

Preface

The traditional local governing structure of most countries does not incorporate a metropolitan scale government. Governmental systems usually consist of a national government, a subnational government level, and local governments. As countries urbanized and development spilled over traditional local government borders, metropolitan regions emerged with new governing challenges and issues. But these regions lacked any overarching traditional governing entity to address those challenges and issues. Various adaptations have been made to adjust to the new realities of regional governance. Governments have utilized four basic approaches to address the regional governing problem: establishing a regional government through government consolidation, establishing a regional government tier with authority to address regional issues, creating regional special districts, and through voluntary collaboration and cooperation. Most provinces in Canada, prior to the 1990s, utilized the tiered approach. In the 1990s, most switched to the consolidated approach except for Vancouver, which utilizes a type of special district approach. Metropolitan areas in the USA generally utilize variations of the cooperative approach. In most instances, the regional governing system to address regional issues was a piecemeal approach and not a full-fledged government.

Changes in the local governing system to address regional policy issues in Canada have usually been mandated by the province. In the USA, they have been subject to voter approval. In most instances in the USA, the voters have rejected efforts to establish a regional governing system. Changes in the traditional governing system to address regional needs have been contested and in many instances bitterly opposed. Moreover, the results of reforms often did not meet the expectations. With this mixed record, there are fierce debates over what changes, if any, would enhance government's ability to address regional governing issues.

Observers differ over which system optimally meets the needs of the residents of a metropolitan area. The purpose of this comparative analysis of regional governance in the USA and Canada is to evaluate these four approaches. The rationale for an analysis of regional governance in these countries is that these basic systems described above are or have recently been utilized in metropolitan areas in these

countries. This is a unique opportunity to conduct a cross-national comparative study of the four basic systems in an environment with a quite similar cultural and local governing heritage although there are some differences that will be clarified. I develop a framework and measures to evaluate how well a regional governing system is able to meet these criteria to effectively address regional policy issues, enhance the quality of life for all residents, and provide the services desired by the residents in an efficient manner.

This comparative study focuses on selected metropolitan areas. The cases analyzed in Canada consist of Toronto and Hamilton in Ontario, Vancouver, British Columbia, and Montreal. In the USA, the cases focus on Portland, Oregon, Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota, Chicago, and Pittsburgh. The appropriate methodology for this comparative study is to research how metropolitan areas respond to regional governing pressures. The case study method adds richness and insights to the study to improve analysis and understanding. An important part of the research was to visit those metropolitan areas that were less familiar and conduct interviews with selected interested observers, community leaders, and administrators involved with, and knowledgeable about, regional government in the areas. Visits and interviews were invaluable in gaining perspectives of the regional governing systems in these areas.

This research makes a significant contribution to the literature on regional governance. It adds to the literature on regional governance and provides an additional comparative perspective. This is a topical issue and more research is being done in this area. However, there is a paucity of systematic studies of regionalism bringing together and analyzing approaches of the USA and Canada in one place. Although each country has basically used a different approach to regional government, there are lessons to be learned from systematically comparing the different approaches.

This book serves a number of purposes. It can be used in college classrooms as a text for the study of regional governance. As an informative treatise on concepts and issues that are of a topical nature, it should be of interest to practitioners and people who are interested in local and regional governance. Such a study should help students of regionalism and decision makers understand the advantages and disadvantages of the different approaches to regional governance. Moreover, it provides a framework that can be useful in analyzing regional governance in other metropolitan areas.

For most of my academic career, I have studied regional governance. However, most of my study has been on regionalism in the USA. I only had passing familiarity with Canadian regional governance and mostly with Toronto. The idea for this research started with a Fulbright to Canada in 2006 where I studied regional government in Ontario. In comparing different approaches to regional governance, I realized that there were commonalities that would make an interesting and informative comparative study and would add to the existing literature on regionalism. As my research on this manuscript progressed, I gained new perspectives and insights into the effectiveness of the different approaches to regional governance. It is not my intent to necessarily identify or defend one particular approach as being the preferred or best approach to organizing regional governance. Indeed, each metropolitan area

is unique and has issues that would preclude the one-best-way concept. There is not a one best way for all occasions or circumstances. The intent is to add insights and information to the discussion on regionalism. Each metropolitan area has different needs and culture that affects its approach to regional governance. Of course, politics and political agendas are the most critical factors in determining the type and shape of a regional governing system.

I wish to thank the countless people who contributed to this study. Many people have influenced my thinking and understanding of regional governance throughout the years. For the current research, many people provided information through interviews and reports that informed the study. I am indebted to them and to others who have influenced me through their writings and presentations at conferences that I have attended. They have forced me to examine and reexamine my perceptions. I wish especially to acknowledge my wife and partner of many years for her emotional support and encouragement. She was extremely patient and understanding of the countless hours I spent developing the concepts that form the book as well as conducting research and writing and revising drafts of the chapters. Finally, I wish to thank the editors at Springer for their patience with me as I missed deadlines and submitted numerous drafts in my efforts to refine and improve the manuscript. Of course, I take full responsibility for any errors in the pages that follow.

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<http://www.springer.com/978-1-4614-1625-8>

Measuring the Effectiveness of Regional Governing
Systems

A Comparative Study of City Regions in North America

Hamilton, D.K.

2013, XII, 192 p., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-1-4614-1625-8