

Metropolitan Governance in the USA

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Fragmentation

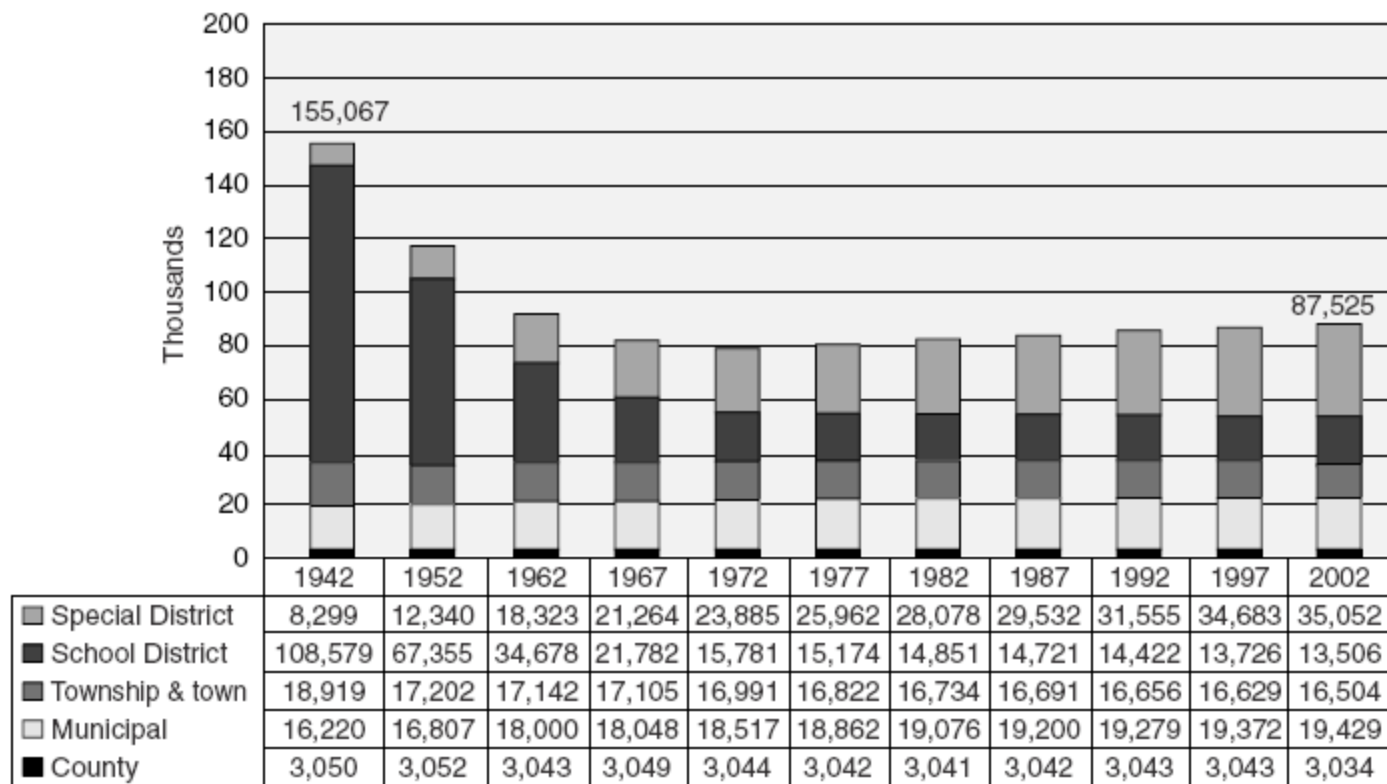


FIGURE 1.1 Number of Local Governments in the United States

Source: Statistical Abstract of the United States, 2006, Table 415.

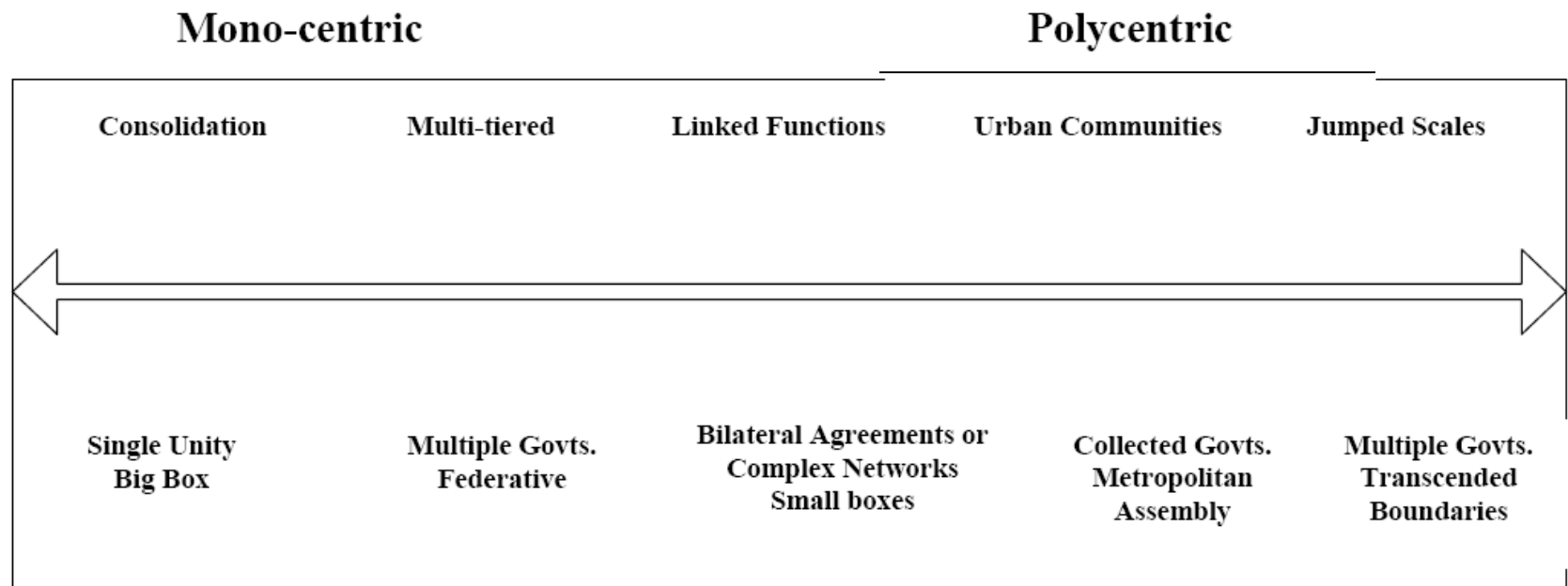
Rescale from city to the city-region (metropolis)

- Combine resources in city and surrounding region,
 - Seek to gain economies of scale and efficiencies,
 - Share costs of infrastructure,
 - Address regional problems (e.g., air pollution, transportation)
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Emphasis on governance rather than government

- New territorial scale makes extending city boundaries impractical (sprawl)
 - Increased centralization and hierarchy often inefficient (too long to make decisions, goal displacement, bureaucracy)
 - Concern for democracy, equity, political accountability (local autonomy)
 - Often evolves on an issue by issue approach
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Typology of Rescaling Options



Organizational chart of Metropolitan Governance

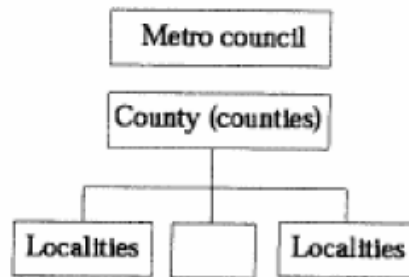
Consolidation

- Single political and legislative bodies.
- May contain service districts, small independent cities, etc
- Operative concept: "government"

Examples

Philadelphia (1854)
San Francisco (1856)
New Orleans (1874)
St. Louis (1876)
New York (1898)
Nashville (1967)
Indianapolis (1970)
Louisville (2000)

Tiered government

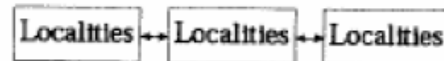


- Separate
- Number of tiers
- Two or more sub tiers
- Operative concept: "government"

Examples

Minneapolis-St Paul (3 tier)
Portland (3 tier)
Miami-Dade (2 tier)

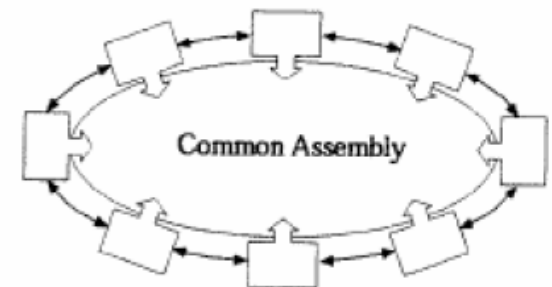
Complex networks



- Voluntary cooperation
- Horizontal relationship
- Inter local agreements
- Operative concept: "governance"

Examples

Pittsburgh
Los Angeles



- Common assembly drawn from existing localities
- Inter local agreements
- Operative concept: "government" plus "governance"

Examples:

Urban communities (Marseille)
Community of cities (Toulouse)

City-County Consolidation

- ❑ Antiquated model?
 - ❑ Advantages: “bigger box” to address problems but offset by change in political constituency
 - ❑ Disadvantages: political obstacles make unlikely, results in minority dilution, problem of scale
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Two or Three Tier Metropolitan Government

- ❑ Two-tier Miami-Dade County, set up in the 1950s as a federated model but largely operates as a metropolitan county.
 - ❑ Three-tier: Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Council and Portland Metro overlay cities and counties
 - ❑ Advantages: cover more of region
 - ❑ Disadvantages: relatively weak and try to avoid antagonizing other governments
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Metropolitan Governance without Government (complex

- Inter-local government agreements at state and local level (examples, Pittsburgh, Louisville pre-merger, Charlotte, Los Angeles)
 - Metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), required under federal highway transportation law to set short and long-term transportation plans
 - Public-private partnerships (e.g., strategic plan for economic development)
 - Advantages: flexible
 - Disadvantages: weak regionalism
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National Academy of Sciences recommendations

- The committee acknowledged inequalities arising from the present system of financing and providing urban services. However, the committee departed from traditional reform diagnoses and prescriptions as the excerpts below reveal.
 - *Source:* Alan A. Altshuler, Harold Wolman, William Morrill, and Faith Mitchell, eds., *Governance and Opportunity in Metropolitan America* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1999).
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Efficiency of Consolidated Government

The preponderance of evidence indicates that small local governments (and thus metropolitan areas characterized by fragmentation) are more efficient for labor-intensive services, whereas larger units are more efficient for capital-intensive services (because of economies of scale) and for certain overhead functions. (p. 106)

Performance of Consolidated Government

[C]onsolidation has not reduced costs . . . [and] it may have even increased local expenditures. (p. 106)

Effects of Consolidated Government on Reducing Disparities Between Central Cities and Suburbs and Whites and Blacks

[T]here are no systematic empirical studies. The evidence that does exist, however, suggests that these efforts have had no significant impact on redistributing income or on addressing the problems of the poor or racial minorities. (pp. 106–107)

Recommendation to Improve Metropolitan Governance

- [W]hen a supra-local approach is desirable, existing overlaying units of governments can provide services, or special districts can be created to do so.
 - When a regional approach or perspective is more appropriate, creation of such entities as the Portland Metropolitan Service District and the Minneapolis–St. Paul Metropolitan Council is desirable, if locally supported and politically feasible.
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If such entities are not likely to emerge (i.e., in most metropolitan areas)

- then we find most appropriate the use and expansion of existing metropolitan forums and agencies, such as councils of governments, metropolitan planning organizations, regional special-purpose authorities, and public-private alliances on the metropolitan level.
 - It is possible that, over time, one or more of these will organically emerge into an institution that has the ability to make decisions for the entire region in several functional areas. (p. 129)
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