

## Metropolitan dynamics and institutional fragmentation in the United States.

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Since 1950, the United States have witnessed a change in their urban dynamics: the advent of the metropolis. Before, the border was clear between big industrial cities, and small rural communities. At the end of the 19th century, large urban centers started to suburbanize. A key property of American metropolitan areas is that they are institutionally fragmented. There is no metropolitan government with a policy monopole on the area. This fragmentation is the product on an increase in individual mobility and a multiplication of new local governments.

In this paper, I will present an overview of the evolution of American metropolitan areas from 1950 to 2010. I will present the growing gap between the space individuals are experiencing in metropolitan areas—a growing space in which they are very mobile—and the space they are citizens of—a space that tends to decrease. There are geographical patterns of fragmentation. Metropolitan areas in the South or in the Great Lakes region tend to be less fragmented than areas in the Northeast or in the Central Midwest.

How does this growing fragmentation affect political and civic engagement? There is a generational shift from political to civic engagement, and I will present here reasons and empirical clues why there might also be a spatial shift. Spatial institutional fragmentation may not simply and generally deter political engagement, but deter it only at certain scales and also foster civic engagement.