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Metropolitanization and Politics in the United States:
From Single Model to Multiple Patterns[1]

The United States has generally been regarded as the first suburban nation. In the last decade the suburbs have grown into the dominant component of the population and ultimately the electorate, surpassing the rural and purely urban components put together. The American historical, social scientific and policy literature is full of assertions about the distinctiveness of U.S. suburbanization. Yet there has been little systematic investigation of how this process and its consequences compare with the parallel processes in other countries. The proliferation of metropolitan areas in the United States (as of 2000, the U.S. Census Bureau designated 168 metropolitan areas over 200,000 in population) has aggravated the task of comparison. Metropolitan areas this size now contain over 76 percent of the U.S. population. Yet even accounts of metropolitan change that are limited to U.S. cities alone have generally focused on a subset of the largest cities. Comparative case studies generally take the most prominent "global" cities (New York, Los Angeles, Chicago) as their central focus (e.g., Sassen 1991, Abu-Langhod 1999), or at most the universe of the biggest metropolitan areas (e.g., Orfield 2002). Yet metropolitan areas with populations between 200,000 and one million encompass more of the population (24%) than the three U.S. global city-regions combined (21%). Metropolitan areas with populations of three million or less contain over half (51%) of the U.S. metropolitan population.

An overview of patterns in the entire universe of U.S. metropolitan areas in 2000 reveals the need for major qualifications to any standardized model of metropolitanization and suburbanization. Indeed, an exploratory cluster analysis points to at least four distinct types of United States patterns. Although all share commonalities with metropolitan areas around the world, and some general characteristics typical of the United States, these types differ significantly in social and economic composition, in spatial forms, and in patterns of political orientations. An analysis based on these types still points to some common U.S. characteristics, but demonstrates major subnational differences. Those differences, moreover, go beyond the regional contrasts that U.S. media and political analysts have pointed to in accounts of the division between "blue" (conservative, republican) and "red" ("liberal" or left-leaning) states (Fiorina 2003). Indeed, with ongoing shifts in population and urban economies, variations in urban regions and their politics have increasingly defied the traditional regional patterns of U.S. political culture.

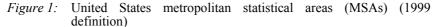# 1. Metropolitanization and surbanization in the United States

Like most other advanced industrial countries, the United States has been a metropolitan nation for decades. More than in many other settings, however, metropolitanization has increasingly taken the form of growing residential areas outside of central cities, but within metropolitan boundaries. Suburban areas have emerged as both the type of place where most people live overall, and a type that varies widely in importance in different parts of the country. Metropolitan areas based on U.S. census classifications, despite some anomalies linked to peculiarities in local jurisdictions in some parts of the country, furnish a broad overview of these trends.
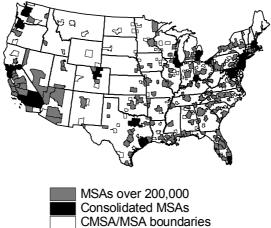
The U.S. Census Bureau has made detailed statistics on metropolitan areas widely available since the 1970 census. Designations center around contiguous groups of counties, or in the case of New England states, of towns, denominated Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs). The definition generally employs a multicriterial standard that incorporates population density, urbanized settlement patterns, commuting, and in some instances population growth. For instance, in the definitions applied to the dataset here (using the definition from 1999), commuting rates over 50 percent would qualify a county with low population density or urban areas. On the other hand, a commuting rate as low as 15 percent would suffice so long as the county has higher density, urban settlement and population growth. Over time, the Census Bureau has repeatedly adjusted the definition in ways aimed at capturing emerging patterns of settlement, including rising mobility.[2]

U.S. metropolitan definitions have generally been developed with little thought to enhancing the possibilities of international comparison. This has sometimes enabled improvements over the more transparent and translatable definitions in other countries. In addition to adjustments that have permitted metropolitan designations to reflect growing mobility, a new overarching category of "Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area" (CMSA) has recently supplemented the standard definitions. This category has permitted definitions that merge increasingly interconnected urban regions in the most urbanized parts of the country, such as the east and west coasts. As figure 1 shows, the eighteen CMSAs encompass wider functional areas analogous to the French *aires urbaines* for most of the largest metropolitan regions in the country. Beyond such centers as Los Angeles and New York, these designations amalgamate San Francisco with the Silicon Valley region surrounding San Jose, and Washington, DC with Baltimore.

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[2]   Documentation on current and historical metropolitan area definitions retreived from (http://www.census.gov/population/www/estimates/pastmetro.html) (August 2003).

Figure 1: United States metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) (1999 definition)

MSAs over 200,000
Consolidated MSAs
CMSA/MSA boundaries

At the same time, the designation of metropolitan boundaries along county lines, rather than the municipal lines employed in most other developed countries, poses a potential obstacle to cross-national comparison. Only in New England has the Census Bureau altered this practice to make municipalities the basic unit. Given the nature of municipal boundaries across much of the United States, it is difficult to gainsay the Census Bureau's choices in this matter. Because the process of municipal formation in most states has left not only how to set municipal boundaries, but whether a municipality will be formed to the choice of residents, portions of metropolitan areas remain outside of any municipality. Moreover, with frequent annexation and municipal formation in many states, municipal boundaries can change drastically over time. In these circumstances, counties offer the only stable, encompassing boundaries for use in metropolitan designations. Still, the comparatively large size of counties makes their boundaries at best a rough measure of where metropolitan settlement stops or starts. As figure 1 shows, for instance, the resulting definition of the Los Angeles CMSA encompasses the vast, uninhabited expanse of the Mojave Desert that stretches from the actual end of metropolitan settlement to the Arizona state line. If the resulting inclusion of larger sparsely populated areas poses relatively limited difficulties for comparisons based on population figures, territorial figures can be compared only with significant caveats to those derived from definitions based on municipalities.

By the year 2000, metropolitan areas defined in this way contained 218.6 million people, or 80.2 percent of the population of the United States. Nearly 97 percent of these metropolitan residents, or 211.5 million, lived in the metropolitan areas over 200,000 that comprise the IMO dataset for the United States (see figure 1). As table 1 shows, metropolitan forms had already grown by

1970 to dominate settlement in the Northeast, the Middle Atlantic and along the Pacific Coast. At that time, Gottesman's vision of a gigantic, sprawling "Megalopolis" (1961) marked a clear contrast with the settlement patterns across much of the rest of the country. More than half of the population in large parts of the Midwest and the middle South, and over a third in the Mountain States and the remainder of these other regions, still lived outside of metropolitan areas. The most dramatic shift of the last three decades came with the rapid spread of metropolitanization to these predominantly or largely rural parts of the country. By 2000, well over half of the population in the West North Central and East South Central regions lived in metropolitan areas. Over thirty years, the proportion in the Southern and the Mountain regions had risen by 14.9 to 21.7 percent. In the most heavily metropolitan areas like the Pacific and New England, metropolitan populations had remained stable or even slipped slightly over the 1990s as some metropolitan residents moved beyond metropolitan boundaries or left altogether. Although differences in census definitions introduce a caveat to these comparisons between censuses as well as to comparisons with other countries, the overall conclusion is unmistakeable. Metropolitan areas have become the dominant form of settlement throughout the United States.

Among commentators on U.S. metropolitan patterns and their consequences, the suburban dimension of metropolitan development has attracted more attention than metropolitanization itself. As both historians (Jackson 1986; Nicolaides 2001) and political analysts (Schneider 1992) have emphasized in equal measure, a hallmark of metropolitan growth and its social and political consequences in the United States has been how much of it has taken place in areas beyond the boundaries of central cities. The generous definition the U.S. Census Bureau has adopted to designate central cities (resulting, for instance, in 14 "central cities" within in the Los Angeles CMSA alone) limits the usefulness of official metropolitan area statistics as a means to gauge the overall scope of this trend.[3] Yet even these figures demonstrate a broad-based shift toward suburban areas (table 2). As Jackson in particular has shown, one of the most singular characteristics of suburbanization in parts of the United States was how early the process began. By 1970, as a result of processes that had begun on the east coast as much as a hundred years earlier, the Pacific coastal and Middle Atlantic states were already half suburban. By 2000, suburbanites emerged as a slight majority of the population nationwide. Unlike metropolitan expansion at large, suburbanization continued across the country through the 1990s. Many of the same regions that had remained over half rural as late as 1970, such as the East South Central and West North Central areas, retained rates of suburbanization in 2000 well below half of the population. Suburban expansion

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[3] For purposes of data collection in the IMO dataset for the United States, a different definition was applied. In addition to the most populous locality, any other locality with a population at least half that of the largest place was included as a central city. This produced only eleven pairs of central cities in a universe of 168 metropolitan areas.

Table 1: Metropolitanization in the United States 1970-2000, by region

	Metropolitan population				Percent of total population				Change	
	1970	1980	1990	2000	1970 (%)	1980 (%)	1990 (%)	2000 (%)	1970-2000 (%)	1990-2000 (%)
United States	140 091 624	169 374 534	198 478 073	218 606 870	69.3	74.8	79.8	80.2	10.9	0.4
Northeast	40 141 692	41 741 766	45 475 871	46 341 688	82.6	85.0	89.5	89.4	6.8	-0.1
New England	8 718 488	9 461 489	11 128 361	11 345 406	76.5	76.6	84.3	84.1	7.6	-0.2
Middle Atlantic	31 423 204	32 280 277	34 347 510	34 996 282	84.5	87.7	91.3	91.3	6.8	0.0
Midwest	37 658 182	41 712 881	43 691 403	46 588 079	66.6	70.9	73.2	73.7	7.1	0.4
East North Central	29 738 301	32 558 489	33 391 109	35 323 983	73.9	78.1	79.5	79.5	5.6	0.0
West North Central	7 919 881	9 154 392	10 300 294	11 264 096	48.5	53.3	58.3	59.9	11.4	1.6
South	35 206 379	50 330 983	63 361 799	72 598 672	56.1	66.8	74.1	75.3	19.2	1.1
South Atlantic	17 698 935	26 032 474	34 296 410	39 361 749	57.7	70.4	78.7	79.4	21.7	0.7
East South Central	5 400 272	7 611 883	8 761 525	9 705 238	42.2	51.9	57.7	58.5	16.3	0.8
West South Central	12 107 172	16 686 626	20 303 864	23 531 685	62.7	70.3	76.0	77.6	14.9	1.6
West	27 085 371	35 588 904	45 949 000	53 078 431	79.3	82.4	87.0	86.8	7.5	-0.2
Mountain	4 714 148	7 172 982	9 944 452	12 714 773	59.3	63.1	72.8	74.2	14.9	1.4
Pacific	22 371 223	28 415 922	36 004 548	40 363 658	85.3	89.4	91.9	91.7	6.4	-0.2

Note: Designations of regions by state: New England: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island; Middle Atlantic: New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania; East North Central: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin; West North Central: Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota; South Atlantic: Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia; East South Central: Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee; West South Central: Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Texas; Mountain: Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming; Pacific: Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington. (Does not include Puerto Rico.) On changing metropolitan definitions over time, see text.Source: U.S. Census data.

Table 2: Suburbanization in the United States 1970-200, by region

	Metropolitan population				Percent of total population				Change	
	1970	1980	1990	2000	1970 (%)	1980 (%)	1990 (%)	2000 (%)	1970-2000 (%)	1990-2000 (%)
United States	85 765 193	101 474 674	119 429 052	140 581 876	42.2	44.8	48.0	50.0	7.8	2.0
Northeast	24 704 191	25 769 791	29 273 300	31 280 994	50.4	52.4	57.6	58.4	8.0	0.8
New England	5 771 079	6 073 753	7 432 913	7 977 493	48.7	49.2	56.3	57.3	8.6	1.0
Middle Atlantic	18 933 112	19 696 038	21 840 387	23 303 501	50.9	53.5	58.1	58.7	7.8	0.7
Midwest	22 666 129	25 388 503	26 364 592	29 776 578	40.1	43.1	44.2	46.2	6.2	2.1
East North Central	18 234 513	20 182 130	20 533 528	22 960 390	45.3	48.4	48.9	50.8	5.5	2.0
West North Central	4 431 616	5 206 373	5 831 064	6 816 188	27.2	30.3	33.0	35.4	8.3	2.4
South	21 877 714	29 066 125	37 706 243	47 605 317	34.8	38.6	44.1	45.7	12.7	3.4
South Atlantic	13 195 468	17 508 799	23 775 630	29 979 302	43.0	47.4	54.6	58.0	14.9	3.4
East South Central	3 407 809	4 056 830	4 838 131	5 877 025	26.6	27.7	31.9	34.5	7.9	2.7
West South Central	5 274 437	7 500 496	9 092 482	11 748 990	27.3	31.6	34.0	37.4	10.1	3.3
West	16 517 159	21 250 255	26 084 917	31 918 987	47.5	49.2	49.4	50.5	3.0	1.1
Mountain	2 286 889	3 798 506	4 865 159	7 105 083	27.6	33.4	36.6	39.1	11.5	3.5
Pacific	14 230 270	17 451 749	21 219 758	24 813 904	53.7	54.9	54.2	55.1	1.5	0.9

Note: Suburban population includes those living in metropolitan areas who reside outside central cities. For regional designations see table 1.
Source: U.S. Census data.

concentrated in these areas, but also in the South Atlantic and Mountain areas. As further analysis will show, expanding municipal boundaries often masked even more dramatic patterns of territorial growth.

Despite general trends toward metropolitanization and suburbanization, the many regional variants suggest that metropolitan regions in the United States in fact followed a variety of local paths. Closer examination at the level of individual metropolitan areas reinforces this suggestion of regional contrasts with a series of further variations rooted in specific metropolitan areas as well.

2. Types of U.S. metropolitan areas: a classification

The common trends among U.S. metropolitan areas, and the similar conditions they confront in comparison with those in other countries, have often prompted comparative analysts to treat them as the same. Yet anyone attentive to the individual variety of metropolitan settings will find it difficult to designate a single place, whether Chicago, Los Angeles or Peoria, as the most typical U.S. urban region. What is needed are modes of comparative analysis that can highlight both the distinctively national patterns shared among most of these places and the systematic variations that make it problematic to speak of a U.S. "model". For exploration of these differences among broad resemblances, cluster analysis offers an especially useful tool. Once sets of distinct types of metropolitan areas with parallel distinguishing characteristics are separated out using this method, these types can then be compared for overall resemblances as well as differences.

The analysis here employed Two-Step Cluster analysis to separate out four distinct groups of metropolitan areas among the 164 in the universe of those with populations over 200,000.[4] Utilizing a Bayesian information criterion, the procedure used two steps to determine initial cluster centers and to define the shape of the clusters, in part by removing outliers. The procedure had the advantage of permitting a categorical variable (i.e., region) to be taken into account alongside scaled variables as a basis for assignment to clusters. A total of 29 variables along with the regional categorization were employed. Along with the hardship, fragmentation and segregation indicators discussed in subsequent sections, the cluster analysis added variables for several other features that distinguish types of metropolitan areas, including racial and ethnic populations, foreign-born residents, total population, population density,

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[4]   The procedure was carried out in SPSS. Although four clusters similar to these emerged automatically from versions run with some combinations of variables, the version reported here was generated on the basis of four stipulated clusters. For purposes of the analysis I excluded the three Puerto Rican metropolitan areas because some data were unavailable for them; and Anchorage, Alaska, in which the equivalence between municipal and metropolitan area boundaries made it impossible to separate a central city from the remainder of the metropolitan area.

housing built before 1950, advanced education, managerial and professional occupations, and the metropolitanization of the surrounding region. This analysis was only one of several employed in order to sort out the main groupings of cases. Most methods revealed similar variations on the following types of metropolitan areas.

As Table 3 shows, the cluster analysis demonstrates major variations across in numerous aspects of metropolitan settings that have generally been taken to distinguish U.S. metropolitan areas as a group. Although racial and ethnic diversity remains generally higher than in many European settings, it varies in the predominant groups as well as the overall degree. Although U.S. urban forms are generally more recent in origin than those in Europe, wide differences distinguish the U.S. metropolitan areas built largely before World War Two from those constructed predominantly afterwards. After around 1950, widespread automobile transportation on the one hand, and civil rights laws on the other, created very different conditions for metropolitan settlement. Although residential segregation by race and class has generally been found more systematic across the board in U.S. metropolitan areas than in those of other countries, the different historical conditions of urban development have contributed to substantial variations in these patterns as well. Finally, as in other countries, metropolitan areas have also diverged in their efforts and capacities to attract larger numbers of well-educated, higher income residents with managerial and professional jobs. In sorting out these variations, the cluster analysis arrived at four general categories of metropolitan areas.

Traditional Southern Metropolitan Areas. The first group, with the largest number of metropolitan areas (63, or 38 percent) is confined to the southern regions between Maryland and Texas. Smaller on average in population, these metropolitan areas contain the largest average proportion of African-Americans, but smaller Asian and Hispanic ones and the smallest proportion of foreign-born. With the growth of the South since World War Two, even the older metropolitan areas in this group now contain relatively small proportions of older housing. Segregation of African Americans here remains high, if lower than in cities with more older housing, while other forms of segregation remain comparatively modest. Proportions of higher status occupations and of college graduates range somewhat below the average for all metropolitan areas. Measures of hardship will also show generally higher levels here, but geopolitical fragmentation is lower and central cities remain subject to less hardship in comparison with their suburbs. Less privileged in comparison with the second category of sunbelt metropolitan areas, these are also less polarized.

New Service Metropolitan Areas. A second group of 37 metropolitan areas (or 23 percent) combines a number of Southern metropolitan areas with a handful of Northern and Midwestern ones, and the majority of Western ones. In addition to significantly more new housing, these places stand out from other metropolitan areas stand out by virtue of higher average levels of college education and larger proportions of professional and managerial jobs. Although racial segregation of African Americans remains lower in these

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settings, segregation between affluent and poorer income quartiles stands out as significantly higher than elsewhere. Larger proportions of foreign-born residents also mark these settings. Comparatively high in privilege like the older northern metropolitan centers, these places are distinguished by relatively low levels of geopolitical fragmentation and central city disadvantage.

Latino Working Class Metropolitan Areas. The poorest metropolitan areas belong to a small group (12, or 7 percent) located in California and Texas, with an average population of only 480,000. On average, these are majority (52 percent) Hispanic or Latino regions, with a foreign-born population (21 percent) four times the average of any other group. Most measures of hardship register the highest average in these settings. Most measures of education and income average the lowest. At the same time, in the midst of relative metropolitan hardship, measures of central city hardship remain generally lower than elsewhere.

Older Metropolitan Areas. A final cluster of 52 metropolitan regions (or 34 percent) includes generally older metropolitan areas, with on average 20 percent more of housing built before 1950 than in the other groups. Although most are located in the North and Midwest, four (Baltimore-Washington, Kansas City, Louisville, and Saint Louis) are in the South. In general, metropolitan areas in this group contain larger numbers of African-Americans but smaller proportions of Hispanic Americans, Asian-Americans and foreign-born residents. Reflecting housing patterns established prior to the passage of civil rights laws, segregation of African-Americans in particular, and to a lesser degree of Latinos, range significantly higher here than elsewhere. Partly as a consequence, segregation as measured by incomes remains somewhat lower. As the subsequent sections will show, these metropolitan areas confront higher levels of geopolitical fragmentation and generally higher levels of central city disadvantage. They also benefit from significantly higher levels of overall metropolitan advantage by comparison with places elsewhere in the country.

Within the United States, this classification points to at least four different metropolitan realities comprised of several associated characteristics. Although exploratory in nature, a cluster analysis of this sort serves in this instance to capture at least part of the diversity among U.S. metropolitan areas. In some respects, commonalities unite these types in comparison with other national patterns. In others, different groups compare in distinctive ways to the patterns of French, Canadian or British metropolitan areas.

Table 3: Characteristics of four U.S. metropolitan types

Variables		**Metropolitan types**				
		Traditional Southern MSAs	New Service MSAs	Latino Working Class MSAs	Older MSAs	All
Population	Mean	649284	1932332	480231	1785834	1286752
	S.D.	636303	2941917	207381	3367033	2448379
African-Americans	Mean	18.7%	6.8%	3.2%	9.1%	11.8%
	S.D.	12.1%	7.5%	2.1%	5.7%	10.5%
Asian	Mean	1.4%	4.9%	3.9%	1.7%	2.5%
	S.D.	0.6%	7.7%	3.4%	1.2%	4.1%
Latino/Hispanic	Mean	6.5%	15.0%	52.4%	4.4%	11.1%
	S.D.	8.7%	11.8%	20.3%	3.7%	15.6%
Proportion of Housing Units built before 1950	Mean	12.0%	13.5%	13.1%	33.1%	19.1%
	S.D.	5.5%	7.7%	4.4%	7.9%	11.7%
Managerial and Professional Occupations	Mean	31.0%	36.2%	27.5%	32.8%	32.5%
	S.D.	3.3%	4.4%	1.5%	4.0%	4.4%
College graduates	Mean	21.8%	29.6%	15.0%	23.5%	23.6%
	S.D.	4.3%	5.6%	3.1%	4.7%	6.0%
Segregation of highest from lowest income quartiles	Mean	35	40	36	35	36
	S.D.	6	6	5	5	6
Segregation of African Americans	Mean	55	48	47	65	56
	S.D.	9	13	10	10	12
Segregation of Latino residents	Mean	38	41	43	46	41
	S.D.	9	11	8	13	11
Foreign born	Mean	4.8%	12.1%	21.4%	5.0%	7.7%
	S.D.	3.1%	8.2%	6.6%	4.1%	7.1%

Source: Segregation figures (based on Metropolitan Statistical Areas and, for Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Areas, on the component Primary MSA with the largest population) from Lewis Mumford Center for Urban Research. Other figures compiled from U.S. Census 2000.

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3. Population dispersal and geopolitical fragmentation

One of the most widely held presumptions that this classification undermines stresses the dispersal of the U.S. metropolitan population, and the geopolitical fragmentation that has resulted. The four groups serve to highlight both the considerable differences in population density among U.S. metropolitan regions, and the even more dramatic variations in the fragmentation of metropolitan governments. Although the overall density of U.S. metropolitan areas remains low by European standards, densities in older metropolitan areas approach those of European regions. At same time, the overall level of governmental fragmentation in the newer metropolitan areas approaches European levels.

The more dispersed settlement of U.S. metropolitan regions has furnished one of the most frequent starting points for comparisons of U.S. metropolitan areas with those in parts of Europe and even in Canada. As early as the mid-nineteenth century, conditions largely peculiar to the United States fostered expansion of settlement out from urban centers (Jackson 1986): land was cheap, building materials plentiful, transportation relatively inexpensive, and legal structures and policies encouraged both land development and homeownership. From the early twentieth century and the New Deal, federal transportation, housing and tax policies have provided an array of incentives for middle-class families to move to suburban neighborhoods. A panoply of local governmental arrangements, from land use regulation to the local provision of primary and secondary education, reinforced this pattern (Nivola 1999). Throughout this process it would be difficult to underestimate the role that class and racial difference has played. Suburbanization offered well-to-do and even middle class whites to escape new urban immigrant populations. Especially from the first years of the twentieth century, it enforced a separation between both upper and middle-class whites and the African-American populations who flocked to many Northern and Western cities.

With the spread of metropolitan settlement to every major region of the contiguous 48 states, this pattern of dispersion remains a distinctive general feature of U.S. metropolitan areas. Not only the suburbs, but the central cities themselves manifest this overall contrast. If "sprawl" is equivalent to dispersed residential development, as Lopez and Hynes (2003) contend, then the U.S. has long been and is likely to remain the sprawl capital of the world.[5] Yet no comparative conclusion of this sort would be complete without attention to the significantly different ways that contrasting types of U.S. metropolitan areas compare with those elsewhere. For the types of metropolitan areas where the most development has taken place more recently, the contrast is much more dramatic than for older areas.

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[5] For an analysis that captures more fully the multiple dimensions of the term "sprawl" see Galster *et al.* (2003).

Because of the statistical distortions introduced by the use of counties to define metropolitan areas, central city population densities offer the clearest view of the comparative patterns. To do so it is necessary to distinguish the more familiar outliers from the overall tendencies. New York City, with over 10,000 persons per square kilometer, is one of the most densely populated places on earth. A small number of additional large U.S. central cities, such as Chicago, Philadelphia, and Miami, also have population densities equivalent to major urban centers anywhere. Even the densities of Los Angeles and San Francisco/San Jose, at 3041 and 2913 persons per square kilometer, exceed the levels in many (usually smaller) European cities. Yet overall, the older central cities increasingly resemble the more crowded European and Canadian urban settings in density while those in other metropolitan areas do not (table 4). At an average density of 2039, the central cities of the older metropolitan areas are much more heavily populated than all but the biggest Scandinavian or Canadian cities. In the New Service Metropolitan Area cities, average density falls by 40 percent despite a slightly larger average population. In the other Southern metropolitan areas, the average central city density drops again, by more than half, to just under 700 persons/square kilometer. If this density resembles levels in Western Canadian cities of similar size, it would be exceptional in Europe.

The difficulties that U.S. local jurisdictional forms pose for defining metropolitan boundaries make it difficult to draw as clear a set of comparative conclusions about suburban densities. The mean density of 148 persons/square kilometer in older metropolitan areas approaches the suburban average in Scandinavian metropolitan areas, and with uniform definitions based on municipalities rather than counties would undoubtedly range somewhat higher. Still, in New England, the one region where municipal boundaries determine metropolitan ones, suburban densities averaged only 245, and ranged as low as 117 (in Portland, Maine). Like central city densities, suburban ones fall off significantly in the other, newer types of metropolitan areas, to 102 persons/square kilometer in service centers and even lower elsewhere. In the Latino Working Class and Southern Metropolitan areas, where farms or essentially rural areas often persist in outlying parts of the suburban counties, density averages only 50 and 77 persons/square kilometer.

Overall, beyond the tendencies in the very biggest places, patterns of urban and suburban densities in older U.S. metropolitan areas do not diverge nearly as much from patterns elsewhere as those in the New Service, Traditional Southern and Latino Working Class MSAs do. In so far as sprawl is a problem of low-density settlement, it is clearly one more prevalent outside of the oldest metropolitan settings. Geopolitical fragmentation, as a concomitant to the sprawl of settlement itself, might be expected to follow suit. Yet fragmented local governments have in fact been much more a fact of life facing officials in the older metropolitan areas than elsewhere. Governmental fragmentation in these settings often outstrips that of metropolitan areas elsewhere with similarly high population densities. Many of the same newer metropolitan areas in which territorial population dispersal ranks particularly high in

international perspective have also achieved levels of government consolidation that most closely approach the rationalistic local government systems of Northern European countries (see table 4).

Table 4: Metropolitan density and geopolitical fragmentation, by type of metropolitan area

	Traditional Southern MSAs		New Service MSAs		Latino Working Class MSAs		Older MSAs		Total	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Area of MSA (km²)*	5689	2712	15342	20952	8314	6787	7218	5996	8544	11327
Population of MSA	649284	636303	1932332	2941917	480231	207381	1785834	3367033	1286752	2448379
Persons/Km²: MSA	107.6	59.7	145.6	123.0	93.6	72.0	190.4	136.5	141.4	110.7
Central City	698.7	265.5	1392.5	739.9	1353.5	689.3	2038.7	1554.8	1328.0	1118.6
Suburbs	76.8	53.2	102.5	104.4	49.6	34.9	147.7	102.3	103.1	89.2
Governments/ 100,000 people	9.2	5.7	7.8	8.4	6.3	3.6	30.0	19.0	15.3	15.6
Percent of MSA population in Central City	35.4	19.4	42.6	19.8	42.5	18.5	24.6	12.9	34.1	18.9
Geopolitical Fragmentation Index*	3.5	3.4	2.4	3.3	1.5	1.2	16.1	15.4	7.1	10.9
(Including Special Districts)*	6.8	6.2	5.7	4.7	6.9	5.3	24.8	23.4	12.3	16.3
N	63		37		12		52		164	

Note: Governmental Fragmentation Index from Ziegler and Brunn (1980).
Source: Compiled from U.S. Census 2000 Data, and Census of Governments 2002.

At least part of the reason for this contrast, which corresponds to a less dramatic difference between eastern and western Canadian metropolitan areas (Collin and Robertson, this volume), lies in the later historical development of settlement and urbanization outside of Northern areas of the country. In the northeast and Midwest, early twentieth-century Reform agendas including centralized administration emerged from confrontations with established institutions. In regions like the Southwest, these agendas furnished guiding principals for the initial establishment of local government forms (cf. Bridges 1997). Even today, procedures for annexation and municipal formation continue to offer opportunities in these less densely settled regions to consolidate governments that have been unavailable in the Northeast (Rusk 199-). The results have made for especially dramatic contrasts to the older MSAs in the New Service MSAs and Latino Working Class MSAs. As Older MSAs have retained a mean of 30 governments per 100,000 people, these areas have averaged only 6 to 8. As the central cities of the older MSAs retain just under a quarter of the metroplitan population on average, the central cities in these newer MSAs maintain jurisdiction over an average just over 42 percent of the population. According to an index that divides the first of these figures by the second (cf. Ziegler and Brunn 1980), older MSAs rank among the most fragmented metropolitan areas internationally, exceeding even the exceptionally high national average in France. New Service MSAs and Latino Working Class ones register far lower levels. The levels there and in the Southern MSAs approach and occasionally exceed those in European countries with long traditions of municipal consolidation, such as Sweden or Norway. As table 4 shows, inclusion of the special district governments that have taken on a large portion of local government responsibilities partly qualifies this contrast. But the average index rises nearly 8 points with these units included in the older metropolitan areas, and only 3-5 points in the other types.

Compilations of general purpose governments for the largest metropolitan areas, whether controlled for population or not, show a wide variety of local tendencies that correspond in no simple ways to differences among cities (National Academies Press 1999; Orfield 2002). As this analysis shows, not only this fragmentation but the dispersal of settlement itself differ in systematic ways that have major implications for comparison with metropolitan areas outside the United States. Within one set, high density goes along with high fragmentation; within others, low densities accompany low fragmentation.

4. Central city – suburban disparities

In the metropolitan United States, widespread sprawl and geopolitical fragmentation have often gone along with spatial inequalities. For decades, a well-established tradition of work focused on the largest metropolitan regions has highlighted the disparities between concentrated disadvantage in central

cities and privilege in the suburbs. A fully accurate comparative perspective on U.S. must not only taken into account the changes that are altering this perspective, but the variations in the overall patterns. Hardship in the cities and suburbs of the four metropolitan types demonstrates the considerable, sometimes dramatic variety among different U.S. settings. Although much of the stark differences found in previous studies persist in certain settings, this represents only one among several metropolitan realities. The central cities of most metropolitan regions continue to suffer from a relative disadvantage. Yet the overall disparities remain much less extreme in the large number of new or recently designated metropolitan areas.

In the 1970s and 1980s, during an era of growing fiscal austerity for local governments around the country, the theme of urban disadvantage gave rise to a considerable literature. At the same time that this disadvantage reflected the greater concentration of the most disadvantaged in central cities, observers also argued that it was partly a consequence of the growing political isolation of the cities within policymaking processes at the national and subnational levels (cf. Mollenkopf 1983). In one of the most systematic compilations of indicators to assess the relative hardship in central cities, Nathan and Adams (1976, 1989) compiled six indicators designed to capture various dimensions of disadvantage: Unemployment (percent of the civilian labor force unemployed); Dependency (persons less than eighteen or over sixty-four years of ages as a percent of total population); Education (percent of persons twenty-five years of age or more with less than twelfth-grade education); Income level (per capita income); Crowded housing (percent of occupied housing units with more than one person per room); and Poverty (percent of families below 125 percent of low-income level) (1976, p. 49).

The centerpiece of this analysis lay in a calculation of ratios between the suburbs and the central city for each of these measures in fifty-five of the largest 65 U.S. metropolitan areas as of 1970. The analysis compared aggregate suburban figures in a metropolitan area for each indicator with those for central cities. To compare the relative position of each part of the metropolitan area among different local settings, Nathan and Adams standardized the measures on a 100-point scale, then compared averages among all central cities and all suburban aggregates separately. Simultaneously, they employed the same indicators to construct a measure of relative city-suburban hardship for each city, based on the ratios between central city and suburban measures for each indicator. To measure cumulative disadvantage, the standardized differences between central city and suburban measures for all six indicators were summed, then again standardized to a base of 100. The resulting calculations showed that "well over half of the central cities in the SMSA's [the acronym in the 1970 census for metropolitan areas]... appear to face some measure of relative hardship." (p. 60). The biggest disparities appeared in a number of northeastern and Midwestern urban regions. A second study extending the analysis to the 1980 census found that the patterns in the first study had persisted and even been reinforced (Nathan and Adams 1989).

Especially since most of the indicators are widely available, the Nathan-Adams index furnishes a convenient and transparent tool for cross-national comparative measurement of the relative position of cities and suburbs (cf. Hoffmann-Martinot 2004). For a fully parallel cross-national comparison of this sort, the universe of cases encompass not only the original metropolitan areas in their study, but the more than hundred additional metropolitan areas that now constitute the IMO database for the United States. Although Nathan and Adams began their analysis with metropolitan areas measured in 1970 with populations of 500,000 or more, by 2000 there were 27 additional ones in this category. A host of additional metropolitan areas with populations between 200,000 and 500,000 also share similarly urban characteristics. The analysis here also incorporates the more recent concept of Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Areas. In capturing how secondary metropolitan cities such as Newark, New Jersey are part of wider metropolitan systems, the analysis here treats them as part of the metropolitan area rather than as central cities in their own right.[6]

Even with these alterations, application of the Nathan-Adams index shows that significant, overall central city hardship was typical of U.S. metropolitan areas in 2000 (table 5). For five of six indicators, central cities manifested more hardship on average than their suburbs as a group.[7] At 160, the aggregate index also demonstrates that these dimensions of hardship have often been cumulative. In contrast with Nathan and Adams earlier findings among the largest metropolitan areas, however, the aggregate disparities are less dramatic. The aggregate indicator of cumulative disadvantage may remain well below the average levels in France or Sweden, but does not differ significantly from the mean for Canadian metropolitan areas (Collin and Robertson, this volume). Among the ratios between suburban and central city for specific indicators, one (crowded housing) averages more than .50 lower than the Canadian average; the others range only .01, .02, .12, .19, and .26 higher. An "average" U.S. central city, these figures suggest, faces relative disadvantage but not necessarily hardship in relation to its suburbs.

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[6]   To correct for regional variations in the cost of living Nathan and Adams employed an adjustment for to the two income-related indicators based on the cost of living for a family of four in different regions of the country (Nathan and Adams 1976, p. 62). As a comparable cross-national adjustment of this sort would be difficult to devise, the analysis that follows will employ unadjusted figures that reflect regional as well as metropolitan variations. Indeed, one of the ways that the biggest urban regions differ from others is in their relation to these wider regional patterns (see Sellers 2002, Ch. 2).

[7]   The relatively strong presence of dependents in the suburbs was high in some of the wealthiest metropolitan areas, such as Naples, Florida and may result from large suburban families and wealthy retirees. This indicator may no longer be appropriate as an indicator of hardship, but we have included it for comparative purposes.

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Table 5: Measures of hardship in central cities, in suburbs, and between them

	Traditional Southern MSAs		New Service MSAs		Latino Working Class MSAs		Older MSAs		All	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Per Capital Income (MSA)	20497	2601	22888	3015	15414	3010	22283	2330	21231	3251
(Ratio C.City-Suburbs)	1.06	0.23	1.08	0.15	1.00	0.31	1.38	0.22	1.16	0.26
Poverty Rate (MSA)	13.1%	2.8%	11.6%	3.5%	22.2%	6.5%	10.0%	1.8%	12.5%	4.3%
(Ratio C. City-Suburbs)	1.65	0.56	1.85	0.62	1.09	0.38	2.80	0.88	2.02	0.88
Crowded Housing (MSA)	3.9%	1.6%	6.8%	4.2%	16.8%	4.2%	2.3%	1.3%	5.0%	4.5%
(Ratio C. City-Suburbs)	1.48	0.54	1.48	0.53	1.03	0.48	2.39	1.04	1.74	0.86
Low Education (MSA)	16.3%	3.4%	11.7%	3.9%	30.0%	7.0%	13.5%	2.5%	15.4%	5.8%
(Ratio C. City-Suburbs)	1.04	0.37	1.24	0.44	0.89	0.37	1.63	0.40	1.26	0.48
Unemployment (MSA)	5.6%	1.1%	5.5%	1.4%	11.0%	1.7%	5.2%	1.0%	5.9%	1.9%
(Ratio C. City-Suburbs)	1.60	0.57	1.36	0.37	0.98	0.35	2.05	0.56	1.64	0.60
Dependents (MSA)	38.4%	2.8%	36.6%	2.9%	42.2%	2.0%	38.6%	1.3%	38.3%	2.7%
(Ratio C.City-Suburbs)	0.98	0.08	0.89	0.09	0.99	0.04	1.00	0.07	0.97	0.09
Inter-city index	40	8	36	11	62	12	46	9	43	11
Inter-suburb index	32	6	29	8	68	16	25	4	32	13
Index of central city disadvantage (avg.)	32	10	30	8	24	11	49	12	37	13
Adjusted index of disadvantage	134	57	123	49	87	63	234	71	160	79
N	63		37		12		52		164	

As the breakdowns by different types of U.S. metropolitan areas show, this would be a misleading conclusion. The different metropolitan realities across the country vary widely both in levels of hardship among metropolitan areas, and in disparities between central cities and their suburbs. If the polarization Nathan and Adams found remains strong in some settings, in others the disparities are much more moderate.

In the Older MSAs, the diagnosis of hardship from Nathan and Adams persists. Recall that these places contain sizeable proportions of African-Americans, along with older patterns of housing that reinforce continued segregation for Blacks and other minorities in central cities. Partly as a result, the central city-suburban disparities persist in these metropolitan areas at much higher levels than in the other types. For three of the individual indicators, central city figures average more than twice the average for surrounding suburbs. At 234, the adjusted index in these settings ranges significantly higher than in the other types. As the inter-suburban and inter-city indexes also show, this is only partly a consequence of concentrated hardship in the central cities of Older MSAs. Average urban hardship as measured by the inter-city index exceeds the national metropolitan average by only 3 points, and falls far short of the levels in the Latino working class areas. The inter-suburban index of hardship is also lower than elsewhere, four points below the average for any other group and seven points below that for all metropolitan areas. The strongest suburban concentrations of privilege among any of the types thus reinforce the strong disparities of the Older MSAs.

Within the other types, more of the indicators show relative parity between central cities and suburbs, and the index of disadvantage ranges much lower. Although Nathan and Adams were careful to point to metropolitan areas with fewer disparities as well, some two-thirds of today's MSAs with populations over 200,000 lay outside their sample. Patterns of hardship also differ in important ways among the other three types as well. In the New Service MSAs, the highest average metropolitan per capita incomes for any of the types differ only eight percent between the suburbs and the central cities, and the aggregate index of metropolitan disadvantage falls 111 points below the levels in older MSAs. Southern MSAs, with significantly lower metropolitan incomes, maintain similar parity for two of the indicators but a slightly higher aggregate index.

The Latino Working Class MSAs have emerged as the metropolitan areas with the greatest hardship in the suburbs as well as the central cities. Regardless of the indicator, these settings register the highest levels of disadvantage. Indexes of hardship for the central cities in these settings average 19 points higher than the national central city average. For the suburbs, the index averages fully 36 points higher, more than twice the level for any other type. On each count, the figures for the suburbs average virtually the same as in the central city. As smaller metropolitan areas, often with large numbers of low-paid agricultural workers in outlying areas, these settings offer a view of metropolitan inequality that has gone virtually
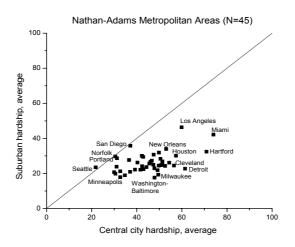
unremarked so far in the urban literature. A full comparative account of U.S. urban inequality needs to take this reality into account.

Partly because of the different metropolitan areas included here, the picture of the metropolitan inequality that emerges is much more varied and diverse than in the Nathan-Adams analysis. Figure 2 compares the inter-suburban index with the inter-city one, first for the original Nathan-Adams metropolitan areas (2(a)), then for the others in the IMO database. The 45 degree diagonal line represents parity between the index for each part of the metropolitan area in relation to all other suburban or central city measures. In none of the Nathan-Adams MSAs does the suburban index exceed the central city one. All but three register suburban hardship indexes under 35. The exceptions, Los Angeles, Miami and San Diego, in addition to being New Service MSAs, are all Sunbelt cities with large immigrant populations that, like many Latino residents of the Latino Working Class MSAs, reside increasingly in the metropolitan periphery. At the same time, indexes above 40 for most of the central cities manifest strong concentrations of disadvantage. Among the small number of central cities with sufficiently low hardship indexes to approach the level of their suburbs, four—Portland, Minneapolis, Seattle and San Diego—have been leaders in programs aimed at inner city revitalization and metropolitan planning.
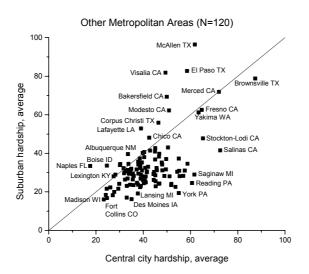
Among the other metropolitan areas, amid a wider range of variation in both indexes, there is considerably less evidence of consistent hardship concentrated in the central cities (figure 2b). A large proportion of the central cities in this group also register high levels of central city hardship. At the same time that these cities manifest the highest levels of urban hardship, however, most also score much higher than the largest cities in suburban hardship. Nearly all of these metropolitan areas with high levels of hardship in both cities and suburbs belong to the Latino Working Class MSAs. If these places are removed from the non-Nathan-Adams metropolitan areas, the median central city hardship shifts to 40 or below. The cluster of New Service MSAs among this group, including Madison, Wisconsin, Fort Collins, Colorado, and Raleigh, North Carolina, register much lower suburban hardship than any of the largest places as well as some of the lowest measures of urban hardship. For many more of these smaller settings, the hardship levels in the central cities fall to virtual parity with or even below the levels in their suburbs.

Systematic, updated application of the Nathan/Adams analysis to the entire set of U.S. metropolitan areas shows a wide variety of concentrations in hardship. The established presumption of privileged, uniform suburbs and impoverished central cities reflects only an aggregate tendency. In a substantial number of U.S. metropolitan areas, central cities have maintained rough parity with their suburbs or even emerged as areas of relative privilege. In a number of instances of the greatest hardship, central cities and suburbs have shared similar fates. Often, these aggregate tendencies have been the result of changes within suburban aggregates, such as the spread of disadvantage to parts of the suburbs (Orfield 2002; Katz and Lang 2002).

Figure 2: Overall central city and suburban hardship indexes compared

(a)

Nathan-Adams Metropolitan Areas (N=45)

(b)

Other Metropolitan Areas (N=120)

More recent researchers concerned with metropolitan patterns of advantage and disadvantage have sought to develop categorizations of different types of individual suburbs based on such criteria as social class, ethnic composition, size and patterns of growth.

5. Political behavior and suburbanization in the U.S.

With the coming of a clear suburban majority in the U.S. national electorate after 1990, commentator William Schneider (1992) proclaimed the dawn of the "suburban century" in national politics. In a country that has remained divided almost evenly between support for the Democratic party in the urban centers and the Republican party in the rural areas, the suburbs have emerged as the central, defining constituency that decides elections at both state and federal levels. Yet the implications of suburbization for political behavior remain surprisingly understudied in the United States. Both the variety of metropolitan areas and the growing diversity of the suburbs themselves also make it difficult to pin down precisely the differences that suburbs, or different varieties of suburbs, make.

One of the most consistent themes in the U.S. literature on suburbanization and politics is that the process has bred a kind of conservatism. A wide variety of analyses have point in different ways to this conclusion. Conclusions to this effect can be derived from public choice analysis (Fischel 2002), from analysis of subjective identifications and political preferences of those in the suburbs (Gainsborough 2001), or from the social composition of neighborhoods and associated networks to be an important influence on political orientations and participation (Huckfeldt 1986; 1987). As Sellers's comparative case analysis of neighborhood politics in French, German and U.S. cities suggests (1999), physical separation from the disadvantaged, concentration of privilege, dispersed residence, and lesser geographic concentration of needs for service and infrastructure may each undermine support among privileged groups for state intervention and public provision of public goods. Other accounts point to suburbs as centers for the mobilization of new middle and even working class movements opposed to such governmental initiatives as welfare programs, school desegregation, property taxes and more generally the Great Society agenda of the 1960s (Nicolaides 2002; Girr 2001; Davis 1990). In their anti-statism and fiscal conservatism, these trends may be seen as conservative variants of the "new political culture" (Hoffmann-Martinot and Clark 1998) of the late twentieth century in the United States culture.

In this way, suburbanization has laid part of the groundwork for what is often portrayed a rightward shift in U.S. politics over the last two decades. Political party dynamics over the 1980s and 1990s, which find strong parallels in the evolution of politics in Britain and other countries, can only fully be understood in light of this underlying shift. The Republican party

succeeded in shifting policy agendas rightward under Ronald Reagan and George Bush by appealing to the emergent suburban majority. The Clinton administration successfully built a winning strategy in successive presidential elections on successful appeals to the soccer moms and dads of this same suburban majority. By most accounts, the Clinton electoral coalition built on departures from traditional Democratic concerns, and appeals based on middle class issues like a balanced budget and welfare reform. Yet even in the years of 1992-2000, when Clinton and Al Gore conquered many of the suburbs, Democrats continued to win lower percentages there than in the central cities.

As a look at voting results from the razor's edge Presidential election of 2000 demonstrates, the central city-suburban divide varied widely in metropolitan areas around the country. Table 6 shows average differences between proportions for Al Gore and for George W. Bush in all of the metropolitan areas, as well as breakdowns by the four types. Here, due to the difficulty of obtaining breakdowns by central cities, the analysis takes compares results for the county containing the central city for those in all remaining counties. In most cases this resulted a generally accurate breakdown between the central city and other more urbanized parts of the metropolitan area, and the outlying counties.[8]

The patterns here demonstrate the considerable variation among metropolitan results, both in the central areas and in the suburbs. Although largely region-based, this variation extends in a number of instances to differences among metropolitan areas within the same region. A breakdown of the metropolitan areas by regions and by types at the same time gives a fuller sense of this variation (Figure 3).[9]

The most distinctive pattern appears in the Traditional Southern metropolitan areas. As figure three confirms, these range significantly below an even proportion of support for the two presidential candidates in 2000. Not only did the suburban counties in these settings average more than a 20 percent margin for Bush, but even the central counties voted Republican by nearly 6 percent more. Several metropolitan areas in Texas and Tennessee, the home states of the two candidates, furnish outliers in each direction from an otherwise narrow range of variation.

Similarly, metropolitan areas in the Northeast vote Democratic by an average margin of three percent in suburban counties and 17 percent in central counties, for a total of just under seven percent overall. As figure 3
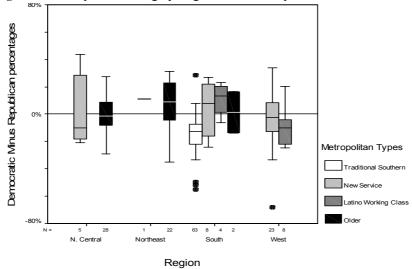
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[8] In 38 metropolitan cases, a single county encompassed the entire metropolitan areas. In these instances, the difference between central and outlying counties was set as zero. The use of counties made no difference for the overall metropolitan totals. For New England metropolitan areas, these statistics followed the Census Bureau's delineations by municipalities rather than counties.

[9] In Figure 3, the tops and bottoms of boxes correspond to the 25th and 75th percentiles, and the whiskers the 5th and 95th percentiles. Means are marked within the boxes.

Table 6: Presidential voting in 2000, by metropolitan area type and central or suburban counties

	Traditional Southern MSAs		New Service MSAs		Latino Working Class MSAs		Older MSAs		All	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Vote for Gore - Vote for Bush (MSA)	-14.39	14.31	-1.59	21.92	-2.79	16.87	2.58	16.05	-5.27	18.41
Difference Central-Suburban Counties	14.58	20.80	8.49	14.96	2.15	5.17	17.36	18.92	13.18	18.66
Vote for Gore - Vote for Bush (Central Counties)	-5.75	19.28	4.66	18.47	-1.23	3.10	13.71	22.53	3.10	21.08
Vote for Gore - Vote for Bush (Suburban Counties)	-20.33	17.01	-3.83	19.43	-3.38	8.25	-3.65	16.40	-10.08	18.66
	63				12		52		164	

Figure 3: Metropolitan voting by Region in the 2000 presidential election

shows, however, a greater degree of variation around these means. Moreover, the same Older metropolitan areas that tend Democratic in the Northeast also divide almost evenly between Democrats and Republicans in other regions, following a pattern close to the national average.

New Service metropolitan areas, the type most widely distributed among regions, averaged three points more Democratic than the national average. A largely similar pattern, with the exception of a slightly stronger lean toward the Republicans in central counties, could be found within the Latino Working Class metropolitan areas. Within the South itself, voting patterns had largely polarized between these two types of settings and the Traditional Southern ones: Charlotte versus Raleigh-Durham in North Carolina, and both El Paso and Austin versus Houston in Texas. In the other two regions, the North Central and the West, both New Service and Latino Working Class metropolitan areas leaned on average more Republican, but by modest margins and, in the case of the New Service Centers, with a wide range of variation. Indeed, with the outlier of Provo-Orem Utah removed, Western New Service MSAs break almost precisely evenly between the two parties.

One trend persists across all of the metropolitan groupings. Regardless of the region or the metropolitan type, suburban counties tend to vote more Republican than central counties. In the Older and Traditional Southern MSAs, the difference approaches or exceeds 20 percentage points. The much smaller difference in New Service and Latino Working Class settings is probably partly a statistical artifact of the generally smaller populations and more encompassing central county boundaries there. It may also be a result of the less dramatic central city hardship of both of these types of metropolitan areas.

If these suburban variations clearly point to common Republican trends in the suburbs, they also serve to illustrate the great variety, and ultimately the contingency, of suburban voting. A great deal of additional analysis would be necessary to understand the sources of these results and their relation to the social and spatial variations examined earlier. One helpful route toward clarification lies in separating out different types of individual suburban communities for analysis that can then be applied more broadly across different regions and different types of metropolitan areas.

In perhaps the most extensive effort of this sort, Orfield (2002) has developed both political and socioeconomic classifications of suburban jurisdictions for 25 of the largest metropolitan areas. On the political side, alongside a categorization based on party affiliations of state legislators, he employed a "safety index" based on a weighted history of a decade of elections to determine which localities within the metropolitan areas were more solidly Democratic or Republican, or represented more volatile "swing" districts up for grabs in elections (cf. Flanagan and Zingle 1974). At the same time, using local data on growth, segregation, and tax bases, he classified classified suburban towns in several categories: fiscally at risk and segregated; at-risk and older; at-risk and low-density; bedroom-developing; and affluent and very affluent job centers. This analysis produced clear predictions about some of the intrametrpolitan variations in micro-level political culture. Swing

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or volatile districts turned out to be predominantly either at-risk suburbs or the bed-room developing suburbs, both places where the stress over financing public services and infrastructure were most acute. Republicans generally held the advantage in the affluent job centers and often bedroom-developing areas. Democrats, in addition to the central cities themselves, found their greatest advantages in at-risk suburbs closer to the central city.

6. Conclusion: common tendencies but multiple models

Rather than a uniform U.S. model of metropolitan form and its politics, the most that can be said is that a number of common overarching tendencies exist. Across the country, settlement disperses consistently outside central cities. The most severe forms of metropolitan economic hardship, when they are present, concentrate more in the central cities than in the suburbs. Along with the generally higher levels of ethnic and racial diversity by comparison with other advanced industrial countries, racial and to a lesser degree ethnic and economic segregation, though gradually declining, remain relatively high. And across the country, suburbs tend on the whole to vote more Republican.

At the same time, a comprehensive examination of U.S. metropolitan areas points to variations that are not only rich but systematic. A variety of local and regional trajectories in social economic and political development, as well as persistent cultural contrasts, have produced identifiable categories of metropolitan areas that often differ nearly as much among each other as U.S. metropolitan areas do from their Canadian or even their French and Norwegian counterparts. The types separated out here, reflecting broad contrasts between earlier and later historical development along with regional differences, represent only one possible way of classifying this diversity for purposes of comparative analysis. Similar types are likely to characterize variations among metropolitan areas within other countries as well. Cross-national but localized accounts of variations within as well as between metropolitan areas offer the best prospect for a better understanding of these differences and commonalities.

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Appendix

U.S. Metropolitan areas over 200,000 in 2000, by metropolitan types

Older:

Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY, Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton, PA, Appleton-Oshkosh-Neenah, WI, Binghamton, NY, Boston-Worcester-Lawrence, MA-NH-ME-CT CMSA, Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY, Canton-Massillon, OH, Chicago-Gary-Kenosha, IL-IN-WI CMSA, Cincinnati-Hamilton, OH-KY-IN CMSA, Cleveland-Akron, OH CMSA, Columbus, OH, Davenport-Moline-Rock Island, IA-IL, Dayton-Springfield, OH. Des Moines, IA, Detroit-Ann Arbor-Flint, MI CMSA, Duluth-Superior, MN-WI, Erie, PA, Evansville-Henderson, IN-KY, Fort Wayne, IN, Grand Rapids-Muskegon-Holland, MI, Green Bay, WI, Harrisburg-Lebanon-Carlisle, PA, Hartford, CT, Indianapolis, IN, Johnstown, PA, Kalamazoo-Battle Creek, MI, Kansas City, MO-KS, Lancaster, PA, Lansing-East Lansing, MI, Louisville, KY-IN, Milwaukee-Racine, WI CMSA, New London-Norwich, CT-RI, New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-CT-PA CMSA, Peoria-Pekin, IL, Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City, PA-NJ-DE-MD CMSA, Pittsburgh, PA, Providence-Fall River-Warwick, RI-MA, Reading, PA, Rochester, NY, Rockford, IL, Saginaw-Bay City-Midland, MI, St. Louis, MO-IL, Scranton--Wilkes-Barre--Hazleton, PA South Bend, IN, Springfield, IL, Springfield, MA, Syracuse, NY, Toledo, OH, Utica-Rome, NY, Washington-Baltimore, DC-MD-VA-WV CMSA, York, PA, Youngstown-Warren, OH

Traditional Southern:

Amarillo, TX, Asheville, NC, Atlanta, GA, Augusta-Aiken, GA-SC, Baton Rouge, LA, Beaumont-Port Arthur, TX, Biloxi-Gulfport-Pascagoula, MS, Birmingham, AL, Charleston-North Charleston, SC, Charleston, WV, Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, NC-SC, Chattanooga, TN-GA, Clarksville-Hopkinsville, TN-KY, Columbia, SC, Columbus, GA-AL, Daytona Beach, FL, Fayetteville NC, Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR, Fort Myers-Cape Coral, FL, Fort Pierce-Port St. Lucie, FL, Fort Smith, AR-OK Greensboro--Winston-Salem--High Point, NC, Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson, SC, Hickory-Morganton-Lenoir, NC, Huntington-Ashland, WV-KY-OH, Huntsville, AL, Jackson, MS, Jacksonville, FL, Johnson City-Kingsport-Bristol, TN-VA, Killeen-Temple, TX, Knoxville, TN, Lafayette, LA, Lakeland-Winter Haven, FL, Lexington, KY, Little Rock-North Little Rock, AR, Longview-Marshall, TX, Lubbock, TX, Lynchburg, VA, Macon, GA, Melbourne-Titusville-Palm Bay, FL, Memphis, TN-AR-MS, Mobile, AL, Montgomery, AL, Naples, FL, Nashville, TN, New Orleans, LA, Norfolk-Virginia Beach-Newport News, VA-NC, Ocala, FL, Odessa-Midland, TX, Oklahoma City, OK, Orlando, FL, Pensacola, FL, Richmond-Petersburg, VA, Roanoke, VA, San Antonio, TX, Sarasota-Bradenton, FL, Savannah, GA, Shreveport-Bossier City, LA, Springfield, MO, Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL, Tulsa, OK, Waco, TX, Wilmington, NC

New Service:

Albuquerque, NM, Austin-San Marcos, TX, Boise City, ID, Chico-Paradise, CA, Colorado Springs, CO, Dallas-Fort Worth, TX CMSA, Denver-Boulder-Greeley, CO CMSA, Eugene-Springfield, OR, Fort Collins-Loveland, CO, Gainesville, FL, Honolulu, HI, Houston-Galveston-Brazoria, TX CMSA, Las Vegas, NV-AZ, Lincoln, NE, Los Angeles-Riverside-Orange County, CA CMSA, Madison, WI, Miami-Fort Lauderdale, FL CMSA, Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN-WI, Omaha, NE-IA, Phoenix-Mesa, AZ, Portland, ME, Portland-Salem, OR-WA CMSA, Provo-Orem, UT, Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill, NC, Reno, NV, Sacramento-Yolo, CA CMSA, Salt Lake City-Ogden, UT, San Diego, CA, San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose, CA CMSA, San Luis Obispo-Atascadero-Paso Robles, CA, Santa Barbara-Santa Maria-Lompoc, CA, Seattle-Tacoma-Bremerton, WA CMSA, Spokane, WA, Tallahassee, FL, Tucson, AZ, West Palm Beach-Boca Raton, FL, Wichita, KS

Latino Working Class:

Bakersfield, CA, Brownsville-Harlingen-San Benito, TX, Corpus Christi, TX, El Paso, TX, Fresno, CA, McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX, Merced, CA, Modesto, CA, Salinas, CA, Stockton-Lodi, CA, Visalia-Tulare-Porterville, CA, Yakima, WA

Western Europe