

SMALL BUSINESSMEN AND URBAN RENEWAL
POLITICS: A CASE STUDY

by 1264

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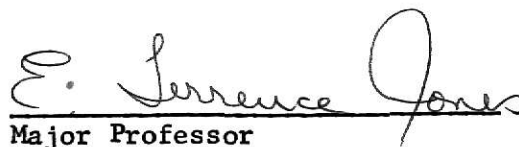
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INTRODUCTION

The vast and complex problems facing our large urban centers are familiar in at least their more general terms to most informed persons. Civil disorders, most notably the riots of the past four summers, have focused national attention on our metropolitan areas. Scholarly observers, in an attempt to explain the riots and the critical disaffections of many ghetto residents, have impressed upon the audience of the mass media the danger and enormity of the problems. From all sides one is told that the disturbing conditions that exist are the end result of social processes that have been going on virtually unheeded since before the turn of the century.¹ Moreover, despite the suggestions of some political candidates that there are clear and relatively simple solutions to these problems, more knowledgeable and objective students of urban America warn us that problems of such scope and complexity will take at least ten to twenty years to alleviate.

In the anxiety over the "crisis of the cities" the less pressing, but no less real, problems of the smaller city are afforded little attention. Yet, the cities in the 25,000 to 50,000 population range are experiencing the early stages of the processes that

¹See, for example, Raymond Vernon, The Myth and the Reality of Our Urban Problems (Joint Center for Urban Studies of M.I.T. and Harvard University: Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1962), pp. 2-4; and James R. Lowe, Cities in a Race with Time (Random House: New York, 1967), pp. 7-14.