



Metropolitan Governance in America

Donald F. Norris

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Metropolitan government and metropolitan governance have been ongoing issues for more than sixty years in the United States. Based on an extensive survey and a review of existing literature, this book offers a comprehensive overview of these debates. It discusses how the centrifugal forces in local government, and in particular local government autonomy, have produced a highly fragmented governmental landscape throughout America. It argues that in order for 'governance' to occur in metropolitan areas (or anywhere else, for that matter), there has to be some form of an actual governmental institution that possesses the power and ability to compel compliance. Everything else is just some form of cooperation, and while cooperation is not trivial, it does not enable metropolitan areas to address the really tough and controversial issues that divide rather than unite governments in those areas. The book examines the principal factors that prevent the development of either metropolitan government or metropolitan governance in the USA. Norris looks at several examples where some form of metropolitan government or governance can be said to exist, from voluntary cooperation (the weakest) to government (the strongest). He also examines each type of arrangement for its ability to address metropolitan-wide problems and whether each type is or is not in use in the USA. In sum, the book uncovers the extent of metropolitan government and governance, the possibility for its existence, what attempts (if any) have been made in the past, and the problems and issues that have arisen due to the lack of adequate metropolitan governance.

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