POVERTY AND PARTICIPATION: VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION AFFILIATION IN A LOW-INCOME POPULATION

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ABSTRACT

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IN A LOW-INCOME POPULATION

By

Robert M. McCann, Jr.

This study examines the membership and participation of low-income respondents in voluntary associations. Three dimensions of participation are examined: (1) the fact of membership, (2) office holding, and (3) belonging to two or more such organizations. The study is a secondary analysis of a random sample of 221 respondents, drawn from a low-income area within a middle-sized industrial city. The respondents were found to be active in voluntary associations; 45 per cent claimed at least one membership, 21 per cent claimed two or more memberships, and 20 per cent stated they held or had held office. Educational attainment, occupational prestige, and residential stability were found to be strongly related to membership and office holding. Respondents living alone were found to be more likely to belong and more likely to hold office. High family income was found to be related to office holding. Blue-collar Negroes were found to be more active participators than their white counterparts. Members were found to differ from nonmembers in certain important respects. They were found to have greater social awareness and were more adept at

solving problems. They were more aware of community problems and were more successful in dealing with social service agencies. Voluntary associations were observed to provide integrating and socializing functions. A sub-sample of respondents living below the poverty level was also examined. Affiliation and participation was found to be substantial in this group. Poor members differed from poor non-members in the same way that members were observed to differ from non-members.

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Robert M. McCann, Jr.

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INTRODUCTION

This study is concerned with formal voluntary associations, and in particular, with the manner of participation exhibited by residents of low income neighborhoods. It examines the organizational membership of low-income residents and explores the differences between those who participate in voluntary associations and those who do not. The characteristics of members and non-members are examined and certain important effects of membership are discussed.

Voluntary associations can be defined as organizations whose membership is comprised of individuals who have become affiliated by personal choice or individual volition.[1] Most members are not paid to participate and members are not physically coerced into participation. Voluntary associations can be contrasted with work organizations, where most members are paid to participate, and with coercive organizations, where most members are physically coerced into participating.[2]

Visitors to America are often surprised at the

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[1]This definition is similar to that used by Smith. See David Horton Smith, "The Importance of Formal Voluntary Organizations for Society," Sociology and Social Research, 50, (July, 1966), p. 483.

[2]Distinctions used in the definition are based on the analysis of Amitai Etzioni, A Comparative Analysis of Complex Organizations, New York: The Free Press, A Division of the Macmillan Co., 1961, Chapters 2 and 3.

number and variety of voluntary associations found in American communities, and the degree of involvement of Americans in these organizations.[3]

The huge number of voluntary associations found in contemporary society, the number and variety of goals and objectives finding expression through voluntary associations, and the great numbers of people involved in such organizations has been well demonstrated.[4] It has been well established that a great many Americans belong to voluntary associations. Wright and Hyman, utilizing a national, random sample of 2,379 adults, found that 36 per cent held a membership in at least one association.[5] This study did not consider union membership or church membership in arriving at this figure. These students also found that of those belonging to associations, 17 per cent belonged to two or more. Most researchers have found a higher rate of organizational affiliation than that reported by Wright and Hyman. Axelrod, for example, utilized a random sample of the adult population of

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[3]See for example, Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, New York: Vintage Books, 1954, Vol II.

[4]See, Murray Hausknecht, The Joiners, New York: The Bedminister Press, 1962. See also, Encyclopedia of Associations, third edition, Volume I: National Organizations of the United States, Detroit, Michigan: Gale Research Company, 1961.

[5]Charles R. Wright and Herbert H. Hyman, "Voluntary Association Memberships of American Adults: Evidence from National Sample Surveys," American Sociological Review, 23 (June, 1958), pp. 284-294.

metropolitan Detroit and found that 63 per cent of the residents belonged to one or more associations.[6] Axelrod included union membership but not church membership. Similarly, Goldhammer distributed a questionnaire to approximately 5,500 Chicago residents and found that 70 per cent of the men, and 60 per cent of the women in his sample, belonged to at least one association.[7] Goldhammer considered union membership but not church membership in arriving at these figures.

The lower rate of organizational participation reported by Wright and Hyman is probably a result of the nature of their sample. Wright and Hyman utilized data obtained from two national surveys and they included rural respondents in their samples. The rural mileaux is not as condusive to the formation of voluntary associations as is the urban.[8] It has been demonstrated that rural residents are not extensive joiners.[9]

Not all members of associations are equally active.

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[6]Morris Axelrod, "Urban Structure and Social Participation," American Sociological Review, 21 (February, 1956), pp. 13-18.

[7]Goldhammer's sample was not selected on a probability-design basis, and 22 per cent of the 5,500 schedules were distributed to persons known to be members of at least one voluntary association. He relates that because of the nature of the sample, the membership rates he found are almost unquestionably the maximum possible number of urbanites with affiliations. See, Herbert Goldhammer, "Some Factors Affecting Participation in Voluntary Associations," in E. W. Burgess and D. Bogue, (eds.) Contributions to Urban Sociology, Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press, 1964

Although the number of persons claiming organizational membership appears to be quite large, it should be noted that voluntary associations often have the active participation of only a minority of their members.[10] Axelrod, for example, noted that while membership rates were high, one-quarter of those claiming affiliation had not attended a meeting, and one-third only rarely attended meetings of associations of which they were members.[11]

Little research has been completed in which an attempt has been made to study the relationship between area of residence and membership in voluntary associations. While the slum has been extensively examined,

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[8]The rural community is more of an all-inclusive social group. Members know each other and are accessible to each other. Racial, national, religious, and economic differences are not as extreme as in the city. There is a high degree of direct communication and less social exclusiveness and specialization of interests. In the city, the family has fewer economic, protective, educational and recreational functions. Many of the services and functions provided by the family and other primary groups in rural areas have been assumed by other agencies. These include commercial establishments, schools, government units and voluntary associations.

[9]See for example, Ted Teruo Jitodai, "Urban-Rural Background and Formal Group Memberships," Rural Sociology, 30, (March, 1965), pp. 75-83.

[10]See, Bernard Barber, "Participation and Mass Apathy in Associations," in Alvin W. Gouldner (ed.), Studies in Leadership: Leadership and Democratic Action, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950, pp. 477-504. See also, W. Keith Warner, "Attendance and Division of Labor in Voluntary Associations," Rural Sociology, 29, (December, 1964), pp. 396-407.

[11]Morris Axelrod, op. cit.

few studies have focused on the role of voluntary associations in low-income areas.

Early students of urban sociology drawing upon the classical theories of Durkheim, Simmel, and Tonnies, tended to emphasize the social disorganization of the slum.[12] In examining urbanization, for example, Wirth discussed urban social systems in terms of size, density, and heterogeneity.[13] He saw these as important in affecting the social relations in an urban environment. Wirth stated that an "increase in the number of inhabitants of a community beyond a few hundred is bound to limit the possibility of each member knowing all the others personally."[14]

High population density was seen by the early students, as affecting the character of social relationships. It was implyed that under these circumstances, contact as full personalities became impossible and human relationships became segmentalized. Differentiation and specialization in land use and in occupations was seen as accompanying urbanization. The urban mileaux in general was seen as differentiated and disorganized,

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[12]This position is maintained by Nicholas Babchuk and C. Wayne Gordon, The Voluntary Association in the Slum, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1962, p. 10.

[13]Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," American Journal of Sociology, 44, (July, 1938), pp. 1-24.

[14]Ibid., p. 11.

but the greatest disorganization was seen as occurring in the slum. It was here that social relationships were viewed as being most transitory, anonymous, and segmentalized.

Burgess, in his theory of city growth, presented such a view of the slum. He postulated an ideal-type city which was constituted of a series of concentric circles.[15] It should be noted that in moving from the suburbs to the center of the city, both physical deterioration and social disorganization were seen as increasing. In Zone II, the area containing the slum deterioration and disorganization were said to be most evident. Burgess related that poverty, bad housing, family disintegration, juvenile delinquency, and poor health were more characteristic of this zone than of the others.

In The Gold Coast and the Slum, Zorbaugh compared an affluent area with a slum.[16] His perspective was consistent with that of Wirth and Burgess. He saw the slum as an area of high mobility, delinquency, and vice. He discussed the "disorganized" aspects of the slum, and suggested that its residents had little community

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[15]Ernest W. Burgess, "The Growth of the City: An Introduction to a Research Project," in R. E. Park, E. W. Burgess, and R. D. McKenzie, (eds.) The City, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925, pp. 47-62.

[16]Harvey W. Zorbaugh, The Gold Coast and the Slum, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929.

awareness. The slum was seen as an area inhabited by transient rooming house tenants and the first generation ethnic population.

Early urban sociologists were preoccupied with the dramatic and disorganized aspect of the slum and they subsequently overlooked the "normal" law-abiding, integrated, and organized population within such an area.[17] It is easy to conceive how this could occur, however. Vice, crime, delinquency, and social pathology in general is more common in the slum; and it is true that minority and ethnic group members, as well as recent migrants from rural areas commonly reside in such low-income areas. It has become apparent, however, that early descriptions of the slum were over-simplified. In addition to the widely discussed disorganized areas, there are many well integrated, homogeneous, stable neighborhoods.

Perhaps the first student to recognize this and challenge the earlier assumptions was William F. Whyte. He recognized that slum areas had a considerable range in types of social organization. In Street Corner Society, Whyte described a well organized and integrated

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[17]Nicholas Babchuk and C. Wayne Gordon, op. cit., p. 115.

ethnic neighborhood within a slum.[18] He also noted that the area had a number of voluntary associations.

Recent thinking in this area has led to a conception of the slum as a series of neighborhoods; such as racial, ethnic, and rooming-house neighborhoods.[19] If urban low-income areas are examined in this manner, it reduces the inherent contradictions in the theoretical schemes discussed above. Well integrated neighborhoods can exist even in slum areas. Within these neighborhoods, considerable social organization is in evidence.

The extent of social organization which can occur in a low-income area has recently been well documented by Herbert Gans.[20] He made an extensive study of Boston's West End. This area was adjacent to the North End, where Whyte made his classic study reported in Street Corner Society. At the time of Gans' investigation, the West End had been identified by the city officials as a slum; and it was scheduled to be torn down under the federal renewal program. Gans, in studying

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[18]It should be noted that this was a case study and that Whyte was focusing on organization. It is possible that the degree of social organization observed by Whyte in Boston's North End does not occur in many low-income areas. See, William F. Whyte, Street Corner Society, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1943.

[19]Nicholas Babchuk and C. Wayne Gordon, op. cit., p. 12.

[20]Herbert J. Gans, The Urban Villagers, New York: The Free Press, A Division of the Macmillan Co., 1962.

the Italian-American population in this area, found a high degree of social organization to be present. Social interaction among many residents was intense. Gans discovered that these residents, particularly those of the second generation, tended to band together into peer groups. The peer groups were composed of friends and relatives of approximately the same age. Members of the peer group were of both sexes, but interaction among the members tended to be limited to those of the same sex. The peer groups met nightly and visiting often continued into the early morning hours. Gans reported that the hold of the peer group was so great that many members were unable to conceive of leaving the neighborhood and the group.

As related above, few studies have attempted to examine the relationship between membership in voluntary associations and area of residence. One exception is a study by Bell and Force.[21] They discovered that many persons living in a rooming-house slum area belonged to voluntary associations. They also found, however, that these residents were less likely to hold memberships than were residents of more affluent areas; and that they were less likely to hold office or attend meetings as often.

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[21] Wendell Bell and Maryanne T. Force, "Social Structure and Participation in Different Types of Formal Associations," Social Forces, 34 (May, 1956), pp. 345-350.

The existence of voluntary associations in a low-income area was also documented by Babchuk and Gordon.[22] They noted the comparative ease with which a professional community organizer was able to develop voluntary associations among slum residents. They also discuss the wide range of organizations to which the residents belonged.

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

The central emphasis of this research is the examination of the extent of participation, in voluntary associations, exhibited by residents of low-income areas. It explores the characteristics of those found to be members, and compares these members with those found to be non-members. Also of interest is the manner of participation of "poor" respondents. The research examines organizational participation among this group to see if it differs from that of the non-poor respondents, and to see what effect affiliation produces on each.

Voluntary associations do more than provide their members with an avenue for sociability and entertainment; they also serve to integrate the member to his community, and it has been suggested that they serve to integrate the wider society by providing important links

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[22] Nicholas Babchuk and C. Wayne Gordon, op. cit.

between communities.[23]

Numerous studies have indicated that education is related both to holding membership in voluntary associations and to the intensity of participation of the members.[24] Lazerwitz, for example, utilizing data from a large national sample found that increasing activity in voluntary associations is directly associated with higher educational achievement.[25] Rose found that group leaders were much more likely to have had at least some college education than was the general population.[26] Similarly, Goldhammer[27] reported that the higher the level of education, the greater the rate of participation, and further, that the more highly educated an individual is, the more likely it will be that he will assume a

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[23]See for example, Ruth C. Young and Olaf F. Larson, "The Contribution of Voluntary Organizations to Community Structure," American Journal of Sociology, 71 (1965), pp. 178-186.

[24]See for example, Mirra Komarovsky, "The Voluntary Associations of Urban Dwellers," American Sociological Review, 11 (December, 1946), pp. 686-698; See also, John Scott, Jr., "Membership and Participation in Voluntary Associations," American Sociological Review, 22 (June, 1957), pp. 315-326.

[25]Bernard Lazerwitz, "Membership in Voluntary Associations and Frequency of Church Attendance," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 2 (Fall, 1962), pp. 74-84.

[26]Arnold M. Rose, "Alienation and Participation: A Comparison of Group Leaders and the 'Mass'," American Sociological Review, 27 (December, 1962), pp. 834-838.

[27]Herbert Goldhammer, op. cit., p. 229.

leadership position. The following hypothesis was derived to test this relationship:

> Those with higher educational attainment will have a higher rate of organizational participation.

Also of interest is the relationship between other class-linked variables, such as occupation and income, and participation in voluntary associations. It has been noted that persons of higher socio-economic status are more likely to join, and more likely to hold leadership positions in voluntary associations. They also tend to join different types of associations. For example, Freeman, Novak, and Reeder found that income was the most useful variable for predicting whether an individual held a membership in an association.[28] Mather found higher-income to be related to belonging to a wider range of types of voluntary organizations.[29] With respect to occupational level, Hagedorn and Labovitz[30] found that respondents having higher occupational prestige tended to be more likely to join, and participated

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[28]Howard E. Freeman, Edwin Novak, and Leo G. Reeder, "Correlates of Membership in Voluntary Associations," American Sociological Review, 22 (October, 1957), pp. 528-533.

[29]William G. Mather, "Income and Social Participation," American Sociological Review, 6 (June, 1941) pp. 380-384.

[30]Robert Hagedorn and Sanford Labovitz, "An Analysis of Community and Professional Participation Among Occupations," Social Forces, 46 (June, 1967), pp. 483-491.

to a greater extent than those with lower occupational prestige. Scott reported that non-manual workers are greater participators than manual workers;[31] and Rose found that 52 per cent of the leaders in his sample were from professional or managerial occupations, while only 12 per cent of the general population fell in this category.[32] These conclusions were utilized to derive the following hypotheses:

> The higher the occupational status, the greater the rate of organizational participation.
>
> The larger the income, the greater the rate of organizational participation.

The relationship between residential stability and participation in voluntary associations will also be examined. It would seem logical that the most stable residents would be most likely to join. This has been more often assumed than demonstrated, however. One study bearing on this relationship was conducted by Jitodai. He found that recent migrants to the Detroit area had membership rates significantly lower than those of the natives.[33] Jitodai related that rural migrants had somewhat lower rates than migrants from urban areas, but that migrants from both groups who had lived in Detroit for a longer period of time tended to resemble the

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[31] John Scott, Jr., op. cit.

[32] Arnold M. Rose, op. cit., p. 834.

[33] Ted Teruo Jitodai, op. cit., p. 82.

natives in rate of affiliation. The following hypothesis was derived for testing:

> Length of residency is positively related to organizational participation.

The extent of participation of minority-group members has not been widely examined. There appears to be some evidence that Negroes, particularly lower-class Negroes, are disproportionately represented in voluntary associations. Babchuk and Thompson found Negroes to be more likely to be affiliated with voluntary associations than whites. This was especially true at the lower-class level. They found that 75 per cent of the Negroes in their sample held at least one membership.[34] These findings are in agreement with Myrdal's thesis that American Negroes are more inclined to join voluntary associations than are whites.[35] Drake and Cayton, however, found many Negro organizations, but they report that very few lower-class Negroes participated in them.[36] Dackawich found that working-class Negroes held more

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[34]Nicholas Babchuk and Ralph V. Thompson, "The Voluntary Associations of Negroes," American Sociological Review, 27 (October, 1962), pp. 647-655.

[35]Gunner Myrdal, Richard Sterner, and Arnold Rose, An American Dilemma, New York: Harper, 1944, p. 952.

[36]St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, Black Metropolis, New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1945, pp. 606-607.

memberships than working-class whites.[37] He states, however, that this was partially because Negroes belonged to more church related voluntary associations. There was a smaller difference between the two groups when the comparison was limited to membership in non-church related organizations. The following hypothesis is derived from these conclusions:

> Negroes will have a higher rate of organizational participation than will whites.

Certain other variables will be examined. For example, age appears to be related to organizational participation. Babchuk and Edwards note that participation of adults generally increases with age reaching a peak at 50 or 60 years of age and then declining.[38] Similarly, Lazerwitz found participation increased from a low point in the 21-24 year old group to a fairly constant high level from 30 to 40 years and then decreased quite regularly until old age, where the level is about that of the young group.[39] Goldhammer also found high membership rates for mature or middle-aged adults, and

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[37]John Dackawich, "Voluntary Associations of Central Area Negroes," Pacific Sociological Review, 9 (Fall, 1966), pp. 74-78.

[38]Nicholas Babchuk and John N. Edwards, "Voluntary Associations and the Integration Hypothesis," Sociological Inquiry, 35 (Spring, 1965), pp. 149-162.

[39]Bernard Lazerwitz, op. cit., pp. 77-78.

lower rates for young adults and older adults.[40] In this research, three age groups will be examined. "Young" (29 years & under), "mature" (30 to 59 years), and "older" (60 years & over), respondents will be investigated to see if there are differences in their organizational participations.

It has also been noted that there is a differential between male and female participation. Generally, it has been found that the participation rate of males is greater than that for females. This has been found to be true in studies of the general population,[41] and in studies of ethnic[42] and Negro populations.[43] This study will examine the participation of male and female respondents and compare their rates of office holding and membership.

It would appear that marital status might influence organizational participation. Research in this area has produced contradictory results, however, and it is not yet clear whether the married participate to a greater extent than the unmarried. In this research, marital

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[40]Herbert Goldhammer, op. cit., p. 229.

[41]See for example, Bernard Lazerwitz, op. cit., pp. 78-79. See also, John Scott, Jr., op. cit., p. 324.

[42]Bartolomeo M. Palisi, "Ethnic Generation and Social Participation," Sociological Inquiry, 35 (Spring, 1965), pp. 219-226.

[43]Nicholas Babchuk and Ralph V. Thompson, op. cit., p. 652.

status, per se, will not be examined. A more fruitful approach will be the comparison of the organizational participation of those respondents who live alone (one person families), and those who live with other people (larger families). Persons who live alone are deprived of the functions and services commonly provided by the family. Voluntary associations are one of the agencies which provide these functions and services for such individuals.

Organizational participation may be related to the number of friendships an individual has. Sills has indicated that people are often influenced into joining groups through the persuasion of close friends.[44] Babchuk and Thompson, in a study of Negro participation, found that persons claiming at least six close friends were both more likely to be members, and more likely to have multiple memberships.[45] Similarly, Palisi found that Italian-American respondents citing seven or more friends were significantly more likely to belong to at least one formal organization than those listing less than seven friends.[46] Finally, Rose found group leaders

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[44]David Sills, The Volunteers, Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1957.

[45]Nicholas Babchuk and Ralph V. Thompson, op. cit., p. 652.

[46]Bartolomeo J. Palisi, "Patterns of Social Participation in a Two-Generation Sample of Italian-Americans," Sociological Quarterly, 7 (Spring, 1966), pp. 167-178.

claimed to have more close friends than did individuals from the general population.[47] In this study, the rates of membership and office holding of those respondents who reported having seven or more "best" or "close" friends are compared with those who reported having six or fewer friends.

The composition of the family also has an influence on organizational participation. Lazerwitz found that families with no children in the home were the least active in voluntary associations. He found an increase in organizational activity for one child families, and a substantial increase for two child families. Larger families were slightly less active than two child families.[48] In this research, respondents having children (under 18 years old and in the home) are compared with those who do not have children. The rates of membership and office holding of the two groups are examined and compared.

It has been noted that integration and socialization are two important functions provided by voluntary associations.[49] If this is true, then organizational members should be more integrated into their community than non-members. If socialization, (or education in

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[47]Arnold M. Rose, op. cit., p. 835.

[48]Bernard Lazerwitz, op. cit., p. 80.

[49]See for example, David Horton Smith, op. cit.

its broadest sense), occurs in voluntary associations, then members should be more knowledgeable or skillful than non-members. This research will examine the responses of members and non-members to see if members appear to be more integrated into the community, and to see if they appear to possess greater pragmatic knowledge. A sub-sample of respondents living in poverty will be examined in the same way.

RESEARCH PROCEDURE

The data for the present study were obtained from a larger survey concerned with community needs.[50] The study was conducted during the winter of 1967; and the sample was drawn from a universe of adult residents of three low-income census tracts in Lansing, Michigan.[51] A structured schedule was used. A sample of 300 households was drawn at random. The interviews were conducted in the late afternoon or evening. This helped to insure that males would be well represented. The schedule was pretested prior to its use. A total of 221 completed schedules was obtained, which was a response rate of 74 per cent.

The three census tracts were adjacent to each other. The area sampled lies partly in the city's center, and partly in the interstitial zone. The location of the area is shown in Figure 1. According to information obtained from the 1960 census, the tracts chosen for study possessed a higher rate of poverty characteristics than other tracts in the city. Twenty-two per cent of the

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[50] The study was conducted by Daniel Kruger, Philip M. Marcus, and Earle Snider, and was supported by the School of Labor and Industrial Relations of Michigan State University.

[51] The population of the central city in 1968 was approximately 130,000; and that of the metropolitan area was approximately 350,000. See, "Area Population Continues Rise," Lansing, Michigan, The State Journal, February 4, 1968, section B, p. 6.

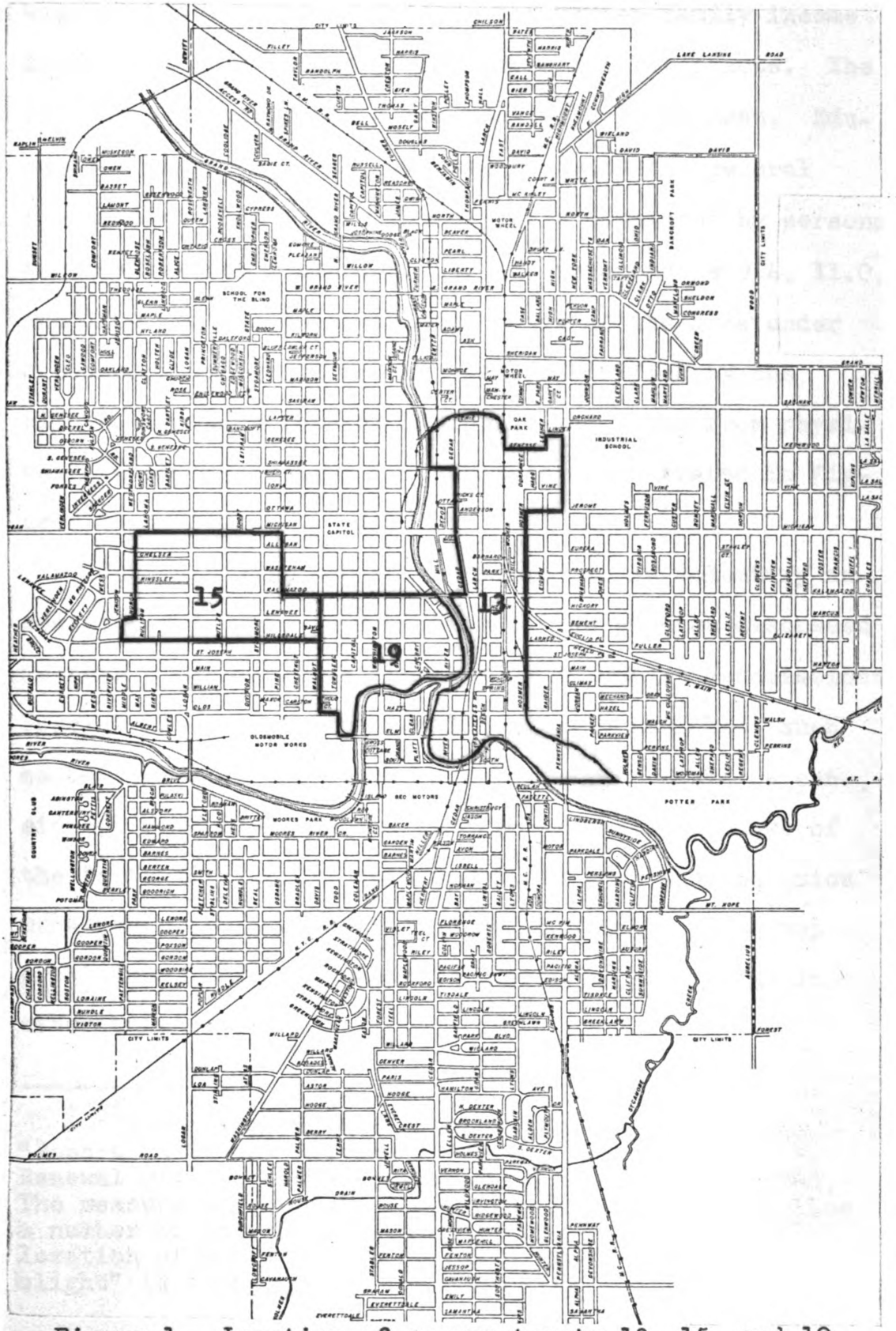

Figure 1. Location of census tracts 13, 15, and 19

residents of the area were Negro. Median family income was low; the 1960 census lists the median family income as $4,786, $5,334, and $5,422 for the three tracts. The rate of unemployment was reported as 7.8 per cent. Educational level was low, as compared with the general population. The median school years completed by persons twenty-five years old and over was reported as 9.4, 11.0, and 11.8 for the three tracts. Most of the area under discussion falls within the areas identified by the city's community renewal office as suffering from physical and social "blight."[52] This is demonstrated in Figures 2 and 3.

Churches will not be considered to be voluntary associations in this study. None of the studies discussed in this paper included churches as voluntary associations. Special interest groups affiliated with churches, such as bowling teams or ladies aid societies, would be considered voluntary associations in the present usage of the term. Similarly, unions are excluded because union membership is required in factories having union shop provisions, and membership is often a prerequisite in other work situations.

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[52]Community Services Council, Lansing, Michigan, "Report on Social Blight," prepared for the Community Renewal Office, City of Lansing, Michigan, March 1967. The measure of "social blight" was determined by asking a number of social-service agencies the geographical location of heavy client concentrations. "Physical blight" is a measure of deterioration of buildings.

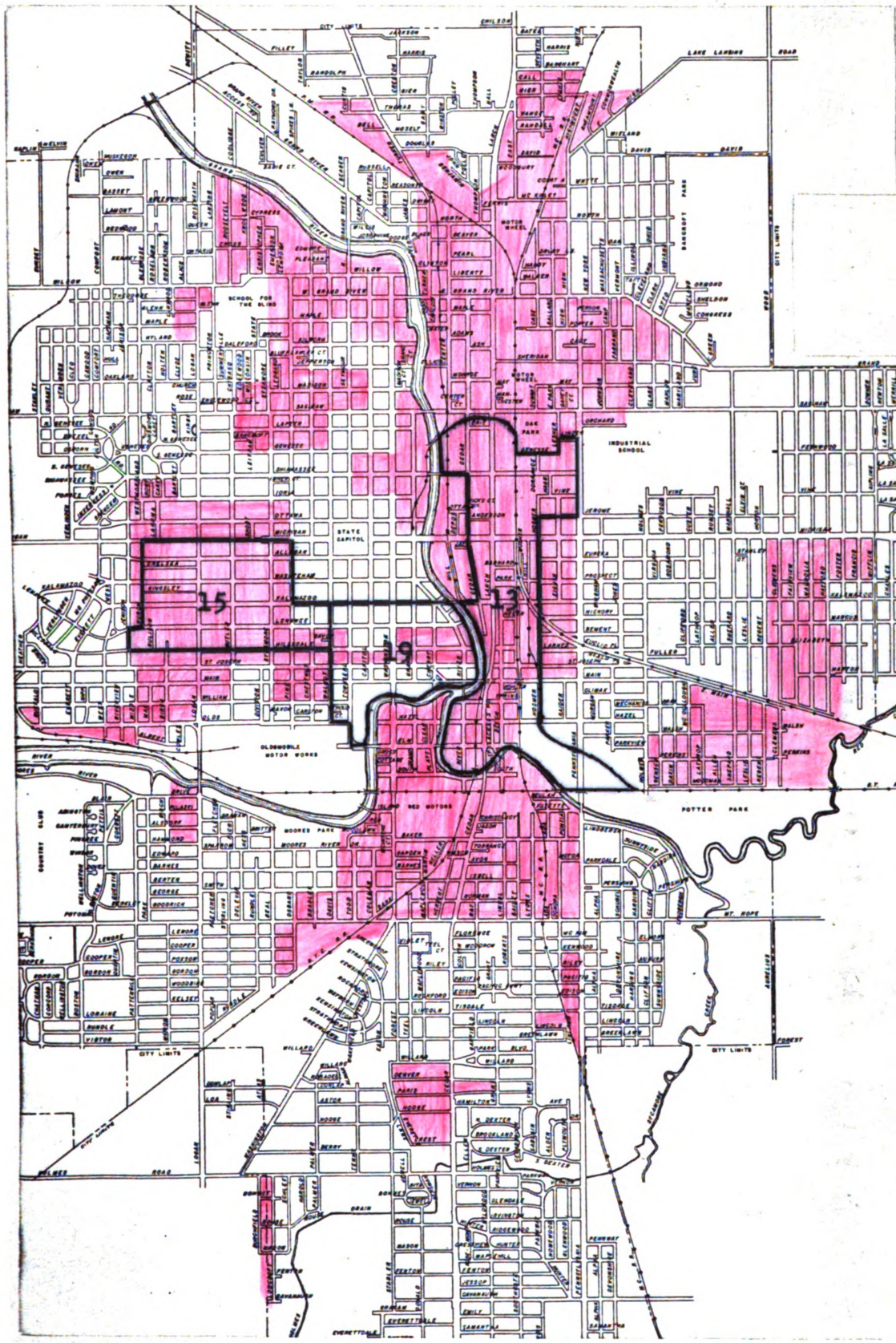


Figure 2. Concentration of physical blight

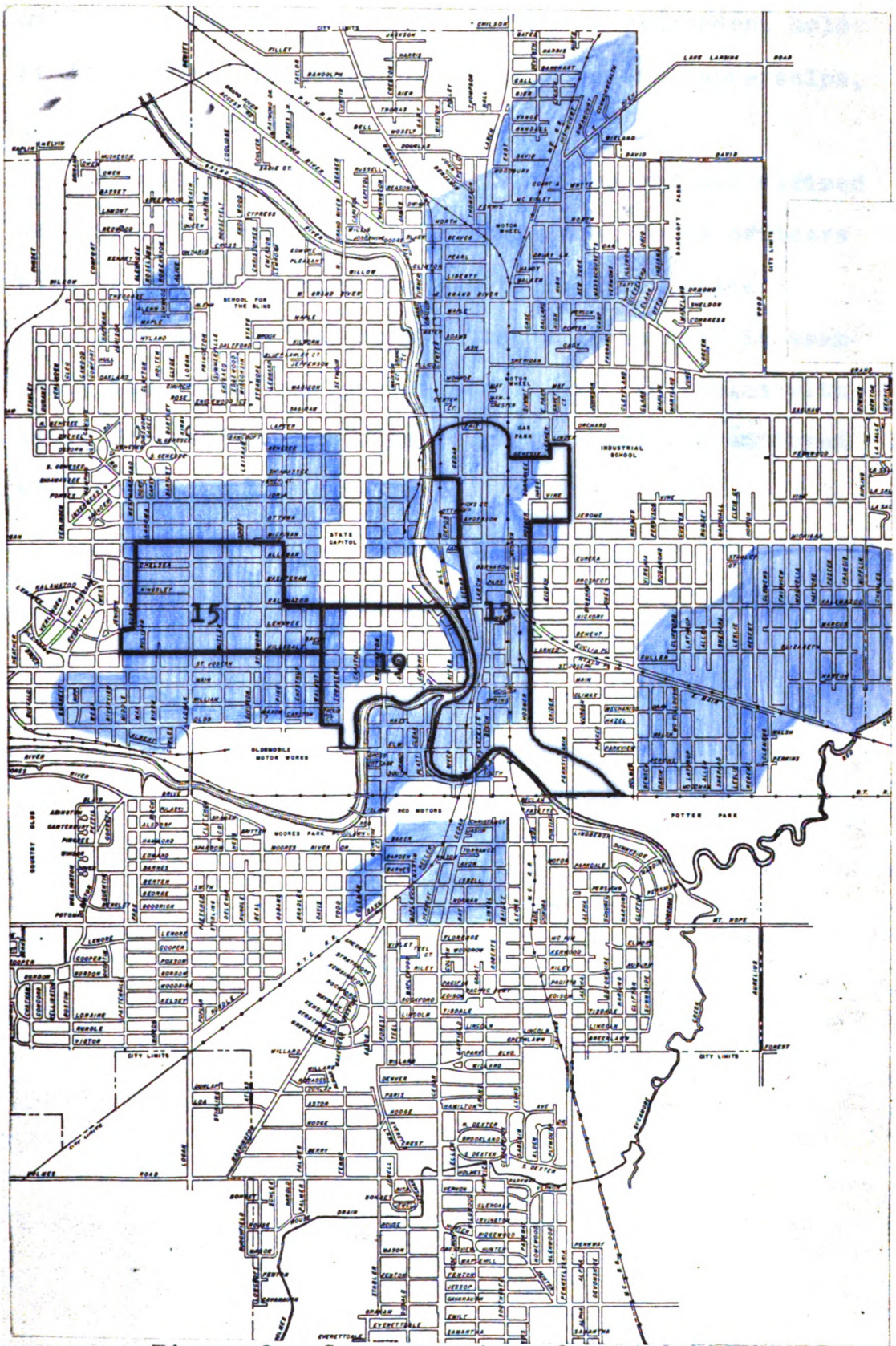
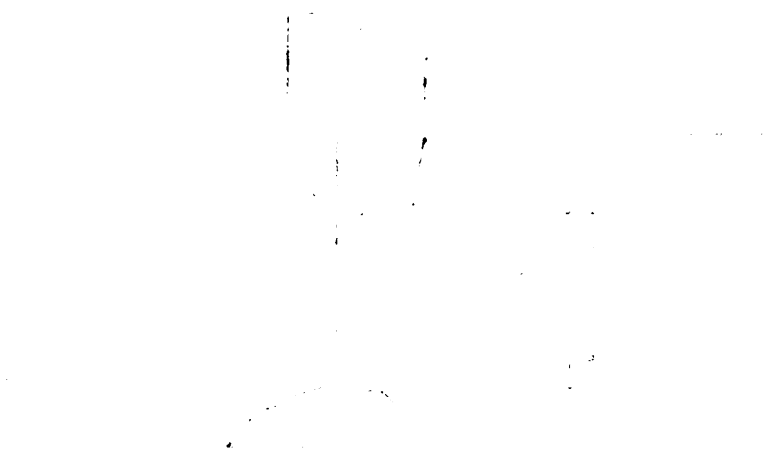


Figure 3. Concentration of social blight



Several dimensions of organizational participation will be examined. These are whether a respondent holds at least one membership, holds two or more memberships, or holds an office.

A member will be defined as anyone who has claimed membership; similarly, those considered to be officers will be those who have claimed to hold an office.

Finally, the chi-square test will be used in examining the significance of association. In tables with small frequencies, a Yates correction will be employed when computing the chi-square.

FINDINGS

Who Belongs

Analysis of the data revealed that many residents of low-income neighborhoods do participate in voluntary associations. Forty-five per cent of the respondents claimed membership in at least one voluntary association; 21 per cent claimed they belonged to two or more such organizations; and 20 per cent stated they held or had held an office in organizations on which they were reporting.

Educational level was found to be strongly associated with organizational participation. Respondents who attended some college were significantly more likely to belong to one voluntary association than respondents who had finished high school or less. Similarly, those who attended some college were much more likely to belong to two or more organizations. Table 1 presents these data. This relationship was not greatly altered when an occupational control was introduced. Although, controlling for occupation did indicate that the relationship was strongest for white collar respondents. This is depicted in Table 2.

Table 1. Educational level by membership in voluntary associations

Memberships	Educational level: Some college or more	Educational level: Finished high school or less
Belongs to two or more	35.2	15.4
Belongs to one	27.8	23.9
Does not belong	37.0	60.7
Total	100.0% (54)	100.0% (163)

$X^2 = 12.39$ $p<.005$ $df = 2$ $N = 217$ (4 no-response)

Table 2. Educational level by membership and occupational status

Memberships	White-collar: Some college or more	White-collar: Finished high school or less	Blue-collar: Some college or more	Blue-collar: Finished high school or less
Two or more	44.8	15.4	16.7	13.8
One	27.6	34.6	41.7	26.3
None	27.6	50.0	41.7	60.0
Total	100.0% (29)	100.0% (26)	100.1% (12)	100.1% (80)

White-collar: $X^2 = 5.86$ $p<.10$ $df = 2$ $N = 55$

Blue-collar: $X^2 = 1.52$ (not sig.) $df = 2$ $N = 92$ (2 no-response)

Educational level was also found to be associated with holding office. Respondents who attended some college were more likely to claim they held or had held office. This relationship is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Educational level by office holding

	Some college or more	Finished high school or less
Holds office	31.5	15.3
Does not hold office	68.5	84.7
Total	100.0% (54)	100.0% (163)

X^2 = 5.78 p<.025 df = 1 N = 213 (8 no-response)

When an occupational control was introduced, however, it was found that the relationship was true only for white collar respondents. Among blue collar respondents, the relationship was slightly negative.[53] See Table 4.

Table 4. Educational level by office holding and occupational status

	White-collar		Blue-collar	
	Some college or more	Finished high school or less	Some college or more	Finished high school or less
Holds office	55.2	15.4	0.0	15.0
Does not hold office	44.8	84.6	100.0	85.0
Total	100.0% (29)	100.0% (26)	100.0% (12)	100.0% (80)

X^2 = 7.74 p<.01 df = 1 N = 55

X^2 = 0.95 (not sig.) df = 1 N = 92 (2 no-response)

[53]This result is hard to explain. The number of cases is small (12). Also, these respondents probably have low incomes and appear to be employed in jobs below their skill level.

Family income was found to be associated with organizational participation, but the relationship was not significant. Respondents with higher incomes were more likely to belong to two or more voluntary associations, and somewhat more likely to belong to one organization. This tendency remained when occupation and education were held constant, but the relationship was not found to be statistically significant.[54]

A significant relationship, however, was found between office holding and high family income. Those with higher family incomes were found to be more likely to hold office. This is depicted in Table 5.

Table 5. Size of family income as related to holding an office in a voluntary association

	High income	Low income
Holds office	29.8	16.4
Does not hold office	70.2	83.6
Total	100.0% (57)	100.0% (140)

$X^2 = 3.70$ $p<.10$ $df = 1$ $N = 197$ (24 no-response)

The tendency for those having higher family incomes to be more likely to hold office was changed somewhat after the introduction of an occupational control.

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[54] The table showing the relationship between family income and organizational membership, and the tables showing this variable when occupation and education are controlled, can be found in the appendix.

The relationship between high family income and office holding remained for blue-collar respondents, but it was diminished for white-collar respondents. See Table 6.

Table 6. Size of family income by office holding and occupational status

	Blue-collar		White-collar	
	High income	Low income	High income	Low income
Holds office	25.0	6.8	42.9	33.3
Does not hold office	75.0	93.2	57.1	66.7
Total	100.0% (28)	100.0% (59)	100.0% (21)	100.0% (30)
	$X^2 = 4.18$ $p<.05$ df = 1 N = 87 (7 no-response)		$X^2 = 0.16$ (not sig.) df = 1 N = 51 (4 no-response)	

Occupation was found to be related to participation in voluntary associations. White-collar respondents were found to be more likely to belong to one association than were blue-collar respondents. They were also more likely to be affiliated with two or more organizations. Blue-collar respondents were much more likely to be without organizational affiliations. These relationships remained after education was held constant.[55] These relationships are depicted in Table 7.

[55]The table depicting the relationship between occupational status and membership in voluntary associations, with education held constant, is presented in the appendix.

Table 7. Occupational status by membership

Memberships	White-collar	Blue-collar
Belongs to two or more	30.9	14.9
Belongs to one	30.9	27.7
Does not belong	38.2	57.4
Total	100.0% (55)	100.0% (94)

$X^2 = 7.04$ $p<.05$ df = 2 N = 149[56]

White-collar respondents were also more likely to be officers than were blue-collar respondents. This is shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Occupational status by office holding

	White-collar	Blue-collar
Holds office	36.4	13.8
Does not hold office	63.6	86.2
Total	100.0% (55)	100.0% (94)

$X^2 = 8.95$ $p<.01$ df = 1 N = 149

[56] It was not possible to classify 72 respondents occupationally. These respondents were not in the work force. Analysis of this sub-sample revealed that they were nearly all housewives. This group did not appear to differ greatly from the larger sample with respect to the other variables investigated in this study. It should be observed that in tables where occupation is held constant, the total N is also reduced to 149. Tables 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, and 17 have a total N of 149 for this reason.

When education was held constant, it was found that the relationship between white-collar occupational status and office holding disappeared for respondents having low educational attainment, but remained for the more highly educated respondents. See Table 9.

Table 9. Occupational status by office holding and educational attainment

	"Higher" educational attainment		"Lower" educational attainment	
	White collar	Blue collar	White collar	Blue collar
Holds office	55.2	0.0	15.0	15.4
Does not hold office	44.8	100.0	85.0	84.6
Total	100.0% (29)	100.0% (12)	100.0% (26)	100.0% (80)

$X^2_y = 8.66$ $p<.01$ $df = 1$ $N = 41$ $X^2 = 0.05$ (not sig.) $df = 1$ $N = 106$ (2 no-response)

Residential stability appears to be related to participation in voluntary associations. Respondents who had resided in their neighborhood for one year or longer were found to be somewhat more likely to belong to one organization than were respondents who had lived in their neighborhood less than one year. Those living in their neighborhood for one year or longer, were also more likely to belong to two or more voluntary associations, and were more likely to be office holders. Introduction of occupational and educational controls did

not alter the relationships.[57] These relationships are shown in Tables 10 and 11.

Table 10. Length of time in the neighborhood by membership in voluntary associations

Memberships	Over one year	Under one year
Belongs to two or more	25.0	14.3
Belongs to one	25.7	22.1
Does not belong	49.3	63.6
Total	100.0% (140)	100.0% (77)

$X^2 = 4.79$ $p<.10$ $df = 2$ N = 217 (4 no-response)

Table 11. Length of time in neighborhood by office holding in a voluntary association

	Over one year	Under one year
Holds office	23.6	13.0
Does not hold office	76.4	87.0
Total	100.0% (140)	100.0% (77)

$X^2 = 2.87$ $p<.10$ $df = 1$ N = 217 (4 no-response)

An additional index of residential stability, the length of time the respondent had resided in the city, also provided evidence that residential stability is related to organizational participation. The proportion

[57] These tables appear in the appendix.

of respondents who belonged to one voluntary association was about the same for both long and short term residents of the city. Respondents who had lived in the city for four years or longer, however, were much more likely to belong to two or more such organizations. Table 12 depicts these relationships.

Table 12. Length of time in the city by membership in voluntary associations

Memberships	Over four years	Under four years
Belongs to two or more	25.2	10.5
Belongs to one	24.5	26.3
Does not belong	50.3	63.2
Total	100.0% (159)	100.0% (57)

$X^2 = 5.52$ $p<.10$ $df = 2$ $N = 216$ (5 no-response)

The relationship remained when occupation and education were held constant. There appeared to be little relationship between long tenure in the city and holding office.

It was anticipated that Negroes in the sample would prove to be greater participators than white respondents. Little difference in participation rates was observed, however, until an occupational control was introduced. The Negro respondents in the sample were disproportionately blue-collar, and when they were compared with blue-collar white respondents, a relationship appeared.

Blue-collar Negro respondents were found to be somewhat more likely to belong to one voluntary association than were their white counterparts. Similarly, blue-collar Negro respondents were found to be more likely to hold office, and more likely to belong to two or more organizations. While these relationships were not found to be statistically significant, they are consistent with other findings. See Tables 13 and 14.

Table 13. Race by membership, for blue-collar respondents

Memberships	Negro	White
Belongs to two or more	17.6	15.1
Belongs to one	35.3	26.4
Does not belong	47.1	58.5
Total	100.0% (34)	100.0% (53)

X^2 = 1.12 (not sig.) df = 2 N = 87 (7 no-response)

Table 14. Race by office holding, for blue-collar respondents

	Negro	White
Holds office	23.5	9.4
Does not hold office	76.5	90.6
Total	100.0% (34)	100.0% (53)

X^2 = 2.22 (not sig.) df = 1 N = 87 (7 no-response)

Age and sex were expected to be important variables related to organizational participation. In the present research, however, these variables were not found to be related to belonging to one association, belonging to two or more associations, or holding office. Similarly, controlling for educational level, as well as occupation, failed to reveal any important relationships.

The structure and size of the family is an important variable. Respondents who lived alone (one person families) were found to be greater participators than those who lived with other people (larger families). Respondents who lived alone were found to be more likely to belong to organizations. These relationships remained relatively unchanged when controls were introduced.[58] See Table 15.

Table 15. Total family size by membership

Memberships	One person family	Larger family
Belongs to two or more	26.4	18.9
Belongs to one	30.2	23.2
Does not belong	43.4	57.9
Total	100.0% (53)	100.0% (164)

X^2 = 3.41 (not sig.) df = 2 N = 217 (4 no-response)

[58] These tables appear in the appendix.

Similarly, a greater proportion of persons who lived alone claimed to hold leadership positions. The introduction of educational and occupational controls did not greatly alter the relationship between living alone and holding office; but, it revealed that this relationship was clearest among respondents having higher socio-economic status. Tables 16, 17, and 18 show the relationship between family size and holding office.

Table 16. Total family size by office holding

	One person family	Larger family
Holds office	32.1	15.9
Does not hold office	67.9	84.1
Total	100.0% (53)	100.0% (164)

$X^2 = 5.65$ $p<.025$ $df = 1$ $N = 217$

Table 17. Total family size by office holding and occupational status

	White-collar		Blue-collar	
	One person family	Larger family	One person family	Larger family
Holds office	57.9	25.0	16.7	13.5
Does not hold office	42.1	75.0	83.3	86.5
Total	100.0% (19)	100.0% (36)	100.0% (18)	100.0% (74)

$X^2 = 4.48$ $p<.05$ $df = 1$ $N = 55$

$X^2 = 0.01$ (not sig.) $df = 1$ $N = 92$ (2 no-response)

Table 18. Family size by office holding and educational level

	"Higher" educational attainment		"Lower" educational attainment	
	One person family	Larger family	One person family	Larger family
Holds office	53.3	23.1	23.7	12.9
Does not hold office	46.7	76.9	76.3	87.1
Total	100.0% (15)	100.0% (39)	100.0% (38)	100.0% (124)

$X^2 = 3.30$ $p<.10$ $df = 1$ $N = 54$ $X^2 = 1.83$ (not sig.) $df = 1$ $N = 162$ (1 no-response)

It was anticipated that having children in the home would be related to organizational participation. Having children in the home, however, was not found to be related to belonging to one association, belonging to two or more associations, or holding office.

The two final variables considered were the number of "best" or "close" friends the respondents claimed to have, and whether the respondents had relatives living in the city. It was thought that friends and relatives might be influential in inducing participation in voluntary associations. These variables were only slightly related to affiliation and to holding office; and the relationships were not significant.

As noted earlier, a considerable proportion of the residents of the low-income area surveyed, participated

in voluntary associations. Many of these respondents belonged to several organizations, and many were officers.

Previous research has shown that socio-economic variables are strongly related to participation in voluntary associations. Most earlier studies, however, have concentrated on the membership and participation of middle-class individuals. The present research has demonstrated that even in a low-income area, inhabited by people of relatively low social status, educational level, family income, and occupational prestige are strongly related to organizational participation.

Residents of low-income areas are commonly thought to move more often than the general population. The present research has shown that respondents who have resided in the city longer, and respondents who have lived in the neighborhood longer, are more apt to be association members and officers. It may be that such residential stability as exists is aided by the "ties" that organizational participation provides.

An additional important finding was the rate of Negro participation. Blue-collar Negroes were found to be active participators.

Effects of Membership

The research also investigated the responses members and non-members gave to questions about problems of people in their neighborhood and about their contact with social-service agencies.

Voluntary associations have many functions. In addition to the obvious but important function of providing an avenue for pleasurable activity, and personal gratification through face-to-face interaction, voluntary associations also provide integrating and socializing functions.

In this section, it will be shown that, on the basis of the responses they gave, members appear to be more integrated into their community than non-members. Similarly, members appear to be more skillful in identifying and solving problems.

Some evidence was found supporting the contention that voluntary associations serve to integrate their members to the larger society. When the respondents were asked what the people in their neighborhood needed most, members tended to give less individualistic answers. In this respect, they appeared to possess greater social awareness; rather than stating that individuals needed help, they were more likely to reply that the city needed improvement or should be the recipient of help.

It would also appear that those who were affiliated with voluntary associations were more aware that problems existed in their area of residence. Respondents who claimed membership in at least one such organization were more likely to be able to identify a major need of people in the neighborhood. This relationship remained relatively unchanged with the introduction of occupational and educational controls.[59] See Table 19.

Table 19. Having the ability to name a major need of people in the neighborhood, by membership

	Member	Non-member
Able to name a problem	71.0	60.3
Unable to name a problem	29.0	39.7
Total	100.0% (100)	100.0% (121)

$X^2 = 2.30$ (not sig.) df = 1 N = 221

Similar relationships were discernable from the replys to the query of how the major need might be met. Organizational members, who had identified a need or a problem, were more likely to suggest the problem could be resolved with social-service agency, community, or governmental help. Non-members tended to reply that resolution of the problems named was an individual responsibility, or that they should be solved by individual

[59]These tables appear in the appendix.

effort.[60] This relationship was not greatly changed by the introduction of occupational and educational controls; it is depicted in Table 20.[61]

Table 20. How respondents perceived the major need might be met, by membership

	Member	Non-member
Community, governmental, or agency responsibility	52.7	36.2
Individual responsibility	47.3	63.8
Total	100.0% (55)	100.0% (47)

$X^2 = 2.18$ (not sig.) df = 1 N = 102[62]

Of those naming a major need of the people in the neighborhood, there was a distinct tendency for members

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[60] It should be noted that in coding this question, only those respondents who stated that resolution of the problem should be attained by individual effort were included in the table under "individual responsibility." Those who supplyed answers coded as community effort, local or city agency responsibility, state government responsibility, or federal government responsibility, appear in the table as "community, governmental, or agency responsibility."

[61] These tables appear in the appendix.

[62] The replys of 119 respondents were not included in this table. These were respondents who were not able to answer the question adequately. Responses coded don't know, not applicable, no-response, move, or other, were not included in this table. Table 21 illustrates that non-members were more likely to supply this type of inadequate reply.

to be more likely to be able to suggest how the need might be met. This relationship remained when occupational and educational controls were introduced, but it proved to be the clearest among respondents having higher educational attainment. This relationship was statistically significant as shown in Tables 21 and 22.

Table 21. Being able to suggest how the major need might be met, by membership

	Member	Non-member
Able to answer	75.7	58.0
Unable to answer	24.3	42.0
Total	100.0% (74)	100.0% (81)

$X^2 = 4.64$ $p<.05$ $df = 1$ $N = 155^{63}$

Table 22. Being able to suggest how the major need might be met, by membership and educational level

	"Higher" educational attainment		"Lower" educational attainment	
	Member	Non-member	Member	Non-member
Able to answer	87.5	57.1	69.4	56.9
Unable to answer	12.5	42.9	30.6	43.1
Total	100.0% (24)	100.0% (14)	100.0% (49)	100.0% (65)

$X^2_y = 2.99$ $p<.10$ $df = 1$ $N = 38^{64}$ $X^2 = 1.83$ (not sig.) $df = 1$ $N = 114$

Not many respondents, members or non-members

reported having had contact with a social-service agency. While slightly fewer members had contact with agencies, the research provided some evidence indicating that they were more skillful in the methods they used to find or select agencies. Most respondents utilized personal methods,[65] such as talking to friends or relatives, to find out about the existence of agencies. Organizational members, however, were found to be more likely than non-members to have used impersonal (more authoritative) means in discovering the agency with which they later had contact. Those who belonged to two or more voluntary associations were the most likely to have used impersonal means. This relationship is depicted in Table 23.

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[63]The respondents were first asked to identify a major need or problem of people in the neighborhood; they were then asked how this need or problem might be obtained or resolved. Only those respondents supplying an answer to the first inquiry were questioned further. This reduced the total response by 66.

[64]Only those respondents who first named a problem were asked how they would solve the problem. This reduced the response for those having "higher" educational attainment from 54 to 38, and reduced the response for those having "lower" educational attainment from 163 to 114. See footnote 63 for a more detailed discussion.

[65]Respondents who reported that they found out about the agency from friends, relatives, neighbors, or newspapers, appear in Table 23 as having used personal means. Those who reported that they first learned of the agency from employers, from union, from social security sources, from the agency directly, or by referral from another agency, were coded as having used impersonal means.

Table 23. How respondents found the agency with which they had contact, by membership

	Number of memberships held		
	Two or more	One	None
Impersonal means	57.1	7.7	10.7
Personal means	42.9	92.3	89.3
Total	100.0% (7)	100.0% (13)	100.0% (28)

X^2 = 1.21 (not sig.) df = 2 N = 48[66]

Similarly, some evidence was discovered indicating that organizational members had less difficulty than non-members in getting the agency to agree to help them. Of those respondents having contact with social-service agencies, organizational members were more likely to report that the agency's service was not hard to get. See Table 24.

Table 24. Respondents who found agency service hard to obtain, by membership

	Number of memberships held		
	Two or more	One	None
Felt service was not hard to get	91.7	86.7	74.4
Felt service was hard to get	8.3	13.3	25.6
Total	100.0% (12)	100.0% (15)	100.0% (39)

X^2 = 2.29 (not sig.) df = 2 N = 66[67]

The existence of voluntary associations is important both to the member, and to the larger society. In this research, several measures indicated that voluntary associations provide integrating and socializing functions.

Members were observed to possess greater social awareness. They were more aware that problems existed in their neighborhood; and they were more ready to suggest rational solutions to the community problems. Members seemed to be more oriented to the community. They were less apt to suggest that the major problems in their residential area were the result of individual failings, and more apt to suggest that community or governmental resources should be utilized to resolve the difficulties.

In a similar manner, members were observed to be more effective in their dealings with social-service agencies. They showed greater initiative and skill in the manner in which they established contact with agencies; and they subsequently had less difficulty in obtaining help.

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[66] Only those respondents who actually had contact with a social-service agency were considered in constructing this table. There were 18 no-response replys; this reduced the number from 66 to 48.

[67] Only those respondents who had contact with a social-service agency are included in this table.

While the total sample was drawn from a low-income area, not all respondents were living in dire poverty. The majority of respondents, while not "rich," had sufficient incomes to ensure them the "bare necessities" of life. Approximately 24 per cent of the respondents, however, were found to be living in poverty.[68]

The relationship between organizational participation and poverty does not appear to be a simple one. Surprisingly, when membership rates are compared, little difference is found between poor and non-poor respondents. Forty-two per cent of the poor respondents held at least one membership, as compared with 46 per cent of the non-poor respondents. Similarly, 20 per cent of the non-poor claimed membership in two or more voluntary associations, while 25 per cent of the poor reported

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[68]The measure utilized to classify the respondents was the Social Security Administration's "Poverty Index." This measure considers family income, family size, area of residence, and age and sex of the family head. The "economy level" of this index produces results quite similar to those given by the other major indexes currently in use. The poor respondents in this research were comprised of 36 persons who were living below the "economy level" and 17 persons who were above the "economy level" but below the "low-cost" level. The "low-cost" level is slightly higher than the "economy" level. It centers around $4,000 for an urban family of four, rather than around $3,100 as is the case with the "economy level budget." See Mollie Orshansky, "Counting the Poor: Another Look at the Poverty Profile," in Louis A. Ferman, Joyce L. Kornbluh, and Alan Haber (eds.), Poverty in America, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1965, pp. 42-82.

multiple memberships. When the dimension of leadership was examined, however, the relationship changed dramatically. The non-poor were distinctly more likely to claim they were office holders. This is depicted in Table 25.

Table 25. Poverty level by office holding

	Non-poor	Poor
Holds office	24.5	9.4
Does not hold office	75.5	90.6
Total	100.0% (143)	100.0% (53)

$X^2 = 4.50$ $p<.05$ $df = 1$ $N = 196$[69]

In this sub-sample, respondents who were living in poverty were examined along the same variables discussed in the previous section. In general, poor respondents who belonged to voluntary associations gave responses similar to members in the larger sample. Poor respondents who were not members tended to resemble non-members in the larger sample.

That organizational participation may serve an integrative function is revealed by the response of this sub-sample to the query; what do people in this

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[69]It was not possible to classify the total sample of 221 into poor and non-poor. This table excludes 25 respondents who could not be so classified. Most of these respondents had declined to reveal their family income. Analysis of other variables indicated that these 25 did not differ greatly from the remaining 196.

neighborhood need most? Poor members tended to answer that the city or neighborhood needed attention or should be the recipient of help. Poor non-members tended to answer that individuals needed help or should be the recipients of aid. This is depicted in Table 26.

Table 26. Identifying the major need of people in the neighborhood, by membership

	Poor members	Poor non-members
Community needs help	60.0	40.0
Individuals need help	40.0	60.0
Total	100.0% (15)	100.0% (15)

$X^2_y = 0.53$ (not sig.) df = 1 N = 30[70]

It is worth noting that those poor who were members seemed to have a greater awareness that problems existed in their neighborhood. Poor members were more likely to be able to identify a major need of people in their area of residence. This is shown in Table 27.

Those who were poor, but members, not only showed a greater awareness of community problems than poor non-members, they also appeared to be more able to suggest rational methods to solve the major problems.

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[70] Only those poor who were able to identify a major need or problem are included in this table. Table 27 investigates organizational membership among the 23 poor respondents who were not able to answer this query adequately. The reader should note that the response rate in this table is only 57 per cent.

Table 27. The ability of poor respondents to be able to identify a major need of people in the neighborhood, by membership

	Poor members	Poor non-members
Able to name a problem	68.2	48.4
Unable to name a problem	31.8	51.6
Total	100.0% (22)	100.0% (31)

$X^2 = 1.33$ (not sig.) df = 1 N = 53

Of those poor who had identified a need or problem, the members were more likely than the non-members to state that the problem might be alleviated with the aid of community, governmental, or social-service help. Non-members tended to respond that individual effort should be used to resolve the problem or need. This is shown in Table 28.

Table 28. How poor respondents perceived the major need might be met, by membership

	Poor members	Poor non-members
Community, governmental, or agency responsibility	46.2	25.0
Individual responsibility	53.8	75.0
Total	100.0% (13)	100.0% (8)

$X^2_y = 0.26$ (not sig.) df = 1 N = 21[71]

Similarly, of those who had identified a major need, poor members were more likely than non-members to be able to suggest how the major need or problem might be resolved. This is shown in Table 29.

Table 29. The ability of poor respondents to be able to suggest how the major need might be met, by membership

	Poor members	Poor non-members
Able to answer	76.5	50.0
Unable to answer	23.5	50.0
Total	100.0% (17)	100.0% (16)

$X^2_y = 1.48$ (not sig.) df = 1 N = 33

Proportionately more poor, than non-poor respondents, had had contact with social-service agencies. Still, only a minority of the poor reported having been in contact with an agency in the last two years. Among those poor who had consulted an agency, organizational members were more likely, than non-members, to have used impersonal means in seeking out or discovering the agency with which they had contact. Non-members were more likely to have used personal means such as talking to friends and relatives. See Table 30.

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[71] Only those poor who were able to identify a major need or problem are included in this table. Table 27 investigates organizational membership among the 23 poor respondents who were not able to answer this question adequately. The reader should be cautioned that the response rate in this table is quite low.

Table 30. How poor respondents found out about the agency with which they had contact, by membership

	Poor members	Poor non-members
Impersonal means	33.3	23.1
Personal means	66.7	76.9
Total	100.0% (6)	100.0% (13)

$X^2_y = 0.01$ (not sig.) df = 1 N = 19[72]

Table 31. Poor respondents who found agency service hard to obtain, by memberships

	Poor members	Poor non-members
Felt service was not hard to get	100.0	75.0
Felt service was hard to get	0.0	25.0
Total	100.0% (6)	100.0% (16)

$X^2_y = 0.54$ (not sig.) df = 1 N = 22[73]

Poor members not only used more authoritative sources in seeking out agencies, it also appears that they had less difficulty in obtaining help once contact

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[72] Only those poor respondents who had contact with social-service agencies are included in this table. No-response replys further reduced the sample from 22 to 19. Footnote 65 details the manner in which the responses were coded "personal" and "impersonal". The reader should note that the response rate is quite low.

[73] Only those who had contact with a social-service agency are included in this table.

was made. Poor members were more likely to report that it was not hard to get help from the agency with which they had contact. This is shown in Table 31.

As we have seen, voluntary associations are important to the poor. The rate of affiliation of poor respondents was observed to be nearly identical with that of the non-poor; and participation appeared to have an important effect. Earlier, it was observed that organizational members responded differently than non-members. It is significant that important differences remained between members and non-members, even within this subsample.

Poor respondents, who were members, appeared to possess greater social awareness than non-members, and they appeared to be more integrated into their community. They were more aware of problems in their neighborhood, and they were more likely to suggest rational solutions for these problems. They appeared to identify more closely with the city or neighborhood. When asked to name the major problems of people in the area, they tended to identify neighborhood or community problems. When asked how the problems could be resolved, they tended to suggest community or governmental action.

Poor members also differed from poor non-members with respect to their contact with social-service agencies. They showed greater skill in selecting agencies, and they had less difficulty in obtaining help.

CONCLUSIONS

While the percentage of respondents who were found to belong to voluntary associations was somewhat smaller than that reported in some earlier research, the fact that approximately 45 per cent of the sample were members, clearly indicates that residents of low-income areas do participate in formal voluntary associations. Further, many of the respondents were found to participate actively; over one-fifth of the respondents claimed to belong to two or more associations, while a similar number stated they were or had been officers in the organizations on which they were reporting.

Lower-income neighborhoods have probably been neglected by students of voluntary associations for two primary reasons. First, the idea that such areas are "disorganized", "delinquent", and "pathological", persists. Second, it has been frequently observed that membership tends to be greater among those in higher socio-economic positions.

Visualizing the slum as a series of neighborhoods does much to discredit the first assertion, since low-income areas can be found where many residents are neither "pathological" nor "delinquent". While socio-economic position remains an important variable, it should be noted that many lower-class persons participate in organizations, and as we have seen in this research, even

people living in poverty participated to a considerable extent.

As expected, educational level was found to be strongly related to organizational participation. This was true when membership was examined, as well as when office holding was explored. Surprisingly, family income was a less important variable than expected. Significant relationships were discovered only when the sphere of office holding was investigated. The examination of occupational status revealed that it is an important variable. This was true for each of the dimensions of participation examined; basic membership, multiple memberships, and office holding. Similarly, residential stability was found to be related to organizational participation. Both indexes of stability examined, length of time in the city and length of time in the neighborhood, were related to participation.

The relationship between race and participation was also interesting. Little difference in participation rates of Negro and white respondents was discernable until occupational level was controlled. While a statistically significant relationship was not found, blue-collar, Negro respondents did tend to hold office more frequently, and they did tend to belong to organizations more frequently than their white counterparts. The examination of family structure revealed that respondents who lived alone tended to be more active in voluntary

associations than respondents who lived with others. This was particularly true with respect to office holding.

The research compared the responses of members and non-members to a series of questions about contact with social-service agencies and about problems of people in the neighborhood sampled. When asked to identify a major problem of people in the neighborhood, members tended to answer that the city, neighborhood, or community needed help; while non-members tended to respond that individuals needed help. That members seemed to be more knowledgeable, and aware of problems in their neighborhood, was revealed by the fact that more members were able to identify a major problem. Similarly, of those who had identified a major problem or need, members were more likely to suggest it might be resolved with the help of community, governmental, or social-service agencies. Non-members tended to reply that the problems named should be resolved by individual effort. Members were also more likely to be able to suggest a rational way to solve the problem.

Members of voluntary associations seemed to use more skill in selecting social-service agencies, and they reported they had less difficulty in getting the agencies to agree to help them. Members tended to be more likely to use impersonal (more authoritative) methods in finding out about the agency with which they had contact.

Non-members were more likely to use more personal methods such as talking to acquaintances. That members were more skillful in their dealings with agencies is revealed by the finding that members were more likely than non-members to report that it was not hard to obtain help from the agency.

A sub-sample of respondents living in poverty was also examined. Many of the poor respondents participated in voluntary associations. Respondents who were poor, but members, appeared to be more knowledgeable and skillful, than respondents who were poor but not members.

Poor members appeared to be more integrated into their community than poor non-members. They were more likely to report that the city or neighborhood, rather than individuals, needed attention or should be the recipient of help. Poor members were also more likely, than poor non-members, to suggest that major problems could be solved with the aid of community, governmental, or social-service agency help. The greater community awareness and skill of the members was also indicated by the fact that they were both more aware of the presence of major problems, and more ready to supply solutions.

Similarly, poor members appeared to be more skillful and more successful in their dealings with social service agencies. Those poor members who reported contact with an agency were more likely to have found the agency through the use of impersonal (more authoritative)

means. Poor members were also more likely to report that it was not hard to get the agency's help.

This research clearly indicates that the poor do participate in voluntary associations. Poor and non-poor respondents were found to have nearly identical membership rates. The study has also produced some evidence indicating that participation has a positive effect on members; and that the poor, as well as the non-poor, can benefit from contact with this type of organization.

While virtually all discussion of social change is value laden, few people would disagree that the "quality" of life of slum residents could not be improved. Voluntary associations could be utilized to facilitate change in low-income areas. Additional research of both an empirical and a practical nature is needed. Research is needed exploring the various functions of voluntary associations. Similarly, studies examining how such organizations could be utilized to induce change, and studies exploring how voluntary associations could be fostered or founded would also be desirable.

Perhaps the most obvious function of voluntary associations is an expressive one. They provide an avenue for leisure and recreational activity. Associations, however, are also utilized to attain many other goals; including political, religious, educational, health, welfare, and scientific goals. Politically, voluntary

associations are often effective and powerful "interest groups". In this role, of course, the primary goal can vary. Associations can work to bring about change, or they can work to prevent change. In light of the "turmoil" surrounding the federal government's current "Poverty Program", research investigating the capability of voluntary associations to act as agents inducing social change, could be especially enlightening.

As we have seen, voluntary associations also have an integrative function. They serve to bind the society together. Members who differ in attitudes, values, and beliefs may gain a sense of identity and unity. Voluntary associations integrate the member into both the community and the larger society. It has frequently been suggested that "disorganization" is more common in low income or slum areas. Voluntary associations can provide ties to aid and support the weak kinship and community ties that exist in urban, industrial, low-income areas. Also, the presence of numerous voluntary associations allows some individuals to hold many memberships in diverse organizations; this may aid in reducing inter-group conflict.

Pattern maintenance is another major function of voluntary associations. The processes of socialization, education, and social control serve to maintain our national culture. Since social deviency is often cited as a major feature of low-income areas, the importance of

this function of voluntary associations is immediately apparent.

This research has shown that voluntary associations were strongly supported by residents of this low-income area. Many of the respondents were officers, and many held two or more memberships. Within this sample of low-income respondents, even the very poorest showed considerable interest in voluntary associations.

The importance of voluntary associations to the member, and to the community has also been discussed and documented. It would appear that voluntary associations have the capability of reaching these residents; and the capability to help them improve the "quality" of their lives.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Additional Tables

Table 32. Family income by membership

Memberships	High income	Low income
Belongs to two or more	26%	19%
Belongs to one	26%	22%
Does not belong	47%	59%
Total	100% (57)	100% (140)

X^2 = 2.11 (not sig.) df = 2 N = 197 (24 no-response)

Table 33. Family income by membership and occupational level

	White-collar		Blue-collar	
Memberships	High income	Low income	High income	Low income
Two or more	48%	23%	10%	15%
One	29%	27%	31%	25%
None	24%	50%	59%	59%
Total	100% (21)	100% (30)	100% (29)	100% (59)

X^2 = 4.32 (not sig.) df = 2 N = 51 (4 no-response)

X^2 = 0.61 (not sig.) df = 2 N = 88 (6 no-response)

Table 34. Family income by membership and educational attainment

Memberships	Some college or more		Finished high school or less	
	High income	Low income	High income	Low income
Two or more	45%	33%	14%	16%
One	27%	22%	26%	22%
None	27%	45%	60%	62%
Total	100% (22)	100% (27)	100% (35)	100% (113)

$X^2 = 1.58$ (not sig.) df = 2 N = 49 (5 no-response)

$X^2 = 0.22$ (not sig.) df = 2 N = 148 (15 no-response)

Table 35. Family income by office holding and educational attainment

	Some college or more		Finished high school or less	
	High income	Low income	High income	Low income
Holds office	40%	26%	23%	14%
Does not hold office	60%	74%	77%	86%
Total	100% (22)	100% (27)	100% (35)	100% (113)

$X^2 = 0.65$ (not sig.) df = 1 N = 49 (5 no-response)

$X^2 = 0.92$ (not sig.) df = 1 N = 148 (15 no-response)

Table 36. Occupational status by membership and educational attainment

Memberships	Some college or more: White-collar	Some college or more: Blue-collar	Finished high school or less: White-collar	Finished high school or less: Blue-collar
Two or more	45%	17%	15%	14%
One	28%	42%	35%	26%
None	28%	42%	50%	60%
Total	100% (29)	100% (12)	100% (26)	100% (80)

$X^2 = 2.93$ (not sig.) df = 2
N = 41 (13 no-response)

$X^2 = 0.85$ (not sig.) df = 2
N = 106 (57 no-response)

Table 37. Length of time in neighborhood by membership and educational attainment

Memberships	Some college or more: Over one year	Some college or more: Under one year	Finished high school or less: Over one year	Finished high school or less: Under one year
Two or more	39%	29%	19%	9%
One	30%	24%	25%	22%
None	30%	48%	56%	69%
Total	100% (33)	100% (21)	100% (104)	100% (55)

$X^2 = 1.63$ (not sig.) df = 2
N = 54

$X^2 = 3.51$ (not sig.) df = 2
N = 159 (4 no-response)

Table 38. Length of time in neighborhood by membership and occupational level

Memberships	White-collar		Blue-collar	
	Over one year	Under one year	Over one year	Under one year
Two or more	33%	29%	18%	11%
One	30%	33%	32%	19%
None	36%	38%	50%	70%
Total	100% (33)	100% (21)	100% (56)	100% (37)

$X^2 = 0.13$ (not sig.) df = 2
N = 54 (1 no-response)

$X^2 = 3.73$ df = 2
(not sig.) N = 93
(1 no-response)

Table 39. Length of time in neighborhood by office holding and occupational level

	White-collar		Blue-collar	
	Over one year	Under one year	Over one year	Under one year
Holds office	42%	29%	14%	11%
Does not hold office	58%	71%	85%	89%
Total	100% (33)	100% (21)	100% (56)	100% (37)

$X^2 = 0.55$ (not sig.) df = 1
N = 54 (1 no-response)

$X^2 = 0.33$ df = 1
(not sig.) N = 93
(1 no-response)

Table 40. Length of time in neighborhood by office holding and educational attainment

	Some college or more		Finished high school or less	
	Over one year	Under one year	Over one year	Under one year
Holds office	33%	29%	19%	7%
Does not hold office	67%	71%	81%	93%
Total	100% (33)	100% (21)	100% (108)	100% (55)

$X^2 = 0.01$ (not sig.) df = 1 N = 54

$X^2 = 3.27$ $p<.10$ df = 1 N = 163

Table 41. Length of time in city by membership and educational attainment

Memberships	Some college or more		Finished high school or more	
	Over four years	Under four years	Over four years	Under four years
Two or more	44%	20%	19%	5%
One	26%	30%	25%	24%
None	29%	50%	56%	70%
Total	100% (34)	100% (20)	100% (121)	100% (37)

$X^2 = 3.54$ (not sig.) df = 2 N = 54

$X^2 = 4.33$ (not sig.) df = 2 N = 158 (5 no-response)

Table 42. Length of time in city by membership and occupational level

Memberships	White-collar: Over four years	White-collar: Under four years	Blue-collar: Over four years	Blue-collar: Under four years
Two or more	38%	20%	21%	3%
One	32%	30%	29%	28%
None	30%	50%	51%	69%
Total	100% (34)	100% (20)	100% (63)	100% (29)

X^2 = 2.80 (not sig.) df = 2
N = 54 (1 no-response)

X^2 = 4.98 df = 2
p<.10 N = 92
(2 no-response)

Table 43. Total family size by membership and educational attainment

Memberships	Some college or more: One person family	Some college or more: Larger family	Finished high school or less: One person family	Finished high school or less: Larger family
Two or more	53%	28%	16%	15%
One	27%	28%	32%	22%
None	20%	44%	53%	63%
Total	100% (15)	100% (39)	100% (38)	100% (124)

X^2 = 3.60 (not sig.) df = 2
N = 54

X^2 = 1.71 df = 2
(not sig.) N = 162
(1 no-response)

Table 44. Total family size by membership and occupational level

Memberships	White-collar: One person family	White-collar: Larger family	Blue-collar: One person family	Blue-collar: Larger family
Two or more	37%	28%	22%	14%
One	32%	31%	33%	27%
None	32%	42%	44%	59%
Total	100% (19)	100% (36)	100% (18)	100% (74)

X^2 = 0.67 (not sig.) df = 2, N = 55

X^2 = 1.57 (not sig.) df = 2, N = 92 (2 no-response)

Table 45. The ability to be able to name a major need of people in the neighborhood, by membership and educational attainment

	Some college or more: Member	Some college or more: Non-member	Finished high school or less: Member	Finished high school or less: Non-member
Able to name a problem	68%	50%	73%	62%
Unable to name a problem	32%	50%	27%	38%
Total	100% (34)	100% (20)	100% (64)	100% (99)

X^2 = 0.99 (not sig.) df = 1, N = 54

X^2 = 1.93 (not sig.) df = 1, N = 163

Table 46. The ability to be able to name a major need of people in the neighborhood, by membership and occupational level

	White-collar		Blue-collar	
	Member	Non-member	Member	Non-member
Able to name a problem	76%	62%	80%	69%
Unable to name a problem	24%	38%	20%	31%
Total	100% (34)	100% (21)	100% (40)	100% (54)
	X^2 = 0.72 (not sig.) df = 1 N = 55		X^2 = 1.02 (not sig.) df = 1 N = 94	

Table 47. How respondents perceived the major need might be met, by membership and occupational level

	White-collar		Blue-collar	
	Member	Non-member	Member	Non-member
Community, governmental, or agency responsibility	52%	44%	61%	37%
Individual responsibility	48%	56%	39%	63%
Total	100% (21)	100% (9)	100% (23)	100% (27)
	X^2_y = 0.01 (not sig.) df = 1 N = 30 (25 no-response)		X^2 = 1.95 (not sig.) df = 1 N = 50 (44 no-response)	

Table 48. How respondents perceived the major need might be met, by membership and educational attainment

	Some college or more		Finished high school or less	
	Member	Non-member	Member	Non-member
Community, governmental, or agency responsibility	48%	62%	58%	32%
Individual responsibility	52%	38%	42%	68%
Total	100% (21)	100% (8)	100% (33)	100% (37)
	$X^2_y = 0.09$ (not sig.) df = 1 $N^y = 29$ (25 no-response)		$X^2 = 3.51$ df = 1 $p<.10$ N = 70 (93 no-response)	

Table 49. Being able to suggest how the major need might be met, by membership and occupational level

	White-collar		Blue-collar	
	Member	Non-member	Member	Non-member
Able to answer	78%	64%	73%	63%
Unable to answer	22%	36%	27%	37%
Total	100% (27)	100% (14)	100% (33)	100% (43)
	$X^2_y = 0.31$ (not sig.) df = 1 $N^y = 41$ (14 no-response)		$X^2 = 0.45$ df = 1 (not sig.) N = 76 (18 no-response)	