

Federation permits coordinated areawide approaches to areawide problems, and a closer relating of taxing areas to benefit areas. By assigning areawide problems to the metropolitan government and local problems to the municipalities, it keeps officials at each level from being overwhelmed by details.

The federation approach has less political feasibility than a step-by-step approach, such as the piecemeal transfer of functions to an urban county. Also, the federation is a new political entity, not foreseen at the time when most State constitutions were prepared; as a result, constitutional revision is invariably needed. The relationship to county governments must be worked out, and this may become especially difficult if the new unit lies in more than one county.

Further, a key question in political feasibility is the requirement for voter approval. Commonly local approval requires separate majorities in different subunits within the area of the contemplated federation, and sometimes it involves majorities in each of the political subdivisions affected. This amounts to giving each unit a veto over the whole, and is a particularly difficult obstacle to overcome.

Finally, there is little evidence that urban civic and political leadership in the United States is as yet favorably disposed to the concept of "metropolitan government" as such, which is embodied in the federation plan. The conceptual ties to traditional forms of local government are very strong, and the image of a single new form of general government covering an entire metropolitan area is distasteful to many.

APPLICABILITY OF REORGANIZATION METHODS

This review of alternative approaches leads to no easy generalizations about the best way to reorganize governments in the metropolitan age. All the approaches surveyed are useful in some circumstances, and they are not mutually exclusive. Many are closely related in their use and impact, such as extraterritorial powers, intergovernmental service contracts, and annexation. Different approaches can supplement one another, such as the use of service contracts in California to facilitate the development of urban counties. Also, one approach may serve as a steppingstone for later and more significant structural changes. Thus voluntary metropolitan councils may help create areawide agreements to undertake joint approaches to service problems. In fact, the likelihood that further modifications will always be needed argues against undertaking any governmental approaches that will make future adaptation more difficult.

The diverse approaches described here suggest that the governmental structure in metropolitan areas is rich in possibilities for change to cope with new conditions. Yet in many areas, these approaches are theoretical possibilities rather than realistic alternatives to the present system. In particular, State restrictions on local governments block the more widespread use of these reorganization devices. In recognition of the urgency of adjusting local government structure to handle today's needs, the Commission has called for State action to unshackle the metropolitan communities so that they can have a freer hand in reorganizing their governments. The Commission's proposal is that the States provide an "arsenal" of remedial weapons that metropolitan areas can draw upon, consisting of author-