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A Research Agenda for the Mid 1990's**

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**Working Paper 96-10**

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**Metropolitan Government and Governance:**

**A Research Agenda for the Mid-1990s**

**Nelson Wikstrom**

**Virginia Commonwealth University**

**A Working Paper prepared for Roundtable in Honor of Victor Jones, American Political Science Association, San Francisco, California, August 30, 1996.**

## **Metropolitan Government and Governance:**

### **A Research Agenda for the Mid-1990s**

Writing more than fifty years ago, Charles Merriam wrote in his preface to Victor Jones' classic work Metropolitan Government that the adequate organization of modern metropolitan areas is one of the great unsolved problems of modern politics (Jones 1942, ix). Jones, echoing the perspective advanced earlier by Paul Studenski in his equally legendary contribution The Government of Metropolitan Areas (Studenski 1930), asserted that the answer to the metropolitan political problem was the establishment of a regional government which would encompass the entire metropolitan area and prove to be more efficient, effective, and resourceful than the usual bewildering maze of local government units. Although Jones in his later writings disassociated himself with the complete merger position (Jones 1979), the metropolitan governmental perspective early-on gained the allegiance of practically all scholars of urban politics and held a virtual intellectual monopoly well into the nineteen sixties, as is evident in the widely read statement of Luther H. Gulick, The Metropolitan Problem and American Ideas (Gulick 1962).

During the middle portion of this century, the consolidationist perspective not only dominated academic thought, but also provided the impetus for the cause of metropolitan political reorganization. The prestigious Committee for Economic Development (CED) issued several monographs designed to spur campaigns for metropolitan government (Committee for Economic Development 1966 and 1970). Vigorous efforts, often well financed, were mounted on behalf of regional government in many metropolitan areas during this time period, largely,

although not exclusively, utilizing the strategy of city-county consolidation. However, only in the major instances of Baton Rouge-East Rouge Parish (1949), Miami-Dade County (1957), Nashville-Davidson County (1962), Jacksonville-Duval County (1967), Indianapolis-Marion County (1969), and a distinctly limited number of smaller metropolitan areas did the reformers achieve their goal. Underscoring the general failure of metro reformers to realize their success, Joseph F. Zimmerman noted that of the sixty-three major attempts of metropolitan governmental reorganization between 1947 and 1978 only eighteen proved to be successful, largely in smaller areas (Zimmerman 1979). White suburban voters proved to be especially impervious to the call for metropolitan governmental reform (Banfield 1957; Norton 1963; Salisbury 1960; Schmandt, Steinbrickner, and Wendel 1961; Watson and Romani 1961). Discouraged by repeated failure, metropolitan reform advocates lost their zeal and devoted their energies and financial resources to other good government reform causes.

Not only did the ordinary voters in mid-century more often than not frustrate the goals of metropolitan reform advocates, but, in addition, a number of prominent scholars developed a respectable intellectual defense of the "balkanized" nature of local government in the metropolis. In their opening seminal contribution, Vincent Ostrom, Charles M. Tiebout, and Robert Warren, drawing upon the concept of a free market and public choice theory, roundly criticized the consolidationist argument. Ostrom, Tiebout, and Warren argued that it was preferable to have a large variety of local governments in a metropolitan area because it ensured competition between local governments functioning as service providers and the ability of citizens, by "voting with their feet" as they phrased it, to reside in that locality of the region which best met their private and public needs (Ostrom, Tiebout, and Warren 1961). This vigorous intellectual attack on the

consolidationist perspective was further developed and refined by a number of scholars (Warren 1966; Bish 1971; Bish and Ostrom 1973).

For the past several decades, scholarly interest in metropolitan governmental structure and governance was largely one of a reclusive nature, banished from the research agendas of most political scientists and other scholars of urban affairs. Borrowing from the apt poetic phraseology of David Walker's insightful contribution on metropolitan reform (Walker 1987), the topic of metropolitan governance was the recipient a long Rip Van Winkle-like sleep. However, similar to the proverbial town crier on his repeated rounds, once again, the concern of what should be the nature of governmental structure in our metropolitan areas has drawn the attention of a significant segment of academicians and the "relevant publics." This development, undoubtedly, is at least partially due to the continued socio-economic decline of our core cities and the persistence of difficult urban problems. In an immediate intellectual sense, the concern about the need for reshuffling metropolitan governmental structure was significantly triggered David Rusk's work Cities Without Suburbs (Rusk 1993), Citistates, by Neal R. Pierce (Pierce 1993), Anthony Downs' contribution New Visions for Metropolitan America (Downs 1994), and an anthology edited by Henry G. Cisneros entitled Interwoven Destinies: Cities and the Nation (Cisneros 1993). Rusk argues that for our central cities to prosper, especially in view of their continuing socio-economic deterioration, cities must be able to expand their territorial limits by annexing adjacent suburban areas. Pierce's central argument is that our metropolitan areas must be governed on a regional "citistate" basis in order to effectively compete in the global economy. He notes: "A citistate divided against itself will prove weak and inefficient" (Pierce 1993, 292). Downs proffers that only through a regional governance structure and process can we effectively

deal with the various socio-economic problems, such as crime and poverty, inordinately associated with our central cities. In the series of papers edited by Cisneros, initially prepared for 1993 American Assembly session entitled "Interwoven Destinies: Cities and the Nation," emphasis is given to the belief that metropolitan-wide strategies of urban revitalization must be implemented if we are to successfully rebuild the economy of our core cities. In addition to these volumes, a series of papers by Allan D. Wallis published in the National Civic Review (Wallis, 1994a, 1994b, and 1994c) have drawn renewed attention by scholars and the "relevant publics" to the topic of metropolitan governance.

*Metropolitan Government and Governance: A Research Agenda for the Mid-1990's*

I would like to suggest, given its renewed theoretical and practical significance, a research agenda for the study of metropolitan government and governance in the mid-1990's. It is important to underscore that such research should not be limited to formal governmental structures, but also include informal and private structures established in the metropolis for facilitating public-private ventures, debating policy, mobilizing political action and coalition building, and delivering services. On this point, it serves us well to heed the well honed following advice of Vincent Ostrom, Robert Bish, and Elinor Ostrom: "We need to recognize, then, that local government in a democratic society cannot be confined only to what transpires in particular corporate entities or agencies identified as units of government. This is why it may be more useful to refer to governance structures than governments. We can then appreciate that something viewed as a process of government (governance) requires a much larger universe of discourse than do units of governments as such." (Ostrom, Bish, and Ostrom 1988, 212)

*Metropolitan Government: An Appraisal*



As a component of its wide-sweeping regionalism study in the early 1970's, the U.S. Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR) undertook a review of the experience of the few metropolitan governments established by that date (U.S. Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations 1973; 1974). Since the ACIR investigation, no comparative in-depth study has been undertaken on the experience, and virtues and vices, of the various metropolitan governments. Therefore, as a matter of first priority, our research agenda should include a comparative assessment of the relative success of the major metropolitan governments brought about through city-county consolidation in the 1960's, most prominently Indianapolis/Marion County, Indiana; Jacksonville/Duval County, Florida; and, Nashville/Davidson County, Tennessee. To this study list should be added the somewhat unique comprehensive urban county government of Miami/MetroDade County, Florida, which was established in 1954. Questions of research concern include: Have metropolitan governments, by taking advantage of economies of scale, provided services more effectively and efficiently? Which services? Have these governmental units, notwithstanding several earlier findings to the contrary (Grant, 1966; Benton and Gamble; 1984) reduced overall local governmental expenditures and taxes? Have metropolitan governmental structures generally provided adequate political representation, access, and responsiveness to the disadvantaged and minorities, as appears to be the instance in several regions? (De Grove 1972; Wilbern 1972) To what degree have metropolitan governments proved to be effective in dealing with economic and social problems? Have these governmental units been successful in promoting regional economic development in the increasingly global economy? In sum, to what degree have the various metropolitan governments realized the expectations of their advocates, or in a contrary vein, confirmed the initial suspicions of their

opponents?

### *Incremental Change and Functional Regionalism*

A second topic of research should focus on the current extent of functional regionalism implemented in metropolitan areas, instituted through intergovernmental contracts, the transfer of a function from one government to another, and the establishment of special districts and authorities. By the term functional regionalism I am simply making reference to the delivery of a service, such as mass transportation, sewers, trash disposal, or water, by a public or private organization on a regional or semi-regional basis. In a closely related fashion, it would serve us well to acquire a much better understanding of the extent to which functional regionalism has been actualized by the practice of governmental "privatization" (i.e. government contracting with a private firm) and the use of non-profit organizations for the provision of services.

Past in-depth investigations centering on public service delivery in metropolitan areas has substantiated the extensive utilization by governments of intergovernmental contracts. One study found that the County of Los Angeles, through what is commonly referred to as the "Lakewood Plan," provides a wide array of services, involving approximately 1500 contracts, to more than eighty municipalities in the county (Coin 1971). H. Paul Freisma reported on the widespread use of contracts among governments in the Quad-City metropolitan area of Illinois and Iowa (Freisma 1971). Similarly, Vincent L. Marando documented the extensive resort to intergovernmental contracts between governments for the delivery of services in the Detroit metropolitan area (Marando 1968). Another well-known study documented a score of intergovernmental contracts entered into by governments in the Philadelphia region (Williams, Herman, Liebman, and Dye 1965).

In an exhaustive inquiry conducted in the mid-seventies, Zimmerman found that about seventy-five percent of the core cities and seventy-two percent of the suburbs were a party to one or more intergovernmental contracts. Most of these contracts involved the provision of water, sewerage disposal and treatment, road maintenance, and public safety (fire and police) mutual aid pacts. He reported that localities entered into intergovernmental contracts in order to achieve economies of scale; and, reflective of their satisfactory experience, only twelve percent of the core cities reported terminating a contract (Zimmerman 1974, 35, 41).

More recent evidence indicates that local governments are making increasing use of intergovernmental contracts to meet their public service responsibilities (Shanahan 1991). We need to gain a much more comprehensive understanding of this development and the extent to which this bears upon intergovernmental cooperation and functional regionalism. Further, we need to better understand which system maintenance services, such as roads and mass transportation, and life style services, such as public education, seem to be most politically susceptible to the intergovernmental contract approach, and the manner in which the innovative use of the this approach might be utilized to deal with the problems of the core city.

Much more so than is commonly acknowledged by scholars of urban politics, a significant incidence of the transfer of responsibility for the delivery of a service from one government to another has taken place in our metropolitan areas, usually resulting in the service being delivered on a larger area-wide basis. In some instances, functional transfers have been *mandated* by state action, as in Florida where the state shifted the responsibility of tax assessment from the municipal to the county level and in the case of Minnesota which transferred the administration of welfare services from the cities and towns to the county. On the other hand, one study, carried out several

decades ago, reported that fifty-one percent of the central cities and thirty percent of the suburbs had *voluntarily* transferred the responsibility of at least one service function to another governmental unit. Functions which central cities most often transferred to another governmental unit, in descending order of incidence, included: public health, law enforcement, and social services. Suburbs most often transferred, again in descending order of incidence, responsibility for the following services: sewerage treatment, solid waste collection and disposal, public health, taxation and assessment, and social services. Further, it is noteworthy, that in fifty-six percent of the transfers a county was the recipient unit, while in nineteen percent a special district gained greater functional responsibility. In fourteen percent of the transfers the state became the provider of the service, while in seven percent functional responsibility was simply shifted from one municipality to another. Significantly, in approximately three-quarters of the transfers responsibility for a function was reassigned from a municipality to a regional or semi-regional county or special district governmental unit (Zimmerman, 1976).

All of this strongly suggests, of course, that scholars of metropolitan governmental organization need to inventory the pace and degree to which functional transfers have which have recently taken place in the metropolis, and its significance for functional regionalism. Pertinent research questions include: Which particular services have been most often transferred, and on the basis of what rationale, from a municipal to a semi-regional or regional government? To what degree has the transfer of service responsibilities actualized economies of scale and eliminated duplication of service efforts? And, importantly, has the transfer of functional responsibilities significantly eased the fiscal condition of core cities and older inner suburbs?

Special districts, inclusive of authorities, are the most numerous and rapidly increasing

governmental units in the United States: between 1987 and 1992 the number of special districts spiralled from 29,532 to 33,131, an increase of twelve percent (Bureau of the Census 1992, 3).

Concerning the spread of special districts in metropolitan areas, William H. Cape wrote:

"Unwilling to accept significant political and governmental rearrangements for the prevailing crazy-quilt fragmentation of traditional governmental patterns within their immediate areas, local residents and their public officials are more inclined to acquiesce in limited areawide interlocal solutions, including the creation of so-called special district governments, to handle their most pressing problem areas with centralized jurisdiction and management (Cape 1972, 39).

Special districts in metropolitan areas, which encompass the entire region or a significant portion thereof, are usually entrusted with only a single or few service responsibilities.

Metropolitan special districts have come into being in about one-half of our metropolitan areas, although they are most prevalent in the metropolitan areas of California, Ohio, and Texas. Their functional responsibilities most often include: mass transportation, sewerage disposal, water supply, public housing, hospitals, libraries, swimming pools, pollution control, and airports.

Scholars of urban governmental organization and politics have been highly critical of the continued establishment of special districts in metropolitan areas. They have argued that special districts are inherently undemocratic, their creation serves to further fragment the governmental structure of the metropolis and undermine general purpose local governments, and that the multiple establishment of special districts in a metropolitan area simply forestalls the organization of a more comprehensive metropolitan government. Reflecting many of these sentiments, Roscoe C. Martin advanced: "The widespread use of special districts reflects, among other things, the single-minded pursuit of programmatic goals. Such a single emphasis produces a

number of side effects, by no means all of them benign. It serves to separate the program in question - urban renewal, public housing, and so on - from the mainstream of city affairs. By the same token it divorces the program from city politics, thereby denying it the juices of democracy." Martin added: "Politics aside, special-district government means special-clientele and special-pleader government. On the one hand, the citizen who participates here has his interest and energy diverted from the affairs of the city; on the other hand, he is likely to become prisoner to a myopic commitment to what is after all a side show to the main performance." Martin concluded: "Finally, the promiscuous employment of special districts tends to atomize local government. The resulting fragmentation has serious implications for a concerted attack on local problems, for citizen concern in government, for the visibility of public activities, and for the responsibility of agencies and officials. A major casualty of the program-by-program approach to local government is planning, which becomes impossible in any meaningful sense when several governments in a locality share (or divide) responsibility for related public programs." (Martin 1965, 178-179).

The above criticisms of special district government are certainly not lacking in merit; however, viewed in a more positive vein, special districts have proved to be especially adapt in providing some services, like mass transportation, on a regional or semi-regional basis. In this regard, John Bollens and Henry Schmandt wrote: "The performance record of metropolitan district government is impressive despite their functional restrictiveness. They have done much to satisfy or alleviate some of the pressing areawide needs of the SMSA's they serve." (Bollens and Schmandt 1981, 359) Similarly, Jones has advanced: ".....city and county officials look upon special districts as useful devices by means which city and county officials may avoid the creation

of a general purpose regional government, shift the cost of a service or regulation to taxpayers outside the county or municipality, and lay the burden of supporting a particular matter "out of politics" by encapsulating it in an independent single-purpose organization." Jones concludes: "It is an easy and painless way of eating one's regional cake and having one's local cake too." (Jones 1979, 11)

The above positive commentaries in regard to special districts require us to lay aside our hostile intellectual attitude toward these bodies and to acquire a better understanding of those factors accounting for their continued proliferation. We need to gain a much better sense of their organizational and political nature, service effectiveness, and responsiveness to the community. Some thought should also be given to the way in which special district government could be utilized to spur metropolitan economic development and innovatively confront social problems.

In present governmental circles, a considerable amount of praise has been bestowed upon the practice of governments contracting with a private firm for the provision of a service. This is popularly referred to as the service delivery alternative of "privatization." Along this line, it is evident that an increasing number of local governments are privatizing much of their service delivery structure. A study conducted in the mid 1990's reported that a large number of cities take advantage of privatization approach for the delivery of a variety of services. Most commonly, these services involve trash collection, streetlight operation, vehicle towing, hospital management, solid waste disposal, street repair, and traffic signal maintenance; indeed, twenty-five percent of all the cities included in the survey contracted out to private firms all of these services (New York Times, May 28, 1995, 9). We may postulate that functional regionalism in the metropolis has become more widespread due to the increasing number of local governments

contracting with the same private firm for the provision of a service. This development warrants our scholarly concern and investigation.

In a similar vein, we know relatively little about the complex relationship between government and non-profit organizations, especially in regard to the delivery of social services. This void in our knowledge is especially serious because, as well documented by Lester M. Salaman, governments in the metropolis have historically relied upon, to a significant degree, an assortment of non-profit organizations for the delivery of social services. Salaman reported that this relationship between local governments and non-profit organizations is so extensive that local government may be fairly described as the major philanthropist in a wide range of social service areas (Salaman 1987). We may suspect, and it certainly merits our research attention, that non-profit service organizations, given their usual metropolitan-wide funding and delivery focus, engender a considerable measure of functional regionalism.

In summary, then, I would like to suggest that we need to acquire a much greater understanding of the web of rich governmental and private relationships in the metropolis, especially in regard to the delivery of services, and the extent to which functional regionalism is implemented through intergovernmental contracts, functional transfers, special districts and authorities, privatization, and non-profit organizations. Too often in our past writings we have described the political life of the metropolis largely through a simple *governmental* structural focus, rather than through the vantage point of a web of complex structure and process, involving both the private and public sectors. The collection of evidence may well support the belief that in many of our metropolitan areas functional regionalism has become so extensive that it has given rise to a sort of *de facto* metropolitan governmental structure, rendering the quest for traditional



metropolitan governmental reform somewhat obsolete and irrelevant.

*Regional Councils, Political Culture, and a Regional Political Perspective*

A third topic warranting our scholarly attention centers on the degree to which regional councils - here defined to include councils of governments, economic development agencies, planning district commissions, and an assortment of other regional agencies - have been successful in promoting intergovernmental cooperation and nurturing a regional-wide political perspective, policy process, and political culture in our metropolitan areas. Although the rise of regional councils may be traced back to the 1930's, the great surge in these bodies commenced in the 1960's because of local and state support, and, most critically, federal monetary and policy initiatives (Wikstrom 1977, 25-49). Throughout the United States at least one (usually more than one) regional council is functioning in each metropolitan area. In a specific sense, metropolitan (as well as non-metropolitan) areas in Virginia are served by a regional planning district commission. Suburbs in Northern Virginia are also members of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

In assessing the pragmatic worth of the regional council approach we could borrow with considerable profit analytical concepts associated with the study of the politics of nation-building, as in a somewhat analogous fashion Matthew Holden utilized concepts employed in the study of international relations to better conceptualize the dynamics of urban politics (Holden, 1964). After all, both nation-building and regional council development involve the long-term goal of actualizing greater territorial political integration. Myron Weiner wrote in regard to national political development: "It is often said of the developing nations that they are unintegrated and that their central problem, often more pressing than economic development, is the achievement of

integration." (Weiner 1967, 150) In a roughly parallel fashion, regional councils seek to achieve a greater measure of political structural, process, and public policy integration in the metropolis.

Additional parallel analogies may be advanced concerning the nuances of nation-building and metropolitan regionalism. The fragmented nature of governmental structure in the metropolis, with its array of counties, municipalities, and special districts and consequent particularistic political loyalties, may be characterized as a "traditional" system much as in the same fashion that this label is applied to the less developed nation-state, with its usual plurality of territorial, ethnic, and religious loyalties. And, further, in regard to both the nation-state and the fragmented governmental metropolis the goal of political modernization is basically two-fold: successfully establishing a modern political structure transcending particularistic traditional loyalties; and, second, redirecting the political loyalties of the elite and subsequently the mass citizenry away from traditional identifications and toward this new structure. And finally, in terms of symbolism, whereas the rallying banner for the nation-state is "nationalism," its scaled-down counterpart for regional councils is "regionalism."

Although the impact of regional councils on the politics of the metropolis has been the subject of considerable debate, tangential evidence suggests that regional councils have stimulated and brought into being in many metropolitan areas a semblance of a regional political perspective, policy process, and political culture. Indeed, in the Portland, Oregon and Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan areas the accomplishments of the regional council has been credited with helping to establish a regional organization with significant policymaking approval powers (Abbott 1983; Harrigan and Johnson 1978). Through the employment of in-depth interviews with local political actors we can gain a better insight into the role of regional council in promoting metropolitan

governance and a regional political culture.

*Metropolitan Government and Governance, and Democratic Preference*

Another area of research warranting our concern is that of gaining a current understanding of the attitude of the electorate and various interest groups toward the concept of metropolitan government. In the past, proposals to establish a regional government has usually confronted the determined political resistance of white suburban elected office holders. In a similar fashion, African-American political leaders have registered their strong opposition to metropolitan governmental reform initiatives. In the main, white suburbanites have harbored the perspective that their community government is a "republic-in-miniature," as Robert Wood described this attitude many years ago (Wood 1959), eminently capable of meeting their public needs, and have been strongly adverse to reforms designed to politically consolidate their community with the core city. This attitude of political self-sufficiency widely held among suburbanites has been further reinforced by the recent growth of suburban governmental bureaucracy and capacity, a development documented by G. Ross Stephens (Stephens 1995). White suburban hostility to metropolitan governmental reform proposals has been further reinforced by their belief that community public services would not be materially improved by a regional-wide delivery of services (Hawley and Zimmer 1970), and that the establishment of a metropolitan government would eventually result in increased local taxes and a financial subsidization of less deserving former core city residents (Krefetz and Sharof 1977). Augmenting the traditional white suburban political resistance to metropolitan reform proposals is the belief held by many African-American core city political leaders that such reforms would serve to undercut their newly-won political power (Piven and Cloward 1967; Marshall 1972; Johnson 1972).

However, recent scattered evidence suggests that the political opposition of white suburbanites and African-American core city political leaders toward metropolitan governance and reform may well be moderating. Survey research conducted in the Richmond (Virginia) metropolitan area found substantial support among white suburban dwellers for greater cooperation among governments and for the establishment of a limited-purpose metropolitan government, responsible for water, sewer, waste disposal, and mass transportation services (Virginia Commonwealth University 1994). However, legislation facilitating this structural reform was defeated in the State Senate. In a similar vein, scholars have underscored that many African-American core city political leaders have become more supportive of governmental cooperation in the metropolis and view with favor the establishment of limited purpose metropolitan governmental structures, especially those entrusted with the responsibility of constructing and operating airport and port facilities (Judd and Parkinson 1990). In addition, the continual economic misfortunes of many core cities has convinced a segment of the African-American leadership that it is in their self interest to further politically integrate their community into the larger metropolitan region, rather than to preside over, what H. Paul Friesma described some years ago, a "hollow prize" (Friesma 1969). As one African-American political leader volunteered prior to the city-county merger of Jacksonville and Duval County: "I might have been the black mayor, but I would have been only a referee in bankruptcy." (De Grove 1973, 24) More recently, in 1993, the African-American mayor of Memphis, a predominately African-American city, advocated, because of the declining tax base of his city, the merger of Memphis with predominately white Shelby County (State 1993). Further, an increasing number of African-American core city political leaders appeared swayed by the argument that a metropolitan

government, fairly structured in terms of minority representation, would not be inimical to their political interests (Hawley 1972). We need to determine the extent to which the above findings are of an isolated nature, or reflect a wider trend throughout the nation among white suburbanites and African-American political of decreasing political opposition to regional governance.

In contrast to the historical resistance of white suburbanites and African-American political leaders toward metropolitan government, business leaders and groups, for the most part, have typically been in the forefront of promoting metropolitan governance reform proposals. Indeed, Thomas A. Henderson and Walter A. Rosenblum concluded that metropolitan governmental reform proposals have a fair chance of success in only those efforts where local governmental, business, civic, and media leaders are united on behalf of the cause of political reform (Henderson and Rosenblum 1973). On the whole, business leaders have supported metropolitan governance reform efforts out of their sense of *noblesse oblige* and their belief that such reforms would result in more economical, efficient, and responsive government. Their long-standing support for metropolitan governance has been further bolstered by their concern about the erosion of the economy of core cities and their conviction that viable urban economic development requires that core cities must be further politically integrated into the larger region. An extension of this line of reasoning is that unless reform efforts are successful in bringing about a greater degree of metropolitan political integration we may expect inner older suburbs to increasingly experience the socio-economic problems of core cities (De Witt 1995). And, finally, many business leaders support the metropolitan governance position being convinced that only a politically consolidated metropolis has the sufficient resources to effectively compete in the global economy.

Reflective of the above line of thought, the Chambers of Commerce of Seattle, Detroit,

Hartford, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh have adopted a regional membership structure and promoted the upgrading of airport and port facilities on the premise that an improved infrastructure will facilitate the ability of their region to be a more effective competitor in the global economy. In a parallel fashion, the Virginia Chamber of Commerce played a key role in establishing the "Urban Partnership," composed of a coalition of local governments and business interests. The Urban Partnership is dedicated to suggesting innovative policies for confronting urban problems, advancing the cause of metropolitan governance, and promoting a good business climate in metropolitan areas. Similarly, the Allegheny Conference on Community Development (Pittsburgh), Cleveland Tomorrow, and Greater Philadelphia First have pursued educational, economic development and job training goals designed to marshal human resources, and economic and political assets on a regional basis.

We need to gain a much greater insight into the role and of business leaders and groups in the politics of metropolitan governance and reform. Research concerns include: Which types of business leaders and groups are most attracted to the reform cause? What factors, beside economic self-interest and economic and political ideology, motivate their involvement? What various strategies do they pursue for realizing their goals, especially in terms of coalition building with academic, governmental, and media leaders? And, why have business leaders and groups, especially given their usual well documented dominant position in American politics (Lindblom 1977), compiled such a poor record of success in realizing their metropolitan governmental reform goals? In a contrary vein, which business leaders and groups are most apt to oppose metropolitan reform, and for what assortment of reasons? And how do such opponents mobilize opposition to reform efforts?

*Metropolitan Government and Governance: Higher Levels of Government*

For a variety of reasons, including the usual constitutional and financial dependency of localities on the higher levels of government, our research agenda needs to include an assessment of the present (and future) degree to which state and federal policies promote metropolitan government and governance. Writing about fifteen years ago, Patricia S. Florestano and Vincent L. Morando provided at that time an excellent rendering of the various ways by which state managerial requirements and public policies impacted upon governments in the metropolis and promoted (or failed to promote!) metropolitan governance (Florestano and Morando 1981). Since the 1960s, practically all states have provided funding for regional councils and, in most instances, have entrusted these bodies with policy review functions (Graham 1985). Eight states -- including Florida, New Jersey, and Washington -- have established growth management policies which require local intergovernmental cooperation and policymaking in metropolitan areas. In Minnesota and Oregon, the state legislatures, respectively, significantly enhanced the political stature and policy role of the regional council established in Minneapolis-St. Paul and Portland metropolitan areas. The most extreme example, of course, of a state restructuring local government in the metropolis, without the direct involvement and approval of the populace, took place in 1969 when the Indiana state legislature established the Indianapolis-Marion County (UNIGOV) metropolitan government.

Given the resurgence of the states and their pivotal role in the federal system, it is important for us to assess whether the states are on the verge of adopting a more aggressive posture in promoting metropolitan governance because of the socio-economic decline of core cities, the spread of socio-economic problems, most notably poverty and crime, throughout the metropolis,

and the ever expanding physical growth of metropolitan regions (Garreau 1991). These developments may serve to convince state legislators of their perceived need to singlehandedly reorganize the governmental structure and political process of the metropolis, casting aside whatever may be citizen democratic preference. At least over the long-haul, it is not unreasonable to surmise that the usual primacy of suburban and business interests in the state legislatures bodes well for the cause of metropolitan reform and governance.

Commencing in the mid-1960's federal governmental policies constituted a major force in stimulating metropolitan regionalism. Federal legislation promoting regionalism in metropolitan areas included the: Housing Act (1961), Federal Highway Act (1962), Urban Mass Transit Act (1964), Housing and Development Act (1965), Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act (1966), and the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act (1968). Most importantly, the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act established the A-95 review process which required that local federal grant applications had to be reviewed and commented upon by a regional council before it could be forwarded to the appropriate federal agency. However, this federal requirement was subsequently terminated by the Reagan administration which viewed with far less favor the role of the federal government in promoting regionalism in metropolitan areas.

However, federal governmental policies have once again began to promote intergovernmental cooperation and metropolitan governance. Examples of these policy initiatives include a mandate that requires the establishment of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in each metropolitan area, the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), enacted in 1982, which promotes a private-public partnership for job training on a metropolitan basis, and the Intermodal Surface Transportation and Efficiency Act (1991), providing further powers to MPO's for regional



transportation planning. In addition, recent amendments to the Clean Air Act (1990) requires cooperation between governments in the metropolis in order to comply with federally mandated clean air standards. Finally, the federal government provides funding to regional councils to design metropolitan-wide prevention and other service programs for individuals afflicted with the AIDS virus. We need to acquire a better understanding of the degree to which present federal managerial requirements, mandates, and public policies promote intergovernmental cooperation and metropolitan governance.

### *Conclusion*

Given the fact that the vast majority of Americans reside in the metropolis, it is obvious that the political order and stability of the nation is closely intertwined with the overall economic, political, and social well-being of our metropolitan areas (Cisneros 1993). Leaving aside our amateur normative preconceptions of what should constitute the structure and process of metropolitan governance, we need to get on with the business of gaining a much more sophisticated understanding of the web of governance in the metropolis and the degree to which governmental structure and process needs to be altered, and the manner in the way it should be altered, to promote the good life of all of our metropolitan citizens. I believe that by pursuing the research agenda which I have outlined, involving the collection of base economic, political, and social data and the completion of in-depth elite and mass opinion surveys, we would achieve the requisite level of insight about metropolitan governmental affairs which would allow us to be in a far better position to confidently respond to "the governmental problem of the metropolis," as Merriam phrased it so long ago, and advance some well developed policy proposals for reinventing metropolitan governance for the dawn of the forthcoming century.

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