
Territorial (Regional) Government or Governance
– Normative Dimensions & Policy Making Implications –

Introductory Questions

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Territorial Government or Governance

- *Our proposal is to initiate a collective work about the normative dimensions and policy implications of territorial government or governance arrangements*
 - *Indeed, there are few answers to what are the policy implications of “how do municipalities in large metropolitan areas cooperate?” or, “are metropolitan or regional institutions necessary?”*
 - *We believe, these are loaded with important normative dimensions.*
 - *Yet, in North American, the literature of the last half century addressing those questions has been greatly influenced by the public choice views.*
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- The institutional forms and functions of cities follow a variable geometry of institutional arrangements that have evolved from traditional multifunctional government into a multitude of uni-functional governance arrangements,
- All can be more or less accountable or responsive to a local community – community of electors / community of service recipients.

- Placing the primacy on political accountability and responsiveness seems to anchor local governing capacity in the local politics of a place;
- Shifting the priority towards the efficient delivery of services results in servicing the needs of market forces.

- All locality struggles to establish the appropriate institutional framework to meet the needs of its communities and its economic region

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- A single-tier municipality is a multifunctional local government that manages a wide range of functions.
- An upper-tier municipality has a limited number of functions but is not a special purpose body because it is multifunctional and overlaps a number of lower-tier municipalities.
- In other words, the functional capacity of an upper-tier municipality spans a much larger territory, one that encompasses all of the constituent lower-tier municipalities.
- Single-, lower-, or upper-tier bodies often have multifunctional policy capacities, are often elected, and never deliver services beyond the boundaries of their constituting local municipalities.
- Tiered-level governments are rooted in the political space from which they emerge. Each level is accountable to an electorate, either directly or indirectly.
- In most cases, a lower-tier body is directly elected and an upper-tier body is indirectly elected; hence, although their democratic accountability and responsiveness vary, they are entrenched in local communities

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- A variant is the joint services board, also called a regional district in British Columbia, Canada, or a special purpose authority, or public authority or district, in the United States.
 - This model's flexibility allows municipalities to cater servicing arrangements to an optimum economy of scale. A board manages municipal agreements that focus on efficient service delivery.
 - The flexibility of this institutional arrangement, however, loses its appeal once the number of functions to be managed by the board expands ...
 - Proponents of this model assert that the board remains accountable to the municipal level and it allows for strong accountability and responsive governance.
 - Others contend that complex inter-municipal agreements result in unclear bureaucratic and functional responsibility and lack of local control
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- The uni-functional special purpose body is used to service the needs of a community and, sometimes, disregards municipal boundaries.
 - The functional accountability of such bodies supports a non-territorial logic that emerges out of the level of satisfaction of their functional community which often shows support by paying a direct fee for service; this may be an advantageous tax instrument for municipalities that do not want to raise property taxes.
 - The councils or boards of these public bodies often are appointed and, traditionally, are used to administer parks, hydroelectric services, transportation services, education, and policing.
 - This type of arrangement expanded by about 40% in the USA since 1960, and nearly 30,000 of those were created in France since 1990.
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- **In sum:** The functional capacity of cities relies on two general types of local governing arrangements:
- The first type, the municipality, is a multifunctional or multipurpose local government; the second type is a uni-functional local government or a special purpose authority.
- Municipalities are elected bodies that have a wide number of functions.
- Special purpose authorities are rarely elected and, most of the time, deal with one government function only. As well, the inherent accountability of special purpose bodies relies on the function they deliver to a community being neither territorially identifiable nor even homogeneous.
- Most multifunctional local governments are, in essence, territorially identifiable and accountable and responsive to a community of individuals.
- Most special purpose bodies are not accountable to electors, but instead answer to appointed officials; although this limits direct public involvement in their affairs, they are closely scrutinized by private sector stakeholders.

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- *Theorization (Keating, 2004, Savitch and Vogel, 2009):*
- *The literature of the last half century addressing those questions has been greatly influenced by the public choice views:*
 - (1) *rational actors have very limited, if any, incentives to cooperate;*
 - (2) *focuses of efficiency (inclusion and exclusion)*
 - (3) *leviathan steps in to regulate cooperation.*
- *Other views include:*
 - *The metropolitan governance perspective focuses on equity and competitiveness,*
 - *The metropolitan government (old regionalism) approach that centres on efficiency and effectiveness – providing economies of scales – equity and redistribution. Policies reach the largest number at the lowest possible cost*
 - *The rescaling and re-territorialization view that centres on global competitiveness,*

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- *Our proposal is to initiate a collective work about the normative dimensions and policy implications of territorial (regional) government or governance arrangements.*
 - *Our primary assumption regarding the four broadly defined schools of thoughts on the government or governance of territories is that they have normative dimensions that have policy making implications, which are not well researched by scholars, or understood by policy makers.*
 - *Indeed, the answers to how do municipalities in large territorial / metropolitan areas cooperate, and, are territorial / metropolitan or regional institutions necessary, we believe, are loaded with important normative dimensions.*
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- *Our ambition is to work out, and compare across case studies those normative dimensions to clearly identify the various facets of those arguments and illustrate them across case studies looking at:*
 - *(1) The shift from government to governance that is now widely reported in literature. Governance is more about the processes of public policy and engagement than it is about the structure and institutions of government. Governance is a more contemporary concept than government, reflecting the appreciation scholars give to the dynamic context within which public policy is played out.*
 - *(2) The shift in focus of processes to engage citizens and interest groups reflects a broader change in the social context which impacts local and other levels of government. From the citizens' point of view however, the gains of governance are not easily asserted, while it might on the contrary appear that it dangerously threaten representative democracy. This preoccupation justifies the recent rise of democratic accountability issues. Governance has to be questioned as to its impact on political, social and spatial inclusion or exclusion.*
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Territorial Government or Governance

- *(3) The shift towards new intergovernmental relations, legal statutes, institutional arrangements – and policy implications – that become critical to the capacity of every local community to compete in the market economy because they articulate and mediate the activities of agents into the global world.*
 - *Federal and unitary states adapt and mediate those international markets and governance changes with varying difficulties. Both Europe and North America over the last 15 years have witnessed an important wave of local government and multi-level governance reforms at the end of the 20th century.*
 - *1) central governments are less able to regulate, to organize fiscal equalization, and to reduce inter-regional or provincial competition;*
 - *2) central governments actually encourage intergovernmental competition at lower government levels; and, most important to our discussion,*
 - *3) decentralizing or devolving constitutional reforms and/ or statutory prerogatives have implications for intergovernmental relations, local institutional structures, and the governing capacity of lower-level governments, in particular.*

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- *To distinguish this work from other forums where these issues have already been discussed, we wish to emphasize the spatial dimension of governance:*
- *The central questions that a territorial approach to accountability helps to answer are:*
 - *(1) is territorial competitiveness based on functional efficiency?*
 - *(2) Are territories only places aimed at retaining economic flows or are they still at the service of their populations?*
 - *(3) Who makes everyday governance: elected people who govern territories or technicians who do more than administrating it?*

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Thank You for your attention!

Anne Laure & Emmanuel