

Significant economic and social disparities do indeed exist among central cities and suburban communities. However, these disparities vary from region to region and from one metropolitan area to another.

Almost everywhere the proportion of nonwhites in the central city is higher than in the suburbs, and the most striking central city-suburban differentials, outside the South, are found where nonwhites are concentrated. Likewise, proportions of elderly persons and broken families with children are much larger in the central city than in the suburbs.

This statistical analysis of central cities and suburbs reveals that population components are similar in many more respects than casual observation indicates. The important differences vary primarily according to metropolitan area size, regional location, and extent of suburbanization. There is a definite community of interest between central cities and suburbs where they share an equivalent burden of social problems, as in the case of high school dropouts. On the other hand, other problems, such as education for poor nonwhites, are primarily the concern of central cities in the North and the suburbs in the South and West. Finally, some issues are primarily suburban in their impact, such as substandard, owner-occupied housing.

GOVERNING METROPOLITAN AREAS

The distribution of different groups of people tends to divide metropolitan areas into many subcommunities with distinct social and economic characteristics. Cutting across this division into social groupings is another network that also divides metropolitan areas into many small and separate units: the pattern of local government. The public business of metropolitan America is carried on by a myriad of governments—cities and towns, counties, school districts, and special districts responsible for such diverse functions as fire protection, utility service, port development, and even cemetery management. And the current trend in metropolitan areas is toward still greater proliferation of local governments.

The 1962 Census of Governments enumerated 18,442 independent governmental units within the 212 metropolitan areas. Table 6 summarizes 1962 data on local governments, by type, within and outside of metropolitan areas.

The average number of independent units of government per metropolitan area is 87. This average covers a wide range, from 24

TABLE 6.—*Distribution of local governments, 1962*

Type of government	United States, total	Within SMSA's	Outside SMSA's	Percent in SMSA's
All local governments.....	91, 186	18, 442	72, 744	20. 2
School districts.....	34, 678	6, 004	28, 674	17. 3
Other.....	56, 508	12, 438	44, 070	22. 0
Counties.....	3, 043	310	2, 733	10. 2
Municipalities.....	18, 000	4, 144	13, 856	23. 0
Townships.....	17, 142	2, 573	14, 569	15. 0
Special districts.....	18, 323	5, 411	12, 912	29. 5

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census of Governments: 1962*, vol. V, "Local Government in Metropolitan Areas," p. 2.