

and planing tends to eliminate duplication of administration and overhead costs.

Consolidation may reduce the voter's influence on his local government by making his vote relatively less important in the total. However, if the new government is set up with ample powers, an adequate system of representation, and clear lines of responsibility, it can increase his influence by making areawide problems more susceptible to public control.

A principal weakness of consolidation is its low political feasibility, indicated by its infrequent use. Over half the States do not permit consolidation. When it is permitted, the general procedure of separate petitioning and approval by separate majority votes in each of the units makes the process difficult.

8. CITY-COUNTY SEPARATION

City-county separation is an action in which the major city in a county separates from the county, sometimes with simultaneous expansion of its boundaries, and thereafter exercises both city and county functions within its boundaries, although sometimes not all the county functions. This procedure normally requires special constitutional provisions, since the detached city-county usually does not conform to the general provisions setting up a uniform system of county government throughout the State.

City-county separation was used as a means of reorganizing local governments in metropolitan areas in four major cities in the last half of the 19th century: Baltimore, Denver, St. Louis, and San Francisco.²⁷ The impetus for this approach in three of the cities came largely from the belief of city residents that they were shouldering a disproportionate share of the cost of county government services provided to noncity residents, and that the county and city governments were suffering from a duplication of effort.

Although city-county separation was tried in a few places in the early 20th century, there has been little recent interest in this approach except in the State of Virginia. Virginia has special conditions which have come into being by usage rather than explicit constitutional or statutory provision. When towns reach a population of 5,000 they may become cities. By becoming cities they separate from their counties and thereafter exercise, in addition to their city functions, all county functions except those relating to the circuit court, which they share with the county of which they were formerly a part. When they reach a population of 10,000, they take over responsibility for the circuit court as well. In 1957 there were 32 of these "independent" cities in Virginia.²⁸ Although Virginia cities are not given additional territory when they separate from their counties, they may subsequently add territory from counties that surround them, following the usual Virginia annexation procedure.²⁹

Recent interest in detaching the central city from the existing county has sometimes come from the suburbs rather than the central city. In

²⁷ Paul Studenski, *op. cit.*, pp. 170-215; the Library of Congress, Legislative Reference Service, *City-County Consolidation and City-County Separation* (1952) (typewritten).

²⁸ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census of Governments: 1957, State Bulletins*, VI, No. 44, "Government in Virginia," p. 2.

²⁹ Council of State Governments, *The States and the Metropolitan Problem* (Chicago, 1956), pp. 81-82.