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Regionalism on Purpose

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Transportation Meeting Aims at Regional Unity

Kathryn A. Foster

Regionalism on Purpose

This report is one in a series of policy focus reports published by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy to address timely public policy issues relating to land use planning and development, land markets and property taxation. Each report is designed to bridge the gap between theory and practice by combining research findings, case studies and contributions from scholars in a variety of academic disciplines and from professional practitioners, local officials and citizens in different types of communities.

Regionalism on Purpose is based in part on the conference, "Urban-Suburban Interdependence: New Directions for Research and Policy," held in September 1998 in Chicago. For two days in plenary and smaller group sessions, more than 120 public and private officials, academic researchers and policy analysts grappled with emerging questions of city-suburban linkage, metropolitan economies and regional policy, trying to distill and make sense of what we know and don't know about the process and outcomes of regionalism.

The conference was cosponsored by the Lincoln Institute, the Brookings Institution, and the Great Cities Institute of the University of Illinois at Chicago, with additional support from the John T. and Catherine D. MacArthur Foundation. The papers presented at the conference were edited by Rosalind Greenstein and Wim Wiewel and published by the Lincoln Institute in the volume *Urban-Suburban Interdependencies* (2000).

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Executive Summary

In the past decade, interest in and experience with U.S. metropolitan regionalism—ways of thinking and acting at the regional scale—have mushroomed. Public officials, civic leaders and metropolitan residents increasingly pursue regionalism to address complicated border-transcending problems, including urban sprawl, sluggish regional economies, uncoordinated land use policy, environmental decline, and intraregional inequities in housing, education and tax capacity.

Because doing something regionally typically means not doing it locally, regionalism faces the classic dilemma of a diverse and democratic society: how to realize the common (regional) good while safeguarding individual (local) freedoms. The task of brokering these tradeoffs and additionally crafting a regional vision and agenda, seizing regional opportunities, and delivering regional services efficiently and equitably—all in the absence of a metropolitan polity—challenges most metropolitan leaders.

History reveals three long cycles in a shifting balance between regional and local authority: colonial regionalism from the early 1600s to 1790; the ascendance of local authority from 1790 to 1930; and a "quiet revolution" in regionalism since the 1930s, with intensified activity since 1990. Americans generally embrace regionalism when it promises material gains through improved service delivery or tax-reducing mergers, but reject it when it redistributes resources, promotes racial and class mixing, or jeopardizes local land use prerogatives.

Theoretical and empirical evidence offer a mixed or inconclusive picture of the effects of regionalism in achieving metropolitan goals. Regional approaches are thought to be better suited than local ones for achieving equity, environmental sustainability and regional economic growth, but evidence remains scant. On the other hand, governance systems based on multiple local governments tend to have greater political participation and lower service costs.

In practice metropolitan regions often determine governance arrangements on a function by function basis, which yields a variety of multitiered models. Metropolitan areas relying on regional multipurpose entities are rare. Far more common are regions with complex networks of local governments, limited-purpose regional authorities, and private, civic and nonprofit organizations participating in metropolitan governance simultaneously.

The politics of regionalism present five special challenges: 1) overcoming a weak sense of regional identity; 2) finding consensus on political strategies for regional change; 3) securing the benefits of a "big tent" coalition without succumbing to the fragility of diverse alliances; 4) overcoming a strategic bias toward relatively uncontentious issues of economic development and away from knottier equity and land use goals; and 5) responding to often inconsistent federal and state policies.

Contemporary regional leadership responds to such challenges by building intricate networks of intraregional relations in a shared-power world. Deliberate, goal-oriented, inclusive regional efforts have had considerable success, suggesting the importance of these attributes to regional excellence.

The varied regional experiences of Louisville, Silicon Valley, Denver, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Cape Cod and Chicago illuminate these challenges as these communities pursue regionalism for political, economic, growth-based, equity, environmental and multiple purposes, respectively. These and other metropolitan regions noted in the report also reinforce the value and versatility of regionalism, as well as its vulnerabilities.

Introduction

What a difference three years make. Since the September 1998 conference on "Urban-Suburban Interdependence," interest in and practical experience with regionalism have mushroomed. There are hundreds of examples, but a few cases represent the range of recent initiatives.

- Public and private agencies in the Buffalo-Niagara Falls Metropolitan Area have jointly invested millions in Buffalo Niagara Enterprise, a staffed partnership intended to recharge the regional economy.
- Leaders in the traditionally rivalrous Baltimore and Washington, DC, metropolitan areas have put down their swords to collaborate on a bid for the 2012 Olympic Games.
- Voters in five counties in the Illinois and the Missouri portions of the St. Louis Metropolitan Area approved a tax increase to form metropolitan parks and recreation districts that will create and manage an interlocking system of over 200 miles of hiking and biking trails in that politically fragmented bistate region.
- The Memphis City Council voted to merge its school district with that of surrounding Shelby County, a first step toward possible governmental consolidation.
- Even in the Boston region, ground zero for New England-style small-scale governance, civic leaders are engaged in a year-long visioning and educational exercise to raise awareness of issues such as sprawl and affordable housing that warrant regional responses.

At the same time, academics have been publishing articles and books examining and interpreting regional change, and the popular press has picked up the beat. *Time*, *Newsweek*, *USA Today*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, *Business Week* and *U.S. News & World Report* have all weighed in on the new metropolis. Public and civic officials are scrambling to learn a new lexicon: collaboration, not competition; shared power, not hierarchy; networks, not atoms; consensus, not conflict. Predictably, a regionalism industry has blossomed as consultants and nonprofit umbrella groups spring up to help regions find the metropolitan way.

Boston

St. Louis

Of course, not everything has changed.

- In Buffalo-Niagara Falls, the newly elected proregional Erie County Executive's proposal to merge village and town governments fell on decidedly unreceptive ears.
- Leaders in Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia continue to spar over issues such as the future of the Chesapeake Bay, water intake pipes in the Potomac River and the fiscal spoils of a Mid-Atlantic economic boom.
- Voters in two counties in the St. Louis region turned back the metropolitan parks districts on the grounds that their cost—an extra one-tenth of one percent sales tax—wouldn't bring them sufficient benefit.
- Leaders in Shelby County, who in 1990 threatened to secede and form a new county over the school consolidation issue, immediately announced their opposition to Memphis leaders and dismissed the prospect of school consolidation or other, grander mergers.
- In Boston a caucus of suburban legislators filed more than two dozen bills seeking to roll back provisions of a 1969 "anti-snob zoning law" that requires communities to have at least 10 percent of their housing stock affordable to low- and moderate-income households.

Regionalism, it seems, remains a two-steps-forward, two-steps-back phenomenon.

As regional interest and activity continue their swift and sure move toward center stage, the time is right to reassess the promise, pitfalls, policies and politics of regionalism. Certainly, much has occurred on the regionalism front since September 1998, and classic themes continue to bring insights and deserve reconsideration under new metropolitan light. The purpose of this report—intended particularly for public officials, policy makers, and private, nonprofit and civic participants in regional affairs—is to reconsider regionalism in U.S. metropolitan areas. The exploration covers a range of seemingly basic questions, which often turn out to have uncommonly intricate answers:

- What is regionalism?
- Why all the attention now?
- What can regionalism provide that localism can't (and vice versa)?
- Why is regionalism so controversial, and what are the tradeoffs?
- Where is regionalism occurring, in what ways, and to what effect?
- What are the politics of regionalism?
- Who leads in a regional world?
- How does regionalism happen?

The Metropolitan Problem and the Challenges of a Regional Solution

Why all the buzz about regionalism? Why now? The answer is that for an increasing number of people motivated by an increasing array of interests metropolitan areas don't work very well. For example:

- the stuck-in-traffic commuter cringes at "Home Lots From $60,000!" where stunning old pines once stood;
- the angry taxpayer is incensed at supporting multiple layers of village, town, city and county road departments;
- the low-income city parent is concerned that her child's school lacks the books, gyms, science labs, computer facilities and art programs that exurban elementary schools have; and
- the corporate leader thinks counterproductive intraregional squabbling diminishes the region's presence in global markets.

To these and others suffering from metropolitan malaise, regionalism seems a powerful and promising elixir for what ails them. By virtue of their scale—big enough to surround the problem, but small enough to tailor the solution—regions have the potential to address complicated ills that spill over local borders: urban sprawl, intraregional inequities in education and housing, uneven tax capacity, uncoordinated land use policies, a sluggish regional economy and groundwater pollution.

But metropolitan life has always been a source of complaints. What is different now that puts regionalism in the news? Essentially, many observers believe contemporary metropolitan maladies are worsening, increasingly intertwined, unlikely to clear up on their own, and needful of the aggressive comprehensive treatment that regionalism might offer.

At the same time, regions are assuming greater significance in local, national and world affairs. Metropolitan residents routinely cross local borders between home, work, play, health care and other daily business, thus linking people and places and fostering a shared sense of, right to and responsibility for the broader metropolitan community. Federal and state governments devolve functions and powers to lower-level governments, often situating programs such as air pollution control, transportation planning, and employment and training programs at the county or metropolitan level. Regions also are often viewed as the premier unit of competition in a global economy.

> Regions […] may offer the minimum size at which markets and business networks achieve the low-cost economies of scale […and] the maximum size at which working relationships can be crafted and sustained. (Pastor et al. 2000, 10)

Reinforcing the significance of regions is the well-respected "equivalence principle" of governance, which holds that the decision-making unit for a problem should equate to both its financing unit and the area affected. The decision-making unit for siting a water main extension, for example, would include all those territories affected by and paying for the extension. As more frequent and durable cross-border links turn once local problems into metropolitan ones, regions gain significance.

In practice, regionalism and regional problem solving are neither simple nor straightforward. Acting regionally—and particularly forging the agreements, powers and tools to do so—is no easy enterprise. Indeed, regionalism inevitably confronts four formidable challenges.

1. *Philosophical Challenge.* Regionalism faces the classic dilemma of a diverse and democratic society: how to realize the common good while safeguarding individual freedoms. Especially in a nation committed to and benefiting from diversity and self-determination, working toward common regional goals—even identifying them—is a challenge. Suburban officials, the editor of the metropolitan daily, residential developers, homeless single mothers, union members, post-college job seekers, corporate CEOs, city taxpayers, farmers and other regional interest groups neither experience similarly nor agree on the importance of regional problems and proposed solutions. Tradeoffs between regional and local goals and values are inevitable.

2. *Political Challenge.* Regionalism is infused with politics. Doing something regionally means not doing it locally or nationally, a circumstance that creates winners and losers and, thereby, conflict. A region typically lacks constituents more loyal to it than to their localities or other communities of interest. Even among regionalists there is disagreement over core values and strategies of regional action. Proponents differ, for example, over the relative importance of regional purposes, such as a stronger economy or greater equity, and they also part ways over whether incremental steps or bold actions make more sense when pursuing regional outcomes.

3. *Governance Challenge.* Even if a region does manage to determine common ground and align on political approaches, most regions in the United States lack a polity—a multipurpose entity authorized and empowered to act on behalf of the metropolitan public good. Unlike the counties, cities and towns that comprise them, regions have no chief executive, no legislature, no constitution, no by-laws, no public hearings, no place for the buck to stop. Thus, regions must typically identify issues, set a vision, seize opportunities, thwart crises, deliver services, broker conflicts, and establish and achieve goals without any formal structure or authority for doing so.

4. *Empirical Challenge.* High hopes and bold claims notwithstanding, we don't know very much about the impacts of regionalism, and what we do know offers mixed reviews. Societies are understandably cautious about abandoning the status quo for the unproven or insufficient benefits of a new regionalist order. Until the impacts of regionalism are better known, the appropriate regional path will remain uncertain.

Taken together, the philosophical, political, governance and empirical challenges of regionalism are enough to stymie any region, and often they do. Still, against tough odds, regional approaches and solutions emerge. Profiled in this report are six regions—Cape Cod, Louisville, Silicon Valley, Denver, Minneapolis-St. Paul and Chicago—pursuing regionalism for different purposes and by various means. Their experiences, and other cases noted throughout the report, illustrate regionalism's values and versatility, as well as its vulnerabilities.

What is a Region? What is Regionalism?

The words are familiar and used frequently, but some fundamental definitions will guide our understanding of their use in this report.

Region is a fuzzy, hence versatile, concept. It refers to a wide range of territories, from a small group of communities (e.g., the South Shore) to a city and its immediate surroundings (e.g., Greater Boston) to a mid-sized collection of states or other subnational areas (e.g., New England or the Northeast) to a large multinational territory (e.g., the Atlantic Rim). Common to contemporary regions is their political informality. Unlike the original regions of centuries ago, today's regions denote territory that is not under common rule.

Adding to the fuzziness is the fact that a single region may actually contain multiple regions—a region's regions—each with a different geography and meaning, depending on the criteria for definition. Regional types include:

- *Bioregions* based on environmental factors (e.g., Great Lakes Basin);
- *Economic regions* based on trade flows and labor markets (e.g., Silicon Valley);
- *Cultural regions* based on vernacular language, arts, literature and social norms (e.g., the Louisiana Bayou);
- *Administrative regions* based on state and federal program provisions (e.g., New York State's Genesee-Finger Lakes Region);
- *Political regions* based on voter affiliation, congressional districts, or jurisdictional boundaries (e.g., Arizona's 4th Congressional District);
- *Marketing regions* based on buying patterns and media reach (e.g., the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex);
- *Service regions* based on service delivery territories (e.g., Metropolitan Water District of Southern California); and
- *Metropolitan regions*, the focus of this report, based on urbanized territory encompassing a large population nucleus and adjacent areas with high economic and social integration[1] (e.g., Hartford Metropolitan Area).

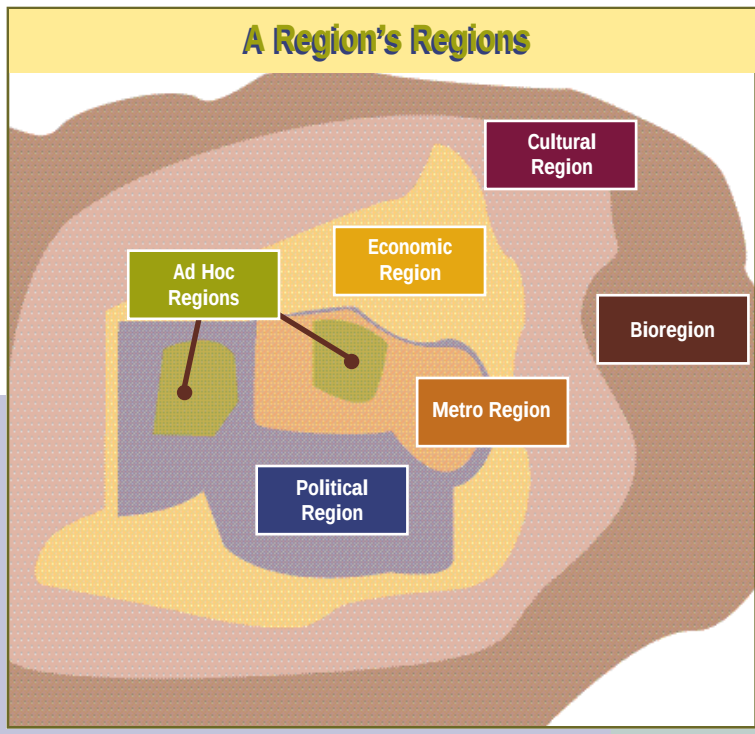


Figure 1

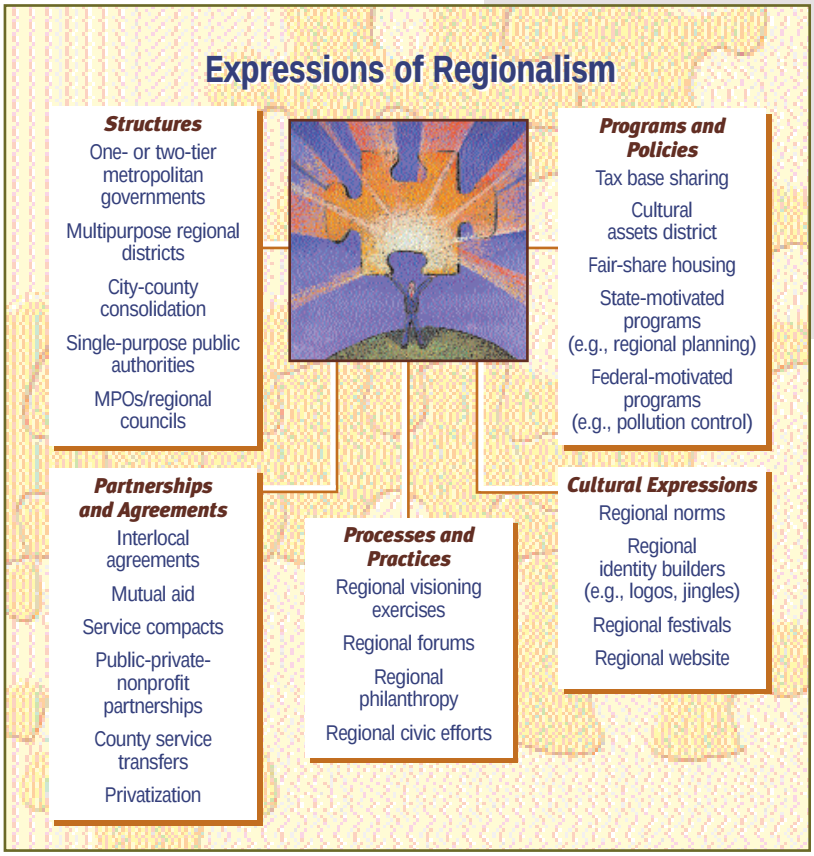


Figure 2

Regionalism (or metropolitanism as is sometimes used when referring to metropolitan regions) likewise lacks a precise definition. It generally refers to ways of thinking and acting at the regional scale and may, more particularly, refer to shifting authority and functions from local, state or national governments to regional entities. Regionalism has many faces. It may reveal itself as *structures* (e.g., city-county consolidations), *programs and policies* (e.g., regional fair-share housing policy), *partnerships and agreements* (e.g., interlocal compact), *processes and practices* (e.g., regional forums), or simply as *cultural expressions* (e.g., regional norms, regional logos). By extension, localism refers to ways of thinking and acting at the local scale, and the vesting of functions and powers in local entities.

What is a Region?

region [ME regioun, fr. MF region territory, region, fr. L *region-, regio* direction, territory, region, fr. regere to guide, rule.]

1 realm, kingdom; an administrative area, division or district

a. large tract of land: one of the large districts or quarters into which a space or surface is conceived of as divided; *broadly:* an indefinite area of land (as a country, province, district, or tract)

b. a broad geographical area containing a population whose members possess sufficient historical, cultural, economic, or social homogeneity to distinguish them from others

excerpted from *Webster's Unabridged Third New International Dictionary,* 1993

Just as there are types of regions, there are types of regionalism that can be categorized by the following regional purposes or motivations:

- *Environmental regionalism:* jointly manage air, water, land, energy, plant, wildlife and other natural resources; preserve a special environmental resource;
- *Fiscal regionalism:* merge services; share labor or capital equipment;
- *Economic regionalism:* unify economic development strategies and practices; promote one-stop shopping for prospective investors; collaborate on regional marketing and promotion;
- *Political regionalism:* boost political clout, particularly in relation to higher-level governments; solidify a political base; dilute the power of a geographically concentrated interest group or minority;
- *Equity regionalism:* narrow intrametropolitan disparities by redistributing resources; standardize service levels in education, housing and other issue areas;
- *Growth-based regionalism:* manage the impacts of metropolitan growth; coordinate, plan for and shape the nature and pace of growth;
- *Cultural regionalism:* safeguard a threatened culture; build regional identity; bolster or sustain a social movement by expanding the network of adherents;
- *Ad hoc regionalism:* undertake a time-bounded specific task, such as attracting a new firm, raising funds or hosting a major event.

Regions prioritize these purposes differently. An isolated region, for example, might desire cultural regionalism to preserve a way of life, but reject political regionalism to achieve it. Regions may also pursue more than one type of regionalism at a time. For example, a region might adopt policies to direct growth away from fragile ecosystems, narrow the differences between growing and stagnating areas of the region, and recharge the regional economy, thus touching on growth, environmental, equity and economic regionalism.

While there are no hard and fast rules, regional purposes tend to be associated with different regional means. Structural means, which involve the institution of a government entity, require ample time, money and political resources to put into effect, but typically enjoy considerable authority and permanence. Nonstructural regional means, such as service agreements, partnerships and programs, are easier and less expensive to implement, but may offer less power and institutional security.

Although each regional purpose could theoretically be accomplished by any means, common approaches tend to arise, as the shaded cells in the accompanying figure indicate. Equity regionalism, for example, often relies on nonstructural policies and programs from higher-level governments. Fiscal regionalism typically occurs by structural means or formal interlocal agreements.

Regional Purposes and Regional Means

	Structural Means			Nonstructural Means			
	Metro Govt. Models (city-county consolidations, two-tier federations)	Multipurpose Regional Entity	Single-Purpose Regional Entity	Interlocal Agreements/ Service Compacts	Private/Civic-led Collaborations	County Program/Policy	State-motivated Program/Policy
Environmental		Portland, Minneapolis-St. Paul	Cape Cod		San Francisco, Portland		
Fiscal	Nashville, Jacksonville, Miami-Dade Co.	Portland, Minneapolis-St. Paul	Many metros, e.g. for transit	Many metros e.g. for service sharing			
Economic	Indianapolis				Silicon Valley, Austin, Charlotte, Cleveland-Akron		
Political	Louisville, Indianapolis						
Equity						Montgomery Co, MD, Dayton-Montgomery Co, Ohio	New Jersey metros
Growth-based	Nashville	Portland, Minneapolis-St.Paul	Atlanta	Denver	Chicago, San Francisco		Denver, Portland
Cultural	Miami-Dade Co.	Portland, Minneapolis-St. Paul	Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Denver		Chattanooga		
Ad Hoc					Baltimore-Washington, DC		

Figure 3

The Evolution of Regionalism

While regions have been around a long time and regionalism is as old as they are, contemporary conditions and trends seem to offer new developments and variations on old themes. To put current regional interest and activity in context, consider the evolution of regional purposes, the different means metropolitan societies have developed to accomplish these purposes, and the ever-shifting balance between local and regional authority over time.[2]

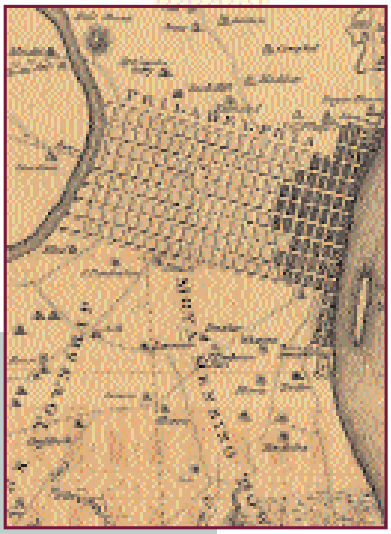
Building a Regional Nation (1600-1790)

The U.S. story begins in early colonial days, a time when there was no distinction between regional and local governance. Empowered with royal charters, mercantile sponsorship or authorizing acts from a European parent authority, colonial governments led by governors, constables, land distributors and justices of the peace handled the soup to nuts of governance, managing everything from garbage disposal to foreign relations.

For practical reasons, the fusion of regional and local control was short-lived. Settlement dispersal made it impossible for colonial governments to administer far-flung places. While central colonial authorities retained the overarching powers to govern—to lure new settlers, allocate land and obligate tax collection, for example—they readily formed and transferred a wide range of functions and powers to subcolonial units (generally towns or districts in the northern colonies and counties in the southern colonies). These units became the new world's local governments.

Through the 1600s and 1700s colonial governments delegated authority for what became a standard menu of local functions: road maintenance, poor relief, schools, peacekeeping, justice, recordkeeping and tax collection. Colonial governments retained primary authority to govern and also responsibility for functions that transcended town borders. Prime among these was ensuring the movement of people and goods throughout the colonies, a responsibility that meant constructing and maintaining ports, roads, bridges and canals. Such tasks of economic regionalism have remained cornerstones of regional purpose to the present.

> ...the vitality of local government that Tocqueville observed in the 1830s had begun two centuries earlier, when provincial legislatures created local institutions and then, act by act, year by year, regularly enhanced their responsibilities…(Maier 1999, 74)



Nationhood transformed colonial governments into state governments (and thereby converted former "wholes" into "parts"). The young nation's small but growing metropolitan centers faced numerous regional dilemmas, most notably the chaos of conflicting municipal laws and standards. Crossing a local border often brought new rules for conduct, as well as different levels of service delivery, public health, morality, lawlessness and justice.

Intergovernmental cooperation thus emerged. One instance was the 1790 collaboration between the City of Philadelphia and its ten independent adjacent districts to jointly form a Board of Prison Inspectors. Eventually the Philadelphia collaborators formed other regional boards for health, education, police, port control, tax allocation and equalization, and poor relief, a list notable for both its length and its breadth of economic, equity and cultural purposes. While necessity was the mother of their invention, the multiple boards were barely tolerated by Philadelphia officials who sought and eventually achieved (in 1854) a city-county consolidation to streamline regional governance.

Quiet Revolution in Localism (1790-1890)

While the new states held most governing powers at the turn of the nineteenth century, national expansion, settlement dispersal and dedication to the doctrine of local self-determination soon set in motion a more-than-century-long shift of power from centralized entities to local governments.

The driving forces for new localism were, notably, state legislatures themselves. Eager to dispose of the steady stream of incorporation petitions from proliferating town settlements, state legislatures made town formation a locally determined right by enacting general laws for municipal incorporation. Permissive laws made incorporation easy: any settlement with a minimum population of 100 to 500 (depending on the state) and the will of a majority or two-thirds of its residents could automatically incorporate.

"...the American system is one of complete decentralization, the primary and vital idea of which is that local affairs shall be managed by local authorities." Thomas M. Cooley, 1874 (Teaford 1979, 5)

Early towns had relatively few functions, typically schools, police, health inspections, roads and operation of markets. Through the 1800s towns gained ample powers, including powers to tax, spend and borrow (within state-set limits). Some states added strong home rule provisions to state constitutions, thus protecting local governments from state interference in local affairs.

For regional purposes states turned to counties or private companies. A typical county portfolio included highways, courts, poor relief, recordkeeping and jails. Private corporations constructed and operated—often by franchise—major state and regional infrastructure projects like canals, turnpikes, bridges and, before long, railroads and tramways.

As the century progressed, municipal annexation and consolidation became potent means for achieving regional economic, fiscal and political purposes. At first, state legislatures acted on individual requests to alter municipal borders. By this means cities with territorial ambition, including Boston, New Orleans, Pittsburgh, Cleveland and Philadelphia, greatly broadened their reach, often over the objection of the area to be annexed or consolidated. As with incorporation, states abandoned special acts for general annexation laws. While ostensibly streamlining regionalism, state laws actually favored localism by requiring approval by a majority of voters in both the annexing territory and the area to be annexed.

Mutually agreeable annexations nonetheless occurred, notably when considerations of health and safety trumped local desires for separatism and sovereignty. Small-town residents who had emphatically rejected city life for its higher taxes, looser morals and ethnic mix now reasoned that securing the superior water, sanitation, roads, police, fire, electricity and transport services of the nearby city was better than living with impassable roads, cesspools, pestilence and disease.

Such requests for annexation dried up in the 1870s, once suburban towns acquired water and sanitation systems, convenient trolley and rail stations, improved roads and public safety services of their own. Only in southern and western states, where statutes favored the annexer over the annexee, did these tools remain powerful means of fiscal, political and economic regionalism.

Expansion of Regional Purposes in the United States: 1600-present

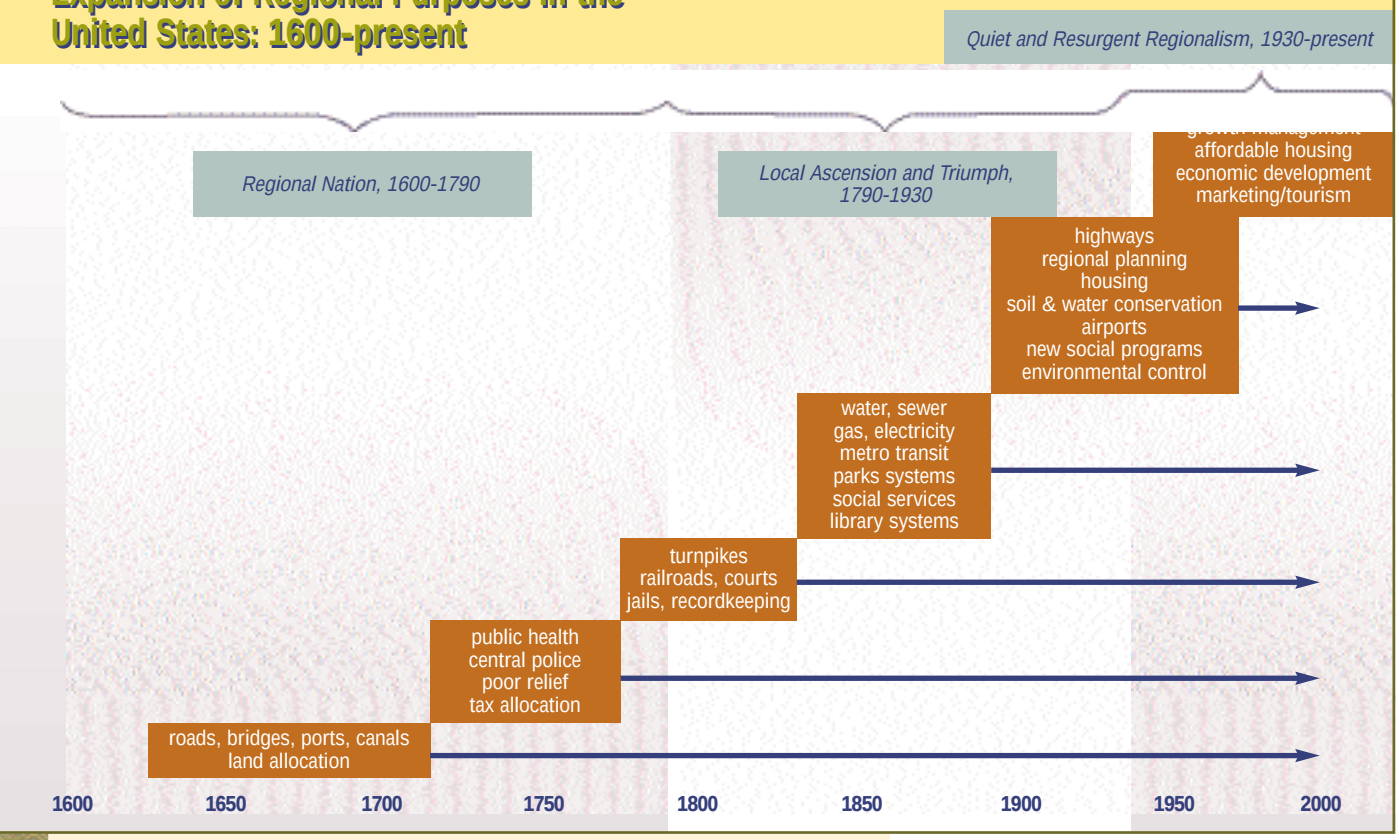


Figure 4

Triumphant Localism, Opportunistic Regionalism (1890-1930)

By the end of the 1800s urbanization and advances in transportation, utilities and communication had generated more regional purposes than ever. A single metropolitan region simply didn't need and could hardly afford dozens of separate waterworks, gasworks and sewer systems, yet desires for and legal protections of local sovereignty remained intact.

Three state-enabled mechanisms—metropolitan service districts, expansion of county powers and interlocal agreements—facilitated regionalism while safeguarding local autonomy. Especially in states with low ceilings for municipal tax and debt, independent services districts such as the Chicago Sanitary District (1889), Metropolitan (Boston) Water District (1895), the Board of Water Supply of the City of New York (1905) and the East Bay (Oakland) Municipal Utility District (1923) became effective tools for serving a politically decentralized metropolis. In many states, county governments gained authority to provide health, parks and recreation, libraries, road maintenance and sewers. Interlocal agreements, though fragile relative to metropolitanwide districts or expanded county powers, provided a nonthreatening way to accomplish fiscal purposes like jointly funding a sewage disposal or water system.

A fourth means of regionalism, metropolitan government, failed the local sovereignty test and thus suffered defeats despite persistent efforts by metropolitan reformers. To these activists metropolitan government was the logical way to realize regional efficiency, economic growth and political prestige. Sovereignty-loving voters did not agree, however, and they repeatedly turned back proposals in the 1920s and 1930s for major annexations, city-county consolidations and metropolitan government. Voters even rejected the compromise concept of a two-tier metropolitan federation—which would leave some powers in local hands while creating an upper tier for regional functions. While federation proposals fared well in urban Pittsburgh, Cleveland and St. Louis, they nonetheless were defeated by opposition from outlying suburban areas and rural interests who rejected the prospect of a strong urban core.

…Under local government we can absolutely control every objectionable thing that may try to enter our limits—but once annexed we are at the mercy of the city hall. Editorial, Morgan Park (Illinois) Post, 1907 (Jackson 1972, 454)

Quiet Revolution in Regionalism (1930-1990)

Ironically for metropolitan reformers, the Great Depression, World War II and their aftermath did more to achieve regionalism than did active reform campaigns. Over this 60-year period, federal and state directives and court decisions "deliberately delocalized" the metropolis (Derthick 1999, 133), chipping away at local control over schools, zoning and other local staples.

To aid nearly bankrupt local governments and put people back to work, the federal government in the 1930s initiated numerous projects resulting in new city halls, roads, bridges, dams, post offices and other public works. Federal grants-in-aid came with strings attached, however: funds were available only through newly professionalized state or county agencies, or through independent public authorities. Federally motivated regionalism spawned hundreds of special districts and county programs for housing, social services, sewers, and soil and water conservation, the latter representing an early example of environmental regionalism.

State and federally motivated regionalism occurred amidst active intellectual debate over the form of the emerging metropolis. "Metropolitanists," represented by Thomas Adams and Charles Dyer Norton, architects of the Regional Plan Association's (RPA) 1929 *Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs*, considered decentralization a phenomenon to accommodate through the efficient placement of transportation, housing and industrial land uses around a concentrated and revitalized city core. The "regionalist" view, represented in the essays and activities of Benton MacKaye, Lewis Mumford and other proponents of the Regional Planning Association of America (RPAA), advocated planned dispersion of urban settlement into cities, small towns and permanent rural areas that symbiotically functioned as an ecological settlement unit. Ultimately neither model prevailed: technological change and postwar decentralization emptied cities and overwhelmed the suburban and rural countryside, leaving metropolitan regions with neither the vital cores envisioned by metropolitanists nor the planned small towns amidst greenbelts favored by regionalists.

In the Progressive Era, the New Deal, and then more purposefully during the rights revolution of the 1950s and 1960s, national power was employed in such a way as to reduce the place of the local polity in American life. (Derthick 1999, 126)

Postwar suburbanization and a proliferation of municipal incorporations increased pressures to regionalize the metropolis. As in the prewar period, metropolitan government models had little popular appeal, putting into even greater relief the handful of successful city-county consolidations in Nashville-Davidson County (1962), Jacksonville-Duval County (1967), Indianapolis-Marion County (1969) and Lexington-Fayette County (1974), and the successful two-tier federation in Miami-Dade County (1968).

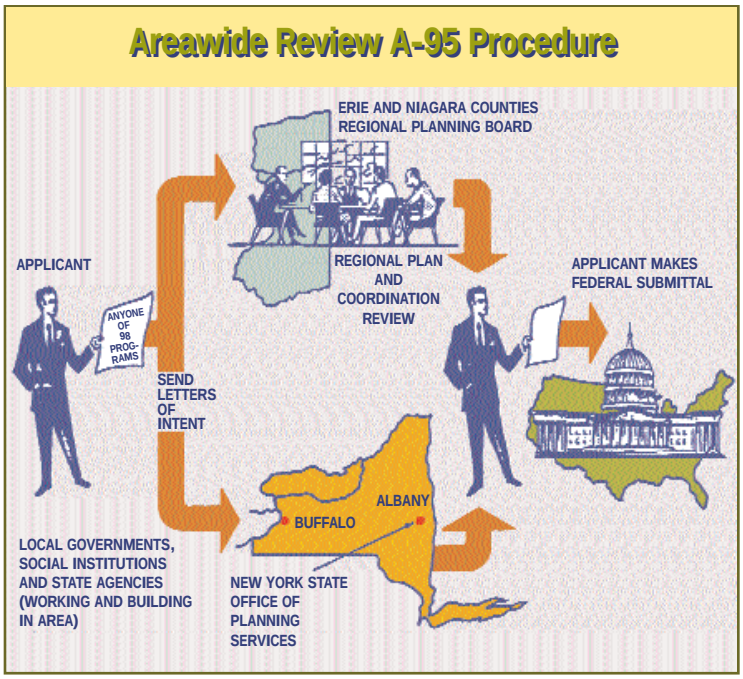
> Most voters, nearly all of the time, seem to conclude that they are better off with a strong voice in neighborhood decisions than a nearly inaudible voice in regional or statewide decisions. (Altshuler 1999, 212)

As in prewar eras, postwar receipt of federal funds for regional planning, highways, airports, sewer systems and mass transit required a regional entity to administer the funds, a condition that predictably spawned hundreds of regional planning councils, transportation committees, airport authorities and metropolitan sewer districts. State and federal provisions also placed many newer regional purposes, such as environmental planning, water pollution control and mental health, under county rather than municipal control, thereby promoting environmental and equity regionalism.

Federal and state court decisions to desegregate schools, equalize school funding and require regionwide fair-share housing fostered the equity regionalism that local governments could not or would not accomplish on their own. Through what became known as the "quiet revolution in land use control" (Bosselman and Callies 1971), the federal and state governments also promoted environmental and growth-based regionalism by reasserting authority over environmental protection, historic preservation, facility siting, brownfield redevelopment and other growth realms long the province of local governments. Although federal funding cutbacks in the 1980s retarded regional activity, the previous half-century had clearly rebalanced the line between regional purposes and local control.

Resurgent Regionalism (1990-present)

Increased or accelerated metropolitan decentralization, intrametropolitan mobility, affluence, global competition, fiscal distress, intrametropolitan disparities, and federal and state program devolution in the 1990s prompted a resurgence of interest and activity in regionalism. While the resurgence is at one level a continuation of regional trends since the 1930s, four new themes or variations on old themes distinguish contemporary regionalism from that of earlier eras.



The first theme is the counterweight of localism. The 1990s saw a powerful reinvigoration of local rights fueled by forces including a backlash against the quiet revolution in regionalism, yearning for small-scale governance, embrace of multiculturalism and minority rights, "megeneration" individualism and the triumph of market capitalism. New localism emerged as secession campaigns, property rights activism, the rise of privatized communities and powerful homeowners associations, charter school movements and reenergized community development corporations.[3]

A second feature of resurgent regionalism is the emergence of "new regionalism," a school of thought linking equity regionalism to economic regionalism. Proponents of new regionalism support a proregional "we're all in it together" strategy based on preliminary findings that city and suburban population, employment and income growth tend to track one another, and metropolitan regions with narrower disparities between city and suburban incomes tend to have stronger overall economic performance.[4] More recently, new regionalism has embraced growth-based regionalism, arguing that low-density, car-dependent development—urban sprawl—likewise correlates with intrametropolitan disparities, the decline of the central city and diminished metropolitan economic performance.[5]

Whether or not new regionalist claims hold up under closer empirical scrutiny, new regionalism has inspired regional coalitions of equity advocates, the business community, and anti-sprawl interest groups. How coalitions of these traditionally strange bedfellows serve their members, how members broker their inconsistent political interests, and how well multipronged regional agendas can succeed are new questions for contemporary regionalism.

A third distinctive feature is a new political strategy for regionalism known as "metropolitics." Coined by Minnesota State Legislator Myron Orfield (1997a), metropolitics refers to political alliances between central cities, inner-ring suburbs and other low-tax-base communities to achieve regional outcomes, particularly equity regionalism. The basis for metropolitics is the finding that many inner-ring suburbs, like central cities, face fiscal and social distress, and that these constituents together subsidize infrastructure-hungry outer-ring suburbs. As potential beneficiaries from redistributive regional policies, the argument goes, metropolitical coalitions have self-interested reasons for politically allying against affluent communities.Whether metropolitics proves effective in realizing equity and growth-based regionalism remains to be determined.

Finally, more than ever, regionalism involves cooperation and collaboration across issue areas (e.g., land use, economic development, education), sectors (e.g., public, private, nonprofit) and geographic borders (e.g., villages, towns, cities, counties, services districts). Such boundary crossing reflects two realities: 1) a world with more numerous and intense flows of people, information, goods, services, ideas and money across ever more porous boundaries; and 2) problem solving in a "shared-power" world, in which no one person is in charge and many play a role. The mechanisms and effectiveness of collaborative models of governance, particularly amidst reinvigorated localism, are only now being tested.

> …what prompted the building of the Twin Cities reform coalition was the discovery of the commonality of interests between the city core and the inner and low tax-base suburbs… (Orfield 1997, 9)

Is Small Beautiful, or Is Bigger Better?

As history shows, tensions between regionalism and localism are longstanding and unresolved. What is behind these tensions? Why do some argue that "small is beautiful," while others insist "bigger is better"? What is the theoretical basis for regionalism and localism?

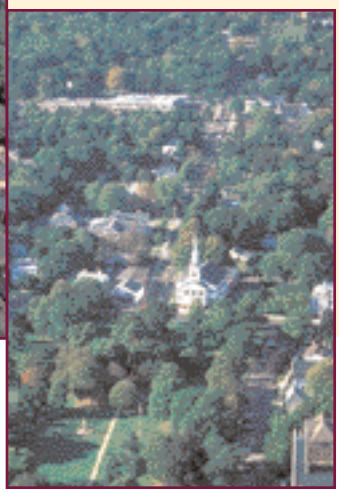
The regionalism-localism debate focuses on which of the two traditions is better at bringing about the metropolitan "good life"—one that achieves goals of service efficiency, intrametropolitan equity, political accountability, robust economic growth and environmental sustainability. While each tradition claims the theoretical upper hand for realizing metropolitan goals, students of governance suggest that regionalism has the stronger theoretical case for achieving equity and environmental sustainability, whereas localism has the stronger case for maximizing political participation and accountability. Both regionalism and localism play to a theoretical draw for realizing efficiency and economic growth.

Why? For equity and environmental sustainability, the larger scope of a region—fiscal, social and geographic—better enables resource pooling and redistribution, and better approximates an entire ecosystem, watershed or air pollution basin. For political participation and accountability, the smaller the polity the greater the odds of interacting with local officials, the weight of an individual vote and, hence, the motivation for political participation. For efficiency, both traditions have strong claims—regionalism on grounds of economies of scale and elimination of service duplication, and localism on the cost and responsiveness benefits of interlocal competition. For attracting economic growth, both likewise make a good case—regionalism because it can streamline the development process, saving time and money for new investors, and localism because it lets potential investors play one community off against the other for favorable terms of development.

Making Claims: Localism versus Regionalism

Goal	"Small is Beautiful" Because Local Arrangements:	"Bigger is Better" Because Regional Arrangements:
Efficiency	• permit service/tax choice • better match public policy and private needs • promote cost-braking interlocal competition and innovation	• realize economies of scale • eliminate service duplication • facilitate sharing of labor and capital equipment • capture "spillover effects" of public or private actions
Equity	• better achieve fiscal equity wherein those who benefit pay and those who pay benefit • achieve redistribution via state or federal governments	• standardize service levels, tax rates, policies and processes • facilitate redistribution of resources
Political Accountability and Participation	• increase relative weight of individual voice • foster citizen participation and build social capital • bring citizens closer to government officials	• clarify lines of authority • facilitate citizen "watchdog" efforts
Environmental Sustainability	• tailor solutions to specific environmental problems	• conserve resources through centralized management of air, water, energy, species, and other natural resources • better control growth through land use coordination
Economic Growth	• attract growth through potential to "play one community off against another" • tailor tax and service packages • facilitate denser links useful in global marketplace	• attract growth through "one-stop shopping" • signal managerial efficiency • operate effectively in a global marketplace

Figure 5



On theoretical grounds, then, neither tradition consistently bests the other. Leaning too far toward regionalism may mean sacrificing accountability, political participation and the cost-braking effects of interlocal competition. Leaning too far toward localism may mean compromising equity, environmental sustainability and economies of scale. Because governance choices entail such tradeoffs, it's no wonder metropolitan leaders seek a balance between regional and local.

What light does empirical evidence shed on theoretical claims?[6] As the summary in Figure 6 indicates, governance systems based on many local governments tend to promote participation and have lower service costs than do regionalized systems. Evidence remains inconclusive that regionalized governance systems are necessarily superior to localized ones in achieving equity or economic growth, although conventional wisdom and perception favor regional arrangements. While the empirical links between governance arrangements and environmental sustainability remain to be determined, a recent study linking sprawl and government fragmentation (Razin and Rosentraub 2000) finds no significant relationship between the number of local governments and levels of sprawl.

Overall it's a mixed picture, which may indicate that governance structure simply doesn't matter that much relative to other harder-to-measure factors—such as leadership, political culture, the nature of intergovernmental relations and agreements, the size and powers of special-purpose governments, economic fortune, and the extent and effectiveness of private, nonprofit and civic involvement—when it comes to achieving effective metropolitan governance.

Is Small Beautiful? Or Is Bigger Better?

Goal	Evidence Finds:	Suggesting:
Efficiency	• as the number of general-purpose governments (or governments per capita) increases, service costs decrease, affirming the cost-braking effects of interlocal competition • as the number of special-purpose governments (or governments per capita) increases, service costs increase, affirming the cost-braking effects of economies of scale for big-ticket services • consolidation, as in Indianapolis and Jacksonville, increases service costs (at least initially), evidently because the highest-cost pre-consolidation terms become post-consolidation norms	**Small is beautiful, though for special-purpose governments, bigger is better**
Equity	• mixed results, with most studies finding no link between disparities and governance structure, one finding greater disparity in metros with fewer governments, and one finding greater disparity in metros with more governments • as number of governments increases, residential segregation tends to increase • concentrated race and poverty remain problems in relatively regionalized metros (Nashville, Indianapolis, Portland) • targeted tax-base sharing and fair share housing programs, as in Minneapolis- St. Paul and Montgomery County, Maryland have narrowed disparities	**Despite conventional wisdom, scant evidence that bigger is better, although targeted equity programs, regardless of governance structure, have been effective**
Political Accountability and Participation	• governance structure only weakly related to service satisfaction as measure of accountability • as size of government increases, level of civic involvement decreases, as measured by voting rates, contacting local officials, or attending community meetings • in Indianapolis, city voter turnout and service satisfaction decreased following consolidation	**Small is beautiful**
Environmental Sustainability	• government fragmentation does not lead to sprawl (if anything, sprawl leads to fragmentation); neither low nor high fragmentation determine compact development, suggesting other factors more important than structure • many relatively regionalized metros, including Portland, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Jacksonville, El Paso, Albuquerque, and Norfolk, have high sprawl levels (although Portland's sprawl is within an expansive urban growth boundary) • no known studies linking environmental sustainability to governance structure	**Bigger is no guarantee of better**
Economic Growth	• inconclusive link between governance structure and population, income, or employment growth rates • no economic payoff following consolidation in Jacksonville, but positive impact in Indianapolis • strong support for consolidated governance from pro-growth business interests • strong support for consolidated governance from interests concerned with negative effects of growth	**Not clear, though perception is that bigger is better**

Figure 6

The Hypothetical Metropolis

Because neither regionalism nor localism consistently dominates, most regions take the eminently practical step of determining governance arrangements function by function. There are several rules of thumb for doing so.

Rules of Thumb for Regionalism and Localism

Regionalism makes sense when a service:

- can achieve economies of scale
- has big "spillovers," that is, affects areas outside the service territory
- requires cross-border coordination
- has a narrow range of preferences, that is, consumer desires vary little
- warrants a standardized level on equity grounds

Localism makes sense when a service:

- can achieve few economies of scale or might experience regional diseconomies
- has small "spillovers," that is, affects areas within the service territory only
- requires little cross-border coordination
- has a wide range of preferences, that is, consumer desires vary widely
- does not warrant a standardized level on equity grounds

By these guideposts, regionally provided services would be those that can capture economies of scale, have broad service territories and narrow preferences, require ample cross-border coordination, and warrant a standardized level of service—typically sewer and water service, utilities, airports, highways, harbors and ports, garbage disposal, transit, environmental planning and management, tourism and marketing, criminal investigation, public health and public assistance.

Locally provided services would be those that are subject to diseconomies of scale, have narrow service territories and wide preferences, require relatively little cross-border coordination, and do not require a standardized level of service—typically police patrol, fire, community development, local planning and zoning, schools, parks, recreation, garbage collection, youth programs, senior services and libraries.

When issues transcend regions or warrant uniform treatment across a state or nation, higher-level governments may take the lead. Fully applied, these rules of thumb yield a "federated" metropolis in which different geopolitical levels take the lead on different services, based on service properties and community preferences.

Even in the hypothetical metropolis, though, determining levels is not easy. Many services don't fall neatly into the local or regional category. Education, for example, engenders wide community preferences and may suffer from diseconomies of scale, both factors implying local provision. On the other hand, education has spillover effects and the doctrine of equal opportunity argues for standardizing education services, factors implying regional provision.

Similar problems occur for other traditionally local and community-shaping services like land use planning and zoning, local economic development, property taxing and housing, each of which has wide preferences at the local level but warrants regional provision on other criteria. For such services determining regional or local provision necessitates value choices and, not surprisingly, engenders conflict.

The Hypothetical Metropolis

State and federal entities provide:

- Services with redistributive impact (e.g., poverty programs)
- Services with intermetro or interstate impact (e.g, transport/commerce/other)

Regional-level entities provide:

- Services achieving economies of scale (e.g., highways, water, sewer, airports, ports, utilities, transit)
- Services with regional impact (e.g., metro parks, metro arts, cultural, and sports facilities, solid waste disposal, air pollution control, public health)
- Services needing cross-border coordination (e.g., regional marketing, tourism, and promotion, central police, regional planning, environmental planning, regional economic development)
- Services deemed to warrant a standard level of service (e.g., housing, education, tax burden)

Local-level entities provide:

- Services with narrow service territories (e.g., recreation, neighborhood development, street lighting, garbage collection, libraries)
- Services subject to diseconomies of scale (e.g., fire protection, ambulance, police patrol, elementary education)
- Services subject to wide preferences (education, planning and zoning, local economic development, senior services, youth services)

Figure 7

Regionalism in Practice

Quite amazingly, perhaps, many regions don't look altogether different from the hypothetical metropolis. Through the many structures, partnerships, policies and practices of regionalism, metropolitan areas do deliver many "regional" services regionally. Likewise, metropolitan areas provide many "local" services locally. And, yes, most regions grapple with how to provide services that fall between the regional-local cracks, notably land use planning, education, housing and resource sharing.

Regionalism by the Numbers

U.S. Metropolitan Areas

1 two-tier metropolitan federation (Miami-Dade County)

2 regional mulitpurpose service agencies (Portland, OR, serving 3 counties, elected; and Minneapolis-St. Paul, serving 7 counties, appointed)

3 regional assets districts in major metropolitan areas (Pittsburgh, Kansas City, Denver)

4+ multiservice interlocal compacts in major metropolitan areas, including
Louisville-Jefferson County (libraries, parks and recreation, economic development),
Charlotte-Mecklenburg County (police, planning, parks and recreation, tax administration, purchasing, elections, emergency management),
San Antonio-Bexar County (emergency services, health, library, animal control), and
St. Louis City-St. Louis County (zoo, convention center, museum, sewer)

15 city-county consolidations.* Five of these occurred since 1990: Athens-Clarke County (GA), Augusta-Richmond County (GA), Lafayette-Lafayette Parish (LA), Kansas City-Wyandotte County (KS), and Louisville-Jefferson County (KY)

450 (est.) regional councils (includes regional planning councils, associations of municipalities, and other councils of governments)

2,000 (est.) countywide or larger special-purpose districts

numerous region-focused private associations, including groups in New York (Regional Plan Association, New York Partnership), Chicago (Commercial Club), Silicon Valley (Joint Venture: Silicon Valley and Santa Clara Valley Manufacturing Group), Cleveland-Akron (Cleveland Tomorrow, Northeast Ohio Business Council, Cleveland Growth Association), Pittsburgh (Allegheny Conference), Buffalo (Buffalo-Niagara Enterprise), and Miami (Beacon Council)

numerous region-focused nonprofit and civic groups, including those in Portland (1000 Friends of Oregon), Chicago (Gamaliel Foundation), St. Louis (Metropolitan Congregations United), Charlotte (Voices & Choices), Cleveland (Eco-City Cleveland), and San Francisco (Greenbelt Alliance)

*Excludes nonmetropolitan consolidations and the seven metropolitan city-county consolidations enacted by state legislatures prior to 1910 (New Orleans, 1805; Boston, 1821; Philadelphia, 1854; San Francisco, 1856; New York City, 1898; Denver, 1904; Honolulu, 1907). The Louisville-Jefferson County merger, approved in November 2000, becomes effective on January 1, 2003.

Figure 8

The upshot is an array of different regional choices. Combined with differences in state law, political culture, local history, nonpublic institutions and other place-based conditions, regions develop distinct governance arrangements.

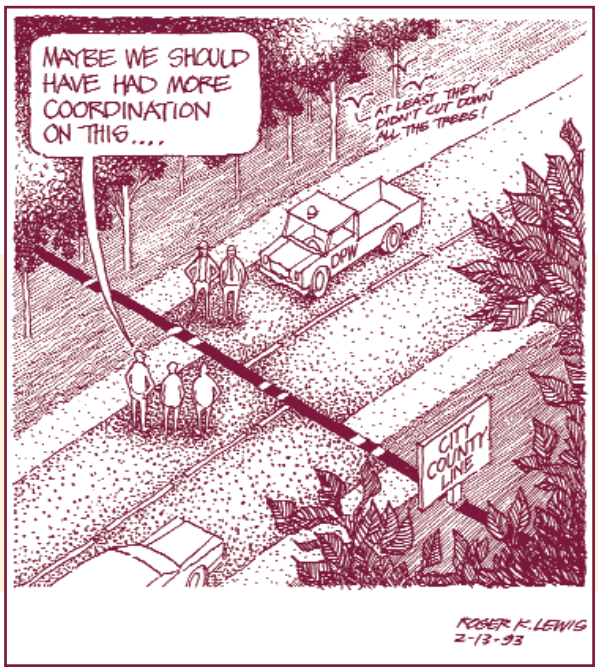
While there are no uniform ways of classifying these different outcomes, a nonsystematic scorecard reveals a few trends:

- *No U.S. metropolitan region has a single-tier metropolitan government (i.e., a single government for the entire region);*
- *A few regions have multipurpose regional entities;*
- *Many regions rely on single-purpose districts or authorities;*
- *All rely to some degree on intergovernmental arrangements;*
- *All have a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to manage funds from federal programs;*
- *All have at least some private, nonprofit, civic or special-interest group engagement in metropolitan affairs, although the significance varies.*

With respect to the types of regionalism:

- *Most pursue regionalism for big-ticket services like sewers, water, airports and transit;*
- *Relatively few pursue regionalism for services entailing redistribution or those subject to wide preferences like land use, regional revenue sharing, education or housing.*

These findings are consistent with decades of history showing that Americans embrace regionalism when it promises material personal gains (through efficient transportation systems, clean air and water or tax-reducing service mergers, for example), but generally reject it when it threatens personal status, redistributes resources, promotes racial and class mixing, or jeopardizes local land use prerogatives.



The Politics of Regionalism

Given the penchant for opportunistic regionalism, what are the politics of regional action? As with other political efforts involving nonmandated, status-quo-changing possibilities, achieving success in regionalism requires the hard work of forging political alliances, negotiating mutually beneficial bargains, persuading skeptical publics and policy makers to support the program and, often, a dose of good timing and luck. Realizing regional outcomes also requires coming to terms with five particular political challenges of regional action.

…social capital is organized, whether we like it or not, along the very fault lines that relationships, neighborhoods, and social participation often are in our world. (Briggs 1997, 114)

1. *The Challenge of Regional Identity.* Observers often note the importance of regional identity and regional social capital as catalysts, if not prerequisites, for regional action. That a regional sense of place facilitates regionalism makes sense: without ties that bind, there is little pressure or constituency for regional efforts. Regional identity is notoriously weak, however, particularly vis-à-vis neighborhood, local or subregional identity. While regional residents may rally round their sports teams, share the pain of an economic downturn, and help one another through a natural disaster, their greater allegiance tends to be to those closer to home. Because the social geography of metropolitan regions often divides along racial, ethnic, religious or socioeconomic lines, high stocks of local or subregional—as opposed to regionwide—social capital may hinder regional efforts.

2. *The Challenge of Political Strategy.* A second challenge recognizes that there is no consensus on the best political strategy for seeking regional change. Some proponents of regionalism argue that achieving lasting regionalism requires incremental, consensus-based steps that slowly but surely build trust and a track record of success. Others counter that getting the attention of policy makers and making a substantive impact requires aggressive timetables, mandates and bold proposals.

Incrementalists boost their case by citing interlocal cooperation in New Jersey, the slow but steady expansion of responsibilities given to Portland's Metro, and the ongoing effectiveness of long-term private-public ventures in Pittsburgh, Cleveland and New York City. Supporters of bolder reforms point to the success of ambitious regional agendas for

...often the simplest and most effective way to achieve a big win is to organize a series of small wins informed by a sense of strategic direction. (Bryson and Crosby 1992, 234)

"If regionalism isn't dealing with land use, fiscal disparities, housing, and education, then regionalism isn't dealing with the issues that count."
Donald Hutchinson, president, Greater Baltimore Committee (Rusk 2000, 90)

equity and political regionalism in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Montgomery County (Maryland) and Louisville-Jefferson County. That both strategies have seen success increases uncertainty and thus intraregional dissension over the best strategic path toward regional progress.

> Go-it-alone strategies do not work… Coalition-building strategies in which […] interests combine forces and work to build a common agenda are needed to effectively address future problems… (Weir 2000, 149)

3. *The Challenge of a Big Tent.* A third challenge derives from the observation that regional efforts are generally more successful and stable when they mobilize a broad base of support across multiple interest groups.[7] On the one hand, finding something in regionalism's black bag for everyone ensures a larger and potentially stronger constituency. On the other hand, coalitions of divergent interests can be fragile. Unaligned interests pulling in different directions may cancel one another out, generate conflicts over agenda and strategy, and face deal-breaking rifts. While regional coalitions seek to unite environmentalists, city interests, stuck-in-traffic suburbanites, regional economic developers, faith-based community leaders, big business and farmers under one big tent, reconciling competing desires across these groups is politically difficult. Where is the middle ground between, say, one regionalist's desire to safeguard groundwater supplies through large-lot zoning with another's desire to narrow city-suburban disparities through high-density, multifamily suburban residential development?

> Even those people and institutions most committed to regional collaboration face an uphill battle: the [state and federal] rules are often stacked against them. (Pastor et al. 2000, 174)

4. *The Challenge of Consensus.* A corollary challenge relates to the natural tendency for coalitions to sustain themselves by favoring issues of consensus over issues of conflict. By this logic, the low-lying fruits of regional action have a much better chance of making it onto the public policy agenda than do the readily postponed, difficult, conflict-ridden issues. Since the latter tend to involve fiscal redistribution, race and class integration, and loss of local land use sovereignty, the upshot of the consensus challenge is a bias toward the relatively uncontentious issues of economic regionalism over the knottier goals of equity and growth-based regionalism.

5. *The Challenge of State and Federal Policy.* Recognizing the challenge of consensus, many regionalists see state and federal government as the appropriate venue for achieving regionalism's equity and growth-based purposes. Yet the federal government and many states are hardly consistent supporters of regionalism, in part reflecting changing administrations and in part responsiveness to multiple constituencies, including, of course, advocates of localism.[8] Inconsistent policy is especially evident in state land use and fiscal policies, which may simultaneously promote regions and undermine them.[9] Whether higher-level governments are a refuge for regionalism is by no means certain.

Regional Governance and Leadership

These and other more place-specific political hurdles are challenges for regional governance and leadership. Regions lack the public apparatus or channels through which societies traditionally discern, deliberate and act on the public good. With weak or nonexistent regional polities, regions must handle the tasks of governance (e.g., establishing a vision, setting and achieving goals, seizing opportunities, thwarting crises, brokering conflict) through nonconventional means.

Who leads in this shared-power world?[10] Traditionally regional leadership came from corporate and civic CEOs, often in region-based enterprises. However, changing demographics, globalization, and new corporate structures and economic imperatives render such leadership less available, reliable and appropriate today. CEOs turn over more rapidly, are less tied to place than in the past, and feel more pressure to focus outside rather than inside the region. The economy itself is changing, with small, footloose knowledge-economy firms ascending in importance. The typically younger entrepreneurial heads of such firms have less experience in, but ample untapped energy for, regional civic involvement. Moreover, immigration and mobility are diversifying regional populations, warranting leadership ranks that more closely mirror the underlying population.

From these trends emerge new forms of regional leadership driven more by the need to inspire, motivate and empower action in a networked, shared-power world than by traditional paths of command and control in a hierarchical, someone-in-charge world. One practice-based model to emerge from these realities is that of "regional stewardship," which emphasizes a commitment to place rather than issue, an integrated approach to issues and solutions, and the development of broad coalitions sharing a regional vision. "Regional stewards"—the individuals putting stewardship into practice—

> *are leaders who are committed to the long-term well-being of places. They are integrators who cross boundaries of jurisdiction, sector, and discipline to address complex regional issues such as sprawl, equity, education, and economic development. They see the connection between economic, environmental, and social concerns and they know how to "connect the dots" to create opportunities for their regions. Regional stewards are leaders who combine 360 degree vision with the ability to mobilize diverse coalitions for action. (Alliance for Regional Stewardship 2000, 3)*

Experience shows that specifics of regional leadership in practice, including which individuals or groups are most prominent in regional affairs, vary depending on a region's organizational strengths, history, politics, demographics, top priority issues, and intergovernmental and intersectoral relations. Some draw primarily on corporate business leaders and special-interest activists, while others have stronger public sector involvement through county or regional agencies. Metropolitan universities may be catalysts for regional efforts, often as gatherers, analysts and disseminators of regional information. Nonprofit and civic groups are increasingly involved—both traditional regional participants like citizen's leagues, the United Way and the League of Women Voters, and relatively new players like faith-based consortia and neighborhood action groups who see links to regional action.

The Breadth of Regional Players in Regional Growth Issues: Selected Metropolitan Regions

	Buffalo	Charlotte	St. Louis	Phoenix
Public	• Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council (MPO) • County Governments • Municipal Governments • Erie-Niagara Partnership (County Legislatures)	• Centralina Council of Governments • Mecklenburg-Union Transportation (MPO) • Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission • County Governments • Municipal Governments	• East-West Gateway Coordinating Council (MPO) • County Governments • Municipal Governments • Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District • Bi-State Development Agency (MetroLink transit)	• Maricopa Association of Governments (MPO) • Maricopa County • Municipal Governments • Salt River Project
Private	• Buffalo Niagara Partnership • Buffalo Niagara Enterprise • Niagara Frontier Homebuilders Association	• Charlotte Chamber of Commerce (includes Sensible Growth Roundtable) • Regional Chambers of Commerce	• Regional Chamber and Growth Association • Civic Progress • Home Builders Association of Greater St. Louis	• Greater Phoenix Chamber of Commerce • Greater Phoenix Leadership
Nonprofit /Civic	• League of Women Voters • 21st Century Club • Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo • Western New York Land Conservancy • New Millennium Group	• Central Carolina Choices (Voices and Choices) • Charlotte Regional Partnership (formerly Carolinas Partnership) • various foundations	• St. Louis 2004 • Danforth Foundation • League of Women Voters • Citizens League • Confluence St. Louis • FOCUS-St. Louis • Sustainable St. Louis (Smart Growth Alliance)	• Western Maricopa Coalition • Valley Partnership
Academic	• University at Buffalo Institute for Local Governance and Regional Growth	• University of North Carolina, Charlotte	• University of Missouri at St. Louis • St. Louis University • Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville	• Morrison Institute for Public Policy, Arizona State University • School of Planning & Landscape Architecture, Arizona State University
Metro Daily	• *Buffalo News*	• *Charlotte Observer*	• *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*	• *Arizona Republic*

Figure 9

A 1999 survey of metropolitan leadership conducted by the Center for Regional Economic Issues at Case Western Reserve University revealed the emergence in many regions, including Indianapolis, Buffalo and St. Louis, of "staffed partnerships." Typically organizations with ample budgets, professional staffs, civic authority and accountability for results, such entities are formed to achieve a particular purpose, usually around economic development (Shatten 2000). The sticking point has been connecting regional efforts to one another and particularly to local, regional and state public sector entities with the authority and funding to advance outcomes.

Just as the nature of regional leadership varies, so does the catalyst for it. In many regions, including Chattanooga, Miami, Buffalo and Portland, a perceived crisis in regional identity, service delivery, economic viability or environmental quality propelled regionalism. In these and other areas, including Charlotte, Austin and Silicon Valley, initial concerns led to a deliberate process of regional visioning and goal setting. Where most successful, goal setting efforts prompted specific, action-oriented initiatives, often coordinated under an umbrella organization that monitors and widely publicizes progress toward these goals.

While there are no systematic studies linking models of leadership to regional outcomes, the observations of scholars and the experience of metropolitan areas undertaking metropolitan agendas yield some insights about the importance of the following characteristics:

- clear focus and compelling purpose for regional action;
- perspective that policies and organizations are means to specific ends, not ends themselves;
- quantified, measurable and widely publicized goals and outcomes;
- commitment to and skills to accomplish collaborative and inclusive processes;
- commitment to shared leadership and mutual gains;
- early successes to build momentum and trust;
- close relations with media to foster regional understanding and action;
- flexibility to adapt as new problems and opportunities arise and others fade away;
- long-term, future-oriented perspective on regional change;
- commitment to recognize and develop new leadership.

Case Studies of Metropolitan Regionalism

Notwithstanding practical hurdles, political dilemmas and leadership challenges, policy makers and citizens face immediate and pressing issues, such as where to locate a landfill or how to house moderate-income families in a supercharged metropolitan economy. In this light, consider the regional experiences of Cape Cod, Louisville, Silicon Valley, Denver, Minneapolis-St. Paul and Chicago. Each region is currently pursuing regionalism for different purposes, by various means, and with more or less success. In what ways does regionalism represent a potential pathway toward resolving problems in these areas? What pitfalls have emerged along the way?

Political

Denver

Growth-based

Louisville

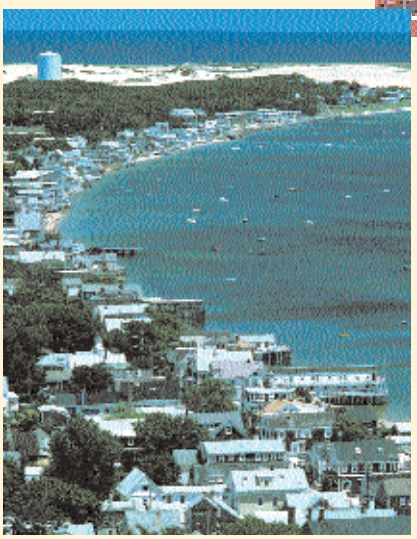
Economic

Minneapolis-St. Paul

Equity

Silicon Valley

Multipurpose



Cape Cod

Environmental

Chicago

Cape Cod

Environmental Regionalism

to Preserve Natural and Human Habitats

The most remarkable thing about the Cape Cod Commission is that it exists at all. It is the largest of only two planning bodies with regulatory powers in Massachusetts (the other is the Martha's Vineyard Commission). County governments in Massachusetts are weak and vanishing, the state enables but does not mandate planning, town governments have extensive home rule powers to codify centuries-old traditions of democratic town governance, and anti-tax sentiment is high, as reflected in passage in 1980 of property-tax limiting Proposition 2½.

Yet, if a regional land use authority were to find a toehold in Massachusetts, Cape Cod would be the place. The entire hook of land comprises just fifteen towns in a single county; only two bridges connect the Cape to the mainland, reinforcing its strong sense of place. The Cape has extraordinary environmental, historic and cultural assets, kindling strong regional identity amongst year-round and loyal second-home residents. Environmental groups have fought actively since the 1960s to educate residents about and safeguard the Cape's environments.

The impetus for the Cape Cod Commission, approved in a 1988 referendum and affirmed in 1990, was rampant growth threatening these environmental assets and quality of life. Between 1980 and 1990, the Cape population increased by 26 percent versus 5 percent growth statewide. Housing units more than doubled between 1970 and 1990, and over 35,000 acres of forest and farmland were lost, almost all of it to new residential development. The Cape's sole source aquifer suffered contamination, unsightly developments ruined scenic vistas and reduced open space, and many village centers lost their vitality to commercial sprawl. The need for regional regulation was so great that voters agreed to tax themselves to pay for it.

The Commission's powers rest in its Regional Policy Plan (RPP), which sets forth land use goals and minimum performance standards for development. Developments of Regional Impact (DRIs)—commercial projects of 10,000 square feet or larger and residential projects greater than 30 units or 30 acres—must go before the Commission for review and compliance with RPP standards; towns may also refer other projects for Commission review.

The Commission staff also works with towns to modernize plans and zoning ordinances, many of which have sprawl-inducing provisions.

The Commission has hardly stemmed the tide of development—during the 1990s Cape Cod grew five times faster than the state overall and development pressures remain intense. However, it is credited with shaping projects to preserve open space, protect coastal bays, mitigate traffic problems and reduce nitrogen levels in soils. Observers note that developers often improve proposals prior to submission to avert referrals to the Commission. The Commission has also raised planning consciousness, strengthening civic promotion of sensible growth. One effort—by all accounts impossible a decade ago—is a regular roundtable coordinated by the Association for the Preservation of Cape Cod, the Cape's premier environmental group, at which two-dozen real estate, business, civic, environmental and planning professionals deliberate and make recommendations to Cape governments on regional policies.

The Cape and the Commission still face challenges. Home rule remains fiercely guarded and many towns still lack plans or codes conforming to the RPP. High mandatory review thresholds prevent the Commission from seeing more than 20 percent of new commercial projects and less than 3 percent of residential subdivisions. The Commission lacks authority over infrastructure spending. The state climate for regionalism remains chilly. But, the continued need, clear purpose and more consensual atmosphere for regional planning give Cape-watchers hope that the Commission will remain a valuable regional fixture.

Louisville Political Regionalism to Gain Stature

A recent piece in *Governing* magazine called it "urban bodybuilding." In November 2000, voters in Louisville and Jefferson County, Kentucky, approved a narrowly drawn, purposely open-ended proposal to merge city and county governments, effective January 1, 2003.

The merger wasn't about service delivery, at least not primarily—Louisville and Jefferson County have since 1986 collaborated on services according to the Louisville Compact, an intergovernmental agreement. The merger wasn't about equity—the city fares well relative to other central cities, thanks in part to a strong economic base and an occupational tax on city workers. And the merger wasn't about coordinating planning—unbridled growth and environmental quality are not top priority issues for the region.

Rather, it was about stature. Only through political merger could Greater Louisville, as the new jurisdiction will be known, climb overnight in population ranks from 65th to an estimated 23rd largest in the nation. Only political merger would dispel the fear of obscurity and the humiliation of being Kentucky's "second city" to Lexington and a poor cousin to rivals Nashville and Indianapolis, each of which gained political brawn through city-county consolidations over thirty years ago.

The Louisville case is notable for its political strategy. Supporters circumvented potential sources of opposition by postponing devil-in-the-details decisions until after the November vote. Only the City of Louisville and Jefferson County governments would merge, leaving the 90 or so suburban jurisdictions intact. Also left intact are all independent services districts for fire protection, water, sanitation and other services. Importantly, school districts

are unaffected by the merger. The Louisville Compact would continue until installation of the new government. Most county posts, including the court clerk, attorney, sheriff, coroner and property valuation administrator, would likewise remain. City and county employees would retain their jobs under existing civil service rules, and labor contracts would be honored until expiration. Tough choices about departmental mergers, taxes, services and personnel, as well as inconsistent city and county laws, regulations and ordinances, would be taken up as post-election deliberations by a new mayor and elected council.

The campaign had significant financial and political support from the business sector, media and a bipartisan group of elected officials, including the Democratic Louisville Mayor and Republican Jefferson County Judge-Executive. These leaders focused on hard-to-quarrel-with platforms like the merger's benefits for business attraction, government efficiency and, most important, national stature. Opposition included the League of Women Voters (concerned over the lack of detail in the proposal), the African-American community (concerned that merger would dilute their political power to as few as two of twenty-six new council seats), and the gay community (which feared losing a hard-fought gay rights bill). However, these constituencies could not muster the resources or organization to successfully fight the merger, and the measure passed by 54 to 46 percent.

Now the real work begins. The Louisville Compact, renewed in 1998, provides a foundation for hammering out service consolidations. Administrative regionalism will likely prove more difficult, however, as the sticky issues of jobs, policies and political balance come to the fore. Ultimately the strength of relationships and willingness to forge purpose beyond the platitudes of stature will determine whether bigger is really better in Greater Louisville.

Silicon Valley *Economic Regionalism* to Sustain a Regional Economy

If regions were stocks, Silicon Valley would have been a fortuitous purchase back when it was still called Santa Clara Valley. Now world-famous, Silicon Valley is a 1,500 square-mile multicounty region of 2.5 million people and 1.3 million jobs, many in the thriving industry clusters of computers, semiconductors, biosciences, defense and innovation services. The region hosts 61 of the nation's 500 fastest-growing high-tech firms, including three of the top five; more venture capital flows into Silicon Valley than into any other region in the world.

That Silicon Valley has flourished as it has is testament to Joint Venture: Silicon Valley (JVSV), perhaps the nation's premier cross-sectoral regional organization and the model for similar efforts in Austin, Charlotte and other regions. Launched by business leaders in 1992 when the Valley was suffering an economic slowdown and in danger of losing its high-tech edge, JVSV was from the start an umbrella organization for problem-driven, action-oriented, outcomes-based collaborative initiatives, each of which had its own board and staff and had to raise its own funds.

At the outset, most of the initiatives focused on traditional economic topics, including business incubation, standardization of local building codes and boosting the software industry. As participation expanded and the economy bounced back, JVSV initiatives reflected a wider range of concerns—from pre-K education and business retention to the digital divide and promoting smart growth—and JVSV assumed a greater role in fundraising and regional assessment.

The eminence of the "Silicon Valley Way" is its commitment to collaborative civic engagement and tangible results. Initiative teams are expected to convene regularly and frequently, include and groom as leaders people of diverse perspectives, submit business plans, and be accountable to specific, quantified goals. As in any marketplace not all initiatives succeed: a workforce development initiative folded in December 1999 for lack of leadership, and several industry-targeted efforts terminated for lack of funding and civic energy.

While ongoing activities such as cross-sectoral collaboration, working with the media and staying alert to new issues are critical, the goal remains tangible, measurable improvements in regional outcomes, and results have been impressive. Initiatives raise over $1.7 million annually, 85 percent from 115 private businesses and 15 percent from 35 different government and foundation sources. The Challenge 2000 educational initiative, a venture capital-based model for school reform, raised over $25 million to bring resources to K-12 classrooms and monitor progress in math, science and literacy. The Smart Permit initiative led to harmonization of building codes in Silicon Valley cities and town, and teams of government and business leaders have used position papers and educational forums to influence legislation on tax and fiscal policy and governmental organization. JVSV maintains its results-based orientation through an annual progress report on regional performance measures tied to quantitative goals in its long-range plan, *Silicon Valley 2010: A Regional Framework for Growing Together.*

The ultimate success of JVSV rests on a program design that requires initiatives to be purposeful, accountable and collaborative. While deliberation, consensus building and the formulation of quantified goals are slow, messy, difficult and demanding—particularly for groups of public, private and civic participants who may initially neither know nor trust one another—they yield a strong brand of regionalism. The byproduct of this strategy has been the emergence of a strong regional consciousness and strengthened relationships, which Silicon Valley now draws upon to address longer-term and ever more challenging regional concerns.

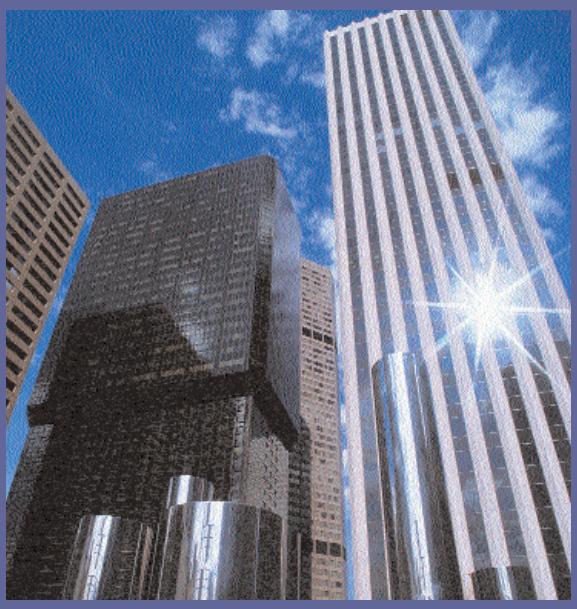
Denver Growth-based Regionalism to Guide Development

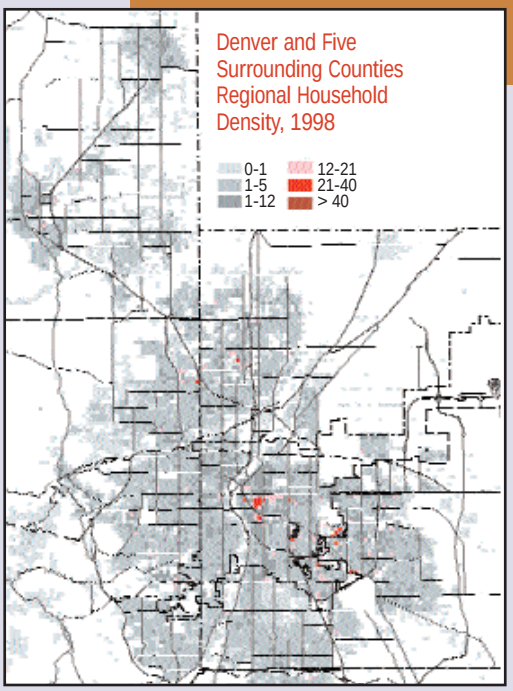
Denver is notable not only for its mile-high geographic setting but also for its intriguing blend of Rocky Mountain cultures. On the one hand are independent, probusiness, private property-loving frontier Westerners. On the other are environmentally conscious, community-inclined settlers inspired by natural assets and ready to fight to preserve them.

In such a setting, growth is inevitably a lightening rod. The eight-county Denver metropolitan area ballooned by nearly 500,000 people in the 1990s to over 2 million, a 22 percent increase. With predictions for another 900,000 by 2020, the magnitude, pace, direction and implications of growth comprise by far the loudest and most critical regional conversation. The clear purpose of regionalism in Denver is to find ways to prepare for, modify and manage growth.

In one respect Denver had a good head start on this mission. In 1990 the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG), the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization, prepared *Metro Vision 2020*, a long-range regional plan. Developed in concert with a task force of government officials, business leaders, environmental interests and community residents, *Metro Vision 2020* set forth principles for guiding regional transportation, land use and water use. Subsequent documents proposed preestablished strategies for implementation, including designation of a 735-square-mile urban growth boundary, cluster development policies to protect open space and land use policies to mitigate traffic congestion.

Widely regarded as the plan and COG were, however, they remained advisory; under Colorado law, planning authority rests in the eight counties and 41 cities and towns in the region, none of which are required to adopt local master plans or development codes. Only through voluntary and collaborative efforts might regional plan provisions be realized.





Two such collaborative efforts emerged. First, in August 2000 about 60 percent of the region's local governments (26 of 41 cities and towns, and 5 of 8 counties) signed the Mile High Compact, an intergovernmental agreement binding signatories to adopt comprehensive master plans consistent with *Metro Vision 2020*. (Since then, four more cities and towns have signed the Compact.) At one level, this is modest progress. The Compact is voluntary and limited to planning, not action. Nonsignatories include three suburban counties. Some communities may have signed to diffuse environmentalist-backed efforts for more stringent state-imposed growth controls. Nonetheless, the Mile High Compact represents an extraordinary voluntary recognition of planning as a means to regional ends, and an intention to get smart about growth.

The second collaborative effort was triggered by a November 2000 ballot initiative that would have withheld transportation funds from any communities lacking a participatory planning process. Though widely recognized as a flawed initiative, its defeat required over $6 million from opponents, primarily the business community. To obviate what were destined to be annual costly battles over growth measures, business leaders agreed to meet with planners, environmentalists and government officials to find consensus on a state measure all could support.

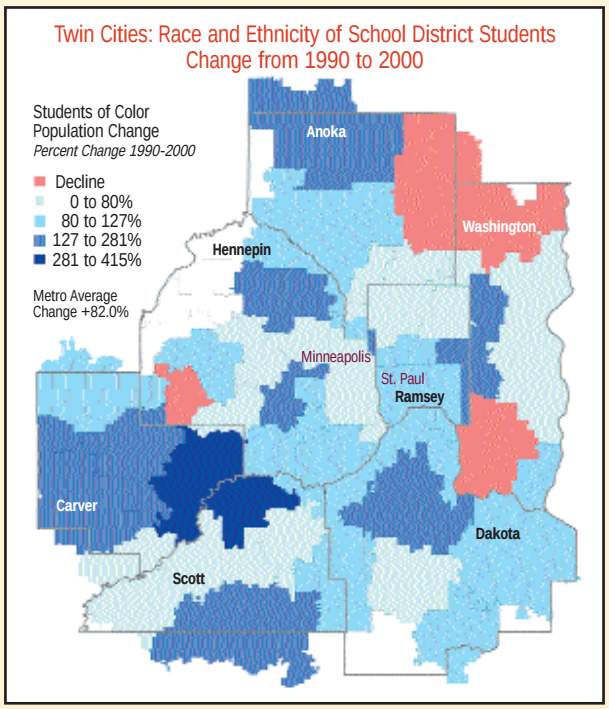
That process continues in spring 2001 as the Colorado State Legislature debates growth bills of various degrees of stringency. Among them is one proposing application of the Mile High Compact—that is, mandatory local planning consistent with a regional plan—throughout the Denver metropolitan area. Observers suggest that whether that bill or another one ultimately prevails politically will depend in part on the consensus building and cross-sector conversations already occurring in the Denver region.

Minneapolis-St. Paul *Equity Regionalism* to Narrow Disparities

The Twin Cities metropolitan region is an oft-cited, oft-studied—but rarely copied—classic of U.S. metropolitan regionalism. In part that is because it is unique. The metropolitan area contains over 60 percent of the state's population and, because it includes the state capital, St. Paul, regional concerns are familiar to state legislators. The region has a long tradition of corporate and civic involvement, often in partnership with public officials. Its Metropolitan Council, established in 1967, is one of just a handful of powerful multipurpose, multicounty regional entities nationwide.

The real distinctiveness of the Minneapolis-St. Paul case is the region's repeated efforts—and moderate success despite controversy—at equity regionalism, regionalism's toughest sell. Since 1974 the region has supported the Fiscal Disparities Plan, a multicounty tax base sharing agreement that pools 40 percent of the growth in commercial and industrial tax revenues and redistributes it back to municipalities based on their population and tax capacity. The region also has a longstanding commitment to affordable housing, implemented via funding incentives tied to a community's acceptance of its fair share of housing units for low- and moderate-income households.

The 1980s and 1990s saw much of this commitment languish, however. Political shifts at the state level and cautious retreat from corporate and civic activism locally took the wind from regionalism's sails. The Metropolitan Council lost political steam and effectiveness. Growth flowed to outer suburban areas and geographically based disparities in poverty, race, investment and opportunities widened. Though credited with narrowing intrametropolitan gaps in tax capacity from 50 to 1 to 12 to 1, the Fiscal Disparities Plan remained controversial; many believe that were it not self-executing, it would have been repealed.



Credit for reinvigorating equity regionalism efforts since the mid-1990s goes to State Representative Myron Orfield, who put regional equity issues at the center of his legislative agenda. Using a strategy of metropolitics, which allies the central city with inner-ring and low-tax-capacity suburbs and pits them in legislative battles against affluent, high-tax-capacity suburbs, Orfield and his supporters persisted in session after session to pass equity measures. Among these were expansion of the Fiscal Disparities Plan to include revenues from high-end residential units, stronger affordable housing provisions, and new powers and scope for the Metropolitan Council, including election rather than appointment of Council members. These equity victories ultimately succumbed to vetoes by Governor Arne Carlson, however.

Judging the success of the metropolitical equity strategy depends on one's outlook. To some, the multiyear, multipronged effort deserves credit for securing favorable votes on many of its equity efforts, including expanded revenue sharing, coordination of functions under the Metropolitan Council and affordable housing provisions. Because history teaches that equity regionalism lacks popular support, these observers reason, realizing equity goals seems to require the no-holds barred state-level political battles that metropolitics espouses. Others note, though, that at the end of the day gubernatorial vetoes stymied most of the equity-based ends, and metropolitics drove wedges between regional interests, perhaps hampering future collaborative efforts. The jury remains out on whether the region can shift gears to pursue more collaborative efforts at regionalism in the future, particularly for looming regional economic and growth issues.

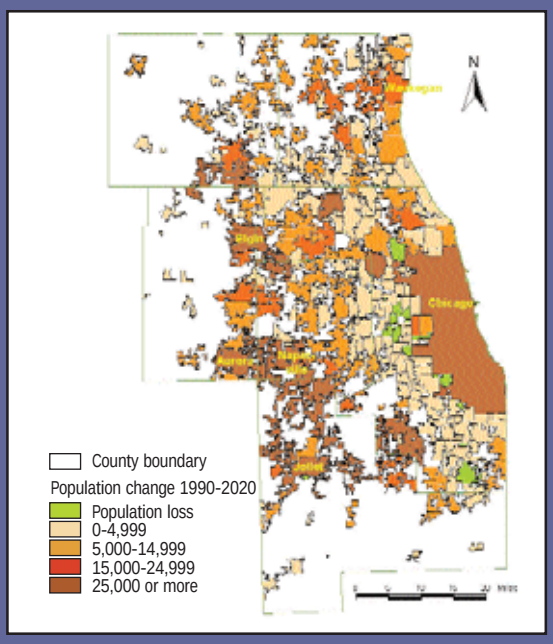
Chicago Multipurpose Regionalism to Increase Metropolitan Quality of Life

It is perhaps fitting that a region centered around the "city of big shoulders" should pursue an ambitious, multipurpose strategy for regionalism. To reach its goal of being a world-class region, metropolitan Chicago is embarked simultaneously on economic, fiscal, growth-based, environmental and equity regionalism.

The backdrop for regionalism in Chicago is a history of intergovernmental animosities, failed attempts at metropolitan governance, and a highly fragmented political system—the metropolitan area has over 1,200 local governments, many of them independent special-purpose districts. Like many metropolitan regions, the Chicago area has been decentralizing for decades, and urbanized land expansion continues to outpace population growth.

Chicago's multi-issue, multi-sector regionalism strategy relies on efforts by many old-time and several new regional organizations. The Commercial Club, a venerable membership group of 400 Chicago business and civic leaders, initiated a Metropolis Project in 1996 to stimulate action toward a world-class Chicago region. (In the early 1900s, this group commissioned Daniel Burnham's classic *Plan for Chicago*.) The document *Chicago Metropolis 2020: Preparing Metropolitan Chicago for the 21st Century*, released in 1999, is a broad-ranging blueprint and set of recommendations covering not only economic development, but also disparities in housing and education, growth patterns, transportation and infrastructure investment, and youth development. The Commercial Club subsequently spun off a facilitating organization, Chicago Metropolis 2020, to promote the plan's strategies, conduct public visioning sessions and coordinate with other regional efforts.

Population Change, 1990-2020 Population Change by Municipality in NE Illinois (ORD Forecast Alternative)



Meanwhile, the Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC), a nonprofit, nonpartisan civic organization founded in 1934 to promote sound planning in the Chicago region, is researching, coordinating and promoting programs in regional transportation, smart growth, housing-job balance, education and neighborhood development. MPC has joined with other public and nongovernmental agencies, including the Commercial Club, to support the Campaign for Sensible Growth, a smart growth effort to sustain regional economic growth without sacrificing open space, community vitality and public budgets. Joining the effort are equity-oriented groups, including the Leadership Council for Metropolitan Open Communities, the Metropolitan Alliance of Churches, and the Gamaliel Foundation, which increasingly see their agenda as one bolstered by smart development choices.

Prominent regionally oriented, public sector agencies include the Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS), which was formed in 1955 by the Illinois State Legislature to coordinate transportation planning and has since the 1970s been the region's designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The Northeast Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC), formed in 1957, collects and analyzes regional data, prepares regional plans and assists local governments with planning. In early 2001, NIPC launched "Common Ground: A Blueprint for Regional Action," a three-year effort to develop a six-county regional plan that will synthesize recommendations and strategies proposed by the many regional groups. Other key supporters of Chicago regionalism are regional research centers at area universities and several prominent foundations, including the Chicago Community Trust, and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

Multifaceted regionalism in Chicago is not without hurdles. Coordination across multiple agencies is challenging, and longstanding animosities between the City of Chicago and suburban jurisdictions can render regionalism more rhetoric than reality. Still, demographic change and the City of Chicago's waning dominance at the state level may slowly facilitate greater intrametropolitan cooperation. The Chicago region is seeing more positive energy and alignment around regional issues today than at any time in several generations.

Regionalism on Purpose

Issues of theory, practice, politics and leadership have attended these—and virtually all—instances of metropolitan regionalism. What lessons can we draw?

Of all the regions profiled, Silicon Valley has been most successful in defining clear purposes and forging consensus around regional action as a solution. The "Silicon Valley Way" requires specific, quantified goals before undertaking a regional initiative. Proposals go forward only if there is consensus within intentionally diverse and cross-sectoral working groups encompassing multiple perspectives. Initiatives without explicit purpose or demonstrated value "die in committee."

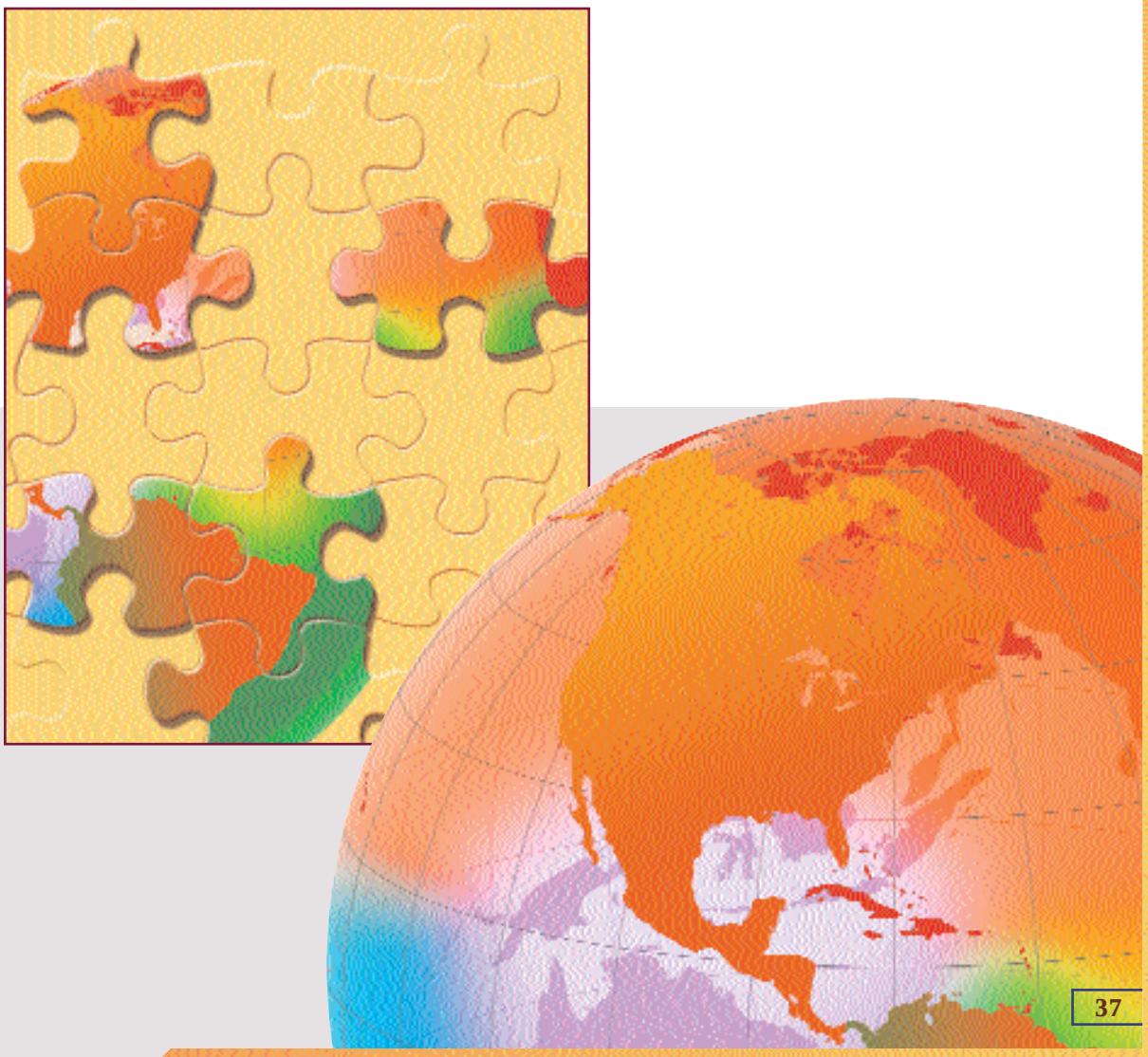
Cape Cod likewise tied formation of a new public entity to explicit purpose, in this case to stemming the tide of environmental degradation. Voter approval of the Cape Cod Commission came only when citizens saw and felt the impacts of unplanned growth. While the Commission has reformed some of the largest development proposals and has instilled a consciousness about sound planning, the regulatory punch of the land use body is too weak to significantly alter growth trends on its own. A lesson from the Cape is that quality of life is a sufficient triggering cry for regional action, but the regional means may not be enough to make a difference. Strong regional governance—at least in land use matters—requires strong local governance pulling in the same direction.

Although the circumstances differ significantly, the Louisville-Jefferson County case affirms the value of clear purpose and consensus in developing regional solutions. To accomplish political regionalism—a tall order given traditional loyalty to local jurisdictions—regional proponents followed a strategy of regional principles over particularities. Voters who had twice previously rejected political merger gave it the nod when the downside of localism, which meant losing additional ground to rival metropolitan regions in Lexington, Nashville and Indianapolis, was stark and disagreeable. The real lessons of the Louisville case may be yet to come, however, as regional leaders hammer out the difficult details of the merger. In this project, the region may well benefit from the multiyear experience and comfort level of the Louisville Compact, the region's tried and tested effort at fiscal and equity regionalism.

Although the effort is still nascent, cross-sectoral discussions underway in Denver reinforce the importance of region-level deliberations on regional futures. Particularly where passions are strong and opinions run the spectrum, hammering out consensus at the regional level—as opposed to having a solution imposed from higher-level governments—smoothes the way for lasting, less contentious outcomes. Still, as the Mile High Compact implies, voluntary agreements present a paradox: they facilitate lasting agreements but are hard to sustain. State intervention, should it come as anticipated, is being shaped by a collaboration of business, environmental, planning and civic interests in the Denver region, thus increasing the probability that Denver's growth future will have political sustenance.

The Minneapolis-St. Paul case reveals both the promise and pitfalls of state-imposed solutions that lack regional consensus. Because it directly affects the lifestyle issues held dear by local residents, equity regionalism has long had the highest degree of difficulty of all the regional types, typically finding effect only through state or federal interventions. The Twin Cities case reflects that strategy, with regional advocates seeking housing, tax base sharing and other equity outcomes through state policy. The scorecard is checkered, though, with setbacks matching gains. Perhaps more disconcerting, the Minneapolis-St. Paul region now has clearly drawn class- and geography-based battle lines that may impede further progress on equity or other regional fronts.

Finally, the Chicago case illuminates the potential payoff and risks of high stakes regionalism. The region faces tough odds: a troubled history of regionalism and intergovernmental relations, a highly fractured political landscape, and multiple interests gathered under the regionalism tent. Yet, Chicago leaders are engaged in an ambitious effort to achieve growth, environmental, economic and equity regionalism under the banner of a world-class Chicago, an elegant and effective vision for mobilization and cooperation. Working in the region's favor are longstanding regional entities showing good faith at building bridges across previously unyielding functional and political walls. Seeing whether and how the multifaceted new regionalism strategy can overcome historic bad blood and the divergent interests of powerful groups will provide valuable lessons for other regions pursuing bold strategies.



Final Thoughts

Regionalism has an ambiguous nature, at once encompassing pitfalls and promise. On the one hand, regionalism entails the classic tradeoffs of a multilayered governance system: doing something regionally means not doing it locally. Given that local systems foster diversity, freedom, choice, participation and accountability, shifting a function from local to regional control has opportunity costs. In addition, regionalism's benefits are uncertain and often unrealized. While much remains to be learned, empirical evidence so far suggests that bigger may not always be better. Regionalism in practice is politically paradoxical: the big tent strategy fosters a larger regional constituency, but coalitions of diverse interests are inherently fragile. Regionalism also faces practical limits. Regional identity is weak, and most regions lack political authority and mechanisms for acting regionally.

On the other hand, regionalism has great promise for addressing fiscal, environmental, cultural, economic, political, growth-based and equity-oriented problems. The cross-border, networked patterns of contemporary metropolitan life transform local issues into metropolitan ones, warranting metropolitan solutions. The eminence of regionalism is its cross-border, cross-sector, cross-issue perspective, the combination of which can generate innovative, multifaceted solutions to complex problems. Popular fears notwithstanding, regionalism nearly always manifests itself through means such as intergovernmental agreements, county service transfers and civic-corporate-public partnerships that are sensitive to and approved by local governments.

The unresolved tension between the pitfalls and promise of regionalism makes solving regional problems at a regional scale harder than it sounds. Still, regionalism "on purpose," with a clear goal and appropriate means for achieving it, is both possible and appropriate. Regions that consciously deliberate their goals and the merits of various means to achieve them will be best positioned to make progress in a complex, diverse, shared-power world.

In the end, though, regionalism, like any new order, entails change. As such, regional leaders would do well to recall the words of sixteenth-century political theorist Niccolo Machiavelli, who summed up the challenge this way:

> *It must be considered that there is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things. For the reformer has enemies in all those who profit by the old order and only lukewarm defenders in all those who would benefit by the new order, this lukewarmness arising partly from fear of their adversaries, who have the laws in their favor; and partly from the incredulity of mankind, who do not truly believe in anything new until they have had actual experience of it.*

Notes

[1] To simplify and standardize program implementation and data management, the U.S. federal government formally defines several types of metropolitan areas. Metropolitan areas consist of one or more counties or county equivalents, except in New England states where towns and cities are the metropolitan building blocks. As of June 1999, there were 337 metropolitan areas, of which six were in Puerto Rico. Because federally designated metropolitan regions change over time and include rural territory, they may differ from residents' perceptions of "metropolitan."

[2] Useful accounts of metropolitan governance history include Maier (1999); Meinig (1986, 1993, 1998); Teaford (1975, 1979); Elazar (1994); Derthick (1999); and Wallis (1995).

[3] Examples of localism from the past decade abound. A sampling: Though the New York State Legislature blocked action, more than 60 percent of Staten Islanders voted in 1993 to secede from New York City; as of late 2000, seven communities within the City of Los Angeles, including the San Fernando Valley, Hollywood, and L.A. Harbor, were seeking secession from that city. Through the 1990s private property rights laws were introduced in every session of the U.S. Congress and in every state; 26 states adopted property rights legislation of some kind and many others formed study committees. Observers estimated that by the mid-1990s more than 30 million Americans lived in "privatopias" and gated communities, a phenomenon spreading around the world. By mid-2000, 30 states had passed charter school legislation, making way for a "one size doesn't fit all" model of education. Once hand-to-mouth community development corporations are today increasingly multi-million-dollar operations wielding considerable political sway.

[4] Seminal studies include Voith (1992); Ledebur and Barnes (1993); and Savitch et al. (1993). For a discussion and critique, see Swanstrom (1996).

[5] Among those making this connection are Orfield (1997a); Katz and Bradley (1999); and Rusk (1999).

[6] This section draws on empirical reviews in Altshuler et al. (1999), Boyne (1992), Lowery (1998) and Oakerson (1999); recent empirical studies of local government arrangements in Ellen (1999), Mitchell-Weaver et al. (2000), Nelson and Foster (1999), Oliver (2000), and Razin and Rosentraub (2000); and case studies of metropolitan regions in Blomquist and Parks (1995), Savitch and Vogel (1996), and Rothblatt and Sancton (1998).

[7] This point is made by both Weir (2000) and Richmond (2000).

[8] For example, while some federal programs foster regionalism—among the current examples are regionally implemented transportation policy through ISTEA and TEA21, and support for location-efficient mortgages—others undermine regional efforts. In an analysis of federal housing and workforce policies in ten metropolitan areas, Mark Alan Hughes (2000) found that the administrative geography for federal job training and housing programs—that is, the boundaries determining eligibility, allocation and delivery of services—seriously fragments metropolitan labor and housing markets. In particular, Hughes found that while the metropolitan areas were served by one or two metropolitan planning organizations, they had from four to 101 housing authorities, and from three to 19 service delivery areas (SDAs) for job training (established under the *Job Training and Partnership Act of 1982*). The SDA geography will remain under JTPA's successor legislation, the *Workforce Investment Partnership Act*, thus perpetuating administrative fragmentation and undermining regional coordination. For other examples of state and federal inconsistencies, see Pastor et al. (2000, 176-177).

[9] For examples, see Orfield (1997a); Salkin (1999); and Pastor et al. (2000, 174-178).

[10] This section draws on several useful sources on regional leadership: Bryson and Crosby (1992); Alliance for Regional Stewardship (2000); and Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network (1995, 1998).

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Resources

National Organizations

Alliance for Regional Stewardship
350 Cambridge Avenue, Suite 200
Palo Alto, CA 94306
650/614-0230
www.regionalstewardship.org

American Planning Association
122 South Michigan Avenue, Suite 1600
Chicago, IL 60603
312/659-5170
www.planning.org

Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy
1775 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
202/797-6000
www.brookings.edu/es/urban

Center for Regional and Neighborhood Action
2300 15th Street, Lower Level
Denver, CO 80202
303/477-9985
www.crna.net

Citistates Group
www.citistates.com

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www.napawash.org

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www.prlonline.org

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www.rpa.org

Selected Organizations in Case Study Regions

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Association for the Preservation of Cape Cod
P.O. Box 636
Orleans, MA 02653
508/255-4142

Barnstable County
Superior Court House
3195 Main Street, P.O. Box 427
Barnstable, MA 02630
508/375-6648
www.barnstablecounty.org

Cape Cod Commission
3225 Main Street
P.O. Box 226
Barnstable, MA 02630-0226
508/362-3828
www.capecodcommission.org

Chicago

Campaign for Sensible Growth
25 East Washington, Suite 1600
Chicago, IL 60602
312/922-5616
www.growingsensibly.org

Chicago Metropolis 2020
30 West Monroe Street
Chicago, Illinois 60603
312/332-2020
www.chicagometropolis2020.org

Metropolitan Planning Council
25 E. Washington Street, Suite 1600
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Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission
222 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 1800
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Denver

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303/455-1000
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Denver, CO 80202
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Louisville, KY 40202
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502/574-5700
www.co.jefferson.ky.us

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Metropolitan Council
Mears Park Centre
230 East Fifth Street
St. Paul, MN 55101
651/602-1630
www.metrocouncil.org

Minneapolis Citizens League
708 South 3rd Street, Suite 500
Minneapolis, MN 55415
612/338-0791
www.citizensleague.net

Silicon Valley

Association of Bay Area Governments
Joseph P. Bort MetroCenter
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510/464-7900
www.abag.ca.gov

Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network
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San Jose, CA 95113-1605
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