

ever, varies widely and revenues from these sources, as indicated, are relatively minor.

Counties, instead, increased their reliance on direct federal aid from 1.6% in 1966-67 to 9% of total revenue in 1976-77. (See Table 165.) Cities have seen a similar overall increase, from 4.2% to 14.9% in the decade from 1967 to 1977. State aid, while it proportionately increased slightly for counties in the five years from 1967 to 1972, actually dropped as a percentage of total revenue to 35% for the year 1977. State aid for cities remained approximately stable—ranging between 21% and 23% in the decade from 1967 to 1977.

**SUMMARY**

Today, not all counties have been able to achieve their full potential—structurally, functionally and fiscally—and thus many are still not effective regional and urban servicing units. Yet, significant strides have been made in the last ten to 20 years, both structurally and functionally, and they indicate that counties are capable of change. Moreover, since much of this change has occurred in the metropolitan counties most in need of modern administrative structures and urban services—where the majority of Americans live—the effect of these reforms has had major impact.

While many of these changes have occurred in a piecemeal, haphazard fashion—as counties and their residents slowly began to realize the importance of a modernized county government—the actions of Arkansas and Ten-

nessee mandating the separate election of a county executive for all counties, and of the Kentucky legislature permitting all counties to perform any likely urban function, indicate that at least three states took decisive action believing that all counties in their states needed modernization.

Obstacles still stand in the path of county government improvement, of course. Many are the roadblocks that have always been there: outmoded state laws; the attitude that counties not only are the “dark continent” of American government but should remain so; and the reluctance of some state and county officials and county residents to adopt more modernized governments.

One of the chief obstacles, however, is the heavy county dependence on the property tax and the lack of diversified revenue sources. Consequently, at the time that many counties are achieving increased structural and functional authority and becoming full-fledged local governments, they are also becoming more reliant on federal aid, with the possibility of reducing their local discretion even as they gain it from the state. Regardless of the magnitude of this fiscal problem, it is likely that county government will continue to improve.

**Multijurisdictional Reorganization:  
City-County Consolidations and  
Federated Governments**

The most sweeping local action affecting the assignment of functions is multijurisdictional reorganization—

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Table 166

**INCOME AND SALES TAX REVENUES OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT,  
SELECTED YEARS, 1962-79  
(in millions of dollars)**

Counties	1979	1975	1971	1967	1962
<b>Total Tax Collections</b>	\$19,175	\$12,661	\$8,702	\$5,702	\$4,149
<b>Income Taxes:</b>					
<b>Amount</b>	(68)	(65)	(24)	(4)	(1)
<b>Percent of Total Taxes</b>	2.4	2.4	1.9	0.3	0.1
<b>General Sales Taxes</b>	(802)	(659)	(505)	(330)	(145)
<b>Amount</b>	2,068	1,314	590	202	91
<b>Percent of Total Taxes</b>	10.8	10.4	6.8	3.5	2.2
<b>Percentage of Income and Sales</b>	13.2	12.8	8.7	3.8	2.3

NOTE: Figures in parentheses are approximate numbers of governments with the tax.  
SOURCE: ACIR, *Significant Features of Fiscal Federalism, 1979-80 Edition* (Report M-123), Washington, DC, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1980, Table 59, p. 80.

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either city-county consolidation or a federated type of metropolitan government. There are at least four types of the latter: the multifunctional metropolitan service district, the urban county, the strengthened regional council, and the "Toronto-type" federation. Federation is "a process for systematically dividing public functions between upper and lower-tier jurisdictions."<sup>320</sup> The upper-tier government is responsible for areawide activities requiring central policymaking or administration, while the lower-tier governments manage local functions amenable to decisionmaking and operation by a smaller unit. The policymaking body of the second-tier government can be composed of representatives of the first-tier units or members elected directly by the public or appointed in some manner by the state.

### CITY-COUNTY CONSOLIDATION

City-county consolidation, going several steps beyond the comprehensive urban county, continues to intrigue metropolitan reformers because of its potential to reduce structural fragmentation and produce functional consolidation. A city-county consolidation has been defined as the "unification of the governments of one or more cities with the surrounding county. As a result of the consolidation, the boundary lines of the jurisdictions involved become coterminous. However, certain incorporated jurisdictions may opt to be excluded from the consolidation."<sup>321</sup>

The first city-county consolidation occurred in 1805 with the merger of New Orleans and Orleans Parish. Between then and 1907, eight additional consolidations took place—two of them forming what is now New York City. All were achieved by state legislative mandate. (See *Table 167*.) Then, for the next 40 years, no consolidation occurred.

The post-World War II period saw a rebirth of city-county mergers, although the real spurt did not occur until the 1960s. The unification of Baton Rouge and East Baton Rouge Parish, LA, in 1947 was the first of the 17 consolidations to occur. In contrast to earlier consolidations, these were all established by citizen referenda, except for the merger of Indianapolis and Marion County, IN, which was enacted by the state legislature. At this time, the total number of city-county consolidated governments is 25.<sup>322</sup>

City-county consolidation does not necessarily produce a regional government. None of the five in Virginia encompassed even as much as one-half of the standard metropolitan statistical area (SMSA) of which they were a part. Four of the mergers—Baton Rouge/East Baton Rouge Parish, Jacksonville-Duval County, Lexington-

Fayette County, and Anchorage/Greater Anchorage Borough—were single-county SMSAs at the time they were formed. The first three, however, are now a part of a multicounty SMSA, although each does encompass 65% to 81% of its metropolitan population. Three other consolidations—Nashville/Davidson County, Indianapolis/Marion County, and Columbus/Muscogee County—encompassed at least 70% of the population of their respective metropolitan areas at the time of consolidation. As of 1976, Columbus/Muscogee County represented 71% of its SMSA population; Indianapolis/Marion County, 68%; and Nashville/Davidson County, 59.5%. The other city-county consolidations—Carson City/Ormsby County, Juneau/Greater Juneau Borough, Sitka/Greater Sitka Borough, Anaconda/Deer Lodge County, and Butte/Silver Bow—are located in nonmetropolitan areas. In these cases, merger has so far curtailed the growth of small incorporated towns and special districts which create fragmented systems of local government.

Consolidation is generally a phenomenon of medium-sized metropolitan areas, ranging from 150,000 to nearly 800,000 population. The largest consolidated government ever formed in the post-World War II period was Indianapolis/Marion County and it was established by the state legislature without a local referendum. Some of the more recent mergers have involved smaller populations and been in rural, western areas of the country. Furthermore, although most consolidation referenda attempts have occurred in areas of from 100,000 to 249,999 the approval rate has been better in jurisdictions of under 25,000. (See *Table 168*.) The success of these smaller consolidations, chiefly in the South and West, can be attributed to their generally less fragmented structural environment and fewer political conflicts.<sup>323</sup> The 14 referenda in cities over 250,000 all failed<sup>324</sup>—including the two largest in Cleveland and St. Louis.<sup>325</sup>

Regionally, the difference in city-county consolidation enactments and referenda is striking. At one time, merger activity was primarily a southern activity, but recently there has been a shift to western states.<sup>326</sup> Until 1969, no consolidation had occurred in a western state since the early period when San Francisco/San Francisco County, Denver/Denver County, and Honolulu/Honolulu County merged. No consolidation has been achieved in the South since 1974, although six referenda were held. Moreover, consolidations have been limited to only six of the 16 Southern states: Five in Virginia, two in Louisiana, and one each in Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, and Tennessee. Most referenda attempts have been in Virginia (13 cities), Georgia (7), Florida (6), and Tennessee (6). In these 32 cities, 49 votes have taken place—more than half of the 85 referenda held since 1921. The

Table 167

### SUCCESSFUL CITY-COUNTY CONSOLIDATIONS

Year approved or effective	Consolidation	
1805	New Orleans/Orleans County, LA	LA <sup>1</sup>
1821	Boston/Suffolk County, MA	LA
1821	Nantucket Town/Nantucket County, MA	LA
1854	Philadelphia/Philadelphia County, PA	LA
1856	San Francisco/San Francisco County, CA	LA
1874	New York/New York County, NY	LA
1898	New York and Brooklyn/Queens and Richmond Counties, NY	LA
1904	Denver/Denver County, CO	LA
1907	Honolulu/Honolulu County, HI	LA
1947	Baton Rouge/East Baton Rouge Parish, LA	REF <sup>2</sup>
1952	Hampton/Elizabeth City County, VA	REF
1958	Newport News/Warwick County, VA	REF
1962	Nashville/Davidson County, TN	REF
1962	Virginia Beach/Princess Ann County, VA	REF
1962	South Norfolk/Norfolk County, VA	REF
1967	Jacksonville/Duval County, FL	REF
1969	Carson City/Ormsby County, NV	REF
1969	Indianapolis/Marion County, IN	LA
1969	Juneau/Greater Juneau Borough, AK	REF
1970	Columbus/Muscogee County, GA	REF
1971	Holland and Whaleyville Towns/Nansemond County, VA	REF
1971	Sitka/Greater Sitka Borough, AK	REF
1972	Suffolk/Nansemond County, VA <sup>3</sup>	REF
1974	Lexington/Fayette County, KY	REF
1975	Anchorage/Greater Anchorage Area Borough, AK	REF
1977	Anaconda/Deer Lodge County, MT	REF
1977	Butte/Silver Bow County, MT	REF

<sup>1</sup> Created by state legislative action.

<sup>2</sup> Referendum required for passage.

<sup>3</sup> The locality originally was a county, but it actually became a city prior to the referendum.

SOURCE: National Association of Counties.

other 12 southern states had only ten referenda in nine cities. (See Table 169.)

While there have been numerous attempts at city-county consolidation (85 since 1921) only a small number—20%—has passed. Each decade since the 1940s has seen more and more referenda; but this increase has not resulted in a surge of consolidations, since the rate of passage has steadily declined.

Consolidation of cities and counties is not possible unless the state constitution or statutes permit it. Statutory permission is by special legislation—often a difficult process—or by general authorization. By the mid-1970s,

19 states permitted most cities and counties to initiate consolidation action. Six states—California, Florida, Montana, Oregon, South Carolina, and Washington—required a referendum with majority approval of the residents of each city affected and majority approval of county residents. In this case, residents of the city have a “double-vote”—since it counts in the city and in the county totals. Three states—New Mexico, Tennessee, and Virginia—required majority approval of the residents of each city affected and majority approval of the residents of only the unincorporated area of the county. Three states—Kentucky, North Carolina and South Da-

Table 168

**NUMBER OF CITY-COUNTY CONSOLIDATION REFERENDA, BY REGION<sup>1</sup> AND POPULATION GROUP<sup>2</sup>, 1921-79**

Population group	Total		Northeast		North Central		South		West	
	No. of referenda held	No. of referenda passed	No. of referenda held	No. of referenda passed	No. of referenda held	No. of referenda passed	No. of referenda held	No. of referenda passed	No. of referenda held	No. of referenda passed
Over 1,000,000	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
500,000-1,000,000	5	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	..	..
250,000- 499,999	9	0	..	..	..	..	6	0	3	0
100,000- 249,999	26	4	..	..	1	0	20	4	5	0
50,000- 99,999	13	1	..	..	..	..	12	0	1	1
25,000- 49,999	15	2	..	..	..	..	11	2	4	0
10,000- 24,999	5	2	..	..	..	..	4	1	1	1
5,000- 9,999	7	6	..	..	..	..	4	3	3	3
2,500- 4,999	2	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	1
Under 2,500	1	1	..	..	..	..	1	1	..	..

Leaders (..) indicate no consolidation referendum known.

<sup>1</sup> The Northeast region includes: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

The North Central region includes: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

The South includes: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.

The West includes: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

<sup>2</sup> Population figures for several municipalities in Ravalli County, Montana, were unavailable.

SOURCE: Parris N. Glendening and Patricia S. Atkins, "City-County Consolidations: New Views for the Eighties," *The Municipal Year Book, 1980*, Washington, DC, International City Management Association, 1980, Table 4/4, p. 71.

Table 169

**ROSTER OF CITY-COUNTY CONSOLIDATIONS KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN HELD,  
1921-79**

<b>Year</b>	<b>City/County</b>	<b>Result</b>
1921	Oakland/Alameda County, California .....	fail
1924	Butte/Silver Bow County, Montana .....	fail
1926	St. Louis/St. Louis County, Missouri .....	fail
1927	Portland/Multnomah County, Oregon .....	fail
1932	Pittsburgh/Allegheny County, Pennsylvania .....	fail
1933	Several municipalities/Ravalli County, Montana .....	fail
1933	Macon/Bibb County, Georgia .....	fail
1935	Jacksonville/Duval County, Florida .....	fail
1947	Baton Rouge/East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana .....	pass
1948	Birmingham/Jefferson County, Alabama .....	fail
1948	Miami/Dade County, Florida .....	fail
1950	Hampton, Newport News and Phoebus/Warwick and Elizabeth City Counties, Virginia .....	fail
1952	Hampton and Phoebus/Elizabeth City County, Virginia .....	pass
1953	Miami/Dade County, Florida .....	fail
1954	Albany/Dougherty County, Georgia .....	fail
1956	Albany/Dougherty County, Georgia .....	fail
1957	Newport News/Warwick County, Virginia <sup>1</sup> .....	pass
1958	Nashville/Davidson County, Tennessee .....	fail
1959	Albuquerque/Bernalillo County, New Mexico .....	fail
1959	Knoxville/Knox County, Tennessee .....	fail
1960	Macon/Bibb County, Georgia .....	fail
1960	Several municipalities/Revalli County, Montana .....	fail
1961	Durham/Durham County, North Carolina .....	fail
1961	Richmond/Henrico County, Virginia .....	fail
1962	Chattanooga/Hamilton County, Tennessee .....	fail
1962	Columbus/Muscogee County, Georgia .....	fail
1962	Memphis/Shelby County, Tennessee .....	fail
1962	Nashville/Davidson County, Tennessee .....	pass
1962	South Norfolk/Norfolk County, Virginia .....	pass
1962	St. Louis/St. Louis County, Missouri .....	fail
1962	Virginia Beach/Princess Anne County, Virginia .....	pass
1964	Chattanooga/Hamilton County, Tennessee .....	fail
1967	Jacksonville/Duval County, Florida .....	pass
1967	Tampa/Hillsborough County, Florida .....	fail
1969	Athens/Clarke County, Georgia .....	fail
1969	Brunswick/Glynn County, Georgia .....	fail
1969	Carson City/Ormsby County, Nevada .....	pass
1969	Juneau and Douglas/Greater Juneau Borough Alaska .....	pass
1969	Roanoke/Roanoke County, Virginia .....	fail
1969	Winchester/Frederick County, Virginia .....	fail

<sup>1</sup> The locality originally was a county, but it actually became a city prior to the referendum.

<sup>2</sup> The localities were towns at the time of the merger attempt with the county.

SOURCE: Parris N. Glendening and Patricia S. Atkins, "City-County Consolidations: New Views for the Eighties," *The Municipal Year Book, 1980*, Washington, DC, International City Management Association, 1980, Table 4/2, p. 70.

Table 169 (continued)

**ROSTER OF CITY-COUNTY CONSOLIDATIONS KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN HELD,  
1921-79**

<b>Year</b>	<b>City/County</b>	<b>Result</b>
1970	Anchorage/Greater Anchorage Area Borough, Alaska .....	fail
1970	Charlottesville/Albemarle County, Virginia .....	fail
1970	Chattanooga/Hamilton County, Tennessee .....	fail
1970	Columbus/Muscogee County, Georgia .....	pass
1970	Pensacola/Escambia County, Florida .....	fail
1970	Tampa/Hillsborough County, Florida .....	fail
1971	Anchorage/Greater Anchorage Area Borough, Alaska .....	fail
1971	Augusta/Richmond County, Georgia .....	fail
1971	Bristol/Washington County, Tennessee .....	fail
1971	Charlotte/Mecklenburg County, North Carolina .....	fail
1971	Ft. Pierce/St. Lucie County, Florida .....	fail
1971	Holland and Whaleyville/Nansemond County, Virginia <sup>2</sup> .....	pass
1971	Memphis/Shelby County, Tennessee .....	fail
1971	Sitka/Greater Sitka Borough, Alaska .....	pass
1971	Tallahassee/Leon County, Florida .....	fail
1972	Athens/Clarke County, Georgia .....	fail
1972	Lexington/Fayette County, Kentucky .....	pass
1972	Macon/Bibb County, Georgia .....	fail
1972	St. Louis/St. Louis County, Missouri .....	fail
1972	Suffolk/Nansemond County, Virginia <sup>1</sup> .....	pass
1972	Tampa/Hillsborough County, Florida .....	fail
1973	Albuquerque/Bernalillo County, New Mexico .....	fail
1973	Columbia/Richland County, South Carolina .....	fail
1973	Savannah/Chatham County, Georgia .....	fail
1973	Tallahassee/Leon County, Florida .....	fail
1973	Wilmington/New Hanover County, North Carolina .....	fail
1974	Augusta/Richmond County, Georgia .....	fail
1974	Charleston/Charleston County, South Carolina .....	fail
1974	Durham/Durham County, North Carolina .....	fail
1974	Evansville/Vanderburgh County, Indiana .....	fail
1974	Portland/Multnomah County, Oregon .....	fail
1974	Sacramento/Sacramento County, California .....	fail
1975	Anchorage, Glen Alps, and Girdwood/Greater Anchorage Area Borough, Alaska ..	pass
1975	Ashland and Catlettsburgh/Boyd County, Kentucky .....	fail
1975	Missoula/Missoula County, Montana .....	fail
1975	Salt Lake/Salt Lake County, Utah .....	fail
1976	Anaconda/Deer Lodge County, Montana .....	pass
1976	Augusta/Richmond County, Georgia .....	fail
1976	Butte/Silver Bow County, Montana .....	pass
1976	Front Royal/Warren County, Virginia <sup>2</sup> .....	fail
1976	Macon/Bibb County, Georgia .....	fail
1976	Moab/Grand County, Utah .....	fail
1978	Knoxville/Knox County, Tennessee .....	fail
1978	Morristown/Hamblen County, Tennessee .....	fail
1978	Salt Lake/Salt Lake County, Utah .....	fail

kota—required just one vote for the county as a whole, and Minnesota required only the affected cities to have referenda. (See *Table 170*.) The requirements for dual majorities have inhibited approval. City residents are more likely to approve a merger, while county residents tend to oppose them.<sup>327</sup> A frequently cited reason for opposition to city-county merger is the fear of increased taxes.<sup>328</sup>

City-county consolidation rarely means a total structural and functional merger. In several consolidations, certain small municipalities were not included. For instance, in the Jacksonville/Duval County consolidation, four municipalities were not merged into the consolidated government; in Baton Rouge/East Baton Rouge Parish, two; in Nashville/Davidson County, six; in Columbus/Muscogee County, one; in Carson City/Ormsby County, one; in Indianapolis/Marion County, three; and in Butte/Silver Bow, one. Consolidations in which all municipalities were included were Virginia Beach/Princess Anne County, Suffolk/Nansemond County, and Lexington/Fayette County.<sup>329</sup>

Special districts also are not always included in consolidations, although in many cases consolidation did reduce their number. In Indianapolis and Marion County, the six special districts (other than school districts) were not merged; and in Carson City and Ormsby County, two were not. But in Nashville/Davidson County, the number dropped from six to four; in Jacksonville/Duval County, all four were eliminated; in Juneau and Greater Juneau Borough, the decline was from 13 to six; and Lexington-Fayette County saw a drop from four to three. Nor does consolidation necessarily prevent the establishment of special districts: They have been established in at least two consolidations which never had special districts—Columbus/Muscogee County and Suffolk/Nansemond County.<sup>330</sup> School districts in four of the six major consolidations were excluded, although in some cases the school function had already been consolidated before the city and the county merged.

Citizens often are unwilling to surrender local control of schools to a unified county system, but other functional assignments can experience considerable change when a city-county consolidation occurs, particularly in the more urbanized areas. Services have been expanded and improved in both central and suburban areas.<sup>331</sup> A review of Nashville/Davidson County ten years after consolidation substantiated the fact that there were major improvements in education, police, fire, recreation, water, and sewerage services: Duplication was reduced, programs expanded, and services professionalized. Citizens found education and police services to be adequate or more than adequate.<sup>332</sup> Yet, functional assignment prob-

lems can still plague consolidated governments, particularly when they fail to provide services on a countywide basis or extend basic services to fringe areas.<sup>333</sup>

## FEDERATIVE GOVERNMENTS

The government of metropolitan Toronto is the most radical of the federative forms and the one most like a classic federated government. When established in 1954, areawide powers were delegated to the metropolitan government, but many powers were shared with the lower-level units. The Toronto approach, however, has never been implemented anywhere in the U.S.

The strengthened or state-supported regional council is another federative approach that can be applied to metropolitan areas. It is a basic areawide policymaking body by virtue of the number and scope of planning, developmental, and review and approval powers over special-purpose regional bodies, local governments, and quasi-public bodies in the region. The chief, if not the only real, example is Minnesota's Twin Cities Metropolitan Council.

The comprehensive urban county is a modified two-tiered, federated government. In this form, municipalities retain their existence and continue to perform many functions. At the same time, the county provides services in unincorporated areas and most importantly assumes responsibility for areawide services. While Dade County, FL, is viewed by some as the only county with a truly federated system, many other urban counties have essentially become federated systems through structural reorganization and the piecemeal transfer of functions from municipalities.<sup>334</sup>

The difference between Dade County and other modernized counties is that Dade County made a conscious decision to set up a two-tier system when it approved a new charter in 1957. The new charter retained 26 cities and preserved their right to perform local services. Substantial changes, however, were made in the structure and functional powers of the county government, expanding its ability to perform areawide and urban services. The county government was changed from the traditional commission form to a commission of eight members elected at large with residency requirements. A mayor is elected at large and is a member of and presides over commission meetings. A manager is appointed by the commission and is the chief administrator.

The county was assigned functional responsibility for many areawide and urban functions: health and welfare, enforcement of the building code, comprehensive planning, pollution control, social action programs, the courts, and areawide aspects of traffic control and high-

ways.<sup>335</sup> The county also became the prime provider of local services to unincorporated areas that were rapidly urbanizing. The charter also gave the county the power to assume operating responsibility for a municipal service if authorized to do so by a two-thirds vote of the governing body of the municipality or by a majority of those voting within the municipality. Because Dade County—or Metro, as it is called—is the only government in unincorporated areas, and because of numerous transfers by the municipalities Metro is the major service provider in the area. The county now furnishes fire protection to the unincorporated areas and 19 cities. In contrast, no municipal police department has been transferred to Metro. Certain police activities—such as the crime lab, bomb squad, and central accident records—have been consolidated; but those which are vital—such as communications—have not, despite numerous attempts. Metro also handles most waste disposal, public housing, and community development activities and has a strong comprehensive land-use plan,<sup>336</sup> but it has not been very successful at enforcing it.<sup>337</sup> Whether Dade County remains a two-tiered, federated system is debatable. Some predict that, as more and more functions are transferred by the cities to the county level, the cities will be left with only a few very localized services such as routine police patrol.<sup>338</sup>

Another federated form of reorganization is the multifunctional metropolitan service district. Although a few states—notably California, Oregon, Washington, and Colorado—have enacted legislation which enables metropolitan areas to establish these districts, the range of functions is usually limited. Even in the states which have authorized this form, very few metropolitan areas have established them, and when they have done so these units have tended to have few functional responsibilities.

One of the most notable is the Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle (Metro). Established in 1958, its 37-member governing body is composed of representatives from the local units of government. All nine Seattle city council members and the Mayor of Seattle are automatically members of the Metro council. Also included are the nine King County council members, the county executive, and six additional representatives from unincorporated areas. In addition, there is representation from other cities in the county. One member represents the sewer districts and votes only on actions related to water quality.<sup>339</sup> The enabling authorization permits any regional service corporation to perform six functions: sewage disposal, water supply, public transportation, garbage disposal, parks and parkways, and comprehensive planning. Yet, the Seattle Metro has assumed responsibility for only two of these functions: sewage disposal

and public transportation. Metro also was designated as the agency to develop water quality planning for the area's four river basins pursuant to Section 208 of the *Federal Water Pollution Control Act*.<sup>340</sup> Originally, the area included was Seattle and part of King County. In 1971, the state legislation expanded the boundaries of Metro making it coterminous with the county; but Snohomish, the other county in the metropolitan area, has not been included.

Some question the necessity of two countywide governments that operate separately from each other (Metro and King County), particularly since King County has a home rule charter with a modernized administrative structure. Because of this, merger of the two has been discussed; but both governments are financially viable and administratively effective, so the prospects for merger are slim.<sup>341</sup> Meanwhile Metro—because it has assumed so few functions and does not cover the entire metropolitan area—has not achieved its full potential as a multipurpose metropolitan district.

Another well-known multifunctional metropolitan district is the Portland, OR, "old" Metropolitan Service District (MSD), now the "new" Metropolitan Service District—the first elected regional government in the nation. The old MSD had been responsible for sewerage, solid and liquid waste disposal, control of surface water and the zoo. In 1978, the voters approved the merger of MSD with the Columbia Region Association of Governments, adding, with certain limitations, the land-use planning function. Moreover, the reorganized MSD has authority over air and water quality and is empowered to assume responsibility for Tri-Met, the regional transit agency. The state enabling legislation also authorized MSD to perform other regional functions—including water supply, human services, regional parks, cultural and sports facilities, correctional facilities, and libraries—subject to the approval by the residents of a tax of the MSD before June 30, 1981.

The MSD covers the urbanized area of the three-county Portland metropolitan area, containing about 40% of the land area and 95% of the population of 900,000. The government of MSD is composed of a part-time 12-member board elected on a nonpartisan basis from single-member districts and a full-time chief elected officer with the responsibility to supervise the administrative offices, hire personnel, and enforce ordinances—but without the veto power.<sup>342</sup>

The importance of the new Metropolitan Service District cannot be denied: It is a multicounty, third-tier government run by elected officials currently performing several areawide functions with the potential to assume several more. Yet, this fledgling government faces many



Table 170

**STATE AUTHORIZATION OF CITY-COUNTY CONSOLIDATION, MID-1970s**

	Authorization for City-County Consolidation	Referendum and Majority Approval of Each City Affected Is Required	Referendum and Majority Approval of County Is Required	Referendum and Majority Approval of Unincorporated Area of County Is Required
Alabama				
Alaska	X			
Arizona				
Arkansas				
California	X	X	X	
Colorado	X			
Connecticut				
Delaware				
District of Columbia				
Florida	X	X	X	
Georgia				
Hawaii				
Idaho				
Illinois	X			
Indiana	X			
Iowa				
Kansas				
Kentucky	X		X	
Louisiana				
Maine				
Maryland				
Massachusetts				
Michigan				
Minnesota	X	X		

SOURCE: ACIR *Governmental Functions and Processes: Local and Areawide* (Report A-45), Washington, DC, U.S. Government Printing Office, February 1974, p. 48; and Melvin B. Hill, Jr., *State Laws Governing Local Government Structure and Administration*, Athens, GA, Institute of Government, University of Georgia, 1978, pp. 16, 23, 30, and 37.

Table 170 (continued)

**STATE AUTHORIZATION OF CITY-COUNTY CONSOLIDATION, MID-1970s**

	Authorization of City-County Consolidation	Referendum and Majority Approval of Each City Affected Is Required	Referendum and Majority Approval of County Is Required	Referendum and Majority Approval of Unincorporated Area of County Is Required
Mississippi				
Missouri	X			
Montana	X	X	X	
Nebraska				
Nevada				
New Hampshire				
New Jersey				
New Mexico	X	X		X
New York				
North Carolina	X		X	
North Dakota				
Ohio				
Oklahoma				
Oregon	X	X	X	
Pennsylvania				
Rhode Island				
South Carolina	X	X	X	
South Dakota	X		X	
Tennessee	X	X		X
Texas				
Utah	X			
Vermont				
Virginia	X	X		X
Washington	X	X	X	
West Virginia				
Wisconsin				
Wyoming				

challenges before it becomes a useful tool for solving regional servicing problems. It must establish its credibility with the citizens of the region and the units of local government, create an effective and authoritative land-use planning system; but, most importantly, it must secure a stable funding source to be able to support the areawide functions it currently renders and potentially can perform.<sup>343</sup>

## SUMMARY

Major reorganizations or mergers of local units of government are not a common occurrence in the U.S. Few city-county consolidations have been established in the postwar period and none has been in big metropolitan areas. Most have taken place in medium-sized or small metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas—usually in the South and most recently in the West—suggesting that consolidation may be most useful in preventing future fragmentation problems in jurisdictionally uncomplicated areas. City-county consolidation rarely solves all servicing assignments, since some local units are not merged and the consolidated government usually does not encompass the entire metropolitan population. Yet, where established, they have been generally successful.

The other major form of multijurisdictional reorganization—federative government—is even less common. Comprehensive, reorganized urban counties have been achieved through ad hoc structural, functional, and financial modifications; but only one county—Dade—has officially established a two-tier system, and the trend there is toward centralization. A few multifunctional metropolitan service districts have not fulfilled their potential. Thus, on the basis of the record to date, large-scale restructuring of government at the local level is the least likely method of realigning functional responsibilities, regardless of its ability to broaden the tax base, reduce duplicative services, improve administrative capacity, and provide a structural format for areawide service performance.

## CONCLUSION

An array of methods is used to change the responsibilities for delivering public services between and among local governments. This chapter has probed seven of these largely locally initiated approaches—intergovernmental service agreements, transfers of functions, extra-territorial powers, special districts, annexation, county reorganization, and major multijurisdictional reorganizations, such as city-county consolidation and federated

systems—and one state level action—mandating. Those instituted at the local level are still subject to state regulation by legislative and sometimes judicial actions which determine their use and the conditions under which they may occur.

States also have imposed local servicing shifts. Examples are the reorganizations of county government in Arkansas, Kentucky, and Tennessee; the consolidation of Indianapolis and Marion County by the Indiana state legislature; and mandated annexations, functional transfers and special districts. State government, then, has a major responsibility for the allocation of functions among local units of government.

Three conclusions can be drawn about the allocation and reallocation of functions affecting local units from this examination of the procedural and structural and jurisdictional approaches: the continued reliance on procedural and other ad hoc functional adjustments; the rarity of major jurisdictional reorganizations; and the striking changes in county government in the last ten to 20 years.

The procedural methods for assigning functions—particularly intergovernmental agreements, functional transfers and state mandates—are used frequently because they achieve solutions to servicing problems without involving the difficult task of structural reorganization. Yet, while solving immediate servicing needs, these piecemeal, frequently haphazard, approaches fail to create a rational and governable servicing system. Procedural approaches often tend to produce further complexity and fragmentation of functional responsibility, reduce citizen accountability, and lessen the possibility of achieving an equitable distribution of resources.

Two of the structural/jurisdictional methods—special districts and annexation—also are employed in an ad hoc rather than a systematic manner. Special districts—the most common unit of local government—are popular for reasons similar to those for intergovernmental agreements and functional transfers: they are an easy solution to pressing service needs. Often they are the *only* solution since cities and counties either cannot perform the function because of fiscal, functional, or areal constraints or are unwilling to assume the responsibility. Moreover, in metropolitan areas, they may be the only way to provide a multijurisdictional regional service. Yet, special districts, most of which are unifunctional, further fragment the local government assignment picture; and, when they fail to coordinate their activities with cities and counties, they tend to undermine the general-purpose local government within whose territory they operate.

Potentially, annexation could create areawide local governments encompassing the urbanized area surround-

ing cities. Because annexation does not threaten established governments as much as city-county consolidation or formation of a metropolitan government, it has greater political feasibility than they have. Consequently, although there are thousands of annexations every year, most add little territory and few people, and only a few cities in the South and Southwest—which are not subject to restrictive state laws—have been able to annex sufficient surrounding urbanized areas to achieve a de facto areawide government. In other regions, annexation does extend city services to some urbanized areas; but because of its piecemeal nature frequently, it has not solved major functional assignment problems.

While major governmental reorganizations have extended the geographic scope of services, reduced duplication, improved administrative capacity, and broadened the tax base, they are not a widely accepted method for realigning functions. The only genuine two-tier, federated government in the U.S. is Florida's Dade County, and the trend there is toward centralization. City-county consolidations have occurred only 17 times since World War II and many of these, particularly in recent years, have been in medium-sized or small rural counties. (City-county consolidation has never been a solution for the nation's large urban centers.) Moreover, even the larger city-county consolidations, such as Jacksonville/Duval County, Nashville/Davidson County, and Indianapolis/

Marion County, do not encompass the entire metropolitan population.

The most dramatic local reorganization in the 1970s was the formation of the only elected regional government in the country—the new Metropolitan Services District approved by the citizens of the Portland, OR, area in 1978. But this unique and radically different government must still prove itself as a viable institution, and a crucial factor will be whether it obtains a stable funding source.

The structural reform in the 1970s that proved to have the greatest potential for systematizing functional assignments was county reorganization. While the progress in modernizing counties—structurally and functionally—should not be overestimated, striking changes have occurred. The percentage of counties with an elected executive, county manager or administrator rose to more than 25% and over 50% of all Americans now live in a reorganized county. Counties have greatly expanded their functional activities, performing many new services beyond those they were traditionally assigned as subunits of state government. Because of functional transfers from cities, state mandates, federally funded programs, and the demands for services from citizens in unincorporated, but urbanized, areas, they have taken on a variety of new functions and are more likely to perform them countywide.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Roscoe C. Martin, *Metropolis in Transition: Local Government Adaptation to Changing Urban Needs*, Washington, DC, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR), *Regional Governance: Promise and Performance* (Report A-41), Vol. II of *Substate Regionalism and the Federal System*, May 1973; *Regional Decision Making: New Strategies for Substate Districts* (Report A-43), Vol. I of *Substate Regionalism and the Federal System*, October 1973; *Hearings on Substate Regionalism* (Report A-43a), Vol. VI of *Substate Regionalism and the Federal System*, October 1973; *The Challenge of Local Governmental Reorganization* (Report A-44), Vol. III of *Substate Regionalism and the Federal System*, February 1974; *Governmental Functions and Processes: Local and Areawide* (Report A-45), Vol. IV of *Substate Regionalism and the Federal System*, February 1974; and *A Look to the North: Canadian Regional Experience* (Report A-46), Vol. V of *Substate Regionalism and the Federal System*, February 1974, Washington, DC, U.S. Government Printing Office; ACIR, *Regionalism Revisited: Recent Areawide and Local Responses* (Report A-66), Washington, DC, U.S. Government Printing Office, June 1977; and ACIR, *State Mandating of Local Expenditures* (Report A-67), Washington, DC, U.S. Government Printing Office, July 1978.

<sup>3</sup> ACIR (Report A-45), *op. cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>4</sup> ACIR (Report A-67), *op. cit.*

<sup>5</sup> Information on intergovernmental service agreements is located in two volumes of this series: ACIR (Report A-44), *op. cit.*, pp. 29-52; and ACIR (Report A-45), *op. cit.*, pp. 32-37.

<sup>6</sup> This classification is based on that in the study by Illinois Department

of Local Governmental Affairs and the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, *Intergovernmental Cooperation in Illinois*, Springfield, IL, 1976, p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> James C. McDavid, "Interjurisdictional Cooperation Among Police Departments in the St. Louis Metropolitan Area," *Publius*, Fall 1974, p. 54.

<sup>8</sup> ACIR (Report A-44), *op. cit.*, p. 35.

<sup>9</sup> McDavid, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

<sup>10</sup> Illinois Department of Local Governmental Affairs, *op. cit.*, p. 13; and McDavid, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

<sup>11</sup> Minnesota State Planning Agency, Office of Local and Urban Affairs, *Interlocal Cooperation: A Manual About the Minnesota Joint Powers Act*, St. Paul, MN, 1976.

<sup>12</sup> ACIR, *A Handbook for Interlocal Agreements and Contracts* (Report M-29), Washington, DC, U.S. Government Printing Office, March 1967, p. 23.

<sup>13</sup> ACIR (Report A-44), *op. cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>15</sup> Illinois Department of Local Governmental Affairs, *op. cit.*, p. 266; and Institute for Government Public Affairs, University of Illinois and the Center for the Study of Federalism, Temple University, *Partnership Within the States: Local Self Government in the Federal System*, Urbana, IL, 1976, p. 158.

<sup>16</sup> National Association of Counties (NACo), *Interlocal Service Delivery: A Practical Guide to Intergovernmental Agreements/Contracts for Local Officials*, Washington, DC, 1977, p. 13; and Utah Department of Community Affairs, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

<sup>17</sup> ACIR (Report A-44), *op. cit.*, p. 39.

<sup>18</sup> "Intergovernmental Cooperation: Linking Resources to Public Needs," *Kansas Government Journal*, Vol. 64, No. 6, June 1978,