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IMPLICATIONS OF SUNBELT CITIES' GROWTH

Vincent Werner Political Science 997

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IMPLICATIONS OF SUNBELT CITIES' GROWTH

For much of the United States' history, the Northeast has been the dominant regional center for the most productive activities of our national economy. The "Yankee" cities emerged as the pivotal axes around which the economy swirled. The South and the Sunbelt were resource-rich "outlands", and their cities were the subordinate subcenters of an ever-growing economy. However, it appears as if much of this past tradition has been profoundly altered. The story is quite familiar to the urban scholar. Many of the inner cities have become garbage dumps for the poor, the misfits, and the unwanted. The combination of crime, poor schools, high taxes, and high costs have drained jobs, population, vitality, and spirit out of many cities to such an extent as to call into question their future economic and social role. On their present course, quite a few large cities seem destined to become economic holes in the metropolitan doughnut. Their economies are floundering and their municipal finances are severely strained. The leading candidates for that unwelcome "hole-in-the-doughnut" status can be found among the old and ailing industrial cities of the Northeast and Midwest. Among these candidates is the city of Detroit. Detroit remains by a narrow margin the nation's fifth largest city, but may well be the sickest among the top twenty cities. Based on the Census Bureau's estimates of the 1975 city populations, its population has dropped by about one-third from the 1959 peak of nearly 2,000,000. During the five years ending in 1976, Gurney Breckenfeld of Fortune Magazine found in his study of Detroit that the number of people at work in the city declined by a staggering 26%. Numerous factories built as recently as the 1940s and 1950s stand empty, for the city is long past its industrial prime and still going downhill. Downtown has become a hollow core pocked by vacant stores, boarded-up taverns, and the blank marquees of shuttered movie

theatres. The Washington Boulevard, formerly Detroit's equivalent of Manhattan's Fifth Avenue, is a lonely canyon of concrete and granite. Most of the shops that once offered the finest merchandise in town have closed or moved away. There also stands the padlocked Statler Hotel, closed due to lack of business. In the southwest corner of Detroit, several blue-collar ethnic neighborhoods remain in good order. Elsewhere, the city's extensive residential areas of aging one-family homes are laced with abandoned and vandalized stores and dwellings. In 1976, another 11,000 white pupils left the public schools, raising their ethnic mix from 75% to 79% black. The city's once extensive network of parochial schools has shriveled in recent years because of financial difficulties. The bustle of shopping, office activity, and nightlife has moved to the suburbs. Meanwhile, crime has filled the wasteland left by the exodus of jobs and people, and in the early 1970s the city became known as "Murder Capital USA." Belatedly business leaders have made an effort to revitalize downtown. Fifty-one companies chipped in \$112 million of equity money and borrowed \$245 million more to build Renaissance Center, a gleaming cluster of glass-walled office towers, shopping space, and a 70-story, 1,400 room hotel near the bank of the Detroit River. But the project has drained tenants from the older downtown offices and its location, at the border of downtown, means that it is likely to provide little renaissance for the faltering heart of the city. More probably, Renaissance Center will become the nucleus of a new but smaller city center, patronized by whites, while the old center continues to turn slowly into a black shopping district.

A second example of this urban blight is St. Louis. According to the estimates of the Census Bureau, between 1950 and 1975 the city's population shrank from 875,000 to 525,000. This 39% drop is the largest, in percentage terms, for any big American city during that quarter century. It is estimated that a cause the rising expectations and service needs of city dwellers grow at much faster rates than local revenues. The changing demographic and social composition of big cities necessitates far greater investments in infrastructure and services, including public welfare, special educational programs, more intensive police coverage, and more elaborate health, sanitation, and sewage systems, if the city is to maintain itself. In effect, the maintenance of the civil order of a large city would depend to a large extent on the provision of $\frac{4}{4}$ these services. The new spirit of fiscal conservatism does not lend itself to such purposes, so the outlook is not an optimistic one for the big cities.

The symptoms of this urban decay are readily apparent. Unfortunately, the causes are not as visible. It is a crisis which seems to be growing, and the deteriorating health of the national economy can only exacerbate the situation. Despite this predicament, the cities remain the homes for millions of If there is not some movement on diagnosing the causes of this urban Americans. malaise, the outlook will be grim indeed so far as the effects on America's social stability. Moreover, if these problems arise in the bustling, growing cities of the Sunbelt, then it would be in the interest of the Sunbelt cities to discern the basic, underlying reasons as to why cities decay. One wonders if the grim fate of the older cities in the Northeast and Midwest could befall the Sunbelt, an area of rapid growth and prosperity. Lacking economic opportunity in the countryside, the black poor in recent years have been migrating to the big Southern cities. They cluster in expanding racial and economic ghettoes, where their discontent is much more likely to find organized expression than in a rural, low density setting. Some other familiar symptoms of urban malaise have begun growing. Atlanta, for example, has become a black-majority city surrounded by a fast-growing white suburban ring. Retail trade is moving increasingly to the suburbs while the city has been struggling with a glut of

new hotel space, vacant offices, condominiums, and apartments. New Orleans has been in an economic slump for twenty years, proving that the Sunbelt image may be due a little to public relations rather than actual performance. Since 1967, the number of industrial jobs has declined every year but one. By 1977, only 11% of the labor force was employed in manufacturing, one of the lowest proportions among the nation's major urban centers. So many discouraged workers have given up even trying to find a job that the proportion of the New Orleans area population counted as part of its labor force is among the lowest in the 6 nation, only 55.5%.

Several Sunbelt cities, among them Houston, Dallas, and Charlotte, have developed growth patterns that are economically and racially segmented. Well-to-do whites cluster in one section, poor whites in another, poor blacks in a third, and in some cases poor Chicanos in a fourth. The rich and poor live and work in different worlds and seldom see each other. Because Sunbelt cities are being built at much lower densities than the older, industrial cities of the Northeast, Sunbelt cities will face increasing difficulties in providing community services to their sprawling, low-income neighborhoods. For the time being, the present situation is still appealing to business. Cheap land for space extensive manufacturing activities, low wage rates, low taxes, and a docile labor force all combine to make the region the most logical and cost-efficient location for both newly emerging sectors and old industries trying to maintain profit margins through a reduction in costs. To the casual observer, zoning becomes a matter to please all the requests of businesses seeking to start up. Violent crime is increasing in many American cities, particularly the fastgrowing Sunbelt. Houston, perhaps the Crown Prince of the Sunbelt, serves as an appropriate example. The sprawling boom town of the Sunbelt is fast becoming the new murder capital of the country. The homicide total stood at

403 as of August, 1979. This is a 44% increase over last year's record-shattering pace. In a Newsweek article, Houston detectives refer to their city as "being like Dodge City of the 1880s." Most of the murders occur in Houston's ghettoes, the city's underside that business has bypassed and tourists do not see. 75% of the victims are either black or hispanic, which is roughly double their proportion of the city population. The situation is exacerbated by the badly understaffed police department. There is only one police officer for every 600 people, well below the national average. There are only seven police stations in a city of 556 square miles, an area larger than New York City. Illegal aliens make up approximately 10% of the population and they often become prey for criminals. The illegal aliens are of course hesitant to come forward to report crimes because of the fear they would be deported. In general, the police get little help or trust from the minority community, who have also complained of police brutality. But Houston's problems, indicative of similar conditions elsewhere in the Sunbelt, go beyond a burgeoning murder rate. Every day an additional 190 newly registered automobiles clog Houston's freeways. Newsweek reporters Melinda Beck and Ronald Henkoff found that a commute that took only 30 minutes five years ago now takes an hour in the increasingly numerous traffic snarls. Crippled by antiquated maintenance, the bus system carries only 180,000 riders daily in a city of nearly 2,000,000 people. Built on a swamp, Houston has always had drainage problems. But flooding has become increasingly severe as more and more marshland is paved over and developed. In 1979 floods caused \$500 million in property damage. Houston's appetite for annexing property has kept taxes low and the city's tax base growing. But with each acquisition, the city services have been further strained. There is virtually no public housing. Texas welfare payments are notoriously low, only \$40 per momth per child. Mamy poor residents are crowded into tiny wooden bungalows in the shadows of glittering office buildings. But in the paradox that is the

Sunbelt, Houston has its advantages. There are two dozen major oil companies that operate in Houston, and they will spend much of their rising profits locally, thus feeding a fast-growing support industry of suppliers, builders, scientists, and financiers. Unemployment is only 3.1%, and experts say the 10 number of Houston-area jobs will jump in the next decade.

This paper seeks to uncover reasons as to why cities decay; its vehicle will be the examination of five hypotheses. Their topics deal with conditions which might exist in a city, and by their presence induce illnesses which strangle the life out of a city. Briefly, the topics concern rapid economic and population growth, federal spending, migration of high income populace, municipal unions, and the country's energy supply. The approach employed here is the examination of each hypothesis in light of urban literature which was analyzed. Hopefully each hypothesis can be proven or disproven. An important point is that while evidence is being marshalled either for or against a hypothesis, some basic, helpful rules for governing a city will emerge. A commom thread running through all of them is their relevance to modern times. The first and main hypothesis follows the point that economic and population growth causes the crime rate to increase. This topic was selected because high crime rates seem to be an ever present symptom of urban decay in the Northeast. There are differing theories on the causes of high crime rates. One wonders if crime will rear its ugly head in the Sunbelt because there is an increasing abundance of riches in Sunbelt cities which are also overflowing with new city inhabitants after those riches. The second hypothesis states that the federal government has stimulated a good part of the economic growth in the Sunbelt. This subject was chosen because if the federal government does indeed have a role in Sunbelt growth, then federal largesse could be manipulated to control Sunbelt growth. The possibility arises that the Federal government has had a direct hand in creating the rapid economic growth in the Sunbelt which has in turn affected

the Sunbelt crime rate. Federal aid could also encourage the overpopulation of a Sunbelt city, thus straining the basic social services of the city. The third hypothesis dwells on the idea that an incoming migration of the middle class, mainly from the north, will pull economic growth from a Sunbelt central city to the Sunbelt suburbs. The flow of migrants into the Sunbelt can give rise to the population and economic growth mentioned in the first hypothesis. This migration might also have been caused by federal largesse making the Sunbelt attractive enough to northerners so they would choose to abandon the Northeast. This point ties the third hypothesis to the second hypothesis. The fourth hypothesis implies that unbridled municipal unions destroy a city's economic vitality with their bargaining demands. The main reason this topic was selected was due to its increasing presence on the urban scene. The police strike in Baltimore and the more recent strike by firemen in Chicago seem to be becoming the rule rather than the exception in municipal labor relations. Rapid economic and population growth could affect the rise of municipal unions in the Sunbelt. Any bitter experiences with municipal unions in the Northeast might be a reason for northerners seeking a new start in the Sunbelt. The Sunbelt has a history of being cool to unionism. The final hypothesis explores the premise that the energy crisis will give the Sunbelt an economic advantage over the Northeast, in that the Sunbelt is a more energy-abundant area. This energy abundance could give rise to the economic and population growth mentioned in the first hypothesis, which would then attract northern migrants, who are the subject in the third hypothesis. This energy crisis could also work against some of the hypotheses. High energy prices might induce northern migrants to stay in a Sunbelt central city rather than commute from the suburbs. Higher energy prices might center any future economic growth in the central cities as businessmen seek to reduce their production costs by keeping all of their operations concentrated in one area, namely the big city.

The central point of this paper is the rapid economic and population growth of the Sunbelt causing an increase in the rate of crime. An increased crime rate aids the development of urban blight. The other four hypotheses support and build a foundation for this main point. The federal government favors the Sunbelt in its financial appropriations which helps to stimulate the Sunbelt economy. As a result of this stimulation, northern migrants come to the Sunbelt. With their expertise, they too help to stimulate the economy of the Sunbelt. The energy crisis produces more support for Sunbelt growth because the Sunbelt is more energy-abundant than other parts of the country. The larger supply of energy will attract businesses seeking an assured supply of energy. Due to these three points, the Sunbelt cities will acquire boom town images where everyone is economically well-off. These images will lead to rising expectations of personal wealth among the populace. However, the rising expectations will lead to frustration, because not everyone will have the right skills or expertise needed by the growing Sunbelt economy. Certain segments of the population will become frustrated in their search for personal fortune. It will be attempted to show that this frustration will find its expression in an increasing rate of crime. There is an adjunct to this basic point. The rising expectations of the citizenry and their resultant frustration are more difficult to deal with because of municipal union power. The unions will seek to protect their spheres of interest, whether or not they coincide with the public good. This paper's general scheme then, is one of where federal aid, middle-class migration, and abundant energy supplies stimulate rapid economic and population growth in the Sunbelt. This growth leads to rising expectations for economic prosperity, many of which are frustrated. This frustration leads to a higher crime rate as the frustrations find a means of expression. Municipal union intransigence complicates the situation. The hypothesis concerning economic and population growth is presented first. This is done for both giving it a stronger emphasis, and a desire for the reader to observe how subsequent

hypotheses give support to the main hypothesis. In beginning this treatise with the main hypothesis, an "inverted pyramid" style of writing is being utilized. This paper assumes the importance of beginning with the most important hypothesis, and then allowing later points to be critically examined in light of their factual contribution to understanding and supporting the main hypothesis. It could be creditably argued to do just the opposite. The minor hypotheses could be evaluated first so as to construct a staircase to the main hypothesis. However, for the purpose of this study, the first approach is utilized. When one is reading one of the sections dealing with one of the supporting hypotheses, its significance to the major point must evaluated. It is felt that this evaluation process is best served by presenting the main hypothesis first. The reader will have adequate knowledge of the main point so that the relationship between the major hypothesis and a particular supporting hypothesis is more easily understood. A warning needs to be administered in this area. One should take special care that due attention is devoted to a correct format. An orderly manner and a systematic style of investigation is indeed needed. However, one must not become so enveloped in form as to ignore the more important function of gathering data and evaluating the hypotheses. The issue of emphasis needs to be addressed as well. By specifying one hypothesis' subject as a major point while typing other subjects as either minor or supportive in nature, this paper is not making a normative judgement on the relative importance or value of these subjects in combating urban blight. Rather, for this particular dissertation, those hypotheses have been designated as supportive in nature because they are utilized to support the main hypothesis. This paper does not purport to say that the subject matter of the supporting hypotheses is of lesser importance in the field of urban study.

As aforementioned in this paper, a high rate of crime seems to be a symptom of urban malaise. The first hypothesis is: <u>Conditions of rapid economic and</u> <u>population growth give rise to an increasing rate of crime</u>. Our study of crime in this instance will be focusing on the violent type of crime, such as the murder rate in a city. As criminal violence increases in a city, it often succeeds in driving out businesses and the middle class. One more caveat should be added. This paper does not contend that the economic or population growth directly causes violence per se. Rather, such conditions are seen as affecting the behavior or outlook on life of city inhabitants who then might turn to violence in their Sunbelt boom town.

Houston, Texas will be the first city under examination. As already mentioned, Houston's homicide rate total increased in 1979 by 44% over 1978's record shattering pace. In 1978 Houston's murder rate placed it sixth among American cities. Houston has a fast growth image, which might frustrate those who fail to get ahead. Sociologists say that violence in Houston stems from 12 this frustrated rags-to-riches dream. This is taking the view that crime is perhaps being responsive to relative rather than absolute deprivation. Poverty cannot cause crime, but resentment of poverty can. The National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence explained the violent crime increases of the sixties as in part the result of rising expectations brought on by growing affluence, followed by frustration due to the unequal distribution of the benefits of the new-found affluence. A brief statistical study conducted by Richard Rosenfeld, a professor at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, indicates some support for this position. His brief analysis cannot be considered as providing a comprehensive answer to the question, but it is something of a begining. His investigation examined variations in crime, poverty, and income among Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSAs) with more than 500,000 inhabitants. He defined crime operationally for the purpose of his analysis as the seven offenses which comprise

the Federal Bureau of Investigation's "Crime Index", published annually as part of the bureau's Uniform Crime Report. Rosenfeld found some support for the view that rising living standards trigger frustration among the populace which leads to crime. His investigation showed that crime rates were highest in those metropolitan areas with the largest gap between the poor and the statistical median wage earner, and the greatest percentage of their population on the bottom side of the inequality gap. Such a description would fit the Sunbelt cities. In the boom towns of the Sunbelt, certain skills might be more sought after than others. In other words, economic prosperity might shine upon others quite discriminately. As has been mentioned, there has been a migration of poor blacks into the Sunbelt cities such as Houston, and this large pool of unskilled laborers would not be highly sought after. So there is this large surplus of unskilled labor milling around with nothing to do while observing the white middle class picking off the plums of the new growth. If this were to occur, then the gap between the poor and the median wage earner might very well arise. With this perception of their misfortune, the level of frustration in the poor would grow. This frustration could display itself in acts of criminal violence. It is submitted that this is what is occurring in Houston, with the potential for the same result in other Sunbelt cities. It must be admitted that Rosenfeld's study was small in scope. This casts some doubt on the findings' reliability. Moreover, such a study will need support from other larger studies before its conclusions can be accepted with some finality.

With what turned out to be an accurate insight. the British historian Macauley wrote about a century ago that, unlike imperial Rome, America seemed safe enough from destruction by invading barbarians from beyond its borders, but had much to fear from barbarians within them. As the thousands of Americans who in recent years have been mugged, raped, shot, stabbed, robbed, beaten, or burglarized might bear witness, an alarming number of barbarians are on the

loose in our cities. The most infamous example was the orgy of looting and arson in New York City during and after a citywide power blackout on the hot muggy night of July 13, 1977. This nightmare provides ground for taking Macauley's prophecy at something close to its face value. The most violent crime, murder, has taken a special hold on the Sunbelt. Based on statistics from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Newsweek calculated that of the ten cities with the highest murder rates, four were in the South. A fifth, Washington D.C., is close to the Virginia border, giving it something of a southern influence. With the knowledge of the increasing migration of poor blacks into the Sunbelt cities the following idea should be kept in mind. Rising crime rates in the black community are thought to be partially associated with the operation of the illicit component of the irregular economy. Participation in the irregular economy is often a high-risk venture that allows one to satisfy one's ephemeral needs. But for those who fail to complete high school during a period of slow economic growth, the irregular economy may appear to represent one of only a few options. It would not be too far off course to assume that such an option would also come to mind to those who fail to find their fortune in the Sunbelt. This paper would not presume to say that increased expectations of economic advancement, which are then frustrated, can be singled out as the only determinant for an increased rate of crime. No one could mistake New York City for a Sunbelt boom town. This only gives way to the position that the causes of crime are a multi-headed hydra. It would be an interesting point for future investigations to see if there could be different causes of crime at different intervals of a city's development.

Returning to the hypothesis, one remembers that population growth was also mentioned. This paper assumes that economic growth will increase a city's population. One would hope that a Sunbelt city would increase its basic services to meet the increasing demands of its larger population, but much more importantly,

to treat the angry frustrations of the poor who have not found personal success in the Sunbelt city. Service provision could serve as a pressure valve to release these frustrations before they are channeled into violent acts. The presence of affluence not only provides the tax base to meet demands, as well as respond to desires for amenities, it is also likely to increase citizen expectations. One is making the assumption that as real per capita income rises, people demand and expect higher levels of public services, just as they make increased demands on the private sector for increased goods and commodities. It would not be far from reality to assume that the poor would feel the same way. After all, they would undoubtedly be aware of the prosperous economic conditions sweeping the city. For them it would be a simple matter for the city to share some of the tremendous wealth with them. In most of the area now referred to as the Sunbelt, there has always been widespread poverty, underdevelopment, and few resources for an effective tax base. Recent growth in energy resource exploitation, agribusiness, and technology, as well as federal spending policies and inducements, have begun to alter this situation. It would seem that personal values of those in the Sunbelt are being altered by the new found affluence, but in the case of the Sunbelt, there might be only limited public consequences. The problem centers around the local political culture's definition of service provision in the Sunbelt. Elected political elites in the Sunbelt have traditionally believed that the provision of many common services such as public transportation, emergency medical service, paved streets, curbing, etc., went beyond the legitimate obligations and functions of the polity. A traditional aspect of politics in the Sunbelt has always been the close relationship between the private economic community and the public decision-making community. In Dallas the Citizen's Charter Association, a group of the city's top businessmen, have been instrumental in running the city since the 1930s. In Phoenix, a similar group, the "Phoenix 40", have controlled local politics

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and questions of growth, land policy, and development. Hand-in-hand has come the form of nonpartisan city government in the Sunbelt. It is a form of government that fosters a quiescent, acquiescent citizenry, where only the business community and property-owning middle class need be politicized. The which, where, and for whom of public service delivery in such a political culture is determined by that group which can mobilize effective campaigns to influence the local political will. In Sunbelt cities, that group has been the corporate business community. The setting is then one of a boiling pot with the lid tightly screwed on. The prosperous Sunbelt city will draw many seeking personal fortune. But at the same time many of those who come will fail in that search. The level of frustration will rise among these crestfallen who have not secured 'a part of the "Golden Fleece." Yet at the same time city services are not being expanded to take care of this dispirited group Furthermore, access to political means, with which the disadvantaged could seek to to improve their lot, is blocked by a business coalition which is decidedly unsympathetic to their plight. This in turn increases the frustration of the poor even more. It is highly probable that this anger will find its expression in violence and the high murder rates which abound in the South. It must be granted that this supposition has not found any widespread support in large-scale studies. Yet enough information has been uncovered to warrant some support for this hypothesis. Sunbelt cities would be well advised to expand their social services to at least the extent that the poor would not see their situation as completely hopeless. Moreover, the idea of controlled growth becomes particularly appealing. Avoiding boom town conditions with its accompanying images would do much to lower public perceptions that the streets of Sunbelt cities are paved with gold. By reducing expectations, one is hopefully avoiding the high degree of frustration which arises in these circumstances. Low key should be the watch words.

The second hypothesis deals with the involvement of the federal government

in local affairs. It states: Misdirected federal spending creates uncontrolled, sprawling growth. The meaning of this hypothesis needs to be refined. Its thrust is that the federal government, through its spending policies and other similar decisions, encourages growth in one area of the country while ignoring other regions. Furthermore, within the area it has favored, the federal government stimulates more growth than the local inhabitants actually need or find acceptable. Some regions, with their large cities, find themselves dying on the vine, while other cities find themselves with an embarassment of riches. Perhaps more than they can properly control. This is something of a new phenomenon. For most of its history, the federal government refrained from intervention on the local scene. In the 1950s and 1960s, this began to change. Through new legislation, enacted in a period of general prosperity, Congress extended both the scope and the level of direct federal involvement in the cities. Major national programs were implemented in new areas such as manpower training, and assistance was provided for established local government functions, such as mass transportation and water and sewage systems. Federal urban aid increased from approximately \$3.9 billion in the early 1960s to over \$26 billion in the early 1970s. Furthermore, in many cases the federal government bypassed other levels of government in developing and implementing urban programs, thus enhancing mutual dependence between cities and the national government. As a result of these policies cities are now, more than ever, dependent on political institutions other than local governments to fulfill their traditional functions as well as those added to them in the 1960s. The principle of federal involvement in local fiscal matters had been established, and thus spending decisions made in the nation's capital could significantly affect a local city. A point which goes against the hypothesis is revenue sharing. Rondinelli (1975) concludes that general revenue sharing funds have been used for a narrow range of services and facilities, for existing services and functions versus innovative

ones, and for tax reduction or the postponement of tax increases. Further, he has suggested that funds seldom go to social programs or projects which lead to an expansion of revenue bases for cities. Federal policies and programs which either directly or indirectly contribute to deterioration and abandonement of central city buildings seem to be multitudinous. The federal government cannot subsidize the suburbs through highway construction, the Federal Home Administration, and other tax incentives and expect businesses to stay in the 22 city. It seems the federal government is carrying out just the opposite point of the hypothesis, it is creating urban blight. It can be said that any American city, regardless of its geographic location, age, size, or fiscal health is part of a national economic system. The health of this system is inextricably linked to the federal government. Perhaps an answer which is supportive of the hypothesis can be found in the different types of federal spending that an area receives. Some types of federal largesse can stimulate growth while other types can only keep a decaying corpse from rotting further. The beneficial effect of federal spending can be most visible in the location and relocation of defense and aerospace installations. In 1975, for example, the Navy decided to relocate 1,300 employees in its Naval Oceanographic Office from Suitland, Maryland, to Bay St. Louis, Mississippi. The costs and benefits of that move were never adequately explored by the federal government. The blow to the local economy of Suitland is still being felt as evidenced by the high vacancy rate in housing, the decline in local revenues, and the uprooting of families and friends. The federal government spends billions of dollars on contracts for goods and services, for office leasing, and for facility construction. Yet there is little planning of where those dollars go, who ²³ benefits, and who loses. The commom observer can see that there are far more military installations in the South and Southwest than in the Northeast. Military bases are a gold mine for the nearby towns and cities. Town merchants

come to depend upon the consumers who live on the bases. Schools which educate base children will receive federal aid. The financial stimulation a military base provides is invaluable. Everyone is familiar with the popular outcry in the news media when the Pentagon announces base closings across the nation for the purpose of saving money. This outcry is from the local government officials predicting dire consequences if the local base closes down. From personal observation, this cry has gone up far more often in the Northeast than the Sunbelt. The example of Suitland, Maryland is particularly fitting. The actions of the federal government to establish military bases, to furnish home loans for the suburbs, and to aid highway construction are examples of federal action which routinely favors the Sunbelt and spurs growth.

However, in the case of the Northeast, urban policy has been more concerned with treating the symptoms of the urban malaise rather than uncovering its fundamental causes and engaging in preventive action. In the more northern climes the federal approach has been to develop more programs, create more bureaucracy, and spend more money to stem the tide of urban decay. Most of this was a response to the cities and their advocates. These policies have tended to be dependency-producing for urban populations and cities vis-a-vis the federal agencies. Such dependency significantly reduces the possibilities for the emergence of either effective, self-sustaining citizens or viable cities. Federal Housing Administration programs, for example, have been characterized as adverse to cities because they have encouraged the development of the suburbs at the cost of deteriorating the real estate and the tax base of the central cities. Freeway programs designed to increase access to certain parts of the city have, in retrospect, contributed to the breakup of older neighborhoods. The housing demolitions necessary for new construction have diminished the tax base not only by the value of the houses directly removed, but also by the value loss of the remaining properties bordering the newly created freeway.

Again one approaches the idea that the type of federal spending in the Northeast urban areas stiffles productivity. Revenue sharing is not the real answer as has already been stated. Far too often the local officials insure their blessed reelection by using such funds to cut taxes or prevent tax increases. Federal pressure should be brought to bear in order that these type of funds might find their way into capital expenditures, thus increasing a city's capacity for growth in the future. A problem here is that the original implementation of revenue sharing was that the cities would receive the money without any significant federal strings attached. With much of the other federal aid going to the Northeast in the form of welfare maintenance functions, a society dependent on the services of professional government bureaucrats arises. In such a serviced society there is a dilemma in the growth of the service economy. In order to serve one another it is necessary to have more clients who need help or more help. In a society serviced by professionals and bureaucrats, people are increasingly defined as lacking, disabled, or deficient. A growing serviced society depends on more people who can be defined as problems rather than as productive participants. A professionally dominated society/economy thrives on the increases in the deficiencies of the population rather than on its potential to develop a capacity for wellbeing. With such philosophies pervading the welfare bureaucracies of the older cities, federal spending is strangling growth. Economic and social decay will not go away because the professionals are not going to let it go away. This is not to say that the same type of spending does not exist in the Sunbelt. It does. However, as has been shown, the political elites in the Sunbelt are basically hostile to the idea of the welfare state. In such a hostile setting, the welfare bureaucracy is not as apt to be as well developed. As will be shown later, many of the new immigrants of the middle class who come to the Sunbelt have little interest in the welfare state either.

hypothesis, the rewards of this growth are distributed unequally among the general populace, thus destabilizing the social order. It can be creditably argued that the federal Santa Claus has brought to the Sunbelt an overabundance of riches. So much in fact, that the Sunbelt cities cannot adequately cope with all the side effects which arise from the massive growth in the region. A thrust from the analysis of this hypothesis is similar to that mentioned with the first hypothesis. Sunbelt cities need to control their rate of growth. If necessary, there should be an institutional gadfly to examine growth proposals and weed out those which are simply not necessary. Bigger is not necessarily better. Unfortunately, the business and political coalitions in many of the Sunbelt cities believe in just the opposite. Concern also needs to be focused on the growth of the federal welfare bureaucracy. It is evident that a prime concern of a bureaucracy is not so much the wellbeing of a city's inhabitants, but the continued health and vitality of the bureaucracy itself. The poor need to be helped, but they must also be given hope. The federal government is perhaps too enamored with the professional and his special expertise.

The third hypothesis of this paper concerns the migration of middle class and upper class into a region. More specifically; <u>In-migration of higher</u> <u>income populace into a region will lead to an outward relocation of jobs and</u> <u>residences from a central city</u>. This could mean a desertion of a Northeast city for local suburbs, but more importantly a migration from the Northeast to the Sunbelt. Although many people of wealth and influence still reside in the central cities, and for more of moderate but comfortable means, and although a majority in almost all of the larger cities are still Anglos, the old city as a social entity has changed in irreversible ways in the United States. It is no longer the rich center that once so clearly dominated the bedroom suburbs and modest satellite cities scattered outward from its boundaries in an integrated 29 patchwork with the rural hinterland. As the twentieth century progressed, technological developments produced the conditions allowing the outward movement of populations of big cities. The motor vehicle reduced the cost on the internal movement of goods compared with horse-drawn wagons, which it replaced. This permitted work places to spread out from central terminal areas. The construction of high-speed expressways and the ready availability of mortgage credit at preferential terms for new single-family suburban housing enhanced this movement. This added up to a powerful reduction in the hold of the central city. The number of people moving away from SMSAs has been greater than the number moving to them, at least since the early 1960s. This was not generally noticed until recently because up until 1970 the excess of births over deaths exceeded net out-migration and SMSAs continued to show absolute growth for all SMSAs combined, and with few exceptions for individual SMSAs as well. It is the fall in the birth rate which has helped to produce the unprecendented phenomenon of absolute decline in metropolitan population since 1970. Population losses in the metropolises reflect the sprawl of population beyond the official boundaries of SMSAs, but most counties well beyond SMSA borders are growing in significant numbers for the first time this century. Perhaps a new spatial organization of urban activities is emerging, which may be as different in kind as in degree. The basic reason for the spread of SMSAs is the progressive outward shift of job locations, which permits residential locations to bound one more commutation jump outward. Job growth is not following a course of continuous suburbinization, however, but rather one of leap-frogging development to exurban sites. The claim can be made that it is not so much that metropolitan life is being forsaken for a return to a small town or rural existence, but rather that the metropolis is actually moving to the countryside. This evidence supports the hypothesis to some extent.

It is interesting to study a specific Sunbelt city, Houston, Texas. Houston is somewhat typical of the Sunbelt. Much of the growth in Houston occurred wish to settle down in a central city that is too reminiscient of the urban mightmare they left up North. And of course the new buildings, commercial service functions, and other vestiges of growth will go to where the new migrants are settling in. Namely, the suburbs. In a dissertation by Rees, an analysis of the Dallas-Ft. Worth metroplex suggested that "suburban and exurban areas" recently experienced a greater influx of branch plants than did the central cities. Robert Firestine, of the University of Texas at Dallas, uses Rees' findings to support his "incubator hypothesis." This states that fledgling plants might first locate in obsolescent space within the central core until they are sufficiently strong to internalize some of their needed support services and thereupon move to more established facilities in outlying parts of the suburbs. Furthermore, some of the growing core cities of the Sunbelt lack the same tradition of "going downtown" to shop as exists in the more long established urban areas. Retailing decentralization in the Sunbelt cities should ultimately surpass that of the nation as a whole. The giant suburban shopping centers have become a well known and familiar scene in many suburbs. This only enforces the grim isolation of a central business district, especially after normal business hours. Old central cities of the Northeast have simply lost their historic locational advantage of having skills, markets, and manpower concentrated in one location. With the great shift to moving goods and people by truck and automobile, and the increasingly complex network of planes, phones, and computers that link numerous distant places together, the population densities of our old cities have become anachronistic. Today all types of modern urban activities, even such supporting services as advertising agencies, law offices, and consulting firms have spread out at lower and more agreeable densities over ever-widening metropolitan regions. Many shopping centers have become the social, cultural, and recreational focal points of their

Gentrification would seem to work against the hypothesis, as these young migrants are moving into a central city and would thus draw some economic activity with them into the core city. Yet it is not so widespread as to actually disprove it. For future study it would be interesting to follow the process of gentrification through the years to see if it has long term possibilities. If such a migration continues over a long period of time it is possible that a new economic vitality could be generated.

The next hypothesis is probably the most controversial of the five hypothesis presented in this paper. It states: The presence of strong public labor union power deters economic growth. From the standpoint of this paper it is hoped to be discovered whether or not unions have strangled the economy of the Northeast. If so, this would have serious implications for the growth of labor unions in the South which is traditionally anti-union. Urban bureaucracies in the Northeast have gone through the process of unionization, making them strong pressure groups within the context of urban government and leading to higher wages. While the higher wages have contributed to the fiscal strain, union-management efforts to formalize roles and procedures would make financial reductions in a budget in the context of a fiscal crisis more difficult. In the event of layoffs, unions tend to advocate seniority as the major layoff criterion. In fact, unions' seniority creates additional management problems and a tendency towards inefficiency. The cutback process could result in the replacement of lower seniority persons in new programs by less qualified but higher seniority persons who have been transferred from the area in which they have accumulated their ^{experience. 38} To the casual observer such an environment will hamstring a local government's handling of fiscal matters, and invite the financial losses that are the hand maidens of urban decay. Productivity can only Wither on the vine and die away as maintenance of the status quo becomes the goal of the entrenched labor union. The 1960s were a period of rapid

growth in the public service unions. By 1971, more than 25% of all state and local government employees (2.7 million) were members of employee organizations. president Kennedy's executive order affirming the right of government workers to collective bargaining had a powerful effect as it encouraged local unions to press for the same rights. This along with the growing strength of unions in helping set prices for items for which the nonunionized must pay was a powerful argument to unionize. Some observers argue that public service unions are useful counterweights to civil service regulations. They stress the tendency of the bureaucracy to filter messages from below, especially those critical of higher-level performance and policy, and believe union power can guarantee better communications. But as aforementioned, unions are basically opposed to the merit system, and could erode what criteria exist, substituting the high god of seniority for means of promotion. The nightmare arises of the combination of staid civil service regulations and unionization procedures producing the worst possible output: a property right to the job without respect to merit, and lifetime tenure as well as first choice of higher-level jobs when they open up. With the union seeking to gain salary increases for its members, one can expect increasing tax burdens on city dwellers to meet those increases. In short, public service unions combined with civil service regulations promise the emerging city higher-priced services with no improvement in quality, higher taxes with no public benefit. The situation is exacerbated by the nature of government work. With the exception of just a few agencies, practically all of government work is labor intensive. Knowing that there is no danger of being replaced by a more efficient machine, government workers have one less reason to be productive, and one more reason to be militant in collective bargaining negotiations. In effect, public employee unions are simply another interest group. Crime, riots, and decay are frequently in the limelight of discussions of urban America, but it is personnel costs that account for most of the expenditures to be found in the typical city's

operating budget. It is not unusual for such costs to represent 60% to 70% of 40 such a budget. Public employee unions are simply another interest group tearing at the political fabric of the country, advocating single issue politics, which is mainly their own self interest. Beyond the range of access points and tools available to other groups, public unions in municipal settings enjoy distinctive opportunities which provide them with a competitive advantage over other pressure groups for the determination of selected issues.

One such opportunity which has analogues but no equals among other interests is the capacity to draw upon the threat or actuality of a public service strike. A range of sensitive public services such as education, transportation, sanitation, and fire and police protection have, when disrupted by strikes or other work stoppages, an immediate impact on the life of a city discernible by large groups of its public. For this large inconvenienced or endangered public the salience of government is temporarily raised. Elected public officials can become the focal point of this awareness and the possible voting retribution it may engender if labor peace and needed service are not quickly restored. In New York City, successive mayors have conducted labor relations with sensitivity to both the possibility of (1) of arousing negative latent public opinion and (2) of antagonizing the unions themselves which are a large force in voting and campaign finance. A second unique advantage to the public union is the collective bargaining process of decision making. The collective bargaining follows a closed access pattern which is inherent in the process borrowed from the private sector and supported by statute as well as practice. In bilateral bargaining only representatives of the union and the employer are acceptable Participants. So-called third parties are excluded from either observation of or participation in negotiations. While the interests of such parties may be affected by the outcome of bilateral negotiations, nonparticipants can neither represent their interests nor observe how they have been handled by public

zeal for efficiency and economy. At a time when other cities were adding employees, he managed to reduce the municipal work force by 30%. At one point he managed $_{\rm t0}$ reduce the city's tax take by 20% and even with persistent inflation the tax load was 3% below the 1970 level. But in doing so he made an enemy of almost every powerful group in town, especially the municipal unions. He was called callous, cruel, ungrateful, regressive, arrogant, and obstructionist. When he took office Flaherty found the same conditions that beset cities all over the Northeast: inefficiency, swollen payrolls, and duplication of effort. In his first year as mayor he replaced nearly all of Pittsburgh's department heads, froze hiring, placed restrictions on the use of overtime, and eliminated 900 jobs. That converted a threatened \$2,000,000 deficit into a \$3,700,000 surplus. A fight with the unions broke out the following year after Flaherty eliminated five driver's jobs in his proposed budget. The drivers had been chauffering pickup trucks for plumbers who installed residential water meters. The plumbers and Teamsters went on strike, being joined by other unions. The walkout grew to 2,000 employees. Flaherty went on the offensive, criticizing the unions on the television. Then with the cameras following him, he lead a volunteer pickup squad for trash collection. Ten days later the unions called off their strike. Despite all the rancor, Flaherty's efforts paid off. The city was able to enjoy an A-1 Moody's rating on its bonds. The experience of Pittsburgh demonstrated that recalcitrant unions can be brought to heel. It is interesting to note that the Sunbelt, especially the South, has a history of anti-unionism. It is not unusual to find right-to-work laws in the state constitutions of several Southern states. With the experiences of the Northeast in mind, one wonders if the status quo should be changed in the Sunbelt. Certainly such laws could be strongly supported on the evidence presented in this paper. The extreme argument of attempting to totally ban or otherwise destroy union activity is a View which goes against the moral fiber of the nation. Joining a union seems

to be a democratic freedom that is inherent in a free society. Yet the experience of the cities of the Northeast cannot be totally ignored. In the last analysis, perhaps the decision lies in the hands of the polity itself. The inhabitants of a city would probably have the final word as to how powerful a municipal union would be, or whether it would exist at all.

The final hypothesis concerns a topic which is frequently in the news limelight. It states: Scarce energy sources lead to an exodus of industry from a central city. This hypothesis needs to be refined some. The point of investigation is whether or not the energy crisis is driving business out of the central cities of the Northeast into the more warmer climes of the Sunbelt. In other words: Scarce energy sources will drive industry from the Northeast to the Sunbelt. Energy will be in the news headlines for some time to come, and businesses may have to consider it just like any other factor of production. The basic structure of America's older cities was built around wood and coal as fuel and around horses, trolleys, and walking as transportation. The newer cities of the Sunbelt are built for the automobile and the truck, and for the culture they represent: easy private transportation, suburbinization, and energy-intense lifestyles. The country is supposed to be experiencing an energy crisis, though there is great disagreeement about what the crisis is, about what its effects will be, and about what implications of that crisis will follow. But in 1966, the United States had only seven years worth of oil left, yet more than a decade later, the oil wells are still pumping. Globally, proven oil reserves have increased tenfold over the past 25 years. There are probably a trillion barrels of oil, more than twice the world's current reserves, remaining to be discovered, and plenty of natural gas. It may be expensive to ⁴⁴ ^{9roduce,} but the resources are available. Where they are is another important matter.

Changes in the worldwide supply and cost of petroleum, induced by the

actions of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, provide the real background for the current energy anxiety. The United States' current current energy imports account for 46% of its total energy consumption. In addition, the long anticipated development of nuclear energy has floundered. Capital costs of nuclear plants have soared, and it is arguable whether nuclear power is cheaper than conventional fuels or many forms of conservation. The arguments about the safety of nuclear plants are becoming increasingly rancorous while other debates spring up about the optimum method of disposing of nuclear wastes. Coal is abundant in the country, but it represents a variety of health, safety, environmental, and regional political problems. Solar heating panels and photovoltaic cells are at present uneconomic relative to equivalent petroleum energy. Further water development raises major environmental and landuse issues; wind and wave power generation are largely experimental; the use of plants, grains, and organic wastes to produce solid, liquid, and gas fuels is uneconomic or experimental. Conservation implies restraints on lifestyles and independence. Consumers have demanded rapid energy growth to fuel economic and lifestyle improvements. Thus in addition to being an economic problem involving resources and technology, energy is also a political, organizational, and cultural 45 problem.

The implications of higher energy prices are large for the future of mass-scale, single-family housing. The free-standing, family-sized dwelling is the most energy intense form of housing. The fact cannot be lost on an observer that such housing dominates the Sunbelt. Conditions of higher energy prices and low market control suggests trends towards decreased energy require-46 ments: apartments, condiminiums, and more concentrated urban living. Such events might stop an exodus from the central cities of the Northeast, at least not to Northeast suburbs. Moreover, this could mean that the cities of the Sunbelt might not ever experience great population losses to the suburbs because the costs of commutation from suburb to city will become prohibitive. The American phenomenon known as the "car culture" with the resulting effect of the automobile on urban form has been obvious and immense. The newer cities of the South and Southwest are automobile towns, designed and built to fit the needs and rhythms of suburban living. Allied with the car culture is the rapid growth in truck freight transport. The speed, convenience, and versatility of trucks have been important in the growth and development of the newer American cities, encouraging the spread out and fast-paced lifestyle. But again, trucks are energy intensive, and of $\frac{47}{47}$

Practically all of the aforementioned data applies to the vibrant cities of the Sumbelt, not the sick, decaying corpses that are the cities of the Northeast. From a personal analysis, the information forbodes ill for the Sunbelt and its suburbs. With the car so firmly entrenched in the Sunbelt lifestyle, scarce energy supplies, which drive up the price of the energy, will hit the Sunbelt hard. Instead of living in the suburbs and commuting to work in the city, families may very well have to live in the city to avoid crunching energy bills. There is the possibility that one could seek work in the suburb itself and eliminate commuting. However, there simply is not a large enough number of jobs in a suburb to fulfill all the requests that would come. If large numbers of suburbanites were able to work and live in the suburb, it would spell doom for the central city, it becoming in effect ^a twentieth century ghost town. The fate of the cities in the Northeast would probably fare the same, although their mass transit systems are better. The cities are ^{seemingly} are on the horns of a dilemma.

But as things now stand, expensive energy prices can only drive people back to ^{the} city so long as the suburbs do not have the capacity for becoming capable of ^{meeting} all the employment demands of its inhabitants. The same will probably hold ^{true} for industry as it seeks to cut down on transportation costs. Locating within ^a large city, closer to the avenues of interstate commerce, would allow just that. ^{However}, this does not necessarily mean that the decaying cities of the Northeast

have established the feasibility of self-contained and ecologically self sufficient communities. Less dramatic tendencies include movements back to rural communities or to small towns to capture elements of both lifestyle and alternative energy supply. Examples of lifestyle effects include small or semi-industrial operations which avoid some of the anomie of mass industrialization. The alternative energy supply would include a return to the use of wood in some areas for home heating, the revival of backyard gardening, and access to solar energy assits use becomes more feasible. In the United States these developments are marginal to be sure, but dissatisfaction with both the pressure of urban life and the demise of rural life, along with higher energy prices, create pressure towards such developments. There may be the emergence of a new rural society, but it will be a society in which the availability of communication prevents the isolation characteristic of traditional rural societies. It could be a global village. Such conditions would be more readily adaptable to the Sumbelt whose climate is much milder and warmer than the northern regions. In addition, the Sunbelt could count on its political muscle with the federal government to provide any necessary financial aid to stimulate and nurse the development of the infrastructure necessary for this vision of the future. As aforementioned, the dominant power on Capital Hill seems to reside in the southern congressional delegations. Aside from the political situation, the Sunbelt, abundant in still unmarked, fresh land, is perfectly suited for the task. Further-More, it has the most important raw material, namely the people. The migrants who come to the Sunbelt are, often as not, skilled rather than unskilled, urban ^{tather} than rural, and white rather than a racial minority. In the main, they Were not pushed by abject poverty to the Sunbelt. They did not move to the slums, they moved very quickly to suburban-type housing. They did not represent ^{Ugeless} labor power to the emerging Sunbelt cities; they represented profitable, integratable workers. They did not represent a gross infusion of high cost,

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left the Sumbelt; it has merely produced gold in different, more often feverish 50 one image that never leaves the Sunbelt is that of its aura of success and economic growth. This spirit can infect all who come there. Yet it has been shown that not all will find that pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Personal disappointment breeds frustration. This frustration can be a major ingredient of crime. It could be a source of union retrenchment in collective bargaining. It could lead to opposition of necessary changes in lifestyle in the face of energy scarcity.

This paper has attempted to examine why cities decay. To be truthful, no firm answers have been provided. Yet tendencies and other evidence have been mcovered which support some of the ideas presented here. The urban crisis is relatively young, having been in the public mind for only about 20 years. One idea that needs critical examination is the mindless enthusiasm for growth which infects the Sunbelt. Too many local government officials and Chambers of Commerce in the Sunbelt have sworn undying devotion to the concept of continued business expansion as a way of life for their cities. The encouragement of boom town conditions may very well bring with them undesirable side effects. The one effect that has been given considerable attention in this paper is the The rewards of the Sunbelt are not spread equally feeling of frustration. among the populace. There will always be those who feel they are getting the This resentment will fuel a lot of angry frustration that will have consequences for the society in general. A city needs to adjust to change, and this adjustment is severely hampered if the change is occurring ^{at} a very rapid rate. Moreover, change is not always necessary. Bigger is Not better. Sunbelt officials need to reexamine their priorities and see what is actually in the best interest for their region. Hopefully, some basic Buideposts on how to develop and then manage a city can be established for those who work, manage, and live in the Sunbelt. The answers may not come

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easily, and they may not be what some will want to hear. But the answers do need to come. The fate of the Sunbelt rests upon them. In effect, it is time to say that the quality of life is important, and that the quality cannot be defined only in terms of a profit/loss statement.

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