

GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING  
IN METROPOLITAN AREAS

# AMERICAN COUNCIL TO IMPROVE OUR NEIGHBORHOODS

*American Council To Improve  
Our Neighborhoods*

SERIES IN HOUSING AND  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
BANFIELD AND GRODZINS:  
*Government and Housing in Metropolitan Areas*  
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## GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING IN METROPOLITAN AREAS

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## Government and Housing in Metropolitan Areas

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This volume is one in the ACTION Series in Housing and Community Development made possible by a grant from the Ford Foundation to the American Council To Improve Our Neighborhoods. Some of the contributors to the Series are members of ACTION's staff; others are at universities or in private practice. The findings they present here are the product of their own selective process. The conclusions they reach have had the benefit of advice and comment from a wide variety of persons, including members of ACTION's *ad hoc* committees for the Series. Neither individually nor collectively, however, has ACTION's Board of Directors attempted to limit the authors in the facts they present, the conclusions they reach, or the recommendations they propose to solve or mitigate a particular problem. Whether prepared by staff or consultants, the volumes in the Series are uniquely the product of their authors. To say here that the authors' findings and views do not necessarily reflect the knowledge and attitude of ACTION or of any or all of the ACTION Board of Directors is also to underline the Board's intention that the Series should provide fresh points of view to some of the most complex and controversial problems of housing and urban development in America.

ACTION hopes that both the expert and the student will find the volumes useful additions to the literature on housing and community development. The principal purpose of the Series, however, is to inform and stimulate the growing body of influential businessmen, professionals, and citizen leaders

whose opinions on many facets of urban life are having a profound effect upon the kinds of policy and actions required for the provision of adequate housing.

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## Foreword

The ACTION Series in Housing and Community Development is the published part of a two-pronged effort of the American Council To Improve Our Neighborhoods (ACTION) to help bring about a higher level of living in this country's urban areas. It has been made possible by a grant from the Ford Foundation. These volumes analyze many of the facts about the present condition of American communities, particularly with respect to housing, and offer new conclusions about the problems and potentialities implied by the facts. The other part of this ACTION effort is made up of many activities through which ACTION and other groups are aiding communities and their citizens to meet present local problems and to realize future potentialities for sound urban growth. These activities put to the test the proposals of the authors and the members of the *ad hoc* committees for improving the nation's urban life.

Specifically, ACTION aims through this Series and its related program efforts to create a climate within which the choices available to the American people for improved urban living can be expanded in terms of a larger supply of housing, of better quality and at lesser cost. At the least, this means the realization of the following objectives:

1. The elimination of slums that cannot be economically rehabilitated.
2. The improvement of properties that can be economically rehabilitated.
3. The preservation of currently sound housing and neighborhoods by slowing down their rates of obsolescence.
4. The provision of new housing on both cleared and va-

cant land in sufficient quantity and in satisfactory quality to meet current requirements and the requirements of the huge urban growth foreseen in the years ahead.

5. The accomplishment of the foregoing objectives in conjunction with a high level of coordinated community services and in such a manner that all income, racial, and other groups in the population will be served.

6. The effective planning and distribution of urban functions in order to correct the costly imbalances which now exist among them both within the central city and between it and its surrounding metropolitan area.

These objectives cannot be accomplished without intensive effort to organize pertinent knowledge systematically and to clarify the aims of urban policy. Obviously, this Series cannot furnish all the information necessary to solve all the problems. But the authors of the volumes do provide a basis for policy. They do so by analyzing the current problems and indicating possible future changes. The summary volume, the over-all view, takes the major findings of each of these specific studies and presents them along with the suggestions which the ACTION *ad hoc* committees believe to be most promising for solving a number of critical current problems.

The framework of the Series is based on the primacy of the consumer in the housing market and in housing policy. Because the largest number of Americans live in urban communities, the studies deal only with cities and urban housing.

Most of the wealth of America is in its cities. And most of the wealth of cities is in residential structures and their related utilities and facilities. The value of dwellings alone stands at over \$300 billion, a figure twice as large as the assets of the country's 500 biggest manufacturing companies. Not only is housing the largest single item in our national wealth, but that part of it which is newly constructed amounts on the average to more than a fifth of all our capital expenditures each year. New housing uses one-third of the lumber produced in

the country, two-thirds of the bricks, at least half of most plumbing items, and three-fourths of all gypsum products. Yet new housing in any given year is only 3 per cent of all housing. These statistics prove that housing is among the most important commodities in our economy, but they do not prove that our supply of housing meets the requirements of all consumers nor that it is produced as efficiently as possible.

For housing, as for other commodities, the market place tends to govern the quantity, quality, cost, and distribution of the product. America is properly famous for what it produces. It is equally admired for the methods of production and distribution which its industries have developed. Particularly in the past 25 years, accomplishments in housing have been considerable, but either they are not considerable enough or the dissatisfied observers of, and participants in, the housing market argue their case more eloquently than people do about other commodities and services.

The very nature of housing makes almost inevitable that both the product of the housing industry and the mechanism of the housing market should come under criticism. Unlike most other economic commodities, housing is also a social commodity. As such, it is overlaid with all kinds of attributes that blur the lines between supply and demand, need and preference. In our system of values as well as in our vernacular, the house is the home. So long as it stands as the symbol of the family, satisfaction with it will take as many forms as the traditional sentiments which people attach to it.

But putting aside its social values, housing is still very different from other economic commodities. Its scale of cost, for one thing, is not matched by any other commodity. For most householders, monthly housing outlays represent their largest current expenditure after food and—if they buy a house—their largest single expenditure in a lifetime. Another of its distinguishing attributes is immobility. A pair of shoes or an automobile can be shipped from one part of the country to another

as demand varies regionally. Most housing, on the other hand, is immobile; it is tied to its land. Still another example of difference is the fact that the market for housing is essentially one for an existing stockpile; even in years of highest new housing production, the stockpile still meets 97 per cent of the demand for housing. Coupled with the high level of expenditure always required for housing, it makes the market respond disproportionately to sudden declines in the economy and in consumer income. The Depression of the thirties, for example, while it greatly reduced the production of automobiles and other consumer goods, cut down the number of new housing starts proportionately very much more. Because housing is so vulnerable to economic fluctuations, it has rarely attracted large amounts of risk capital from individual firms.

Relatively few of housing's small businessmen have introduced technological advances into their operations. Where they have, the results have been remarkable, but the small scale at which most of them operate has generally precluded their investing in much more than an occasional market analysis or research in design. Their scale of operation also tends to foster labor practices which, while protecting the otherwise precarious position of workers in a seasonal and fluctuating trade, nevertheless contribute to production inefficiencies. But if the small businessman in housing sometimes operates at a disadvantage, he has nonetheless been remarkably successful in Washington. Since the 1930s he has persuaded the Federal government to underwrite the housing market with credit mechanisms and other benefits which eliminate much of his risk. It is important to remember, however, that Federal policies which reduce risk in home building have not been adopted simply because housing has extraordinarily persuasive spokesmen. Inducements to the construction industry and to the manufacturers of materials have become traditional compensatory measures when the economy slumps.

There is considerable irony in the fact that the very pro-

ductive devices which surround the production and marketing of housing inhibit its industrial rationalization. As the risk goes down, so does competition, and competition is one of the essential ingredients for successful production and merchandising in America. Piece by piece, the whole setting for housing tends to magnify the inability of private enterprise to merchandise housing in the extraordinary way that the American economy merchandises its soap and soap, aspirins and automobiles. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the consumer has come to place less and less attention on his dwelling and more and more attention on nationally advertised commodities to go into his dwelling or to use outside it.

This widespread shift in consumer values hits hard at every city's struggle to stay viable, for the state of our dwellings and the state of our cities are inseparable. Relatively minor deterioration and obsolescence in a city's residential parts can have major economic repercussions on the whole urbanized area. So can inappropriate locations of housing types and levels of density. If housing types determine the pattern of social organization and activity in the city, density determines the city's size and circulation. In different combinations they add up to a greater or lesser public investment in schools, parks, playgrounds, streets, and utilities and to a greater or lesser economic return to the private entrepreneurs who invest in, build, own, and manage housing or provide a range of services and commodities for its occupants. Next to their employment, where people live and the way they live constitute the most important feature of urban policy.

Within this general setting, the ACTION Series in Housing and Community Development deliberately combines research and policy-making activities to help clear away obstacles that stand in the way of the kinds of communities that will meet the requirements of new quantities and qualities—esthetic as well as economic and social—in American life. Throughout the preparation of the volumes there has been unique interplay

between the researcher and representatives of the key groups which make public and private policy for the housing market and for urban development.

For all the studies, I sought to associate with the Series the ablest persons I could find. Some of the authors, although informed on housing matters, had not previously written about them. Their points of view, I felt, were likely to be uncluttered by old attachments. I asked other persons to participate in the Series, however, because they so clearly were experts in the field.

My method of organization for the Series was this: The primary agents whose decisions determine how effectively housing and community services respond at any point in time to the often conflicting demands and requirements that are made upon them were identified as the investor, the producer, the consumer, the government, and the community. For each of these major areas of housing involvement and interest, ACTION's directors set up an *ad hoc* committee whose responsibility was to suggest feasible courses of action which stemmed from the subject matter dealt with by the researchers for the separate volumes.

Thus, within the broad category of investment, the *ad hoc* Committee on the Investor considered the problems of rental housing and rehabilitation. In his study, *Rental Housing: Opportunities for Private Investment*, Louis Winnick uncovers many of the deep-seated forces which have produced a significant decline in apartment construction. He sets forth reasons why life insurance companies have abandoned their rental-housing programs and why apartment developers have become so dependent on government mortgage aids. But he also outlines an impressive list of factors which point to a broader demand for urban apartments in the future. The committee's second area of interest, the economic feasibility of rehabilitation, had its inception in the great stress on rehabilitation expressed in the urban-renewal provisions of the Housing Act of

1954. In *Residential Rehabilitation: Private Profits and Public Purposes*, Miles L. Colean and William W. Nash present a comprehensive examination of the rehabilitation market and the individuals who operate successfully in it. Based on intensive field investigation and factual accounts of operations by well-known rehabilitators in a number of cities, the study explores investment opportunities in housing rehabilitation and discusses the role local government can play in stimulating rehabilitation either inside or outside official urban-renewal areas.

The Committee on the Producer accepted the challenge of proposing ways to achieve the potential opportunities for technological change in the design and production of housing. As a basis for these proposals, Burnham Kelly and a team of associated experts at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology analyze the blocks which prevent the housing industry from taking advantage of a new way of life and cost-saving features offered by new design and technology. Their book, *Design and the Housing Industry*, explores the roles of the builder, the labor union, the manufacturer of building materials, the architect, and the public official, and points out ways in which their combined efforts can introduce many forms of improved design and technological innovation into future home-building operations.

Problems with which the Committee on the Consumer dealt are interrelated with all the other studies in the Series, as the committee faced the issue of whether the behavior of the consumer can be altered to induce him to place a higher value on housing and the neighborhood amenities which complement it. Nelson Foote, Janet Abu-Lughod, Mary Mix Foley, and Louis Winnick collaborated in the research and writing of *Consumer Choice and Housing: Present Behavior and Future Expectations*, which brings together knowledge about the values people attach to their housing and the degree to which they appear to be realizing or sacrificing those values. In his chapters, Foote presents some original and thought-provoking

material on the organization of the dwelling unit for the kind of urban life now developing in most American cities.

Because housing is a commodity whose social value makes it a matter of national interest, it was necessary to explore the role the Federal government plays in its production and consumption. The Committee on the Government, therefore, was concerned largely with how housing credit policies of the Federal government impede or stimulate desirable competitive practices in the housing market and provide necessary protective devices for consumers who for reasons of age, income, discrimination, or incapacity cannot compete successfully in the market. Charles M. Haar, in *Federal Credit and Private Housing: The Mass Financing Dilemma*, gives a comprehensive account of the twenty-year evolution of Federal housing credit programs and provides a stimulating reappraisal of their impact on the housing market.

Finally, the studies which came under the view of the Committee on the Community explore both the responsibility and the limitations of local government in the achievement of a higher standard of urban life. Here the principal issues were ones of governmental structure as it affects the standard of housing in metropolitan areas, and of levels of expenditure for housing and related facilities required to reach a set of tentative goals throughout an urban area. Edward C. Banfield and Morton Grodzins are deliberately quizzical and provocative as they explore the first issue in *Government and Housing in Metropolitan Areas*. They look carefully at the political impediments to large-scale structural changes in metropolitan governments; examine the lack of logic underlying many current schemes for reorganization; point up some values of the "chaos of governments" in metropolitan areas; and offer a "model for action" looking to governmental change on a scale needed in terms of improved housing and possible in terms of political realities. In the second study prepared for the Committee on the Community, John M. Dyckman and Reginald

R. Isaacs explore the questions of our ability to pay for required investment in cities and the organization of our economy necessary to realize urban goals. In *Capital Requirements for Urban Development and Renewal*, they translate national expenditure totals into specific changes in the urban environment and convert specific local programs into a national bill of goods.

The final volume—the over-all view of the ACTION Series—brings together the principal points in each of the other volumes and puts them in the setting of the total housing market and public policy. The consolidated suggestions of the five *ad hoc* committees, which appear in the over-all view, thus become the preface for action.

As the committees reviewed the research materials presented to them, they sought to suggest policies and activities which if implemented by public agencies, private groups, or institutions under the stimulus of ACTION might reasonably help achieve the major objectives for the Series. The steps the committees recommend are an attempt to establish a level of aspiration for housing and urban development against which private and public decision makers can formulate policies and programs that with more ingenuity and flexibility than has been shown in the past will enable the housing market to function to its limit in satisfying the value we place upon its product. The combined report of the committees, which appears in the last volume of the Series, includes a plea for the empirical testing in many communities of a wide variety of new practices.

In a field such as housing and urban development in which only a small amount of research has or is being done, any effort is a pioneering one. Those who make it do so not only with the expectation that it will provide a fresh outlook for scholars and policy makers, but with the intention that it will provoke the next push forward. This Series, whose preparation began in February of 1956, is heavily indebted to several im-

portant predecessors: The Twentieth Century Fund's comprehensive analysis by Miles L. Coleman, *American Housing: Problems and Prospects*; the scholarly research of Ernest M. Fisher and his associates at Columbia University's Institute for Urban Land Use and Housing Studies; and Coleman Woodbury's collection of perceptive essays for *The Future of Cities and Urban Redevelopment*. Moreover, this ACTION Series looks forward to being complemented by one which the Commission on Race and Housing is sponsoring.

Barbara Terrett, Deputy Director of Research at ACTION, shared the responsibility of administration, criticism and editing. Among many other persons whose knowledge and experience I called on frequently were Neal J. Hardy, director of the National Housing Center, and Arthur S. Goldman, director of marketing for *House & Home* magazine. Both of them were endlessly generous with their time and counsel. William L. C. Wheaton, a collaborator on the final volume, gave constructive review to several of the other volumes, as did Herrymon Maurer, the editorial consultant for the Series. Most of all, I am indebted to the authors of the separate volumes for the excellence of their contribution, and to the understanding and wisdom of the ACTION directors and *ad hoc* committee members. In particular, Ferd Kramer, ACTION Vice Chairman, who heads the Research Committee, Andrew Heiskell, Chairman of ACTION's Board of Directors, and James E. Lash, ACTION Executive Vice President, provided helpful criticism without which the Series would never have been developed.

Martin Meyerson  
ACTION Vice President

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Martin Meyerson, a friend and former colleague, ACTION Vice President, deserves our particular thanks. His suggestions and criticisms were invaluable at all stages of the work.

The members of ACTION's *ad hoc* Committee on the Community, whose names are listed on page vii, gave us their criticism at two crucial points. We are grateful to them for the suggestions they made and also grateful for their sensitivity to the difference between their role and ours. At no time did they attempt to influence our conclusions. Just as we realized that they could make whatever use they wished of our findings, so they carefully preserved our freedom to say exactly what we pleased.

In the course of the research we interviewed a number of persons concerned with the problem of housing in metropolitan areas—mayors, planning officials, housing and development officers, heads of professional and trade associations, home builders, and others. All of those to whom we talked were generous of their time. We do not name them individually because to do so might inadvertently divulge the source of viewpoints or data in the text which were originally given to us with our pledge of anonymity. The book could not have been written without the materials made available to us by those whom we interviewed.

Our colleague, Martin Diamond, carried out several interviews for us and also gave us the benefit of his sharp, critical views at a number of points. Our student, William Gerberding, supplied us with a relevant and useful paper (cited in the text) on the role of the states in housing.

The first draft of the manuscript was read critically by a

number of persons, including some of those we had interviewed as well as several academic colleagues. Though we were not always able to agree with what our critics said, all of their comments were carefully considered and many of them led to improvements in the text. For their valuable services as critics we thank Janet Abu-Lughod, former staff member, ACTION Research Program; William A. Doebele, Jr., Assistant Research Professor of Urban Studies, Center for Urban Studies, Harvard University; Stuart Euman, Executive Director, Inter-County Regional Planning Commission, Denver, Colorado; Herbert J. Gans, Assistant Professor, Institute for Urban Studies, University of Pennsylvania; Luther Gullick, President, Institute of Public Administration; Morris E. Johnson, Planning Director, Salt Lake County (Utah) Planning Commission; Maxine Kurtz, City Planner, Denver City and County Department of Planning; James E. Lash, Executive Vice President, ACTION; William L. Rafsky, Development Coordinator, Philadelphia; Barbara Terrett, Deputy Director of Research, ACTION; Coleman Woodbury, Professor of Political Science, University of Wisconsin; and The Honorable Frank Zeidler, Mayor, City of Milwaukee.

Edward C. Banfield  
Morton Grodzins

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## INTRODUCTION

*To Leonard D. White*

This book is addressed to two main questions:

1. How does the structure of government in metropolitan areas affect the quality, quantity, and price of housing and related community facilities?
2. What changes in this governmental structure would improve the housing situation?

As far as it is possible, this book deals with the effects on housing of the *structure* of government rather than with the effects on housing of the *policy* of government. Structure and policy cannot, of course, always be separated. Nevertheless, the book attempts to take the content of policy as fixed or "given" and to look only at the consequences for housing of the way government is, or might be, organized. From this special standpoint, that governmental structure is best which produces the best housing situation. A "satisfactory" housing situation is defined as one in which there is adequate provision of new housing in both large and small tracts; existing housing is rehabilitated and conserved where it is economically sound to do so; housing which cannot be economically maintained is replaced by new housing or converted to other suitable uses; there is adequate provision of such related facilities as schools, parks, transportation, and shopping places; and no income or ethnic group lacks opportunity to secure adequate housing.

The volume is in three main parts.

Part One describes the governmental structure which characteristically exists in metropolitan areas, defines the nature of the problem of metropolitan organization, and considers why so little has come of the many schemes that have been advanced for solving it.

Part Two, based largely upon field interviews in a number of metropolitan areas, analyzes the views of informed persons regarding impediments to improvements in housing situations which arise out of inadequate governmental structure.

Part Three examines the major remedies that have been proposed for the ills of metropolitan government as these bear upon the housing situation, and sets forth some conclusions and recommendations.

As the following pages show, changes in governmental structure in the metropolitan areas may do much to improve the housing situation. But it should be said at the outset that the fundamental causes of unsatisfactory housing are unrelated to the way local governments are organized. One of these fundamental causes is, of course, poverty: the scarcity of resources in relation to wants. Another is imperfections in the capital market that discourage the free flow of investment into housing. A third is the virtual exclusion of a large number of consumers, Negroes and others, from important sections of the housing market. These problems may to some extent be met by governmental action. But this is not to say that they can be dealt with by changes in the *structure* of government.

An attempt is made here to clarify some matters which are unclear in most discussions, including: the effects on housing of the way government is organized; the advantages and disadvantages which may realistically be expected from the various schemes of reorganization that are commonly offered; and what is politically possible in the way of reform and reorganization. The discussion leads to emphasis on some facets of the

problem which are often ignored: the importance, for example, of racial and other differences between the populations of central cities and suburbs.

This work puts in new perspective the old idea that there ought to be a single general local government for each metropolitan area—an idea which, however disguised or compromised, is usually favored by those who write about problems of metropolitan government. This scheme, if achievable, would not be the unmixed blessing that many people claim. But the more important point is that in most places it is not achievable in the foreseeable future. Despite the limitations which political reality imposes, this book shows that much can be done to make local government structure more responsive to the housing needs of the metropolitan populations, populations which now include most of the people in the country.

PART ONE  
PROBLEMS

# Chapter 1

## THE STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT IN METROPOLITAN AREAS

Local governments in metropolitan areas are numerous and overlapping, and their jurisdictions do not correspond with the areas for which public services are required. The virtues and vices of such a system aside, the nature of the system can easily be made apparent.

### *Many Governments*

Eighty-four million persons—more than half the population of the United States—live in 168 metropolitan areas.<sup>1</sup> Altogether these areas are somewhat smaller than Texas, yet they are governed by more than 16,000 independent local bodies. None has a single, all-purpose local government for the whole

<sup>1</sup> Although the number of metropolitan areas has increased somewhat, it is convenient to use the data from the 1950 census. As defined by the census, a standard metropolitan area is a county or group of contiguous counties which contain at least one city of 50,000 inhabitants or more. In addition to the county or counties containing such a city, or cities, contiguous counties are included in a standard metropolitan area if they are essentially metropolitan in character and socially and economically integrated with the central city.

A detailed bibliography on metropolitan government is Government Affairs Foundation, *Metropolitan Communities: A Bibliography*, Public Administration Service, Chicago, 1956.

area. Twenty-three of the metropolitan areas extend across state lines and another twenty-eight extend up to a state line (see Figure 1). The number and types of local governments are shown in Table 1.

Some metropolitan areas have many more local governments than others. In fact, eleven areas, with about 45 per cent of the

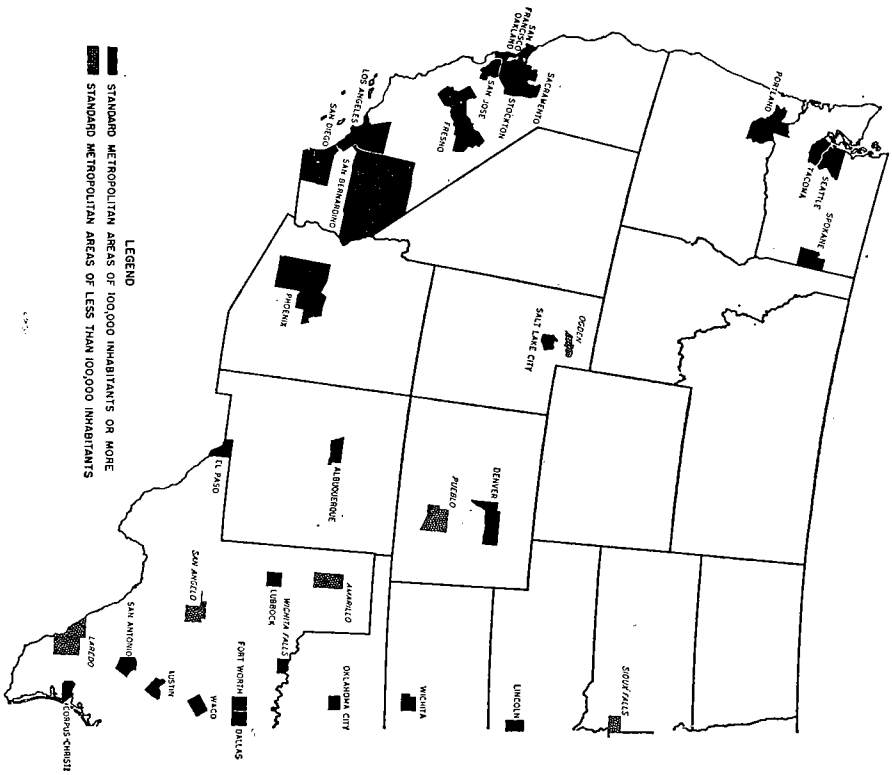
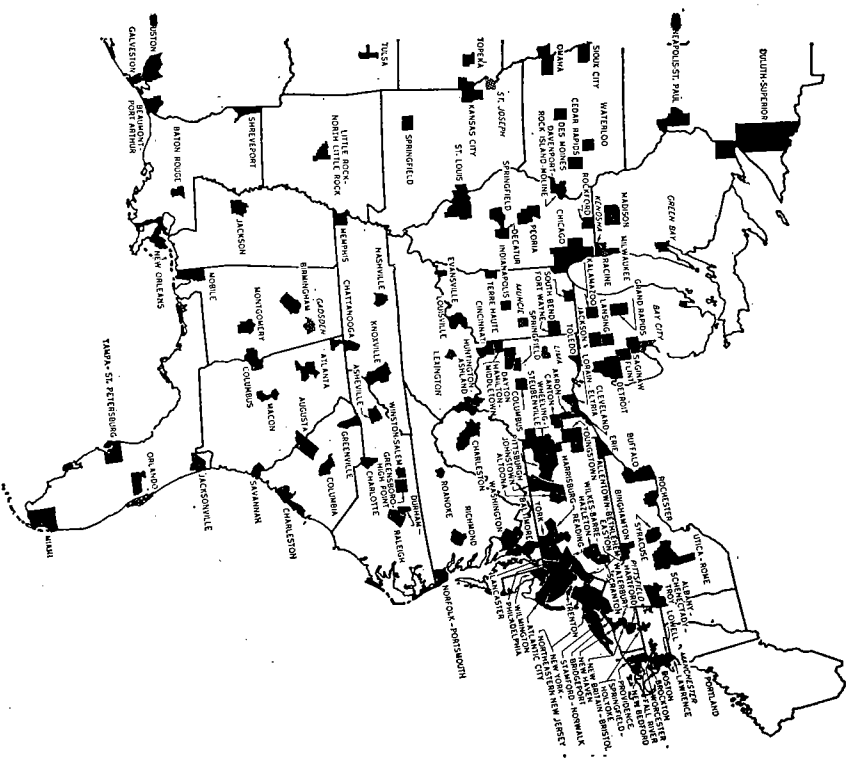


Figure 1. Standard metropolitan areas, 1950.

total metropolitan-area population, have somewhat more than one-third of all the governments. If mere numbers of local governments were a significant indicator, the problem of structure would be worst in the cities listed in Table 2. Actually such totals mean relatively little. If schools happen to be organized on a district basis, for example, the number



(Source: Bureau of the Census.)

of "local governments" appears very impressive, although a large number of school districts does not necessarily indicate a serious problem of organization.

TABLE 1: Number of Local Governments in 168 Metropolitan Areas (1952)

Counties	256
Townships	2,328
Municipalities	3,164
Special districts	2,598
School districts	7,864
Total	16,210

Note: The data in this and Tables 2, 3, 4, and 6 are from U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Local Government in Metropolitan Areas*, Apr. 2, 1954. The category "special districts" is probably the only one requiring explanation. Most of these perform a single function, especially fire protection (18 per cent), drainage (18 per cent), soil conservation (16 per cent), public housing (7 per cent), and cemetery maintenance (7 per cent). Every state has some special districts, but six states (Illinois, California, New York, Missouri, Kansas, and Washington) have half the total.

TABLE 2: Number of Governments in Selected Metropolitan Areas

Area	Governments	Area	Governments
New York	1,071	Detroit	355
Chicago	960	Minneapolis	316
Philadelphia	702	Portland	314
Pittsburgh	616	Los Angeles	298
St. Louis	420	Madison	292
San Francisco	372		

If only municipal corporations are counted, the number of governments in the metropolitan areas is by no means so striking (Table 3). Nevertheless, the seventy-seven smallest areas have within them an average of ten municipalities. And in the five largest metropolitan areas there are no fewer than 748 municipalities, an average of 149 general-purpose governments per area.

TABLE 3: Number of Municipal Governments within Metropolitan Areas by Size of Largest City

Size of largest city in each metropolitan area	Number of municipalities					
	Metro-politan areas	Over 50,000	25,000-50,000	1,000-25,000	Under 1,000	All
Over 1,000,000	5	39	35	534	140	748
500,000 to 1,000,000	13	32	29	413	220	694
250,000 to 500,000	18	19	7	164	174	364
100,000 to 250,000	55	64	13	322	207	606
50,000 to 100,000	77	78	12	355	307	752
Total	168	232	96	1,788	1,048	3,164

County governments in metropolitan areas are relatively few. The eighteen largest areas (those with a central-city population in excess of 500,000) average 3.7 county governments. But only about one-quarter of the other metropolitan areas have more than one county government. More than 65 per cent of all areas have only one (in eleven cases there are none) county government (Table 4). This immediately suggests that the central counties might play a more important

TABLE 4: Number of Counties in Metropolitan Areas

Number of counties	Metropolitan areas
—	11
1	110
2	23
3	12
4	7
5	1 (San Francisco)
6	2 (Chicago and Wheeling)
7	1 (Philadelphia)
12	1 (New York)
Total	168

TABLE 5: Estimates of Population Growth: Metropolitan Areas (in thousands)

	Population 1955 (civilian)		Increase 1950-55 (estimated) <sup>a</sup>			Increase 1955-75 (projected) <sup>b</sup>		Population 1975 (projected) <sup>c</sup>		
	Number	Per cent of total	Per cent for area	Number	Per cent of total	Number	Per cent for area	Number	Per cent of total	Change in per cent of total from 1955
U.S.A.	161,461	100	7.9	11,827	100	56,000	34.8	218,000	100	
Standard metropolitan areas	95,304	59.0	13.7	11,508	97.4	54,544	56.8	150,000	69	+10
Central cities in SMAs	51,023	31.6	3.8	1,888	16.0	8,960	17.5	60,000	28	-4
"Urban" fringe	28,236	17.5	19.1	4,526	38.3	21,448	76.1	50,000	23	+5
"Rural" fringe	16,045	9.9	46.5	5,094	43.1	24,136	150.0	40,000	18	+9
Outside metropolitan areas	66,157	41.0	0.5	319	2.6	1,456	2.2	68,000	31	-10
Urban	24,217	14.9	5.0	1,150	9.6	5,376	22.2	30,000	14	-1
Rural	41,940	26.1	-1.9	-831	-7.0	-3,920	-9.4	38,000	17	-9

<sup>a</sup> U.S. Census, Series P-20, no. 63.

<sup>b</sup> "Population Trends in the U.S. Through 1975," Stanford Research Institute, August, 1955. Distribution assumed to be in the same proportion, by type of area, as for the 1950-1955 increase.

<sup>c</sup> These figures include the same deduction for noncivilians made in census estimates of the 1955 distribution. The actual Stanford projection for 1975 is 220,794,000.

Source: Catherine Bauer, "First Job: Control New City Sprawl," *Architectural Forum*, vol. 105, September, 1956, pp. 112-113.

role than they now do as units of general government in metropolitan areas, a point discussed in Chapter 9.

#### Patterns of Growth

One fact is certain: in the future the metropolitan areas will be more numerous, larger, and have increased population densities. Accretions to the total population and migration from rural areas, especially from the South, will increase the number of persons living in metropolitan areas from 95 million (in 1955) to an estimated 150 million in 1975. Whereas slightly more than half of the nation's population lived in metropolitan areas in 1950, almost 70 per cent will live there in 1975 (Table 5).

The number of standard metropolitan areas will increase somewhat, but population growth will be greatest around the cities which are already the largest. In most of the metropolitan areas the central cities will grow more slowly than their hinterlands: at least 60 per cent of the increase will take place in the suburbs or in present incorporated areas.<sup>2</sup> As Figure 2 shows, this is a trend that is already established. Whereas the central cities in 1950 contained almost 60 per cent of the entire population of metropolitan areas (Table 6),

TABLE 6: Percentage Distribution of Population within Standard Metropolitan Areas, 1950

Central city	57.8
Metropolitan ring	42.2
Urban	28.6
Suburbs and fringe	24.0
Satellite urban	4.6
Rural metropolitan	13.6
	100.0

<sup>2</sup> For an analysis of the population redistribution within metropolitan areas between 1900 and 1950, see Amos Hawley, *The Changing Shape of Metropolitan America*, The Free Press, Glencoe, Ill., 1956.

they will contain 30 per cent or less by 1975. The metropolitan problem by that date, purely in terms of population, will be less a central city problem and more a problem of urban sprawl.

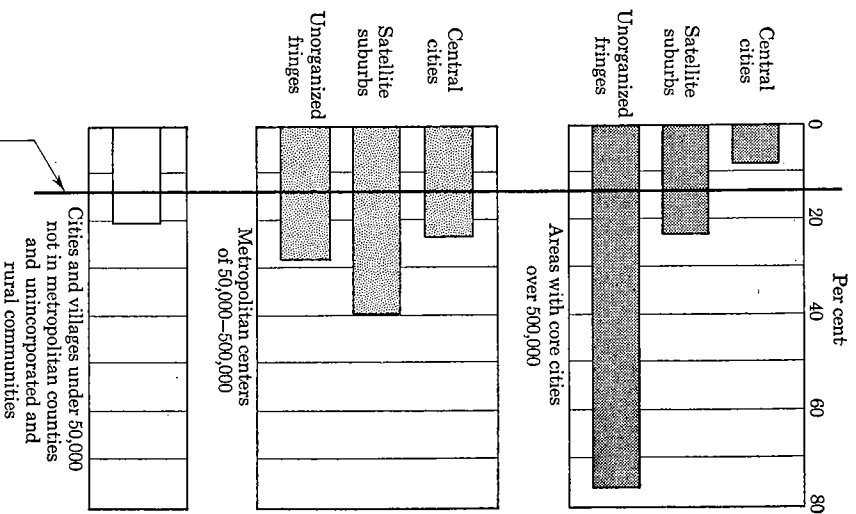


Figure 2. Differential population growth in metropolitan areas, 1940 to 1950. (Source: *Business Conditions*, November, 1954, a review by the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago.)

The larger number of residents in metropolitan areas will cause some increase in the number of local governments as new municipal corporations come into existence on the rapidly growing urban-rural fringes. For the most part, however, existing local governments will serve more people. At present there are 1.9 local governments for every 10,000 persons in metropolitan areas (as against 15.2 local governments per 10,000 persons elsewhere).<sup>3</sup> Within a decade or two the average number of persons served per local government will be much larger.

Probable increases in real national income will bring about changes hardly less important than those caused by increases in birth rates and by migration. Assuming the continuation of present economic trends, higher per capita income will enable a larger proportion of the larger population to pay more for housing and related facilities. By 1970 or thereabouts (assuming that building costs do not skyrocket), it seems likely that a family of equivalent status to the skilled factory worker, who now spends about a quarter of his \$4,000 annual earnings for payments on a three-bedroom, one-bath house (construction cost, about \$12,000), will spend a somewhat smaller portion of his greater earnings for a larger, better-equipped house, often on a larger lot. At that time there will be relatively few families (although the actual number may run to several million) who cannot afford what is now generally considered minimum adequate housing and related facilities. There may be a good many, however, who will prefer a lower level of housing in order to enjoy a higher level of consumption of other goods.

Even on the extreme assumption that in the next twenty years the average newcomer to the suburbs will require twice

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Local Governments in Metropolitan Areas*, Special Studies no. 6, Apr. 2, 1954, p. 3.

as much land as did newcomers to the suburbs in the decade just passed, the projected size of the metropolitan areas will not turn any of the great geographic regions of the country into a vast urban area. (Shortages of residential acreages may exist close to the largest central cities.) Nor is there any danger that the spread of the cities will seriously reduce the amount of cropland. In some localities shortages of land suitable for residential development or other resource limitations will restrain the spread of the suburbs. In most places, however, the costs and inconvenience of travel by automobile from places of residence to places of work and recreation will be the principal limitation.<sup>4</sup> Highway improvements and the probable introduction of a four-day week will greatly extend the travel range of the commuter and recreation seeker. People willing to drive one hour (35 miles) to work under present conditions may be willing to drive one and one-half hours (75 miles) on improved highways when they can look forward to a three-day weekend. But many suburbanites will not have to commute so far, for places of employment will also to some extent be suburbanized. Greater income, greater leisure, and improved transportation will cause many more persons to maintain cottages or other quarters for vacation and weekend use.

The increases in population and income and the tendency to spread out will greatly increase the number of automobiles in metropolitan areas. Even among the working class there will

<sup>4</sup> The twenty-year span of this project must be emphasized. During that period, the continued existence and growth of America's automobile culture can probably be safely predicted. Beyond it, however, other modes of individual and mass transportation, based upon newer technologies, will almost certainly be developed. And predictions upon the shape and organization of urban masses, based upon automobile transport, thus cannot be confidently made for the longer period. The discussion also assumes no widespread redistribution of population as a defense against, or consequence of, hydrogen warfare.

be a large proportion of two-car families. Air pollution from the oxidation and evaporation of gasoline and other hydrocarbon fuels will become a critical problem at certain times of the year in almost all metropolitan areas; smog, as well as sheer traffic congestion, may require limitation of the number of automobiles.

The American's affinity for his automobile, as Richard L. Meier has remarked, will largely determine the manner in which urbanization spreads.<sup>5</sup> Already arms of low-density development are stretching out along the toll roads and first-class highways. Within the next two or three decades the extended arms of many metropolitan areas will have joined, as those of New York and Philadelphia have joined already. The ribbons formed by these connections will be from 300 to 900 miles long. They will vary in width from twenty to thirty miles, where there is a major city, to only a block or two on either side of the highway. North of the Ohio River, Meier believes, the ribbons will form a weblike pattern whose outline is already fixed by highways and railroads. The interstices of the web are sparsely settled at present. In the future, migration will tend to be *away* from these open spaces and toward the metropolitan ribbons. The interstices of the web, therefore, will contain even less settlement than at present. Where they cannot profitably be farmed, the interstices will go back to brush and forest. In the South and West, there will be markings of the same weblike pattern, but here the ribbons will often be interrupted by mountains and by insufficient population density to support large cities. To the extent that populations string themselves along highways, metropolitan planning will be made more difficult.

<sup>5</sup> Richard L. Meier, "A Preview of American Urbanization Arising from Studies of Industrial Development and Social Change," *Planning* 1955, The American Society of Planning Officials, Chicago, 1956, pp. 15-23.

### *Political Problems and Social Conflict*

Typically the metropolitan area consists of a central city of 50,000 or more population and a "ring" area of 10 to 50 miles around it. The ring characteristically includes cities and villages which are oriented toward the central city, the place where specialized economic and cultural functions are performed on behalf of the area as a whole. In the interstices between the cities are unincorporated areas. Usually the whole of the area lies within the bounds of a single county, though multicounty and even multistate metropolitan areas exist.

Pyramiding of governmental units is characteristic in all areas. Typically there is a four-layer cake of local government: county, city, school district, and special-function unit. In many areas, however, the levels are more numerous. The people of Park Forest, a planned suburb near Chicago, pay taxes to the following governments:

- Cook County
- Will County
- Cook County Forest Preserve District
- Suburban Tuberculosis Sanitary District
- Rich Township
- Bloom Township
- Bloom Township Sanitary District
- Non-High School District 216
- Non-High School District 213
- Rich Township High 227
- Elementary School District 163
- South Cook County Mosquito Abatement District
- Village of Park Forest

The independent suburban corporations, clustered around the central cities, exhibit a variety of social characteristics. There are fashionable communities inhabited by wealthy busi-

ness and professional people who want and can easily pay for a high level of governmental services. Suburbs of this kind are generally very proud of their schools and of the businesslike and impartial way in which their affairs are managed. (Other wealthy suburbs are proud of their "country" atmosphere and maintain exceedingly low levels of service.) There are middle-class suburbs in which, characteristically, the residents are anxious to have a high level of local governmental service but, somewhat inconsistently, are also anxious to keep taxes down, at least until their mortgages have been reduced. There are lower-middle-class suburbs of factory workers and others whose mortgages have been nicely calculated to absorb as much as possible of the average take-home pay. There are few Negroes outside the central cities, and most of these are in segregated communities or in the less desirable neighborhoods of industrialized fringe cities.

Settlements in unincorporated places, while sometimes meant from the first to become middle- or upper-class suburbs, consist predominantly of scattered houses or small "developments" for people who, because of income or cultural disposition or both, choose a low level of services and low taxes. For example, a person who cannot find a place for rent in the central city and who cannot raise the necessary down payment for a home in an established suburb, may buy a cheap lot in an outlying area where there are no building restrictions. The new settler is usually served by two units of government, the county and the school district, but these at best rarely provide more than a bare minimum of welfare and medical assistance, roads, the protection of a sheriff, and a rural school. In the typical case the settler feels no great need for other services—fire protection, garbage collection, library, public health, building inspection, and so on. Indeed, from his standpoint it is a positive advantage that some of these—building

inspection, for example—do not exist. In some cases he is able to build a good deal of his house himself, dig his own well, and install a septic tank. As the influx of population continues, however, problems may arise. Water supply and sewage disposal are among the most difficult. As the income of the average resident increases there is a greater disposition to demand improvements like sidewalks and services like fire and police protection.

In most suburban areas there are "old" settlers as well as "new." A number of the old settlers are farmers and other rural-minded people. As a rule they view the suburbanization of the countryside with very mixed feelings. They have sentimental attachments to the community as it used to be. They are accustomed to running local affairs in their own way. Their needs and interests are very different from those of the newcomers. Paved streets, sewer lines, and garbage collection have never been needed before. Why should they be needed now? And why should the old settlers, whose children have mostly grown up and gone away from home, be expected to tax themselves to build new schools (fancy ones, perhaps, with swimming pools) for the young city people who are flooding in upon them? Around these and similar questions political conflict between old and new residents often arises. One circumstance, however, tends to dissolve such conflict: the most influential of the old families are likely to have land to sell to subdividers at high prices. The suburbanite may be a nuisance, but for people with land to sell he is a profitable one.

There are also "old" suburbanites in many places. These are people whose village or small city was very much to their liking when—suddenly—it was transformed by the influx of hundreds or thousands of newcomers. Like the old settler, the old suburbanite has much to be sad about: the newcomers'

houses are crackerboxes and they obstruct his view; he must tax himself to build schools for their children; and so on. And there are no compensations for him as there are for the old settlers: he does not have land to sell.

Traditionally, the people of a given suburb or satellite place have been largely of the same social and economic class, or at least the social composition of the place has been in an equilibrium which the residents found desirable or tolerable. The attributes of the social environment are of course inseparable from the attributes of a house within it. As the homeowner sees it, the desirability of the house both as a piece of property and as a place to live is vitally affected by the kind of people who live in the neighborhood. In the typical middle- or upper-class situation the suburb tries to protect itself against an influx of lower-class people. Areas adjoining the established suburb are annexed in order to prevent the growth of "undesirable" settlements. Zoning and other regulations are similarly used: by requiring that a new house be built on a lot of a certain size or conform to certain other standards, the community excludes people of lesser income. In the nature of the case those who wish to maintain social homogeneity usually insist that such regulations be made and administered by their own suburban municipalities rather than by a government which is able to take into account the needs of the whole population, including of course the would-be suburbanites. In a good many cases, nevertheless, the barriers have somehow been breached, and low-income people have moved into once fashionable suburbs in considerable numbers, thereby causing those who can afford it to move to more exclusive places.

There is, then, in the typical metropolitan area a congeries of local governments. They exercise different powers in different ways over populations separate in their place of residence but nevertheless dependent upon and interacting with

each other. Thus, if a central city chooses to enforce rigorously its building, housing, and sanitation regulations, it may cause movement of low-income workers out of the city. The suburbs, by erecting a wall of zoning ordinances against low-income groups, may force them into unincorporated areas. There they may create problems which are not solvable by their own action or inaction, and which indeed no government is presently constituted to meet.

### *Suburban Blight*

In some parts of every metropolitan area growth from the central city has created unsightly and congested neighborhoods and, in some cases, sanitation hazards. Coleman Woodbury has remarked that the defects of recent *suburban* housing fall largely into three classes: (1) poor location, in which he includes both the "planless extension of urban building on and on into the countryside with little or inadequate attention to community facilities and services, topography, future transit and transport problems" and the haphazard scattering of individual houses or small groups of houses whenever pieces of land can be bought quickly and cheaply; (2) inadequate size, as evidenced by the fact that a sample study in fifteen major metropolitan areas showed that 65 per cent of the new single-family houses in 1950-51 had fewer than the 1,150 feet of floor space, which the Committee on the Hygiene of Housing of the American Public Health Association regarded as a reasonable minimum for a family of four; and (3) inadequate facilities, particularly for water supply and waste disposal, as illustrated by the fact that in 1949 as many as 95 per cent of new houses in some areas had individual waste disposal systems. (The areas with the highest proportions were Miami, 95 per cent; Seattle, 51 per cent; New York, 50 per cent; Boston, 49 per cent; and Atlanta, 44 per cent.)

The proportion of individual water-supply systems ran as high as 15 per cent in one area.<sup>6</sup>

Urban blight, and the dilapidated housing that goes with it, are therefore not confined to the central cities. Blight exists in varying stages of intensity in all parts of the metropolitan area, central city and suburbs alike. In all but the very newest of planned suburban developments, there are many dwellings which, the Bureau of the Census has stated, "should be torn down, extensively repaired, or rebuilt." According to Victor Jones:

In the metropolitan communities of Baltimore, Buffalo, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Houston, Indianapolis, Kansas City, Louisville, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Pittsburgh, Portland (Oregon), St. Louis, San Antonio, San Francisco-Oakland, and Seattle, a larger proportion of the dwelling units outside the central city are dilapidated or lack running water than within the central city. In Buffalo, Houston, and Pittsburgh, the proportion outside is over twice as large as in the central city; in metropolitan Dallas, the proportion in the suburbs is over three-and-a-half times as large as in the central city; in Denver, it is almost four times as large; in Minneapolis-St. Paul, it is over five times as large; and in Portland (Oregon) over six times as large.<sup>7</sup>

Table 7 shows the extent of substandard dwelling units in selected suburban areas. The cities listed are not a representative sample of all cities, and the range from 6 per cent dilapidation in Pawrucker, Rhode Island, to 47.5 per cent in Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, probably does not reflect the extreme differences that exist. It is probable, for example, that in Montclair, New Jersey, and Lower Merion Township, Pennsylvania, fewer

<sup>6</sup> Coleman Woodbury, "Suburbanization and Suburbia," *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 45, no. 1, January, 1955, pp. 6-7. The average size of new houses has increased since this article was written.

<sup>7</sup> Victor Jones, "Local Government Organization in Metropolitan Areas," in Coleman Woodbury (ed.), *The Future of Cities and Urban Redevelopment*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1953, p. 510. Other data in the following paragraphs are also taken from this article.

than 6 per cent of the dwellings are dilapidated; on the other hand, dilapidation in the West Dallas suburbs probably exceeds a 50 per cent rate. And some small suburban developments, largely those in unincorporated areas, are 100 per cent substandard from the day of their construction.

### The Racial Schism

One notable trend within the metropolitan areas is the increasing separation of central cities and suburbs on racial lines. "The central cities," Woodbury has written, "will become increasingly the place of residence of new arrivals in the metropolitan areas, of non-whites, lower-income workers, younger couples, and the elderly. The suburbs will become even more the residence of middle-income families and of those of the better paid workers, particularly those families in the middle stages of the family cycle."<sup>8</sup> This is true. In less polite language, many central cities are fast becoming lower-class, largely Negro, slums.<sup>9</sup>

The trend is most pronounced in the fourteen largest metropolitan areas, those with more than one million population. For several decades the Negro population of the central cities in these areas has been increasing much faster than the white. The most rapid growth came in the years of war and full employment between 1949 and 1950. While the total white population within these cities increased by only 4 per cent, the Negro population leaped upward 68 per cent. The highest central city gain for whites was 25 per cent in Los Angeles;

<sup>8</sup> Coleman Woodbury, *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 45, no. 1, January, 1955, p. 9.

<sup>9</sup> Data in the following paragraphs are taken from Morton Grodzins, *The Metropolitan Area as a Racial Problem*, a report to the Special Studies Project, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, March, 1957. See Wesley C. Calet and Howard J. Nelson, "Distribution of Negro Population in the United States," *Geographical Review*, vol. 46, January, 1956, pp. 82-97.

TABLE 7: Occupied Substandard Dwelling Units, 1950, in Certain Suburban Areas<sup>a</sup>

Metropolitan area	Units	Percentage dilapidated
New York-Northeastern New Jersey area	14,637	28.3
Jersey City	9,397	32.4
Paterson, New Jersey	808	32.3
Harrison, New Jersey	399	14.3
West New York, New Jersey	4,847	16.6
Hoboken, New Jersey	1,887	28.7
Bayonne, New Jersey	998	18.3
Woodbridge Township, New Jersey	5,609	23.4
Yonkers, New York		
Philadelphia area		
Camden, New Jersey	5,783	29.7
Detroit area		
Detroit, Michigan	46,655	42.5
River Rouge, Michigan	859	30.5
Providence area		
Providence, Rhode Island	27,687	12.5
Woonsocket, Rhode Island	7,876	11.0
Pawtucket, Rhode Island	10,047	6.0
Cincinnati area		
Newport, Kentucky	2,850	20.1
St. Louis area		
East St. Louis, Illinois	11,147	36.8
Granite City, Illinois	2,773	29.2
Pittsburgh area		
Alliquippa, Pennsylvania	1,483	47.5
McKeesport, Pennsylvania	5,049	27.6
Phoenix area		
Phoenix, Arizona	5,801	42.3
Vicinity	8,492	34.9
Sacramento area		
Sacramento, California	3,995	32.2
Urban fringe	4,620	39.2
Stockton area		
Urban fringe	3,819	44.1
Bakersfield (California)		
Urban fringe	4,211	44.3

<sup>a</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, special tabulations for local housing authorities, ser. HC-6.  
Source: Victor Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 513.

there the Negro increase was 116 per cent. (For absolute growth, see Figure 3.) Four central-city areas (Los Angeles, Buffalo, Detroit, and San Francisco-Oakland) at least doubled their Negro populations during the ten-year period; and eight had increases of 60 per cent or more (Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, and New York in addition to those already named). Pittsburgh had the *lowest* rate of Negro increase with 32.9 per cent, as compared with the *highest* white gain of 25.1 per cent in Los Angeles. Five central cities *lost* white population during the decade; their average gain in nonwhite population was 54 per cent.

Despite these spectacular percentage increases, Negroes in 1950 constituted only a minor fraction of the total population in most of the central cities of the fourteen largest metropolitan areas. Washington, D.C., with nonwhites totaling 35.4 per cent of total population, and Baltimore (23.8 per cent) had the largest group of nonwhites in proportion to total population. In addition to these, only three other cities had Negro populations in excess of 15 per cent (Detroit, Philadelphia, and St. Louis). Minneapolis-St. Paul, Boston, and New York had less than 10 per cent.

Suburbs in these largest metropolitan areas exhibit quite different population trends. Negroes made up only 4 per cent of their population in 1940 and less than 5 per cent in 1950. (In the central cities, the total increase for Negroes was from 9 to more than 13 per cent.) In only one of the suburban areas, that of Baltimore, did nonwhites constitute more than 10 per cent of the suburban population in 1950. In eight of the fourteen suburban areas, nonwhites constituted 5 per cent or less of the respective suburban populations. Nonwhites made up a larger proportion of central-city population than of suburban population without exception. In most cities, the proportion of nonwhites was two or three times greater than

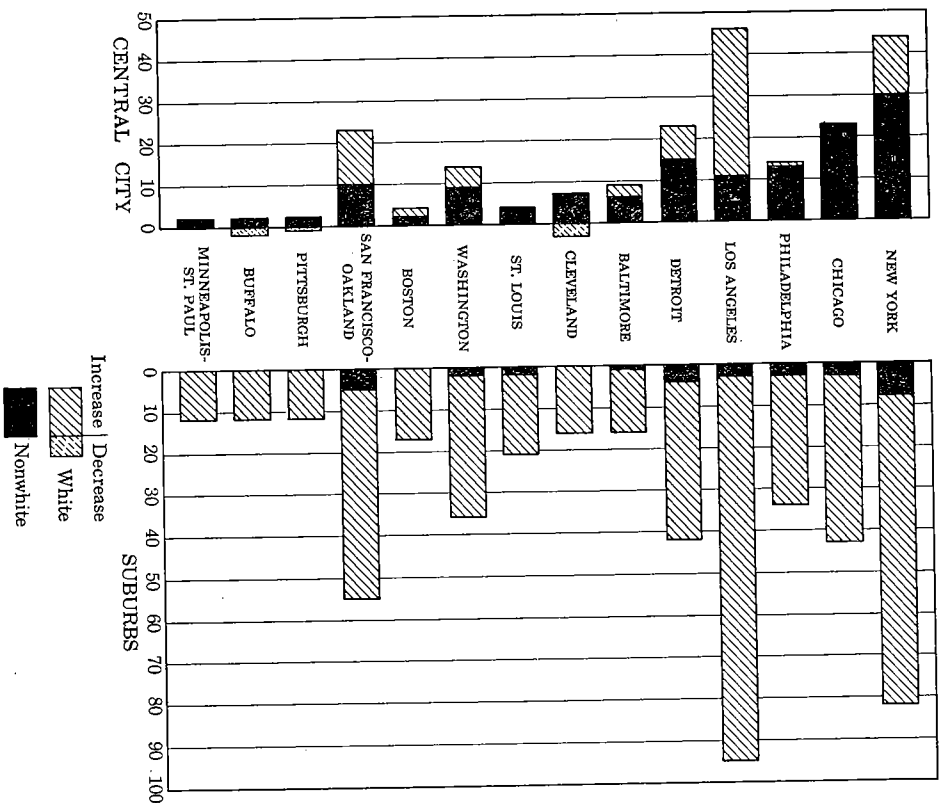


Figure 3. White and nonwhite population growth in major standard metropolitan areas, 1940 to 1950. Each unit represents 10,000 people. (Source: Bureau of the Census.)

