THE METROPOLITANIZATION OF POLITICS:

A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

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Conclusion: The Metropolitanization of Politics

1. Introduction

A clear picture of transnational transformation emerges from the preceding chapters. Throughout Western Europe, North America and beyond, metropolitan regions are becoming the predominant mode of human settlement. Only in exceptional cases, such as Scandinavia, do less than half of the citizenry now live in metropolitan areas with populations over 200,000. Trends in this direction are also evident in the newly established democracies of eastern Europe, or, as the examples of Israel and South Africa attest, in developing areas. In countries where governmental reforms have not consolidated local jurisdictions, including France, Germany, Israel, Switzerland and the United Kingdom as well as the United States, metropolitanization has also meant widespread suburbanization. Even where reforms have limited the growth of residence outside the central cities, as in Canada, Scandinavia and South Africa, settlement has usually dispersed within expanding central jurisdictions.

Our analyses show that growing metropolitan geopolitical fragmentation has been a frequent consequence of these shifts. New concentrations of middle class residents have congregated outside urban centers, as poor and disadvantaged populations remain disproportionately in central areas. The resulting sociospatial polarization between central and outlying residents has been systematic across most of Canada, the United States and Switzerland, and in specific regions of England, France, Israel, the Netherlands, and Sweden. Even where central cities have retained relative parity in important dimensions of socioeconomic status, specific disadvantaged groups like the unemployed, the poor and minorities have often concentrated more there than in suburban towns. Parallel patterns are emerging but not yet dominant in the larger East European metropolitan areas, and in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem in Israel. In tandem with these spatial social and economic shifts, our evidence points to ongoing political changes. Most pronounced in the places with the most systematic socio-economic polarization, a growing party polarization opposes more conservative or neoliberal suburbs to more left-leaning central cities.

These trends have major implications for politics and governance. In this chapter we summarize the overall similarities and variations in the national trends, and discuss the reasons for patterns we have found.

2. Trends toward metropolitanization

In the IMO countries, like in much of the rest of the world, urbanization has increased persistently over the last several decades. In the 1990s it reached on the average a level ranging between 70 and 80% of the populationin in the most developed countries. Even in newly post-communist countries of eastern Europe or in middle income countries like South Africa or those of Latin America, half or more of the population lived in places classed as urban. The largest part of this growth has occurred between the 1950s and the 1980s.. Since the 1980 the urban population growth in the established democratic capitalist countries has often been much slower, only three percent in France

Table 1: Urban Population, 1950-2000

	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Canada	61	69	76	76	77	79
Czech Republic	41	46	52	75	75	74
France	54	62	71	73	74	76
Germany	72	76	80	83	85	88
Hungary	39	43	49	57	62	64
Israel	65	77	84	89	90	92
Netherlands	54	54	56	58	60	64
Norway	50	50	65	71	72	76
Poland	39	48	52	58	61	62
South Africa	43	47	48	48	49	56
Spain	52	57	66	73	75	76
Sweden	66	73	81	83	83	83
Switzerland	44	51	55	57	68	68
United Kingdom	79	78	77	88	89	89
United States	64	70	74	74	75	79

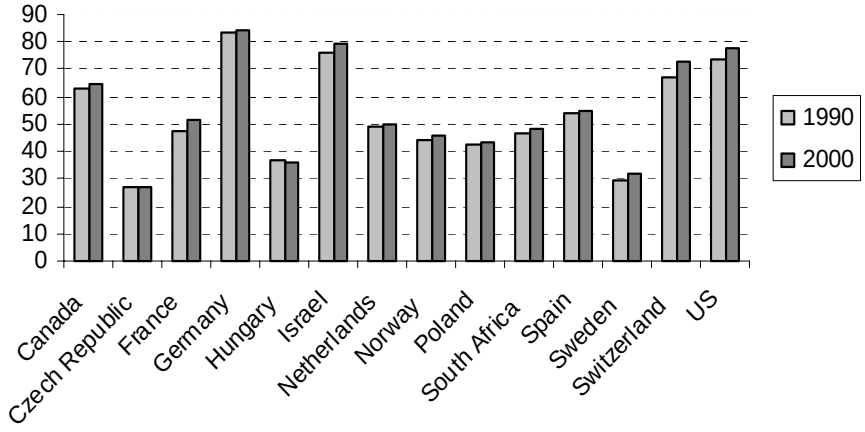
Note: Urban population defined as those living in places with populations over 2,000 (in the United States, over 2,500).
Source: United Nations Population Division, *World Urbanization Prospectus 2003* (New York: United Nations, 2004).

and Spain and virtually zero in Sweden. Of course these figures are national and don't reflect often important inter-regional variations of urbanization levels and changes. Very substantial disparities characterize in particular Canada, where comparatively highly urbanized provinces like Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec coexist with weakly urbanized parts of the

federal territory like Saskatchewan, Manitoba, the Maritime Provinces, the Yukon and Northwest Territories.

Metropolitan residence differs from residence in an urban place; one could live in a metropolitan area outside an urban locality or in an urban place that lies beyond metropolitan boundaries. Although historical statistics on metropolitanization are not available, our figures show that it has largely advanced in tandem with urbanization. In the majority of the IMO countries, more than half of the population lives today in metropolitan areas with over 200,000 inhabitants. The most metropolitanized nations are Germany (84%), Israel (79%), the US (78%), Canada (63%), and—in contrast with the "widely publicised cliché as the bucolic mountainous home of Heidi" (Kübler and Scheuss in this volume)—Switzerland (73%). Population is less concentrated in these biggest metropoles in a number countries with densely urbanized regions like Spain (55%), France (51%), the Netherlands (50%), or South Africa (48%).

Figure 1: Change of the population in metropolitan areas with over 200,000 inhabitants, 1990-2000 (%)



Canada: 1996, 2001/ Czech Rep.: 1991, 2001/ France: 1990, 1999/ Germany: 1989, 2002/ Hungary: 1990, 2001/ Israel: 1989, 2002/ Poland: 1993, 2001/ Spain: 1996, 2001/ South Africa: 1996, 2001/ Sweden: 1990, 2002/ US: 1990, 2000

The development of metropolitan areas remains comparatively more limited in Scandinavia despite the high levels ofurban settlement there - Norway (46%), Sweden (32%) – and in the Eastern European countries, Poland (43%), Hungary (36%) and the Czech Republic (27%) (figure 1).

The extension of metropolitan areas is not a recent phenomenon. It started earlier in North America and England than in France or in Scandinavian countries. It has characterized all the countries considered in our research for the last decades but in the Czech Republic and in Hungary where the largest metropolitan areas, and in particular, Prague and Budapest, registered a slight

decline of their population. These deviant patterns are a direct consequence of communism and its fall, and to the subsequent policies of decentralization and liberalization that have led to a relative economic and demographic decline of the two capitals. The more balanced distribution of the population between Warsaw and other metropoles and the growth of the suburban areas explain the different pattern displayed by Poland.

Except in the Czech Republic and in Hungary, the overall population of the largest metropolitan areas has kept increasing during the 1990s faster than the remainder of the country. Former rural regions or areas have been absorbed in expanding metropolitan areas. One of the clearest examples is the US, where metropolitanization has spread rapidly to parts of the country that for a long time remained largely rural. Since the 1980s, the seventeen Dutch metropolitan regions have grown at systematically somewhat higher rates than the national average. This amounts to a reversal of the pattern during the 1960s and 1970s, when the metropolitan area growth rate fell considerably below that of the total Dutch population. Growth was even more pronounced in the four metropolitan areas of Israel between 1989 and 2002, ranging from 38% in the Tel Aviv metropolitan area to 66% in the Beer Sheva metropolitan area. Despite the relative demographic stagnation of the central cities, the population of all the 42 French metropolitan areas but Saint-Etienne also displays a substantial increase between 1990 and 1999, with peaks in Metz (+67%), Avignon (+44%), or 28% in Perpignan. The extension of metropolitan areas is also reflected in their change in area. In France like in the other countries, the population increase results from two changes: there was a population growth of 1.5 million inhabitants within the metropolitan areas' limits of 1990, and in addition 2.3 million inhabitants came from the territorial extension of the metropolitan areas between 1990 and 1999. This area change reaches an average value of 38% with some particularly rapid increases: 50% in Paris or Limoges, 71% in Toulon, and 114% in Avignon.

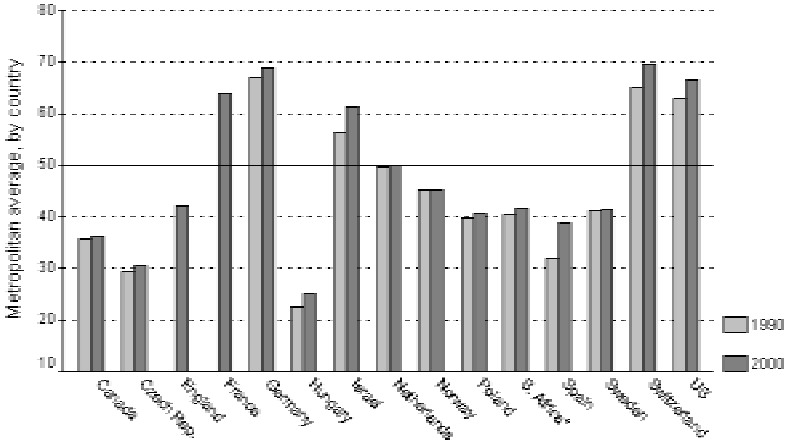
Metropolitanization has often brought growing concentration in a small set of bigger metropoles. The case is obvious in Israel where most of central and north Israel is becoming a continuous metropolitan region, resembling the Dutch Randstad or Delta-metropool (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, Utrecht, Amersfoort, Dordrecht, Haarlem and Leiden) and including the largest metropolis in Tel Aviv and secondary nodes in Jerusalem and Haifa. This demographic concentration is also manifest in Canada where the five city-regions of Toronto, Montréal, Ottawa-Hull, Vancouver-Victoria, and Edmonton-Calgary made up over 83% of national population growth between 1991 and 2001. Other examples include the Ruhr Valley in Germany, the Liverpool-Hull corridor in England and the Washington-Boston corridor in the United States. Categories like the new definition of "Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Areas" in the United States have only partly captured these widespread trends.

3. Trends toward suburbanization

Suburbanization, defined as the growth of dispersed settlement beyond urban centers, has usually gone along with metropolitanization. A well-established line of analysis, predominantly carried out by U.S. scholars, portrays this process as distinctive of U.S. metropolitan areas (e.g., Jackson 1986, Nivola 1999). Our analysis shows that this process is much more widespread. Many of the longest established democratic capitalist countries now possess significant or even dominant proportions of suburbanised settlement. Either a large proportion of metropolitan residences now locate outside central cities, or more physically dispersed patterns now characterize settlement within central jurisdictions. The degree of suburbanization still varies widely, however, in ways that reflect longstanding as well as more recent legacies of settlement patterns, urbanization and local government reforms.

Figure 2 compares the mean proportion of metropolitan settlement outside the central cities. The national mean values here obscure often striking intra-national variations. In Israel, for instance, the central city proportion of the four metropolitan area population reaches on the average 39%, which is close to the values for Beer Sheva (40%) and Haifa (28%), but quite far from the extreme levels of Tel Aviv (13%) and Jerusalem (75%). In two metropolitan areas in the U.S. and Spain, one in Canada, and throughout South Africa, central city governments encompass entire metropolitan areas even as most do not.

Figure 2: Change in the percentage of metropolitan populations in suburbs, 1990-2000



*Note: South African percentages for low-density wards within metropolitan governments.
Canada: 1996, 2001/ Czech Rep.: 1991, 2001/ France: 1999/ Germany: 1989, 2002/ Hungary: 1990, 2001/ Israel: 1989, 2002/ Poland: 1993, 2001/ Spain: 1996, 2001/ South Africa: 1996, 2001/ Sweden: 1990, 2002/ US: 1990, 2000.

With this caveat, a number of clear cross-national differences emerge in the overall patterns.

(1) In a number of the larger, established democratic industrial nations - France, Germany and Switzerland as well as the United States -suburbs generally dominate metropolitan areas. In each of these countries, proportions outside the central cities average over 60 percent. Israel has now moved into this category as well. The Netherlands, with a suburban proportion of 50 percent, approaches this level. Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands and France experienced less systematic local government consolidation since the 1960s than a number of northern European countries. The first three also share the legacies of interlinked urban settlement from the medieval "city belt" (Rokkan 1970; cf. Hohenberg and Lees 1995) that followed medieval trade routes across the center of Europe.

(2) In a second group of established democratic capitalist countries, suburban proportions remain more in check. In Canada, England, Norway and Sweden, territorial reforms have helped keep suburban proportions on average between thirty and fifty percent. Except in England, the differences extend back to preindustrial traditions of rural and small town settlement with less dense historical settlement structures than in the city belt of Europe.

(3) The three eastern European countries still bear legacies from the former communist policy of concentrating residents in industrial central cities and preventing the development of secondary centers in their periphery. Eastern European metropolitan areas remain heavily monocentric, yet more in Hungary (75%) and the Czech Republic (70%) than in Poland (59%). In this perspective, Poland appears as a demographically more decentralized country. The largest metropolitan area is not the capital Warsaw but Katowice. Polish metropolitan areas are more polycentric. The suburban proportion exceeds 60% in one third of them - Kraków, Katowice, Rzeszów, Bielsko Biała, Rybnik, Wałbrzych, Tarnów. Among the four Czech or the six Hungarian metropolitan areas, by contrast, only Ostrava follows this pattern. In Spain, authoritarianism and delayed economic development produced analogous patterns of urban centralization. Here as in Hungary, suburbanization is now proceeding rapidly.

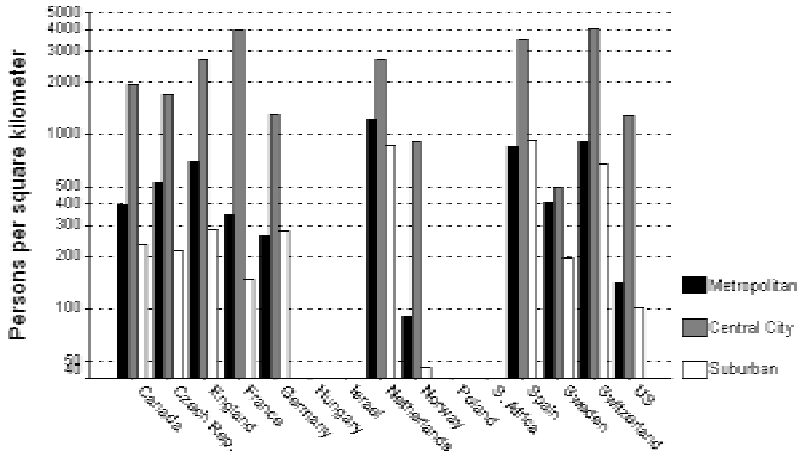
(4) Finally, the recent reform of local authorities in South Africa was the most radical of any country. Reforms aimed at overcoming the metropolitan legacies of apartheid have now merged all previous local authorities within single metropolitan governments. Here the distinction between central cities and other metropolitan authorities literally no longer applies.

For those countries for which statistics to measure population density at the local level are available, the need for significant qualifications to this comparative picture is evident (figure 3).[1] As these figures make especially

[1] Density also varies widely within some of these countries. In the densest urbanized regions such as southern Ontario in Canada, the Midlands of England, the Ruhr Valley in Germany or the megalopolitan areas of the United States, the average density of surburban areas ranges much higher than in more rural regions.

clear, consolidation of local governments in Canada, Norway and Sweden has not by itself led to concentrated settlement. If the Scandinavian countries have experienced less metropolitanization and less suburban growth than other older democratic countries, metropolitan population densities there have ranged among the lowest in Europe. Central city densities there average even lower than in the United States. Despite significant consolidation, Canadian metropolitan areas retain comparatively high densities in the central cities and moderately high suburban ones. In England, both urban and suburban densities have remained even higher.

Figure 3: Average metropolitan population density, 2000



Among the countries with high suburban proportions, density figures point to further variations. As might be expected in small countries with longstanding networks of urban settlement, suburban as well as urban densities in the Netherlands and Switzerland average high. In Germany and France, however, suburban and ultimately metropolitan densities remain quite low in comparison. French efforts toward territorial consolidation of local governments have brought the least changes in central city boundaries since the 1960s. As a result, the densest central cities of any country in the study contrast there with some of the most dispersed suburban peripheries.

The high suburban percentages and low density in the United States partly confirm the distinctiveness of settlement there. Along with high levels of suburban settlement, the central city density figures for the U.S. reaffirm a somewhat lower overall density than in most of Europe or Canada. Yet density in the central cities still falls within the range of European variation. The mean not only approximates the average for German central cities, but exceeds the averages in the Scandinavian countries. Although the U.S. suburban and metropolitan densities are indeed the lowest, this is partly a statistical artefact.

The procedures for definition of metropolitan territorial boundaries in the United States have led to the inclusion of wider unsettled expanses than in other countries (see Sellers this volume). With this statistical anomaly corrected, we expect that suburbanization the United States would look even less different from the parallel processes in other countries.

Not only the United States, but a number of larger as well as smaller European nations as well as Israel share growing components of suburbanised settlement. Reforms to adjust for the growth of settlement beyond central cities have often created more dispersed settlement within central boundaries. Metropolitan areas in several of the newer democracies of Europe have also acquired growing suburban dimensions.

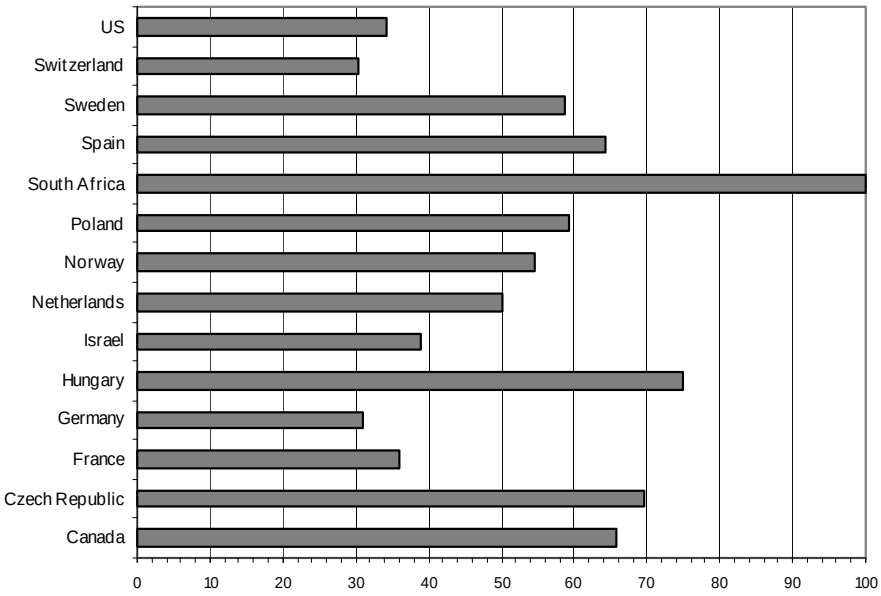
4. Geopolitical fragmentation

Metropolitanization and suburbanization foster geopolitical fragmentation, as more people choose to live in communes more distant from the central city. The greater their liberty to move and their incentives to choose between various characteristics of local settlement, the greater their potential mobility between different locations within a given metropolitan area. The extension of existing transportation systems (highways, trains, other mass transit), the search for less dense and more spacious individual housing, and the growth of competition between local governments as a result of decentralization policies largely explain that nowadays a growing proportion of the population in metropolitan areas lives in more diverse and fragmented metropolitan areas.

A first measure of geopolitical fragmentation is the central city proportion of population in the areas with over 200,000 inhabitants (figure 4). With the exception of the South African results, this is essentially the converse of the measures for suburbanization in figure 3.

On this measure, Israel belongs to the geopolitically most fragmented countries along with Switzerland (30%), Germany (31%), the US (34%), and France (36%). While Netherlands is located on the 50% line, the other countries, i.e. the majority of those that are here observed, are characterized by metropolitan areas where more people continue to live in central cities than in their suburbs. In countries having experienced merging reforms of localities, larger parts of the central city territories are still low densely populated so that the population extension continues to occur within the limits of the city. Such reforms were conducted recently in Canada where two thirds of the inhabitants live now in central cities, the changed jurisdictional structure now differs drastically from the U.S. pattern in which only a third of metropolitan residents live in central cities. Except Canada and South Africa, an overall trend of continuing decrease of the central city demographic weight has been observed in the last two decades in all countries.

Figure 4: Central city proportion of population in metropolitan areas with over 200,000 inhabitants, 2000 (%)



The number of local authorities for 100.000 inhabitants constitutes a second measure of geopolitical fragmentation. The higher this indicator for a metropolitan authority, the more fragmented that authority is. Here again we deal with national mean values that are of course useful variables for international comparisons but somewhat crude for taking in consideration intranational variations (figure 5).

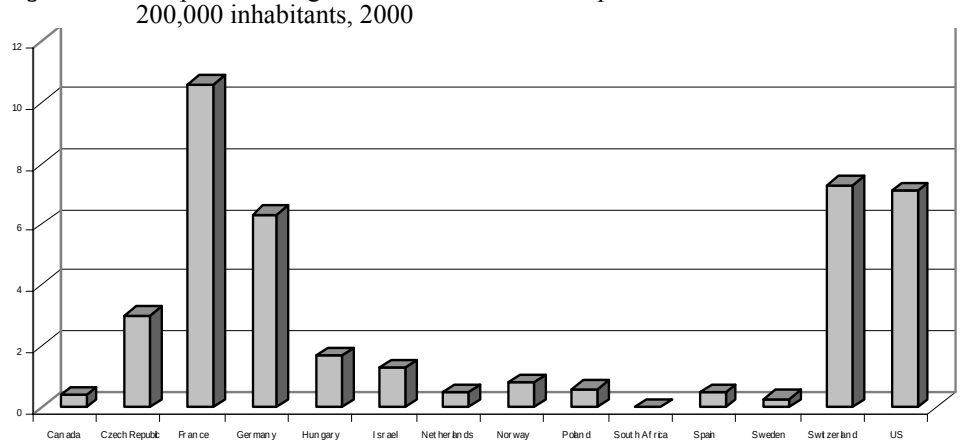
The patterns in this figure largely converge with those of the previous one. A majority of countries display a high proportion of central city population and a small number of local authorities per 100.000 inhabitants. In eight of them, the institutional fragmentation is particularly low as this number lies below 5: of course in the recently consolidated nations of Canada (1) and South Africa (0), but also in the countries where amalgamation reforms were previously enacted like Sweden and Netherlands (2), Israel and Poland (3), and Norway (4). Spanish metropolitan authorities have extended relatively recently, which explains the rather low level of their institutional fragmentation (3). The highest values characterize France (32), the Czech Republic and Switzerland (21), Germany (18), the US (15), and Hungary (12). It may appear as a surprise that values are much higher in the former Czech and Hungarian communist regimes than in Poland: this higher level of fragmentation results in large part from deamalgamation policies pursued by the governments of the first two of these countries in the 1990s.

Figure 5: Number of local authorities per 100,000 inhabitants in metropolitan areas with over 200,000 inhabitants, 2000

Finally an index of geopolitical fragmentation based on the two previous indicators – the so-called Zeigler and Brunn index (Zeigler and Brunn 1980) – was computed in order to capture into a single measure demographic and institutional fragmentation at the national and international levels (see figure 6).

France is often presented as the most fragmented European country in terms of local governments. This figure confirms this reputation (11) and indicates that is even more fragmented than the US average (7), which is about the same level as the Swiss Confederation (7). Comparing Zeigler and Brunn indexes across countries also allows us to revise some common assumptions and generalizations. To speak about a North American pattern is misleading: Canadian metropolitan areas are institutionally extremely different from the US context, and their recent consolidation reforms make them now quite similar to the North European model. In the same way it is hardly possible to group in a same category Eastern European countries. Of course relatively highly fragmented post-communist Czech Republic differs quite substantially from Hungary and Poland.

Figure 6: Geopolitical fragmentation index in metropolitan areas with over 200,000 inhabitants, 2000



Are Southern European countries more fragmented than other nations, as Page and Goldsmith (1987) have argued? If the answer is clearly yes in France, Spain is much closer to the Netherlands, Sweden, and Norway, reflecting a more recent and less pronounced process of metropolitanization. And Germany in north-central Europe stands out as a strikingly fragmented context. There the mean value of 6 reflects particularly high levels reached in Eastern metropolitan areas as well as in some Western metropolises like Koblenz (value of 31, see the chapter of Walter-Rogg in this volume and its table 1a in Appendix).

Geopolitical fragmentation is strong and developing in some of the most exemplary countries (France, Switzerland, US), and is proceeding in the majority of others (e.g., Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Israel). Yet drastic and spectacular reforms have succeeded in reducing this fragmentation in nations as diverse as Canada and South Africa. It would require closer comparative examination of specific practices in each country to sort out the practical significance of these institutional differences for governance.

6. Metropolitan socio-economic polarization

For the majority of the countries scrutinized in this volume, we have also gained a broad comparative overview of how far socio-economic polarization between central cities and their suburbs has accompanied metropolitanization. The established view of these patterns, along with most of our indicators, derives from decades of work on a subset of metropolitan areas in the United States. Cross-national comparative indicators of central city hardship, put

together here for the first time, reveal widespread but varied patterns of metropolitan spatial polarization. In many other countries beyond the United States, metropolitanization has brought growing numbers of middle class residents to expanding suburbs, and left certain forms of disadvantage more concentrated in central cities. Meanwhile, a contrasting pattern of suburban hardship persists in eastern Europe and parts of Israel. It has also emerged in the most disadvantaged metropolitan areas of the United States itself.

A recalculated transnational version of the Nathan-Adams index for measurement of central city hardship in relation to the suburbs of each metropolitan area provides the basis for this comparison (Nathan and Adams 1976, 1989; also see the country chapters to this volume). To furnish a parallel basis for cross-national comparison, we calculated the index for central city-suburban ratios of the same indicators in all of the metropolitan areas for which data was available. Since most countries had available only part of the six Nathan-Adams indicators, individual indicators for a metropolitan area could not be aggregated using the cumulative method of the original Nathan-Adams index. Instead, a simple average was used to combine indexes for whatever indicators were available for metropolitan areas within that country.[2] Although the results of this procedure need to be interpreted with due attention to the comparability of the aggregated averages, the main patterns of hardship proved consistent whatever indicator was used.[3] In the individual country chapters, a number of the researchers in this volume have also explored patterns of inequality at the more fine-grained levels of individual towns or neighborhoods.

The overall index (figure 7) conveys the broad outlines of our comparative results. The boxplots in the figure capture the range of variation with 80 percent and 95 percent confidence intervals and outliers as well as the means for each country. For the figures, taking this variation within countries into account is particularly crucial to understanding the patterns.

The index highlights the exceptional nature of the most extreme central city hardship, A number of U.S. metropolitan areas, most of them part of the original Nathan-Adams index, stand out from the international trends much as

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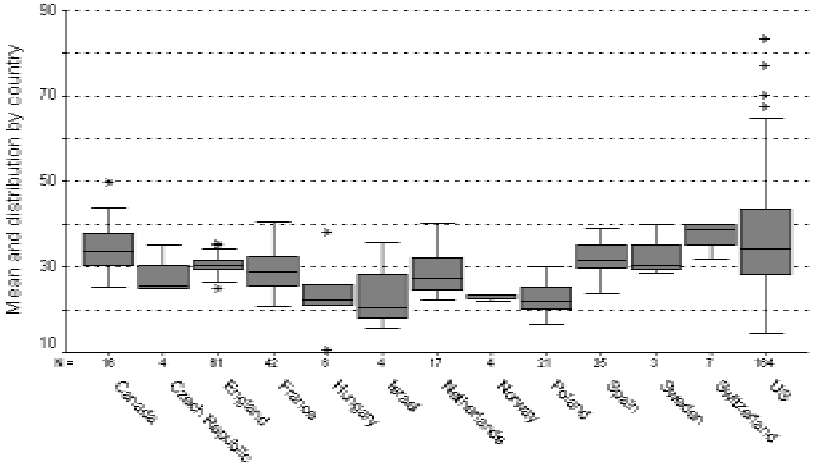
2 The aggregated indicators averaged to build the index included the following Nathan-Adams variables: Canada—income, poverty, housing, education, unemployment, dependents Czech Republic—poverty, housing, education, unemployment, dependents; England—housing, education, unemployment, dependents; France—income, housing, education, unemployment, dependent; Hungary—poverty, unemployment, dependents; Israel—income, poverty, education, unemployment, dependents; Netherlands—income, poverty, unemployment; Norway—income, poverty, housing, education, unemployment, dependents; Poland—income, housing, unemployment, dependents; Spain—income, education, unemployment, dependents; Sweden—income, housing, education, unemployment, dependents; Switzerland—education, unemployment, dependents; United States—income, poverty, housing, education, unemployment, dependents.

3 The one exception was the measure of dependents, calculated as the percent of residents either over 65 or under 18. This indicator appears to pick up large affluent families or wealthy retirees in addition to instances of hardship. In Spain, it also showed somewhat higher levels of suburban disadvantage than elsewhere.

Figure 7: Combined index of central city hardship based on Nathan-Adams indicators, 2000



Note: Here and in figures 8 and 9, middle lines represent national means, shaded boxes 80 percent confidence intervals and whiskers 95 percent confidence intervals.

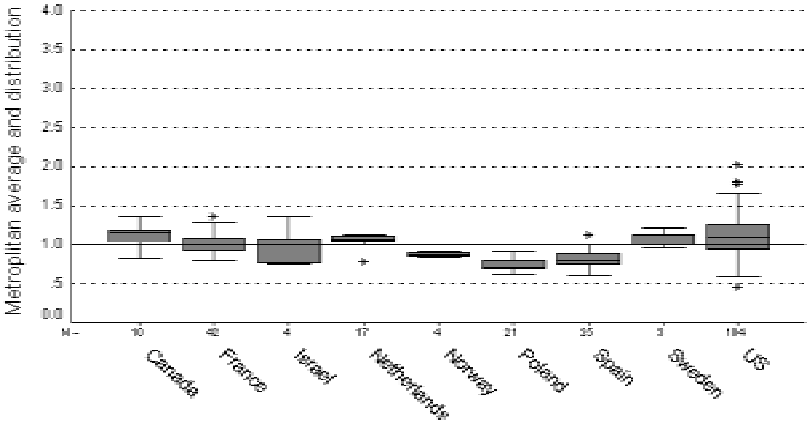
they do from the full range of U.S. metropolitan areas. The lone Canadian outlier that approaches the level in these metropolitan areas, Windsor, is the sister city across Lake Michigan from Detroit. Against the backdrop of the disparities in these U.S. metropolitan areas, the central city-suburban disparities in other countries fall into a much lower range. At the same time a smaller number of U.S. metropolitan areas, mostly with large numbers of poor Latino immigrants, display the starkest suburban hardship in relation to central cities. Reflecting a range of patterns beyond that of the other countries put together, the U.S. average remains well within the international range of variation.

At least as striking as these divergences are the significant but more moderate metropolitan disparities that predominate elsewhere. In countries with high levels of metropolitan and suburban development, portions of metropolitan areas have often equalled or even exceeded the average U.S. central city hardship. The average disparities across metropolitan areas in Switzerland exceed those in the United States. Those in Canadian metropolitan areas average only a single point lower. A portion of metropolitan areas in France, Hungary, Israel, the Netherlands and Sweden also register levels of relative central city hardship well above the U.S. average. Even in parts of the Czech Republic, England, and Poland, and South Africa, relative central city hardship has become commonplace. In North America, Europe and even beyond, a growing movement of middle and upper class residents to suburban areas has driven this trend. Even where parity has largely persisted between the socio-economic status of the suburbs and central cities, as in most of

England, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Norway, this result is often a product of expanding middle class settlement.

Comparison between two of the indicators, for income and for unemployment, provides a more precise view of a second dimension of contemporary metropolitan socio-economic polarization (figures 8 and 9). In all of the long-established capitalist democratic countries for which we have data, disadvantage confined to specific groups (especially unemployment and poverty) averaged higher in the central cities than in the suburbs as a whole. In all of these countries except for Norway, for instance, central city unemployment averages around half or more of the level in the suburbs. This consistent pattern stands in contrast with the variations around parity in figures for overall central city disadvantage, such as per capita income. Even in central cities where high average incomes and education indicated concentrations of privilege, such as Stockholm, specific disadvantaged populations remained relatively concentrated. Even where individual suburban localities contained the highest proportions of the unemployed, suburban populations as a whole had distanced themselves from the greater problems in the central cities they surrounded. More nuanced forms of socio-economic polarization like this are now a general feature of advanced industrial society.

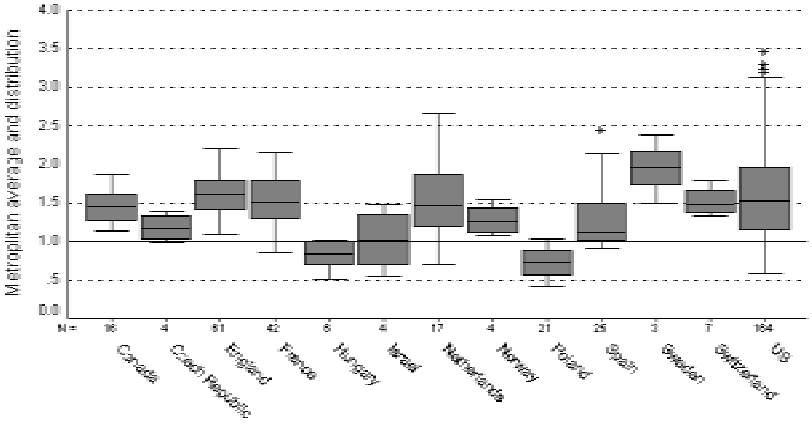
Figure 8: Ratio of suburban to central city per capita income, 2000



In the less wealthy and more newly established democratic capitalist countries, and in eastern Europe in particular, the unemployment and income figures highlight a contrasting pattern of relative suburban hardship. Compounded disadvantage concentrates in the metropolitan peripheries. In the wake of communist urban development as well as delays in urban development and other forms of economic and social modernization, much of the physical infrastructure for suburban development remains limited. The movement of middle class residents to the suburbs has not yet reversed this overall imbalance.

As the example of Jerusalem attests, this form of polarization is also not uncommon outside of eastern Europe. In the United States, the suburbs in the small group of metropolitan areas that we have identified as Latino Working Class suffer from the greatest disparities in relation to the central cities.

Figure 9: Ratio of central city to suburban unemployment, 2000



Clearly, spatial concentrations of residents by socio-economic status have often accompanied metropolitan and suburban growth. As the country chapters of this volume show, segregation by ethnicity, nationality and race is often closely linked to these socio-economic patterns. In the United States as well as in other countries, these patterns have increasingly taken more complex forms than the compounded, uniform central city disadvantage of earlier US studies. A full comparative account of these patterns would ultimately have to take into account polarization between suburban towns as well as between different parts of central cities.

6. Metropolitan political polarization

In countries where metropolitanization is accompanied by socio-territorial polarization, distinctive patterns of political orientations increasingly tend to oppose central cities from their suburbs. The most illustrative examples of this evolution are the US, Canada, the UK and Switzerland. In US metropolitan areas, central cities vote more Democratic while the majority of suburbs express more Republican preferences. The range of this general central city-suburban divide varies however to a large extent by regions. The rapid pace of suburbanization over the last twenty years in Canada has produced similar

effects on the provincial and national political systems: larger conservative electorates tend to impose their political agenda. The main difference resides in the new institutional context created by the recent merging reforms that lead to a less visible territorial differentiation as many new cities that have been constituted now include much of their suburban territory. The territorial cleavage persists but has been internalized within the limits of the new merged urban authorities. In that sense the politico-institutional Swiss setting is much more similar to what is commonly observed in the US. Core cities remain frequently red while the periurban residential zones inhabited mostly by affluent families tend to support liberal-conservative formations. But suburban business zones that are quite different from these – closer to central cities, more densely populated, poorer and with higher concentrations of immigrants – present a very different profile as they have become strongholds of national-conservative and populist parties.

In countries where the city-suburban differentiation is more blurred, no clearcut separation between core cities and suburbs can be drawn. In France, central cities tend to concentrate a greater proportion of poor and dependent people. A majority of their city halls are currently controlled by leftist majorities. We need more systematic time-series analyses to verify if progressive parties are gaining a stable control over time in more cities. In any case new higher middle class suburbs are developing at the outer fringe of metropolitan areas in a very similar pattern to what is commonly observed in North America. These areas may be emerging as the territorial basis for expanding new electoral constituencies in search of more amenities and lower taxes. Similar signs of conservative gains in a specific type of affluent and pleasant suburb are also detectable in the former Communist countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland) where for a long time most of the wealthiest households lived in the core areas. This quite impressive trend, though still limited, is favored by the liberalization of the bank and housing market, the wish of many citizens to settle in individual housing at the periphery of the most densely populated areas, and the rapid spread of car ownership.

We expect that, controlling for other significant variables like municipal size, wealth and education, socially and ethnically homogenous suburbs would participate less in elections than central cities, due to a lower level of social conflicts and therefore a weaker social and political mobilization of the citizenry (Oliver 2001). At this exploratory stage, only distribution statistics were produced that are inconclusive about a specific impact of the central city-suburban cleavage on electoral turnout. Electoral participation is generally higher in Swiss suburbs while a reversal pattern is observed in British metropolitan areas. Multivariate regression analyses using ecological and contextual data in the various IMO countries should permit us in a second stage to get a clearer understanding of the main factors explaining the variation of political participation across metropolitan areas and localities.

7. Concluding summary: Metropolitanization and affluence

Metropolitanization emerges from the comparisons of this book as a growing and global presence. It is now a pervasive fact of social, economic and political life throughout most advanced countries, and increasingly in the developing world. More than a global "Americanization" of lifestyles, this development grows out of local and domestic processes. Along with technological capabilities that have increased the potential for mobility, it is related to the growth of affluence and related socioeconomic divisions within each society. It also appears in numerous guises. Even the United States itself increasingly contains more than one of these.

The breadth of this trend emerges from a comparison of national wealth and income distribution with several of metropolitan indicators used in this book. Overall, among the wealthiest countries with average or higher levels of income inequality, the spread of settlement into metropolitan regions has become the rule (table 2). Among those countries examined here with a per capita Gross Domestic Product over $18,000 in purchasing power parity, metropolitan areas contain over half of the population in all but two. Only in the two Scandinavian countries has the growth of affluence and urbanization not yet resulted in either a metropolitan majority or suburban preponderance within metropolitan areas. The causes of this Scandinavian exception are not entirely clear. Beyond different policies or preindustrial legacies, we suspect that it may be linked to the unusually low socioeconomic inequality evident in the Gini indexes of these two countries (Table 2). Greater equality across the board could give the middle class elements of the population who have largely driven metropolitanization and suburbanization elsewhere less incentive to seek residences outside central cities. Except in these and a handful of other cases where metropolitan jurisdictions have reorganized, suburbanization has accompanied metropolitanization. Even some countries with lower relative wealth, such as Spain, Israel and Hungary, are experiencing especially rapid metropolitanization and suburbanization. Even those wealthier nations and regions that have reorganized local and metropolitan jurisdictions to accommodate metropolitan growth, like Canada, the Scandinavian countries, and portions of the United States, usually incorporate lower density settlement into centralized jurisdictions. Where pre-metropolitan local jurisdictions have remained unchanged, as exemplified in France, governmental fragmentation has resulted. Metropolitan areas in the United States, although relatively suburbanized and fragmented, are not distinctively so. Rather, U.S. suburbanization and geopolitical fragmentation represent only one version of tendencies that in particular respects are stronger elsewhere.

As suburbanization has proceeded in wealthier countries, central cities have often faced socio-economic hardship in relation to their suburbs. This polarization reaches its most extreme form in a subset of U.S. metropolitan areas. But more moderate forms are a consistent feature of central city-suburban relations in such countries as Switzerland, Canada, the Netherlands, England and Sweden as well as much of the United States itself. Even in Germany and France, middle-class suburbanization is eroding relative urban advantages. In middle-income countries like those of eastern Europe, Israel or

South Africa, parallel dynamics have yet to alter the overall relative concentrations of affluence in urban centers.

Table 2: Overall National Figures in 2000, By National Wealth and Wealth Distribution

	GDP per capita, PPP ($)	GINI Index, 1990s	Metropolitanization	Mean suburbanization	Mean Geopolitical Fragmentation (Zeigler-Brunn Index)	City-Suburban Socioeconmic Polarization (Nathan-Adams)	Central City/Suburban Left/Right Cleavage
Norway	32228	***26***	46%	44%	0.8	23	Mixed
United States	31338	41	78%	67%	6.4	36	Yes
Switzerland	25803	33	73%	69%	7.3	37	Yes
Canada	25456	33	64%	38%	0.2	35	Yes
Netherlands	24833	33	50%	50%	0.5	29	Yes
Germany	23913	28	83%	69%	6.3	(Limited)	Mixed
France	23225	33	52%	63%	10.7	29	Mixed
United Kingdom	22652	36	76%	42%	(low)	31	Yes
Sweden	22498	***25***	32%	41%	0.3	33	Yes
Israel	18895	36	79%	61%	1.3	23	Yes
Spain	18314	33	54%	39%	0.5	32	Mixed
Czech Republic	***12840***	25	28%	31%	3.0	28	Mixed
Hungary	***11579***	24	37%	25%	1.7	23	Yes
Poland	***9114***	32	42%	41%	0.6	22	Limited
South Africa	***8702***	59	48%	0%	0.0	(Not Applicable)	Limited

Source: GDP and Gini Indices from World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2005.

Our findings about the consequences of metropolitan change for politics remain more provisional than these other conclusions. Yet the evidence for widespread new cleavages between more leftist central cities and conservative suburban areas is already considerable. The relative privilege of the suburbs and the concentration of the disadvantaged in the central cities have often laid the foundations for this division. At the same time, in such countries as the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland, the urban left also derives part of its strength from the privileged constituencies who remain downtown. Where residence of affluent and middle class residents outside urban centers remains

more limited, as in Israel and Eastern Europe, the vestiges of rural conservatism have produced parallel metropolitan political cleavages from different sources.

Established ways of thinking about comparative and urban politics, shaped by the traditional distinction between the urban and the rural, can no longer do justice to these emerging metropolitan realities. Taking the metropolitan dimension directly into account is critical to a better understanding of its consequences for political culture and political behavior, for the operation of political institutions, and ultimately for governance and policy. In future work, building on the analysis and data from this volume, there is a clear need for more extensive comparative investigation into the role of metropolitan characteristics and dynamics in political life.

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