

## F O R E W O R D

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Professor Gottmann, in his introduction to this volume, has made plain the nature of his undertaking and the precise significance he attaches to the term *Megalopolis*. I hope that his own definition will be heeded; for the term is so awe-inspiring, and the phenomenon it describes so dramatic and novel, that it is very easy for misconceptions to take root. While this work was in progress, I found the most universal impression among those who heard of it for the first time to be that of a monstrous city, a kind of indefinite extension of Times Square up and down the whole Atlantic seaboard.

This book is about something entirely different. Dr. Gottmann is too careful and too imaginative a scholar to assume that trends are running all in one direction, or to take it for granted that man is doomed to be crushed under an environment of his making. He sees the Northeastern seaboard of the United States as a development of immense significance, typically modern in its urbanized concentration, yet containing balances and counterforces which give it variety within its overall unity. This area, he says, “may be considered the cradle of a new order in the organization of inhabited space.” The fact that the new order is, in his words, “still far from orderly” should not blind us to the possibilities that exist within this form of human settlement – nor absolve us of the responsibility to correct its deficiencies.

In planning a study of the growth of a great urban region, so characteristic of our times, it seemed to the Trustees of the Twentieth Century Fund a good idea to seek out the contribution of a geographer,

with his own method of combining the insights of various disciplines; and of a foreigner, who could look on a representative American phenomenon with fresh eyes. Dr. Gottmann, a professor at the University of Paris and one of Europe's leading geographers, had become familiar with the United States through his work at the Institute for Advanced Study, in Princeton, and his important study *Virginia at Mid-Century*. It seemed natural to the Fund, and inviting to him, that he should proceed with the challenging project that resulted in *Megalopolis*.

The book deals with a specific area; it treats that area as a unique development, with its own origin and destiny. But it is the hope of the Fund that the insights thus gained will be found applicable to other areas, both in this country and abroad, where many of the tendencies which shaped Megalopolis are now creating rapid growth and change.

The book was well received in its original hardcover edition as published by the Twentieth Century Fund. It now goes forth to still wider usefulness in this paperbound edition, which contains the entire text and all the illustrations of the original, made possible by the interest and initiative of the M.I.T. Press. To the author once more, and now also to the Press, the Twentieth Century Fund extends its thanks.

AUGUST HECKSCHER, *Director*  
*The Twentieth Century Fund*

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# Megalopolis

## The Urbanized Northeastern Seaboard of the United States

By: Jean Gottmann

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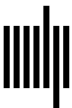
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