

American Political Science Association
Standing Committee on Civic Education and Engagement

**Working Draft, Part II:
Civic Engagement and the American Metropolis¹
version 7-19-04**

Yvette Alex-Assensoh
Luis Fraga
Stephen Macedo
Robert Putnam
Kathy Cramer Walsh
Archon Fung
Todd Swanstrom
Jeffrey Berry
Christopher Karpowitz
Rob Rodgers

Table of Contents

Section I. Introduction: Local Opportunities and Obstacles to Civic Engagement	2
A. The Promise and Perils of Local Politics	3
B. Changing Patterns of Metropolitan Structure.....	11
Section II: Avenues of Civic Engagement in Metropolitan Areas	18
A. Engagement with Electoral Politics	19
B. Engagement with Institutions of Government Between Elections.....	28
C. Engagement with Non-Governmental Institutions and Groups	38
Section III: Policy Prescriptions and Recommendations for Research (rough draft)...	52
A. Encourage Citizen Empowerment and Mobilization	54
B. Overcome fragmentation without suppressing engagement	55
C. Increase Racial and Ethnic Inclusion and Economic Integration.....	59
D. Allow Real Political Conflict in Local Government.....	61

¹ This draft of the Civic Engagement Report has been a true collaboration with substantial contributions from each member of the committee and their co-authors. It also draws on two extremely useful workshops: the first at the Kennedy School in December 2003 and the second at Princeton University in February 2004. We have had substantial input from David Barron, Gerald Frug, and Xavier de Sousa Briggs. We appreciate the important contributions of Jane Junn, Edward Glaeser, Larry Bartels, Donald Green, Iris Marion Young, and many other participants at those meetings. We also appreciate suggestions offered at roundtables held at the 2003 and 2004 Midwest PSA annual meeting and at the 2003 APSA annual meeting. Non-committee panelists at the Midwest included Clarence Stone, Michael Jones-Correa, Eric Oliver, Douglas Rae, and Sidney Verba, and our APSA roundtable included James Jennings and Greg Markus.

Readers are kindly asked to suggest crucial missing topics, additional text, cuts, alternative sources, competing claims and evidence, etc. (by contacting any committee member or co-author or sending to macedo@princeton.edu). *This is a work in progress: we would appreciate (and will happily acknowledge in the final product) your constructive input!*

Civic Engagement and the American Metropolis

- 96.2 percent of all elected officials serve at the local level.²
- Since 1970, the number of African-American elected officials has increased nearly five-fold, with close to half of the 9,101 holding office in 2001 serving at the municipal level, and another 21.3% elected to school boards.³ Of all Latinos holding public office, 70% served in local office in 2002.⁴
- 24% of respondents said that they belonged to or worked with a community group or neighborhood association in a 2003 national survey sponsored by the Pew Internet and American Life Project.
- An estimated 50 million people belong to over ¼ million homeowners associations, with well over one million becoming actively engaged by serving on boards and committees.⁵
- In 1967, 47 percent of U.S. adults said they always vote in local elections, but in 1987, only 35 percent reported doing so.⁶ A 1990 survey found that only 21 percent of eligible voters reported voting in all local elections.⁷
- The number of candidates nationwide running for local offices dropped by 15 percent between 1974 and 1994.⁸ A recent survey of California city clerks found that 17 percent of mayoral candidates ran unopposed, and the New York Times reported that 7 California cities cancelled elections in 2003 because of a lack of candidates.⁹
- Between 1973 and 1994, the percentage of people reporting that they attended a public meeting on town or school affairs declined from approximately 22% to 12%, and the proportion reporting that they had served on a committee for some local organization declined from 10% to just over 5% over this same time period.¹⁰
- In 1990, 38% of people with family incomes over \$75,000 participated in some informal community activity, and 6% had been a local government board

² 1992 Census of Governments. Volume 1. Government Organization, No. 2. Popularly Elected Officials. Need to update with 2002 Census of Governments, to be released soon.

³ David A. Bositis, Black Elected Officials: A Statistical Summary, 2001, Washington, DC: Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, 2003. [sm: We should be careful that these numbers are based on the same large pool of local elected officials that we specified earlier – 494,000 – given that very large base, these numbers strike me as small.]

⁴ National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund, 2002 National Directory of Latino Elected Officials, Los Angeles: NALEO, 1993.

⁵ Homeowners association data from the Community Association Institute.

⁶ Verba et al, *Voice and Equality*, 72.

⁷ Verba et al., 1990 Citizen Participation Study, calculated on weighted data.

⁸ Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, pp. XX.

⁹ New York Times, September 21, 2003, p. 30 (National Edition).

¹⁰ Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, p. 43. But see Verba et al, *Voice and Equality*, 72 who report slight increases in some forms of community engagement.

member. But of people with family incomes under \$15,000, just 13% participated in community activity, and a mere 1% held a board membership.¹¹

- SOMETHING ON THE RISE OF INNOVATE STRUCTURES, SUCH AS NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS, CO-PRODUCTION OF PUBLIC SERVICES, DELIBERATIVE REFORM?

Section I. Introduction: Local Opportunities and Obstacles to Civic Engagement

Place matters for civic engagement. While we recognize the importance of individual-level characteristics such as education and income level, the local circumstances in which citizens live and work have significant independent effects on the quantity and quality of civic engagement. Place contributes to what might be called an individual's sense of political self. A majority of Americans identify with their city or town and report that living in their city gives them a sense of community. These identities in turn influence political attitudes and behavior. Place shapes the issues individuals face as well as their responses to those issues. Place also influences the development of social networks, which help determine patterns of political mobilization. In addition, place has important institutional implications: the type of community largely determines the nature and capacity of its institutional structure, which, in turn, affects the nature of public participation. All in all, the characteristics associated with place shape both the opportunities for and the obstacles to civic engagement.

Metropolitan places are changing – growing and spreading and fragmenting – and these changes affect citizens' engagement with their communities. As in Part I of this report, where we chronicled declines in participation at the national level, many of the facts cited above show an erosion of many traditional forms of local political

¹¹ Verba et al., "Voice and Equality," p. 189-190.

participation. But when we look closely at patterns of local engagement, it is clear that the diversity of localities comprising metropolitan regions face different challenges and distinct opportunities. The goal of this section is to identify the place-related factors that work to enliven or dampen civic engagement at the local level. Because the nature of the places we live in are determined in large part by political choices, our overarching interest is this: *How can we reshape local institutions, policies, and practices to encourage residents of metropolitan areas to get more involved in working together, especially across geographic, racial, ethnic, class, and jurisdictional boundaries?*

Cities and other local political units provide crucial opportunities for civic engagement, despite their problems. But political scientists have lately paid too little attention to local politics, with some notable exceptions. What Robert Dahl said of the city nearly forty years ago is even truer now: “it confronts us with a task worthy of our best efforts because of its urgency, its importance, its challenge, the extent of our failure up to now, and its promise for the good life lived jointly with fellow citizens.”¹²

A. The Promise and Perils of Local Politics

Even as the country has grown, local institutions have helped spur civic engagement by keeping government accessible to ordinary people. The crazy quilt of political boundaries affords an almost endless array of occasions to get involved in local politics. In 2002, there were 87,525 units of local government in the United States,

¹² Dahl, p. 964.

including 35,933 municipalities, towns, and townships, and 13,506 school districts.¹³

Nearly half a million elected officials – 24 out of every 25 elected officials in this country – serve at the local level. In addition to simply growing in number, many local governments – especially in larger cities – have created innovative forms of citizen participation. Given the multiplicity of access points, it is relatively easy to get involved in local politics, and local governments provide especially significant political opportunities for racial and ethnic minorities.¹⁴

Many have argued that a healthy democratic life rests upon local institutions. “Local institutions are to liberty what primary schools are to science;” as Tocqueville put it, “they put it within the people’s reach; they teach people to appreciate its peaceful enjoyment and accustom them to make use of it. Without local institutions a nation may give itself a free government, but it has not of the spirit of liberty.”¹⁵ By “liberty” Tocqueville meant the capacity of free citizens to govern themselves in private and public life. It is through interaction with local institutions that citizens can make a direct connection between their own interests and those of their political community.

In fact, the observation that democracy depends upon small political units is as old as serious reflection about politics itself. When Aristotle argued that a democracy should be small enough so that citizens could at least recognize one another he expressed what would be common wisdom for centuries. So much so that an “extended republic” of the sort championed by Madison and the other founders was a radical innovation,

¹³ U.S. Census Bureau, 2002 Census of Governments, Volume 1, Number 1, Government Organization, December 2002, p. v.

¹⁴ Rufus P. Browning, David H. Tabb, and Dale Rogers Marshall, eds., Racial Politics in American Cities, New York: Longman Publishers, 2003

¹⁵ *Democracy in America*, NY: Anchor Books, 1969, p. 63.

considered by many to be an impossibility – even though its federal nature would preserve vital space for the virtues of the small republic.¹⁶

Indeed, local participation is important not just for its own sake but because it enhances the capacity of citizens and leaders to participate in the broader arenas of state and national politics. And the political stepping stones provided by local institutions seem especially important for those whose voices the nation has ignored. As we will see, many Black, Latino, and, increasingly, Asian officials gain office at the local level, in part because they have numerical advantages in some areas, making local politics especially important for those traditionally under-represented groups that are geographically concentrated.

The value of *local* government flows from its closeness to the people – closeness in the sense that city hall is nearer than Capitol Hill, city boundaries are smaller than those of an extended republic, and here one’s fellow citizens are more likely to be one’s familiars. That democracy flourishes in small communities is a claim as old as systematic reflection on politics: “[T]he city-state must be small in area and in population. Its dimensions are to be human, not colossal, the dimensions not of an empire but of a town, so that when the youth becomes the man he knows his town, its inhabitants, its countryside.”¹⁷

Ease of access at the local level is coupled with direct potential benefits of involvement. The actions of local governments greatly affect the value of residential

¹⁶ But, of course, many of the original states were already too big and so Jefferson, who cared about democratic life as much as any of the founding generation, warned his fellow Virginians to “divide the counties into wards.” Notes on the State of Virginia, in the context of his discussion of citizenship and education; Need cites, and precision

¹⁷ Robert A. Dahl, “The City in the Future of Democracy,” *APSR* 61(December 1967): 954. Dahl here summarizes long-standing vision of local politics that includes both the ancient Greeks and Rousseau.

property, the primary economic asset of the majority of Americans. In addition, local public services are “vital to the preservation of life (police, fire, sanitation, public health), liberty (police, courts, prosecutors), property (zoning, planning, taxing), and public enlightenment (schools, libraries).”¹⁸ Local governments spend close to a trillion dollars on service provision, and in doing so they directly address ordinary citizens’ tangible interests and everyday concerns.

Recent research supports the claim that smaller units of government invite political participation and civic engagement. In his study of citizen participation in eight hundred towns and cities in the United States, for example, Eric Oliver finds that rates for three kinds of engagement – contacting officials, attending board meetings, and attending organizational meetings – decline significantly as the population of one’s place of residence increases.¹⁹ In a decades-long study of participation in town meetings in Vermont, Frank Bryan reports that town size is by far the best predictor of participation rates at town meetings: far greater percentages of residents attend town meeting in small towns.²⁰

Smaller places seem likely to help draw citizens toward participation for reasons in addition to those we have mentioned. Dahl and Bryan assert that individuals participate more in smaller places because they are more likely to be able to influence outcomes; this echoes part of Benjamin Constant’s explanation for why citizens of

¹⁸ Robert Lineberry, *Equality and Urban Policy: The Distribution of Municipal Services* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1974), p. 10.

¹⁹ Eric Oliver, “City Size and Civic Involvement in Metropolitan America” in *American Political Science Review* Vol. 94, No. 2 (June 2000): 361-73. Oliver (2001). See also Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, pp. 205-207, including references.

²⁰ Frank Bryan. *Real Democracy: The New England Town Meeting and How It Works* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003). See also Christian Albrekt Larsen. “Municipal Size and Democracy: A Critical Analysis of the Argument of Proximity Based on the Case of Denmark” in *Scandinavian Political Studies*. Vol. 25, No. 4 (2002): 317-32.

ancient city states took politics more seriously.²¹ It may also be that alienation is lower and political interest greater in smaller places, and residents of smaller places seem more likely to be mobilized.

Robert Putnam, Wendy Rahn, and others muster a great deal of evidence showing that residents of smaller places are more likely to trust other people as a general matter, and those who exhibit such attitudes are more likely to behave in a trustworthy manner. Residents of smaller places are far more likely to be involved in their communities: they are more likely to volunteer, work on community projects, and give to charity.²²

But we pay a political price for the civic advantages of localism. This is not surprising. If our only aim were to maximize the opportunities for civic engagement, Americans would have done well to side with the Anti-Federalists and reject the Constitution's "extended republic." We care not only about the quantity of political participation, but also its quality and also the quality of governance. "Extend the sphere," as Madison argued in the Federalist #10, "and you take in a greater variety of parties and interests; you make it less probable that a majority of the whole will have a common motive to invade the rights of other citizens; or if such common motive exists, it will be more difficult for all who feel it to discover their own strength and act in unison with each other." Madison did not argue that politics on an extended scale would inhibit all forms of political cooperation equally. To the contrary, in a larger polity "unjust or dishonorable purposes" are especially inhibited because "communication is always checked by distrust in proportion to the number whose concurrence is necessary."²³

Nevertheless, it is hard to escape the suggestion that greater size and diversity of interests

²¹ "The Liberty of the Ancients Compared with that of the Moderns," ...

²² Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 136-138, 119.

inhibits political cooperation, even if these inhibitions apply most especially to dishonorable political purposes.

Also relevant to the quality of governance is the fact that different levels of government in our federal system have specific advantages when it comes to promoting particular political values and interests. Many of the Anti-Federalists preferred the sorts of aims associated with smaller and more homogeneous communities: [quote from Storing volume, limit immigration and keep the political community small in order to preserve morals and keep the blood pure]. Nearly two centuries later, Grant McConnell argued that larger and more diverse constituencies are more liable to promote encompassing public interests:

[I]t is not meaningless to speak of public values. They are public in the sense that they are shared by broad constituencies, usually, they must be achieved through mobilization of large constituencies. ... A political order composed exclusively of small constituencies, whether drawn on lines of geography, function, or other dimensions, would exclude a variety of genuine values of real concern to the members of society. Many of the values Americans hold in highest esteem can only be realized through large constituencies, some indeed only by a genuinely national constituency.²⁴

Paul E. Peterson has given greater precision to McConnell's insight, emphasizing that local political institutions are less likely than the federal government to promote certain sorts of policies – including redistribution and policies with broad and unconfined benefits – because movement is easier across localities than across national boundaries. While national governments have some control over entry, naturalization, and eligibility for public benefits, local governments do not. When local communities raise taxes in order to aid to the disadvantaged, they furnish incentives to the better off to exit and the

²³ The Federalist Papers, Rossiter edition, p. 83.

²⁴ Grant McConnell, Private Power and American Democracy, p. 366.

worse off to enter.²⁵ Small communities are relatively incapable of pursuing broad-based political goals.

In thinking about civic engagement in the American metropolis, two central and related dilemmas have drawn our attention. First, there is the *dilemma of scale*: small size may increase opportunities for engagement in various ways, but smaller political units have their limitations, including the fact that they are less capable of promoting inclusive, broad-based, unconfined, and redistributive political goals.

In addition, there is evidence of a *dilemma of diversity or heterogeneity*. On the one hand, more diverse localities seem far more likely to realize democratic hopes of tolerant diversity, vitality, creativity, and innovation. A large and diverse democracy needs settings in which citizens learn how to encounter, comprehend, and negotiate a myriad of differences: of opinion, race, class, religion, ethnicity, and lifestyle. Though cities have often contained neighborhood enclaves, the democratic promise of city life is that in their daily routines people encounter others who are different from themselves. As Iris Marion Young notes, "City dwellers frequently venture beyond ... familiar enclaves ... to the more open public of politics, commerce, and festival, where strangers meet and interact."²⁶ Douglas Rae similarly emphasizes that diverse and inclusive early 20th century cities, where all classes and races lived and worked in relatively close proximity to each other, helped realize core aspirations of democracy: "Central to the democratic experience is contact with difference – other races, other nationalities, other

²⁵ Paul E. Peterson, "Federalism, Economic Development, and Redistribution," in J. David Greenstone, ed., *Public Values and Private Power in American Politics* (U. Chicago: 1982), p. 257. Because local institutions are far more permeable they are in a much weaker position than the national government when it comes to pursuing greater equality and other policies that generate "widespread repercussions," or broad and unconfined benefits, see McConnell, ch. 10.

²⁶ Justice and the Politics of Difference; this idea is echoed by Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, pp. 208-10.

economic classes, other language groups.”²⁷

On the other hand, there is evidence that greater size and greater diversity or heterogeneity – including racial and ethnic heterogeneity – increase distrust and undermine a shared sense of community. The greater diversity likely to be found in cities may engage citizens of different interests and backgrounds in a rich slate of meaningful political issues, but the greater levels of conflict that may accompany democratic politics among a diverse citizenry may prove off-putting and difficult to some.²⁸ [FURTHER CLARIFICATION AND MORE EVIDENCE HERE? IS THERE A TEMPORAL ELEMENT WITH RESPECT TO HETEROGENEITY, NOT INVESTIGATED IN THE POL SCI LITERATURE: THE CONTACT NECESSARY TO OVERCOME SOCIAL CONFLICTS IN THE LONG RUN GENERATES DISTRUST AND TENSIONS IN THE SHORT RUN? OLDER FORMS OF HETEROGENEITY NO LONGER SALIENT, AFTER ALL: IRISH, ITALIAN, ETC.]

In sum, local political institutions may involve significant benefits but also costs. The two dilemmas we have identified mean that certain valuable political goals and interactions may only be possible in larger, more diverse political communities, but there the quantity of engagement may be inhibited by size, remoteness of governmental units, greater social distrust, and the diversity of interests and groups. This does not mean that the local institutions should be abandoned by those who favor civic engagement, even were this possible. Here more than elsewhere in this report we must grapple with both limited evidence and hard tradeoffs. But we are not completely in the dark and institutional and policy choices offer the possibility of managing tradeoffs in better and worse ways in the specific contexts of American metropolitan areas.

²⁷ Rae, *Urbanism*, pp. 30-31, quoting Richard Sennett.

²⁸ Social scientists find a negative relationship between community heterogeneity and the quantity of civic engagement. Rahn and Rudolph 2004; Alesina and La Ferrara 2000; Costa and Kahn 2003. See also Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002.

B. Changing Patterns of Metropolitan Life

The whole pattern of local community life in America has changed enormously over the last 50 years, and these changes have profound impacts on the nature of civic engagement in metropolitan America. The specific form of these changes – the particular patterns of growth and decentralization, and increased inequality across places – are the result in part of particular political structures, laws, policies and institutions that are subject to our collective control.

American metropolitan areas are growing in population but they are spreading out even faster: the American metropolis has experienced a dramatic “decentering” over the last sixty years. They are adding urbanized or developed land at a much faster rate than they are adding population.²⁹ The vast majority of Americans now live in metropolitan areas (80.3% or 226 million people in 2000).³⁰ The population of the XX largest metropolitan areas has increased NEED SPECIFICS HERE. The U.S. has become a predominantly suburban nation in which residences and places of employment are far more separated than they were in the early decades of the 20th century. As the U.S. has suburbanized, Americans have increasingly sorted themselves into a balkanized array of local governments, and many now reside in “ex-urban” areas that may lack strong general-purpose local governments.

²⁹ William Fulton, Rolf Pendall, Mai Nguyen, and Alicia Harrison, “Who Sprawls the Most? How Growth Patterns Differ Across the U.S.” The Brookings Institution Center on Urban & Metropolitan Policy, July 2001.

³⁰ Marc J. Perry and Paul J. Mackun with Josephine D. Baker, Colleen D. Joyce, Lisa R. Lollock, and Lucinda S. Pearson, “Population Change and Distribution, 1990 to 2000,” U.S. Dept of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, U.S. Census Bureau, April 2001, p.5, <http://www.census.gov/prod/2001pubs/c2kbr01-2.pdf>, last accessed January 13, 2004.

In some parts of the country, principally the South and the West, central cities have annexed territory and grown along with the suburbs. But in most metropolitan areas, incorporation laws facilitate the formation of new suburban municipalities, constraining the ability of central cities to grow through annexation. From 1952 to 2002 the number of municipal governments grew by 2,624 – from 16,807 to 19,431.³¹ More strikingly, the number of special district governments – usually serving only one function, such as fire protection or sewers – almost tripled in the half century after 1952, growing from 12,340 to 35,356. The average metropolitan area now has a complex and, to many, confusing array of over 100 governments, including school districts and other “special districts” and regional authorities.³²

While the multiplicity of political institutions in metropolitan areas means smaller jurisdictions and more access points for civic engagement, jurisdictional fragmentation can undermine the quality of the engagement. Among the distinctive features of American metropolitan life is the fact that government is broken up and localized – politics is fragmented. Political boundaries may work to sever social relations, as well as political relations, cutting off the free flow of communication, mutual understanding, and a sense of shared fate.³³ In addition, many issues that fall across jurisdictional lines including transportation, housing, education, land use, employment, and law enforcement, appear on local agendas only in an attenuated form, if at all. Thus, many

³¹ Figures on the number of governments are from the Census of Governments as reported in the U. S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2002 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2002), p. 260.

³² G. Ross Stephens and Nelson Wikstrom, Metropolitan Government and Governance: Theoretical Perspectives, Empirical Analysis, and the Future (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 19.

³³ As Iris Marion Young states, “It is appropriate to ask whether the boundaries of a given polity correspond to the definition a polity ought to have in order properly to respond to moral requirements of justice.” Inclusion and Democracy 222. See Michael N. Danielson, *The Politics of Exclusion* ().

metropolitan areas are unable to confront a variety of important public issues.³⁴

For example, the St. Louis region, one of the most fragmented in the country, is comprised of over 750 units of government.³⁵ In such a context, issues that affect the metropolitan area as a whole fall through the cracks. And the sheer extent of this fragmentation all but precludes voluntary inter-jurisdictional cooperation. Instead, municipalities within the metropolitan region often pursue their particular interests at the expense of any regional good, and sometimes at great cost even to their own local self-interest.³⁶

Fragmentation of metropolitan regions is especially problematic to the extent that political borders coincide with patterns of racial and economic segregation. True enough, it no longer makes sense to think simply in terms of the “city-suburb doughnut;” the stereotype of suburbs as lily-white middle-class enclaves is increasingly false.³⁷

Metropolitan regions in the United States have become markedly more diverse over the past fifteen years. But while it is true that suburbs taken as a whole are more diverse,

³⁴ NEED HERE TO CITE KENNETH JACKSON. Many years ago, Dahl and Tufte argued that smaller units of government create greater opportunities for citizens to engage effectively in collective decision-making, but larger governments are more likely to have the capacity to address some public problems effectively. Dahl and Tufte, “Size and Democracy” 1973.

³⁵ East-West Gateway Coordinating Council, 1999, *Where we stand: The Strategic assessment of the St. Louis region*, 3rd edition, St. Louis, p. 29.

³⁶ See David Barron, Gerald Frug, and Rick Su. *Dispelling the Myth of Home Rule: Local Power in Greater Boston* (Cambridge, MA: Rappaport Institute, 2004). Local governments take actions that harm others, such as development projects that allow one town to dump traffic on neighboring towns while capturing most of the sales tax revenues. The entire region can bear the costs of infrastructure improvements while only few well-placed suburbs garner a disproportionate share of the fiscal benefits of development.

³⁷ The proportion of minorities in the suburbs of the nation’s 102 largest metropolitan areas grew from 19.3 percent in 1990 to 27.3 percent in 2000. Frey, p. 158. Across all metropolitan areas the rise in minority populations was even more substantial: the numbers of African-Americans, Hispanics and Asians residing in suburbs increased by 38, 72 and 84 percent, respectively, between 1990 and 2000. Logan, “Ethnic Diversity Grows,” p. 248. Fifty-four percent of Latinos now reside in suburbs, as compared to 36% who reside in central cities. A report from the PEW Hispanic Center classifies this Latino population growth as having four distinct patterns in metropolitan areas: established Latino metros, fast growing Latino hubs, new Latino destinations, small Latino places. Roberto Suro and Audrey Singer, “Latino Growth in Metropolitan America: Changing Patterns, New Locations,” a report of the PEW Hispanic Center, July 31, 2002, p. 1, Figure 1.

suburban diversity is mostly *between* suburbs, not within them. Across the larger patchwork of suburban jurisdictions, individual suburbs are likely to be characterized not by integration and diversity, but by residential segregation and homogeneity. While there is some evidence that black-white racial segregation fell in American metropolitan areas after 1970,³⁸ it remains stubbornly high. One measure of racial segregation reports that, on average, about half of all blacks would have to move across census tracts to achieve an equal distribution of the population.³⁹ If somewhat greater racial integration has followed the movement of whites out of cities, economic segregation has become worse over the past thirty years. In 1970, the neighborhood of the average poor person was 13.6 percent poor; by 2000 that figure had risen to 24.6 percent. Similarly, the average affluent household lived in a 30.8 percent affluent neighborhood in 1970; but that figure rose to 33.8 percent in 2000.

As a result of residential segregation, suburbs vary tremendously in fiscal capacity, socioeconomic conditions, and demographic composition.⁴⁰ In the twenty-five metropolitan areas studied by Myron Orfield, for example, the fiscal disparity among

³⁸ Edward L. Glaeser and Jacob L. Vigdor, "Racial Segregation: Promising News," in Katz and Lang, 2003, pp.211-234; David M. Cutler, Edward L. Glaeser, and Jacob L. Vigdor, "The Rise and Decline of the American Ghetto," *Journal of Political Economy* 3 (1999): 455-506.

³⁹ Glaeser and Vigdor, "Racial Segregation."

⁴⁰ Myron Orfield has captured this variety of suburbs with a typology focused on the fiscal condition of each municipality. Orfield 2001, Tables 14 and 18. Orfield's typology of suburbs includes at-risk segregated, at-risk older, at-risk low-density, bedroom-developing, affluent job centers, and very affluent job centers. Nowadays, white flight is no longer the principal factor driving suburbanization. Increasing suburban diversity has been driven partly by the "new immigration": the dramatic movement of people from non-European countries to the United States since the repeal of racially discriminatory immigration laws in 1965. Yvette M. Alex-Assensoh and Lawrence J. Hanks, eds. Black and Multiracial Politics in America (New York: New York University Press, 2000). See also Alex-Assensoh 2000; and Ron Schmidt, Rodney Hero, Andy Aoki and Yvette M. Alex-Assensoh, "Political Science, The New Immigration and Racial Politics in the United States: What do we know? What do we need to know?," which was presented at the 2001 American Political Science Association Meeting.

suburbs increased eight percent between 1993 and 1998.⁴¹ Economic disparities across local communities are promoted by competition among local political communities for well-off residents and businesses, a competition spurred by local control over property tax revenues and the capacity of local communities to practice exclusionary zoning.

The resulting lack of diversity within suburban jurisdictions depresses the quality of civic engagement. As Rae explains:

[T]oo often, the end of urbanism has undermined [the democratic] experience by promoting social homogeneity within municipalities, leading to the evolution of regional hierarchies in which “purified communities”... bring likes together, safe from contact with persons different from themselves. ... [T]he bottom rung more often than not lies in the formerly working class neighborhoods of central cities, where opportunity is scarce, danger is commonplace, and democracy in any plausible sense seems out of reach.⁴²

Instead of being microcosms of the larger society, our local governments are too frequently characterized by racial and especially economic stratification.

Some scholars have argued that homogeneity within suburbs depresses not just the quality but also the quantity of civic engagement by decreasing the likelihood of controversy that would mobilize people to become more involved.⁴³ While that claim is debated, it is clear that the homogeneity within many suburban jurisdictions deprives local leaders of the opportunity or necessity to engage the full spectrum of issues that face a metro region. "Boutique" suburbs – homogeneous upper income enclaves – trivialize and dampen the quality of public engagement because important issues involving race and class never make it onto the agenda. As McConnell observed of narrow constituencies in general: “[I]t often appears that the achievement and defense of

⁴¹ Myron Orfield, *American Metropolitcs: The New Suburban Reality* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2002), p. 60.

⁴² Rae, *Urbanism*, pp. 30-31, quoting Richard Sennett.

particular status and privilege are the central goals of narrow and cohesive groups.”⁴⁴

Acting more like private interest groups than truly public institutions, havens of privilege keep their agendas narrow by practicing the politics of exclusion.

Stratification is especially harmful to those who live amidst concentrated disadvantage.⁴⁵ Although many poorer neighborhoods exhibit impressive levels of civic activity, people’s capacity to become involved in civic affairs is circumscribed where inequalities are “cumulative rather than offsetting”.⁴⁶ Surrounded by neighbors who may not have developed critical civic skills, residents of disadvantaged communities have comparatively fewer effective models of civic engagement. In addition, they may face other impediments to civic engagement, such as greater health problems, transportation difficulties, and safety concerns. Even if they overcome these obstacles, they are likely to encounter local public institutions that lack the resources to respond to their needs.

In sum, American metropolitan areas have become among the most diverse urban areas in the world, but the fragmented jurisdictional fabric of many major metropolitan areas – including local control over property tax revenue and social services -- has facilitated a sorting of populations by class and race that damages civic life by thwarting the effective pursuit of many inclusive political goals and short-circuiting the public encounters that bridge social and economic divisions among citizens. For both the privileged and the disadvantaged, the sorting of people into fragmented municipalities with radically different demographic profiles narrows civic identities, polarizes political

⁴³ Citation Needed: Eric Oliver?

⁴⁴ McConnell, *Private Power*, 365.

⁴⁵ Compounding the problem is the fact that local political institutions and groups in civil society are not doing all they could do to incorporate and facilitate the civic engagement of new immigrants.

⁴⁶ Douglas W. Rae, *City: Urbanism and Its End* (New Haven, Yale U Press, 421); Alex-Assensoh, *Neighborhoods, Family and Political Participation in Urban America* (New York: Garland Publishing);

interests, and dampens important forms of civic engagement. Simply put, highly segregated localities defy pluralist democracy.

Segregation and stratification across metropolitan localities are not the only obstacles to a vibrant local civic culture. Civic activity is shaped by a variety of place-related factors besides demographic differences and jurisdictional boundaries. Sprawl itself may dampen civic engagement, as may other aspects of community design that emphasize the private over the public.⁴⁷ The greater reliance on the auto, the decline of walking, the absence of front porches, and other aspects of sprawling suburban design create what some urban planners have called environments of soullessness and “placelessness.”⁴⁸ Williamson found, for example, that citizens in pedestrian-friendly cities with high mass transit use have an increased propensity to “participate in civic life in more demanding ways than simply voting.”⁴⁹

[URBAN FORM AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT. WE NEED A PARAGRAPH ON JANE JACOBS/ RAE ON THE CIVIC FAUNA OF THE OLD URBANISM ... HERE? WHAT ARE SPECIFIC CLAIMS AND EVIDENCE? THIS IS SURELY AN AREA WHERE MORE RESEARCH IS NEEDED. A FEW SENTENCES?]

Finally, one of the least-studied trends, with potentially profound implications for civic engagement, is the growth of population in unincorporated areas. Usually located

John Bolland and Debra Moehle McCallum, “Neighboring and Community Mobilization in High Poverty Inner-City Neighborhoods”, *Urban Affairs Review* 38:1(2002): 42-69. (add Berry’s chapter). .

⁴⁷ For an introduction to the sprawl literature, see Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Jeff Speck, *Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream* (New York: North Point Press, 2000). Many observers have linked sprawl with civic disengagement. Ethnographer M. P. Baumgartner describes a New Jersey suburb of the 1980’s as having a culture of atomized, isolated individualism, a “moral minimalism” according to which suburbanites keep to themselves, ask little of their neighbors, and seek nothing in return. Paraphrasing Putnam here, p. 210.

⁴⁸ Peter Calthorpe, *The Next American Metropolis* 1993. Peter Katz, *The New Urbanism: Toward an Architecture of Community* (1994).

⁴⁹ Thad Williamson, “Does Sprawl Hinder Citizenship? The Impact of Local Socio-Spatial Characteristics on Nonelectoral Political Participation.” Paper presented at the 2004 annual meeting of the Urban Affairs Association, Washington DC.

on the fringes of metropolitan areas – sometimes dubbed “exurbia” – unincorporated areas may have limited or weak institutions of local government. We do not know much about the civic consequences of living in unincorporated areas, in part because it is difficult to generalize across the diverse set of institutions that service these areas.

Section II: Avenues of Civic Engagement in Metropolitan Areas

With this background in mind, consider the central avenues through which residents of metropolitan areas engage with government and each other to influence policies, solve public problems, and enhance their community. The menu of opportunities for local civic engagement begins with government institutions: electoral politics, including voting, campaigning, and office holding. It also includes various forms of participation in deliberation and policy development between elections. These opportunities for civic engagement stretch from service on traditional city councils and school boards to an expanding array of other public committees, commissions, and councils that are receptive to citizen input. Many large cities are finding innovative ways of bringing government closer to the people by creating neighborhood councils, citizen advisory boards, and other means for citizens to participate in the provision of local services. A growing movement seeks to identify additional opportunities for citizens to deliberate together about local issues, as we see below.

But citizen involvement is not restricted to formal institutions of government. A rich array of non-governmental institutions, committees, organizations, and other efforts exist for the purpose of influencing political choices, mobilizing citizens to act in local

politics, and empowering politically disadvantaged segments of the population.⁵⁰ Of course, here as elsewhere, observers worry that some forms of political activity and association may detract from the larger public good. Homeowners associations, for example, may in effect encourage members to disengage from the larger political community, or so some worry.

A. Engagement with Electoral Politics

The most common and arguably least demanding form of citizen participation at the local level is voting. Local politics offers a prodigious array of opportunities for casting ballots. In 1992, there were 494,000 *locally* elected officials, including not only mayors and city councilors, but also elected officials who serve on numerous school boards, county offices, commissions, and the like. A remarkable 96.2 percent of the nation's elected officials serve at the local level.⁵¹

Turnout in local elections is, however, notoriously low. In general, the lower the level of election, the lower the turnout. Although 62% of eligible voters claimed in 1990 to have voted in all or most presidential elections since they were old enough, only 54% claimed to have voted in all local elections.⁵² Even these rates are likely over-reported, as turnout figures acquired through municipal records put the average turnout in municipal elections in cities over 25,000 in 1962 and 1975 at 31%, compared to an average national

⁵⁰ In part III of the report, we turn to the many non-political civic groups, including chambers of commerce, fraternal organizations, churches, and other voluntary associations (like bowling leagues), enhance personal connections and communications and facilitate ordinary people's capacity for civic engagement.

⁵¹ 1992 Census of Governments. Volume 1. Government Organization, No. 2. Popularly Elected Officials. Need to update with 2002 Census of Governments, to be released soon.

⁵² Verba et al. 1990 Citizen Participation Study data, estimates calculated on weighted data.

election turnout rate from roughly the same period of 59%.⁵³ Most municipalities reformed elections in the late 1800s or early 1900s to hold local elections in off years and in the spring, rather than at the same time as higher-level, November elections.⁵⁴ The result is that a wide array of elected officials – from mayors and council members to law enforcement and judicial officials – are simultaneously easily accessible, yet selected by a very small fraction of the constituents they represent.

Beyond the act of voting, elections provide city residents with the opportunity to participate in various ways in the process of campaigning and electioneering. An important part of these efforts is the attempt to mobilize citizens into the political process. As we emphasized in Part I, scholars have convincingly demonstrated that mobilization enhances political and civic engagement.⁵⁵ Getting someone to participate in public life is a bit like dating; it's a lot more likely to happen if someone asks, and asks in person. In a study of 30,000 registered voters in New Haven, Connecticut, for example, Donald Green and Alan Gerber find that personal, face-to-face contact substantially increases the probability that individuals will turn out to vote, while direct mail had only a slight effect on turnout and telephone solicitation had no effect at all.⁵⁶ In a later study of local elections in six cities, Gerber, Green, and David Nickelson found that face-to-face

⁵³ Robert L. Morlan, "Municipal vs. National Election Voter Turnout: Europe and the United States," *Political Science Quarterly* 3(1984): 461. ***Does someone have: Politics in States and Communities, 4th ed by Norman Luttbeg? If so, could you check the turnout rate in local elections cited somewhere on pp 93 to 97 and insert it here? ... cited in an unpublished paper ...***

⁵⁴ John P. Pelissero, "The Political Environment of Cities in the Twenty-first Century," In John P. Pelissero (ed) *Cities, Politics, and Policy: A Comparative Analysis*, (Washington: CQ Press, 2003), 18.

⁵⁵ See, for example, Steven J. Rosenstone and John Mark Hansen, *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America*. New York: Macmillan, 1993 and Sidney Verba, Kay L. Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady, *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995.

⁵⁶ Alan S. Gerber and Donald P. Green. "The Effects of Canvassing, Telephone Calls, and Direct Mail on Voter Turnout: A Field Experiment" in *American Political Science Review*. Vol. 94. No. 3 (Sept. 2000): 653-63.

mobilization contact increased turnout by between 0.2 and 15 percentage points.⁵⁷

[NEED TEXT ON POLITICAL PARTIES AND LOCAL MOBILIZATION HERE].

The goal of elections and campaigns is, of course, winning elective office, which typically represents the most intense form of civic engagement available at the local level. An elected official has made the decision to run for office, solicited the support of others, succeeded in that effort, and subsequently participates in the exercise of public authority. Each of the nearly half-million local offices represents recurrent collective political efforts, though obviously the scope of the activities varies widely. The sheer number of elected offices and the civic activity generated thereby would seem inevitably to be a major spur to civic activity in America. Despite increasing numbers of local governments since 19XX, however, the number of candidates running for local offices dropped by 15 percent between 1974 and 1994.⁵⁸

Local elective offices are especially important to minority groups, because it is at the local level that both African-Americans and Latinos have had their greatest electoral success. By the most reliable estimate, the number of African-American elected officials has increased nearly five-fold since 1970: with 9,101 holding office in 2001, close to half served at the municipal level, and another 21.3% were elected to school boards.⁵⁹ Of

⁵⁷ Donald P. Green, Alan S. Gerber, and David W. Nickerson. "Getting Out the Vote in Local Elections: Results from Six Door-to-Door Canvassing Experiments" in *Journal of Politics*. Vol. 65. No. 4 (November 2003): 1083-1096. See also Verba et. al. (1995): 134-9.

⁵⁸ Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, p. XX.

⁵⁹ The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies first gathered data on the number of African-American elected officials in 1970. Of the 1,469 African-Americans holding elective office in 1970, 42.4% (623) served at the municipal level and another 24.6% (362) served in education, with most of these persons serving on local school boards. In 1980 72.7% (N=3570) of all African-American elected officials served at the local level. In 1990 it was 72.3% (N=5326). David A. Bositis, [Black Elected Officials: A Statistical Summary, 2001](#), Washington, DC: Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, 2003. [sm: We should be careful that these numbers are based on the same large pool of local elected officials that we specified earlier – 494,000 – given that very large base, these numbers strike me as small.]

all Latinos holding public office, 70% served in local office in 2002.⁶⁰

There are at least two major reasons for the increased minority office holding in cities and working class suburbs. One was the implementation of the Voting Rights Act in 1965 and its expansion to include language minorities in 1975. Thanks to Voting Rights Act enforcement, many cities and towns that had “diluted” the votes of African-Americans and Latinos through gerrymandering and the use of at-large elections were forced to transform their electoral systems.⁶¹ Because of actions taken directly under the auspices of the Voting Rights Act, cities such as Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, and many others have experienced considerable increases in the numbers of African-American and Latino local elected officials.

Another important factor in the rise of minority office-holding was the out-migration of whites, who chose to leave many central cities and working class suburbs, especially in the post-WWII era. As whites left, those who remained and moved in were often African-American and Latino. Simple demographics allowed minority candidates to win office in increasing numbers.

But these victories come with sobering challenges. When white residential out-migration has coincided with substantial retail and industrial out-migration, newly empowered racial and ethnic politicians often face almost insurmountable difficulties in finding sufficient financial resources to meet the needs of the constituencies that placed

⁶⁰ In 1996 34.3% (1295) of all Latinos served at the municipal level and another 33.8% (1278) served on school boards. In 2002, the largest group again served on school boards: 35.9% (1,603). The second largest group served at the municipal level where 34% (1,516) of all Latino elected officials held positions. National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund, 2002 National Directory of Latino Elected Officials, Los Angeles: NALEO, 1993.

⁶¹ See the discussion in Chandler Davidson and Bernard Grofman, Quiet Revolution in the South: The Impact of the Voting Rights Act, 1965-1970, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.

them in office.⁶² Public office can be a “hollow prize.”⁶³

Even in the face of these challenges, the substantial numbers of African-Americans and Latinos who hold local elective office is a clear sign of a minority leadership core willing to undertake demanding forms of civic engagement. In that local elective office serves as a significant training ground for these leaders who go on to win higher elective office, local civic engagement in the metropolis may help promote more inclusive forms of civic activity in the polity as a whole. Local government plays especially important roles as political training ground and spring board for growing segments of our urban populations.⁶⁴

The Impact of Institutional Design: Progressive Era Reforms

While local electoral politics furnishes a cornucopia of opportunities for civic engagement, these activities are structured and facilitated or constrained by local political institutions. The political reform movements that swept across many cities in the 1890’s and early decades of the 20th century changed many aspects of local institutions, including the method of filling many local government jobs (from patronage to civil

⁶² Paul Friesma., “Black Control of Central Cities: The Hollow Prize,” Journal of the American Institute of Planners, V. 35, 1969, pp. 75-79. Albert Karnig and Susan Welch, Black Representation and Urban Policy, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980). Adolph Reed, “The Black Urban Regime: Structural Origins and Constraints,” Comparative Urban and Community Research, 1988, pp. 138-189. Neil Kraus and Todd Swanstrom, “Minority Mayors and the Hollow Prize Problem,” PS: Political Science and Politics, Vol. 34, No. 1 (March 2001), pp. 99-105; and especially Reed 1988.

⁶³ Douglas Yates, The Ungovernable City: The Politics of Urban Problems and Policy Making, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1977. Paul E. Peterson, City Limits. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1981.

⁶⁴ We do not mean to imply that the representation of African-American and Latino communities is in any sense proportional to their percentage of the population. This proportionality ratio would vary dramatically from locality to locality. Using national totals from the 1992 Census of Governments of municipal, township, and school district local elected officials, only 1.7% of all municipal and township elected officials in the U.S. were African-American in 2001, and 0.6% were Latino in 2002. Representation of African-Americans and Latinos was better in school districts, but still low. In 2001, 2.2% of all elected school board members were African-American, and 1.8% of all school board members were Latino in 2002. Data are taken from Table 471. Local Elected Officials by Sex, Race, Hispanic Origin, and Type of

service), election districts (from ward or district elections to more at-large elections), election ballots (from partisan to nonpartisan), and type of executive (from elected mayor to non-elected city manager). In many places these reforms remain today, and new localities often choose to adopt reform institutions.

Reformers attacked graft and corruption, and sought to replace political machines and partisan politics with greater professionalism and businesslike efficiency; many scholars argue that another motive was to curb the political power of recent immigrants.⁶⁵ Whatever the mix of intentions, the changes were not without consequences for civic engagement. They weakened the old political machines by curbing patronage and promoting council manager systems that chose chief administrators on the basis of merit rather than ‘sullied’ partisan elections. While the machines themselves had often become entrenched power centers, they had done a great deal to spur participation (at least for a time) and also to incorporate immigrants into the political process. One of the leading scholars of cities argues that they were “a veritable school of politics for working-class and minority voters, compared with big-city reform.”⁶⁶

Evidence for the contemporary impact of reform institutions on civic engagement is complex. Several studies suggest that some reform institutions – nonpartisan elections and council-manager forms of government – continue to decrease election turnout.⁶⁷ The dampening effects of these reform institutions seem to be particularly acute among

Government, U.S. Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2000*, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2003, p. 287, Bosisis (2003) at fn. 3 above, and NALEO (2002) at fn. 5 above.

⁶⁵ Russell D. Murphy, “Politics, Political Science, and Urban Governance: A Literature and a Legacy.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 5(2002), 63-85.

⁶⁶ Amy Bridges, *Morning Glories*, p. 216. See also Jones-Correa 2000, p. 137, who emphasizes that the point of reforms were not to mobilize citizens, but to perpetuate themselves. See Jessica Trounstein’s work. See also Steven Erie’s analysis of “entrenched machines” in *Rainbow’s End: Irish-Americans and the Dilemmas of Urban Machine Politics, 1840-1985*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

⁶⁷ Alford and Lee 1968, Karnig and Walter 1983; Schuckman 2000.

African-Americans, Latinos in the South, Southwest and West, and people of lower socio-economic status, raising special concerns from the standpoint of democratic equality.⁶⁸ In addition, evidence from the 1970s showed that cities with a system of choosing a mayor other than through a popular election were less likely to have an African American mayor, holding other factors constant. In contrast, cities with nonpartisan elections in the 1970s were more likely to have an African American mayor and council members.⁶⁹ This is an important finding because the presence of a Black mayor is related to higher rates of African American local participation.⁷⁰ However, other scholars are less certain about the relationship between reform institutions and minority participation.⁷¹

When it comes to their effect on civic engagement, choices of institutional structure appear to involve difficult trade-offs. By shifting from neighborhood-based to city-wide representation and by placing the powers of chief financial officer in the hands of a non-elected manager, reform institutions widen the distance between governing processes and ordinary citizens. By removing the cue of party labels and lessening neighborhood-based representation they reduced the information available to citizens

⁶⁸ Schuckman 2000 for African Americans and people of low SES; Luis Ricardo Fraga, "Domination Through Democratic Means: Nonpartisan Slating Groups in City Electoral Politics," *Urban Affairs Quarterly*, V. 23, No. 4, June 1988: 528-555, p. 551 for African Americans and Latinos (Fraga argues that, in the Southwestern cities he has studied, "[reform] governmental structures and their attendant party-type organizations...long serve[ed] to minimize the effective representation of minority community interests in city government [by preventing] the election of their first-choice candidates."); Rahn and Rudolph, nd, with respect to a negative relationship between political trust and at-large elections among at-large elections.

⁶⁹ Karnig and Welch 1980.

⁷⁰ Bobo, Lawrence and Franklin D. Gilliam, Jr. 1990. "Race, Sociopolitical Participation, and Black Empowerment." *American Political Science Review* 84 (2): 377-393; There is also recent preliminary evidence that the presence of a black mayor is related to trust in local government among African Americans. (Melissa Marschall, 2004, "The Attitudinal Effects of Minority Incorporation: Examining the Racial Dimensions of Trust in Urban America," Paper presented to the annual meetings of the International Society for Political Psychology, Lund, Sweden, July 15-18.

about how to get involved in politics.⁷² At the same time, council-manager forms of government, and governments in which some of the seats are elected at-large, are associated with higher levels of trust in government.⁷³ Limiting local partisan politics may promote greater citizen trust in local government.

Choices about institutional form may also be important for immigrant incorporation. While evidence shows that individual resources such as education, income, and home ownership – commonly-identified as predictors of political engagement in general – play a role in shaping immigrant political activity, the political and institutional context of immigrants and their communities are also critical to understanding their political behavior.⁷⁴ In a recent study of immigrants and Blacks in Los Angeles and New York, Jones-Correa found that responsiveness to immigrants' concerns was a function of institutional frameworks within the two cities.⁷⁵

Institutional form matters, but more research is needed before we can say definitively which forms foster more participation or more equal participation among residents of metropolitan areas. The published evidence that reform institutions depress turnout is dated, and the recent research demonstrating a link between some types of

⁷¹ Luis Ricardo Fraga, "Domination Through Democratic Means: Nonpartisan Slating Groups in City Electoral Politics," *Urban Affairs Quarterly*, V. 23, No. 4, June 1988: 528-555, p. 551. [Were the mechanisms similar to those described in the previous paragraph?]

⁷² Schuckman 2000.

⁷³ Rahn and Rudolph n.d. However, low levels of trust may also spur participation, especially when combined with high levels of efficacy or political interest, Margaret Levi and Laura Stoker, 2000, "Political Trust and Trustworthiness," *Annual Review of Political Science* 3: 475-508, 486-488. ***We have to explain how an increase in trust in government affects civic engagement...***

⁷⁴ Jones-Correa 1998; de la Garza 2004; DeSipio and de la Garza forthcoming; Pantoja, Ramirez and Segura 2001; Cho 1999; Lien et. al. 2004.

⁷⁵ **[WHAT INSTITUTIONAL FORMS ARE BEING REFERRED TO? PLEASE SPECIFY.]** Michael Jones-Correa, "Immigrants, Blacks and Cities", *Black and Multiracial Politics in America*, Yvette M. Alex-Asensoh and Lawrence Hanks, eds. (New York: New York University Press, 2000); Gary Gerstle and John Mollenkopf, "The Political Incorporation of Immigrants Then and Now" *E Pluribus Unum?: Contemporary and Historical Perspectives on Immigrant Political Incorporation* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2000).

reform institutions and trust in government calls into question whether reform institutions have consistently deleterious effects. It may be that greater perceived professionalism or efficiency in government encourages some citizens to participate more.

Special Districts and Authorities

The reformist impulse also contributed to the formation of new governments insulated from partisan politics. Services previously supplied by municipal governments, such as water, sewers, and fire protection, are now frequently supplied by “special districts” and authorities. The tremendous growth of special districts since World War II represents, among other things, an effort to “take the politics out of municipal government.” In the United States, the number of special districts increased from 8,299 in 1942 to 35,356 in 2002.⁷⁶ These districts often overlap each other, as well as with municipal boundaries.

The formation of special districts and authorities is often a strategy to overcome the tax and debt limitations of municipal governments, to provide services on a more regional basis, or to professionalize service delivery. In addition, however, and especially in recent decades, corporations and real estate developers have been most successful at forming special districts, often via referenda that they succeed in placing on the ballot.⁷⁷

The formation of these districts is a profoundly political act that has significant implications for civic engagement. Beyond the fact that they can be a source of confusion for ordinary voters trying to understand and influence local decision-making,

⁷⁶ U.S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States 2000 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2000), p. 299 and U.S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2002 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2002), p. 261.

special districts enable the private values of selected groups to dominate via obscure political structures that are nearly invisible to ordinary voters. Burns shows that developers use special districts to acquire access to powers of eminent domain and to fund the infrastructure needed for private development through the issuance of tax exempt revenue bonds, all with very little if any democratic oversight.⁷⁸ Kathryn Foster shows that special districts tend to drive up the cost of government and "bias" spending toward development and routine services over social services.⁷⁹ Lest we assume that the specter of greater public indebtedness increases salience for voters, turnout in special district elections, when they occur, is very low – usually less than 5 percent, compared to about 30 percent in municipal elections. Special districts are not required to follow the one person, one vote requirement placed on municipal governments and can have property qualifications for voting. As Burns argues, "these local institutions ... are created for reasons that often impair their ability to be democratic training grounds. ... [They] discourage participation because ... the information costs associated with learning even the names of the districts that govern a location are prohibitive."⁸⁰ Special districts do not take the politics out of municipal government; they only make it less visible and accessible to the average citizen.

B. Engagement with Institutions of Government Between Elections

⁷⁷ For a review of the scholarship on special districts, see Kathryn Foster, *The Political Economy of Special-Purpose Government* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1997), esp. ch. 2.

⁷⁸ Nancy Burns, *The Formation of American Local Governments: Private Values in Public Institutions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 25.

⁷⁹ Kathryn Foster, *The Political Economy of Special Purpose Government*. Some argue that the overlapping jurisdictions created by the proliferation of special districts tends to result in higher taxes, not greater efficiency in service provision, see Christopher Berry, n.d., "Piling On: The Fiscal Effects of Jurisdictional Overlap," ms. Harvard University Department of Government.

⁸⁰ Burns, p. 116.

The design of institutions of local government can either enhance or depress civic engagement. Similarly, political choices shape the opportunities for engagement with local government after election day.

Citizens may address their locally elected officials by writing a letter, making a phone call, or attending a public meeting. And millions of Americans do get involved in precisely these traditional ways. One 1987 survey found, for example, that almost 25 percent of Americans reported having contacted a local official about an issue in the previous year, and in 1989, 14 percent reported attending a meeting of a local board or commission.⁸¹ In the 2000 National Election Survey, 27 percent responded that they had attended a meeting to address a community issue in the last twelve months. Beyond attending meetings, citizens may serve on local councils, commissions, and advisory boards.⁸² In 1990, 3 percent of U.S. adults reported volunteering for an official local board or council in the previous two years.⁸³ But some scholars call attention to a profound decline in citizens' use of these traditional avenues for political voice. Between 1973 and 1994, for example, the percentage of people reporting that they attended a public meeting on town or school affairs declined from approximately 22 percent to 12 percent.⁸⁴ Service on local boards and councils also seem to be declining.⁸⁵

In addition to these most formal options for participation, American government provides an increasing variety of additional avenues for people to have their voices heard.

⁸¹ Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, *Voice and Equality*, p. 72 and p.51.

⁸² For example, of all of the census-designated central cities between 50,000 and 250,000 in population in 18 states chosen randomly from across the United States, 90% had citizen seats on local boards and commissions (Katherine Cramer Walsh, n.d. "Local Governance and Intergroup Dialogue Programs" unpublished manuscript.)

⁸³ Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995, p. 51.

⁸⁴ Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, p. 43. But see Verba et al, *Voice and Equality*, 72 who report slight increases in some forms of community engagement, including contacting public officials.

⁸⁵ Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, p. 43.

Among the legacies of the idea of the idea of “participatory democracy” that came to the fore in the 1960s and 1970s are “requirements for citizen participation... at every level of government. Although they are seriously attenuated at the federal level, at the state and local level some good-faith efforts still provide citizens an opportunity to influence policymaking.”⁸⁶

Contemporary Neighborhood Councils

Many participatory structures are based at the neighborhood level, especially in large cities. After all, the neighborhood is where citizens may have the most to say about what government should do and how it should do it. Government-mandated neighborhood-based structures for citizen input into the policy process can stimulate engagement under the right conditions.

Since the upsurge of community organizing in the 1960s and 1970s, city governments have gradually tried to incorporate neighborhoods into the institutions of city government. Boston Mayor Kevin White set up “Little City Halls,” New York created 59 community planning boards, and St. Paul empowered seventeen district councils – just to mention three examples with widely varied powers and citizen involvement. In a 1993 survey of the 161 cities with populations over 100,000,⁸⁷ Carmine Scavo found that 60% have active systems of neighborhood councils: these cities reported an average of fifty-five neighborhood councils in their systems.⁸⁸

Cities continue to innovate in the area of neighborhood governance. For example,

⁸⁶ Berry, Portney, and Thompson 1993, p. 45.

⁸⁷ Scavo’s survey excluded New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles. All three of these cities have systems of neighborhood councils. See also Rohe and Gates (1985), p. 8.

⁸⁸ Carmine Scavo, “Use of Participative Mechanisms by Large US Cities,” *Journal of Urban Affairs* 15, no. 1 (1993): 93-109.

the Minnesota state legislature and the city of Minneapolis initiated its Neighborhood Revitalization Project (NRP) in 1990. Through the NRP, neighborhood associations have implemented a host of housing rehabilitation, construction, economic development, education, and public service improvement projects.⁸⁹ In 1999, Los Angeles revised its city charter to create what will become a system of more than 100 neighborhood councils: a much needed layer of intermediate civic associations between residents and city government. Though the expansion has proceeded in fits and starts, more than half of the neighborhoods in the city have created representative associations.⁹⁰

Neighborhood councils address such issues as housing, the physical quality of the neighborhood, and public services. They vary widely in their powers, effectiveness, and methods for selecting representatives.⁹¹ These bodies have received scant attention from researchers and so there is little evidence to report and few generalizations to be offered about the effects of different forms of neighborhood government on the quantity, quality,

⁸⁹ See, for example, Judith Martin and Paula Pentel. "What the Neighbrohoods Want: The Neighborhood Revitalization Program's First Decade" in *American Planning Association Journal*. Vol. 68 No. 4 (2002): 435-49 and Fainstein, Susan. Center for Urban Policy Research. "An Evaluation if the Minneapolis NRP," CUPR Policy Report No. 13. January 9, 1995; Fainstein, Susan S. and Clifford Hirst. "Neighborhood Organizations and Community Planning: The Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program", in *Revitalizing Urban Neighborhoods*, edited by W. Dennis Keating, Norman Krumholz, and Philip Star, Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996, pp. 96-111; Goetz, Edward G. and Mara S. Sidney. "Revenge of the Property Owners: Community Development and the Politics of Property", *Journal of Urban Affairs*, Vol. 16, No.4, 1994, pp. 319-334.

⁹⁰ See Juliet Musso, Alicia Kitsuse, Evan Lincove, Michael Sithole, and Terry Cooper. "Planning Neighborhood Councils in Los Angeles: Self-Determination on a Shoestring" Neighborhood Participation Project, School of Planning, Policy, and Development, University of Southern California (Report, April 30, 2002)

⁹¹ See Rohe and Gates, pp. 75-84. About a third of neighborhood councils elect representatives by committee, another third have elections in which neighborhood residents vote, and a quarter have volunteer memberships. Very few neighborhood councils have representatives that are appointed by the mayor or city council. Three-quarters of these councils are administered by cities' planning or development agencies. On the dimension of government support, almost all of the councils receive information and data from the city, 80% receive staff assistance, and 55% receive public money. In response to surveys, these councils claim to do far more than communicate preferences to city councilors or agencies: 80% say they develop neighborhood plans, and 67% monitor the activities and projects of agencies. Such organizational surveys, however, reveal little about the character of neighborhood politics and engagement. It appears that many neighborhood council systems are moribund or powerless.

and equity of civic engagement in metro areas. Neighborhood councils, associations, and similar bodies would seem to increase the quantity of civic engagement by multiplying the avenues through which citizens can engage with each other and with local government. They would seem, at a minimum, to offer a first step on the ladder of civic leadership, as neighborhood councils are more accessible than many city-wide institutions, such as the city council, school board, or zoning board offices.

It is not easy to say whether neighborhood governance increases levels of civic engagement generally, however. Issues might be brought directly to city councilors or agency officials in the absence of neighborhood council structures. Neighborhood councils, furthermore, are subject to the same kinds of background inequalities that shape participation in other political venues. In particular, home-owners, and wealthier and more educated residents participate far more actively than renters and low-income residents in typical systems of neighborhood government.⁹² In addition, government may co-opt neighborhoods and seek to control their organizing and advocacy efforts.⁹³

Only one study has examined whether the presence of neighborhood government structures increases civic engagement generally. Berry, Portney, and Thomson compared five cities with strong systems of neighborhood government to a group of cities without such institutions and found no significant differences in aggregate civic participation.⁹⁴ In terms of equity of engagement, this study also found that expected socio-economic biases in participation (with greater activity exhibited by wealthier, more educated citizens) did

⁹² Susan S. Fainstein and Clifford Hirst. "Neighborhood Organizations and Community Planning: The Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program" in Dennis Keating, Norman Krumholz, and Philip Star ed. *Revitalizing Urban Neighborhoods* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1996).

⁹³ See Saul Alinsky, "The War on Poverty – Political Pornography," *Journal of Social Issues* 21 (January 1965), p. 42.

⁹⁴ Berry et. al., p. 81.

not seem to diminish in cities with neighborhood governance structures. Berry, Portney, and Thomson are, however, more sanguine about the impact of neighborhood governance structures on the quality of civic engagement. They argue that neighborhood councils help make government more responsive to resident concerns, and that they make those who participate more knowledgeable about public affairs and more tolerant of differences, and give them an increased sense of political efficacy. Furthermore, residents of cities with robust neighborhood governance institutions are more likely to engage in a variety of more demanding forms of participatory democratic engagement.

Deliberative Opportunities

From the general assemblies of New England town meetings, when settlements were much smaller than today's local communities, Americans have always experimented with forms of engagement and participation at the most local levels.⁹⁵ As one way of overcoming parochialism, a growing movement promotes citizen interest and engagement with public issues through face-to-face discussion. These efforts are consistent with a very large and growing body of work within political theory about the need for opportunities to come together and talk with one another about pressing public issues.⁹⁶ Deliberative theorists assert that such opportunities improve the quality of civic engagement and public policy.

Today, some municipalities are experimenting with more deliberative forms of citizen engagement and decision-making about local issues.⁹⁷ Minneapolis, Rochester,

⁹⁵ See Frank Bryan. *Real Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003) and Joseph F. Zimmerman. *The New England Town Meeting: Democracy in Action*. Westport, CT: Praeger. 1999.

⁹⁶ See Gutmann and Thomson, Bohman, Fishkin, etc.

⁹⁷ Minneapolis, Rochester, and Portland have innovative participatory opportunities with respect to neighborhood planning. The states of Vermont and Kentucky have similar structures in which parents

and Portland have innovative participatory opportunities with respect to neighborhood planning. The states of Vermont and Kentucky encourage parents to serve on boards that help to govern individual schools. Often, deliberative opportunities are initiated by a mayor's office, city council, human-relations department, or public safety department, as in Chicago's Local School Councils or Alternative Police Strategy and in many initiatives conducted by the Study Circles program. Alternatively, they may be sponsored by non-governmental institutions and civic groups, such as the National Issues Forums or AmericaSpeaks.⁹⁸ Regardless of the sponsor, deliberative events can be an innovative addition to the formal institutions of local government, and public officials, seeking better ways to grapple with increasing heterogeneity and increasing demands, have been willing to participate in them.⁹⁹ For example, the 2002 "Listening to the City" event, which drew some 5,000 participants to the Jacob Javitz Center in Manhattan to deliberate about the plans to rebuild the area of lower Manhattan, was a remarkable opening of an urban design and planning process to public criticism.¹⁰⁰

As with any measure to enhance civic engagement, this and other examples point to the need for special efforts to insure that participatory opportunities are equitably distributed. As we discuss below, achieving equity in deliberation may require special mobilization efforts. Even when a representative cross-section of the community can be

serve on boards that help to govern individual schools. See also Archon Fung, "Street Level Democracy: Pragmatic Popular Sovereignty in Chicago Schools and Policing" (Paper prepared for presentation at the annual meetings of the American Political Science Association, Atlanta, Georgia, September 2-5, 1999); Archon Fung, Empowered Participation: Reinventing Urban Democracy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

⁹⁸ See Ryfe 2002; Button and Mattson 1999, Katherine Cramer Walsh, 2004, Talking about Politics: Informal Groups and Social Identity in American Life, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp.191-194. For historical antecedents, see Mattson (1997).

⁹⁹ Reichler and Dredge 1997.

mobilized to participate, there is no guarantee that the proposals generated by deliberation will become public policy. Community involvement in the design of the World Trade Center site had a significant impact on evolving plans. In other instances it is less clear how deliberative efforts ultimately fare in the wider, adversarial decision-making process, where elected officials, bureaucrats, or others have the final say. While many believe that deliberative participation improves the process, the participants, and the product, much more systematic study is needed to understand fully the conditions under which public deliberation of the sort described here succeeds both as a participatory opportunity and so as to improve outcomes.¹⁰¹

Co-production of Public Services

In some municipalities, citizen participation does not end with deliberation about policy development, but extends to policy implementation. Citizens become not just *consumers* of public services, but active participants in the *production* of those services as well. Public safety is perhaps the most obvious policy area in which the activity and involvement of citizens themselves are crucial to the desired public goods. In his city survey, Scavo finds that the use of co-production strategies is widespread – 92% report block watches, 39% use adopt-a-park programs, and 27% report adopt-a-street programs.¹⁰² From providing “eyes on the street,”¹⁰³ to forming block watches, citizen patrols, and anti-crime marches and crusades, residents frequently engage in activities, sometimes with police and sometimes by themselves, to promote their physical

¹⁰⁰ Beyond the direct participants, the event catalyzed a much wider discussion in the pages of city newspapers and in New York generally. See Kennedy School of Government. “Listening to the City: Rebuilding at New York’s World Trade Center Site” (Case 1687.0 and 1687.1, April 2003).

¹⁰¹ See John Hibbing and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse, *Stealth Democracy*.

¹⁰² Scavo (1993): 102.

security.¹⁰⁴ These forms of civic engagement are often essential to promoting safer neighborhoods. In addition, fully forty percent of the U.S. population is protected by volunteer fire departments (most communities under 50,000 are served by volunteer departments).¹⁰⁵

With respect to schooling, PTA's used to be a widespread and important part of our collective commitment to education. But PTA's have experienced a huge decline in membership "from a high in the early 1960s of almost 50 members per 100 families with children under eighteen to fewer than twenty members per 100 families with children under eighteen in the early 1980s."¹⁰⁶ Some of this membership has likely been absorbed by PTOs, which do not enjoy a federated organization like PTA.¹⁰⁷ Even if parents continue to be involved in their school districts, the fact that they are no longer doing so (to nearly the same extent at least) through organizations that are linked across school district boundaries is troubling given the increasing homogeneity of school districts and the problem of metro-wide fragmentation that we highlight elsewhere in this report.¹⁰⁸

Efforts to involve citizens in local service provision may be sponsored by the federal government as well. Programs such as AmeriCorps or Teach for America engage citizens in helping to solve the problems of central cities and other disadvantaged places, and a recent development involves federal funding for faith-based service provision. We explore these topics in greater detail in Part III of this report.

¹⁰³ Cite Jane Jacobs... [AF].

¹⁰⁴ AF: Should be work from Rob Sampson's (et. al.) Chicago Study that is relevant here.

¹⁰⁵ Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, p. 130-1, and n. 38 (p. 465).

¹⁰⁶ Susan Crawford and Peggy Levitt, "Social Change and Civic Engagement: The Case of the PTA, in Theda Skocpol and Morris P. Fiorina, eds. *Civic Engagement in American Democracy*, Washington: Brookings, 1999, pp249-296.

¹⁰⁷ Crawford and Levitt report that membership statistics in PTO's are not recorded.

¹⁰⁸ "Social Change and Civic Engagement, esp. 283-284,

With a few notable exceptions,¹⁰⁹ citizen participation in the production of public services has escaped the attention of political scientists who tend to focus on engagement in law- and policy- making rather than on implementation. However, many of the most salient encounters between citizens and government occur at the level of public administration and service delivery. At this level, individual engagement offers reasonable prospects of being effective. Citizens are crucial conduits of information, as well as being crucial participants in the creation of public goods. Citizen participation in services, then, offers many of the benefits claimed for participation generally: more informed and responsible citizens on one hand, and more accountable and responsive government on the other.¹¹⁰

These new forms of civic empowerment and the older more traditional forms of engagement both suggest that sustained participation requires giving citizens authentic decision-making power. Citizens want their engagement to make a difference. When this occurs, reform efforts appear to overcome some obstacles that commonly hinder participation.¹¹¹ Skeptics will argue that this kind of democratic engagement cannot persist in resource-poor neighborhoods. However, analysis of participation in Chicago suggests otherwise. Contrary to what socio-economic models of participation predict,

¹⁰⁹ Scholars working at Indiana University's Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis have produced fundamental work in this arena. [AF: Check Citation: See also Lawrence Susskind and Michael Elliott and associates. *Paternalism, Conflict, and Coproduction : Learning from Citizen Action and Citizen Participation in Western Europe*. Plenum Press 1983]

¹¹⁰ See Whitaker, Gordon P. "Coproduction: Citizen Participation in Service Delivery" in *Public Administration Review*. Vol 40. (May/June 1980): 240-46; Stephen L. Percy. "Citizen Participation in the Coproduction of Urban Services," *Urban Affairs Quarterly*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (June 1984) 431-446; Wilson, R. K. "Citizen Coproduction as a Mode of Participation: Conjectures and Models" *Journal of Urban Affairs*. 3 (1981): 37-49.

¹¹¹ For example, while many neighborhood associations simply provide input or advice to city agencies, the Minneapolis Revitalization Project allocates \$400 million over 20 years to individual neighborhood associations to implement projects around housing, services, and amenities. The influence and power associated with various forms of participation is described in Sherry Arnstein's classic "A Ladder of Citizen Participation," *American Institute of Planning Journal* (July 1969): 216-224.

attendance at police beat meetings across the city was not a function of median income, education levels, or racial composition of the neighborhood. Instead, attendance was driven by neighborhood crime rate.¹¹² With respect to public schools, the number of parents who ran for the Local School Council varied partly according to the socio-economic characteristics of the school, but turnout was higher in neighborhoods with higher proportions of Black and Hispanic students.

Efforts to involve citizens in these new and innovative forms of engagement can be assisted by direct mobilization. As part of its community policing initiative, for example, the City of Chicago provided \$3 million to a community-based group charged with deploying organizers throughout the city to recruit participants for neighborhood community policing meetings. They used door-to-door contacting, outreach to neighborhood forums, and other time-tested methods to generate very substantial participation rates across most Chicago neighborhoods.¹¹³

C. Engagement with Non-Governmental Institutions and Groups

Opportunities for civic engagement in local settings are not limited to the formal access points governments provide. Citizens who care about the issues facing their communities can find many other avenues of political action, including those provided by organizations that bridge the gap between citizens and the formal institutions of government. In some cases, these bridging efforts have become deeply enmeshed in government institutions, making it difficult to tell where one stops and the other begins. Often, these organizations work to mobilize different communities within the

¹¹² Fung 1999, p. 33.

metropolitan region, including communities of interest or issue, communities of racial and ethnic similarity, and communities of geographic location, such as neighborhoods. In this section, we first highlight efforts to engage citizens by interest or issue and by demographic profile. We then turn to a discussion of citizen mobilization by neighborhood boundaries. Of course, to the extent that neighborhoods are fragmented and segregated, these distinctions are not clear cut and frequently overlap.

Community Organizing and Community Organizations

One branch of local community engagement is “community organizing.” That phrase evokes for many the adversarial tradition of radical neighborhood organizing pioneered by Saul Alinsky in Chicago’s Back of the Yards.¹¹⁴ Since the 1930s, organizers in that tradition have sought to mobilize residents of poor neighborhoods and local institutions such as churches and labor unions to demand concessions from city government and private corporations on issues such as employment, health, public services, and local amenities. This tradition remains significant in many cities today. Its hallmarks are the use of professional organizers who attempt to build lasting “power” organizations and indigenous leaders in low-income, typically minority communities. These organizations deploy a variety of tactics ranging from electoral mobilization to disruptive protest to improve the quality of life in highly disadvantaged areas.

Community organizations may also be part of larger national organizing networks. The largest of these networks – and the ones that have been best documented

¹¹³ Cite AF *Empowered Participation*. It would be much better to have non-Chicago examples here... Perhaps Jeff Berry or Todd Swanstrom can help out here. [AF Comment]

¹¹⁴ See Saul Alinsky. *Rules for Radicals* (New York: Random House, 1971), *Reveille for Radicals* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946); Sanford D. Horwitt, *Let Them Call Me Rebel: Saul Alinsky—His Life and Legacy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990). Fisher (1994).

and analyzed – are the Industrial Areas Foundation,¹¹⁵ Associated Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), the Pacific Institute for Community Organizing (PICO),¹¹⁶ the Gamaliel Foundation, and the Direct Action Research and Training Center (DART). There are no doubt thousands of less heralded and documented organizations in cities and towns across the United States, dedicated to fair housing, community development, environmental justice, and school quality.¹¹⁷

It is difficult to estimate the general effect of this brand of populist, adversarial community organizing upon the quantity or quality of civic engagement. There is no census of community organizing that reveals the extent of the number of persons involved.¹¹⁸ It is similarly difficult to assess the quality of participation in these organizations. Surely, they provide crucial avenues through which residents of disadvantaged areas can learn the skills and reap the benefits of collective action. There are also grounds to view these organizations critically: the quality of democracy within these organizations varies. Even highly sympathetic writers notice the paternal and

¹¹⁵ Of the major community organizing enterprises, The Industrial Areas Foundation—and specifically the Texas IAF—has received by far the greatest attention from scholars and journalists. See, for example, Mark R. Warren. *Dry Bones Rattling: Community Building to Revitalize American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Mary Beth Rogers. *Cold Anger: A Story of Faith and Power in Politics* (University of North Texas Press, 1990); Paul Osterman. *Gathering Power: The Future of Progressive Politics in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003); Dennis Shirley. *Valley Interfaith and School Reform: Organizing for Power in South Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002); Michael Gecan. *Going Public: An Inside Story of Disrupting Politics as Usual* (Boston: Beacon Press 2002); Benjamin Marquez, *Constructing Identities in Mexican-American Political Organizations: Choosing Issues, Taking Sides* (Austin, University of Texas Press, 2003).

¹¹⁶ See Richard Wood. *Faith in Action: Religion, Race, and Democratic Organizing in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

¹¹⁷ AF: Check cite: Harry Boyte, *Backyard Revolution...*

¹¹⁸ ACORN claims 150,000 member families and 700 neighborhood chapters in 51 cities. Mark Warren and Richard Wood estimate that the faith-based community organizational field “includes about 4,000 member institutions, of which 87% are religious congregations, and 13% are non-congregational institutions (NCIs) like unions, public schools and a diverse array of other community organizations. The religious congregations involved represent between 1 and 1.5% of all congregations in the country.” Mark R. Warren and Richard Wood. *Faith Based Community Organizing: The State of the Field*.

perhaps oligarchic tendencies inherent in received organizing techniques.¹¹⁹

The effect of these groups upon the equity of civic engagement, however, is clearer. These groups create paths of sociability and collective action in precisely those communities that lack the resources and connections to engage civically. They reduce the bias in civic engagement that stems from inequalities in material conditions, social status, and political privilege. Community organizing can lead directly to improved economic access, school quality, public and private investment, and public services.

Issue- or interest-based adversarial community groups constitute only one kind of community organizing.¹²⁰ Additional efforts attempt to mobilize people along demographic lines. In cities, the settlement houses of the late 19th and early 20th centuries provide an early example of efforts at engaging immigrants and the poor. Established to address the economic, social, cultural, and intellectual needs of impoverished immigrant neighborhoods by mobilizing residents, these associations filled gaps in the larger civic and municipal structure. The settlement houses drew public attention to the condition of impoverished areas¹²¹ and produced many activists who would later engage in broader reform endeavors.¹²²

Community empowerment and mobilization initiatives can have an especially important impact on African-Americans, Latinos, newer immigrants, and other segments of working class urban communities.¹²³ Immigrants, in particular, face obstacles to

¹¹⁹ Fisher (1994): p. 60. But see Osterman (2002): p. 64.

¹²⁰ Fisher correctly observes that neighborhood organizing “is not inherently reactionary, conservative, liberal, or radical, nor is it inherently democratic and inclusive or authoritarian and parochial. It is above all a political method.” Fisher (1994): 221.

¹²¹ Rohe and Gates, p. 21.

¹²² McCormick. “Public Life in Industrial America” in Foner, ed. *New American History*. Cited in Putnam, *Bowling Alone*.

¹²³ Urban scholars have focused detailed attention on the role of accessible political institutions and coalition-building in facilitating empowerment and mobilization in minority communities. Rufus P.

mobilization and engagement in many aspects of community life because they often face statutory and bureaucratic obstruction, in addition to cultural and language barriers.¹²⁴

This is an increasing problem because foreign migration to the United States is dramatically altering the demographic profile of the American population.¹²⁵

A considerable range of new research in political science is focusing on immigrant mobilization. Immigrants are likely to follow settlement patterns marked out by co-national predecessors. Hence the striking array of new ethnic enclaves in which immigrants from particular sending countries live in close proximity within a metropolitan area. This residential concentration should make mobilization easier from a logistical standpoint, but efforts to activate political participation among immigrants by

Browning, Dale Roger Marshall and David H. Tabb. 1984. *Protest Is Not Enough: The Struggle of Blacks and Hispanics for Equality in Urban Politics*. Berkeley, University of California Press; Rufus P. Browning, Dale Rogers Marshall and David H. Tabb, 1997. *Racial Politics in American Cities*, 2nd Edition, New York: Longman; Wilbur Rich, ed. *The Politics of Minority Coalitions: Race, Ethnicity and Shared Uncertainties*, Westport: Praeger. In cities where African-Americans and Latinos have become politically empowered, it is because of accessible political institutions, which allowed members of previously disenfranchised groups to become a part of the governing coalition that determines public policy, coordinates institutional arrangements, and influences the distribution of scarce municipal resources. William Nelson. "Black Mayoral Leadership", *National Political Science Review* 2(1990):188-195; Michael Preston. "Symposium—Big-City Black Mayors: Have They Made A Difference?" *National Political Science Review* 2(1990):129-195.

¹²⁴ Noah Pickus, *Immigration and Citizenship in the 21st Century* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998); Louis DeSipio, *Counting on the Latino Vote: Latinos as a New Electorate* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1996); Pei-te Lein, *The Making of Asian America through Political Participation* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2001); Michael Jones-Correa, *Between Two Nations: The Political Predicament of Latinos in New York City* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998); Ronald Schmidt, Sr. *Language Policy and Identity Politics in the United States* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2000). One study by Segura, Garcia, and Pachon found that those Latinos who were citizens (especially the native-born), more educated, and English-dominant were more likely to participate in traditional civic affairs. Gary M. Segura, F. Chris Garcia, and Harry Pachon, "Estimating and Understanding Social Capital and its Political Effects Among Latinos in the United States," delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Western Political Science Association, Long Beach, CA, March 22-24, 2002.

¹²⁵ More than 20% of Americans are immigrants or their children, and nearly a third of all Americans are of non-white and non-European descent. By a slim margin, African Americans are no longer the largest minority group in the United States, having been eclipsed in 2000 by a rapidly growing population of Latinos. In the last decade, Asians doubled the size of their population to more than 4 percent of Americans.

political parties is sporadic at best.¹²⁶ Lower naturalization rates, lower status occupations, and correspondingly modest incomes, make these populations less likely targets of mobilization by established political forces that control local politics. The mobilizing work traditionally accomplished by political parties is now largely undertaken through civic organizations, labor unions, churches, and voluntary organizations in immigrant communities.¹²⁷

Immigrant mobilization is influenced by particular features of gateway cities and their surrounding metropolitan areas, and also by differences across the states in political culture political parties, electoral competitiveness, and election laws.¹²⁸ Among the local contextual factors that are especially important for immigrants are the density of co-ethnic populations, the competitiveness and receptiveness of local political party structures to immigrants, the possibilities for cooperation in cross-group coalitions, the presence of traditions of balancing slates with ethnic groups, and other features of local networks and organizations.¹²⁹ For newer immigrant groups, one challenge is to find the most effective mechanism for becoming a part of the municipal governing coalition through collaboration, displacement, or the forging of new coalitions among immigrants that cross racial and ethnic boundaries.

Research on immigrant empowerment suggests that even in the midst of difficult circumstances, immigrants are very much involved in non-electoral political activities, including labor union organizing and participation, church-related activities, national-origin mutual aid societies, social movements, women's organizations, and other non-

¹²⁶ Jones-Correa 1998; Andersen 2004; Wong 2004

¹²⁷ Andersen and Wintringham 2003; de la Garza et. al. 2002

¹²⁸ Ramakrishnan 2001.

¹²⁹ Waldinger 1996.

governmental organizations. In order to find such instances of engagement, political scientists must be willing to look beyond electoral participation.¹³⁰ We still have much to learn about existing patterns of civic engagement among immigrants and the ways in which they might be empowered to participate more. Latin American immigrants, for example, may simultaneously be engaged in churches whose activities focus on lived realities in the US, but also in “hometown associations” that maintain ongoing links between immigrants’ communities in the US and their home country.¹³¹ [SEE NYT ARTICLE...]

Neighborhood Organizations

Although neighbors may have similar demographic profiles and interests, neighborhoods themselves are fertile ground for civic engagement. Many Americans have strong neighborhood ties and cooperate with their neighbors to pursue collective aims on a regular basis. Efforts to mobilize along geographic lines have come from a variety of sources and have attempted to accomplish a variety of aims.

Neighborhood-based social service providers can be especially important in

¹³⁰ See Kim Geron, Enrique de la Cruz, Leland T. Saito and Jaideep Sing. 2001. “Asian Pacific Americans’ Social Movements and Interests Groups,” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 34:3(2001), pp. 619-24; Carol Hardy-Fanta. *Latina Politics, Latino Politics: Gender, Culture and Political Participation in Boston* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992); Benjamin Marquez and James Jennings. 2000. “Representation by Other Means: Mexican Americans and Puerto Rican Social Movement Organizations”, *PS: Political Science and Politics* 33:3.

¹³¹ Hometown associations within Latino immigrant communities have become major centers of civic activity. The primary identity of these groups is to villages and towns in home countries. Hometown associations have been directly responsible for raising funds and in-kind contributions to promote a variety of urban development projects including the building of churches, schools, roads, and water wells, all in countries of origin. Although there is no systematic survey of their presence in U.S. communities, such information would provide a very clear indicator of the full scope of civic engagement of some immigrant communities. Our traditional categories of civic engagement may need to be expanded to comprehend this growing segment of urban populations.

disadvantaged areas.¹³² Consider, for example, the Grand Boulevard neighborhood on Chicago's South Side, which was studied by a research team at Northwestern University. This is a high poverty neighborhood of 36,000 residents in which fully 82 percent of the children grow up in families living below the poverty line. Yet even in this very poor neighborhood, a block-by-block inventory revealed 319 "face-to-face organizations" where volunteers do the bulk of the work. About 100 of these nonprofits were churches or religious groups.¹³³ These types of organizations can empower citizens and provide an important link between residents and city hall.

An important wave of neighborhood organizing came from Washington, with President Johnson's 1964 War on Poverty and its Community Action Programs (CAPS) and Model Cities.¹³⁴ Community Action Agencies were created and charged with developing and administering poverty-reduction programs "with the maximum feasible participation of the members of the groups and residents of the area served."¹³⁵ Many urban neighborhoods participated, eventually establishing over one thousand Community Action Agencies across the country, making the Citizen Action Program a "vast incubator" of civic engagement.¹³⁶ The participation mandated by the Community

¹³² See Steven Rathgeb Smith, "The New Politics of Contracting: Citizenship and the Nonprofit Role," in Helen Ingram and Steven Rathgeb Smith, eds., Public Policy for Democracy (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1993), pp. 198-221.

¹³³ John P. Kretzmann, John L. McKnight, and Nicole Turner, Voluntary Associations in Low-Income Neighborhoods: An Unexplored Community Resource (Evanston, IL: Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern University, n.d.).

¹³⁴ David J. Greenstone and Paul E. Peterson, Race and Authority in Urban Politics: Community Participation and the War on Poverty (New York: Sage, 1973), pp. 2-6.

¹³⁵ U.S. Congress, An Act to Mobilize the Human and Financial Resources of the Nation to Combat Poverty in the United States, Public Law 88-452, 88th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1964, p.9, quoted in Greenstone and Peterson 1973, 4-5.

¹³⁶ Sirianni and Friedland 2001, p. 35-43; Judd and Swanstrom, City Politics, p. 394; see also Richard Cole, Citizen Participation and the Urban Policy Process (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1974).

Action Program laid the groundwork for other forms of citizen participation in policymaking, and changed expectations about what local policy ought to look like.¹³⁷

Today, community development corporations, or CDCs, could be an important avenue for citizen engagement at the neighborhood level.¹³⁸ CDCs are nonprofits with a primary focus on housing and are governed by their own independent boards of directors. Though the vital role they play in conceiving, planning and financing various neighborhood projects and their role in establishing public-private partnerships to pursue economic development gives them considerable status in their communities, some scholars have argued that most CDCs exert little effort at community organizing and advocating for their neighborhoods.¹³⁹ Although CDCs have been highly successful in building links between city hall and neighborhoods, as currently configured they are less than ideal vehicles for citizen participation. Whereas citizen participation was at the very foundation of CAPS, it has never been at the heart of the CDC mission.

Beyond efforts to mobilize poor or disadvantaged areas, residents of middle- and upper- class neighborhoods are especially likely to organize their neighborhoods, seeking to preserve or advance the quality of their local public goods. Most sizable towns and cities in America contain dozens if not hundreds, of neighborhood improvement associations, block clubs, neighborhood corporations, and residential community

¹³⁷ Allard 1999. The effects were, some argue, especially pronounced among low-income residents and across racial boundaries. Thomas 1986, p. 38, 41. Since many model cities grants went to African-American residents, the legislation helped to break down racial barriers in local politics. Allard 1999, p. 180. The program served as a political training ground for residents, as the experience helped launch various attempts to gain elected office at the local and state levels. Peter Eisinger, "The Community Action Program and the Development of Black Political Leadership." In Dale R. Marshall, ed. Urban Policy Making (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1979), p. 127-144; Allard 1999.

¹³⁸ In 1980 there were only 200 CDCs in the United States but a 1999 survey puts their number at around 3600. Over half of these are in urban areas. Mildred Warner, "Innovative Economic Development Strategies," June 2001, at <http://www.cce.cornell.edu/restructuring/doc/reports/econdev/ieds.htm>. Accessed 27 February 2004.

associations.

In the national 2000 Social Capital Benchmark survey led by Robert Putnam, twenty percent of respondents claimed to participate in a neighborhood association.¹⁴⁰ Those with college educations were almost three times as likely (32% responded affirmatively) as those with a high school education or less (12% responded affirmatively) to participate in such an association.

Older studies have found different relationships between neighborhood participation and socio-economic status (SES). Nearly a quarter century ago Richard C. Rich identified 167 neighborhood associations in the consolidated county of Indianapolis/Marion, Indiana.¹⁴¹ Rich found *no* associations in the wealthiest quarter of neighborhoods, 10% of the associations in the poorest quartile, and 90% in the middle half. More recently, Matthew Crenson has argued that there is a *curvilinear* relationship between SES and neighborhood participation. On this argument, neighborhood participation operates according to mechanisms that are quite distinct from other forms of political engagement that rise *monotonically* with socio-economic status, such as voting, working in political campaigns, and contributing money to campaigns.¹⁴² Eric Oliver finds a similar curvilinear relationship between community median household income and a host of other local participatory acts.¹⁴³

Rich and Oliver differ, however, about the explanation for this pattern. Rich hypothesizes that formation of, and participation in, neighborhood associations

¹³⁹ See Randy Stoecker, "The CDC Model of Urban Redevelopment: A Critique and an Alternative," *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 19, No. 1 (1997), pp. 1-22.

¹⁴⁰ See Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey. <http://www.cfsv.org/communitysurvey/>.

¹⁴¹ Richard C. Rich. "A Political Economy Approach to the Study of Neighborhood Organizations" in *American Journal of Political Science*. Vol. 24. No. 4 (Nov. 1980): 559-92.

¹⁴² See Matthew Crenson, *Neighborhood Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983).

¹⁴³ Oliver (2001): 79.

corresponds to the ratio of resources in the neighborhood to the demand for public goods. In contrast, Oliver argues that communities in the middle-income range are also more likely to be economically diverse and that diversity begets conflict, which, in turn, generates participation.¹⁴⁴

One type of neighborhood organization that is particularly common among middle- and upper-income Americans raises some concerns about civic engagement. Established by covenants attached to the deeds of residential property, homeowner associations (HOAs) are “private governments” that manage property held in common by homeowners, provide services, and enforce rules and regulations. Through internal processes of decision making, and lobbying of local government, HOAs would seem to stimulate civic participation. However, both the quality and equality of that participation is problematic.

The moniker “private government” is applied because HOAs tend to take on many of the roles traditionally assumed by local government.¹⁴⁵ HOAs collect mandatory fees, similar to local taxes, to finance its operations. In addition, HOAs usually have a public meeting once or twice a year and elect a governing board that supervises business between meetings. A 1989 report by the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR) asserted that homeowner associations “account for the most significant privatization of local government responsibilities in recent

¹⁴⁴ Oliver (2001): 86-93. In contrast, Oliver argues, both poor and wealthy communities are more homogenous and less conflictual, with individuals in such communities less likely to be drawn into the political process.

¹⁴⁵ HOAs have three basic responsibilities: 1) to manage the facilities owned in common by the homeowners in the development, such as streets, swimming pools, and parking lots; 2) to provide certain services, such as trash collection and snowplowing; and 3) to enforce the “covenants, rules, and regulations” (CC&Rs) that restrict the behavior of residents in the housing development, such as whether they can own a pet, build an addition, or park their car on the street.

times....”¹⁴⁶

This form of association has grown dramatically over the past forty years. In 1964, there were fewer than 500 HOAs. By 2003, 8,000 new HOAs were forming each year and an estimated 50 million Americans – almost one out of every five – lived in association-governed communities.¹⁴⁷ Despite their growing numbers, few, if any, HOAs cater to low-income or subsidized housing.¹⁴⁸ As exclusively middle and upper-middle homeowner enclaves, HOAs reinforce income segregation and may thereby reinforce racial segregation.¹⁴⁹ According to the 2001 Annual Housing Survey, seven million Americans live in gated communities: these almost always involve a community association and further accentuate their exclusionary character by controlling public access. The withdrawal of prosperous homeowners from the local public fisc leaves fewer resources to meet the needs of those left behind; the possibilities for redistribution and the promotion of other inclusive public goods within the public sector are attenuated. HOAs can thus exacerbate place-based inequalities.

HOAs can be viewed as “small republics”: the epitome of grassroots democracy where residents identify their own interests with the interests of the community. The weakness of HOAs is that they nurture a sense of shared fate among residents at the

¹⁴⁶ ACIR, *Residential Community Associations: Private Governments in the Intergovernmental System?* (Washington, D.C.: ACIR, 1989), p. 18.

¹⁴⁷ Figures are from the Community Associations Institute, which is the trade association for HOAs as cited in Evan McKenzie, *Privatopia: Homeowner Associations and the Rise of Residential Private Government* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 11 and on the Community Associations Institute website: <http://www.caionline.org/about/facts/cfm>.

¹⁴⁸ Robert H. Nelson argues that the benefits of homeowner associations should be spread to existing poor and inner city neighborhoods. At least two obstacles present themselves immediately to this scheme: 1) most inner city poor are renters, not homeowners; 2) almost all HOAs were founded by real estate developers when they built the subdivision; it is difficult to imagine who would serve this function for existing neighborhoods. See Nelson, “Privatizing the neighborhood: A Proposal to Replace Zoning with Private Collective Property Rights to Existing Neighborhoods,” in David T. Beito, Peter Gordon, and Alexander Tabarrok, eds., *The Voluntary City* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), pp. 307-370.

expense of connections to the larger political community. In addition, the governance structures of HOAs do not encourage norms of healthy political engagement, despite the semblance of direct and representative democracy. For example, renters do not have a vote, meetings are not subject to sunshine laws, free speech and other constitutional guarantees are not protected, and many decisions are delegated to hired professionals and contractors, leading to a system that, in the words of one author, “attempts to replace politics with management.”¹⁵⁰ The underlying rationale is that the residents have chosen to self-segregate into communities where they voluntarily agree on what services should be provided and what rules of behavior should be enforced.¹⁵¹ With everyone agreeing on the goal of protecting property values, there should, in theory, be few interest or value conflicts. Management thus replaces politics because values are agreed upon, and those who do not agree are free to move.

In practice, the governance of HOAs is characterized by a combination of widespread indifference along with recurrent nasty conflicts of interest and values. The private decision making process, or managerial model, is not well suited to resolve these conflicts. Many HOAs have trouble mustering a quorum for their meetings or persuading someone to run for the board. More than half of the respondents to a 1988 survey of HOA board members characterized their members as “apathetic.”¹⁵² Much of this nonparticipation is probably due to the fact that members are basically satisfied with the services of their homeowner association.

¹⁴⁹ McKenzie, *Privatopia*, p. 22.

¹⁵⁰ McKenzie, *Privatopia*, p. 18.

¹⁵¹ The CC&Rs prohibit behaviors that are perceived as harming property values. These rules cover an incredibly broad range of activities, from paint colors, to banning clothes lines or basketball hoops, to rules about pets, cars, and guests. Everyone who purchases property in the development becomes a member of the HOA and is subject to the rules.

¹⁵² Cited in Dilger, *Neighborhood Politics*, p. 140.

Externally, HOAs can stimulate citizen participation in the larger community, and in fact, homeowner associations have increasingly become effective lobbying organizations.¹⁵³ However, they usually become politically active when residents perceive that a proposed action, such as a commercial development or a landfill, threatens their property values. According to a number of studies, HOAs “are in the vanguard of the NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) movement across America.”¹⁵⁴ In contrast to renters and low-income homeowners, HOAs have the resources, networks, and, often, the paid legal assistance to effectively direct patterns of land use around their neighborhoods. HOAs have every right to organize and lobby the government, but the “mobilization of bias,” to use Schattschneider’s term, tilts the playing field of metropolitan development in the direction of these well-financed and well-organized interests.

In conclusion, HOAs can provide an avenue civic engagement by their members, but it is a narrow form of civic engagement, aimed at advancing the particular interests of a well-defined association. Internally homogeneous and with weak commitments to democratic processes, HOAs seem very likely to exemplify the weaknesses of small and insular communities committed to advancing a narrow agenda. They do not serve as effective schools for civic engagement in a large and diverse society.

¹⁵³ A 1990 survey found that board members believe HOA residents are more knowledgeable and active in local politics because of their membership in the association. The survey results are based on 561 surveys returned from a random sample of board members of HOAs that are members of the Community Association Institute. For example, 60 percent thought their general membership was more likely to monitor government actions and 50 percent said that they were more likely to attend a local government meeting because of their membership in the HOA. The effect on participation in local electoral politics was smaller but still positive.

¹⁵⁴ Robert Jay Dilger, *Neighborhood Politics: Residential Community Associations in American Governance* (New York: New York University Press, 1992), p. 7. Dilger cites three publications to back up his statement.

Section III: Policy Prescriptions and Recommendations for Research (rough draft)

We have emphasized throughout this part of the report that metropolitan regions have experienced dramatic change – most notably growth and decentralization, coupled with increasing economic stratification and persisting segregation. But the story of metropolitan change is neither simple nor unambiguous in its implications. We believe these changes have had profound and complex effects on the quantity, quality, and equality of civic engagement in cities and their suburbs.

We have also emphasized the centrality of tradeoffs, or even, dilemmas. One is the dilemma of size: small scale serves in many ways to spur civic activity by keeping government accessible to citizens. But small communities are liable to be narrow and exclusive in their outlook. The pursuit of the most comprehensive public aims, including redistributive policies, are especially difficult at the local level. Second is the dilemma of diversity or heterogeneity: the personal encounter with diversity seems essential to democratic citizenship in a vast heterogeneous republic such as ours. But there is some evidence that places that are more heterogeneous, irrespective of size, are less trusting and quite possibly also less apt to nurture engagement. Features of the changing metropolitan landscape that are in some respects spurs to civic activity are in other respects sources of severe problems.

Changing metropolitan structures are a result of a myriad of factors. Technological advances played a major role in shaping patterns of work, residence, and urban life across the metropolitan region.¹⁵⁵ But technology did not work this

¹⁵⁵ It took the availability of cheap cars, advances in housing construction, the development and extension of the AC electric grid, and other factors to unleash the great decentering of the metropolis. Economists Edward L. Glaeser and Mathew E. Kahn are unequivocal about the causes: sprawl is ubiquitous, expanding,

transformation without the significant and ongoing intermediation of political choices at all levels of government. Cities make choices about local structures from neighborhoods to city hall. States are the source of city authority – determining cities’ revenue streams, often limiting their ability to annex their suburbs, and frequently preventing regional governance and cooperation.¹⁵⁶ Federal policy has emphasized certain patterns of residential organization by encouraging suburbanization and segregation.¹⁵⁷ It is clear, therefore, that policy recommendations aimed at fostering civic engagement in metropolitan regions must include state and federal governments as well as cities and localities.

In this section, we propose recommendations for increasing the quantity, quality, and equity of civic engagement in the changing metropolis. We acknowledge that complex tradeoffs exist, and emphasize, once again, that evidence is limited. We offer four general recommendations:

- Create new institutions (and reinvigorate old institutions) that encourage citizens to participate directly in decisions that affect their lives such as neighborhood planning, local school governance, public safety, provision of local services and amenities, and local economic development.
- Develop metropolitan governance institutions that address the social divisions and inequalities that come from political fragmentation, but that foster rather than suppress local engagement and political empowerment.

and irresistible, and it has a single root cause: the technological superiority of the automobile. “Sprawl and Urban Growth,” May 5, 2003; forthcoming in Volume IV of the Handbook of Urban and Regional Economics, quote from ms p. 2. And see Rae, pp. .

¹⁵⁶ Dreier et al., p. 101. See more in David Barron, New Federalism article. On annexation and suburbanization generally, see Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*.

¹⁵⁷ Among the policies that powerfully contributed to suburban sprawl and the decline of many urban areas were the decision to dedicate the federal gasoline tax to highway construction rather than urban mass transit, and the great subsidy for home ownership provided by the home mortgage deduction on federal income taxes. The Federal Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), in their policies on mortgage guarantees and refinancings from the 1930’s on, gave preference to single family rather than multi-family dwellings, spacious rather than crowded neighborhoods, and homebuilding in new locations over the refurbishment of older neighborhoods, all because it was thought that these choices would keep housing prices stable and guarantee the repayment of mortgages. In addition, federal policies favored racially segregated housing. The FHA seems to have believed that home values would remain more stable in racially homogenous neighborhoods.

- Encourage racial and ethnic inclusion and economic integration within and across jurisdictions in metropolitan areas to equalize the opportunities and resources for civic engagement, and to foster engagement across lines of class, race, and ethnicity.
- Researchers should pay more attention to the Progressive era reforms that attempted to enshrine expertise by insulating the operations of local government from political conflict, and from popular engagement generally. We should consider whether opening government to broader organized politics can spur healthy political conflict as well as create opportunities for civic and governmental collaboration.

We consider these four recommendations along with several others below.

A. Encourage Citizen Empowerment and Mobilization

To bring government closer to the people, political and administrative reforms should increase the opportunities for residents to participate in the decisions that affect the quality of their cities, towns, and neighborhoods. Some recent reform efforts have created avenues for residents to engage directly with elected officials and agency staff to deliberate about public decisions that affect the direction of neighborhood development, operations of neighborhood schools, and the character of local policing. These efforts can spur substantial interest and participation from residents: they hold out the promise of a more active citizenry and the more effective delivery of public services.

Political scientists can do more to understand in a systematic way the conditions under which participation is likely to succeed and the conditions under which it may fall short of our hopes. In particular, we need to understand how the outcomes of deliberation are likely to fare in the wider policy-making process. One condition for the success of deliberative reforms (and political engagement generally) is already clear: opportunities to engage in public affairs are often more attractive to the extent that participation makes a difference by influencing some decision or altering the disposition

of public power. Beyond creating opportunities for civic engagement, then, such opportunities ought to be associated with concrete prospects for exercising power – for making a difference. Another important factor is mobilization. Citizens are more likely to participate when they are asked to do so.

Some of the most important opportunities for public action occur not through government, but through non-profit organizations. These organizations should be structured in ways that encourage effective civic engagement on the part of ordinary citizens.

Our recommendations in the area of direct political participation and citizen empowerment are several:

- Cities should enhance neighborhood governance and other methods of administrative decentralization, such as citizen advisory boards and citizen co-production of public services. Under the right conditions, empowered neighborhood councils and other such opportunities can improve both the quantity and quality of civic engagement, and they can improve our collective capacity to promote public goods.
- Cities should invest resources, and perhaps join with community groups, to mobilize residents to participate in the civic and political life.
- Political scientists should undertake more systematic studies of the conditions under which citizens may be mobilized and empowered to participate in inclusive, informed, and constructive ways.
- Community intermediary organizations such as CDCs represent an untapped potential for spurring greater civic engagement. CDCs, in particular, should enhance the role of their boards and involve more residents in governance activities. Indeed, they should follow the lead of the high percentage of non-profits that have advisory boards as well as board of directors. Even greater potential may be realized through the ancillary activities of the CDC.

B. Overcome fragmentation without suppressing engagement

We began by noting the complex relationship between civic engagement and small political units: participation is greater in smaller, more empowered jurisdictions

where government is close and accessible to the people, but the political fragmentation that characterizes many of America's metropolitan areas contributes to degrees of social stratification and segregation that undermine our capacity to pursue broad and inclusive public aims together. Smaller, more homogeneous, municipalities may promote social trust and ease of social intercourse, but they organize key issues out of politics and prevent the kind of bridging social capital necessary for a diverse democracy. We should develop political institutions that preserve as many of the participatory advantages of localism as possible, while recognizing that homogeneous and exclusive localities may foster engagement directed toward ends that are narrow and factional rather than broad and inclusive. In addition, while recognizing that centralizing power is generally not good for engagement, we must consider how to create institutions capable of addressing regional, metropolitan-wide issues that cannot be adequately addressed via local institutions.

Seeking to address problems of inequality and sprawl, urban and metropolitan scholars have offered several institutional proposals for enhancing regionalism. From the perspective of a concern with civic engagement, proposals for a new regionalism are far from equally attractive. Many current proposals do not imagine civic engagement as anything but a possible by-product of political amalgamation¹⁵⁸

Other scholars have offered proposals that aim simultaneously to enhance regionalism while fostering civic engagement. Local government scholars David Barron and Gerald Frug, for example, propose a civic regionalism that would maintain local jurisdictions while creating incentives and structures to incorporate public officials and

citizens from all municipalities affected by potential policies.¹⁵⁹ Such a civic regionalism operates on two principles. First, state laws that define and circumscribe the powers of local governments should compel them to take seriously the effects of their actions on other localities and create incentives for inter-local cooperation on regional problems.¹⁶⁰ Second, state legislatures should create representative regional institutions that allow municipalities to address common issues by forging enforceable agreements with one another.¹⁶¹

Another possible path toward civic regionalism is a two-tiered approach: create a new level of overarching regional government whose authority encompasses issues that generate inter-local externalities while current municipal governments would be left with autonomy over local matters that generate few externalities.¹⁶² Measures that shift governance from localities to a metropolitan region may do little to promote a higher quantity of civic engagement,¹⁶³ but it is important to remember as things currently stand metro-wide issues often simply fall through the cracks of fragmented political structures, or they are dealt with piecemeal by actors whose interests are narrow. Insofar as new

¹⁵⁸ Some measures – such as federal intervention, state court litigation aimed at curbing local exclusionary powers, state legislative impositions of consolidated regional governments, and other state legislative changes that seek to limit local control – may well depress levels of political and civic participation.

¹⁵⁹ See Barron, “Reclaiming Home Rule” and Frug, chap 7.

¹⁶⁰ Barron argues, for example, that certain common local powers should be reduced: powers to engage in exclusionary zoning, maintain municipal boundaries, and refuse to share property tax revenues, while localities should exercise greater powers in other domains such as the enactment of inclusionary zoning and anti-discrimination ordinances. Such changes, he contends, would create incentives for citizens and officials in current localities to address, rather than exacerbate, sprawl and spatial stratification. David Barron, *Reclaiming Home Rule*. Harvard Law Review (2003).

¹⁶¹ Gerald Frug, *Beyond Regional Government*. Harvard Law Review (2002).

¹⁶² See Briffault, Richard. “Localism and Regionalism” in *Buffalo Law Review*. Vol. 48, No. 1 (2000). For discussion of regional government and two-tiered approaches, see David Barron, “Reclaiming Home Rule,” *Harvard Law Review* 116 (2003): 2255, for the distinction between consolidation and two-tiered approaches.

¹⁶³ While sense of community with one’s neighborhood is significantly related to civic acts of voting, working with others to solve a community problem, participating in a neighborhood association, and in a PTA, sense of community with one’s city is not, according to Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey data. Wong, 94

regional institutions help a wider array of stakeholders to address common problems we can hope that these institutions produce a higher quality of engagement that cuts across municipal boundaries and lines of racial and class difference.¹⁶⁴

At present, there are few if any metro-wide institutions that are elected by the population they serve, and fewer still that purport to represent the individual municipalities that make them up.¹⁶⁵ Still, a few metropolitan areas have succeeded in establishing successful regional institutions or patterns of effective cooperation. Perhaps the most noted experience comes from Portland, Oregon, where its Metropolitan Services District (or simply Metro) and Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) help establish frameworks within which localities negotiate with each other and with regional government in ways that appear to have stemmed sprawl and revitalized the center city and its neighborhoods.¹⁶⁶ Other examples of regional governance, including Minneapolis/St. Paul and Salt Lake City, are also worthy of greater study from the perspective of their effect on civic engagement, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Though ideas regarding regional reform abound, there is little evidence regarding how alternative structures of regional governance affect the quality or quantity of civic engagement, or the patterns of segregation and inequality that can undermine that engagement. Our recommendations in this area are, therefore, quite tentative:

¹⁶⁴ Gerald Frug has suggested a number of ways in which institutions -- ranging from a regional legislature to a kind of intra-metropolitan sister-city program -- can build up a regional consciousness without thereby stripping municipalities of authority.

¹⁶⁵ See Beyond Regional Government and note article on Puget sound regional assembly.

¹⁶⁶ Also in the Portland area, ecosystem management concerns in the Johnson Creek watershed and Columbia River Basin have given rise to a host of intergovernmental cooperative enterprises See Johnson, *The Transformation of Civic Institutions in Portland*, 276-7, 271-2; Robert D. Putnam and Lewis M. Feldstein with Don Cohen, *Better Together: Restoring the American Community*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 2003, chap. 12. See also Carter and Wilkie, *Changing Places*, pp. 213-216; Carl Abbott. *Greater Portland: Urban Life and Landscape in the Pacific Northwest* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001); Carl Abbott, "The Portland Region: Where City and Suburbs Talk to Each Other—and Often

- State and local policy makers should experiment with a range of institutions that alter municipal powers and create arenas for politics and deliberation around issues of metropolitan concern.
- In this institutional experimentation, they should seek not to over-ride local decision-making and so risk depressing civic and political engagement, but rather to create incentives that align local and regional aims.
- Social scientists should seek to understand the motives and patterns of individual engagement on issues of metropolitan concern. They should attend especially to the variation of these patterns with respect to different regional institutional arrangements. In this way, social science might inform policy experimentation.
- Corporations and real estate developers have used special districts in a way that confers benefits on a few and imposes burdens on the public at large. One potential problem is that in eliminating special districts localities would lose one way of getting around limits on local taxing authority. [A special district can be created for the sole purpose of collecting revenue for the library]. An alternative is to entrust the authority to plan regional development and allocate development funds to regional governments, this could increase the chances that development will be conducted in ways consistent with a broader public good.

C. Increase Racial and Ethnic Inclusion and Economic Integration

The character of civic engagement is deeply affected by patterns of social and economic inequality, segregation, and political exclusion. The fragmentation of American local governments into relatively homogenous enclaves undercuts the ability of local jurisdictions to serve as effective training grounds in the skills of politics. The social and political marginalization of racial and ethnic groups creates highly unequal opportunities for meaningful civic and political engagement. We are not unmindful of the magnitude of the political and economic interests that are bound up with current patterns of residential stratification and segregation. We would fail in our duty, however, if we did

Agree” in *Housing Policy Debate*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (1997): 11-51; Paul G. Lewis, *Shaping Suburbia: How Political Institutions Organize Urban Development* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press,).

not draw critical attention to an engine of systemic inequality and separation that some go so far (not without cause) to call an “American apartheid.”¹⁶⁷

The political incorporation of immigrant groups is of special concern. Immigrants face barriers to naturalization and voting that limit their civic participation. Furthermore, many immigrant groups are rarely mobilized. There have been some recent efforts to increase the turnout rates among registered voters in areas of high Latino population density but low Latino turnout.¹⁶⁸ Personal contacting may be an especially effective strategy for increasing voter turnout in a number of urban communities.¹⁶⁹

Our recommendations include the following:

- Enforce Fair Housing Laws. Vigilant enforcement of fair housing laws already on the books would enable more members of racial and ethnic minorities to live in racially exclusive localities. Because privileged suburban enclaves derive direct public and private benefits from their the exclusivity and fiscal autonomy – better public services, including schools, and in the higher home values associated with the superiority of schools and public services – important constituencies will be opposed to residential integration.¹⁷⁰ However, fair housing laws are on the

¹⁶⁷ Douglass Massey and Nancy L. Denton, *American Apartheid* ().

¹⁶⁸ The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) has pursued evaluation research in the Los Angeles, Houston, and Denver metropolitan areas. This focus on low turnout areas contrasts with the many current “get out the vote” efforts that target areas with historically high levels of turnout. Preliminary research shows that live phone contacting can increase turnout in areas with a low propensity to vote. Ricardo Ramírez, Alan Gerber, and Donald Green, “Report on NALEO *La Voz del Pueblo*, 2002,” forthcoming 2004.

¹⁶⁹ Noah Pickus, *Immigration and Citizenship in the 21st Century* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998); Louis DeSipio, *Counting on the Latino Vote: Latinos as a New Electorate* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1996); Pei-te Lein, *The Making of Asian America through Political Participation* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2001); Michael Jones-Correa, *Between Two Nations: The Political Predicament of Latinos in New York City* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998); Ronald Schmidt, Sr. *Language Policy and Identity Politics in the United States* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2000).

¹⁷⁰ Cites: Mt. Laurel litigation in New Jersey... Also important to keep in mind that trying to override the local funding of some services such as education, in the name of equalization across a state, may have the effect of dampening citizens willingness to fund education at as generous a level. The result can be greater equity at lower funding levels. With respect to education finance equalization in California, Loveless argues that “School finances can only be equalized by divorcing educational funding from local wealth,” but centralizing school funding may cut “schools off from local political support, further fraying the schools’ weakened ties to local communities.” See, Loveless, “Uneasy Allies: The Evolving Relationship of School and State,” *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, Spring 1998, v. 20, no. 1, pp. 1-8, p. 4.

books, and they are supported in principle by the majority of Americans.¹⁷¹ They should be enforced, because the diversity they bring is likely to enhance aspects of civic engagement.

- More ambitiously, policy makers should consider a variety of inclusionary housing policies for economic integration. Such measures include affordable housing requirements in local planning and development in wealthy areas, and perhaps housing voucher policies that facilitate geographic mobility.
- Policy makers should explore ways to lower the formal barriers to the political participation of immigrants such as lowering barriers to naturalization and expanding the local political franchise. Takoma Park, Maryland, for example, permits non-citizens to vote in school board elections, and San Francisco is currently considering a similar policy.¹⁷² Public school officials should reach out to the parents of immigrant children – in their native language – to try and lessen the barriers that fan alienation and low achievement.¹⁷³ Whether by voting or other means, immigrants should have avenues for expressing voice about policies that directly affect them and their children.
- Community groups and public agencies should supplement the traditional role of political parties in mobilizing new immigrants in the public, economic, and civic arenas. NEED MORE IN TEXT ABOUT PARTY MOBILIZATION.
- The demographic changes entailed by massive foreign migration to the United States are regarded by many as worrisome from a civic standpoint, as already noted. But these changes also have a democratic potential. Political scientists must do more to understand the dynamics of civic and political engagement among new immigrant communities. There is a danger in attempting to “retro-fit” new populations into existing institutional arrangements and democratic practices. Advocates of democracy should consider providing resources and space for these new Americans to imagine and construct new models of democratic politics consistent with basic principles of liberty and equality. Scholars studying civic and political engagement should use this moment of racial pluralism to reconsider their assumptions about where political and civic engagement can be found, the utility of reigning models of political behavior, and even to reconsider the extent to which political power resides in the institutional structures of American democracy.

D. Allow Real Political Conflict in Local Government

¹⁷¹ Abravanel, Martin D. “Public Knowledge of Fair Housing Law: Does it Protect Against Housing Discrimination?” *Housing Policy Debate* 3 (2002): 469-504.

¹⁷² We do, of course, acknowledge that such an effort to allow non-citizens to vote could result in a noticeable backlash from native citizens. Any community considering extending voting to non-citizens must take the risks of such a backlash into account.

¹⁷³ See Alejandro Portes,

In the first part of the twentieth century, urban reformers instituted political reforms to combat corruption and enhance the professionalism of public agencies. These reforms – including at-large systems of representation, city-manager forms of government, professionalized agencies that insulated themselves from political “interference” and popular contact – had the effect of de-politicizing many activities of city government and dampening civic engagement. While allowing that Progressive era reforms responded to genuine problems, we believe that partisan political activity could and should be revitalized at the local level. Conflict can be healthy, especially when it brings new voices and perspectives into the arenas of public discussion and decision. Furthermore, enlarging the scope of politics invites not just conflict, but fosters the give-and-take between political and civic interests and organizations that can result in innovative collaborations and agreements that thicken the relationships between government and civic groups, and among civic groups themselves. We agree with Clarence Stone and his many collaborators that cooperative relations among local civic and business leaders can be a vital form of “civic capacity.”¹⁷⁴ Therefore,

- Cities should reconsider the Progressive-era move toward council/manager governance and non-partisan elections, institutional forms that disproportionately depress participation, especially minority participation. Mayoral campaigns can spur civic engagement, particularly when the elections help empower previously excluded groups.
- More research is needed to uncover the municipal government forms that are most conducive to a greater quantity and better quality of civic engagement. Past studies that uncovered the negative effects of some reform institutions should be updated to encompass municipalities of a variety of sizes and regional locations.

We recognize that while increasing conflict in local government will mobilize some, it will prove distasteful and difficult for others. This highlights the need for more and

¹⁷⁴ See Stone et al., *Building Civic Capacity* (), and ...

better education of citizens about the centrality of disagreement and debate to democratic political life.

Conclusion

[to be written...]