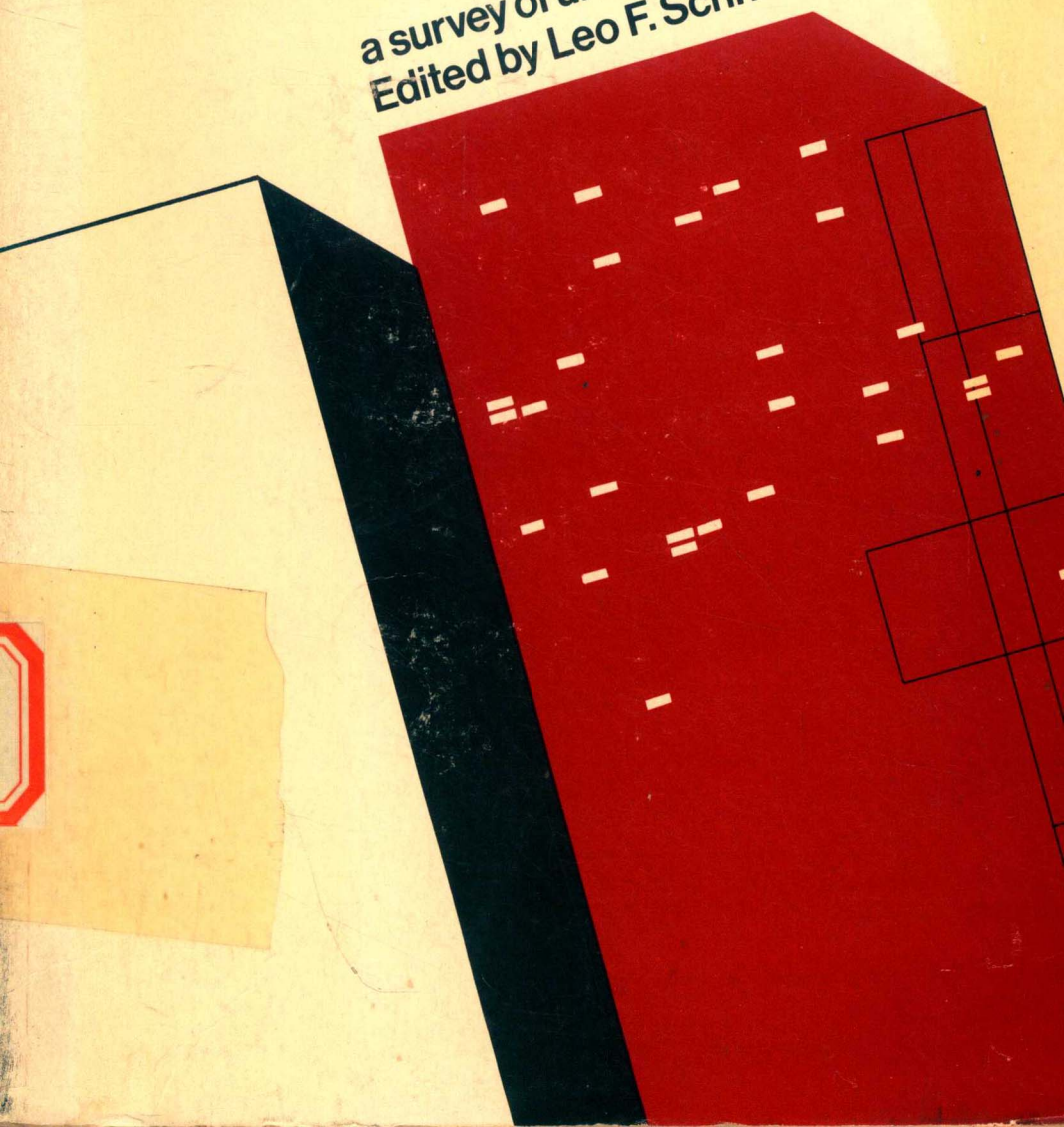


# social science and the city:

a survey of urban research.  
Edited by Leo F. Schnore



# Social Science and the City

*A SURVEY OF URBAN RESEARCH*

Edited by **LEO F. SCHNORE**



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FOR  
BARBARA HARRIS,  
*Who Knows Why,  
Or Should*

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Zita R. Atkinson  
April 1971

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## Preface

□ THIS VOLUME REPRESENTS A SURVEY of some of the major urban studies conducted by social scientists in the twenty-odd years since World War II. It is more than a mere inventory, however, for a number of the chapters are focused on research needs rather than existing accomplishments. In most instances, the emphasis is upon *applied*, empirical research, or "action-oriented" studies that offer practical guidelines to the social engineer.

In some respects, this book may be regarded as a companion to *The Study of Urbanization*, edited by Philip M. Hauser and Leo F. Schnore for the Committee on Urbanization of the Social Science Research Council, and published by John Wiley and Sons in 1965. The need for such a follow-up, stressing applied research, was one of the themes that recurred again and again during a four-day Chicago conference based on the Hauser-Schnore work. Another related theme was that the earlier book was very parochial in a geographic sense.

Participants in the conference, 33 in number, included the members of the Committee on Urbanization, the other contributors to the volume who were not members of the committee itself, a few American guests, and 13 scholars from outside the United States. . . .

There was widespread consensus among the participants on the need for systematic, comparative inquiry into the problems of urbanization. It was generally agreed that *The Study of Urbanization* itself represents a somewhat parochial and ethnocentric view of research on urbanization and the problems of cities, although it was recognized that the original charge to the committee was to survey the state of the field, particularly in the United States. . . .

The desirability exists, therefore, for a number of further conferences oriented toward more intensive exploration of particular problems; toward the applied aspects of scholarly research on the city; toward the more intensive examination of issues on a comparative basis as revealed in one or several countries, in contrast to a world view; and toward the expansion of interdisciplinary communication particularly in those fields characterized by a marked cultural bias, on the one hand, or by lack of communication among regional specialists within it, on the other (Ginsburg, 1965b, pp. 49-50).

The reference in this passage to work directed "toward the applied aspects of scholarly research on the city" is the basis for this book. The present volume has certainly not corrected for "American parochialism," but it does appear to represent a large step in the direction of removing the other limitation mentioned above—an absence of attention to policy issues.

The scope and limits of this book are readily apparent and can be easily identified. It attempts a survey of the various social science disciplines directly engaged in urban studies, and enumerates research accomplishments as well as pointing up research needs.

Structurally, the book is made up of five pairs of papers. The first pair of chapters comprises essays by Leo F. Schnore and Eric E. Lampard on "Social Science and the City: A Survey of Research Needs," and by Lyle W. Shannon and Magdaline Shannon on "The Assimilation of Migrants to Cities." The second pair deals with social psychology and social welfare and consists of a chapter by Anselm L. Strauss on "Strategies for Discovering Urban Theory," and a chapter by Eleanor P. Wolf and Charles N. Lebeaux on "Class and Race in the Changing City." The third pair turns to economics and regional science; Wilbur R. Thompson has contributed a chapter looking "Toward an Urban Economics," and John F. Kain has summarized recent research on "Urban Travel Behavior." The fourth

pair takes up history and geography; Charles N. Glaab provides "Historical Perspective on Urban Development Schemes," and Harold M. Mayer surveys "Urban Geography and City and Metropolitan Planning." The last pair of chapters consists of essays by a political scientist and a political sociologist; Norton E. Long's chapter takes up "Political Science and the City," and Robert R. Alford surveys some recent research in "The Comparative Study of Urban Politics." In almost every instance, the first chapter in a pair deals with general problems, and the second chapter takes up specifics. All of the essays, it should be noted, are original contributions.

Finished research provides the focus for some of the chapters; the best example is the chapter by Kain, which is essentially a survey of work on urban travel behavior that has already been accomplished. In other cases, there is a frank confession concerning existing gaps in the research literature, and a concomitant emphasis upon research needs. The chapter by Strauss constitutes a good example of the latter approach. Whether one or the other slant is taken, however, there is close and sustained attention to *methodological* matters. Although the volume is not intended to be some kind of "handbook" of urban research methods in the social sciences, there is much here that will reward the professional scholar or student who is interested in *doing* urban research. Such a methodological emphasis, of course, is quite natural (and perhaps inevitable) in a series of essays by a distinguished group of research-oriented scholars interested in various aspects of the city.

It should be added that the stress on applied research mentioned earlier is not overemphasized to the point where "basic" or "fundamental" research is somehow neglected. As Schnore and Lampard assert in Chapter 1, "Serious scientific research must continue to be concerned with fundamental questions of understanding the whole urban phenomenon and not just those aspects that currently appear to be problems to the social engineers." This statement reflects a long-standing bias in the social sciences. Indeed, it would be unfortunate if administrative demands or planning needs alone were to dictate the efforts of social scientists interested in the city. For one thing, there are a number of pressing urban problems (e.g., air and water pollution) in which social scientists have very little interest and sharply limited expertise. It is highly questionable whether they could contribute anything of value on these topics.