of traditional neighborhood development strategies, which did not situate neighborhood development in the regional context (Nowak, 1997; Foster-Bey, 1997). Nowak’s analysis of Philadelphia, for example, argues that successful neighborhood development must connect workers in low-income communities to regional opportunities.

Other research demonstrates how regionally-linked endogenous development can occur in inner city areas. For example, Michael Porter’s influential work on the “competitive advantage of the inner city” argues that declining central city areas need to discover and build on their distinctive advantages in the regional economy (Porter 1995; Porter 1997; Harrison, 1997, Bates, 1997). Proximity to the central business district and knowledge of an ethnically specific market – such as food – are two examples he highlights. Porter’s work has been criticized for paying insufficient attention to the danger that his approach will improve particular places but provide little benefit to the people that live in those places.

Another perspective on regional growth is provided by the growing body of work showing that the prosperity of the central city is vital to the economic growth of the region as a whole.⁵ One set of studies, noted in the first section of this paper, seeks to establish the complementarity between city and suburban growth, mainly on the basis of correlation analysis (Ihlanfeldt, 1995; Ledebur and Barnes, 1992; Voith, 1998). Other studies have examined the fiscal spillovers caused by high levels of central city poverty. This research contends that the poor create social welfare costs that soak up public resources that would otherwise have enhanced regional economic growth. Related studies have examined fiscal spillovers, showing that central city poverty undermines suburban property values. Human capital arguments posit that a large unskilled workforce drags down the entire metropolitan economy.

This body of research has been faulted for demonstrating correlation, not causality (Hill et al., 1995). Some critics contend that unexamined factors – such as state economic policy – may account for the similar fates of cities and suburbs (Blair and Zhang, 1994).

⁵ See the review of these studies in Gottlieb, 2000.

This work has also been criticized for focusing more on “helping the central city rather than helping the metropolitan poor more generally”(Gottlieb, 2000,). Most of this research is based on aggregate data analyses that use a range of different variables as measures of central city prosperity and regional or suburban growth. Much of this work grew out of an advocacy orientation, aiming to provide evidence to suburbs that it is in their interest to have a strong central city. With the exception of Myron Orfield, whose research is discussed in the next section, there is little about political process in this literature.

The combination of rich case analyses and a variety of quantitative analyses has made the study of regional economic growth a lively field. Yet because research emphasizes either single cases or quantitative analyses, a deeper understanding of how local context affects regional economic development is lacking. There are very few studies that deploy similar concepts across a range of cases, making structured comparisons across the cases (Clarke, 2001; Clarke and Gaile, 1998).

Transportation Transportation is the policy area with the longest history of regional analysis.⁶ Urban historians have examined how developments in transportation transformed metropolitan areas by opening new areas for settlement and altering the character of existing areas (Warner, 1978; Jackson, 1985; Rose, 1979). The planning literature has studied how the complex federal, state, and local funding arrangements influence regional transportation planning (Taylor 1995). In political science there is a case study literature on the urban renewal projects of the 1950s and 1960s in which transportation played a central role. Planners, political scientists and historians have also examined the development of transportation decision-making institutions. There is a large case study literature examining specific regional transportation agencies as well as analyses of the politics of transportation policy in federal and state arenas.

The efforts of the Intersurface Transportation and Efficiency Act of 1991 and its successors to strengthen metropolitan decisionmaking have attracted some research, although much work remains to be done in this area (Katz, Puentes, Bernstein, 2003). There are a few studies that survey Metropolitan Planning Organizations, which ISTEA sought to empower but little work that situates the development of these organizations in specific regional contexts (Gage and McDowell, 1995; Innes and Gruber, 2001). There has also been little research on how the ISTEA requirements for participation have altered the politics of transportation decisionmaking.

Researchers have explored the relationship between transportation and many other policy areas. For example, Raphael and Stoll have produced several quantitative studies showing that access to public transit affects the employment prospects of inner city residents (Raphael, Holzer, and Quigley, 2003). There are also case studies of transportation and inner city labor market problems (Bullard, 1997). The interaction of transportation policy and policy related to air quality has been examined in case studies and in legal analyses. Finally, the impact of transportation on land use has long attracted research, with the disconnection between land use planning and transportation planning as a central theme in much of the planning literature.

⁶ See the review in Wachs and Dill 1999.

Labor markets Scholars have approached the study of metropolitan labor markets from several different perspectives. There is a growing body of work documenting the higher growth rates of employment in suburban areas compared to central cities (Kasarda, 1988; Brennan and Hill, 1999).

There is an enormous -- 60 articles by one count -- quantitative literature on the spatial mismatch hypothesis, which contends that the combination of urban racial segregation and the suburbanization of jobs has created “a surplus of workers relative to the number of jobs in central city neighborhoods where blacks are concentrated” (Ihlanfeldt, 1999 p.216; Kain 1968, 1992). The mismatch means that these workers will have trouble finding jobs or they will face lower wages in jobs close to home. Ihlanfeldt’s 1999 review of this literature shows that over several decades of research substantial evidence has accumulated to confirm the negative impact of the spatial mismatch on the employment of black workers (Ihlanfeldt, 1999).

A relatively recent literature has begun to examine the institutions, local politics, and social networks that govern metropolitan area labor markets. Harrison and Weiss, for example, showed that regional networks are key to successful workforce policies (Harrison and Weiss, 1998). A collection of case studies reaches a similar conclusion, showing that efforts to strengthen labor market institutions in six metropolitan areas were limited by the weak connections among institutions (labor market intermediaries, training institutions, employers) and needy populations spread throughout the metropolitan region (Giloith, 2004).

Land Use, Zoning, Affordable Housing, Segregation, and Concentrated Poverty Land use, zoning, affordable housing, and segregation constitute an interlocked cluster of issues that have generated a large research literature. Two central questions animate this work. The first examines the causes for the distinctively American low density form of suburbanization. The second asks how land use, zoning, and housing policies have contributed to the racial and income segregation and spatially concentrated poverty that characterizes American metropolitan areas.

Research on the causes of suburbanization is wide ranging. Historians and political scientists have pointed to the role of federal policies including housing and transportation policies as well as cultural factors, notably the affinity of Anglo-American elites for the countryside (Jackson 1985, Fishman 1987, Savitch, 2002). Economists have emphasized technological determinants and rising incomes as well as social and political factors as causes of suburbanization. For example, Mieszkowski and Mills’s review of the economic literature suggests that the desire for racial separation and problems of central cities, such as high crime rates and poor public schools, are important forces in promoting suburbanization (Mieszkowski and Mills, 1993). Fischel has emphasized the key role of exclusionary zoning in creating “excessive suburbanization” in the United States. By restricting density levels beyond what the market would produce, zoning promotes additional suburbanization (Fischel, 1999).

Another strand of literature seeks to understand how land use, zoning, and

housing policy contribute to income and racial segregation. There is broad consensus that these policies are central factors creating segregation by income and by race. Historians, sociologists, and legal scholars have analyzed the way federal and local housing policies and legal rulings actively fostered racial discrimination in housing and income exclusion by jurisdiction (Massey and Denton 1993; powell, 2002; Briffault 1990). Fischel's review of the economics literature concludes that even though individual choices are likely to produce homogeneous neighborhoods, exclusionary zoning significantly exacerbates income segregation by municipality (Fischel,1999). Although proponents of smart growth suggest that low density per se fosters income segregation, recent studies find that the relationship between density and income segregation is not straightforward, indicating that the market forces and political factors accompanying choices about density need to be better understood (Pendall and Carruthers, 2003; Jargowsky, 2002).

Researchers have also studied initiatives designed to remedy segregation. Some of the earliest work in this area emerged from efforts to address the causes of the urban riots of the 1960s. The final recommendations of the 1968 Kerner Commission inquiry into urban riots, for example, recommended additional federal resources to help develop ghetto areas but, recognizing that that this strategy could lead simply to "gilding the ghetto," the commission declared that it was also critical to open suburban areas to low income minorities.⁷ In contrast to the consolidationists, who proposed metropolitan government, analysts and advocates animated by the Kerner Commission examined prospects for affordable housing in the suburbs, cross-district busing for schools, and fair housing.⁸ For example, Downs elaborated a policy strategy that relied on a combination of incentives and requirements to increase the number of low-income people living in the suburbs (Downs, 1973).

In the 1990s, a renewed debate about in-place vs. mobility approaches to poverty sparked additional research on the geography of opportunity in metropolitan areas. This work sought both to measure isolation of the inner city residents from the rest of the metropolitan area and to show how this isolation affected the opportunities of inner city residents. (Galster and Killen 1995; Abramson et al., 1995). Researchers have also examined particular programs that have sought to combat segregation. These include analyses of Chicago's Gautreaux program, which offered minority low-income public housing residents access to housing in the suburbs, and the federal Move to Opportunity Program modeled after Gautreaux (Rubinowitz et al., 2000). Studies have also examined the development of New Jersey's Mt. Laurel decision, the only state to require suburbs to shoulder their "fair share" of affordable housing (Kirp et al., 1995; Haar, 1996).

Education Studies of metropolitan education policy examine a range of explanations behind poor performance in central city schools including segregation, concentrated poverty, school district organization, civic capacity, and school financing. Because segregation, concentrated poverty and school financing issues are direct

⁷ Kerner Commission 1968.

⁸ See Danielson 1976 for an overview of this era.

consequences of regional dynamics, the study of education is implicitly regional. Yet, education policy has remained largely its own topic of investigation, separate from other issues of regional growth and development.

Research on school reform includes case studies of governance changes. Recent studies investigate the role of social capital and civic capacity in building urban education reform. For example, Stone et al. (2001) conducted an eleven city study of school reforms and concluded that cities with high levels of civic capacity are better situated to leverage the large scale kinds of changes necessary for successful school reform. Furthermore, they found that informal relationships are not enough. Such efforts require an institutional foundation that allows for both interaction among elites and grassroots organizing among citizens.

Other studies address school financing and the issue of fiscal equalization across school districts. This literature connects most directly to the work on fiscal disparities between cities and suburbs, seeking to recognize the particular burdens and limited resources that constrain cities from providing quality education. For example, Downes and Pogue argue that correcting for fiscal disparities in abilities to finance education requires adjustments that look beyond student counts to address a wide range of factors affecting costs (Downes and Pogue 1994). Andrew Reschovsky (1994) identified two distinct principles of fiscal equalization. The first is the egalitarian principle, which focuses on the inputs into the educational process and the importance of equalizing the fiscal capacity of districts. The second is a focus on equal educational opportunity which focuses on outputs and calls for equal performance from students within a state.

Research on racial segregation in schools also has an implicit regional focus. In an examination of the current status of segregation in US schools, Orfield et al, use national data to show that minority students today are more likely to be in high poverty schools and that segregation has become more prevalent in large and medium-sized cities and their suburbs, while it has improved in rural areas. Much of this change can be contributed to school district organization. In *Milliken v. Bradley* 418 US 717 (1974), the Supreme Court ruled that remedies for segregation must be limited to individual school districts, unless the court finds that state or suburban action caused the segregation. The ability of a state to integrate its schools then became closely tied with the size of the school district. States with traditionally small school districts became much more limited than states where the school district traditionally corresponds with county boundaries (Orfield et al., 1994).

Summary -- Political Processes and Outcomes in Policy Research: While policy-specific research has improved our understanding of the development of various policies and the impact of those policies on patterns of metropolitan development, it has made fewer contributions in connecting political process to policy outcomes. The dominant styles of analysis in this work are quantitative correlations, policy analyses, and individual case studies. These approaches do not provide sufficient analytic leverage for understanding how political processes and institutions influence policy outcomes. Effective policies have been identified through this research, but there is little guidance

for policymakers about how to develop, implement and administer these model policies in their political context.

Furthermore, because each policy domain has been examined from within a particular area of study, there has been little research on the broader effects of regional coordination among the policy areas. The literature is strongest in detailing the ways that different policies interact to produce outcomes as in the research showing how zoning and housing policies support segregation and the work on the impact of transportation policies and racial segregation on labor market outcomes. Missing in the literature are analyses of the way regional efforts in one policy area affect the political prospects for efforts to achieve regional coordination in other areas. This absence reflects the inattention in most of the literature to connecting outcomes with political processes, policy actors, and institutions. For example, there is a significant case study literature documenting Portland, Oregon's success in containing growth and promoting in-fill housing. But there is little analysis pinpointing what allowed Oregon to pursue these multiple goals and, accordingly little sense of how these two goals might be pursued in other metropolitan areas. (Could you provide a concrete example to highlight this point?)

Finally, much of the policy literature is based on the model of a poor minority central city surrounded by wealthy white suburbs. However, in the past decade, this model has become obsolete in many areas of the country as regions have confronted a variety of new challenges ranging from rapid economic growth, increased immigration, and the suburbanization of poverty (Singer, 2004; Katz and Lang, 2003). At the same time, rapid technological change and shifts in the international division of labor pose fundamental and ill-understood challenges to existing metropolitan policies and strategies. Studies of policy and regionalism need to address these new realities.

New Regionalists

As it became evident in the 1960s that metropolitan political consolidation was not politically viable, research and discussion of the issue faded from public view. However, in the 1990s, a group of practitioners, advocates, and researchers broadly referred to as "New Regionalists" revived interest in regional solutions to metropolitan problems.⁹ In contrast to the earlier literature, which advocated political consolidation, contemporary new regionalists call for regional governance. Governance is an encompassing term that covers a range of formal and informal mechanisms for cooperating across local metropolitan boundaries. Moreover, new regionalists are not focused on efficiency concerns, as were the advocates of consolidation; instead they have championed a regional agenda on behalf of the environment, economic growth, and equity. The most distinctive new regionalist claim is that regional approaches can reduce the trade-offs among these objectives such that they become complementary rather than competing goals.

This multifaceted focus reflects the diverse perspectives that converged on regional ideas in the 1990s. Those coming to regionalism from an equity perspective

⁹ See the discussion in Dreier, Mollenkopf and Swanstrom, 2001, pp.177-12.

included practitioners and analysts frustrated at the limited success of twenty-five years of community development efforts. They highlighted the need for low-income urban communities of color to connect to the broader region and to have a voice in the regional processes that profoundly affected their neighborhoods but over which they had no influence. Chief among these were decisions about the location of jobs, infrastructure investments, and housing patterns (powell, 2000; Weir, 1999; O'Connor, 1999; Bullard and Johnson 1997). Environmentalists, mainly concerned with wilderness issues in the past, began to highlight the negative impact of sprawl and automobile transportation on the environment. A regional perspective was inherent in the metropolitan issues that concerned environmentalists and the solutions they advocated (Benfield et al., 1999). Those concerned with economic growth touted regionalism as a way to strengthen the international competitiveness of American metropolitan areas. Instead of pursuing low road beggar-thy-neighborhood policies, a regional approach would capitalize on the unique strengths of the region by building on the resources of the entire region (Pierce, Johnson, and Hall, 1993; Dodge, 1996).

Much of the advocacy-oriented new regionalist literature is devoted to showing how policies and fragmented government have not only helped to create problems related to racial inequality, environmental degradation and economic decline but also stand in the way of finding remedies to these problems. For example, those concerned with equity show “how urban sprawl, racial inequality, concentrated poverty and gentrification are all bound up together” as John Powell puts it (powell, 2002). This work also suggests how a regional approach – for example ensuring that the voices of low-income communities are heard in important regional decisions – can help address unequal opportunity (Bullard, Johnson, and Torres, 2000). The work often makes the case that economic growth, equity, and environmental protection are compatible. For example, regionalist work on economic growth posits that increased investments in education and human resources – usually the province of equity advocates – are essential to regional competitiveness. Likewise, environmentalists seek to show how land use policies that foster more compact growth patterns can benefit low-income neighborhoods. This work relies on a combination of historical and case study analysis documenting the problems with the current arrangements. It is weakest in showing for how regional strategies would be superior.

Researchers have sought to document the superiority of regional approaches in several ways. Some work compares regional and fragmented political settings. For example, David Rusk, in one of the earliest and most influential new regionalist works, compares cities with elastic political boundaries (those whose boundaries expanded to capture peripheral growth) with inelastic cities. He shows that on many dimensions, including racial segregation, city-suburban income differentials, and economic growth, elastic cities exhibit superior performance. Critics have challenged Rusk’s methodology and his implicit assumption that political consolidation would be superior to interlocal agreements (Blair, et al. 1996). Pastor et al. take a different approach to assessing effective regional governance. They first construct indicators to rank metropolitan area performance on two dimensions: increasing economic growth and decreasing inequality. They then undertake case studies of the three highest ranking regions to assess the factors

that led to regional success (Pastor et al., 2000). This approach has the advantage of linking regional performance with distinctive political processes but the analysis of politics and institutions is presented in case studies, the lessons of which are difficult to generalize.

Researchers have also produced a significant body of research examining the implementation of new regionalist practices at the local level. Much of this work focuses on Portland, Oregon and the Twin Cities in Minnesota, which have the most established forms of regional governance (Nelson, 1992; Abbot, 1997, Liberty 1998; Orfield 1997, Weir 2000). Case studies also examine specific practices championed by new regionalists, such as Montgomery County, Maryland's requirements for affordable housing (Rusk 2001). More recently, this work has elaborated the different forms that intentional and unintentional regional efforts and institutions take in many different regions of the country (Foster 2001; Hamilton, 2002; Benjamin and Nathan, 2001).

Researches on the political processes that support regional practice take different approaches. One strand of work emphasizes the possibilities for a broad consensus around regional practices on the basis of the expectation of widely shared benefits (Dodge, 1996). Allen Wallis, for example, emphasizes the importance of building formal and informal networks that cross metropolitan jurisdictional boundaries. Such ties allow for the creation of a new vision for the region and provide an essential starting point for realizing that vision (Wallis, 2001). Myron Orfield offers an alternative perspective by analyzing the differences among suburbs and the common interests between some suburbs and cities. He shows that particular suburbs share objective interests with central cities around fiscal issues, the distribution of affordable housing, and growth management (Orfield, 2002). Other work emphasizes the need for changes in federal and state laws as well as local network connections as ways to envision and enact changes to promote regional goals (Downs, 1994).

While this research has produced several notable studies that make arguments in favor of regionalism, it has not produced systematic evidence about the political processes that support regional efforts nor has it assessed the impact of those regional efforts on regional problems. Furthermore, the "new regionalists" have not adequately assessed the tradeoffs between policy gains in one " domain and the effects on the other domains.

Conclusion

The long history of research on metropolitan government, governance, and policy reflects the central role of regional organization in ensuring broad national prosperity and social well-being. Yet because most of the literature does not connect regional processes with regional outcomes, we do not know enough about what makes regions successful and what makes them resilient when faced with challenges. Moreover, our notions of success are inadequate because measures of success are often vague or one-dimensional. If research is to inform policymakers

about possible paths to regional success, research must devise multi-dimensional measures of success that can be used to evaluate success. It must also show how particular processes contributed to that success.

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