**Report on Networking Event "Metropolitan Regions Management: National and International Experiences, Advances and Challenges"[1] and Roundtable on "Management of Metropolitan Regions: National and International Experiences, Advances and Challenges"[2]**

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## Introduction

Significant centralization of power and policy making occurred in Brazil during the years of military dictatorship (1964 to 1985). Since 1985, the civilian government has promoted political decentralization, free market policies, and privatization. The legislative and judicial institutions have gained significant power, as have municipalities, which are recognized in the Constitution of 1988.[3] The current framework for intergovernmental relations in Brazil was established under the 1988 Federal Constitution and the City Statute (Law No. 10.257 2001).[4] In 2003, the Ministry of Cities was established with "responsibility of helping states and municipalities to consolidate a new urban development model embracing housing, sanitation and urban transport."[5] Current debate about metropolitan regions in Brazil focuses on what

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[1] Wed., March 24, 16:30-18:30 at The Fifth Session of the World Urban Forum, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

[2] Thurs., March 25, 9:00-13:00 at The Fifth Session of the World Urban Forum, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

[3] Wayne A. Selcher, "The Politics of Decentralized Federalism, National Diversification, and Regionalism in Brazil," *Journal of InterAmerican Studies and World Affairs* 40: 25-50.

[4] See "The City Statute: A commentary," Organizers Celso Santos Carvalho e Anaclaudia Rossbach. São Paulo: Cities Alliance and Ministry of Cities - Brazil, 2010 http://www.citiesalliance.org/ca/sites/citiesalliance.org/files/CA_Images/CityStatuteofBrazil_English_fulltext.pdf .

[5] Ibid, p. 3.

institutional form, authority, and service responsibilities should assigned to the metropolitan level.

Under the military regime in the 1970s, metropolitan regions in the state capitals were responsible for urban planning and providing metropolitan services. Celina Souza argues:

> [T]he institutionalization of metropolitan regions and the creation of agencies for their management during the military regime became associated with the regime's major negative features—authoritarianism and centralization—hence influencing future choices and leaving metropolitan governance in a political, institutional, financial and administrative vacuum.[6]

The state agencies that administered the metropolitan regions were dismantled after with the passing of the military rule. Today, there is some pressure to recreate the metropolitan regions as part of the national urban policy agenda. This is resisted by the large capital cities in each of the states.

### Comparing Metropolitan Governance in Federal Systems

The Forum of Federations organized a panel at the UN Habitat World Urban Forum to explore how federal systems organize metropolitan governance. The rest of this paper outlines the experience of other federal systems metropolitan regions and their governance based upon the presentations by experts on the United States, Germany, Australia, South Africa, and India.

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[6] Celina Souza, "Brazilian Metropolitan Regions: Regime Change and Governance Vacuum," *Public Administration and Development* 25 (2005), p. 341.

Jeremy Dawkins, former executive chairman of the Western Australian Planning Commission, Australia described the situation in Australia.  There are five metropolitan regions in Australia, each with a single primate city:  Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, and Adelaide.  However, the metropolitan areas themselves are fragmented into a number of cities.  The states—New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Perth, and Adelaide—are responsible for planning, providing and coordinating services in the metropolitan regions.  He pointed out that there is some criticism that states are not effectively managing their metropolitan regions and some favor the abolition of states.  There is some discussion of the need for greater role in metropolitan governance by the federal government.

Hans-Ullrich Karpen, Professor of Constitutional and Administrative Law, Germany described the situation in Germany and Europe.  He first highlighted differences in the nature of urbanization in the developed and developing countries.  This includes the absence of large megacities in developed countries of the west and slums on the scale of the global south.  Other differences are the greater adherence to the rule of law and democratic institutions and more extensive state welfare systems in Europe.  The welfare state also greatly reduces territorial inequalities.  In the contemporary era, metropolitan or regional governance involves multilevel governance arrangements rather than establishing formal metropolitan governments.  The European Union is an important layer that includes designation of European Regions that cross national boundaries and EU policies that emphasize incentives and subsidies to promote regional policy.  The EU includes a formal Committee of the Regions to "facilitate relations between regions and municipalities in Europe and the European institutions."[7]

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[7] http://www.cor.europa.eu/pages/PressTemplate.aspx?id=a1d1f21d-f0a6-44bd-ae63-348fbd7de09d

Jaap de Visser, Associate Professor, Co-ordinator: Local Government Project, Community Law Centre, University of the Western Cape, South Africa outlined metropolitan governance arrangements in South Africa.  Following the end of apartheid, race based existing local governments could not serve as a legitimate basis to organize metropolitan governance.  South Africa was described as a "reluctant federal state" with nine provinces, and 238 municipalities including the six metropolitan cities: Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni (East Rand), Tshwane (Pretoria), Cape Town, eThekwini (Durban), and Nelson Mandela Bay (Port Elizabeth).  Two tier metropolitan governments were set up in the other metropolises.  In the case of Cape Town, 60 local governments were amalgamated to form a single one.  Professor de Visser described an elaborate framework of formal and informal relations tying the Provincial Executive to mayors but one that worked to the disadvantage of metropolitan cities, which were treated like other much smaller cities.  Moreover, since most important policy is set within the ANC, which does not include the mayors, the mayors are not well-linked into policy debate and adoption.

Professor de Visser described the metropolitan collaboration model in Gauteng City Region to illustrate efforts at creating metropolitan governance.  There is recognition by the Province that the region is functionally interdependent and needs "strategic intelligence" capacity.  The effort has produced an economic development strategy, local observatory, regional branding, and revenue sharing.  However, no institutional arrangement has been formalized as of yet.  There is pressure to elevate other smaller cities to metropolitan municipality status because of dissatisfaction with the two-tier metropolitan governments.  The national government has not been very active in national urban policy or planning and provincial governments are now acting more aggressively in this area.

Om Prakash Mathur, Professor of Urban Economics and Finance, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, New Delhi, India, made a presentation on metropolitan governance in India. He pointed out that until the 1990s, India's federalism had little role for local government except as subordinate to the states. Since the 1990s, the Indian constitution has been amended to provide greater protection to local government. As a consequence, there is debate about how the system of local governance should evolve including (1) how to structure a system of metropolitan governance, (2) the extent of municipal autonomy, especially over their economy, and (3) whether to favor metropolitan cities, which house a majority of the poor; 25 metropolitan cities account for 10 percent of the country's population but 40 percent of its GDP. The nation's security depends on these metropolitan cities economic performance but states are reluctant to allow the central government to be involved in the metropolitan areas.[8] Since 2005, the National Urban Renewal Mission of the national government has sought to enhance investment in infrastructure and urban conditions. To receive the funds, the three levels—national, state, and local—must agree on the projects and others reforms, which should promote greater decentralization and improved governance.[9]

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[8] Sudha Mohan (2009) highlights a number of challenges to local governance in India including whether the national government is committed to political decentralization as well as limitations on the part of local government. While recognizing that there has been significant economic growth in city-regions in India, she finds that it has not led to social justice or improved the situation for the poor in the cities. "Challenges of Globalisation in Urban Local Governance," in Hans Löfgren, Prakash Sarangi, eds., *The Politics and Culture of Globalisation: India and Australia* (New Delhi: Esha Beteille), pp. 121-137.

[9] Mayraj Fahim, "Local government in India still carries characteristics of its colonial heritage," 24 May 2009. http://www.citymayors.com/government/india_government.html

Ronald K. Vogel, Chair, Department of Political Science, Professor of Political Science and Urban & Public Affairs, University of Louisville, United States made a presentation on management of metropolitan regions in the United States. He highlighted the fragmented system of local government including 89,476 local governments in the 50 states.[10] He identified four forces propelling urban rescaling including globalization of the economy and finance, political devolution and decentralization, metropolitanization (sprawl), and ascendance of market based philosophies. However, he stressed that these forces were mediated by the local and state political systems. Internal political dynamics including local political culture, legal-political administrative organization and processes and past practices are the primary factor leading to changes in territorial boundaries, local autonomy, and intergovernmental relations.

In the U.S., Professor Vogel pointed out that there are few cases of metropolitan government. In the past, city-county consolidation or two-tier metropolitan government was established in a handful of places.[11] The city-county consolidation approach is now considered antiquated given the spatial decentralization of American metropolises and the fact that the county boundary can no longer contain the metropolis. The few two or three tier metropolitan governments in the US have been relatively weak and try to avoid antagonizing other governments.[12] The National Academy of Sciences concluded that metropolitan government

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[10] United States Statistical Abstract, 2009, Table 416.

[11] The prominent cases of city-county consolidation are New York City in the late nineteenth century and a handful in the 1960s and 1970s including Jacksonville, Indianapolis, Nashville, and most recently in 2003, Louisville, Kentucky. There are three cases of two (or three) tier metropolitan government, Portland, Oregon, Minneapolis-St. Paul, and Miami-Dade.

[12] H.V. Savitch and Ronald K. Vogel, eds. (1996), *Regional Politics: America in a Post-city Age*, Thousand Oaks: Sage [*Urban Affairs Annual Reviews* v. 45).

was unlikely, that existing inequities in financing and providing urban services would not likely be fixed by metropolitan government, and that consolidated governments do not necessarily lead to greater efficiency, reduced costs, or reduced income or racial disparities between cities and suburbs.[13]

Professor Vogel stressed that rescaling cities in the US involves focusing on *governance* rather than amalgamation or significant territorial adjustment. The chart below illustrates the four major ideal-type rescaling options: consolidation, multi-tiered, linked functions (complex networks), and urban communities (common assembly). This ranges from mono-centric to polycentric in form. Today, territorial scale (e.g., mega-regions) makes extending city boundaries impractical. Reform notions that increased centralization and hierarchy lead to less costs or more efficient service provision have also been called into question. Therefore, a governance approach emphasizes focusing on regional problems issue by issues and determining what solution can be worked out through government collaboration and cooperation. This may be stimulated by state or federal mandates or incentives. For example, a Metropolitan Planning Organization must be established and produce regional transportation plans if the area local governments wish to access federal highway transportation grants to support their projects.[14]

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[13] Alan A. Altshuler, Harold Wolman, William Morrill, and Faith Mitchell, eds., *Governance and Opportunity in Metropolitan America* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1999). Most proposals for city-county consolidation or other metropolitan government arrangements are defeated and very few get on the ballot.

[14] See H.V. Savitch and Ronald K. Vogel, eds. (2002), "New Regionalism and Its Policy Agenda," *State and Local Government Review* 32 (Fall 2000): 158-238; Ronald K. Vogel and Norman Nezelkewicz, "Metropolitan Planning Organizations and the New Regionalism: The Case of Louisville, *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 32 (Winter 2002): 107-129.

Organizational chart of Metropolitan Governance
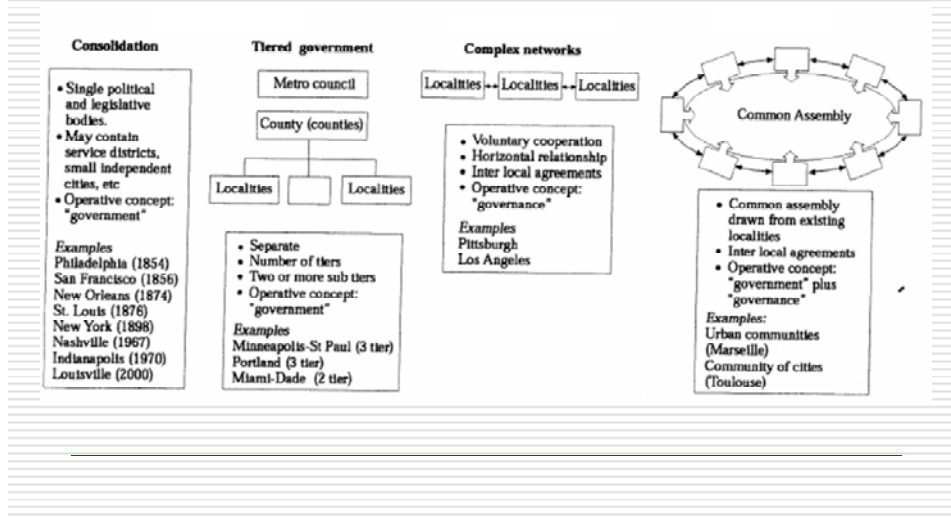
Professor Vogel concluded that in the US, metropolitan government is rare and unlikely. He suggested that regionalism was being pursued through governance strategies, although there is little evidence to date that these have been very successful. He recommended that metropolitan reformers ask, "What is the problem?" and focus on the problem rather than fixate on a solution. Unfortunately, in the US, great time and effort are spent on metropolitan government or city-county consolidation proposals that are unlikely to be adopted, fail to address the specific policy failures of current arrangements, and have unanticipated consequences. He also suggested that metropolitan reform be based upon empirical research rather than reform prescriptions.

Professor Sol Garson from the Observatorio das Metropoles made a presentation on metropolitan regions in Brazil. He explained that there are more than 10 cities with more than a

million people.  He identified as a significant problem the lack of public services for new urban residents.  The municipalities fail to meet their obligations to provide public services except in the area of education and lack the ability to plan the larger urban region.  Most of the states do not address metropolitan issues and there are no metropolitan governments in place.  He concluded, "no metropolitan vision comes out of the current system."  Following the presentation, several comments were made by expert observers in Brazil.  A major point of contention was whether the metropolitan cities or the states should take the lead in metropolitan governance.  That is, should it be a more collaborative city-regionalism from below or an imposed regionalism from above.

## Conclusion

The network event dialogue of April 24, 2010[15] revealed that metropolitan regional policy in Brazil had been introduced onto the agenda by the federal government, which recognized a need to promote regional policy.  However, the federal government cannot act on this issue alone and needs the consensus of the states and metropolitan cities, both of which are reluctant to embrace a new regional institutional government in light of the history and threats they may pose to municipal or state authority and political power relations.

The comparative cases of Australia, Germany/Europe Union, South Africa, Indian, and the United States reveal no single solution to improved metropolitan or regional governance.  In fact, as Table 1 below demonstrates, fragmentation and concerns about coordination are not unique to the developing world or global south.  Federal systems are constantly tinkering with

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[15] Regional disparities shape intergovernmental relations in Brazil,"
http://www.forumfed.org/en/events/event.php?id=382 .

intergovernmental relations.  Solutions appear to be tailored to the specific local historical

circumstance and political culture.

**Table 1Summary of Situation in Country Comparisons**

|  | Characterization | Regional policy Initiatives/Assessment |
|---|---|---|
| Australia | Fragmented metropolis | State |
| Germany/European Union | Fragmented metropolitan regions crossing national boundaries | Multilevel Governance |
| South Africa | Inherited metropolitan fragmentation reduced post-apartheid | Amalgamated metropolitan cities (six large) and two-tier metropolitan government elsewhere; Some collaborative models with province driving |
| India | Fragmented and poorly coordinated | National initiative to promote more integrated regional policy |
| United States | Fragmented metropolis | Limited and weak |

In Australia, the state governments are the primary jurisdiction responsible for

metropolitan policy and services by default if not design.  In Germany and more widely the

European Union, metropolitan regions are governed through complex multilevel governance

arrangements, which may differ by nation but reflect the fact that many metropolitan regions

cross-national boundaries.  In South Africa, the legacy of apartheid led to wide scale

amalgamation so that metropolitan city governments or two-tier metropolitan governments

manage regional policy and services.  In India, national initiatives may lead to greater

coordination and improved metropolitan governance. However, the multilevel governance

arrangements are much more fluid and uncertain. In the United States, there is little significant

regional policy, although national policy does promote some (weak) regional planning around

transportation. Selective states and city-regions have more robust metropolitan governance

arrangements and greater coordination in regional service delivery.[16]

This brief review cannot pinpoint a clear pattern of metropolitan regional management in

the world overall. It may be that a more focused and extended examination can result in greater

understanding of the range of models of metropolitan regional governance. This may also

provide greater insight into the alternatives federal systems may employ and their consequences

for good governance.

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[16] The most noted cases are Portland, Oregon and Minneapolis-St. Paul (Minnesota) Metropolitan Council.