AN ANALYSIS OF METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT AND ITS POSSIBLE APPLICABILITY TO THE CITY OF DES MOINES AND POLK COUNTY

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AN ANALYSIS OF METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT AND ITS POSSIBLE APPLICABILITY TO THE CITY OF DES MOINES AND POLK COUNTY

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Approved by Committee:

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Dean of the School of Graduate Studies

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INTRODUCTION

As metropolitan areas have recently expanded, there has been a tendency for local governments and governmental units to proliferate. One effort to counter this development has been aimed at producing a governing body for the metropolitan area. The goal of a consolidated approach to area-wide government may be reached by integrating the various local governments into one unified structure, or by establishing a federal-type authority under which municipalities retain their autonomy. As considered by several metropolitan areas, and adopted by a few, the degree of consolidation may range from combining certain services to the unification of the central or core city, its suburban municipalities, and the county government.

It was the purpose of this study to consider the basic forms of metropolitan government which have been adopted in specific areas, including factors involved in the process of adoption as well as the varying degrees and levels of consolidation which have resulted from its implementation, and to consider metropolitan government as a possible alternative for the local governments existing in the City of Des Moines, its suburban municipalities, and Polk County.

The subjects considered in this study are by no means being investigated for the first time, nor does the author
attempt to take credit for all the opinions or conclusions expressed. However, to the author's knowledge, this is the first analysis of these subjects to take this particular form or to appraise all the topics which are developed here. Although the author recognizes the broad scope of the major subjects considered here, he believes this is preferable to an extremely narrow scope that leaves little room for significant generalizations. It is also acknowledged that it is possible for a study to become so broad that conclusions based upon it are no longer specific and, thus, have limited value. The effort will be made to develop this study to a degree that conclusions based upon it will be of value, but not so holistic that the purpose of the inquiry is lost in a multiplicity of fragmented problems.

During the past two decades, local governments in metropolitan areas have been faced with growing problems of coordinating their efforts in governing, planning, and providing services for rapidly increasing populations and continually expanding areas. Some local governments have experimented with metropolitan government in an effort to attack and to solve their area-wide problems. The Des Moines metropolitan area has been undergoing a pattern of expansion, in numbers, area, and governments, which is similar to that of other major metropolitan areas. Thus earlier metropolitan experiments in local government may be seen as providing a possible pattern for dealing with the problems that the
Des Moines metropolitan area now faces. It was because of this assumption that the concept of metropolitan government was chosen as the analytical focus of this study.

In the development of this study, emphasis will be placed first of all on the proposals for, and adoptions of metropolitan government in the metropolitan areas of Toronto (Canada), Miami (Florida), and Nashville (Tennessee). The types of metropolitan government, and the many factors involved in bringing them into existence, will be analyzed. The focus will then shift to the existing local governments in the Des Moines metropolitan area, the coordination and cooperation already operative on an intergovernmental basis, the actions necessary to activate metropolitan government in the Des Moines area, and conclusions pertinent to the purpose of this study.

In the analysis that follows, chronological and case study methods have been utilized. The chronological procedure has been employed as a convenient means of presenting the historical development of metropolitan government. The case study method has been utilized for the purpose of making comparisons and contrasts in the operation of metropolitan government in specific locations.

The primary sources for this study were these books: Harold Kaplan, Urban Political Systems: A Functional Analysis of Metro Toronto (New York, 1967); Edward Sofen, The Miami Metropolitan Experiment (Bloomington, Ind., 1963); and Brett
W. Hawkins, *Nashville Metro: The Politics of City-County Consolidation* (Nashville, 1966). The basic sources for data concerning Des Moines and Polk County were the *Des Moines Register* and the *Des Moines Tribune*. In addition, a number of other books, census reports, and publications by local governmental units provided useful background materials for specific parts of this study.
CHAPTER II

METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT

A tendency to consider metropolitan government as a new development may exist because, in recent years, there have been several proposals for its adoption in various metropolitan areas of the country. To provide a better perspective on the historical record of metropolitan government, and to provide also an understanding of the varying forms of metropolitan government that have been adopted, a background summary is now in order.

I. A CHRONOLOGY

Although metropolitan government has been the object of renewed interest since early 1950, the concept of city-county consolidation is not new:

It began with the combining of New Orleans and Orleans parish (county) in 1805, just two years after the Louisiana Purchase. There followed consolidations in Boston in 1821, Philadelphia in 1854, and a series in New York City before the turn of the century.¹

Except for the intercounty consolidation of Campbell, Milton, and Fulton Counties in Georgia in 1931 and 1932,²

¹Des Moines Tribune, February 17, 1971, p. 44.

and several consolidations in Virginia,\textsuperscript{1} which one author dismisses by saying, "There is reason to believe that governmental organizations in Virginia are not really comparable with those elsewhere...,\textsuperscript{2} there were no other city-county consolidations recorded until after World War II, when Baton Rouge and East Baton Rouge Parish (county) consolidated in 1947.\textsuperscript{3}

The next significant metropolitan consolidation was in Canada rather than the United States. The Ontario Municipal Board proposed that thirteen municipalities in the Toronto metropolitan area be joined in a metropolitan federation.\textsuperscript{4} The Ontario Provincial Parliament added a few amendments to the proposal and voted its approval in 1953. Metropolitan Toronto came into existence as a consolidated form of government on July 1 that year.\textsuperscript{5}

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid. (Hawkins lists Virginia's city-county consolidations as Hampton, Phoebus, and Elizabeth City County, 1952; South Norfolk and Norfolk County, 1963; and Virginia Beach and Princess Anne County, 1963. He also mentions intermunicipal consolidations in Virginia by Manchester and Richmond, 1910; Waynesboro and Basic City, 1920; and Warwick and Newport News, 1958.)

\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., p. 3.

\textsuperscript{3}Ibid., p. 9.


\textsuperscript{5}Ibid., p. 49.
In this country, there were serious proposals for consolidations of government in the metropolitan areas of both Miami, Florida, and Nashville, Tennessee. Community leaders in many other areas debated the idea intermittently.

Voters in the Miami metropolitan area, where a prototype of consolidated metropolitan government for Dade County had been beaten in 1945, gave their approval May 21, 1957, to a metropolitan government charter, and metropolitan government for Miami-Dade County was launched officially on July 21, 1957.

On June 28, 1962, four years after voters had turned down a similar proposal, a charter consolidating the city and county was finally approved by the voters of Nashville and Davidson County. Later in the decade, two more major metropolitan areas came under consolidated government, although by differing methods.

Voters in Duval County, Florida, approved a plan in 1967 that consolidated the county’s government with the

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2Ibid., p. 69. 3Ibid., p. 18.

4Hawkins, op. cit., p. 4.
city government of Jacksonville, except for four small communities.¹

In 1969, the Indiana legislature approved a bill which consolidated Indianapolis and all of Marion County, except for three municipalities, into a form of metropolitan government popularly known as "Uni-Gov." The consolidation was effective January 1, 1970.²

The consolidation proposals included in this listing are not meant to be an exclusive listing of situations in which metropolitan government has been proposed and adopted. One author also mentions consolidations which have taken place in Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties in California.³ Those included above, however, are generally cited as particularly noteworthy consolidations. Hawkins mentions both the Miami-Dade County experiment and the Toronto consolidation,⁴ Kaplan cites both the Miami and Nashville consolidations,⁵ and Sofen refers to the "well-known" metropolitan Toronto plan.⁶ There will be no discussion in this thesis of metropolitan proposals which have been considered and rejected.

⁵Kaplan, op. cit., p. 80.
⁶Sofen, op. cit., p. 37.
such as the consolidation plans turned down in the metropolitan areas of Oakland, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, San Francisco, Boston, and Cleveland.¹

With this sketch of the chronological development and approval of consolidations in a few metropolitan areas, attention will now be turned to case studies of the experiences in the Toronto, Miami, and Nashville metropolitan areas. These will be followed by brief summaries of the consolidations in the Jacksonville and Indianapolis metropolitan areas.

II. THE TORONTO PLAN

Background

One of the basic facts to bear in mind when comparing and contrasting the Toronto experience with consolidations proposed in the United States is that the Canadian provinces "exert a far tighter and more pervasive control over their municipalities than do American states," according to Kaplan.²

Thus, there is a provincial, quasi-judicial body, the Ontario Municipal Board, which has broad powers over municipalities, including the power to order changes in municipal boundaries or municipal governmental structure.³ It has been said that:

Canadian provinces...are prepared to rearrange municipal government structure and municipal boundaries in a much freer fashion than any American state government would contemplate. No American state government

¹Hawkins, op. cit., p. 13.

²Kaplan, op. cit., p. 48. ³Ibid., p. 46.
has been willing to approve a reorganization of
governments into a metropolitan area unless the
proposal were first requested and actively sup­ported by the municipalities concerned. In many
cases, the state has required that metropolitan
reform be approved by the voters in a metropolitan­
wide referendum before the state will consider
adding its assent. In the Toronto area, Ontario
officials never seriously considered a referendum.
Nor did they grant the municipalities concerned an
unofficial veto power over proposed metropolitan
reforms.\(^1\)

In 1953, the Toronto metropolitan area included the
City of Toronto as well as twelve suburban municipalities.
Population of the entire area was 1,174,002, including
665,502 in Toronto. Suburban populations ranged from North
York's 110,311 to Swansea's 8,344.\(^2\)

The suburban municipalities were governed by councils
which were elected annually and which varied in size from
five members in Long Branch to eight in North York. A reeve,
or mayor, was elected at large, but he had little voice in
setting policy except for his one vote in the council.\(^3\)

Toronto itself was governed by a twenty-three member
city council and a board of control. Eighteen aldermen (two
elected from each of nine wards), four controllers (elected at
large), and a mayor (also elected at large) formed the council.
The mayor and the controllers constituted the executive com­
mittee, or board of control, with powers to supervise the
administrative agencies and to draft policy proposals.\(^4\)

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 48.  
\(^2\)Ibid., p. 44.  
\(^3\)Ibid., p. 55.  
\(^4\)Ibid., pp. 55-56.
Post-World War II developments in the Toronto area followed what Kaplan calls familiar North American lines. There was the typical exodus of businesses and middle-class citizens from the central city to the suburbs. At the same time, there was an immigration of lower-income families to the central city from elsewhere in the nation, and some from other countries. Around the boundaries of the central city there emerged a proliferation of independent suburban governments.¹

At a time when the City of Toronto's revenues from the property tax were declining and the tax rate was one of the highest in Canada, central city officials were quite concerned about increasing needs for urban renewal, public assistance, and public housing.²

Chief problems of the rapidly growing, outlying suburbs were to provide public services and to finance capital-construction needs for rapidly increasing populations. The suburbs lacked sewers, water mains and reservoirs, roads, schools, and sidewalks, and many had so much outstanding capital debt that municipal officials had difficulty in borrowing additional badly needed funds. The suburbs could rely, however, on the central city to provide certain services, such as parks, hospitals, and libraries, for the entire metropolitan area.³

¹Ibid., pp. 41-42. ²Ibid., p. 45. ³Ibid.
Kaplan believes that the postwar trends divided the metropolitan area into three segments—the City of Toronto, the outlying suburbs which were growing rapidly, and the inner suburbs which were fully developed. He sees the trends as producing growing dissatisfaction among the central city residents and officials, and a general feeling that "something should be done."¹

What most of the suburbs desired was the creation of a joint service area covering the twelve suburban municipalities and permitting them to pool certain facilities and to cooperate in the provision of some services. The suburbs' request for such a service area was sent to the Ontario Municipal Board.²

The City of Toronto filed a counterapplication with the board, requesting permission to annex all the inner suburbs, but excluding the large outlying suburbs that were involved in construction programs. In seeking total amalgamation, or "one city for the entire metropolitan area," the Toronto officials were opposed to including less-than-fully developed suburbs in the metropolitan area.³

Although either plan would have divided the area, whether into city and suburban sectors or central city-inner suburbs and outlying suburbs, there was no visible support at

¹Ibid., pp. 45-46. ²Ibid., p. 46. ³Ibid.
first for the idea of a federated metropolitan government. Yet this was the idea proposed by the Ontario Municipal Board as it rejected both the joint service and outright annexation requests.¹

The board then proposed that the thirteen municipalities in the Toronto area be joined into a metropolitan federation. The provincial cabinet, which would be responsible for securing legislative enactment of the plan, was now faced with the question of whether it should work to impose such a plan of government when none of the municipalities involved had actually requested it. The City of Toronto opposed the proposal because it did not go so far as amalgamation; the suburbs opposed it because it went much farther than a joint service district.²

Premier Leslie Frost finally gave his approval to the proposal. Factors involved in his favorable decision were reported to have included his high respect for Lorne Cumming, the board chairman who made the proposal; the promise of Frederick Gardiner, a prominent Conservative, to serve as first Toronto Metro chairman if the plan was instituted; and a judgment that the proposal was a moderate compromise between the plans sought by the suburbs and Toronto. With only a few amendments, the board's plan was passed by the Ontario Provincial Parliament in 1953.³

¹Ibid., p. 47.  
²Ibid.  
³Ibid., p. 49.
Features of the Proposal

The Metro Toronto Act, known also as Bill 80, was drafted with two purposes in mind. It was to give metropolitan government adequate powers to meet regional problems and promote greater efficiency, and it was also to make metropolitan government as acceptable as possible to the municipalities. Without changing municipal boundaries, and without greatly disturbing the operations of municipal governments, it in effect created a regional government.¹

Most decisions at the metropolitan level were to be made by a twenty-five member council that would include twelve delegates from the suburbs and twelve delegates from the City of Toronto. The suburban delegation was composed of the mayor or reeve of each suburban municipality. The central city’s delegation included the mayor, two controllers, and one alderman from each of Toronto’s nine wards. The remaining seat was that of council chairman, initially appointed by the province, then to be elected annually by the council. Frederick Gardiner, a former reeve of suburban Forest Hill, was appointed as the first chairman, and re-elected annually until his retirement in 1961. Ontario officials had considered the direct election of council members, but they decided that having municipal officials sit on the council would make Metro more acceptable to the municipalities, and

¹Ibid., p. 50.
at the same time eliminate possible metropolitan-municipal conflict.\textsuperscript{1}

The enabling act left as much local power with the municipalities as possible, including such responsibilities as fire and police protection, public health, libraries, and licensing. Only those powers necessary to deal with critical, regional problems were shifted to the metropolitan level. Transportation was the only public service program shifted entirely to Metro.\textsuperscript{2}

Many government programs were made areas of shared responsibility in an effort to avoid conflicts between the two levels of government.\textsuperscript{3} Thus,

Metro would be responsible for constructing and repairing expressway and major through-streets designated as "Metro roads," and the municipalities would retain jurisdiction over "local roads." Traffic control was divided in the same way... Bill 80 empowered Metro to construct and improve sewer and water-supply facilities in the area and to sell water on a wholesale basis to the municipalities, but the municipalities would act as the retailer... In some areas of shared responsibility, like public assistance, the powers left at the municipal level were far more important than the powers shifted to Metro. Bill 80 made Metro responsible for the hospitalization of indigents and the provision of homes for the aged, but all the other categories of welfare assistance were left with the municipalities.\textsuperscript{4}

Major powers for zoning and land planning remained at the municipal level, while Metro acted as an adviser, overseer,

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid., pp. 50-52. \textsuperscript{2}Ibid., p. 52.

\textsuperscript{3}Ibid. \textsuperscript{4}Ibid., p. 53.
and technical assistant, warning, persuading, and negotiating with municipal officials.\(^1\)

In education, substantive policy was to be set by the local school boards. A metropolitan school board was to help finance education in the thirteen municipalities, and thus contribute to the regional sharing of costs.\(^2\)

The new government's most important powers were in the field of financing. The Metro Council got authority to do all borrowing for the municipalities and independent boards in the area, thus providing the opportunity for lower interest rates than the hard-pressed suburbs might otherwise have obtained. Revenue needs among the municipalities were to be apportioned on the basis of each municipality's share of the total area assessment. To assure equity in this area, Metro was given full powers for property assessment, and it was ordered to reassess all property to provide a uniform standard for the area.\(^3\)

The powers granted to the metropolitan government in the enabling act indicated those problems that were considered regional. These included the suburbs' inability to borrow at a reasonable rate, the inadequacy of existing water and sewer facilities in the suburbs, the need for more expressways, and the demand for new schools in the suburbs.\(^4\)

\(^1\)Ibid.\(^2\)Ibid.\(^3\)Ibid., p. 54.\(^4\)Ibid.
The chairman of the council was given very limited powers, for two reasons. One was to demonstrate the province's support for legislative supremacy at the local level.\(^1\) The other was to make clear that the chairman was not to be a mayor or chief executive; he was merely to be the presiding officer of a federation of independent municipalities.\(^2\)

**Implementation**

During his tenure as chairman, Gardiner became chief administrator, legislative floor leader, and intermediary between the council and administration. This process began with the creation of an executive committee in 1953 by a procedural by-law—the chairmen of the four standing committees were designated the executive committee. The executive committee was given all the powers normally held by boards of control in municipal government, including the right to award contracts, hire and fire staff, as well as to initiate legal action on behalf of the entire council, subject to later confirmation by the council. The committee also was empowered to prepare budgets, nominate department heads and candidates for independent boards, and approve all reports of standing committees before they were forwarded to the full council.\(^3\)

By 1955, the council had decided that executive committee

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\(^1\)Ibid., p. 56. \(^2\)Ibid., p. 52. 
\(^3\)Ibid., p. 60.
members would be elected by the council, rather than being the chairmen of the standing committees.\footnote{Ibid., p. 59.}

Gardiner also recruited experts to serve as department heads,\footnote{Ibid.} and this cabinet became the major source of policy proposals.\footnote{Ibid., p. 60.} He urged department heads to base their recommendations on technical or professional grounds rather than on political acceptance.\footnote{Ibid., p. 61.} By channeling all important communications between the technicians of the administrative branch and the politicians of the legislative branch, Gardiner developed power as a chief administrator rather than sitting as a presiding officer.\footnote{Ibid., p. 62.}

Although suburbanites felt early in the metropolitan era that provincial officials might eventually dissolve the consolidation and allow the municipalities to return to the earlier arrangement, it became clear by the 1960s that such a course would not be considered. Support for the system continued to grow, because Metro was the least centralized form of government acceptable to the province at a time when the City of Toronto had renewed its demands for total amalgamation.\footnote{Ibid., p. 250.}

Prompted mainly by the campaign for amalgamation, the provincial cabinet appointed a Royal Commission on Metro
Toronto in 1963, and the system was reorganized slightly in 1966. The reorganization appears to have been generally well received.

The number of municipalities was reduced from thirteen to six, the size of the council was expanded to thirty-two seats, and the basis of municipal representation was altered. Toronto continued to have twelve seats, although it had meanwhile absorbed Forest Hill and Swansea. North York was given six seats and Scarborough five. Mimico, New Toronto, and Long Branch were incorporated into Etobicoke, which was given four seats. Weston became part of York, which was given three seats, and East York, which absorbed Leaside, was given two seats. The only change in the distribution of power involved the transfer of power over welfare to the Metro level.

The metropolitan school board was given power to levy one school tax rate for the entire area. It assumed virtually complete control over the fiscal decisions of local boards, which were reduced in number to six to accord with the reduction in the number of municipalities.

Observations

Although the 1966 adjustments in the system were comparatively slight, the expansion of power for the metropolitan

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1 Ibid., p. 256.  
2 Ibid., p. 261.  
3 Ibid.  
4 Ibid., p. 262.
government may have been sufficient to make City of Toronto officials believe that steady expansions in its power would introduce total amalgamation in a roundabout fashion,\(^1\) thus resulting in increased support for the system from the central city as well as the suburban areas. A weakness of the plan is that support for Metro must be secured from officials who remain primarily committed to their own municipalities,\(^2\) although this also tends to diminish rivalry between Metro and the municipalities.

A crucial difference between Metro Toronto and other consolidated systems is that in the Toronto case federation was imposed by a higher authority which continues to have power of review, and thus provides a constant factor of compulsion.\(^3\)

III. THE MIAMI PLAN

Background

The beginning of formal consolidation movements in Dade County, both functional and geographic, can be traced back to the early 1940s. Sofen makes the point that no move for functional consolidation in the area has ever failed to gain approval, whether presented to the legislature or to the

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\(^1\)Ibid., p. 263.  
\(^2\)Ibid., p. 81.  
\(^3\)Ibid.
people. This represents a contrast with the Toronto consolidation, which was imposed without citizens' request or approval.

The early consolidations in the Miami area included the creation of a county-wide health department in 1943; a unified county-wide school system under 1945 legislation which combined ten districts—the boundaries of which corresponded with municipal boundaries only in the case of Miami Beach; replacement of the Greater Miami Port Authority with the Dade County Port Authority in 1945; and the acquisition by Dade County of the City of Miami's Jackson Memorial Hospital—an action approved in 1946, but not completed until 1949.

The functional consolidations are seen as indicating an awareness that certain functions required county-wide management in the interest of the general welfare. Except for the Port Authority action, regarded as primarily an economic move, the other consolidations were viewed as reflecting a desire for improved services.

One of the customs of political practice in Florida was that in the absence of home rule, local bills sponsored

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1Sofen, Miami Metropolitan Experiment, op. cit., p. 21.
2Ibid., pp. 21-22.
3Ibid., p. 23.
4Ibid., p. 23.
5Ibid., p. 24.
by a county delegation and given unanimous approval by the
delegation would be approved automatically by the state legis­
lature.1 Thus, consent by the county delegation was tanta­
amount to state approval.

An early effort for consolidation of all governmental
units in Dade County fell before the county delegation, which
refused to submit to the state legislature a consolidation
plan submitted by Miami Mayor Leonard K. Thomson in 1945.2
Dade County voters, on May 25, 1948, also rejected a proposed
amendment to the state constitution which would have con­
solidated Dade County, the City of Miami, and four small
cities, while giving other municipalities in the county the
option for consolidation.3

In 1949, after Florida City, South Miami, and West
Miami had incorporated to prevent annexation by Homestead,
Coral Gables, and the City of Miami, respectively, and at a
time when developers were attempting to create other cities
under the state's loose laws for incorporation, the Dade
County legislators secured enactment of a measure that fore­
closed further incorporations in the county under the state's
general laws. Four years later, there was informal agreement
to create no additional cities in the county through special
acts.4

1Ibid., p. 14. 2Ibid., p. 28.
3Ibid. 4Ibid., pp. 14-16.
After efforts at consolidation had failed, attempts at annexation were thwarted by incorporations of new municipalities, and a permissive state-wide home rule amendment was defeated by Florida voters in 1952 despite a favorable vote in Dade County. City of Miami voters then narrowly rejected a proposal which would have abolished the city and transferred its functions to the county.¹

Less than one month later, July 1, 1953, the city created the Metropolitan Miami Municipal Board (also known as the JM Board). Under a contract from the board, the government department at the University of Miami in suburban Coral Gables agreed to supervise a fact-finding survey of metropolitan Dade County. Its report of December 31, 1954, recommended the idea of a federal form of metropolitan government for the area.² As Sofen describes it:

Each of the cities in Dade County would continue to be responsible for its local functions, with minimum standards determined by the county government. A reorganized and expanded county government headed by a county manager would take over such area-wide functions as tax assessing, tax collecting, sewerage, transportation, water, waste disposal, traffic planning, and over-all metropolitan planning.³

The Metropolitan Miami Municipal Board accepted the recommendations in principle. The next step was the drafting of a home rule amendment to the state constitution, which was done in cooperation with the Dade County legislative delegation.⁴

¹Ibid., p. 28. ²Ibid., p. 36. ³Ibid., p. 38. ⁴Ibid.
Under a 1955 act of the legislature, the home rule amendment and home rule charter, prepared by a Miami area charter board chosen by the legislature, were to be submitted together in the election of November, 1956. The items were ordered separated during a special session of the legislature in 1956, with a determination that the home rule amendment would have to be approved in a state-wide election before Dade County would have the legal right to vote on a charter proposal allowed by the home rule amendment. Because of a constitutional question related to the naming of persons to serve on the charter board, the legislature also created a second charter board for the county.¹

To secure enactment of the home rule resolution by the legislature, the Dade County delegation had to make certain concessions. These included the surrender of rights to tax except as provided by state law; the continued state control over race-track taxes, which were divided equally among all the state's counties; a provision whereby the county would continue to receive its pro rata share of all state revenues, and the equivalent of revenues to any municipality in the county that might be abolished, save for the cigarette sales tax in the unincorporated areas, that amounted to about two million dollars annually. Also assurances had to be given about not passing laws which would conflict with general state laws.²

¹Ibid., p. 40. ²Ibid., p. 43.
After a legal challenge to the proposed home rule amendment was set aside in September, 1956, by the Florida Supreme Court, the proposal appeared on the ballot November 6, 1956. It was approved by about 70 per cent of the state's voters, and about 72 per cent of Dade County's voters.¹

The next step was consideration of the charter for metropolitan government by the voters of Dade County. A preliminary draft that eventually constituted the basis of the final version was prepared by the Public Administration Service for the first charter board. Although the significant issues were regarded as the division of powers between the county and the cities, and limitations on the county's powers, there was no real controversy with either the first or second board on the division of powers. The first board had said that it would not abolish any municipality in the county nor jeopardize its autonomy, and the second board reaffirmed that commitment.²

Reasons for opposition to the proposal included the fear of an increase in taxes, elimination of homestead tax exemptions through higher assessments, pork-barrel civil service, and law suits.³ These factors, as well as the groups and individuals supporting or opposing the charter, will be discussed in Chapter V.

¹Ibid., pp. 44-45. ²Ibid., pp. 47-49. ³Ibid., p. 67.
County voters decided May 21, 1957, to adopt the metropolitan form of government. Only 26 per cent of the registered voters in the county cast ballots, with 44,404 in favor of the proposal and 42,620 against. The proposal trailed in many suburban areas, and got slightly less than 50 per cent of the votes in unincorporated areas. Margins of 57 per cent approval in the City of Miami, and 66 per cent approval in Coral Gables, helped to provide the county-wide majority.¹

Metropolitan government was thus approved for the county's twenty-six municipalities and the extensive unincorporated areas of Dade County. It was launched officially on July 21, 1957.²

Features of the Proposal

One of the major differences within the second charter board concerned the number of commissioners for the new metropolitan government and the method of their election. Should the commissioners be chosen at large, from districts, or from wards?³

In its final form, the charter provided for ten commissioners from five districts. Five would be elected at large, but with one commissioner from each of the five districts. The other five, one from each district, would be

¹Ibid., p. 69. ²Ibid., p. 18. ³Ibid., p. 59.
elected by the members of individual districts. Each city
with a population of 60,000 or more would elect a commis-
sioner, but only the City of Miami qualified in this respect.
In the 1960 Census, Hialeah and Miami Beach also qualified
for additional representation under the population clause.¹

There was no serious consideration by either charter
board for a "strong mayor" type of government, although the
first board had heated discussions before adopting the council-
manager plan.²

The division of power between the county and cities
included twenty-four enumerated powers that could be divided
into four general categories: municipal-type functions that
could be carried out directly or indirectly by the county;
responsibilities in unincorporated areas; responsibility for
establishing minimum standards; and "elastic" powers.³

Included in the category of municipal-type functions
were exclusive powers belonging to the county, powers that
could be exercised by the county without distinction as to
municipalities and unincorporated areas, and the county's
prerogative to assume a function if it so desired. This
authority covered roads; public transportation and terminals;
traffic; centralized records, training, and communications
for fire and police protections; developmental planning for

¹Ibid., p. 61.  
²Ibid.  
³Ibid., p. 50.
the county; health and welfare programs; recreational and cultural facilities and programs; housing and urban renewal; conservation and pollution control; water supply; waste and sewage collection and disposal; zoning and business regulations; uniform building codes; licensing for contractors and building trades; utility franchises; and the promotion of county development. ¹

The unincorporated areas of Dade County had about 38 per cent of the metropolitan population in 1960. Metropolitan government was both the local and central government in these areas.² The county's responsibilities in the unincorporated areas included licensing of vehicles for hire, regulating the sale of alcoholic beverages, levying all taxes authorized to be levied by a municipality and receiving from the state revenues collected in the unincorporated areas on the same basis as municipalities, as well as the power to authorize creation of any new municipalities.³

Under the minimum standards provision, the county gained the right to set minimum standards for all governmental units in the county for any service or function. It also got the power to take over services from other governmental units under prescribed conditions.⁴

¹Ibid., pp. 50-52. ²Ibid., p. 59.
³Ibid., pp. 52-53. ⁴Ibid., pp. 53-54.
The elastic powers were broad and inclusive powers. They included all powers not expressly prohibited by the state constitution or the charter, and a supremacy clause for cases of conflict in metropolitan and municipal laws.\(^1\)

There were, however, some prohibitions on the county. It could not change the boundaries of a municipality or abolish it without the municipality’s consent; it could not interfere with the municipality’s strictly local affairs, nor interfere with its right to enter into contracts with other governmental units. Also it could not interfere with revenues realized by municipal franchises or utility taxes.\(^2\)

But Daniel Paul, attorney for the second charter board, concluded that the charter created a sufficiently strong central government possessing sufficient power to eventually take over all the functions of the cities.\(^3\)

**Implementation**

When the new metropolitan government came into existence, its first commission was the five-man Dade County Commission that had taken office January 1, 1957. All of the commissioners were new—the products of a reform movement—and were without previous legislative experience.\(^4\) They had retained Marion E. Sibley to serve as attorney for the county. After the voters

\(^1\)Ibid., pp. 54-55.  \(^2\)Ibid., pp. 56-57.

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 49.  \(^4\)Ibid., p. 87.
approved metropolitan government, Sibley was given primary responsibility for drafting the new metropolitan ordinances. The commissioners felt that it was necessary to have the ordinances by July 21, 1957, when the new government became effective, and Sibley may justifiably be called "the architect of the metropolitan ordinances," Sofen says.¹

The day after Metro went into effect, the county commission began studying the ordinances proposed by Sibley. The ordinances called for radical changes in the relationships between the cities and the county, and they were not long in drawing fire from the City of Miami, and from representatives of twenty-one of the area municipalities, who on August 12, 1957, decided to sponsor what they called an autonomy amendment on behalf of the municipalities.² The new Dade County manager, C. W. Campbell, would not accept a compromise amendment because he feared it would have harmful consequences on metropolitan government.³

After the constitutionality of the amendment was upheld in circuit court, with a review requested from the Florida Supreme Court, an election was set on the issue for September 30, 1958. This was the same date as the runoff election for the six additional county commissioners.⁴

¹Ibid., pp. 91-92. ²Ibid., pp. 87-96.
³Ibid., p. 106. ⁴Ibid., pp. 107-111.
Before the referendum was held on the autonomy amendment, the county announced policies for improved police protection and garbage service in the unincorporated areas. It also announced creation of a planning department and an intention to abolish the personal property tax. Plans were announced for uniform bus and water systems as well as for two auxiliary courthouses at opposite ends of the county. Finally a forty-eight-page report on Metro accomplishments was produced, and it was promised there would be pay raises for 2,000 county employees after October 1.¹

The autonomy amendment was defeated by 24,527 votes. Unincorporated areas, which were not affected by the outcome, opposed the measure (66 per cent against) and only three of fifty-three precincts in Miami approved it.²

There were other court challenges. Miami Shores challenged the county commission's right to curtail its powers, but a circuit court upheld Metro.³ The Florida Supreme Court upheld circuit court rulings favoring Metro on several issues.⁴ In 1960, Miami Beach tried to become a separate county, but its efforts were opposed by the Dade County legislative delegation and the issue never reached the legislature.⁵

¹Ibid., pp. 114-115. ²Ibid., p. 117. ³Ibid., pp. 127-131. ⁴Ibid., p. 149. ⁵Ibid., p. 162.
Another challenge came from John McLeod, a former county commissioner who once had favored the abolition of all Dade County municipalities.\(^1\) He led a campaign for thirty-seven proposed changes that would have taken away much of Metro's control over area-wide functions. The amendment he supported was beaten, 52 per cent to 48 per cent, in a referendum October 17, 1961.\(^2\) In the end, despite a wide variety of challenges to its existence, the metropolitan system survived. Its major problem was to raise sufficient revenue to continue its expanding county-wide functions.\(^3\)

**Observations**

The fact that an election had decided the question of whether metropolitan government would, in fact, be adopted did not mean there would be an end to the struggle for power between municipalities and the county. Whether the controversy and the struggle could have been minimized is a valid object of discussion. The new form of government got off to an embattled start over the issue of metropolitan ordinances. The passage of ordinances long before they could be carried out, and before a new county manager had arrived, was seen by some as a plot to kill the new government. Others believed it was better to have a frontal attack from the municipalities, and defeat it in the autonomy amendment campaign, than to

\(^{1}\text{Ibid.}, \ p. 171 \quad ^{2}\text{Ibid.}, \ p. 167. \quad ^{3}\text{Ibid.}, \ p. 190.\)
become involved in a long struggle. They believed that city officials and municipal employees would have fought the change without regard to the pace of the conflict.¹

Sofen says that it would seem, from the Miami experience to date, that a most effective means for wooing the cities is to reduce the municipalities' operating costs.² Other lessons which can be learned from the Miami experience in initiating a metropolitan reform movement are:

1. Bring together the moderate proponents and the ardent opponents of consolidation in a 3M type board.
2. Use the impartial expertise of a Public Administration Service type of organization and other professionals.
3. Appoint a charter board of prestigious civic leaders who are first-line leaders and not representatives of special interest groups.
4. Capitalize on the "good government" support of newspapers.
5. Use winning tags such as "home rule amendment" and "home rule charter."
6. Create a federal type of government as a compromise between localists and consolidationists.³

Just as reduced costs can be an attractive feature in winning support for metropolitan government, the area of finances can also be the biggest problem. The pitfalls of alienating lower socio-economic groups and overextending the government's capacities in unincorporated areas must be avoided.⁴

¹Ibid., pp. 132-133. ²Ibid., p. 163.
³Ibid., p. 214 ⁴Ibid., p. 220.
The feasibility of the federal form of government as a solution to complex problems which exist in metropolitan areas should be given special attention. Purists whose only remedy to proliferation of government is consolidation may feel that the federal system lacks clarity and tends to be all things to all people. That is one reason it offers a partial solution. Because the municipalities have taken a long time to build, they should not be lightly junked. Federalism shifts the emphasis from exclusive power to cooperative power, and its approach is informal and pragmatic. It was definitely a spirit of compromise that led to successful creation of the nation's first metropolitan government.¹

IV. THE NASHVILLE PLAN

Background

Metropolitan government for the Nashville area was not established until more than ten years after it was first suggested as a remedy for the metropolitan community,² and after one election to bring about its adoption had failed.³

When it was adopted, it represented the first change in several years in the form of government of Davidson County.

¹Ibid., pp. 217-220.


³Ibid., p. 50.
which was operating in a framework more than one hundred years old. It also brought change to the county governing body, called the quarterly court, which overrepresented rural areas and had gone twelve years without reapportionment.¹

The basic structure of the county government was a traditional Tennessee "county court-county judge" arrangement. Of the sixteen civil districts that provided fifty-five magistrates, one district coincided with the city limits of Nashville. Davidson County Court was the county legislative body, and also a major part of the administrative machinery. There were independent elections for the county trustee, who was a combined tax collector and county treasurer; the tax assessor; sheriff; and attorney general. The county judge, nominally the counterpart of the city's mayor, had influence through his authority in budgeting and accounting. Beverly Briley, first elected in 1950, served as county judge until the consolidation in 1962, when he became head of the new unit.²

Nashville's city government was based on a charter which was substantially revised in 1947 with the adoption of a strong mayor-council. The council had twenty-one members, including a vice-mayor elected at large and twenty members from single-member districts. Mayors served four-year terms. Ben West, elected mayor in 1951, held that position until the consolidation.³

¹Ibid., p. 21. ²Ibid., pp. 22-23. ³Ibid., p. 20.
There were relatively few governmental units in the county. In addition to six incorporated suburban municipalities—Belle Meade, Oak Hill, Forest Hills, Berry Hill, Goodlettsville, and Dupontonia (later named Lakewood)—there were six utility districts and the Nashville Housing Authority. Including the suburbs, the City of Nashville, and the county, fifteen governmental units served 399,743 persons in 1960.¹

Nashville's metropolitan problems were regarded as similar to other medium-sized metropolitan areas. There was no area-wide instrumentality to handle problems of the area until 1962. The suburbs were in the early stages of metropolitan growth and lacked such basic municipal services as fire and police protection, garbage collection, and, in some areas, adequate water supplies. Fire and police protection as well as garbage collection were provided in most suburbs by private subscription. The absence of sewers had long been a problem of Nashville's suburbs, because the rocky subsoil made sewer installation extremely expensive.²

The first recommendation for consolidation government in Davidson County was made in 1951 by the Tennessee Taxpayers' Association, after a study of county government requested by Briley. That same year, the state legislature created the Community Services Commission for Davidson County and the City of Nashville. After studying the governmental needs of

¹Ibid., p. 23. ²Ibid.
metropolitan Nashville and the county, the commission recommended that the central city furnish the suburban area's urban services; that annexation be undertaken by Nashville despite legal difficulties in the process; that the county be given exclusive authority for such services as public health, public welfare, and public schools; and that the county be redistricted by the Tennessee General Assembly so urban residents would have more equitable representation. The commission's report was favorable to consolidation, but that step was not immediately feasible because of constitutional barriers.\textsuperscript{1}

Subsequently, Nashville's health department and juvenile court were transferred to the county.\textsuperscript{2}

In 1953, the state constitution was amended to permit consolidation of any or all functions of cities and counties by a vote of those in municipalities and those outside in the county, although enabling legislation would also be needed.\textsuperscript{3}

In 1955, the legislature provided for municipal annexation by ordinance alone, although there would be a court review of reasonableness. This later was amended to include a requirement for a definite plan for extending services to the annexed area.\textsuperscript{4} At the same time, provisions for incorporation

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 34-37.
  \item \textsuperscript{2}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 37.
  \item \textsuperscript{3}\textit{Ibid.}
  \item \textsuperscript{4}\textit{Ibid.}
\end{itemize}
of new municipalities within five miles of cities of 10,000 or more were extremely restrictive.¹

On June 21, 1955, the first public statement concerning metropolitan government was made by a local leader. The county judge, Beverly Briley, urged the adoption of a single government for Nashville and Davidson County in a speech before a civic club.²

That same year, Advance Planning Division, established by planning commissions to provide long-range studies, was working on problems of suburban sewers and government structure. Engineers favored a special sewer district, but others believed that solutions to area-wide problems would be delayed by that course of action. The planners produced the strategy of annexation in the short run and city-county consolidation in the long run to provide consolidated government for the metropolitan area. West was seen as favoring the annexation portion of the plan, Briley the consolidation.³

Both leaders agreed to the plan—West with some hesitancy. The planners hoped that each leader would conclude that his preference was the attainable one.⁴

Immediate annexation was still recommended, but far greater emphasis was given to a comprehensive plan for city-county consolidation. The end product was, in all major respects, the consolidation plan that six years later was to be adopted in the Nashville metropolitan area.⁵

¹Ibid., p. 10. ²Ibid., p. 33. ³Ibid., p. 39. ⁴Ibid., p. 40. ⁵Ibid.
The plan included a schedule of action calling for an enabling act by the Tennessee General Assembly in 1957, and a referendum in May, 1958, to adopt the charter. To get legislative support for the proposal in 1957, Briley, who had recognition as the president of the Tennessee Association of County Officials, agreed that state sales tax distributions would not go to the whole county, but only to that portion of the county with the urbanized services.¹

Applying only to counties with populations of 200,000 or more, the legislation set up a new political entity called metropolitan government to do the job previously done by the county and the city. It would have the powers of both.²

After a charter commission established by the county and the city had produced a proposal,³ it was time to campaign. Although there was little real opposition through most of the campaign, it materialized with a focus on county voters. Fear of higher taxes, absence of services in the foreseeable future, a power grab by the mayor, likelihood of liquor sales being extended to suburban areas, and allegations of "socialism" and "big government" were mentioned by the foes as reasons to reject the plan.⁴

On June 17, 1958, the plan was rejected with 53 percent of the voters against it. Although city voters gave 62

¹Ibid., pp. 41-43.  
²Ibid., p. 43.  
³Ibid.  
⁴Ibid., p. 49.
per cent approval to the proposal, only 22 per cent of Nashville's eligible voters cast ballots. Voters out in the county killed the proposal.\textsuperscript{1}

Two days after the consolidation proposal was defeated, Nashville annexed seven square miles of industrial territory without a referendum, saying the area already was receiving city services, and that industries as such could not vote.\textsuperscript{2}

In August, 1959, a ten-dollar wheel tax for all motor vehicles using Nashville's streets for thirty days or more was established. In a crackdown on violators of the so-called "green-sticker law," some persons who had not paid the tax and did not have the sticker were fined fifty dollars.\textsuperscript{3}

In 1960, the county voted for a new charter commission to be set up, but the city refused to comply. It began action to annex without a referendum vote forty-two square miles containing about 82,000 persons.\textsuperscript{4}

The annexation, upheld by a court decision in March, 1961, increased Nashville's population to an estimated 253,386. About 27 per cent of the population was nonwhite compared to 38 per cent before annexation.\textsuperscript{5}

Within six months of the court decision, nine new councilmen had been elected in Nashville and bond issues of

\textsuperscript{1}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 143. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{2}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 58.

\textsuperscript{3}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 59. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{4}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 60.

\textsuperscript{5}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 19.
$5.5 million had been floated to finance sewer extension. Also efforts were being made to provide the annexed area with police, fire, and garbage collection service.¹

A question on taxation arose over whether the city's rate of $2.33 per $100 of assessed valuation would prevail in the annexed area, or the county's rate of $2.78. After a court ruling for the higher rate for that year only, Judge Briley said the squeeze on county finances because of annexation might raise taxes for the unincorporated areas of $3.00 per $100 of assessed valuation.²

At the same time, there was another source of city-county friction. It involved the schools in the annexed area, and the amount of payment which should be made to the county for taking the schools, as well as the county's effort to keep four schools.³

In the 1960 elections, metropolitan government had been a campaign issue. County representatives to the state legislature were committed to giving Davidson County residents another opportunity to vote on consolidated government. In March, 1961, the legislature gave its approval to a private act which set August 17, 1961, as the date for an election on whether to validate or reject the creation of a charter commission. There was little opposition, and overwhelming

¹Ibid., pp. 64-65. ²Ibid., p. 65. ³Ibid., p. 67.
approval in a light turnout; city voters approved the charter commission 11,096 to 3,730, and county voters approved it by a total of 7,324 to 3,346.¹

The new charter commission produced a proposal very much like the one considered in 1958.² A referendum election was set for June 28, 1962.³

In this campaign, backers of the metropolitan plan staged an aggressive campaign, attacking Nashville Mayor West for the annexation of considerable amounts of territory without referenda, for the "green-sticker law" for cars using Nashville streets, and for the fact of his twelve years in office.⁴

"Metro or more annexation?" was the campaign slogan of those backing the consolidation. The fact that incorporation in metropolitan areas was a process not available as a defensive measure to areas threatened by annexation, and the recent history of Nashville's annexation efforts were points the supporters of metropolitan government made known.⁵

Those opposing the consolidation plan saw it as an attack on the City of Nashville, its administration, and its mayor. Annexation was defended as necessary and not as complicating legally as the metropolitan plan. The rash of

¹Ibid., pp. 70-71. ²Ibid., p. 73.
³Ibid., p. 77. ⁴Ibid., p. 81.
⁵Ibid., p. 32.
litigation in the Miami experiment was offered as a warning of what might happen if Nashville consolidated its city and county governments.\(^1\) There were other arguments, but these will be considered in Chapter V, which is concerned with supporters and opponents of consolidation plans.

When the voters had considered consolidation for a second time, they gave it approval by a wide margin. The vote in Nashville was 21,064 in favor and 15,622 against. Out in the county the totals were 15,897 for and 12,511 against, providing a total favorable vote of 36,961, or 57 per cent of the total, to 28,133 against.\(^2\)

**Features of the Proposal**

The 1962 charter was little different from the 1958 proposal. It provided for a legislative body of thirty-five members from districts and five members elected at large, rather than the sixteen members from districts and five at large in 1958.\(^3\)

The mayor of the county would be limited to three four-year terms, and would receive an annual salary of $25,000. He would have the power to appoint department directors and members of most boards and commissions, although confirmation of some would need consent of two-thirds of the Metro Council.

\(^{1}\)Ibid., p. 86. \(^{2}\)Ibid., p. 129. \(^{3}\)Ibid., p. 75.
Fiscal officers, including the metropolitan tax assessor, the metropolitan trustee (a tax collection officer), and the county court clerk would be independently elected as required by state law. ¹

The proposal included a general services district, to provide general services required on an area-wide basis and encompassing the entire county, and an urban services district, providing additional services normally required in an urban area. Two different tax levies would reflect the differences in services rendered, but there would be only a single chief executive, and a single legislative body. ²

The urban services district was a municipal corporation. The district was expandable by annexation whenever particular areas of the general services district needed urban services, and the metropolitan government was able to provide the services. Smaller cities retained independence in the general services district, but were free to relinquish their charters and merge with the urban district if they wished. ³

Services offered to residents in the general services district, and thus available to and covering all Davidson County residents, included general administration; police and fire protection; courts; assessment of property; jails; hospitals; health services; streets and roads; welfare; parks and

¹Ibid., p. 76. ²Ibid., p. 41. ³Ibid., pp. 75-76.
recreation; traffic control; schools; use of the auditorium, fair grounds, and library; public housing; airport; urban development; zoning regulations; electricity; transit; planning; building codes; plumbing codes; electrical codes; and housing codes.¹

The urban services district included all services in the general district as well as class I police protection, class III fire protection, water, sanitary and storm sewers, street lighting, refuse collection and disposal, wine and whiskey supervision, and taxicab regulation.²

The tax rate for the urban district was to be established by a special three-man urban council composed of the councilmen at large receiving the highest vote totals and living in the urban district.³

The charter also established that if the Metro Council rejected the proposed school budget, the metropolitan school board could take the budget to the voters in a referendum.⁴

City and county employees who were in existing civil service systems were protected by the charter, and included in a metropolitan pension plan.⁵

¹Ibid., p. 45. ²Ibid. ³Ibid., p. 76. ⁴Ibid., p. 74. ⁵Ibid., p. 76.
Implementation

In November, elections for the new metropolitan offices were held. County Judge Briley was elected mayor, defeating Clifford Allen, 58,333 to 34,466. George Cate, Jr., who had been active in support of the metropolitan plan, was elected vice-mayor. Also elected were forty council members—thirty-five from districts and five at large.¹

(Hawkins' major concern is with four hypotheses concerning voter reasoning. These will be discussed in Chapter V.)

Observations

It is difficult to ascertain the effect of annexation, the wheel tax, and the administration of Nashville Mayor West on the outcome of the second election on consolidation. The circumstances cited would not seem common to proposals for governmental reorganization in all metropolitan areas.²

If Nashville's consolidation was the result of an accident, it offers little reason for optimism to those hoping to learn from the experience in order to conduct an experiment in reorganization elsewhere.³ The fragmented structure of government in metropolitan areas, and the failure of attempts at reorganization may reflect an interest in separatism.⁴

¹Ibid., p. 144. ²Ibid., p. 136. ³Ibid., p. 139. ⁴Ibid., p. 140.
V. THE JACKSONVILLE CONSOLIDATION

County residents blocked attempts at consolidation in 1963 and 1964 before Jacksonville was successful in its 1967 effort to bring reorganized metropolitan government to Duval County. A crisis preceding the action involved loss of accreditation by city high school officials in 1964 and the indictment of fifteen city and county officials over the spending of public funds.

Under Jacksonville's charter, it can consider itself a city or a county, whichever is to its best advantage. Because the state returns eleven cents to cities but only four cents to counties in cigarette taxes, Jacksonville is a city. Because the return of road and gasoline funds favors counties, Jacksonville is regarded as a county.

The consolidated government has a strong mayor over one legislative body with nineteen members, fourteen of them from districts and five elected at large. Incumbent city and county employees were given job protection. To answer fears that consolidation would raise taxes, millages were limited.

The consolidation has reduced the number of elected officials from one hundred sixteen to forty while services have been coordinated and expanded. Four small incorporated municipalities in the county had the option of joining the

1 Des Moines Tribune, February 17, 1971, p. 44.
consolidation, but chose to remain outside the metropolitan agreement.

VI. THE INDIANAPOLIS CONSOLIDATION

The City of Indianapolis and all of Marion County except Beech Grove, Lawrence, and Speedway were consolidated into a governmental unit known as "Uni-Gov" under a bill passed in 1969 by the Indiana Legislature.

The unit is governed by a mayor and a twenty-nine member city-county council which includes four members elected at large and twenty-five from districts. The consolidation is aimed at eliminating overlapping departments, independent, and semi-independent boards, which were reorganized and consolidated into six functional administrative departments. Not included in the consolidation are local school corporations, fire departments, and police forces.

1 Leary, Indianapolis, op. cit., pp. 229-230.
CHAPTER III

GOVERNMENT IN THE DES MOINES METROPOLITAN AREA

Local government in Iowa includes counties and municipalities. The focus in this study is on the City of Des Moines and Polk County. Des Moines is the capital of Iowa, its largest city, and the county seat. Polk County, which has a total of sixteen municipalities within its boundary lines, contains slightly more than 10 per cent of the population of Iowa.

I. FORMS OF GOVERNMENT IN IOWA

A unitary relationship exists between the state and local governmental units in Iowa. All local units are created by the state and depend upon it for their existence.¹

Municipal Government

Iowa laws provide for four different types of municipal government. They are: mayor-council form, commission form, council-manager-at-large form by popular election, and council-manager-ward form by popular election.²


Although special charters giving the appearance of granting legislative home rule were issued to cities by the state legislature until 1857,¹ a home rule amendment was not effected into Iowa's constitution until 1971 after the lengthy amending process that began in 1968. It reads:

Municipal home rule. Municipal corporations are granted home rule power and authority, not inconsistent with the laws of the General Assembly, to determine their local affairs and government, except that they shall not have power to levy and tax unless expressly authorized by the General Assembly.

The rule or proposition of law that a municipal corporation possesses and can exercise only those powers granted in express words is not a part of the law of this state.²

Four cities, Davenport, Muscatine, Wapello, and Camanche, continued under their special charters for more than 100 years.³ Despite the appearance of home rule through the special charters, Iowa law stated this limitation on the general powers of cities and towns:

...statutes which provide a manner or procedure for carrying out their provisions or exercising a given power shall be interpreted as providing the exclusive manner of procedure and shall be given substantial compliance, but legislative failure to provide an express manner or procedure for exercising a conferred power shall not prevent its exercise. Notwithstanding any of the provisions of this section, cities and towns shall not have power to levy any tax, assessment, excise, fee, charge or other exaction except as expressly authorized by statute...⁴

¹Ross, op. cit., p. 305. ²Code of Iowa, p. lx.
³Ross, op. cit., p. 305. ⁴Code of Iowa, p. 1638.
Under the home rule amendment, cities have been given the power to do anything except levy new taxes—a sharp contrast to the law that allowed them to do only what was expressly permitted.

County Government

County administration is under a board of supervisors, consisting of three or five persons. Their compensation is determined, in part, by the population of the county, and by the size of the board of supervisors.¹

Other officers elected by voters of the county are the auditor, treasurer, recorder, clerk, sheriff, and county attorney. Compensation of all six elected officers is determined, in part, by the population of the county. The taxable valuation of the county is another factor in determining the compensation of the auditor, treasurer, recorder, and clerk, and the treasurer may receive additional compensation on a population basis.²

There are other local units of government—school districts, townships, drainage districts, fire districts, and sewer districts,³ for example—but the main concern in this study is with the municipal and county units of local government.

¹Code of Iowa, pp. 1509-1512.
²Ibid., pp. 1520-1539.
³Ross, op. cit., p. 345.
The only local units of government included in Figure 1 are municipalities.
II. THE CITY OF DES MOINES

The City of Des Moines had been a municipality for nearly one hundred years. Its voters replaced the old commission form of government with the city manager plan in an election April 30, 1949.\(^1\) In the turbulent years of growth and change which followed World War II, the city, which was incorporated on October 18, 1851,\(^2\) moved into its second century of existence with a new challenge: increasing growth and development beyond its boundaries as well as within them.

As Table I shows, the City of Des Moines had a decrease of about 8,500 in population from 1960 to 1970. It was the first time the city had failed to show a sizeable increase—at least 8,000—over a preceding decennial census. The same table also shows the rapid growth of other municipalities in Polk County. The suburban and outlying municipalities more than doubled in population from 1950 to 1960, and nearly doubled from 1960 to 1970.

In Table II, decennial census figures for all Polk County municipalities since 1940 are given. These figures show that the four largest suburban municipalities—West Des Moines, Urbandale, Ankeny, and Windsor Heights—have a

\(^1\)Des Moines Register, May 1, 1949, p. 1.

\(^2\)Incorporated Towns in Iowa (Des Moines: Iowa Secretary of State, 1971).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1970 Change 1960</th>
<th>Change 1950</th>
<th>Change 1940</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Polk County</td>
<td>286,101 7.4</td>
<td>266,315 17.8</td>
<td>226,010 15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Des Moines</td>
<td>200,587 -4.0</td>
<td>208,982 17.4</td>
<td>177,965 11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Polk Municipalities</td>
<td>58,205 84.6</td>
<td>31,527 130.3</td>
<td>13,690 44.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unincorporated Polk Areas</td>
<td>27,409 6.2</td>
<td>25,806 -24.9</td>
<td>34,355 29.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( ^{a} \)Includes 18,937 persons in areas annexed during 1950s.

\( ^{b} \)Includes 5,779 persons in areas annexed during 1950s.

*Data obtained from United States census reports, 1950-1970.*
### TABLE II

POPULATION OF POLK COUNTY MUNICIPALITIES, 1940-1970*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>1970</th>
<th>1960</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1940</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Des Moines</td>
<td>200,587</td>
<td>208,982&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>177,965</td>
<td>159,819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Des Moines</td>
<td>16,441</td>
<td>11,949&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5,615</td>
<td>4,252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urbandale</td>
<td>14,434</td>
<td>5,821</td>
<td>1,777</td>
<td>1,083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ankeny</td>
<td>9,151</td>
<td>2,964</td>
<td>1,229</td>
<td>779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windsor Heights</td>
<td>6,303</td>
<td>4,715</td>
<td>1,414</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clive</td>
<td>3,005</td>
<td>752</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altoona</td>
<td>2,854</td>
<td>1,458</td>
<td>763</td>
<td>640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasant Hill</td>
<td>1,535</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchellville</td>
<td>1,341</td>
<td>957</td>
<td>906</td>
<td>769</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grimes</td>
<td>834</td>
<td>697</td>
<td>582</td>
<td>489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polk City</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bondurant</td>
<td>462</td>
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<td>Runnells</td>
<td>354</td>
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<td>Sheldahl</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>206</td>
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<td>Elkhart</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnston</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Includes 18,937 persons in areas annexed in 1950s.

<sup>b</sup>Includes 5,779 persons in areas annexed in 1950s.

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*Data obtained from United States census reports, 1950-1970.
population total more than four times their 1950 figure, 46,329 compared to 11,035. Table II also shows that the population of four west side suburbs (West Des Moines, Urbandale, Windsor Heights, and Clive) and an east side suburb (Pleasant Hill) which have contiguous borders with Des Moines and/or each other increased by more than 18,000 persons from 1960 to 1970 (from 23,634 to 41,718) while the Des Moines total declined by 8,500. The table also shows that only two other Polk County municipalities have lost population in any ten-year period: Polk City from 343 to 336 and Runnells from 388 to 307 in the period from 1940 to 1950—from before World War II to after that war. Nothing else compares to the Des Moines 1970 decline.

Governmental Changes

Des Moines voters had tried, and failed, to replace the city's commission form of government with the city manager plan in a 1938 election. The proposal was defeated, 23,484 votes to 15,852. Eleven years later, another effort was made. This one, spearheaded by the League of Women Voters, included a record turnout for a municipal election. By a margin of 810 votes of 40,562 cast, the change of government resulted. An analysis of the women's campaign efforts brought this appraisal: "A grassroots movement of amateurs" that brought a political "miracle."  


Under the plan as adopted, the city manager was appointed by the five-man city council. The council members elected one of their own to serve as mayor.\(^1\)

In 1967 there was a further revision. The Iowa legislature had provided in 1966 for representation from wards. Under this plan, the council was expanded to seven members. A mayor and two councilmen were elected at large; four wards were created in the city, and each ward elected a representative.\(^2\) This plan was approved by Des Moines voters September 28, 1967, by a vote of 15,440 to 13,094 and became effective January 1, 1968.\(^3\)

Annexation Efforts

Between 1950 and 1960, as the population of the metropolitan area increased and development took place beyond the Des Moines city limits, efforts at annexation were made. The first of two ambitious efforts involved Bloomfield Township, south of Des Moines. On November 4, 1955, voters in the central portion of the township rejected a proposal to incorporate as the city of Wakonda Heights. The unofficial vote was 1,248 against incorporation and 943 for incorporation. At the time the Bloomfield residents voted against incorporation, they

\(^1\)Ibid., May 1, 1949, p. 1.

\(^2\)Code of Iowa, p. 1646.

\(^3\)Des Moines Register, September 29, 1967, p. 1.
were aware that Des Moines voters were to consider annexation of the same area, as well as eastern and western portions of the township.1

The Bloomfield residents had no voice in the annexation proceedings by Des Moines. On November 8, 1955, the City of Des Moines approved the annexation proposal by a vote of 17,847 to 8,022. The outcome marked the first annexation of a residential area by Des Moines in 65 years,2 and the beginning of a court fight.

The Iowa Supreme Court, which had suspended the proceedings while it considered a lower court appeal, ruled on July 7, 1957, in a unanimous opinion, that the annexation proceedings were valid. The decision increased the city's area by more than seven square miles, and added an estimated 12,000 to 14,000 residents.3 The 1960 census report showed that areas which had been annexed by Des Moines during the preceding decade had a total population of 18,937 as of 1960. West Des Moines, which foiled the other major Des Moines annexation effort during this period, had a population total

1Des Moines Register, November 5, 1955, p. 1.
of 5,779 on land annexed during the decade—a figure which nearly doubled its population to 11,949.¹

The second annexation plan which Des Moines tried to implement was a bold effort. The proposal involved sixteen square miles and looped west and north of Des Moines to the west side of five incorporated communities west of Des Moines. The idea was to surround the suburban communities with Des Moines. The threatened communities were West Des Moines, Windsor Heights, Urbandale, Clive, and Crestwood, which had a short-lived experience as a municipality.²

Des Moines Mayor Ray Mills cited St. Louis as an example of a city which failed to take in the area around it: "What happened? All around the city, little suburbs incorporated. Now the entire city's penned in, with no place to expand. The same thing could happen here."³

Predictably, the annexation proposal brought protests from mayors of all the suburban communities involved, except Clive Mayor George Lundberg. He said, "We incorporated to


²Des Moines Tribune, October 8, 1956, p. 1.

³Des Moines Register, October 9, 1956, p. 1.
obtain self-government... If Des Moines expands out near Clive we may want, and we may have, a chance to join Des Moines."¹

Crestwood Mayor George Jorgenson said the annexation should have been done years earlier to provide for orderly expansion. He said that an education campaign by Des Moines officials might have eased the minds of suburban residents who might be "suspicious," and added: "I think it is likely that eventually the whole area, including the suburbs, will become part of Des Moines."²

The court fight over the Bloomfield annexation ended less than a month before West Des Moines voted to annex land west of that city which Des Moines also was seeking. November 5, 1957, Des Moines voters approved the annexation proposal. But there was another court fight. West Des Moines was awarded the land, the court said, because it was first to file intent to annex.³

There was not another similar major annexation effort by Des Moines until 1970, when three areas along the city's northern edge were considered. The total area involved in the initial proposal was twenty-five square miles; it eventually was pared to sixteen square miles.⁴

¹Des Moines Tribune, October 12, 1956, p. 1.
²Ibid.
At a time when the city was considering cutting back its street repairs because of financial difficulties, it also refused to extend sewer service into the area, pending the annexation vote.¹ Des Moines Mayor Thomas Urban said the Bloomfield area had paid $4.7 million in taxes since annexation, but that the city had spent $9.7 million on the area. He said annexation of the north area, with industrial and commercial property, would probably give the city a net gain in tax receipts over expenditures.²

Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, one of the major employers in the Des Moines area, has a plant located in the area considered for annexation. In a statement to its employees telling of company opposition to annexation, Firestone said its property tax of $513,216 annually would be increased by 32 per cent, and reminded employees, and voters, that Firestone’s annual payroll in the Des Moines area is about $30 million.³

An estimate that tax revenues would exceed the cost of services by $1.4 million in 1973,⁴ expanded to $4.5 million

¹Ibid., April 7, 1970, p. 1.
²Des Moines Tribune, April 17, 1970, p. 10.
by 1980, brought a response from residents of the area being considered that the annexation proposal was a "tax grab."¹

When the issue was voted upon November 3, 1970, there was a major difference from earlier proposals: residents of the area involved had the right to vote, too. All three areas considered for annexation were rejected.² Reasons suggested for defeat of the annexation proposal included the difficult time Des Moines was having providing services for existing areas, fear of a tax increase, opposition to a new two-dollar monthly fee for garbage pickup by the new Metropolitan Solid-Waste Agency which replaced city service, and Firestone's opposition and financial efforts to defeat the proposal.³

Reasons for supporting or opposing the Des Moines annexation proposals, as well as groups supporting or opposing the efforts, will be considered in another chapter.

III. POLK COUNTY

Unincorporated areas of the county can be affected by two developments: annexation by incorporated areas, or the incorporation of an area into a municipality. Since World

War II, both of these developments have taken place in what was unincorporated area of Polk County.

Annexation

Major annexation efforts by the City of Des Moines and West Des Moines have been described. There are others which have taken place in less spectacular style. Area may be annexed to municipalities adjacent by petition, if the petition is signed by all landowners in the area involved. At least seven annexations along the northwest edge of Des Moines have taken place since 1960 by this method.\(^1\) Real estate developers also use this method. It is extremely effective for bringing small parcels of land into a municipality, whether large or small.

Incorporation

Iowa law makes it difficult for persons to incorporate a town near large cities. All territory within three miles of any city with a population of 15,000 or more is described as an urbanized area. Such territory cannot be incorporated unless the area has at least three hundred population, is contiguous to the city, petitioners who have sought to be annexed by the city have more than one-fourth of the total assessed value of the area being petitioned, and had their

\(^1\)Annexation File (Des Moines: City Plan and Zoning Commission, 1960-1971).
petition refused by the city. If the city refused to annex the area, the prohibition against incorporation is invalidated for five years.\(^1\)

This law was not in operation at the time of Des Moines' annexation efforts in the 1950s. Pleasant Hill was incorporated May 12, 1956, and Clive on October 9, 1956. Although it was in effect when Johnston incorporated on September 19, 1969, Johnston incorporated beyond the three-mile limit, then annexed territory nearer Des Moines.\(^2\) The decision not to incorporate Wakonda Heights south of Des Moines in 1955, and the collapse of Crestwood's incorporation complete the incorporation proposals in the 1950s.

Residents of the area adjacent to Windsor Heights opposed a proposal to be annexed to that suburb and voted to incorporate as Crestwood. The fledgling municipality had about 1,000 residents in homes valued at $20,000 to $50,000. The area was served by the Des Moines water system, the Urbandale-Windsor Heights sanitary sewer district, and was a part of the Clive school district.\(^3\)

Crestwood's incorporation was nullified after a court fight of nearly two years, and a district judge approved

\(^1\) *Code of Iowa*, pp. 1609-1613.

\(^2\) *Incorporated Towns in Iowa*.

\(^3\) *Des Moines Register*, October 23, 1955, p. 1.
annexation of most of the area by Windsor Heights.\textsuperscript{1} The reason, similar to West Des Moines' court victory over Des Moines in an annexation proceeding, was that Windsor Heights had published notice of a hearing to consider annexation seven days before the incorporation for Crestwood was filed.\textsuperscript{2}

It would seem that efforts by municipalities to add territory and population were countered in many cases by the efforts on residents in unincorporated areas.

\textsuperscript{1}Des Moines Tribune, June 19, 1957, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., May 25, 1956, p. 1.
CHAPTER IV

CONSOLIDATED AND COOPERATIVE EFFORTS

Merger or consolidation of government as well as cooperative and coordinated efforts exist on several levels in Iowa. The proceedings involved have been both formal and informal. Some of the consolidations have been intercounty in nature and regional in scope. Others have been intracounty, and much more limited in scope.

I. INTERCOUNTY CONSOLIDATIONS

Under Iowa law which provides counties the right to form joint school boards, merge county school systems, or employ one superintendent to serve more than one county,¹ a number of consolidations have taken place. State records at the Department of Public Instruction show there are nine joint county school systems, involving twenty-five counties with as many as four counties in one system. The records also show that there are nineteen situations involving forty-three other counties in which county boards share one superintendent. Only thirty-one counties, of which Polk is one, have single-county superintendents.²

¹Code of Iowa, pp. 1172-1176.

II. INTERCOUNTY COOPERATIVE EFFORTS

Cooperative efforts on a regional, intercounty basis are taking place under two sections of the Code of Iowa, Chapters 473A and 28E. Chapter 473A provides for metropolitan or regional planning commissions. Such a commission may be established through the efforts of two towns, two counties, a county and its major city, or local governments such as a school district, benefited water district, or sanitary sewer district.¹

The Central Iowa Regional Planning Commission, for a nine-county area, has been established under this provision, being formally organized on July 28, 1965.² All Polk County municipalities except Elkhart, and Polk County, are members of the commission.³ The commission has produced studies on a wide range of topics, including rails and pipelines, crime control, recreation, utilities, and truck terminals, in the region, as well as a controversial north-south freeway proposal for the Des Moines area.

¹ Code of Iowa, pp. 2157-2159.
³ Membership List (Des Moines: Central Iowa Regional Planning Commission, 1971).
Under Chapter 28E, state and local governments of Iowa are given authority for joint exercise of governmental power with other governmental agencies to provide joint services or facilities, and to cooperate in other ways of mutual advantage. The law also provides for the creation of separate entities without state limitations on their contracts.¹ Other related sections provide for the interchange of federal, state and local government employees,² and provisions for funding, including the issuance of revenue bonds, and the power of eminent domain.³

The Des Moines Metropolitan Area Solid-Waste Agency was established under this provision. Although it began collection of garbage and trash only within the City of Des Moines, members of the agency from Warren and Dallas Counties used the agency's landfill sites.⁴

Another intercounty cooperative effort involved the Central Iowa Regional Airport Commission. Members from Boone, Dallas, Jasper, Polk, Story, and Warren Counties have been studying a new regional airport as an alternative to expansion of the Des Moines airport.⁵

⁵R. Dickson Speas, Central Iowa Regional Airport Study (Des Moines: Central Iowa Regional Planning Commission, 1969), pp. 1-2.
III. CONSOLIDATION IN POLK COUNTY

There have been two main areas of consolidation within Polk County: education and health. The record for both extends over many years.

School Consolidation

Assisted by a state law that required twelve-grade school districts for the entire state by July 1, 1966, the number of school districts which had declined from fifty-two in 1950 to twenty-seven in 1960 declined even more. For the 1970-1971 school year, the number of school districts was nine. This compares with a total of sixteen municipalities in the county.

At the same time, consolidations have left irregular boundaries—for both the county and the municipalities. For example, Polk County-based school boards extend into Jasper, Marion, Warren, Dallas, Boone, and Story Counties. And school

1 Code of Iowa, p. 100.


boards based in all of those counties service residents of Polk County.¹

Although many of the county's municipalities are located entirely within a school district, there are others which are split among two or more districts. Urbandale has residents in five school districts. Not one municipality in Polk County has boundaries which are coterminous with its school district.²

Urbandale, Windsor Heights, and West Des Moines all have residents in the Des Moines Independent Community School District, while Des Moines residents are included in Johnston and Saydel school districts. The Saydel district serves an unincorporated area immediately north of Des Moines in Saydel Township and a portion of Delaware Township.³

Health Consolidation

The idea of a city-county health unit for Des Moines and Polk County was proposed as early as 1944.⁴ It was implemented in November, 1951, with the county agreeing to pay a "reasonable share" of the costs of administering the program.

¹Map of Polk County, Iowa, showing school taxing districts (Des Moines: Polk County Auditor, 1970).
²Ibid.
³Ibid.
⁴Des Moines Register, April 13, 1944, p. 1.
and with the health unit director accountable to the county as well as the city.\footnote{Ibid., November 29, 1951, p. 3.}

There was a controversy early in 1971, when the city asked the county to increase its share of the cost to reflect the population shifts shown in the 1970 census. Because the payment is based on a per capita basis, the lower population in Des Moines and the county's increase in population would have shifted another $10,000 to the county's costs. Since the population estimates had not been available at budgeting time, the city agreed to delay the change until 1972.\footnote{Des Moines Tribune, January 19, 1971, p. 19.}

IV. COOPERATIVE EFFORTS INVOLVING DES MOINES

In addition to its participation in intercounty affairs such as the Central Iowa Regional Planning Commission and the Des Moines Metropolitan Area Solid-Waste Agency, and its role in a consolidated health department, the City of Des Moines is involved in cooperative efforts with Polk County. These efforts extend also to other units of local government.

Polk County

Polk County has agreements to pay the City of Des Moines for certain services. Included in these are reimbursement for 10 per cent of the cost of civil defense, paid by the county.
and other communities within the metropolitan area, and half of the salary costs of the municipal court clerk.¹

The county also pays half the cost of operation of Des Moines Municipal Court, shares in the cost of picking up and sheltering animals in a unit maintained by the city, and shared in a city-county study on the possibility of a combined building program.²

The report which the city and county received on the study of combined buildings included a proposal for a ten-story city-county office building costing $12.8 million, a four-story court-jail-law enforcement building costing $4.9 million, and work on six other structures. City and county officials indicated publicly that the costs were too great.³

Other Local Governments

Through its water utility, the Des Moines Water Works, the City of Des Moines provides water for the municipalities of Clive, Urbandale, Windsor Heights, and Pleasant Hill, all in Polk County, and Norwalk, in Warren County. Private service is provided the John Deere plant at Ankeny, the Polk


²Annual Budget 1971 (Des Moines: Polk County Board of Supervisors, 1970), pp. 7-21.

County Farm, and areas north of Des Moines. Planners see the Des Moines system as the basic element in an expanded metropolitan water system. ¹

The city sewer system provides service on a contract basis to West Des Moines, Clive, Windsor Heights, and much of Urbandale. The Des Moines system is seen by planners as the basic unit for any metropolitan sewerage system. ²

Water users outside Des Moines pay rates much higher than those charged Des Moines residents. Earnings from the sales outside Des Moines were a factor in reducing Des Moines' minimum rates. The water users from outside Des Moines are charged a minimum of one and one-half times the rate for city users. ³

Another area of cooperation involves fire protection. Des Moines is a member of the county's fire department association. This means it may request assistance from surrounding volunteer departments, and upon request, may also assist the other communities. During a strike by Des Moines firemen in 1969, some assistance was obtained from other departments. ⁴

¹Utilities Inventory (Des Moines: Central Iowa Regional Planning Commission, 1970), pp. 11-14.

²Ibid., pp. 21-24.

³Des Moines Water Works Water Rates (effective since January 15, 1968).

A method of informal cooperation and coordination is possible through the Mayors' Advisory Committee, which includes the mayors of Des Moines, West Des Moines, Urbandale, Windsor Heights, Clive, and Pleasant Hill, and also a member of the Polk County Board of Supervisors.¹

Stalemate

Not all efforts at cooperation or consolidation are successful, at least immediately. Conflict over which governing body should control the operation, and receive payment from the other unit, stalled efforts by the city and county late in 1970 to establish a joint data processing unit.

Because estimates from a study indicated that $50,000 to $100,000 could be saved annually by such a joint operation, both the city and county were interested in such a consolidation. Neither, however, wanted the other to control it.²

¹Des Moines Tribune, April 8, 1971, p. 3.

CHAPTER V

PROPOSING METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT

In both the Miami and Nashville experiences, there were legal barriers to be surmounted before consideration could be given to adoption of a metropolitan form of government. There were also precedents of consolidated and cooperative efforts by the central city and the county government, if not the suburban areas. The focus of this analysis will be turned now to the legal steps which would be required and helpful, and to the pragmatic aspects of consolidation: what groups might be expected to support and oppose metropolitan government, based on experiences in Miami and Nashville, and for what reasons might there be support or opposition?

I. LEGAL STEPS

Approval by Iowa voters in November, 1970, completed the long process of amending which produced a home rule provision in Iowa for the first time. This means that the fundamental step in building a system of metropolitan government has been taken.

A bill introduced into the Iowa Senate in March, 1971, might well have a significant bearing on whatever additional steps might be necessary. The bill, Senate File Number 397, was the result of a two-year study by a legislative committee.
More than two hundred pages in length, the bill rewrites many of the state laws pertaining to cities and towns.\(^1\)

It also provides for various forms of municipal government to be allowed under home rule. Most significant for those who might be interested in a form of metropolitan government is a provision for a home rule charter. As proposed, government under the charter would have to include a council of not less than five members and a mayor. A vote on a home rule charter could be proposed either by a city council or by a petition of voters. The petition would have to be signed by the equivalent of twenty-five per cent of those who voted in the last regular city election. Within thirty days of receipt of the petition, a charter commission of five to fifteen members would be named. They would have six months to prepare a charter. Notice of the charter proposal would have to be published within sixty days, and a special election would then be required not less than thirty nor more than sixty days after the last publication notice. The ballot would also include the existing form of government as an alternative to the charter proposal.\(^2\)

The effectiveness of Senate File 397 as a vehicle for metropolitan government proposals would depend on the items contained in the bill's final form, and whether it was passed

\(^1\)Des Moines Register, March 4, 1971, p. 3.

\(^2\)Senate File 397, 1971 session of the Iowa General Assembly.
by the legislature. Although additional legislative permission would be required to bring about consolidation of county government with municipal government—annexation laws could be used in combining municipalities—one important principle could be established through Senate File 397. That would be the provision for voting on a home rule charter created by a local charter commission.

A study concerning consolidation has been made in at least one area of Iowa. An ad hoc committee has proposed consolidation for the City of Cedar Rapids and Linn County. In a 470-page report prepared by representatives of local government, schools, business, labor, churches, various health and welfare agencies, and personnel from the University of Iowa, the committee proposed one consolidated city-county government to replace seventeen local government units in the county, a single school district to replace eleven districts, and a single, comprehensive health and welfare system rather than a number of separate agencies. The committee has set a target date of 1976 for implementation of its proposals.1

With the establishment of a home rule amendment and the principle of home rule charter as embodied in Senate

File 397, the next step would be either establishment of city-county consolidation as a form of local government, or legislation tailored to a specific proposal for the Des Moines-Polk County metropolitan area. Either of these actions would provide the mechanism that would be needed for a proposal on metropolitan government to be considered.

II. OBTAINING VOTER APPROVAL

The first section of this chapter has been concerned with legal steps which would be necessary for consideration of a consolidation proposal. For such a proposal to be adopted, voter approval would also be required. The experiences in Miami and Nashville provide some understanding for possible sources of support and opposition, as well as reasons for voters supporting or opposing the proposals. Some evidence of the feelings of Des Moines area residents is also available as a result of annexation campaigns, and through a poll conducted by the Des Moines Tribune.

The Miami Experience

According to Sofen, the forces that would be leaders in the struggle over city-county consolidation had emerged long before metropolitan government was the issue. He says they were first evidenced in the functional consolidation involving acquisition of Miami's Jackson Memorial Hospital by the county. The transfer from city to county was not
accomplished until more than two and one-half years after it had been voted upon. In the hospital issue, the consolidation effort was supported by central city businessmen, the Miami Chamber of Commerce, and the Miami Herald. They later would support the metropolitan plan. The archfoes of consolidation included city officials, municipal employees, and certain business groups in the satellite cities.¹

Concern over city functions that might be absorbed by the county was a cause for concern, and opposition, by city employees. City and county officeholders, employees of the cities, and beneficiaries of business transactions with the municipalities all opposed the metropolitan plan. They were joined by a special committee of the Dade County League of Municipalities, the Dade Central Labor Union, municipal and county employee groups, and the chambers of commerce of most suburban municipalities. Reasons they cited for opposition included fear of higher taxes, fear of increased assessments that might eliminate homestead exemptions on property taxes, pork barrel civil service, and law suits which might arise from consolidation.²

Support for consolidation came from Miami's chamber of commerce, both newspapers in the city, the Dade County Research Foundation, the League of Women Voters, the Dade

¹Sofen, Miami Metropolitan Experiment, op. cit., pp. 24-26.
County legislative delegation which had been active in the state legislature to establish the charter board after earlier backing of the home rule amendment, the Metropolitan Miami Municipal Board, and the charter board. Many city residents felt they bore the financial burden of county-wide facilities, and some civic leaders in Miami saw the outlying cities as "parasite communities." Sofen also notes that all plans for geographic consolidation between 1945 and 1953 can be traced at least in part to the efforts of Miami business elements.  

One other factor involved in opposition to the charter was present both in the central city and in the suburban areas. That was relative satisfaction with the status quo. The Jewish population of Miami Beach was dominant in that city, and was seen as reluctant to risk changing the status quo for an unknown, unproven form of government. Negroes in Miami were regarded as opposed to consolidation because they had been able to establish a way of life with authorities of the city. There was also a strong sense of community in Hialeah and Homestead, which might be changed if metropolitan government were adopted.  

Safen believes that the socio-political situation in the metropolitan area also was conducive to the development of metropolitan government. Factors he includes are a no-party political system, the absence of relatively strong

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1 Ibid., pp. 68-73  
2 Ibid., pp. 13-14.
racial or religious minorities committed to the status quo, and the lack of a strong labor movement. His conclusion is that, to a certain extent, there were few groups who had a lot to lose by adoption of metropolitan government.¹

As in the Toronto situation, where municipalities involved continued to seek adjustments in the division of political powers, this process was evidenced in Miami, including some court cases and a referendum on a so-called autonomy amendment which would have limited the metropolitan government's powers. The obstacles and challenges came from groups which had opposed the metropolitan plan.²

The Nashville Experience

In his study on the Nashville experience, Hawkins lists organizations and persons who announced an official position on the second charter vote which brought consolidation to Nashville and Davidson County. His list includes:

Those for the charter: Nashville's chamber of commerce and junior chamber of commerce, suburban junior chamber of commerce groups, an education council, League of Women Voters, business and professional women, citizen committees on education and better government, members of the charter commission, a Jewish women's group, the county association of fire and police departments, the Nashville Tennessean, the Tennessee

¹Ibid., p. 74. ²Ibid., pp. 96-98.
Taxpayers' Association, Negroes who were regarded as the intellectual leaders, County Judge Briley and the county tax assessor, trustee, and sheriff, Nashville's vice-mayor, some labor leaders, some members of the Planning Commission staff, and George Cate, Jr., an attorney who later was elected to a position under Briley in the consolidated government.

Those against the charter: one suburban chamber of commerce, members of the Nashville fire and police departments, the Nashville Building and Trades Council, the union of painters, the county Democratic League, officials of small cities in the county, Negroes who were regarded as traditionalists, the Nashville Banner, Nashville Mayor West, a John Birch Society leader, and two city councilmen.¹

In citing a study by the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations on supporters and foes of reorganization attempts, Hawkins observes that metropolitan newspapers, Leagues of Women Voters, academic spokesmen, and central city chambers of commerce, city officials, commercial and real estate interests predominantly favor reorganization efforts while opposition commonly comes from such groups as farmers and rural homeowners, county government employees, and the employees of fringe local groups.²

²Ibid., p. 32.
Hawkins' appraisal is that the alignment of interest groups in Nashville's experience was fairly consistent with what might be expected, with the exception of role reversal by city and county officials. One reason might be that the Nashville mayor, who had supported the first metropolitan effort, had committed his administration to annexation after the first proposal was defeated, and that he had become unpopular in the county through the course his administration had followed.¹

Support for the second charter proposal came from two geographic groups which had opposed it the first time—the areas annexed by Nashville and those which seemed in line if further annexation took place.²

Persons in the county who feared higher taxes because of shrinking taxable areas left after Nashville's annexation efforts,³ or those who were unhappy about the friction over schools affected by annexation, would also be probable supporters.

At the time of the first charter vote, many Negroes and whites considered the proposal as a contrivance to dilute the growing Negro vote in Nashville.⁴ Depending on a voter's beliefs and fears, this also could have been a factor—either for or against—in the second effort.

¹Ibid., p. 105. ²Ibid., p. 134.
Supporters of the proposal attacked the city administration policies of Mayor West, including his use of city firemen and policemen and their wives in the campaign against consolidation, his city political machine, annexation, and the wheel tax on automobiles used in Nashville. They also attacked private fire departments that let non-subscribers' buildings burn, in an effort to show the need for public protection in the county, and suggested that consolidation would not only end the bickering over schools involved in annexation, but would also end duplication of offices and personnel, thus saving tax money or providing more service for taxes paid.¹

The policies of Mayor West may also have caused some reaction in Nashville, but the city's vote for consolidation on the second proposal was in keeping with its vote on the first proposal. Opponents of consolidation did not try to answer every attack by the proponents. They did view it as an attack on the city, its administration, and its mayor. They also defended annexation as necessary, and said it was not as complicated as consolidation, which might bring a wave of litigation.²

Hypotheses About Voters

Hawkins sought to test four hypotheses about reasons for voting in support of or in opposition to reorganization

¹Ibid., pp. 81-85. ²Ibid., pp. 85-86.
proposals. He acknowledged that a flaw in his effort was that the research, interviews with 166 persons, was done after the 1962 metropolitan proposal had been adopted, which was likely to introduce a bias in favor of the actual outcome.\footnote{Ibid., p. 110.}

The first hypothesis was that voters who are not satisfied with their services are more likely to support reorganization than those who are satisfied. Of those who said they were not satisfied with services, 81.1 per cent were for reorganization. Of those who were satisfied, 52.6 per cent were for reorganization. Data confirmed the hypothesis.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 110-112.}

The second hypothesis was that voters who anticipate higher taxes with reorganization are more likely to oppose it than those who do not anticipate higher taxes. Of those who voted against reorganization, the most important reason given by the largest number of respondents was that it would cost more in taxes. Of those voting for consolidation, the most important reason was that it would bring greater efficiency and/or lower cost. Of those who anticipated higher costs, 41.4 per cent were for reorganization. Of those not anticipating higher costs, 35.7 per cent were for reorganization. Also, among those who were dissatisfied with services, 92.7 per cent who did not anticipate higher taxes were for reorganization while 63.3 per cent who anticipated higher taxes were for reorganization. Of those who were satisfied with services,
87.5 per cent who did not anticipate higher taxes were for reorganization while 26.3 per cent who anticipated higher taxes were for reorganization. Data confirmed the hypothesis.¹

The third hypothesis was that voters in the county who are "suspicious" of the central city are more likely to oppose reorganization than those who are not "suspicious." To measure suspiciousness, one of the three questions used was whether big-city politics were more corrupt than small-city politics. Of those classified as suspicious, 16.7 per cent favored reorganization while 72.7 per cent of the non-suspicious favored reorganization. Data confirmed the hypothesis as stated and defined.²

The final hypothesis was that less knowledgeable voters are more likely to oppose reorganization than those who are more knowledgeable. Of those who answered correctly a question about the fate of six suburban cities, 73.1 per cent were for reorganization. Of those who gave wrong replies, 50 per cent were for reorganization. A question about annexation of municipalities out in the county brought an unexpected response--of those with right answers 50 per cent were for reorganization while reorganization was backed by 81.7 per cent of those who gave wrong answers--but the question may have been discerned as prohibiting involuntary annexation, something that would have been favored by those who gave the

¹Ibid., pp. 112-115. ²Ibid., pp. 116-118.
wrong answers. On a third question, 86.2 per cent of those who gave a knowledgeable answer were for reorganization and 63.6 per cent of those who answered incorrectly were in favor of reorganization. Measuring by educational level, of those with eight grades or less, 33 per cent favored reorganization. Support increased with added education, to the point where 95.7 per cent of those who were college graduates were in favor of reorganization. With the exception of one question which was surrounded by confusion, data tended to confirm the hypothesis.1

The Des Moines Setting

Observations about voters in Des Moines and in outlying areas which have been considered for annexation are one source of identification of those who might be potential supporters or foes of metropolitan government. Supporters and foes of consolidation in Miami and Nashville would give a tentative basis for determining the supporters and foes of metropolitan government in Des Moines and Polk County. A third possible source is the Metro Poll which has been conducted by the Des Moines Tribune.

The 1970 annexation campaign in Des Moines, which was rejected, was opposed by residents of the area to be annexed as well as industry in the area. Firestone's objections,

1Ibid., pp. 122-128.
especially to an anticipated increase in taxes, are those which might be raised by other industries. There were also residents within the city who objected to the annexation because the city was pressed financially, services were not being increased or, in the case of garbage collection, were transferred to another agency which imposed a fee for the service, and there were fears of increased taxation. The experience of annexation of Bloomfield, where city expenditures exceeded tax revenue, was also cited as a reason not to annex.

The experiences of Miami and Nashville indicate that the central city's business and real estate interests, the Des Moines Register and Des Moines Tribune, chamber of commerce, League of Women Voters (a group active in the establishing of city manager government in Des Moines), city residents who feel Des Moines carries the financial burden of county-wide facilities, academic interests, and city government officials would be possible sources of support. Opposition might be expected from county officials, depending on the proposal, as well as organized labor, employees of city and county government who would feel their jobs were in jeopardy, city officials in suburban communities, rural residents, and persons outside Des Moines who would perceive metropolitan government as an extension of the city's influence over them. Suburban residents who are community conscious would be a source of opposition, although this might
be tempered if the prospect of lower taxes or improved services was evident.

The Des Moines Tribune's Metro Poll in early 1970 was based on 400 interviews with distribution approximating the latest available census estimates. In response to a question on major problem areas Des Moines may face, county-wide metropolitan government was included. It ranked twenty-second among the priorities tabulated. Law enforcement was the first priority. A regional airport ranked eighteenth.

When asked their reaction to the idea of a single, county-wide metropolitan government, 29 per cent of the city respondents favored it and 37 per cent opposed it. No opinion was expressed by the remainder. In the suburban area polled (West Des Moines, Clive, Windsor Heights, Urbandale, and Ankeny, after Des Moines the most populated municipalities in the county) 30 per cent favored metropolitan government and 52 per cent were opposed. Of persons with incomes under $5,000, 20 per cent favored it and 39 per cent were opposed. Of those with incomes of more than $15,000, 44 per cent were in favor of metropolitan government and 32 per cent opposed. Middle-income response was 30 per cent in favor, 47 per cent opposed.

A question on consolidated schools got favorable reaction from 34 per cent of city respondents with 35 per cent

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opposed. In the suburbs, 43 per cent were in favor and 45 per cent opposed.

Reasons offered for supporting metropolitan government included efficiency, improved area-wide services, an ending of duplicated services and overlapping authority, consideration of area-wide problems by one government. The opposition to metropolitan government included concern for less efficient government, less contact by the government with the people, too much centralization, the belief that Des Moines has enough problems without taking on a larger area and more problems, loss of identity, loss of a voice in local government, and increased opportunity for corruption in a larger government. Both higher and lower taxes were envisioned under consolidated government.¹

Another poll attempted to determine the most influential persons and businesses in the Des Moines area. Des Moines Mayor Thomas Urban was rated the most influential person, followed by Iowa Governor Robert Ray, the Hubbell family which is prominent in business and socially, City Manager Thomas Chenoweth, and Municipal Judge Luther Glanton, the only Negro in the top ten. Although Des Moines city councilmen were acknowledged, none of the top ten persons was a county official. Younker Brothers, which operates department stores in several cities of the state and in

¹Ibid., April 11, 1970, p. 18.
several sections of the city, was regarded as the most influential business organization. Also given high ratings, in order, were the Des Moines Register and Tribune Company, the Greater Des Moines Chamber of Commerce, Firestone Tire and Rubber, Massey-Ferguson, Inc., the Meredith Corporation, a printing firm primarily, the YMCA, and John Deere and Company.¹

A poll late in 1970 asked the question again about metropolitan government. The suburban response was much the same, with 29 per cent in favor and 54 per cent opposed, but in Des Moines the response was 43 per cent in favor and 43 per cent opposed. There had been considerable publicity during the spring and summer about Des Moines' financial problems and cutbacks in services that may have been a factor in the more favorable look upon metropolitan government on the part of city residents.²

Another question was whether some kind of cutback in government service would be favored to avoid a tax increase. Eighty per cent of the suburban and city respondents favored some kind of cut. The priority target was city parking facilities (favored by 40 per cent), followed by county welfare services, and salaries for local government. When asked if there was a particular tax from which they would like to have

¹Ibid., April 13, 1970, p. 11.
relief, 57 per cent said they wanted most relief from property taxes, which finance schools and local government. Next was the federal income tax.\(^1\)

Suburban residents were asked about advantages and disadvantages of suburban living. Only 8 per cent said there was an advantage in lower taxes or more efficient service. The biggest disadvantage was seen as high costs for property taxes and water bills, followed by poor services and schools.\(^2\)

In Urbandale, sixty per cent of the respondents complained about high taxes, and the same number said something could be done on the local level to limit taxes. In West Des Moines, only 10 per cent of the respondents complained about taxes, and 30 per cent said the public could do something about limiting taxes.\(^3\)

Among conclusions that might be drawn from the poll results are these: (1) residents in the Des Moines area have some awareness of metropolitan government and can see both possible advantages and disadvantages, although some see it as Des Moines swallowing the suburbs and the suburban problems; (2) two city officials and a city judge are looked upon as leaders with influence while no comparable figure exists

\(^1\)Ibid., November 4, 1970, p. 35.

\(^2\)Ibid., November 5, 1970, p. 25.

\(^3\)Ibid., November 6, 1970, p. 15.
in county government; and (3) concern about taxes exists, to a very high degree in some areas, along with an interest in efforts to reduce them.
CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, SUGGESTIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

There is a need in many metropolitan areas for reorganization of local government to provide a more consolidated approach to governing, planning, and providing services. This final chapter offers a summary of the problem examined in this thesis, and suggestions and conclusions on how metropolitan government could be a viable alternative to the present systems of government in the City of Des Moines, its suburban municipalities, and Polk County.

I. SUMMARY

Since 1950, metropolitan government has been considered more and more frequently as an alternative to fragmented local government in metropolitan areas. This study has examined three particular metropolitan areas and the proposals for reorganized local government which were adopted for each, as well as the local government existing in Des Moines and Polk County. As was shown, a federal-type plan of metropolitan government was imposed upon Toronto and its suburbs as a compromise between two plans pushed by the central city and its suburbs. The Miami plan, adopted by the voters of Dade County, was also federal in nature, rather than unitary or integrated, and it assigned the county municipal-type functions, respon-
sibilities in the unincorporated areas, the power to set minimum standards in the county, and "elastic" powers. The Nashville plan, as approved the second time around by Davidson County voters, created an integrated or unitary type of metropolitan government with a general services district for the entire county. It also increased services and provided a different tax rate for the urban district.

In order to gain an understanding of the situation in which metropolitan government might be considered a possibility here, it was necessary to show the forms of local government now existing in Des Moines and Polk County, the forms allowed by Iowa law, and the efforts at annexation and incorporation that have thus far been attempted in the metropolitan area of Des Moines. Then, consolidated and cooperative efforts of government, both on the intercounty and intracounty levels, were examined. All of this served the purpose of demonstrating that some consolidation of efforts in governing, planning, and providing of basic public services has been successfully accomplished.

Legal steps necessary to allow a proposal for metropolitan government to be considered for Des Moines and Polk County were likewise examined, as well as factors pertaining to obtaining voter approval. Groups and individuals who supported and opposed reorganization efforts in Miami and Nashville campaigns were considered, along with four hypotheses about reasons for voter support or opposition. These items, and
the findings of a poll in the Des Moines metropolitan area, were used to predict potential supporters and opponents provided a proposal for reorganization of the Des Moines metropolitan area and Polk County should be presented.

II. FORMS OF REORGANIZATION

Federal

One advantage of the federal type of reorganization is that it can be implemented with little change in structure of the municipalities, and with no change in their boundaries. By letting the municipalities retain their control in local matters, community identity is retained, as well as a fairly high degree of autonomy.

The federal, or two-level, approach to metropolitan government also represents a compromise between total amalgamation that might result from a unitary or integrated approach, and the limited proposal of utility or service districts.

Although one difference between the Toronto and Miami federal-type plans was that the Canadian form was imposed by a higher authority while voters adopted the Miami plan, the Ontario Municipal Board was faced with imposing a solution which had not been sought, and which had not been given popular approval. Its redeeming feature was that it was a compromise between two more extreme approaches.

One interesting factor in the Toronto representation system was that elected officials of the cities constituted
the Metropolitan Council. Although there was acknowledgement that a councilman might be first concerned about his own city, there was a conclusion that rivalry between municipalities and the metropolitan system might be lessened because there were not two sets of city officials—one for the city, and one for the metropolitan system.

**Unitary**

The integrated, one-level type of reorganization, which is an extreme in consolidation compared to service districts or the federal approach, was defeated the first time it was presented in Nashville. The fact that it was approved when considered a second time may have been due more to other factors—annexation, a wheel tax, and resentment at a mayor—than to a change in basic attitudes about the form of government. One objection by municipalities might be that a surrender of more of their powers would be involved than in another type of reorganization. While the Nashville plan differed from those in Toronto and Miami since it provided one level of government, the plan did distinguish two levels of service—one for the entire county, another for the urbanized area.

**Other Considerations**

The Jacksonville reorganization merits close and continued watching. For a reorganized area to be able to consider itself either a city or a county depending upon which
designation might be more beneficial is an exceptional advantage that might well be the envy of other city-county governments.

In the case of Des Moines and Polk County, either of the forms adopted by the metropolitan areas studied here could be a possibility. It would seem more likely, however, that the federal-type system would be more attractive to the suburban residents because it would allow for continued autonomy of the community, require no boundary changes, and allow community consciousness to continue.

III. FACTORS OF REORGANIZATION

Time

Efforts toward the three major reorganizations examined in this thesis all were begun early in the 1950s. The two that were adopted by ballot were both presented to voters later in that decade. This seems to have been a significant time in the development of many metropolitan areas, because annexation and incorporation efforts were also taking place at that time in the Des Moines area. This naturally gives rise to speculation concerning the most appropriate time to consider reorganization.

A key question concerning time relates to the temporal gap between the beginning of efforts for reorganization and the appearance of the proposal on the ballot. Proponents of the consolidation plan suggested for Cedar Rapids and Linn
County have set a target date of five years for implementation. Including their year-long study, they have adopted a six-year undertaking. If proponents of metropolitan government for Des Moines and Polk County are serious about such an effort, this is something they must think about.

Whether Des Moines is interested in consolidation such as that proposed by Cedar Rapids, city officials and persons concerned with local government ought to be aware of the Cedar Rapids plan, its general features, and its progress. Because that city is also the central city of a metropolitan area in Iowa, Des Moines officials and students of government should also be familiar with the proposals, legislation sought, and implementing steps taken. Whether reorganization is adopted in Cedar Rapids, developments seeking to get the proposal on the ballot would be informative for Des Moines. Des Moines would, of course, benefit from such information regardless of its own efforts at bringing about reorganization. If Des Moines should choose to seek reorganization via metropolitan government, the knowledge gleaned from the Cedar Rapids-Linn County effort could shorten the amount of time for a Des Moines proposal to get on the ballot.

Attitude of the State

While proponents of reorganization might expect state cooperation for two reasons—the pattern of experience in other states where reorganization proposals were made, and
Iowa's response to special situations of cities, often by limiting legislation to cities or counties with a specified level of population--they can also expect reluctance on the part of the state in one particular area. That concerns financing. Florida would not allow unincorporated areas of Dade County to receive funds from the tax on cigarettes. Tennessee would not allow return of sales tax money to the nonurbanized area of Davidson County. Iowa would only be following this precedent if it limited returns of some tax funds--whether from sales tax, liquor tax, or gasoline tax.

This factor need not be restrictive in the case of Des Moines and Polk County. It did not restrict the proposals in Florida and Tennessee. Although financial problems are among the biggest concerns of the reorganized metropolitan governments in those areas, that fact would not represent a change for the municipal governments of Des Moines and the suburbs. By combining services and resources, it might, in fact, ease their woes.

Resources

Among the key resources used in producing the proposals for metropolitan government in Miami and Nashville were academic resources. Miami had planning assistance from the University of Miami; Nashville had planning assistance from individuals at Vanderbilt University. This same type of resource is available for Des Moines-Polk County proponents through Drake University, its faculty, and staff members.
Existing Combined Practices

Functional consolidations and cooperative efforts preceded the adoption of metropolitan government in both Miami and Nashville. Both Des Moines and Polk County have demonstrated ability to work together, and have shown a willingness to combine efforts in such areas as data processing. Successful experience in these areas lays the foundation for expanded consolidation, and also provides a positive base for additional efforts.

IV. FORCES FOR AND AGAINST REORGANIZATION

A Changing Relationship

The population shift which dramatically emphasized a changing relationship between Des Moines and its suburbs in 1970 is only one part of the changing situation. With increased movement to the suburbs, to the point where the central city declines in population, one finds a shift in the tax revenues. Movement of the affluent to the suburbs leaves those with less ability and money in the central city. This invariably limits the financial options of an aging municipality. By retreating to a smaller municipality, the metropolitan area resident in effect is denying that the problems of metropolitan areas are really area problems.

To cope with this critical shift of tax resources, the city might seek a tax, either on income (levied at the place of employment rather than residence) or on sales. The
Nashville experience proved the unpopularity of a wheel tax. A better alternative might be to acknowledge that suburban municipalities are a part of the metropolitan area rather than an isolated entity, and that they should share a responsibility for assisting in the solution of the metropolitan area's problems. Adoption of metropolitan government would definitely be a step toward equity in dealing with metropolitan problems. It would also make resources of an entire area available for solving area-wide problems such as transportation, traffic, waste collection and disposal, and education.

Regional Planning

Des Moines, its suburbs, all of the municipalities in the county except Elkhart, and Polk County are members of the Central Iowa Regional Planning Commission. This unit serves eight counties, and the projects in its scope of membership go far beyond Polk County. If the local governments of Polk County are able to cooperate in a planning unit which extends beyond the county's boundaries, it would seem to be a reasonable conclusion that they could cooperate in a reorganized form of metropolitan government.

There have been at least two developments in early 1971, however, that have involved regional units in unpopular endeavors. The first involved the Des Moines Metropolitan Solid-Waste Agency. Although it had taken over the collection of garbage and trash in Des Moines in late 1970, without a
great deal of notice, the agency was widely attacked after it encountered difficulty in making collections in the wake of a heavy snow in early January. Des Moines street crews had difficulty in cleaning the streets--the process took ten days in many residential areas--and this was a factor slowing the collection crews. Mayor Urban admitted he had received more telephone calls complaining about garbage than about any other item since he became mayor in 1968. Numerous residents complained that the agency’s garbage collectors were simply bypassing them. But the agency’s garbage collectors were the same men who had worked for the city.¹

The other adverse development concerned a north-south freeway for the Des Moines area, proposed by the regional planning unit. At one public meeting about the freeway, there were reports of booing and hooting of commission officials who tried to answer questions involving the freeway. At the same time there were circulating petitions against the freeway, and a court action was started to halt additional planning.² If one purpose of a governmental unit is to be responsive to the people, then municipal government here behaved properly when the Des Moines City Council voted against the freeway project. No freeway can be built in Des Moines without the council’s explicit approval.³ This

¹Des Moines Register, January 26, 1971, p. 1.
example is cited as evidence that there are times when a local government can provide a firm check against some undesired action. It also shows, however, that unresponsive officials at any level of government can expect to find their actions challenged in court.

To be sure, such incidents should not be allowed to distort the work of the planning commission, which has provided inventories of existing recreational areas, utilities, governmental units, and law enforcement resources. The commission has brought more than forty local units of government together in its membership, and can continue to be a key vehicle to assist in the reorganization of local government in Polk County.

Support and Opposition

Groups and individuals which might be expected to support or oppose metropolitan government have been discussed earlier. According to the results of a poll in the metropolitan area of Des Moines, the area's most influential leaders are city officials and the governor, who was a Des Moines resident before he was elected governor. The poll also indicates that, at least in some suburban areas, there is dissatisfaction over high taxes and poor local services.

The Hawkins hypotheses include these conclusions: if voters are dissatisfied with local services, they will be more likely to vote for reorganization. If they expect higher taxes, they will be less likely to favor reorganization.
county voters are "suspicious" of the central city, they will tend to be against reorganization. And, if the voters are knowledgeable, they will tend to favor reorganization, especially as the levels of education increase.

The complaints about services in the suburbs would seem to indicate that there is much dissatisfaction there which could attract voters. Also present high taxes and limited services might be a basis for fearing higher taxes under any reorganization. At the same time, the possibility exists that services might be maintained or improved without higher taxes, if consolidation was seen as a force that would improve efficiency.

While the amount of suspicion county voters may have toward Des Moines is not known, this is not a factor which should cause concern, especially if proponents were effective in their educational campaign. The bigger problem might be in getting Des Moines voters informed and to the polls. Light voting participation, especially in the Nashville experience, indicated that a concentrated effort to get voters to exercise the franchise could be a key factor for either side. The reason the "suspicion factor" should not be of great concern here is that, although the population is shifting away from Des Moines, Des Moines residents would still enjoy a substantial advantage and majority in a county-wide election. Yet the population shift is a factor. Des Moines' share of the county population has dropped from more than 80 per cent
in 1940 to less than 70 per cent in 1970, and the trend is clearly toward acceleration of this demographic shift.

Hawkins' fourth hypothesis holds that voters who are knowledgeable about reorganization, and especially those who have a good deal of education, tend to favor reorganization. Iowa enjoys a reputation for its literate populace, and there are sufficient grounds to expect that this factor would be a positive one in any consolidation proposal affecting Des Moines and Polk County.

Sofen's suggestions based on the Miami experiment are possibilities which also could be carried out. It would be possible here to create a board similar to the Metropolitan Miami Municipal board, with moderate proponents and ardent opponents of consolidation for Des Moines and Polk County. Professional and impartial experts could be available to suggest a plan.

One difficulty might be in appointing a charter board of civic leaders who are not representatives of special interests. But there definitely is a reservoir of executive talent available in the city, in part due to the large number of insurance, printing and manufacturing businesses in the city and metropolitan area.

Both newspapers, which are under common ownership, are government-conscious and give ample coverage to local government, including boards and commissions. Their support would not seem to be a problem.
The tag of home rule amendment already is in existence, and home rule charters are included as a possible form of government under Senate File 397 in the current Iowa legislature.

A federal type of government would be a compromise between localists and consolidationists, and it would seem that a compromise proposal would have a better chance of surviving a reorganization campaign in this area.

There is evidence that in practice, Des Moines, its suburbs, and the county government have developed at least limited amount of formalized metropolitan government already in their various formal cooperative efforts. There are also informal cooperative activities in this metropolitan area, as well as regional developments that go beyond the boundaries of Polk County.

The available evidence, tenuous and intangible as much of it is, suggests that there is an awareness by the voters of metropolitan governmental efforts, and that vote approval is apparently increasing here. A federal type of metropolitan government, which is the simplest compromise plan, would provide a pragmatic alternative for legally formulating an area-wide metropolitan government for the city, its suburbs, and the county to govern, plan, and provide essential services. It is therefore the conclusion of this study that the citizens of Polk County and Des Moines should one day be given the opportunity to approve and implement a federal form of metropolitan government.
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