

## THE FEDERAL ROLE IN REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCILS: TRENDS AND IMPLICATIONS

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The literature of urban affairs has long been concerned with the problem of governmental fragmentation in our urban areas.<sup>1</sup> Simply stated, there has been a general awareness that there are too many units of government in the large urban and metropolitan areas to permit effective governmental operations. Area-wide problems are not being solved. The solution is to be found in some type of integration. There exists a consensus that such fragmentation has produced major problems in policy planning and implementation and a general inability to deal with that social-economic complex referred to as "the urban problem."

Luther Gulick, speaking of attempts to solve area-wide problems such as transportation, pollution, and water supply under the fragmented system, concluded that there is "accumulating evidence of failure everywhere, in spite of many heroic efforts."<sup>2</sup> He continued:

Once an indivisible problem is divided nothing effective can be done about it. . . . Spreading area-wide problems cannot be handled geographic piece by geographic piece. They must be tackled in their entirety, comprehensively, and are difficult even so.<sup>3</sup>

In addition, there is developing concern for the increasing disparities between the financial resources of some of the suburbs and the money-demanding problems of other jurisdictions in the typical metropolis. "The concentration of taxpaying ability and the concentration of social need are now badly out of kilter. . . ."<sup>4</sup>

Proposed solutions to these problems of fragmentation have taken two broad approaches. The first is a demand for complete, or near complete, restructuring of the governments in the metropolitan area according to a pre-set model of an "ideal" metropolis, generally meaning some type of "metropolitan government." The proponents of this approach we have here termed "reformists."

In recent years a new school of thought about metropolitan reorganization has emerged. This group, here called the "realists," recognizes certain advantages in the fragmented metropolitan system and/or has developed a respect for the political difficulties, perhaps even impossibilities, of major governmental reorganization for most of our metropolitan areas.

There have been numerous taxonomies of proposed methods for dealing with the problems of fragmentation. Roscoe C. Martin, for example, has identified sixteen proposals. He divides them into two categories. Procedural adaptation includes (1) informal cooperation, (2) the service contract, (3) parallel action, (4) the conference approach, (5) the compact, (6) transfer of functions, (7) extra-territorial jurisdiction, and (8) incorporation. Structural adaptation includes (9) annexation, (10) city-county separation, (11) geographical consolidation, (12) functional consolidation, (13) the special district, (14) the authority, (15) metropolitan government, and (16) the regional agency.<sup>5</sup>

The reformists almost universally reject all of these solutions except for geographic consolidation and metropolitan government. Anything less than an area-wide metropolitan government is unsatisfactory. Many of these proposed "solutions," such as incorporation, city-county separation, special districts, and authorities, actually complicate the number of governments in a metropolitan area, the reformists maintain.

In addition, partial solutions, such as a council of governments' (conference approach) decision to voluntarily control air pollution or to recommend uniform housing codes are perceived as temporarily relieving the pressure for change without solving the real problem of too many governments.<sup>6</sup> The reformist literature clearly states the belief that metropolitan government is the only solution.

Jones wrote in 1942 that "there is...no escaping state and federal assumption of metropolitan functions if the myriad of inadequate units of local government are not integrated into metropolitan governments."<sup>7</sup> Fitch later echoed this view:

It is clear that many of the problems can be attacked only by changing forms of government or creating new ones. In the matter of providing government services and exercise needed government controls on a metropolitan area-wide basis, conditions everywhere call for an area-wide authority.<sup>8</sup>

After a survey of the metropolitan reformist literature, Robert C. Wood observed that

the metropolitan dilemma is defined as the existence of many governments within a common economic and social framework. The metropolitan solution has been seen in variations on the theme "one community--one government."<sup>9</sup>

The literature of the realist approach, first emerging about fifteen years ago, has seriously questioned the reformists' demands for metropolitan government. Two points are made. First, with the renewed concern for the values of responsible government, and citizen identification and participation, etc., the whole idea of destroying or seriously limiting the smaller local governments in order to advance other values ought to be carefully reconsidered.

In addition, most realists agree with Joseph F. Zimmerman's observation that "it is next to impossible to achieve a major governmental reorganization in a metropolitan area in the United States in face of political realities."<sup>10</sup> The few real successes, such as Miami-Dade County, Nashville-Davidson County, and Jacksonville-Duval County, are so much in evidence because they are exceptions to the general rule of voter rejection of major restructuring proposals. Realist literature, accordingly, calls for an acceptance of the "lesser" methods of change such as cooperation and informal adaptation. Area-wide performance of limited functions, such as planning or transportation, is accepted rather than maintaining the demand for an area-wide general authority. In sum, the opinion seems to be: "Regardless of the merits of metropolitan government, it is not likely to be accepted. Therefore, let's make the best of the other options."

The described literature on metropolitan reorganization can be roughly divided into two time spans. The reformists clearly dominated from the publication of Paul Studenski's Government of Metropolitan Areas in 1930 until

about the mid-50's.<sup>11</sup> Beginning with a series of journal articles in 1957 by such authors as Banfield and Herson, the realist literature has today assumed the primary position.<sup>12</sup>

A parallel chronological development has occurred with regard to the political efforts at governmental reorganization. That is, the same period under review, 1930-1970, can be broken into two rather clear periods of political activity. The first, 1930-1954, is here called the time of the "pull from below." The second period, from 1954 to the present, we have termed the period of the "push from above."

During the first period most of the stimulus for adaptation came from the local level. The most publicized efforts involved major reorganizations, such as the newsmaking efforts for annexation, geographic and functional consolidation, and metropolitan government. However, even greater grass-roots activity surrounded the attempts to implement many of the procedural adaptations, especially the use of informal cooperative agreements, the service contract, and the conference approach.

With few exceptions, proposals to pull the metropolis together through major structural changes failed.<sup>13</sup> Concurrently, the procedural adaptations increasingly came under attack as being either too slow or too ineffective to meet recurring urban crises.<sup>14</sup> In other words, Martin's taxonomy was viewed along two continuums, that of effectiveness and that of political feasibility. (Figure I.)

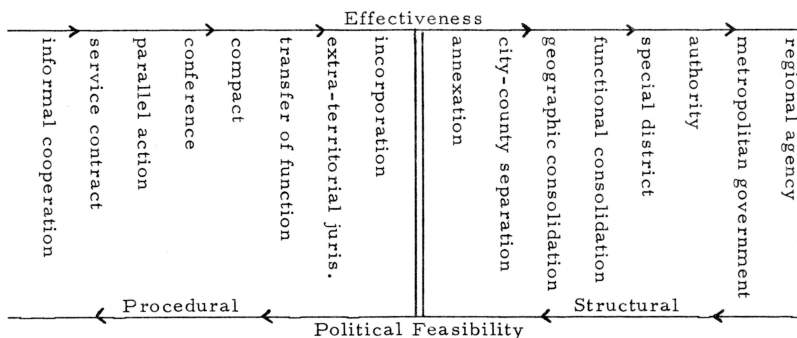


FIGURE I

What was politically acceptable was seen as too ineffective and/or too slow. What was perceived as effective was simply not acceptable to the voters.

This frustration paved the way for the "push from above," that is, the strong encouragement, perhaps even coercion, from the federal government, and to a lesser extent from the states, for substantial adaptation to deal with the problems of local government fragmentation.

For the most part, initial federal activity was designed to stimulate regional planning efforts. Initial federal activity is stressed because, as will be shown below, some authors have suggested the possibility that the federal stimuli will gradually lead to the emergence of multipurpose regional agencies. This controversial point will be reviewed further; however, for the moment, attention will focus on federal activities in the area of planning.

The single most important tool used by the federal government to encourage regional planning has been the requirement that applications for federal funds for most urban programs be reviewed by an area-wide planning agency. This has led to the accelerated creation of regional planning agencies and today all of the nation's SMSA's have some type of multi-jurisdictional planning and/or review agency. The review requirement has now been extended to rural areas. Zimmerman refers to the review requirement as "one of the most significant government developments of the twentieth century...."<sup>15</sup> In 1968 directors of regional councils were questioned, "Why was your organization created?" Almost one-third (Table I) answered "federal requirements or to receive greater federal aid."

TABLE I - DIRECTORS' RESPONSE TO QUESTION "WHY WAS YOUR ORGANIZATION CREATED?"

Response	Percent
Federal requirements or to receive greater aid	32
Recognition of need for cooperation	31
Serious regional problem to be solved	13
Leadership of civic or private groups or persons	8
Leadership and interest of local elected officials	8
N=209	

Source: Adapted from National Service to Regional Councils, "Regionalism: A New Dimension in Government and Intergovernmental Relations" (National Service to Regional Councils, 1969), p. III-5. (Mimeographed.)

The federal stimulus has given rise to several different approaches to regional planning. This paper focuses on the federal role in the emergence and growth of regional councils. The basic characteristics of regional councils are:

(1) they are multi-jurisdictional organizations which involve more than one local government and encompass a portion of a state or portions of contiguous states;

(2) they have as their prime purpose increasing cooperation among the local governments of the area;

(3) they have programs for physical and/or human resource planning, for reviewing and coordinating governmental programs, for providing technical assistance to local governments, and/or, for stimulating cooperative efforts to meet regional problems;

(4) they have a governing body with the local governments represented by their elected officials, appointed representatives, or other representatives of community interests;

(5) they are funded in part or in total by member local governments.<sup>16</sup>

This paper examines the federal role in the three major types of regional councils: (1) councils of governments (COG), (2) economic development districts (EDD), and (3) regional planning commissions (RPC).<sup>17</sup>

#### The Federal Role

Figure II and Table II support the observation that federal legislation



has served as the major stimulus for the creation of regional councils. Understanding the federal impact is most clear when one considers the legislative history of this period. A rather steady growth in the number of RPC's followed the passage of the 1954 Housing Act. In 1965 the 701 planning assistance provisions (subsection 2) of the 1954 Housing Act were amended to make COG's eligible for federal funds. A rapid increase in the number of councils followed. The bases for the economic development districts were created also in 1965 with the passage of the Appalachian Regional Development Act and the Public Works and Economic Development Act. This was followed by the creation of more than forty EDD's in the 1966-68 period. The stimulus was furthered in 1966 with the stipulation in the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act that all applications by local units for federal funds for particular projects, including highways, hospitals, airports, and sewage and water facilities, must be reviewed by an area-wide agency responsible for metropolitan-wide planning.

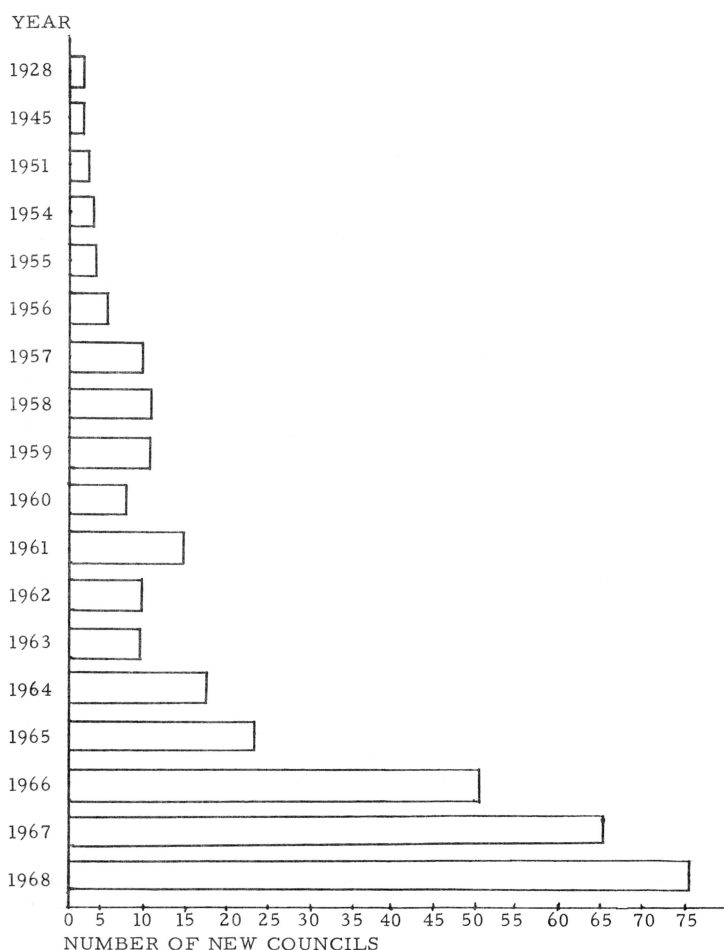


FIGURE II - ANNUAL INCREASE IN REGIONAL COUNCILS, 1928-1968

FIGURE II (continued)

Source: Adapted from working papers of National Service to Regional Councils. Papers on file in Washington, D. C. office, N.D. The National Service emphasizes that this is an estimation due to imprecision of pre-1965 data.

TABLE II - ANNUAL INCREASE IN THREE SELECTED TYPES OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

Year	COG	RPC	EDD
1928	--	1	--
1932	--	1	--
1935	--	1	--
1941	--	1	--
1945	1	--	--
1947	--	1	--
1951	--	1	--
1954	--	1	--
1955	1	3	--
1956	1	2	1
1957	2	1	1
1958	--	5	--
1959	1	6	--
1960	--	2	--
1961	4	4	2
1962	--	5	--
1963	1	7	4
1964	1	2	4
1965	6	4	3
1966	18	12	10
1967	26	17	20
1968	19	8	12
<hr/>			
TOTAL: 1928-1965	18	48	15
TOTAL: 1966-1968	<u>63</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>42</u>
GRAND TOTAL <sup>a</sup>	81	85	57

<sup>a</sup>This is not the total number of COG's, RPC's, and EDD's in existence; rather it represents an analysis of responses to the National Service to Regional Council's 1968 survey.

Source: Adapted from working papers of National Service to Regional Councils. Papers on file in Washington, D. C. office, N.D. The National Service emphasizes that this is an estimation due to imprecision of pre-1965 data.

An exact count of these agencies is nearly impossible because of the lack of a central depository of information. Other data have been reported.<sup>18</sup> And yet the central point of the data remains the same. The greater growth of these regional councils is directly attributable to recent federal legislation.

The "push from above" is likely to stimulate the creation of additional regional councils in the next few years for two important reasons. First, while all metropolitan areas now have at least one major planning agency, much of rural and semi-rural America is without real planning. The Housing Act of 1968 provides planning assistance to multi-county nonmetropolitan areas. Preliminary analysis of the creation of new regional councils in 1969 indicates that as in prior metropolitan area experience, nonmetropolitan areas are taking advantage of this source of planning funding.

Second, an increasing amount of the federal grant-in-aid resources for major functional areas requires the review of an area-wide comprehensive planning agency. The Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966, the Air Quality Act of 1967, and the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Street Act of 1968 are three major examples of this trend.

TABLE III - ACIR'S RANKING OF URBAN FUNCTIONS FROM MOST LOCAL TO LEAST LOCAL, WITH NOTATION OF FUNCTIONS COVERED BY PRIOR REVIEW REQUIREMENT

		Covered by Prior	
		Rank Review Requirement	Function
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="margin-right: 10px;">↑</div> <div style="flex-grow: 1; border-left: 1px solid black; position: relative;"> <div style="position: absolute; top: 0; bottom: 0; left: -5px; right: -5px;">↑</div> </div> </div>	1	No	Fire protection
	2	No	Public education
	3	No	Refuse collection and disposal
	4	No	Libraries
	5	Yes	Police
	6	Yes	Health
	7	Yes	Urban renewal
	8	Yes	Housing
	9	Yes	Parks and recreation
	10	No	Public welfare
	11	Yes	Hospitals and medical care
	12	Yes	Transportation
	13	Yes	Planning
	14	Yes	Water supply and sewage disposal
	15	Yes	Air pollution control
Least local			

Source: Adapted from Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, Performance of Urban Functions: Local and Area-wide, Report M-21, Revised (USGPO, 1963), pp. 9-23.

Interestingly, of the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations' rank ordering of fifteen major functions according to their local or area-wide nature, ten are now covered, in whole or in part, by the requirement of prior review by an area-wide agency before grant applications in those areas will be considered by the federal government. (Table III.) The implications for future growth of regional councils both in number and general viability are obvious.

In addition to this absolute growth in the number of regional councils, there is strong evidence of increase in their general viability and capability. Further, there has been a major expansion of the types of activities under-

taken by these councils. The following analysis of budgets, staffing developments, and functional areas of the councils' activity illustrates these developments.

Data are taken from four surveys conducted by the National Service to Regional Councils. The two most useful surveys are based on questionnaires sent to directors of all known regional councils in 1968 and again in 1969. The first, hereinafter referred to as NSRC Survey I, was mailed to 350 regional council directors. Sixty percent (211) responded.<sup>19</sup> The second, NSRC Survey II, was sent to all listed councils as of January 1, 1969. Data reported herein are based on 220 usable replies.<sup>20</sup>

In addition, in 1968 the National Service surveyed all state associations of municipalities and state associations of counties and county officials concerning their attitudes about regional councils. Fifty-four percent (48) replied--31 municipal and 17 county. This survey is hereinafter cited as NSRC Survey III.<sup>21</sup> Lastly, a similar questionnaire (NSRC Survey IV) was sent to a random sample of 1,943 elected officials of which 192 (10 percent) responded.

A work of caution concerning data interpretation is emphasized. The data give insights into the activities and general directions of the regional councils. However, problems of data collection and tabulation, a lack of continuity between the 1968 respondents and the 1969 respondents, plus an almost complete absence of data prior to 1968, prohibit precise or specific interpretations.

An analysis of the budgets of the regional councils is probably the single most revealing inquiry that could be undertaken. Ideally, a detailed trend analysis of total expenditures and the type of expenditures would be made. However, the recency of the creation of most of the regional councils and the paucity of reliable pre-1968 data make this impossible. The mentioned surveys do, however, permit answers to some important questions about the financial activities of the regional councils.

What are the sources of their revenues? Table IV, showing the sources of revenues as a percent of total budgets, clearly demonstrates the importance of federal funds for these local agencies. One hundred nine of the 202 replying councils (54 percent) indicate that they receive from 51 to 75 percent of their funds from federal sources. The small amount of state support suggests that to date the regional councils operate in a federal-local system with the states playing a relatively peripheral part.

TABLE IV - SOURCES OF REVENUES AS A PERCENT  
OF TOTAL REVENUES

Sources	0%	1-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
Local	8	56	80	24	33
State	117	62	19	3	0
Federal	29	15	46	109	3
N = 202					

Source: Adapted from preliminary summary of NSRC Survey II (1969). Working papers on file in NSRC Office, Washington, D. C., N. D.

Nor are the states likely to play a major role in the near future. The 1968 survey questioned whether it was thought necessary to pursue new revenue sources. The 126 "yes" respondents (62 percent) were then asked to rank their preferred sources for new revenues. As Table V shows, additional state funding ranks third behind federal and local, suggesting a likely continuation of the pattern outlined in Table IV.

The NSRC has taken note of the minor role of the states:

State funding to regional councils as general program support is currently available only in seven states (Connecticut, Georgia, Massachusetts, Missouri, Texas, Virginia, and Wisconsin).

... The state allocations vary from \$3,000 to \$5,000. The most common state grant to a regional council is between \$5,000 and \$10,000. About 15 percent of the 400 regional councils in the United States receive state aid.<sup>23</sup>

TABLE V - 1968 RANKING OF PREFERRED  
SOURCES FOR NEW REVENUES

Number indicating first ranking	Alternative sources
38	New or increased local dues
31	Federal aid
29	State aid
11	Special regional tax
8	New or increased fees for special projects
6	Other
3	Foundation grants
N = 126	

Source: Adapted from NSRC Survey I as reported in National Service to Regional Councils, "Regionalism: A New Dimension in Government and Intergovernmental Relations," (National Service to Regional Councils, 1969), p. A-7. (Mimeographed.)

The federal funds are derived from only a few major programs. As the NSRC noted in its report to HUD:

In 1968, 70 percent of all regional councils receiving federal aid were doing so through only one grant program--HUD's "701" planning assistance. Other important sources are EDA's planning and technical assistance to development districts and the Federal Highway Administration's Transportation Planning Assistance. Twenty percent were aided by two federal grant sources, while the remaining 10 percent received funds from three or more.<sup>24</sup>

The data in Table VI confirm the earlier findings of the importance of a few programs, especially HUD's 701 funds, and suggest a likely continuation of this trend.

TABLE VI - 1969 SURVEY RESPONSES TO SELECT QUESTIONS  
CONCERNING FEDERAL-REGIONAL COUNCIL RELATIONS

Question	Agencies most cited <sup>a</sup>											
	HUD		EDA		DOJ		FHA		DOT		HEW	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
From which federal agencies and programs do you currently receive funds?	63	139	23	50	23	50	17	37	12	26	9	19
With which federal agencies are you currently working the most extensively?	72	158	22	48	10	21	12	26	7	16	9	19
From which federal aid programs do you expect to receive funds in the near future?	68	150	17	38	17	37	10	22	14	31	21	45
N = 220												

<sup>a</sup>HUD = Department of Housing and Urban Development

EDA = Economic Development Administration

DOJ = Department of Justice

FHA = Farmer's Home Administration

DOT = Department of Transportation

HEW = Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

Source: Adapted from preliminary analysis of NSRC Survey II (1969). Working papers on file in NSRC Office, Washington, D. C., N. D.

While different methods of budget preparation and accounting, and the use of different fiscal years place a detailed budgetary analysis beyond the scope of this paper, the general direction certainly appears to be toward increasingly large budgets. The NSRC reported that the average budget of \$136,000 of 1963 had increased to a 1968 average of \$190,000.<sup>25</sup> In the 1968 survey 193 responding regional councils reported total expenditures of \$33,570,000, while in the 1969 survey 189 respondents reported total expenditures of \$44,096,000.<sup>26</sup> Further, of the 161 regional councils that reported a change in the 1969 budget when compared to that of 1968, 129 reported increased expenditures.<sup>27</sup>

In an earlier study, Royce Hanson noted certain personnel requisites that must be met if COG's are to prosper.

The speed with which a council develops and the range of activities it undertakes is largely a function of staff capacities and interests. No other single element seems as important in the development of councils. The trials and length of the formative period can be substantially reduced with able staff. The relative progress of the several existing associations can almost be measured by the degree of staff competence and initiative.

...It is important that the director be an experienced urban administrator, used to working with both elected and appointed officials.... The staff director should have both the professional background and salary level to make it

possible for him to work with public officials on a basis of mutual respect and authority.<sup>28</sup>

Hanson stressed the federal interest in developing local professional staff throughout his report.<sup>29</sup> The need for such professionalism applies, of course, to all regional councils and is not limited to COG's.

How successful have the regional councils been in the area of staff development? The 1969 survey of 220 regional councils reported a total of 2100 staff members of which 1157 were professionals.<sup>30</sup> Table VII shows that while 33 of the 220 responding councils have no in-house staff, the remainder have developed fairly substantial staff resources. Almost 85 percent have some professional staff, while 22 percent have six or more in-house professional staff.

TABLE VII - SIZE OF STAFF, BY NUMBER OF COUNCILS, IN PERCENT

	0		1-5		6-15		16-30		31-50		51-up	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Total Staff	15	33	40	87	28	62	12	27	2	4	3	6
Professional Staff	15	33	60	131	16	34	3	7	2	5	1	2

N = 219

Source: Adapted from NSRC Survey II (1969). Working papers on file in NSRC Office, Washington, D. C., N. D.

Some trend analysis can be made of staffing developments by comparing aggregate data of a 1964 survey conducted for the U.S. Housing and Home Finance Agency and the 1968 NSRC survey. (Table VIII.)

TABLE VIII - 1964 AND 1968 SIZE OF STAFF COMPARISON

Survey	N	Professional staff	Other staff	Total	Average <sup>a</sup>
1964	120	715	810	1,1591	13.3
1968	150	1,012	1,016	2,028	13.5

<sup>a</sup>Excludes regional councils with no staff.

Source: Adapted from National Service to Regional Councils, "Regionalism: A New Dimension in Government and Intergovernmental Relations," (The National Service to Regional Councils, 1969), pp. III-44-45. (Mimeographed.)

The average number of staff has apparently stabilized. The ratio of professional to nonprofessional staff has improved slightly when the 1968 data are compared to that of 1964.

Table IX indicates that directors of regional councils are (1) well educated, (2) experienced, and (3) well-paid. The first and second columns of Table IX reflect a strong professional commitment. COG directors are slightly better paid than other regular directors. More than 60 percent are in the 30-50 age group. In sum, the recommendations of the Hanson study appear to have been generally implemented.

The 1968 NSRC survey shows that regional councils to date have been mainly concerned with regional planning activities and with the review of

local government projects under the 204 provisions. Councils were asked to indicate the programs in which their work had "increased significantly" since January, 1966. The responses are shown in Table X.

TABLE IX - SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF DIRECTORS  
OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

Education level		Previous position held		Starting salary		Age	
Degree	%	Position	%	Range	%	Range	%
Bachelor	25	Planning agency	38	Below \$10,000	4	20-29	4
Advanced Planning	17	Municipal management	8	\$10,000-\$13,999	47	30-39	30
Masters	15	Development Coordinator	8	\$14,000-\$17,999	31	40-49	32
Law	4	Political Scientist	6	\$18,000-\$21,999	11	50 and up	8
Doctoral	2	Engineer	5	\$22,000-\$25,999	4	No answer	28
Other/ no answer	35	Attorney	3	\$26,000 or more	3		
		Miscellaneous	9				
		DK/NA	23				
N = 211							

Source: NSRC Survey I (1968). As reported in National Service to Regional Councils, "Regionalism: A New Dimension in Government and Intergovernmental Relations," (The National Service to Regional Councils, 1969), pp. III-47 and A-7-8. (Mimeographed.)

TABLE X - AREAS OF "SIGNIFICANT INCREASE" OF WORKLOAD  
SINCE JANUARY, 1966, IN PERCENT

Program area	COG's (N=45)	Others (N=79)	Total (N=21)
Upgrade or development of regional comprehensive plan	44	24	31
Review local government projects (Section 204)	31	22	25
Transportation planning	9	19	15
Water and sewer planning	16	11	13
Technical assistance (planning aid to local governments)	16	13	14
Economic development	4	10	8
Public relations and information	4	5	5

Source: Adapted from National Service to Regional Councils, "Regionalism: A New Dimension in Government and Intergovernmental Relations," (The National Service to Regional Councils, 1969), p. III-69. (Mimeographed.)



Seventy-five percent of the COG's and 46 percent of the other regional councils indicate that working on a regional comprehensive plan or reviewing local government plans was taking an increasingly large portion of their time.

However, as the following data clearly show, these councils desire and expect to significantly expand their activities. Table XI notes areas of expected increased activity in the next two years, while Table XII shows the areas of expected increased activity in the near future.

TABLE XI - PROGRAMS AREAS OF EXPECTED "SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE" IN THE NEXT TWO YEARS, IN PERCENT<sup>a</sup>

Program area	COG's (N=58)	Others (N=99)	Total (N=157)
Upgrade or development of regional comprehensive plans	33	30	31
Review local government projects (Section 204)	17	16	17
Technical assistance (planning aid to local governments)	17	15	16
Transportation planning	14	15	15
Coordinate federal, state, and local programs	21	5	11
Water and sewer planning	7	8	8
Economic development	3	8	7
Implementation of planning proposals	9	4	6

<sup>a</sup>The posed question: "In which of your existing program areas do you foresee a substantial increase in your organization's activity in the next two years?" Multiple answers possible.

Source: Adapted from National Service to Regional Councils, "Regionalism: A New Dimension in Government and Intergovernmental Relations," (The National Service to Regional Councils, 1969), pp. III-70, A-8. (Mimeographed.)

A comparison of Tables X and XI shows that the councils of governments apparently foresee a major shift away from the traditional planning functions of upgrading or developing regional comprehensive plans and reviewing local government projects. Further evidence of expected change in future activities is shown by the data of Table XII.

Clearly, a major expansion into new program areas is anticipated. Three of the top six most mentioned areas of future involvement were not even listed in Tables X and XI (health planning, law enforcement, and air pollution). Health planning is the major area of expected expansion, reflecting, undoubtedly, the federal legislation in the area of comprehensive health plans. The COG's show significantly more interest in the areas of law enforcement, air pollution, and assistance to local governments than do the other regional planning councils. Several of the listed areas of future in-

volvement have not traditionally been considered a part of regional councils' normal activities, e.g., data systems and government organization studies.

TABLE XII - PROGRAM AREAS OF INVOLVEMENT IN  
THE "NEAR FUTURE," IN PERCENT<sup>a</sup>

Program area	COG's (N=56)	Others (N=95)	Total (N=151)
Health planning	29	14	19
Water and sewer planning	20	15	17
Overall physical planning	12	15	14
Transportation planning	14	8	11
Law enforcement	18	3	9
Air pollution	12	5	8
Assistance to local government	12	5	8
Economic studies	5	9	8
Solid waste disposal	14	3	7
Water pollution	11	4	7
Airport studies	7	5	6
Data systems	5	5	5
Government organization studies	7	4	5
Capital improvement program	4	4	4

<sup>a</sup>The posed question: "In what new program areas do you expect your organization will become involved in the near future?" Multiple answers possible.

Source: Adapted from National Service to Regional Councils, "Regionalism: A New Dimension in Government and Intergovernmental Relations," (The National Service to Regional Councils, 1969), pp. III-71-72, A-9. (Mimeographed.)

TABLE XIII - EXPECTED USE OF NEW FUNDS, IN PERCENT

Expected use	Percent
To expand programs into other areas of interest	41
To sustain level of existing programs	20
To offset instability of federal and/or state aid	16
To cope with new project review responsibilities	4
To offset criticism about existing dues levels	1
Other	3
No answer	15
N = 211	

Source: Adapted from National Service to Regional Councils, "Regionalism: A New Dimension in Government and Intergovernmental Relations," (The National Service to Regional Councils, 1969), p. A-7. (Mimeographed.)

Further, Table XIII shows the response to expected usage of any new funds that might become available in the near future. More than 40 percent of the respondents indicate an intention to expand into new areas of interest.

In November, 1968, the NSRC sent a memorandum to all regional councils inquiring about which activities and programs were considered to be "hot" programs. The 1969 NSRC survey also questioned which were the "hottest" programs at that time. Responses are reported in Table XIV.

TABLE XIV - LISTING OF "HOT" PROGRAMS, IN PERCENT

Program area	Frequency mentioned		1968-69 change
	1968 (N=49)	1969 (N=212)	
Law enforcement	22	64	+42
Housing	35	69	+34
Comprehensive health	20	46	+26
Airport planning	31	47	+16
Air pollution	14	29	+15
Solid waste disposal	55	58	+ 3

Source: Adapted from National Service to Regional Councils, "Regionalism: A New Dimension in Government and Intergovernmental Relations," (The National Service to Regional Councils, 1969), pp. III-72-73; and from preliminary analysis of NSRC Survey II (1969). Working papers on file in NSRC Office, Washington, D. C., N. D.

Column three shows the tremendous impact of such legislation as the 1968 Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act, the Housing Act of 1968 (especially section 6911.1), the 1967 Partnership for Health Act, and the Air Quality Control Act of 1967.

### Conclusions and Implications

Two major conclusions are obvious from the above data. First, there has been and will continue to be a steady growth of regional councils. This growth must be understood not only in absolute numbers, but also in terms of viability, capacity, and expansion of functions. Second, the federal government has played a major role in the creation of these councils and in stimulating the expansion of their activities. The data suggest that the federal role will continue to be the single most important variable for understanding the future direction of these agencies.

These conclusions, especially the second, raise many questions. Several important implications and questions in the areas of government structure, resource allocation, democracy, federalism, and administration emerge from this paper. While not attempting to provide answers or direction here, these areas of concern can be noted.

#### I. Structure of American Local Government

What does this rapid increase in the number and activities of regional councils suggest for the structure of American local government? The most controversial point is whether we are in the process of evolving, unintentionally and perhaps haphazardly, toward some type of metropolitan government. While most people directly involved with regional councils would vehemently deny the possibility of such evolution, the cautions of the students of these agencies must be noted.

Statements that such an evolution is possible come from both practitioners and academicians. As William Pitstick, Executive Director of the North Texas Council of Governments has stated:

...each COG will develop in the direction determined by the citizens and political leadership in its region as being best for that particular region. It is quite possible that councils of governments may evolve in the direction of regional government in some specific functional areas.<sup>31</sup>

Consider also the comments of the authors of one of the leading and most recent texts on the metropolis:

The current emphasis is on interlocal cooperation as the answer to the existing and emerging public needs of metropolitan areas. This form of institutional response can evolve in one of several ways. It may prove, as its proponents claim, that voluntary cooperation of sufficient magnitude to serve the requirements of large urban communities is possible without further centralization of power. It may fall into disuse because of the inability of local units to reach agreement on crucial issues. It may lead to the conversion of COG's into general purpose metropolitan governments. Or it may result in a strengthening of such councils by endowing them with certain policy-making and administrative powers.<sup>32</sup> (Emphasis added.)

The authors suggest that the last alternative is most likely.

Even if one prefers to avoid the extreme position that we are in the process of creating some type of metropolitan government, it is clear that the powers and scope of actions of regional councils are steadily increasing. It is also clear from both the data presented here and the literature on the subject that the federal government will have the largest single role in determining future direction of this growth.

First, it seems clear that the national government is going to bring increasing pressure on local units to effect greater administrative and policy coordination in matters affecting the development and functioning of the total metropolitan aggregation. The requirement for review of community facilities applications by an area-wide agency is but one step in this direction. Others are likely to follow, such as a stipulation that COG's determine the priorities for the allocations of federal facilities grants among the local units. As this trend evolves, such bodies will be forced into a more active political role; and some of them may even evolve into metropolitan or regional governments.

Second, local officials will sooner or later come to realize that, in view of the upward movement of power, they must mobilize in self-defense if they are to retain a voice in critical decisions affecting their communities. For if local jurisdictions lack the organizational means of reaching agreement on common issues, they will be at a distinct disadvantage in bargaining with state and national agencies.

Third, the problems of adequate housing, equality of opportunity in employment and education, racial discrimination, and other major urban difficulties have become nationalized to the point where federal policy can be expected to become more deeply involved in promoting their solution. The overriding question here is how long the national government will be willing to go along with the cooperative approach if local units fail to show substantial progress in coordinating their own efforts relative to these problems.<sup>33</sup>

The data and literature, then, suggest that the future course of this evolution will be determined in Washington, not the localities. The local

governmental structure of America is, whether it be metropolitan government or less, emerging through a series of interactions that we really know very little about.

## II. Resource Allocation

The federal grant-in-aid programs are not a major determinant in local resource allocation policy decisions. Namely, can local administrators afford to ignore federally set priorities? Data presented here (especially Tables XII and XIV) and elsewhere suggest that they cannot and do not. The political implications of the grant-in-aid programs have been well documented elsewhere.<sup>34</sup> The combined impact of federal finances and regional council review powers further limits resource allocation options open to local administrators. The clear expansion of the powers of the regional councils and the suggested final veto power will further limit local policy makers' choices.<sup>35</sup>

## III. Federalism

Given the data presented here, what is the future of the states? Are they to be increasingly by-passed as federal-local bonds get tighter and tighter? Again, the data suggest "yes." Also, will the many new interstate councils serve to further weaken the states?

We have elsewhere expressed strong misgivings about the impact of some of the federal programs on the continued viability of the states.<sup>36</sup> Research reported in this paper has not served to lessen these misgivings. The confidence expressed in some of the recent literature about the future of the states notwithstanding, we have real fears that the days of the states as true "partners" in the federal system may be numbered.

The current position of the states cannot be explained entirely as a national government "power-grab" nor as a result of ignorance of the likely consequences of these programs. The following description of recent events is, we believe, substantially correct:

Unable to seek and obtain rational boundaries, new authority, or additional revenues, local governments found that their resources were usually insufficient to meet new challenges. The vacuum created by the passive role of the states in providing funds and authority resulted in direct action by federal government. The plight of local government and the citizens involved was too great for Congress and the President to ignore. There soon developed a system of direct federal-local relationships. Through inaction, states abdicated their role and responsibility. The federal government moved in with direct grants to local governments for such programs as urban renewal, comprehensive planning, airport construction, housing, and so on.<sup>37</sup>

## IV. Democracy and Responsible Government

The first three points emphasize the need for careful study about the impact of the evolving councils on our system of democracy and responsible government. There are three major areas of concern.

A. If the regional councils do begin to emerge as metropolitan governments or some similar authority, has not the will of the people been circumvented? Regardless of the rightness of, or the need for, metropolitan government, the will of the people has been repeatedly expressed--namely, "No

Metro!"

B. Does not every restriction on the policy-making process at the local level place a direct obstacle in the path of responsive government? If the review process, combined with the availability of federal funding, becomes a deciding factor in policy choices, is not responsible local government that much weaker? In particular, we refer to James Q. Wilson's comments on the split between the audience and the constituency that is emerging in many of our larger cities as well as our earlier stated concern about local policy choice in a federal system.<sup>38</sup>

C. A long standing problem has been how to provide representation on multijurisdictional councils.<sup>39</sup> The problems of inequitable, or perceived inequitable, representational schema increase as the power and responsibilities of the regional councils increase. Ironically, just as the growth of the councils was largely due to federal policies, so too may major representation changes come from federal judiciary.<sup>40</sup>

#### V. Administration

There are major administrative questions that also remain unanswered. What is the cost impact of the various differing administrative requirements of the many federal departments and agencies? As ACIR Chairman Farris Bryant, appearing before the Senate Committee on Government Operations, stated:

Considering their program and management effects... we are now at the point where the number, complexity, and varying administrative and personnel requirements of these aid programs raise serious questions concerning their usefulness as tools of a properly functioning federal system at both the giving and receiving ends. At the receiving end particularly--the State and local levels:

There is a lack of information and confusion about what is available and what the differences and similarities are among the many programs.

There are problems in having to deal with numerous small categories of funds rather than having the flexibility of using grants with broader purposes.

There is administrative waste involved in overlapping and duplicated effort.

There is the inevitable difficulty of having to comply with a multitude of different requirements that come from having many separate grants.

At the disbursing end, Federal grant-administering agencies encounter serious difficulties in coordinating grant programs and their many separate and different requirements, in handling the mountain of paper work involved in administering the multitude of grants, and in making certain that program goals set by Congress are achieved.<sup>41</sup>

Other administrative questions are also evident. From where are the regional councils' personnel being recruited: Does their background make a difference? Will a past city manager adequately perform in the political position of council director? What is the impact of drawing personnel from the localities, the states, or the national government? What will be the effect of the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act of 1968 and the proposed inter-

governmental personnel acts?

These questions are not intended to attack or in any way reflect on the activities of the various regional councils. For, as we are well aware, the lack of planning was one of the largest problems facing the fragmented metropolis. Rather, the questions are meant to illustrate our areas of ignorance. As one thinks of the impact on the local governmental-political process of such federal legislation as the Housing Acts of 1954 and 1968, the Highway Act of 1962, the Economic Development Act of 1965, the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1968, and the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act of 1968, as well as the impact of the supporting Bureau of the Budget Circulars (especially A-80, A-82, A-90, A-96, and A-97), he can only be dismayed and concerned at the paucity of knowledge available to use in this field.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>For the data on government fragmentation, see, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Governments: 1967, I, Government Organization (USGPO, 1968), *passim*; and John C. Bollens and Henry J. Schmandt, The Metropolis: Its People, Politics and Economic Life (2nd edition, revised; Harper & Row, 1970), pp. 100-125.

<sup>2</sup>Luther H. Gulick, The Metropolitan Problem and American Ideas (Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), p. 23. This view of near complete failure is not universally accepted. See, for example, Robert C. Wood, "Metropolitan Government, 1975: An Extrapolation of Trends," American Political Science Review, LII, 1958, pp. 108-122.

<sup>3</sup>Gulick, The Metropolitan Problem, p. 24.

<sup>4</sup>Luther H. Gulick, "Goals for Metropolis," National Civic Review, XLIX, 1960, p. 592.

<sup>5</sup>Roscoe C. Martin, Metropolis in Transition: Local Government Adaptation to Changing Urban Needs, a report prepared for the Housing and Home Finance Agency under the Urban Studies and Housing Research Program (USGPO, 1963). Martin's study is now out of print. The reader may wish to consult a summary of his 1963 report in Roscoe C. Martin, "Action in Metropolis--I," National Civic Review, LII, 1963, pp. 302-307; and *ibid.*, Part II, pp. 363-367, 371. For a slightly different taxonomy, see, Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, Alternate Approaches to Governmental Reorganization in Metropolitan Areas, Report A-11, (USGPO, 1962).

<sup>6</sup>For a concise expression of this point of view, see, Thomas H. Reed, "A Call for Plain Talk," National Civic Review, LI, 1962, pp. 119-128.

<sup>7</sup>Victor Jones, Metropolitan Government (University of Chicago Press, 1942), p. 109.

<sup>8</sup>Lyle C. Fitch, "Problems of Increasing Urbanization," Political Science Quarterly, LXXI, 1956, p. 86.

<sup>9</sup>Wood, "Metropolitan Government," p. 111.

<sup>10</sup>Joseph F. Zimmerman, "Metropolitan Ecumenism: The Road to the Promised Land," Journal of Urban Law, XLIV (Spring, 1967), p. 437.

<sup>11</sup>Paul Studenski, Government of Metropolitan Areas (National Municipal League, 1930).

<sup>12</sup>Edward C. Banfield, "The Politics of Metropolitan Area Organization," Midwest Journal of Political Science, I (May, 1957), pp. 77-91; and Lawrence J. R. Herson, "The Lost World of Municipal Government," American Political Science Review, LI (June, 1957), pp. 330-345. For a further discussion of this general division in the literature, see, H. Paul Friesema, "The Metropolis and the Maze of Local Government," Urban Affairs Quarterly, II (December, 1966), pp. 68-90; and Parris N. Glendening, "The Metropolitan Dade County Government: An Examination of Reform," (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Florida State University, 1967), pp. 31-42.

<sup>13</sup>For an analysis of the causes of the repeated failures see, Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, Factors Affecting Voter Reac-



tions to Governmental Reorganization in Metropolitan Areas, Report M-15, (USGPO, 1962); Banfield, "The Politics of Metropolitan Area Organization," pp. 77-91; Bollens and Schmandt, The Metropolis, 2nd edition, pp. 374-395; and Parris N. Glendening and John Wesley White, "Local Government Reorganization Referenda in Florida," The Florida State University Governmental Research Bulletin, V (March, 1968), entire issue.

<sup>14</sup>For a summary of these views see, Friesema, "The Metropolis," pp. 73-90.

<sup>15</sup>Zimmerman, "Metropolitan Ecumenism," p. 441.

<sup>16</sup>National Service to Regional Councils, 1970 Regional Council Directory, p. 6.

<sup>17</sup>For a detailed discussion of these three types of regional councils, see, ibid., pp. 6-7 and National Service to Regional Councils, "Regionalism: A New Dimension in Government and Intergovernmental Relations," Department of Housing and Urban Development Urban Planning Research and Demonstration Project Number D.C. PD-3, 1969, pp. III-1-89. There are, to be sure, other approaches to regional planning, such as state planning agencies or the area-wide planning department of a single local government. The federal impact on these approaches is, however, significantly different.

<sup>18</sup>See, for example, National Service to Regional Councils, "Regionalism," part III. The different data result from varying classification systems, repeated changes in reported dates of creation due to an almost constant restructuring of existing regional councils, and varying patterns of questionnaire returns. However, it is emphasized that any of the available sources of data supports the same conclusions that are drawn from the data reported in this study.

<sup>19</sup>Copy of questionnaire, analysis of results, and a summary of results found in National Service to Regional Councils, "Regionalism," passim. Other survey working papers available in NSRC Office, Washington, D. C.

<sup>20</sup>Copy of questionnaire and preliminary summary of results available as working papers only in NSRC Office, Washington, D. C., N. D. Survey data to be published in NSRC's 1970 edition of Regional Council Profiles.

<sup>21</sup>Copy of questionnaire and preliminary summary of results found in National Service to Regional Councils, "Regionalism," passim.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., pp. III-41-42.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., pp. IV-26-27.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. III-42.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., NSRC Survey II. Working papers available in NSRC Office, Washington, D. C., N. D.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, Metropolitan Councils of Governments, Report M-32 (USGPO, 1966), p. 32.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., especially pp. 23, 32-33.

<sup>30</sup>NSRC Survey II. Working papers available in NSRC Office, Washington, D. C., N. D.

<sup>31</sup>Stated in "From Manager to COG Director: Journey to the Unknown," Public Management, LI (January, 1969), p. 9.

<sup>32</sup>Bollens and Schmandt, The Metropolis, 2nd edition, p. 443. Interestingly, several authors have suggested that regional councils, especially COG's, are created in certain areas to prevent such an occurrence. As Hanson observed, "Councils of governments...are frequently formed for defensive purposes to prevent any more powerful or drastic regional government reorganization." See, ACIR, Metropolitan Council of Governments, p. 34. Pitstick expressed a similar opinion: "...opponents to true regional governments are the proponents for the council of governments--and vice versa." See, "From Manager to COG Director," p. 9. These observations are not necessarily a direct refutation of the stated concern, rather they may merely reflect differing local experiences.

<sup>33</sup>Bollens and Schmandt, The Metropolis, 2nd edition, p. 435. For a similar statement from a different vantage point, see, National Service to Regional Councils, "Regionalism," part V.

<sup>34</sup>See, for example, Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, Fiscal Balance in the Federal System, II--Metropolitan Disparities (USGPO, 1967): Parris N. Glendening, "Revenue Sharing Versus Grants-in-Aid: Political Implications," Paper presented at the National meeting of the American Society for Public Administration, May, 1969 (mimeographed); and Deil S. Wright, Federal Grants-in-Aid: Perspectives and Alternatives (American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1968).

<sup>35</sup>See comments in National Service to Regional Councils, "Regionalism," part V.

<sup>36</sup>Glendening, "Revenue Sharing Versus Grants-in-Aid," especially pp. 4-10.

<sup>37</sup>National Service to Regional Councils, "Regionalism," p. V-2.

<sup>38</sup>See, James Q. Wilson, "The Mayors vs. the Cities," The Public Interest, Number 16 (Summer, 1969), pp. 25-37; and Glendening, "Revenue Sharing Versus Grants-in-Aid."

<sup>39</sup>See, for example, Bollens and Schmandt, The Metropolis, 2nd edition, pp. 318-320; and Arthur W. Bromage, Political Representation in Metropolitan Areas, Michigan Governmental Series Number 42 (University of Michigan, Institute of Public Administration, 1962).

<sup>40</sup>The Supreme Court appears to be moving in the direction of requiring some reapportionment of these councils and similar local authorities. See, Avery v. Midland County, 390 U.S. 474 (1968). In a most recent case, Della Hadley, et al. v. The Junior College District of Metropolitan Missouri, et al., the Court moved away from exclusive review of multi-purpose governments. If the governmental unit (regardless of whether it is called a "government") performs "important governmental functions," and the "powers are general," it will come under the doctrine of "one man, one vote." The Court did explicitly state that the unit of government in question must be composed of elected officials. It is uncertain if this will be extended to in-

clude the indirect election method used for regional councils.

Justice Harlan's dissent, joined by Chief Justice Burger and Stewart, may suggest an alternate direction for a "restructured" Court: "The Midland County Commissions Court, the body whose composition was challenged in Avery v. Midland County, was found to possess a broad range of powers that made it 'representative of most of the general governing bodies of American cities, counties, towns, and villages,' and the Court was at pains to limit its holdings to such general bodies. . . . Today the Court discards that limitation, stating that 'there is no discernible, valid reason why constitutional distinctions should be drawn on the basis of the purpose of the election.' I believe, to the contrary, that the need to preserve flexibility in the design of local conditions, furnishes a powerful reason to refuse to extend the Avery v. Midland County ruling beyond its original limits. . . . In my opinion, this ruling imposes an arbitrary limitation on the ways in which local agencies may be constituted." See also, National Service to Regional Councils, "Regionalism," pp. III-35-39.

<sup>41</sup>"Statement of Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations before the Intergovernmental Relations Subcommittee on Government Operations, U.S. Senate, September 9, 1969, on the proposed 'Intergovernmental Cooperation Act of 1969,' 'Grant Consolidation Act of 1969,' and 'Program Information Act'" (Commission, 1969), pp. 2-3.