Consolidation, Local Government, and Urban Service Delivery: What's Really Going On?

Suzanne Leland

University of North Carolina Charlotte

Jill Norton and

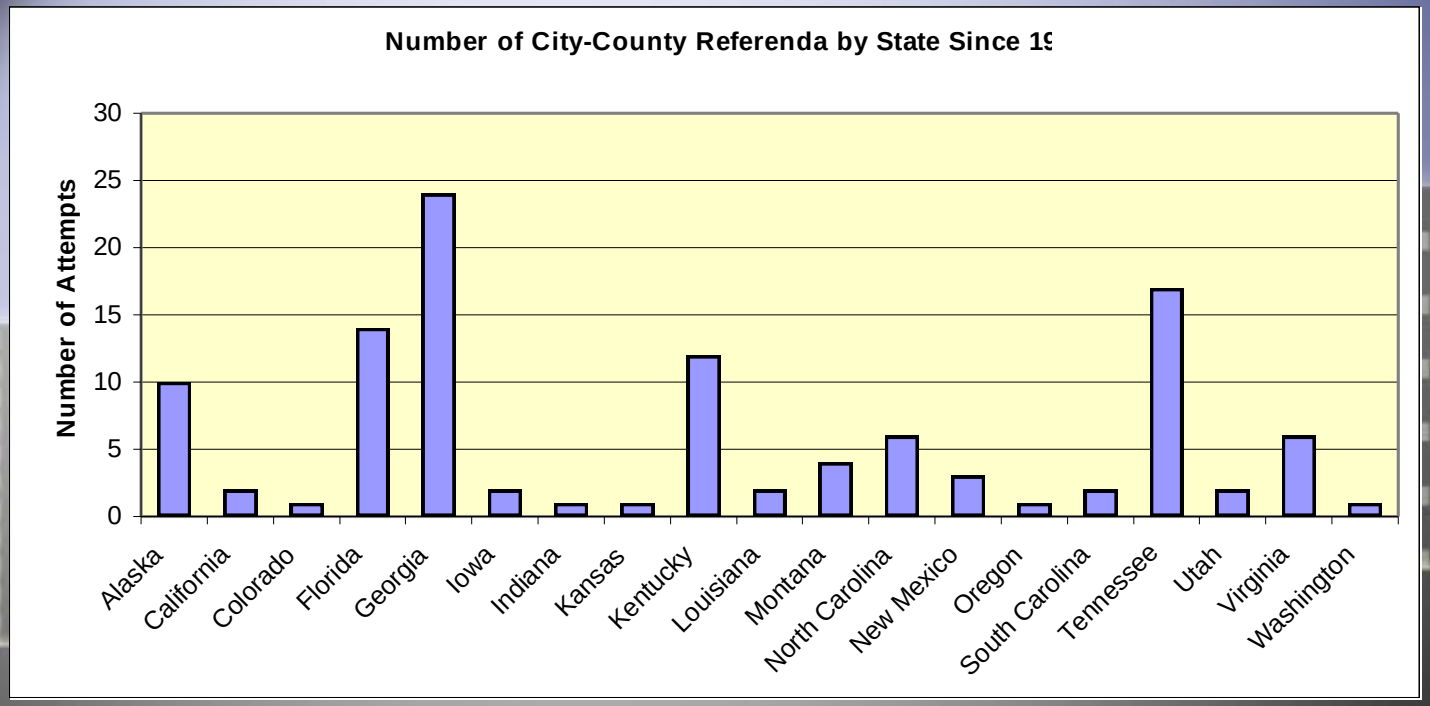
Mark S. Rosentraub

Cleveland State University

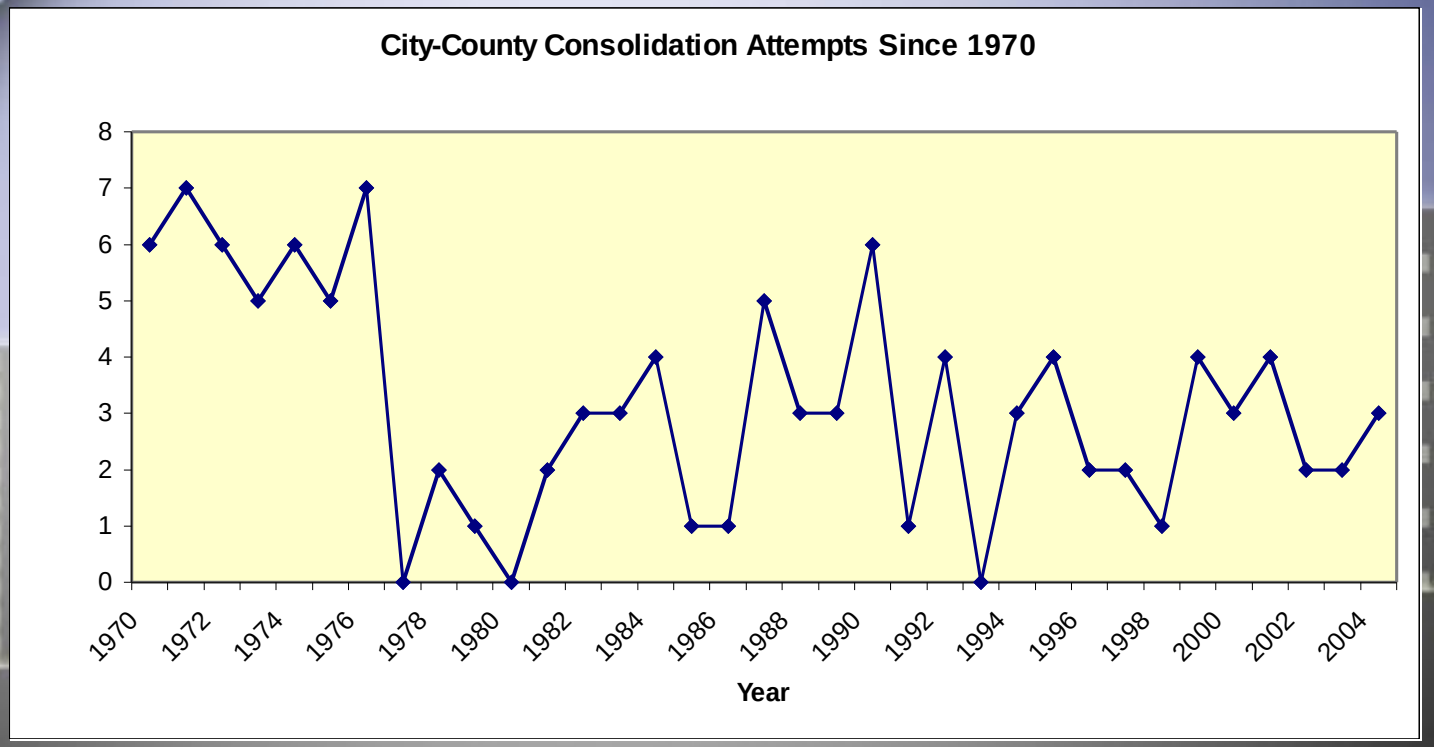
Paper's Origins

- A Don Phares E-Mail
- Suzanne's Observation -- Anytime One Mentions Consolidation, Crowds Gather
- My Observations From My Recent Homes:
  - UniGov (Indianapolis) sold a reality that did not exist and was not intended
  - Cleveland was intent on beating itself up that it needed consolidation when it fact it had already achieved things UniGov longed to see exist
  - There is far more going on in terms of cooperation and regionalism in local government administration than many realize

On Going Interest



On Going Interest II



Some Well Known Illustrations Of The Confusion That Exists

- UniGov -- first urban service delivery consolidation 30 years after passage
- UniGov -- created to permit greater debt levels for economic development
- UniGov -- economic development define to be downtown redevelopment
- UniGov -- economic development, planning, and zoning moved to county level (some exceptions on zoning for neighborhoods, included cities, excluded cities, etc.)

Confusion -- Part II

- UniGov -- 9 fire departments, 11 police departments, sheriff, 9 school districts, 3 park systems, contracting for police services permitted
- UniGov -- more than 80 different taxing jurisdictions within Marion County
- UniGov -- originally no real county-wide tax mechanisms (other than traditional county property tax)
- UniGov and Race -- An issue that must be considered
- UniGov -- consolidation masquerading as Tiebout's dream world?

Confusion -- Part III

- Consolidation, Race & Class
- Survey of national experts on UniGov's impact:
  - Improved efficiencies
  - Reduced inequities
  - No Changes On Taxes
  - Better economic development
  - Lower transaction costs for business

Greater Cleveland -- "No Great Region Would Have Us"

- The real home of the G. Marx joke, "I would never join a club that would have me as a member"
- Usual array of frustrations with leadership
- Declining population
- Job losses; drastic loss of manufacturing jobs
- Loss of Fortune 500 firms
- Is city/county consolidation the 'magic pill' for Greater Cleveland?

Confusion, Part IV

- Brings us to the 4th part of the confusion
- Some fragmented areas growing quite rapidly
- Dallas/Fort Worth, Los Angeles, New York region
- Does consolidation work only in slow growth or declining areas?
- Do fragmented areas really have no regionalism or service consolidation/cooperation?

Saving Greater Cleveland

- County Consolidation -- frustrations with county leadership, feuds with Cleveland
- Class and race divisions
- 57 cities in Cuyahoga County
- 98 percent of the population growth in suburban counties comes from people leaving Cuyahoga County
- Usual levels of political conflicts, personalities
- Inner ring suburb challenge

Greater Cleveland and Regionalism: Facts On The Ground

- Earnings Tax
- 100,000+ workers in downtown
- University Circle, health complexes
- Port Authority and economic development
- Regional Transportation Authority (RTA)
- Greater Cleveland Partnership and its support for Cleveland schools and redevelopment

Greater Cleveland and Regionalism: II

- Metroparks and the Emerald Necklace
- Gateway (Jacobs Field and Quicken Arena)
- Water and Sewer Services
- County Level Financing
- Several Merged School Districts
- County investment for downtown assets
- Role of business elite, property taxes

The Academic Community

- Local government is a complex world
- Parks and Oakerson, 1989
- Thompson, 1994
- Nunn and Rosentraub, 1997
- Leland and Thurmaier, 2005
- Savitch and Vogel, 1994-2002
- Phares, et. al. 2004

An Article or Book Chapter

- The theoretical debate: Tiebout, efficiency, and benefit radii
- The political debate: improved representation and efficacy
- The empirical record:
  - Indianapolis, Cleveland, Charlotte Louisville, Toronto, Miami, Jacksonville, Knoxville,Nashville

Where We Are, Where Can We Go

- Using practice to inform theory
- Illustrating forms and structures for metropolitan governance
- Illustrate options, possibilities, and their impacts on governance, development, efficacy

Your Guidance and Help

- Now we need your help