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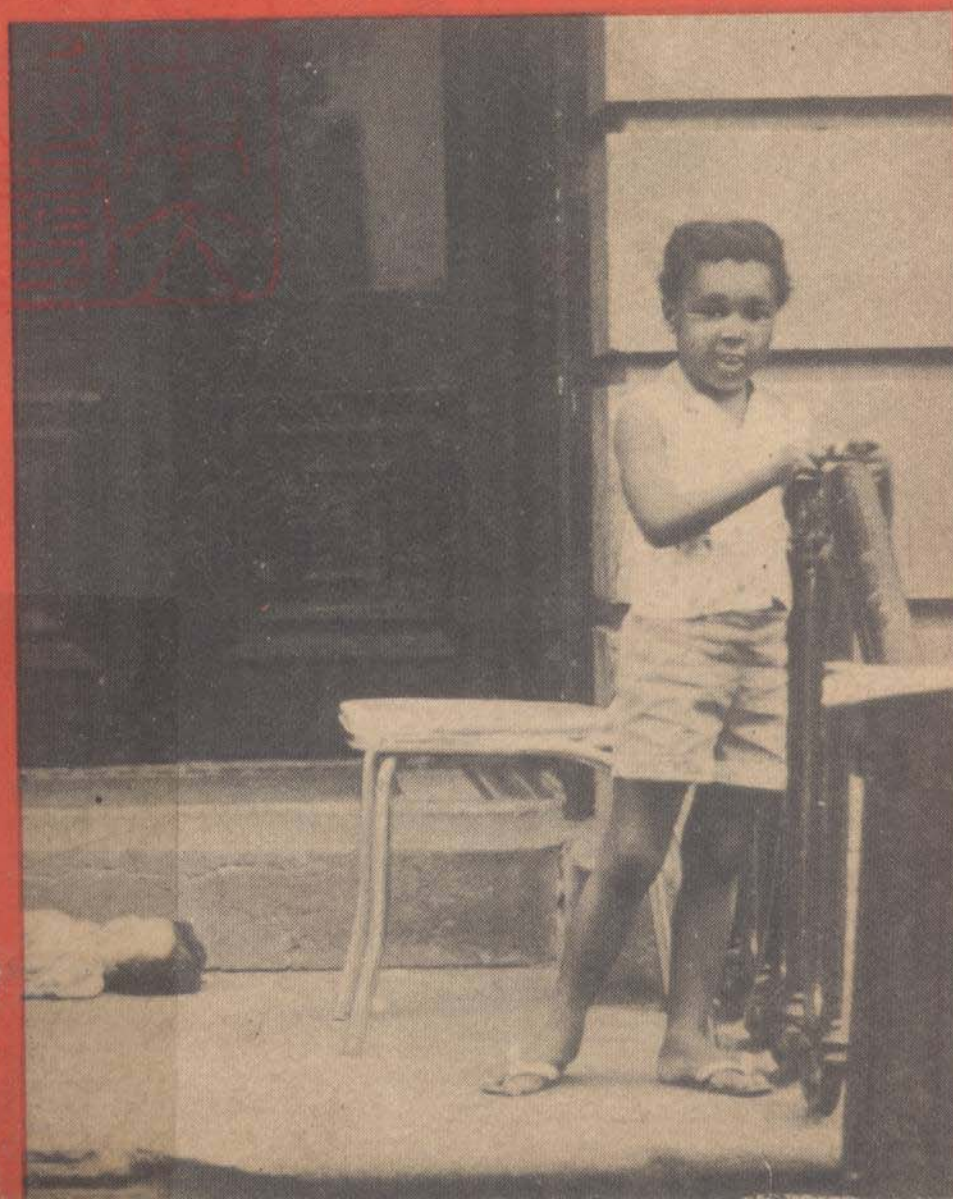


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The Newcomers

Negroes and Puerto Ricans
in a Changing Metropolis

OSCAR HANDLIN



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THE NEWCOMERS

NEGROES AND PUERTO RICANS
IN A CHANGING METROPOLIS

By Oscar Handlin



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THE NEWCOMERS



OSCAR HANDLIN was born in New York City in 1915, received the B.A. degree from Brooklyn College and the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Harvard University, where he has taught for the past twenty years and where he is now Director of the Center for the Study of the History of Liberty in America.

Professor Handlin's writing has focused on the social history of the United States. His first book, *Boston's Immigrants* (1941), was awarded the Dunning Prize of the American Historical Association. In 1952 he won the Pulitzer Prize for History with *The Uprooted*. Other published works include *Commonwealth: A Study of the Role of Government in the American Economy*, written in collaboration with his wife, Mary E. Handlin (1947); *This Was America* (1949); *The American People in the Twentieth Century* (1954); *Chance or Destiny* (1955); *Race and Nationality in American Life* (1957); *Al Smith and His America* (1958); *Immigration as a Factor in American History* (1959). Professor Handlin was also one of the editors of the *Harvard Guide to American History* and is the editor of the *Library of American Biography*, eighteen volumes of which have been published.

NEW YORK METROPOLITAN REGION STUDY

Raymond Vernon, Director

Max Hall, Editor

Undertaken by the Graduate School of Public Administration, Harvard University, for the Regional Plan Association, Inc.

These books constitute the most thorough existing analysis of the present economic condition, the indicated course of development, and the probable future of the New York Metropolitan Region, the archetype of the American metropolitan community. The findings are meaningful for metropolitan areas throughout the United States, since they deal with the most urgent problems confronting American communities today.

1. ANATOMY OF A METROPOLIS, by Edgar M. Hoover and Raymond Vernon
2. MADE IN NEW YORK, by Roy B. Helfgott, W. Eric Gustafson, and James M. Hund, with an introduction by Max Hall
3. THE NEWCOMERS, by Oscar Handlin
4. WAGES IN THE METROPOLIS, by Martin Segal
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8. 1400 GOVERNMENTS, by Robert C. Wood
9. METROPOLIS 1985, by Raymond Vernon

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Technical supplement: PROJECTION OF A METROPOLIS, by Barbara R. Berman, Benjamin Chinitz, and Edgar M. Hoover

All books in the New York Metropolitan Region Study are published by the Harvard University Press, Cambridge 38, Massachusetts.

For the Memory of
ELLIOT E. COHEN
who was ever eager
to understand American society

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I profited also from the opportunity to discuss the problems of this work with scholars from various disciplines at three conferences, at the Merrill Center for Economics in June 1957; with the Inter-agency Research Committee of the Community Council of New York City in November 1957, and with a group convened by the Study in August 1958. For the contents of the book, however, I am of course solely responsible.

As so often in the past, I am indebted to Mary Flug Handlin for devoted collaboration. In the preparation of the manuscript, I profited from the efficiency and the patience of Patricia Will, Dorothy Summers, and Pauline Bender.

Oscar Handlin

Cambridge, Massachusetts
May 15, 1959

FOREWORD

This is one of a series of books on the forces that shape metropolitan areas. In particular, the series has to do with the forces that shape the largest and most complex metropolitan area in the United States, a 22-county expanse which takes in parts of three states but which, for convenience, we have termed the New York Metropolitan Region.

In 1956, the Regional Plan Association, Inc., a nonprofit research and planning agency whose purpose is to promote the coordinated development of these 22 counties, requested the Graduate School of Public Administration of Harvard University to undertake a three-year study of the Region. The challenging task was to analyze the key economic and demographic features of the Region and to project them to 1965, 1975, and 1985.

The resulting studies are reports to the Regional Plan Association. At the same time, they are designed to be of service to a much broader audience. Most Americans now live in metropolitan areas; indeed, ever-increasing proportions of the world's populations are gravitating to metropolitan clusters. Their well-being depends to a considerable extent on how these areas develop. Yet the scholar's understanding of the currents underlying the rise of such areas seems grossly inadequate.

As a study of these underlying currents, this project is neither a blueprint for action nor an analysis of metropolitan government. It has no recommendations to make about the

physical structure of the Region or about the form or activities of the governmental bodies there. At the same time, it is a necessary prelude to future planning studies of the Region and to well considered recommendations for governmental action. Its end product is an analysis of the Region's probable development, assuming that the economic and demographic forces in sight follow their indicated course and assuming that the role of government is largely limited to existing policies.

The results of the Study, it is hoped, will be applied in many ways. Governments and enterprises in the Region should be in a better position to plan their future programs if they become more closely aware of the economic environment in which they may expect to operate. Other metropolitan areas, it is already evident, will benefit from the methodology and the conclusions which the Study has developed.

From the first, there has been a general recognition that the main part of the Study would have to be done by a group located within the New York Metropolitan Region and devoted exclusively to the project. Such a group was assembled in New York. The work that followed was a complex partnership. The New York staff functioned in close harness with members of the Harvard University faculty. It drew on the faculties of other universities, including Columbia University, Fordham University, Hofstra College, New York University, and Rutgers University. It obtained the help of dozens of governmental organizations in the Region and literally hundreds of private groups and individuals. It made use of the materials which the Regional Plan Association had painstakingly pulled together in prior years.

Each book in the series has a place in the total structure of the Study; yet each is designed to be a complete work in itself. The final report, containing the synthesis and projections of the Study, is scheduled for publication sometime in 1960.

It is not easy to account for all the elements that went into the making of this book nor of the others in the series. The Regional Plan Association performed an indispensable function in conceiving and sponsoring the idea of a study.

The Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund generously provided the financial support. The usual formula in such a situation obviously applies: credit for the Study's results must be shared with those who helped to bring it about, but the onus of error or omission lies with us.

The several volumes in the series bear the names of their principal authors. The undertaking as a whole has been under the direction of Raymond Vernon. He is responsible for the final report and substantial parts of other studies, and his guidance is evident throughout the series.

EDWARD S. MASON
for the Graduate School
of Public Administration,
Harvard University.

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INTRODUCTION

It is often necessary in social science to obscure reality in the interest of clarity of analysis. The generalizations that make prediction possible cannot simply be elicited from the complex of interrelationships which constitute the world of actuality. It is not possible, for instance, to understand the forces that operate within a modern community by regarding it in its totality. Those forces will yield to analysis only if they are isolated as discrete variables and treated apart from the social context within which they are in actuality imbedded.

This procedure, essential as it is, nevertheless also presents the danger that it may be confused with reality. The models which emerge from the process of analysis and generalization are not identical with any actual situation; to serve usefully as instruments of prediction they must be measured against the complex elements of the situation excluded in the process of the analysis.

To study a community like New York it is necessary to deal with its components as if they were integers altogether comparable one with another. One can measure growth, for example, only through such abstractions as "population," a term which implies that the units within it are sufficiently alike to be counted. Yet it would be deceptive in speaking of the population of a city to forget that it is actually compounded of numerous dissimilar groups which are themselves but congeries of unique individuals. It is es-

sential in dealing with the city's population to keep distinctly in mind the respects in which its elements are and are not comparable.

Among the factors that differentiate the residents of the twentieth-century American metropolis are the cultural and social dissimilarities derived from the heterogeneity of their ethnic origins. Since urban growth has been largely the product of immigration from outside the city limits, a diverse and mixed population has always been characteristic of these places. Differences in origin have influenced many aspects of urban life; and it will be difficult to explain the development of the past or to project that of the future without taking account of those differences.

It is particularly necessary to do so in the case of New York, one of the most cosmopolitan of American cities. In any consideration of the future of the metropolitan region* of which New York is the center, the question inevitably arises of what effect the distinctive composition of its population will have.

At the moment, that question is most immediately raised by the growing number of Negroes and Puerto Ricans in the area. The problems of adjustment of these recent newcomers to the city have produced a sense of shock among many of their neighbors who regard their difficulties as altogether unprecedented in the development of the metropolis. The shock, curiously, is as great among New Yorkers who are themselves children or grandchildren of immigrants as among the descendants of the oldest stocks.¹

The dismay with which these groups are viewed is in part due to the fact that they involve the city in the question of color; and that has serious connotations to all Americans in the 1950's. But, more important in explaining the shock at the presence of the Negroes and Puerto Ricans is the inability to view these people in the perspective of

* The region, as defined for this study, consists of twenty-two counties ranging from Fairfield County, Connecticut, on the northeast to Monmouth County, New Jersey, on the southwest; this area includes the seventeen counties of the Standard Metropolitan Area as defined by the Bureau of the Census and, in addition, five outlying counties.