ELEMENTS OF LEGITIMACY OF A VOLUNTARY
ASSOCIATION:

A CASE STUDY OF THE FLINT SUBURBAN FORUM

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Francis M. Sim
1956

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ELEMENTS OF LEGITIMACY OF A VOLUNTARY
ASSOCIATION: A CASE STUDY OF
THE FLINT SUBURBAN FORUM

By

Francis M. Sim

AN ABSTRACT

Submitted to the College of Science and Arts
Michigan State University of Agriculture and
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the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

1956

Approved _____

Francis M. Sim

This study examines the process of legitimation of a
voluntary association in order to determine elements of
legitimacy. For present purposes, legitimacy refers to the
right, or lack of it, imputed to the association and affects
its capacity to participate in community decision-making
processes. It is concerned with appraisals of approval and
disapproval by members of the association's audience, i.e.,
persons or groups for whom the association's legitimacy is
of importance. The process of legitimation is made up of
those events which have had consequences for the associa-
tion's legitimacy.

The single case study is conceived here as a device for
obtaining intensive insight into particular theoretical
problems. Its purpose is to develop hypotheses for further
investigation. It makes use of whatever techniques are
appropriate and available. In the present instance these
included interviewing and informal conversations, attendance
at meetings of the association, and the review of reports
and documents. This was done to reconstruct the history of
the association and to obtain information about dimensions
of importance in approval or disapproval of the association.
The process of legitimation is taken as a starting point for
the analysis and provides its phenomenal grounding. The pro-
cess and the association are viewed in perspectives of the
associational structure and community context and American

culture. Not all elements of legitimacy are thought to have been isolated, nor is it believed that they could or ought to have been so isolated.

The study indicates that certain elements have been important in structuring the association's legitimacy, but no particular order of importance is ascribed to them. The analysis indicates that the activities of the association, of its members, and of another related association are all relevant to appraisal of the association by members of its audience. The same activities may be appraised differently dependent upon the conception of community action which is held. The significant audience of the association varies to some extent with the kind of activities undertaken. The structure of the association in terms of recruitment practices also influences audience formation. The manifest purposes of the association appear to provide a flexible rationale, but they do not seem to be the only or the most important reasons for approving or disapproving the association. Programs of specific actions appear to have been more highly desired than programs of an informative or deliberative nature. Institutionalization of the voluntary association in American society may have provided some measure of legitimation. Further, the institutional articulation of the voluntary association with the values of democracy appears to provide a symbolic resource. A set of hypotheses derived from the study are suggested.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is concerned with the study of a voluntary
association known as the Flint Suburban Forum. It is a case
study of the development of social power in certain decision-
making processes of a growing urban community. The central
purpose is to examine the process of legitimation of the as-
sociation in order to determine elements relevant to ques-
tions of legitimacy. However, it is felt that the study is
also of significance in relation to two characteristics of
contemporary American life, viz., the continuing concentra-
tion of population groups in urbanized areas and the func-
tions of voluntary associations in the United States.

The general plan of the presentation is as follows.
The remainder of the present chapter is devoted to a state-
ment of the general theoretical frame of reference, a dis-
cussion of the method and field work involved, and a resta-
tement of specific problems which will be investigated.
Chapter II will be a sketch of the community setting in
which the Forum operates and is intended to give the reader
some perspective of the social context which may limit the
data and the conclusions drawn. In Chapter III the Forum's
inception, structure, activities and evolution will be de-
scribed. Chapter IV is a brief discussion of another asso-

ciation which is related to the Forum and its legitimacy.
Chapter V deals with the key roles in the association. In
Chapter VI the configuration of support and audience are
discussed. Chapter VII is an analysis of elements which
appear to have been important in structuring the legitimacy
of the association. Chapter VIII is a statement of hypotheses
suggested by the study and of the relevance of the study to
other problems.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework within which the study is
undertaken has been developed in analyses of social power
and decision-making processes. The specific focus here is
the concept of legitimacy and the present section is primar-
ily concerned with an explication of this concept. It will
be necessary to outline the notions of social power and
decision-making and to indicate the meaning of some classi-
ficatory concepts which are essential to the present study.
These steps will be taken in inverse order.

Community, Association, and Institution.--The terms
"community" and "association" are used frequently throughout
the study. For convenience, they will be used as adapted
from R. M. MacIver. He defines:

" . . . the community as the most inclusive grouping
of man, marked by the possibility for the individual
member to live his life wholly within it. . . . the
community need not be self-sufficient . . . [There
are] . . . two bases of all communities, the occupa-
tion of a territorial area and the shared possession
of a community sentiment."[1]

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[1]R. M. MacIver and Charles H. Page, Society: An Intro-
ductory Analysis, New York: Rinehart and Company, 1949, p. 281.

Thus there is no single characteristic which infallibly identifies any human group as a community or not a community. The question of whether or not a given group will qualify as a community seems to be related to the problem at hand. In concluding his major discussion of the concept, MacIver notes that community "exists in some degree wherever men live together".[2] The conception is an ideal type applying to all human groups. For present purposes the problem will be resolved by modifying the definition slightly to ask whether under the given social conditions <u>most</u> of the members of a given group can maintain necessary relations largely within that group. Such necessary relations include those involved in kinship, economic, religious, recreational, and educational activities. This will be discussed more fully in Chapter II.

The definition of the term association which will be employed is:

> "a group organized for the pursuit of an <u>interest or group of interests</u> in common".[3]

On its relation to community, MacIver remarks, " . . . an association is not a community, but an organization within a community."[4] An association is an <u>existent</u> group as compared with institutions " . . . <u>the established forms or conditions of procedure</u> characteristic of group activity."[5] However, it is assumed here that the voluntary association as a means of pursuing interests is an established form of

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[2]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 309. [3]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 12. [4]<u>Ibid</u>. [5]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 15.

procedure in contemporary American life and thus has the characteristics of an institution as defined here. This point will be of interest in the discussion of legitimacy in a later chapter. In the sense of an action process any association is here viewed as developing out of an emergence and convergence of interests.

Social Power.--It is in the sense of an action process that the relation between the development of a voluntary association and social power may be seen. If it is assumed that " . . . social power inheres in all social relations and all social organizations,"[6] then the establishment of new ties through the development of a voluntary association will result in the creation of new resources of social power. The emphasis here is on the potential for the exercise of social power and not on its actual manifestation. It seems implicit in this conception of social power that such power is not fixed. Rather, it is a variable factor. As the relations within a social system change, the resources of social power also change. Not only may the locus of power shift, but it may be created and, conversely, destroyed. This creation of new social power may take place in at least two ways. The association may acquire the pre-existing resources of its members (individuals or groups) and re-direct them toward (possibly) new goals in such a manner that the effect is cumulative. Or the association may become a resource in itself,

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[6]R.M. MacIver, The Web of Government, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947, p.90.

gaining approval through its success, mode of procedure, ideals, "good works", etc.

Numerous conceptions of social power are available in the literature. The ethical aspects of power have concerned many political philosophers, but this consideration is specifically eliminated here. The concept of power has been used for large-scale analyses of social organization. Attention has been given to its analytic refinement. And it is widely found in writings on bureaucracy. For present purposes, it seemed necessary to adopt an orienting conception of power which would be useable in the context of community action.[7] While other conceptualizations might have proved as fruitful, the particular conception with which the present writer is most familiar is that developed by Useem:

> "'Power is the concentration of influence and authority within a social system for making, legitimizing, and executing decisions which have consequences, intended or unintended, on the social chances of the members of that social system.'"[8]

> "By influence is meant the act of, or potential for, producing an effect in the determination of decisions without apparent force or direct authority. By authority is meant the prerogative, or precedence by virtue of holding an office, to engage in the decision process."[9]

The advantage of the above definitions for present use is

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[7]This is not meant to imply that this conception was developed solely for the analysis of community action processes.

[8]Quoted in Donald H. Bouma, "An Analysis of the Social Power Position of the Real Estate Board in Grand Rapids, Michigan," unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Michigan State College, 1952, p. 20.

[9]Ibid. This is not a direct quotation from Professor Useem, but it is in substantive agreement with his conception.

that they are specifically concerned with a group (or social system) context in an on-going action process. Other conceptions tend to be concerned with the structure of diadic relationships.[10] These conceptions have been successfully employed elsewhere and it is assumed that they will be worthwhile here.[11]

Decision-Making.--The concepts of social power and decision-making may be viewed as complementary devices for use in the analysis of structural and processual aspects of social systems. Decision-making refers to the "reduction of alternative courses of action".[12] As an action process it is conceived as passing through phases of initiation, legitimation, and execution. Capacities for decision-making (social power) are classified in terms of authority and influence. Authority consists of formal positional elements; they are " . . . the rights and privileges given certain roles and positions within the formal associational life of the community".[13] Influence " . . . is a function of informal interpersonal systems" and is dependent on such resources

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[10]For example, see Herbert Goldhamer and Edward A. Shils, "Types of Power and Status," American Journal of Sociology, 45 (1939), pp. 171-182; or MacIver, Web of Government, op. cit., p. 82.

[11]Bouma, op. cit., pp. 288-291.

[12]The concept of decision-making is used here largely as developed in Paul A. Miller, "A Comparative Analysis of the Decision-Making Process in Community Organization Toward Major Health Goals," unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Michigan State College, 1953, pp. 14-46.

[13]Ibid., p. 27.

and proficiencies as wealth, respect, 'morality', success, access, obligation, time, subject matter competence, organizational skill, 'ideological skill', and the "possession of legendary personality".[14] This conception of decision-making seems useful for present purposes since it is capable of application to groups as well as to persons. While largely designed for the understanding of the activities of individuals, it is framed in terms of the characteristics of positions which can be filled by associations as well.

Legitimacy.--The concept of legitimacy appears to have been first used systematically in sociological literature by Max Weber. Although the term is not used by all other authors dealing with social power, some similar area of analysis or concern with the empirical dimension at which the concept is aimed may be found in all discussions of social power. (The nature of the problem area of legitimacy has made it the focus of discussions of the ethics of social power, but as noted above this concern is specifically eliminated here.) Some conception of legitimacy, how it is acquired, the conditions under which it is applied, the forms in which it appears, etc., seems to be necessary to understand any manifestation of power. Even raw force may be characterized in terms of legitimacy, i.e., as its absence.

Weber's use of legitimacy is strongly conditioned by

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[14]Ibid., pp. 30-44.

his theoretical problems. His systematic exposition[15] is

framed in connection with a large-scale historical analysis,

essentially a " . . . typological analysis of institutional

structuring."[16]

> "Legitimacy is for Weber a quality of an order, i.e.,
> of a system of norms governing conduct, or at least to
> which action may (or must) be oriented. This quality
> is imputed to the order by those acting in relation to
> it. Doing so involves taking a given type of attitude
> toward the norms involved which may be characterized
> as one of disinterested acceptance /as contrasted with
> self-interested/. . . . for one who holds an order to
> be legitimate, living up to its rules becomes, to this
> extent, a moral obligation."[17]

In relation to social power as here conceived, Weber's primary

use of the concept of legitimacy was as the basis for the

classification of the pure types of authority as rational-

legal, traditional and charismatic, i.e., " . . . according

to the kind of claim to legitimacy made by each."[18] However,

he does not deal systematically with what is here called in-

fluence, and it would seem that changes in the locus or

sources of social power through the influence component might

occur without corresponding changes in the authority struc-

ture. The present study is concerned with such a change.

It is not intended to imply that the present study is uncon-

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[15]See Max Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic
Organization, trans. A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons,
ed. and introd. Talcott Parsons, New York: Oxford University
Press, 1947, pp. 124-132, et passim.

[16]Ibid., p. 30.

[17]Talcott Parsons, The Structure of Social Action,
Glencoe: The Free Press, 1949, p. 661.

[18]Weber, op. cit., p. 325.

cerned with manifestations of authority. But, in a sense
our concern is broader than Weber's and must consider the
interplay of both authority and influence.

Schematically, the concept of legitimacy is concerned
with: (1) the disposition of a "subordinate" toward a "su-
perordinate", (2) in respect to the latter's "right", (3) as
framed in some symbolic process. The roles are conceived
here in terms of the (perhaps latent) power involved, not in
respect to manifest content.[19] In the present instance, the
association is viewed as a "superordinate" while the "subor-
dinate" position is occupied by the association's audience,
i.e., persons or groups for whom the question of the associa-
tion's legitimacy is of importance. The particular "right-
ness" (or "wrongness") which is predicated is, of course,
determined by the problem area concerned; it may be that of
a system of norms, of structural characteristics or roles,
of decisions, acts, etc. It is implemented through a process
of symbolic manipulation which, if "successful", is a short
cut to the acquiescence of the "subordinate" as compared with
the exercise of force. It involves the transferral of affect
·from one symbolic object to another. However, these symbolic

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[19]The terms "subordinate" and "superordinate" are used
here in a somewhat different sense than is usually intended.
A superordinate-subordinate power relation is one in which
ultimate control over decisions rests with one party. How-
ever, the intent in the present use is only to point up the
consequences of the "subordinate's" disposition when the
"superordinate's" "right" is accepted. And this may occur
in a coordinate type of relation as well as in a superordinate-
subordinate type of relation.

processes are not viewed as being necessarily rationally
manifest or purposively formulated. When specific symbolic
configurations are formulated by those concerned with the
question of the association's legitimacy or are capable of
being adduced by members of the audience, whether favorably
or unfavorably, such configurations are called rationales.
It is emphasized that the concern is with both the legitimate
and the illegitimate.

At this point, we must deal with a terminological prob-
lem which is not easily disposed of but which must be pointed
out. Like many other terms, the term "legitimate" and its
derivative forms may be used in two importantly different
ways: either to refer to the state or quality or character
of possessing a "right", or to refer to the general area of
the problems of "rightness" without regard to specific "right"
or "wrong". Both senses are used in this study and the con-
text should make clear which is intended, but it is the latter
with which we are essentially concerned in discussing the
concept of legitimacy here. It seems difficult to conceive
and idea of legitimacy without a corollary conception of
illegitimacy. Insofar as empirical manifestations of either
are normatively based, each entails the other. Specifically,
what we will call the process of legitimation is viewed as
involving not only elements through which "rightness" is es-
tablished but also those through which it is lost. It will
be seen that the schema presented above is framed to deal with
both aspects through a consideration of the character of the

disposition involved.

The process of legitimation is viewed here as analytically supplementary to the concept of decision-making process. As was indicated above, the decision-making process also includes a phase of legitimation. The reference there is to the legitimation of decisions, and we are here concerned with the legitimation of a group. However, empirically, legitimation and decision-making are found in the same process, and many events have meaning for both legitimation and decision-making. The same event may have consequences for the legitimation of a decision (or for its initiation or execution) and for the legitimation of a group. Each process has important consequences for the other. However, the conception of separate processes is a useful device for ordering different aspects of the data and for indicating their relation to each other.

For present purposes, legitimacy is viewed as a structural characteristic of a group as seen by members of its audience; it develops from pre-existing sentiment patterns in reference to the interests of those members and the performance of the group in the decision-making process. It bears upon the rightful capacity of the group to enter into the decision-making process and can be seen in the context of that process. The legitimation of a group is a resource of social power.

Methodology of the Case Study

The method of this thesis is that of a case study. While there seems to be some disagreement among sociologists as to the methodological status of a case study, certainly some sociologists use what they call a case study approach. The disagreement over the validity of the case approach is, one would suspect, a function of disparate conceptions of methodology. We cannot resolve these problems here but must attempt to indicate where this study stands.

Functions of the Case Study.--Perhaps the simplest way of approaching the case study method is to contrast it with the statistical;[30] the case study deals with one unit or sociological entity while the statistical study deals with many such units. In connection with this fact both advantages and disadvantages of the case method are to be found. If this distinction were held to be the only significant one between the two approaches, then the study of single cases would be significant only for comparative purposes. However, the exigencies of the research situation in which limited time and resources are available to the investigator suggest the possibility of more intensive study if attention is limited to a single case. Moreover, when the significant variables are unknown, the utility of intensive examination for the discovery of important relationships is heightened. It is in this way that the results of a case study may transcend the limits

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[30]This is not intended to indicate an exhaustive dichotomy of possible types of research procedures or methods, nor to suggest that statistical techniques are inappropriate to case analysis.

of the single case; by intensive consideration insights may be obtained which may be fruitful elsewhere. When case studies are used in connection with statistical analysis, their function may appear to depend on the time-order of the research process. If used early, they are for the "stimulation of insight"; if used late, for the "interpretation of data". But in either instance, the use of single cases is to develop hypotheses intended for use in further research. The consensus in contemporary literature on methods seems to be against the use of cases for the verification of substantive hypotheses.[21]

The most succinct statement of the viewpoint which is reflected here is:

> "The case study is a way of ordering social data with the view of preserving the unitary character of whatever is being studied. It merely selects out and treats some socially defined object or act as a whole. This whole constitutes the case unit, and the case unit may involve any level or base of abstraction. The case may be a person, an episode in a person's life, a group, a concrete set of relationships, a specific process, a culture; any aspect of empirical reality reacted to as a unit. . . .
>
> "The wholeness or unitary character ascribed to this concrete case is a construct. There are no concrete limits to any object or act. The limits imposed reflect the perspective and theoretical interest of the observer. . . .
>
> "Whatever unit has been abstracted out is temporally and spatially bound. It has a particular his-

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[21]For example, see Marie Jahoda, Morton Deutsch and Stuart W. Cook, Research Methods in Social Relations, 2 vols., New York: The Dryden Press, 1951, pp. 42-47; William J. Goode and Paul K. Hatt, Methods in Social Research, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1952, pp. 330-340; or Pauline V. Young, Scientific Social Surveys and Research, 2nd ed., New York: Prentice-Hall, pp. 265-285.

torical development and is a unique configuration.
This unit may be described by an indefinite number of
facts. These facts may be obtained from diverse sour-
ces, depending upon what the case is. They may be ob-
tained from documents, life-histories, from the indi-
vidual, from members of a group, from participant ob-
servation; from the use of various techniques available
to the sociologist."[22]

Problems of Process Analysis.--Another aspect of the

use of the case study which is connected to the above formu-

lation is: " . . . for the purpose of <u>group</u> <u>or</u> <u>process</u> <u>ana-</u>

<u>lysis</u>, as against the analysis of individual traits alone,

it is a highly fruitful approach . . ."[23] because "any cross

tabulation is essentially a static analysis . . . /and/ . . .

we do not observe 'process' in such tabulations".[24] The

notion of process is that of a sequence of related events

having significance for the problem at hand. In the present

instance, the process of legitimation is constituted of those

events which have had a bearing on the legitimacy or illegi-

timacy of the association as perceived by the relevant audi-

ence as seen in the context of the development of the asso-

ciation. It must be emphasized that the events in themselves

are insufficient for an understanding of the process. It is

necessary to attempt to assess their significance in several

dimensions. The meaning of the events and of the process to

the participants must be appraised, as this meaning is crucial

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[22]John McKinney, "The Development of Methodology, Pro-
cedures and Techniques in American Sociology Since World
War I," in a forthcoming symposium edited by Howard Becker
and published by the Dryden Press.

[23]Goode and Hatt, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 340.

[24]<u>Ibid.</u>, p.334 (See also pp. 338-339).

to legitimation. But this meaning is not always manifested,
i.e., much of the rationale is "understood" by everyone and
specific symbolic manifestations are not made. While it
should be possible to elicit all such materials through inten-
sive interviewing, it is, of course, impractical to achieve
a complete inventory. Further, some items are so conventional
as to arouse no reflection on the part of the participants;
they are simply accepted. Consequently, the analyst must
resort to other approaches to gain insight into the signifi-
cance of the process. One must assume a framework of cultural
and structural materials within which the process in viewed.
These materials will be brought to bear selectively in order
to interpret the observed. Resort must be had to a rather
far-ranging and frankly speculative orientation to the data.
But the orientation is to the data; it is not to speculation.
The analysis must be made in terms of the larger setting
within which the process is found, but it is the event process
which provides the immediate phenomenal grounding.

Important technical problems enter at this point for
which no adequate solution is easily available. First, such
an event sequence, if viewed as empirical reality, is inde-
finitely structured. The investigator has no way of knowing
directly when he has succeeded in isolating all the relevant
events. He must rely upon his skill in discerning the emer-
gence of some patterned whole in the course of his investi-
gation. In effect, he must settle for less than the total
process and assume that his construction sufficiently ap-

proximates to the whole.

Another problem in this connection arises from the fact that such studies as this must often, and perhaps necessarily, be undertaken "after the fact". Ideally, the investigator ought to be an observer throughout the processual development. However, this would necessitate his possession of the knowledge which he is seeking, i.e., he would have to be able to predict the occurence of the event sequence in advance. In practice, the investigator must "reconstruct" the events from interviews with the participants and available social documents. This involves the recall of the informant which is necessarily incomplete and intertwined with the meaning which the events have had for the individual. This "meaning for the individual" is of importance to an understanding of the process, but in order to assess it we must have a base line of activity against which it may be seen. Further, intervening events and meanings (including the interviewing process) may have restructured the individual's perceptions in such a way as to significantly alter previous perceptions and obscure important shifts in the process under investigation. Some check on these possible sources of inaccuracy may be afforded by questioning different informants in respect to the same events, subsequently "piecing together" a fuller picture.

Problems of Case Selection.--Another set of considerations, related to those concerned with the collection of data and the methodological position of the case study, is the

problem of the selection of specific cases to be studied and
their relation to significant theoretical problems. Ideally
perhaps, the investigator should elaborate specific theoreti-
cal problems and hypotheses and carry them into the field in
search of suitable cases which would serve to illuminate the
problems. In point of fact, the elaboration of specific
theoretical problems is often consequent to the possession
or discovery of case materials by an investigator who is
alert to a general theoretical problem area. Also, the selec-
tion of one case rather than another may be a function of the
investigator's opportunities in terms of the resources at his
disposal. These resources include the willingness of his
informants to participate.

In view of the, as yet, fragmentary nature of much of
sociological theory (particularly in the area of present
concern), it would seem that one might select from numerous
alternative lines of investigation with the expectation of
fruitful results. In a sense, the investigator may safely
proceed to fit available data to the gaps in the theory,
rather than to choose particular gaps which are to be plugged
at all costs.

In summary, the principal function of a case study is
the development of hypotheses to be tested in further research.
This is to be achieved through the intensive examination of
an event sequence assumed to be related in such a way as to
constitute a processual whole in terms of the problem under
consideration. Any techniques and data deemed appropriate
may be used to accomplish this purpose.

Sources of Information

This section is concerned with field procedures. It is mainly a summary of the steps taken to acquire the desired data. However, some discussion is also made of the less direct, but necessary, jobs of "human relations", i.e., the establishment and maintenance of rapport. As has been pointed out in another connection above, many events in the sequence have relevance for both activities. It is not intended to argue for the adequacy of the field work, but to indicate what was done, so that some perspective may be had of the strengths and weaknesses of the study.

The purpose of the field work was to permit reconstruction of the event sequence assumed to constitute the life history of the association and to provide information with which to assess the significance of these events. Analytically these constitute separate categories of information, but the processes of gathering them largely overlapped. The sources of information included: (1) the annual and monthly reports of the Associate County Agricultural Agent of Genesee County; (2) newspaper accounts of meetings and activities of the association; (3) attendance at meetings of the association and its committees; (4) interviews with the personnel of the association; (5) informal discussions with members; and (6) other previously collated material, particularly that presented in Chapter II. A discussion of these various sources follows.

After preliminary discussions and observations and the decision to undertake the study had been made, the first step taken was that of reviewing the reports of the Associate County Agricultural Agent. This included a complete reading of all yearly reports for the period, 1946 through 1954, of various monthly reports from this period and of reports for the early months of 1955. Extensive notes were made from these documents. In addition, the yearly reports for the period, 1930 through 1945, were scanned for information in regard to the activities of the County 4-H Agent; the Associate Agent had occupied this position during that period. The purpose was to obtain information about events both prior to and following the formation of the association, to develop some perspective of the Agent's activities and position in the relevant structures, and to gain some further understanding of his orientation toward the association. This was done because the agent has played a key role in the inception and development of the association. After this initial step other sources of information were pursued concurrently.

Newspaper accounts of activities of the association were reviewed; they provided some corroborating information in respect to places, times, personnel, and topics of meetings. Unfortunately, the newspaper's method of filing articles by organization made difficult the acquisition from this source of information about activities prior to the formal association. Because of the particular problems of legitimation of the association, newspaper reports did not provide infor-

mation significant to them.

After the inception of the study, the observer attended all meetings of the association and its steering and executive committees, occasionally in the company of other Michigan State University personnel. The observer (and observers) were introduced to the groups as University personnel interested in understanding the association so that such understanding might be made available to other similar organizations. Attendance was largely in a non-participant capacity, although occasional invitations to participate were made by members. On these occasions, an attempt was made to answer in such a manner that no suggestion, initiation, or direction of activity was involved. However, general approval of the course of activity was sometimes expressed. It was felt that this behavior would be more appropriate than repeated direct refusals to participate, since the latter might have a more disruptive effect. For the same reason, notes were not taken during the meetings. Most of the meetings were "in the round" making note-taking more noticeable and distracting. However, an attempt was made to summarize and cross-check observations afterward. The purpose of attendance at these meetings was to observe patterns of interaction and leadership and manifestations of attitudes toward the association, its activities and procedures.

Interviews were undertaken with persons concerned with the association and its areas of activity in order to establish greater understanding of the event sequence and to get

insights into problems of legitimacy for the association.
Approximately thirty-five "formal" interviews, ranging from
about one hour to three hours in length, were conducted with
twenty different respondents. Two persons acted as "infor-
mants" to provide detailed information about the association.
No detailed questionnaire was employed. Interviews were struc-
tured around the association and its areas of activity. A
fuller statement of interviewing procedures appears as an
appendiz to this thesis.

Numerous informal discussions in which the observer
participated provided less well-recorded but perhaps critical
data. Small "bull sessions" before and after meetings of the
association and "coffee breaks", both with members and other
persons, sometimes yielded previously unnoticed facts or sug-
gested explanations which had not been considered. While
much of this material had an indirect value to the problem
at hand, it must be recorded as a possible source of impres-
sions reflected in the study.

Other sources of data used in the study, especially
much of Chapter II, consist of material previously gathered
by other persons and agencies. These sources are indicated
at the appropriate points and are used primarily as background
information against which the present study may be viewed.

This section has reviewed the sources of information
and the field procedures involved in the present study.
These sources are necessarily more varied and the procedures
less precisely structured than in certain other kinds of

sociological undertakings. It is tentatively suggested that this is a necessary concomitant of the purpose of the present study and of other similar studies.

Problems

The problem of this study is to examine the process of legitimation of a voluntary association in order to determine the elements relevant to its legitimacy. It is felt that the statement of the intended procedure in terms of orienting questions is appropriate to guide the discussion. As indicated in the discussion of method, it is not assumed that all of the relevant elements can be isolated, although the questions are framed in an inclusive manner. Further, the concern is with the loss of legitimacy as well as its accrual.

The main questions which will be posed are:

1. What factors in the social setting of the association have an important bearing upon its legitimation?

2. How does the structure of the association affect its legitimation?

3. How are the activities of the association related to its legitimation?

In order to gain the information necessary to deal with these problems certain other questions must be raised:

4. What is the character of the audience and how is support for the association structured?

5. What are the significant events which constitute the history of the association; how is the association structured, and how has the association changed over time?

Finally, consideration must be given to the larger community setting:

6. What are the characteristics of the community within which the association has developed which may, however indirectly, have a relation to the association and its legitimation?

It is this last question to which Chapter II is addressed.

The preceding questions are subsequently considered in approximately inverse order.

CHAPTER II

COMMUNITY

The present chapter is concerned with describing the community in order to place the Flint Suburban Forum in perspective of the social setting in which it developed. The purpose is to suggest and outline some dimensions which it is thought might have important effects on the analysis. The present description is merely a sketch. However, it is felt that some treatment is necessary. The chapter will include discussion of the area involved and the characteristics of its population, the economic structure, the relation of the city and its fringe, the subdivisions of the fringe and certain social problems involved.

In the previous chapter a definition of the term community was adapted to serve as a guide for present use. It was not intended to argue that this was the correct definition but that some consistent use was needed. The concept is an ideal type construct in that its applicability in an empirical setting is a matter of degree, i.e., all human groups have elements of community-ness. For present purposes it was decided that the community was roughly coterminous with the geographic area including the city of Flint and the four adjacent townships.[1] (See Fig. 1) This area approxi-

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[1]Within the definition adopted, other areas could be used, e.g., the city of Flint or Genesee County.

···· Township boundaries
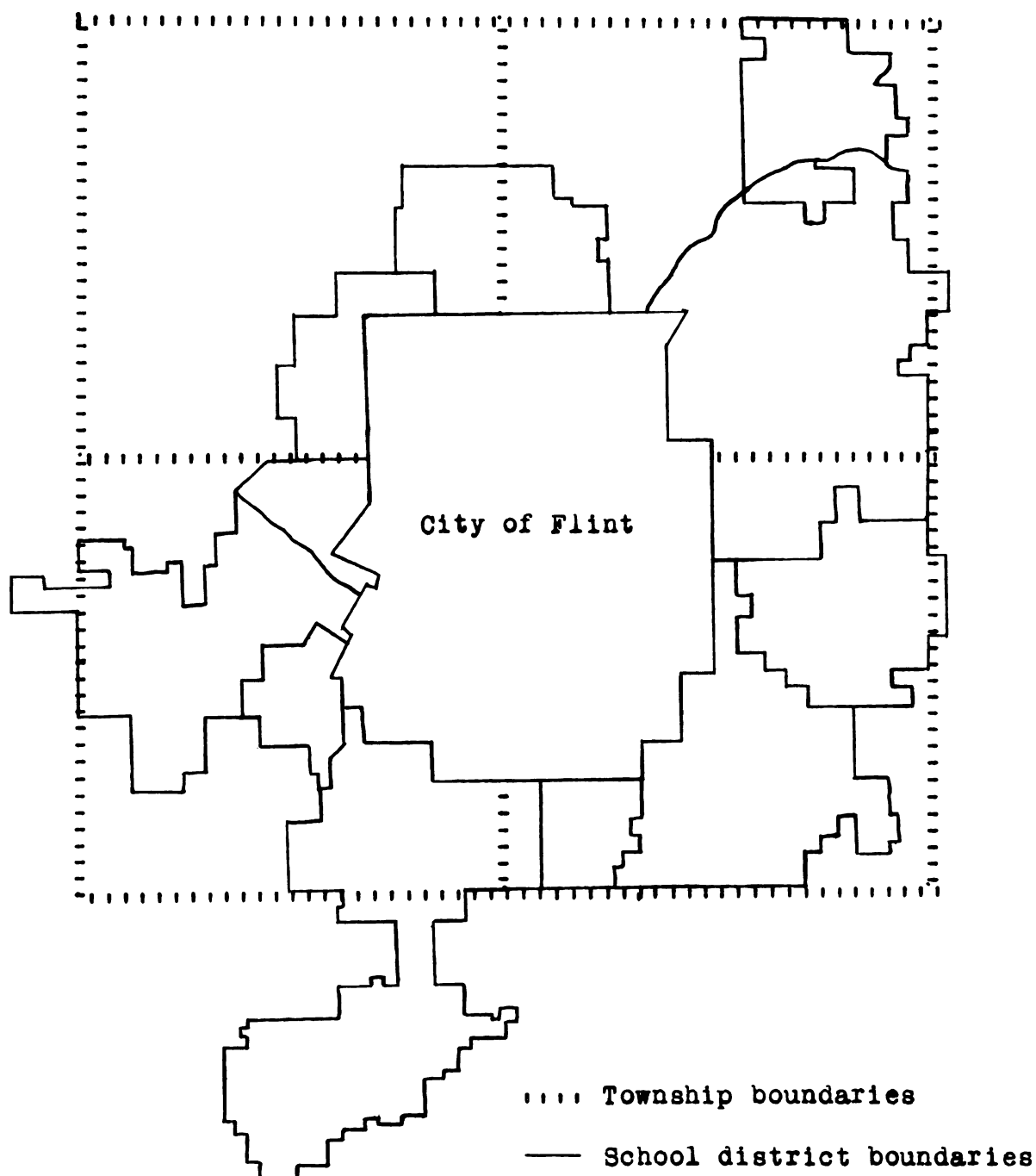
—— School district boundaries

Figure 1. Outline map of the City of Flint, the four adjacent townships, and the school districts which participate in the Flint Suburban Forum. Adapted from Basil G. Zimmer, Demographic Handbook of Flint Metropolitan Area, Social Science Research Project, Institute for Human Adjustment, University of Michigan, March, 1955, p. 50.

mates the outer limits from which membership in the associa-
tion is drawn, and it is often used for demographic analysis.
This problem will be considered further in discussing the
relation between the city and the fringe.

Population

Since 1900 population increase in the Flint area has
been rapid. Recently it has been marked by the continually
increasing importance of the area in the four townships con-
tiguous to the city. Since 1930 the greatest increase in
the county, both numerically and proportionally, has been
in this fringe area. In this time, the proportion of the
total county population living in the city has decreased
almost fifteen percent and that in the fringe has increased
more than ten percent. In 1950 the population of the city
of Flint was 163,143 and that of the remainder of the four
contiguous townships was 57,363.[2] Significant increases in
the townships' populations since 1950 are indicated by a
consideration of school census data.[3] Comparison of enroll-
ment figures for 1950 and 1954 for the school districts
which approximate the area shows an increase of about
twenty-seven percent in the number of school age children,

[2]Basil G. Zimmer, Demographic Handbook of Flint
Metropolitan Area, Social Science Research Project,
Institute for Human Adjustment, University of Michigan,
March, 1955, p.5. Unless otherwise noted, all population
data used herein are abstracted from this source.

[3]Genesee County School Directory, 1950-1951 and
1954-1955, County Superintendent of Schools, Flint, Michigan.

i.e., five to nineteen years of age.[4] The distribution of
the population and its growth patterns in the contiguous
townships tend to be concentrated on the boundaries of the
city and along major roads leading out of it. In comparing
selected demographic characteristics of city and fringe
dwellers, Zimmer concludes:

> " . . . the fringe area population may be charac-
> terized as being made up predominantly of young,
> married, non-migrants, who have a low level of
> educational attainment, and engage in industrial
> jobs and are concentrated in the middle income
> group. On the other hand, city dwellers, by com-
> parison, tend to be older; have a larger propor-
> tion unmarried; are more migrant and residentially
> mobile; have a higher level of education; are
> more likely to engage in white collar jobs; and
> are in the extremes of income--high and low."[5]

Economic Structure

Changes in population size and composition underline
the shift in the economic structure from an agricultural to
an industrial base and large scale urbanization. Flint is
primarily a manufacturing city as classified by employment
in the city.[6] Its major business is the manufacturing of
automobiles, primarily by various divisions of General Motors
Corporation. Recent employment estimates by Flint manufac-

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[4]Due to the relatively large number of child-bearing
families usually found in fringe areas, an estimate of pop-
ulation in the area based on this factor might prove to be
high. However, Dr. Zimmer has indicated in conversation
that recent research of the Social Science Research Project
indicates an increase of about 25 percent.

[5]Zimmer, op. cit., p. 48.

[6]Grace M. Kneedler, "Functional Types of Cities,"
Public Management, 27, pp. 197-203.

turers indicate that of more than 81,000 persons employed
in manufacturing over 77,000 are employed by the nine
General Motors plants in the area.[7] Concomitantly, the
extent of commercial activities is relatively limited for
a city of this size. The central business district is
smaller than would be expected.[8] A comparison, in terms of
selected business activities, with other cities of similar
size indicated that " . . . Flint ranked relatively low in
both urban and metropolitan services."[9] However, when com-
pared to cities of similar industrial importance, " . . . its
relative position in the volume of both . . . was more favor-
able."[10]

Economic Structure and Decision-Making

It should be pointed out that, in spite of the dominant
position held by General Motors in the economic structure,
there is little evidence of manifest paternalistic control
of local community affairs on the part of the corporation.
This is, of course, not intended to argue that the corpora-
tion's interests are ignored in community decision-making

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[7]Flint Chamber of Commerce, "List of Manufacturers,
Flint, Michigan," n.d.

[8]J. D. Carrol, Jr., Report on the Parking Survey of
the Flint Downtown Business District, Social Science Research
Project, Institute for Human Adjustment, University of
Michigan, November, 1950, pp. 5-8.

[9]Marian Dunlap, The Urban and Metropolitan Status of
The City of Flint, Social Science Research Project, Univer-
sity of Michigan, Feb., 1948, p. iv. "Urban" refers to ser-
vices to individuals; "metropolitan" refers to services to
institutions.

[10]Ibid.

processes. Rather, that the points of tangency between the corporation and (particularly) governmental structures are not highly visible. This is in part necessitated by the popularly held negative appraisal that "General Motors runs the town" which precludes direct intervention, especially in elective processes. The out-fronters in community actions (e.g., Community Chest) seem to be drawn from local business, banking, utilities, the middle ranges of corporation management, etc., but seldom from the higher levels of corporation executives. Some mention should also be made of the apparent position of labor unions in community decision-making. Some local observers are inclined to view labor as essentially a veto group, able to oppose actions but unable to initiate them. Informants reported that in the formation of the Flint Area Study[11] care was taken to include representatives of the two major union councils, although no material aid was anticipated from this source. Persons involved in decision-making in the community seem to believe that it is necessary to have the backing of the corporation to undertake any large-scale program and to neutralize potential opposition from labor to avoid having such a program stopped.

City-Fringe Interrelations

There are a number of local governmental units relevant to the four-township area. They include one county, four townships, about twenty-five school districts, two cities,

[11]This is an association which is closely related to the Forum and it will be discussed in a later chapter.

and one special district. "Every acre . . . is under (at least) three local governments . . ."[12] This situation is not unusual.

> "Urban decentralization is one of the most difficult problems confronting public administrators today. A suburban fringe of residentail communities, incorporated and otherwise, surrounds every major city in the United States. Multiplicity of unifunctional units of government, need for urban services, limited ability to raise revenue, and lack of integrated development with the central city and with neighboring suburbs—all characterize these communities to some extent."[13]

It is here assumed that these social problems result, in part, from the fact that such areas constitute communities and that governmental associations which are normally community-wide do not coincide with the area. The concept of a community includes many elements, some of which we have arbitrarily excluded here in favor of a functional definition. However, it is still an ideal type construct and assumes some measurement in at least two respects—the number of persons who need given social relations which require at least a given group and area under existing conditions. This would include examination of economic, religious, family, recreational, educational and other activities for the individuals and groups involved. This has not been done here. However, there seems little doubt that, for such relations as are

[12]I. Harding Hughes, Jr., Local Government in the Fringe Area of Flint, Michigan, Social Science Research Project, Institute for Human Adjustment, University of Michigan, July, 1947, p. 1. There were 37 school districts at that time, but consolidations have reduced the number.

[13]Maxine Kurtz, "The Tri-County Regional Planning Commission," Public Administration Review, 7 (1947), pp. 113-123.

involved in work, shopping, or recreation, there are relatively few who can find the necessary relations in one sub-area of the larger grouping. In addition, considerable indirect evidence of the interrelatedness of the city and its fringe is available for occupations, commercial relations, shopping and driving practices, migration, etc.[14]

Fringe Sub-Areas

The two most important ways in which the fringe area is subdivided are by townships and school districts. Each of these have characteristics which approximate toward those of a community as here defined, but to a lesser extent than that of the larger urbanized or metropolitan area. The 1950 population of the four townships, exclusive of cities, ranged from 10,968 to 18,171. However, population is not evenly distributed throughout the townships but tends to be concentrated on the city boundaries.

> "Complicating the problem of local government in the fringe area is the fact that population groupings in some instances straddle township lines. Population has clustered about the highways which were constructed on township lines."[15]

If public services be adopted as a criterion of local government, there is some question as to how much governing

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[14]See the series of publications by the Social Science Research Project, including Carroll, op. cit., Zimmer, op. cit., Dunlap, op. cit., and Betty Tableman, Intra-Community Migration in the Flint Metropolitan District, Social Science Research Project, Institute for Human Adjustment, University of Michigan, Sept., 1948.

[15]Hughes, op. cit., p. iii.

these townships do. Road construction and maintenance is
the province of the county. Sewerage is sold to some adja-
cent fringe areas by the city. One township provides water
in part of its area. A special district provides water to
parts of two other townships. Police protection is offered
by townships, but the areas also come under the jurisdiction
of the county sheriff and the state police. Schools are pro-
vided by separate districts. The most notable exceptions
are in the areas of fire protection and zoning.[16] In other
respects there is even less evidence of integration of the
area embraced by the township. Few associations of any sort
are identified with such areas, and the local retail shopping
areas are usually identified with their immediate areas.

Of the school districts in the fringe area, the ones
of most importance to this study are those from which member-
ship in the association is drawn. There are eleven of these
districts and all but one lie adjacent to the city of Flint.
These ten adjacent districts embrace most of the densely
settled part of the fringe in the "Flint urbanized area".[17]
The 1954 school census for the eleven districts shows a range
of school age children (five to nineteen years of age) from
445 to 3,315.[18] A rough estimate of the total population
based on this data would indicate that not fewer than 1,300

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[16]Both of these are recent and in part the consequence
of the activities of the association analyzed here. _Infra_,
Chapter III, s.v. "Activities."

[17]Zimmer, _op. cit._, p. 1, n. 2.

[18]_Genesee County School Directory_, _op. cit._, _passim_.

persons live in the smallest of the districts and not more than 12,000 to 13,000 are resident in the largest. The diversity in population size reflects differences between the districts in other dimensions, although there is no simple correlation. Within the population range there are three large districts, three which are fairly small, and five which are intermediate in size. The districts are of different types but most have twelve grade schools. The larger districts have considerable plant dispersion; the largest has eight school locations. The three largest districts and some of the others have shopping areas of various sizes. Two of the larger districts are located on the main highway from Detroit to Saginaw on the north and south sides of the city, and the shopping areas of each line the highway for several blocks. These two districts also have service associations in the form of Lions Clubs. The other large district has a local men's social club which fills service functions. The largest district is co-extensive with a special district for water and sewerage services.

In terms of the possession of shared community sentiment, these districts are probably communities for school-age children (particularly adolescents) more than for any other group.[19] For children, such areas of activity as school, home, play, and perhaps work can be undertaken largely within

[19]Confirmation on this point for one of these districts is expressed in W. H. Form, et al, "Final Report on the Flint-Beecher Tornado," Michigan State College, Social Research Service and Continuing Education, 1954, p. 38.

the district. But the general lack of some services (parti-
cularly such commercialized forms of recreation as movies)
in most of the districts probably leads to considerable acti-
vity outside of the area. Probably the most powerful force
for the development of community sentiment in this group is
the common school experience, as exemplified by the display
of spirit in connection with inter-school athletics.

In connection with this, there is very little evidence
on which to base any appraisal of the relative amount of
community sentiment in the various districts. It does seem
that there is no simple relation to size. The smallest of
the districts (it is also the only one not contiguous with
the city) is known as one which is "very active for its
size". This district has received relatively less in-migra-
tion than others. The unincorporated village in its center
has been a small rural trade center for some time, and the
township hall and fire department are located there. On the
other hand, the superintendent of another small district,
which has received rapid recent in-migration, reported flatly,
"This is a bedroom."

In summary, the growth of the fringe areas adjacent
to the city has present new problems of social organization.
These newly aggregated populations have marked social and
economic interconnections with the central city. In certain
areas of human organization, these groups lack adequate
decision-making structures to provide necessary urban-type
services. It is these dimensions of the situation viewed as

social problems which constitute the interests around which
the Flint Suburban Forum has emerged and developed.

CHAPTER III

THE ASSOCIATION

This chapter will describe the events which led to the founding of the Forum, its structure, and the decision-making activities in which it has engaged. The purpose is to describe the organizational context within which the analysis of the legitimacy of the association is to be understood. It will be necessary occasionally to repeat references to certain aspects of the material in order to place each phase of the discussion in its proper context.

Prior Events

In January, 1946, an Associate County Agricultural Agent (hereafter referred to as "the agent") was appointed in Genesee County. His assignment was "to investigate where the Extension Program might be of better service to part-time farmers with small acreages".[1] However, no specific instructions were given as to the methods or goals which he was to pursue. The agent had previously been the Genesee County 4-H Club Agent since about 1930.

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[1]Genesee County Cooperative Extension Service, Program of Work, 1946 (in the files of the Cooperative Extension Service, Michigan State University).

During the early months of 1946, the agent "talked with friends and schoolmen in typical fringe communities",[2] i.e., school districts. In the Spring of 1946 he adminis- tered a questionnaire to all high school students in four of the school districts adjacent to the city of Flint. The purpose was to discover the extent of part-time farming in these areas. This questionnaire was followed up by distri- buting an Extension Bulletin on vegetable gardening to the students. Also, 4-H Clubs were established in three of the districts.

In the 1946 Annual Report, the agent remarked, "About the one common nucleus in these overgrown and under-organized so-called communities is the school system." He indicated that he felt his previous work as a 4-H Club Agent in the county had brought him into close contact with school per- sonnel and provided a natural entree into these districts. Also, he was convinced that the problems of part-time farmers could not be handled fruitfully on an individual basis. Ra- ther, he believed that his work should be undertaken on an "area" basis and should be concerned with finding ways to attack certain most important "social" problems, e.g., water, sewage, roads, recreation, home life, etc. (i.e., largely service functions usually performed by local government). He felt it was most important to work with the school dis-

[2]Genesee County Cooperative Extension Service Annual Report, 1946 (in the files of the Cooperative Extension Service, Michigan State University).

tricts. In assessing the conditions of the districts he found "general human conditions bad" but noted positive factors in the "intense school loyalty on the part of young people" and his belief that "social consciousness seems to be emerging among elders". The agent's generally positive evaluation of the schools is indicated by the following passage from the County Program of Work for 1947.

> "These suburban communities are not well defined and differ greatly in character. Such social institutions as churches, recreation facilities and even trading centers have not kept pace with the growth of the population. The schools have made a valiant effort to keep up with seat space, but laboratories, shop space, gymnasiums, etc., are in most cases utterly inadequate or lacking altogether."

In order to implement a program in this area, the agent undertook the organization of a series of meetings and other activities. In December, 1946, a "planning meeting" was held for "leaders in the Flint fringe". In April, 1947, the agent assisted the Social Research Service of Michigan State College in conducting a "suburban questionnaire" in twelve school districts surrounding the city of Flint. During May, plans were made among the school districts for the "first fringe youth camp". This resulted in the Circle Flint Camp for suburban seventh and eighth grade students held in June, 1947. The organizational successor of this group is now under the sponsorship of the Forum and is still in operation. During July, 1947, a meeting of a fringe advisory committee was held. In August, two "educational trips for fringe youth" were undertaken. A "fringe leaders" camp was held in

September. In November, 1947, a "Flint Fringe Community

Conference" was attended by about 100 "leaders" from the

fringe area. In the 1947 Annual Report, the agent reported

as follows:

> "In order to plan . . . we have attempted to se-
> cure the cooperation of the heads of the twelve schools
> in these communities. In many instances the school is
> the only community-wide organization and in all in-
> stances the school man is in close touch with community
> needs and activities. Some of the school men have been
> my friends for years past, others at first were natu-
> rally skeptical as to what we were trying to sell. . . .
>   "One of the first services rendered by these
> groups was the summer camp for 7th and 8th grade boys
> and girls. This worked out so successfully that the
> next steps were easier. Our most successful and cer-
> tainly most significant meeting recently held brought
> together about 100 community leaders from all 12 of
> these fringe districts. . . .
>   "Recommended programs of activity are forming
> along four lines.
>   1. Community organization
>   2. Youth programs
>   3. School needs
>   4. Public services . . .
>   "/These problems/ . . . must be faced and solved
> by the urban and suburban folks as a unit. In the
> Flint Fringe Community Conference held in November of
> this year, a start was made in bringing these two ele-
> ments together. . . ."

These activities by persons from the twelve school districts

surrounding the city eventuated in the organization of the

Flint Suburban Forum in the Spring of 1948. In the Annual

Report for 1948 the agent summarized the process as follows:

> "The twelve school men because of their training
> and their outlook were eager to proceed in some coop-
> erative relationship. After one or two meetings with
> these men, they brought in members of their school
> board or PTA president. . . . Then later businessmen,
> church men, township officers and representatives of
> other like groups /e.g., child study, youth guidance/
> joined in these informal discussions until there were
> nearly 150 present when the simple Forum constitution
> was finally adopted."

In view of the configuration of differential support of the association from the several districts,[3] it seems appropriate to question whether all persons involved were equally "eager" to proceed in the formation of the Forum. It must be made clear at this point that in spite of the importance of the role played by the agent the formation of the association cannot be attributed to him alone. The process is viewed as a convergence of interests. The interplay of the activities of many persons and a pre-existing set of other conditions are considered necessary to such convergence.

Some implementation of the process may take place through the emergence of a normative crisis, i.e., an event or events which are seen as threatening to deeply and commonly held values. Such events are, of course, important in many phases of decision-making processes and may be used as tactical devices.[4] The following incident took place during the period prior to the formal association of the Forum and was reported by one of the informants.

> A meeting of community leaders was called to discuss the possibility of forming an association. The question of the purpose of such an organization was raised and one man said, "We haven't got the time for just another county PTA. There's enough of that already. What would be the good of it? Just what could we do?" At this point a man got up in the back

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[3]See below, Chap. VI.

[4]See Miller, op. cit., p. 438, for an instance in which a professional fund-raiser created a crisis by reporting that a drive for funds would fail (although it had in fact reached its goal) in order to insure over-subscription.

of the room and he was obviously quite excited. He said, "Well, I'll tell you one thing that needs to be done." He then proceeded to tell about a fire that had taken place out in __X__ just the night before. Everybody had read about it in the paper that day. Three young children were killed when the little shack they lived in burned to the ground while the parents were gone. The fire department didn't get there in time. Whoever called in the fire called the __Y__ department, and they couldn't find it on their map because the street was new. They called __X__, and they weren't sure where it was because there was more than one street with that name. Because of the wasted time the house burned down. The man said he thought that something ought to be done to make sure it didn't happen again. Everybody was pretty upset and agreed that it would be worth working on.

The problems of duplicate street names and an integration of fire call-in systems were the first lines of action undertaken by the Forum after its organization. It is difficult to evaluate the exact effect of the instance in overcoming reluctance to formation of the association which may have existed among some of the persons concerned. However, the concurrent threat to such powerfully held values as property and the lives of children may well constitute a normative crisis and serve to crystallize the feeling of urgent common interests.

Structure of the Association

The Flint Suburban Forum was organized in the Spring
of 1948 as a "clearinghouse for ideas, and voice for subur-
ban opinions". Its manifest purpose was to identify the
common problems of fringe areas and make recommendations to
the legally constituted agencies responsible for their solu-
tion. The expressed intent was to keep the organization
"as elastic and responsive as possible", to be a "delibera-
tive, not an action agency". Nevertheless, interest was also
expressed in achieving "specific accomplishments".

Initial Form.--At its inception, the Forum was made
up of representatives from twelve school districts surroun-
ding the city of Flint. The association was to be open to
any "suburban community". No others have joined, although
occasional advances have been made toward them. One school
district dropped out of the Forum before 1950. It is a
rural primary district adjacent to Flint on the north and is
the only district adjacent to the city which has a relatively
large number of full-time farmers.

Representation to the association was to be made up of
three persons from each district who were to belong to the
Executive Committee. One was the superintendent of schools
and the other two were to be "elected by the local community
council". In practice, the superintendent has taken the re-
sponsibility for securing other members for the Executive
Committee and sometimes appoints them without consulting

others. The Executive Committee was divided into sub-committees called program committees. In the beginning, the program committees included one on public affairs and one on recreation. Their duties were to be planning the association's activities in their respective areas and arranging resources for general meetings. General meetings were to be held quarterly (i.e., four meetings during the school year). Executive Committee meetings were to be held prior to each general meeting, and on other occasions, if necessary, for the purpose of directing the Forum's activities. Officers included a secretary, a president and a vice-president. The latter two were to be elected by the Executive Committee, and the agent was made permanent secretary. No treasurer's post was created as no dues were levied and each activity was to be self-supporting.

Changes in Structure.--Since its inception, the association's structure has been changes as its activities and functions have evolved. By 1951, a series of changes had resulted in the following organization. An additional representative from each district was added to the Executive Committee, bringing its total membership to forty-four. Four program committees were established and it was intended that the four representatives from each of the school districts would be chosen for positions on each of the committees as follows: for Education the superintendent of schools, for Public Affairs a member of the township board, for Home

Affairs an officer of the PTA or Child Study Club, and for
Youth (originally Recreation) a person involved in local
youth programs. However, this has not been rigorously fol-
lowed in practice. By 1951, all four township supervisors
were on the Executive Committee and Public Affairs Committee
of the Forum. In 1952, the program committee system was
reorganized. Each program committee was made responsible
for holding one of the quarterly meetings, which was to be
devoted to a specific problem.

In the summer of 1953, a Steering Committee composed
of one representative from each district was formed as an
advisory group to the president. These members were to be
elected by the Executive Committee members from each district
but, again, are often appointed by the superintendent of
schools. Although no superintendents of schools are offi-
cially members of the Steering Committee, some superintendents
and other members of the Executive Committee attend Steering
Committee meetings. This group has taken over some of the
activities of the Executive Committee in organizing the pro-
gram of the association.

Present Structure.--In summary, the Forum is now struc-
tured around an Executive Committee of forty-four members,
four from each of the eleven school districts; a Steering
Committee of eleven members, one from each district; and
four program committees of eleven members, one from each
district. The Executive Committee elects a president and

a vice-president and the agent acts as permanent secretary. He serves in this capacity for both committee and general meetings. The key person in most school districts is the superintendent of schools. In effect, he is responsible for maintaining participation in the activities of the Forum by persons from his district. The key person in the Forum is the agent, although a president with equal resources (e.g., time to devote to the organization, access to persons and organizations involved) may play an important part.

A Note on Liaison.--It is necessary to make note of the fact that no formal machinery for the transmission of "recommendations to appropriate legal bodies" has ever been instituted. Suggestions that this be done have been rejected on the grounds that these recommendations could be made adequately by personal contact with members of such bodies by members of the Forum. This was often accomplished by the agent, as secretary, through his personal and quasi-official contacts which gave him access to other organizations. And, in many cases, members of the appropriate bodies were members of the Forum.

Activities of the Association[5]

1948-1951.--At its founding, the Forum undertook a program of activities aimed at "specific accomplishments" and carried on by the program committees. During 1948, the

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[5]The relation between the association's activities and its legitimacy is discussed in Chapter VII, s.v. "Program."

Public Affairs Committee held a general meeting of the Forum on community development, with professional resource personnel in attendance; sponsored a "course in leadership training", attended by about forty persons from seven of the districts; and held dinner meetings in various districts for persons from other associations. The first suggestion for possible action at the first meeting of the Public Affairs Committee was to begin a program for the elimination of duplicate street names in the four townships surrounding the city. The committee sent delegations to the four townships requesting action on the matter, and by the end of 1948 three of the four townships had completed the process. The agent remarked, "The County Road Department had been aware of this situation for some time but there was no organized group to start action." The initial suggestion had been prompted by the occurence of a fire in one of the townships in which the duplication of the street name and other factors had led to the total loss of a dwelling and the deaths of several small children.[6]

The Public Affairs Committee also appointed a sub-committee on fire control which undertook action toward improving the service of the township fire departments. At the first meeting of the subcommittee, seven persons were in attendance. The second meeting was held in the office of the Flint Fire Chief with seventeen persons present and eight

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[6]See above, Chapter III, s.v. "Prior Events."

suburban departments represented. The third meeting was held early in December, 1948, in a township fire hall with thirteen fire departments represented and about fifty persons present. These activities resulted in the creation of a new county map made by photostating the township maps of the Genesee County Road Department. Copies of this map were purchased by the various fire departments. The Flint Fire Department agreed to relay calls for the departments in surrounding areas. The fire chiefs began holding monthly meetings.

The sub-committee on fire control also attempted to influence the various township boards to increase the extent of fire protection in their areas. Some townships had already hired firemen, but others were still operating on a volunteer basis. Additional funds had recently been made available for new construction and equipment in the townships through the sales tax diversion act. Subsequently, improved fire departments have been instituted in all four townships surrounding the city. However, respondents differed in their opinions as to the extent to which the Forum was responsible for the improvement of these departments. One reported:

> "Well, I con't really know whether the Forum ue-
> serves the creuit or not. It probably had its part,
> in otaer places as well as our own. But that was about
> the time that we began getting some money, and we cer-
> tainly couldn't have done it without that. And then
> maybe we would have done it anyway when the money was
> available."

However, others were of the opinion that the use of the funds for the expansion of fire control facilities rather than for

some other purpose (e.g., police protection) illustrated the effectiveness of the Forum.

During the same period of time the Recreation Committee began a program of activities to increase facilities available for youth in the several districts. It undertook the sponsorship of the summer camp begun in 1947 as the Circle Flint Camp. This camp is still held yearly in cooperation with the school districts and has been renamed the Flint Suburban Youth Camp. The committee also initiated a program of summer sports. This was carried out through sub-committees of the Recreation Committee, cooperating with the schools, and involved matches between the districts. The intention of the Executive Committee was to establish programs in public affairs and recreation at first and to move into other areas later.

In 1949, the Executive Committee of the Forum was made the advisory council for the field of suburban affairs for the County Cooperative Extension Service. Previously, the Forum president had been elected chairman of the County Extension Advisory Council. During the year, the program which the Public Affairs Committee had initiated in 1948 was continued. The fourth township completed the process of elimination of duplicate street names. The series of meetings of the fire chiefs resulted in the organization of the Genesee County Fire Association, including twenty-one departments from cities, towns, townships, and industrial plants. A constitution was drawn up by four of the chiefs, and the

first president elected was the chief of the fire department of one of the industrial units. The Public Affairs Committee also undertook new activities aimed at the development of uniform zoning ordinances in the four townships. Three of the four township boards indicated that they would be willing to employ professional aid to study the problem. The intent in these activities undertaken by the Public Affairs Committee was to initiate actions with the relevant authority structures and then to withdraw.

During 1950, two of the townships adopted zoning ordinances. One of these townships, whose supervisor was a member of the Public Affairs Committee of the Forum, hired the city planner of Flint, who had attended meetings of the committee, to draw up the ordinance. The attempt was to create a zoning ordinance which the other townships could adopt. An Educational Committee made up of the superintendents of schools of the districts was set up, and a program for the special education of mentally retarded children was undertaken. The schools hired professional aid to screen children in grades four through eight, and an agreement was reached with the Flint city schools to accept mentally retarded children in its special classes. The negotiations were carried out over a period of about six months between the Flint Superintendent of Schools, his staff, and the members of the Educational Committee. Seventy-eight children were placed in the Flint school, and the program is still in effect. By 1950, all of the school districts had established summer

recreation programs, and the Recreation Committee had shifted
its interest to winter and safety programs. Some of the dis-
tricts had already begun action in these areas. The Home
Affairs Committee began a program in the area of "family li-
ving". Some classes were held in the districts by a family
counselor under the sponsorship of a local philanthropic
foundation.

In 1951, the activities which had been initiated in
1949 in respect to the creation of township zoning laws were
completed when the two remaining townships adopted ordinances
similar to those already in effect. The Youth Committee held
a panel discussion meeting, with students from several dis-
tricts present, to attempt to discover what program ought to
be undertaken. Recommendations were made for a survey of
safety, a survey of youth organizations in each community,
enlarged summer activities, wider participation in the subur-
ban Youth Camp, and the establishment of leadership training
courses. The Education Committee held discussion meetings
under the chairmanship of the County Superintendent of Schools
on the subject of the "best means of mutual acquaintance of
our suburban people and the commercial and industrial people
of Flint". In the Spring of 1951, the agent was appointed
deputy director of the county Civil Defense organization.
At the April meeting the Forum endorsed this appointment and
pledged support to this program. Other members of the Forum
have also been associated with Civil Defense, and a recent
president of the association is the part-time secretary of

the county office. Although the Forum has not taken an active
part in Civil Defense activities, one organizational devel-
opment has been the articulation of the Civil Defense fire
service with the Genesee County Fire Association mentioned
earlier. Through this connection, the state Civil Defense
agency undertook half the cost of providing radio communica-
tion for the fire departments. These radios were of strate-
gic importance in the early phases of relief activity follow-
ing a tornado in the summer of 1953; the first report of the
disaster was made through this medium.[7]

Since 1951.--No new programs aimed at "specific accom-
plishments" have been undertaken by the Forum since 1951.
Emphasis has shifted to deliberative and informative proce-
dures since the previously noted reorganization of the com-
mittee system. This reorganization made each program com-
mittee responsible for one of the general meetings, usually
in the form of a panel discussion around a particular pro-
blem. In connection with this shift to "deliberation", there
appears to have been some lessening of year to year continuity
of the programs. The panel discussions for each year are
chosen from the general topic areas assigned to each program
committee and are not required to be directly relevant to
those undertaken in previous years. Earlier, such undertak-
ings as the improvement of fire control and the development
of zoning ordinances provided some continuing focus for acti-

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[7]Form, et al, op. cit., pp. 13, 70, 76.

vities.

During 1952, the Public Affairs Committee organized a discussion of sewage disposal with a panel including the county Health Officer and Drain Commissioner. The Home Affairs Committee held a panel on family life, and some classes were formed in local communities. The Education Committee discussed the problem of the differences in tax base between districts. And the Youth Committee sponsored a discussion by a panel of eleven high school students on youth problems.

In January of 1953, the Forum sent to the County Board of Supervisors a resolution to the effect that sewage should be considered an area problem. However, no other action on the matter has been taken by the association. Two other sets of events which took place during 1953 have an important bearing here. The president of the Forum initiated the formation of the Steering Committee to carry on the activities of the association during the summer months when it is normally inactive. This was done because the president wished to consult others before making a requested statement for a local newspaper in regard to a series of articles on governmental structure which it had published. Since then, the Steering Committee has taken over some of the functions of the Executive Committee. It now holds a mid-summer meeting to select topics for the general meetings in the coming year. These are then presented to the Executive Committee for approval at a later meeting, and members of the Executive Committee volunteer for the committee on which they would like

to serve. The second event of importance occurred in November, 1953, when an election was held in one of the adjacent townships on a proposal to incorporate the township as a city. The proposal was defeated by a margin of about eight to one. The township supervisor, who was a member of the Public Affairs Committee, favored the proposal. Some others in the Forum opposed it on the grounds that it was premature.

During 1954, the general meetings consisted of panel discussions on the following subjects: better understanding of township government, the character development of youth, school building programs, and the cultural advantages available in the metropolitan area.

Summary.--The activities of the Forum may be conceived as falling into two major phases.[8] In the first several years of its existence, the Forum's programs emphasized activities aimed at the accomplishment of specific action programs. The intent in these programs was to initiate action with appropriate authority structures and then to progressively withdraw as solutions were reached. This was possible in certain cases, particularly those actions undertaken largely by the Public Affairs Committee and to some extent those initiated by the Education Committee. All of these terminal programs were completed by 1951. In other areas it was necessary to maintain the Forum's participation as an organi-

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[8]On the particular importance of this for the association's legitimacy, see below, Chapter VII, s.v. "Program."

zational focus for the programs undertaken, e.g., the summer camp. No new programs of the action variety have been undertaken since 1950, and the emphasis has shifted to information meetings and discussions. Changes which have brought the structure into line with the shifts in activities are discernible in the reorganization of the program committee system and the creation of the Steering Committee.

One important outgrowth of the Forum's activities is the development of other associations. In the early action phase, the Genesee County Fire Association and the Flint Suburban Youth Camp were, to some extent, the direct result of the Forum's programs. Another association is, in part, an indirect result of the Forum's activities, through the actions of its members. This association is intimately related to the shift in emphasis of the Forum's programs, and it will be described in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

A RELATED ASSOCIATION[1]

Beginning in about 1951, certain leaders within the Forum reviewed the position of the association in personal conversations. They felt that the Forum alone was no longer adequate to meet the problems with which they were concerned. They viewed these problems as area-wide, necessarily including both the city of Flint and outlying areas; therefore they desired the participation of persons from these areas. It was thought that these persons should hold positions (similar to their own) of "community leadership". This would include membership (and leadership) in service organizations, public and private; recognition as leaders by the "community-at-large"; and non-involvement in "political", i.e., controversial, affairs.

During the summer of 1953, a local newspaper published a series of articles on the problems of metropolitan areas. In the November election a proposal to incorporate an adjacent township as a city was defeated. It was felt that these events had aroused interest in the problems and that it would be a propitious time to capitalize on the interest in order

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[1]For a discussion of the relevance of this association to the legitimacy of the Forum see below, Chapter VII, s.v. "Program".

to forestall any further attempts at "premature solutions",
i.e., such actions as separate incorporation which might
hinder solution of problems "on an area basis". During
December and January, the agent and a superintendent of
schools undertook the organization of a steering committee
and the initiation of a planning meeting of representatives
from seventeen "communities". This meeting was held late in
January. Delegates to this meeting were obtained through
the superintendents of schools in the Forum districts, and
those from Flint were selected to represent various interests
(industry, labor, education, etc.) but to avoid such organi-
zations as the Chamber of Commerce and the City Commission.
At this meeting it was decided that the delegates should re-
turn to their areas and through "democratic process" obtain
two permanent representatives, a delegate and an alternate.
This group met early in March, 1954, and was officially as-
sociated as the Flint Area Study.

The Flint Area Study is a terminal association whose
purpose is to "identify and analyze the problems" of the
Flint metropolitan area and then to "make recommendations to
the properly constituted" authorities. Its structure is
similar to that of the Forum in some respects. Officers were
elected by the delegates, and committees to deal with various
areas of interests were formed. These committees are respon-
sible for studying these areas and making reports to the
group. However, the Area Study differs from the Forum in the

matter of finances. After a period of several months, the
Area Study solicited funds from philanthropic and industrial
sources to obtain professional assistance to conduct research
in the problem areas. In September, 1954, a consultant was
hired. He has since carried on research for the committees.

The relation between the Flint Area Study and the Flint
Suburban Forum is intimate but not simple. There is some
overlap between the groups because some persons belong to
both. The Area Study has become active in some of the areas
in which the Forum has been interested. There is general
agreement among Forum members that "the Forum gave birth to
the Area Study", but there is apparently disagreement as to
whether this is a good thing. In spite of attempts to main-
tain an officially neutral position on the question of annex-
ation of districts adjacent to the city of Flint, the Area
Study has come to be identified by some persons as favoring
such annexations. Because of this possible identification,
the superintendent of schools who participated in the initi-
ation of the Area Study was requested by the County Superin-
tendent of Schools to withdraw from active participation in
the association. The County Superintendent felt that such
identification would be inappropriate and the district super-
intendent complied with the request. Nor are other superin-
tendents active participants in the Area Study, though some
are strong in vocal support of it. It may be suggested that
this division of opinion in respect to the Area Study within

the Forum is reflected in the fact that there was no attempt to make direct use of the Forum as an organizational nucleus for the development of the Area Study.

The relation of the Forum to the Area Study reveals certain distinctions of attitude toward the Forum which would otherwise have remained somewhat obscure. The participants in the Forum may be loosely divided into "localites" and "metropolites" on the basis of their beliefs as to how certain actions should be undertaken. All members may be assumed to be interested in the solution of problems which confront their districts or areas.[2] However, the two groupings differ in their opinions as to how solutions of their problems should be achieved. Those whom we will term "localites" believe that solutions must be undertaken by the individual districts and that it is important to retain the identity of such districts. The "metropolites" focus their attention on the common nature of the problems and believe that solutions must be worked out on an area basis. In general, "localites" find reason to be opposed to the Area Study on the grounds that it is likely to obscure the problems of individual districts, perhaps through annexation. On the other hand, "metropolites" are inclined to view the Area Study as a "good thing" since it focuses on the common or area-wide nature of the problems. These viewpoints have a bearing on how the

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[2]One "decision" which the Forum has effected is the idea that "the districts have common problems" and that something must be done to solve these problems.

Forum is appraised.

Most Forum members believe that "the Forum gave birth
to the Area Study". (Some other persons hold a somewhat dif-
ferent view; they believe the Area Study is a consequence of
the activities of The Flint Journal.) As a consequence,
some "localites" appear to view the Forum with suspicion and
seem to have withdrawn active support. However, other "lo-
calites" appear to believe that it is necessary to maintain
the Forum as a possible check on the Area Study. "Metropo-
lites" are similarly divided but for different reasons.
Some "metropolites" appear to believe that the Forum has
outlived its usefulness because "the Area Study has taken
over". Others feel that the Forum should be maintained as
a potential support base for the Area Study.

CHAPTER V

IMPORTANT ROLES IN THE FORUM'S STRUCTURE

In discussing the structure of the association in an earlier chapter it was pointed out that certain key roles were involved, namely, those of the agent and the several superintendents of schools. The purpose of the present chapter is to describe these roles and the bearing they have had on the Forum's development and character. There will be some differences in the discussions of these two roles. The number of superintendents allows some low level generalizations about their role, but there are no other positions comparable to the agent's and this precludes such generalizations about his role. In addition, the differences in their structural positions within the association entail differences in their areas of importance.

The Agent

The agent's activities have played a crucial part in the development of the association. MacIver points out that:

> "The mere recognition of an interest that can be promoted by organization is not sufficient to bring about the formation of an association. For inertias, prejudices, and problems of ways and means must be overcome, and here is where the role of leadership is most manifest. Usually the initiative, enthusiasm, and energy of one or a small number of persons prepare the ground for organization. The leaders, whether from sheer devotion to the cause or from a sense of advantage to themselves in the form of status or power or

economic gain--usually, in fact, from a combination of these motives--play up the desirability of organization and seek to establish attitudes in the potential members favorable to its formation."[1]

While some similar association might have been initiated by other persons, the fact that it was the agent who attempted to stimulate its development had a determining effect on the Forum's structure. During the years in which he was the County 4-H Club Agent, a set of relationships with school personnel throughout the county had been developed. The extent of these relations may be suggested by noting that the Genesee County High School Superintendents Association, which supervises all inter-high school activities, was organized at a meeting in his home in 1925. His procedure in activating these sets of relations in the districts which make up the Forum has had a lasting consequence by channeling support for the Forum through the school superintendents.

It is not intended to suggest that the agent was unaware of the course of action which he was pursuing. In the Annual Report for 1952, he reviewed possible organizations which might have been used for "original entree". Among these were township boards, churches, business groups, and local press. He rejected these on the grounds that they could be seen as representing special interests and might bias public view of the association, although their participation would be necessary later. Further, he was convinced that the high school, and through it the school system, represented the focus of community organization, in part,

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[1]MacIver and Page, op. cit., p. 438.

because of the "caliber" of the school superintendents and the "representativeness" of the student body. However, although members of these other organizations (particularly township supervisors) have become involved in the Forum's activities, these groups have never become a focal point of the Forum. Recruitment has been the job of the superintendents rather than being shifted to some other groups in the districts.

The agent's position as permanent secretary has provided an organizational resource for the maintenance and continuity of the association. He attends most meetings of all committees and is responsible for maintaining records of the Forum. The facilities of the county extension office are used for notifying members of meetings. Other members of the Forum believe that the continued existence of the association is partially dependent on having someone to fill the secretary's position on a permanent basis. The present agent is to retire from the Extension Service during 1956. During 1954, the Forum sent a request to the Extension Service that the secretaryship of the association be designated as an official function of the person occupying the agent's office.

While the agent has played an important part in the development and maintenance of the association, his effect upon decision-making activities of the Forum has been less extensive. His viewpoint on the problems of the fringe districts and the most adequate solutions is generally that of a "metro-

polite". In the 1948 Annual Report, he expressed his con-
viction that the Flint metropolitan area must "work as a
unit", and then remarked:

>"This will involve a change of attitude toward
>the established township governmental system. . . .
>the matter must be handled carefully and paralleled
>by public education and civic demand. This is a major
>topic of discussion for the meeting of the Forum execu-
>tive committee to be held in January, 1949."

However, the Forum has never undertaken a specific program
of activities aimed at achieving this end. In the Annual
Report for 1951, he said:

>"At this stage it seems to the writer that the ulti-
>mate goal might well be the organization of an all-
>inclusive metropolitan area."

In January, 1954, when the Area Study was being organized,
he reported:

>"/The agent is/ . . . now engaged un-officially in
>helping set up a study commission for the best form of
>government for Flint and the metropolitan area."

And in the 1954 Annual Report, he remarked on the Area
Study's program:

>"It is hoped that the report that ultimately will be
>forth-coming . . . will be well received by the voters
>in the seventeen communities involved."

However, in more public communications regarding either the
Forum or the Area Study, the specific necessity for govern-
mental changes is seldom manifest. This stems from the gen-
erally held belief that persons living in fringe areas are
opposed to annexation. In particular, the agent made note
of this characteristic in describing fringe residents in his
1953 report. This belief played an important part in the

initiation of the Steering Committee of the Forum, described earlier. The president said that the group was called together because help was needed to carefully draft the requested statement in respect to a series of articles on metropolitan government which had appeared in a local newspaper. The president pointed out that the statement " . . . says a lot but really doesn't say anything. We couldn't afford to get identified with annexation, and most people feel that the paper is in favor of it." The heavy defeat of the separate incorporation proposal which was discussed previously was, perhaps somewhat hopefully, interpreted by the agent as an indication that "The people do not want premature solutions." However, some other persons felt that it was a reflection of general opposition to any governmental changes. The general effect of the necessity to avoid the issue of specific governmental changes has been to align the Forum with the position of "localites", i.e., the maintenance of the present governmental conditions. This limitation on the effectiveness of "metropolites" applies, of course, not only to the agent but to other persons holding similar convictions.

Superintendents of Schools

As was indicated in the introduction to this chapter, the discussion of the role of the superintendents will be somewhat more general than that of the agent. Further, the focus of interest in the following pages shifts from the association to the districts since our interest lies in the

function of the superintendents in recruitment and obtaining support for the Forum.

In general, it may be said that the superintendent is viewed by his constituents as a technically competent professional, as an authority in matters relating to schools. When the observer asked questions of information or opinion about the local schools, some respondents gave replies such as, "Why don't you go down and see the superintendent? He knows about that. He's got all the information right there." In some cases there is a diffusion or transference of this imputed authority from matters concerning the school to other areas of local community problems, and the superintendent is _expected_ to be interested in such areas as taxation or water supply. Also, superintendents often hold similar self-expectations. For example, one superintendent reported that he had been instrumental in forming a study group similar to the Forum in his own school district.

> "We have our own group here in ___A___ . I started it by calling in interested persons . . . The heads of /several organization§/ and some other people. The superintendent has to do this."

The importance of what might be called the "symbolic neutrality" organized around the superintendent's professional role is heightened by comparison with other formal leadership roles in local affairs, e.g., those of the school board members and of the township supervisor and township board members. All of these are elective rather than appointive positions, and are susceptible to charges of undue personal

ambition and "wanting to run things". In addition, these other positions are mostly part-time occupations for which the incumbents have had no special training. By comparison with the superintendent, their positions do not allow for a high degree of technical competence and acquaintance with "the facts". In his relation to the school board, the superintendent is technically a subordinate but *may* in practice exercise considerable control over the board, both as the result of his more intimate acquaintance with school matters and more favorable position in respect to the constituency. In at least one recent case in the school districts under consideration, the superintendent appears to have been instrumental in replacing (through election) members of his board to whom he was opposed and retaining other members whom he favored.[2]

Some possibly confirming evidence in respect to the picture of a superintendent's position which is presented here is available in a recent study of school-community relations in five Michigan towns. In that study, respondents were asked to name the persons holding certain formal positions of community leadership. Among these positions were the superintendent of schools and the president of the school board. In the five communities taken as a whole, seventy-five percent of the respondents accurately named their local

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[2]For further discussion of this district, see below, Chapter VI, s.v. "Superintendent-Clique Relations."

superintendent and twenty-six percent accurately named the president. In only one of the individual communities did more than twenty-six percent identify the president. In this case, fifty percent correctly named the president who was also the leading local industrialist, and eighty-eight percent named the superintendent.[3]

However, it is not meant to suggest that the superintendent's position is invulnerable. Among the various districts from which representation to the Forum is drawn, there is considerable variation in respect to the superintendent's ability to "run the district" and to obtain support for programs or activities which he wishes to undertake. Numerous factors seem to bear upon this problem and to account in some part for the individual variations observed. The key equation appears to be a favorable relation between the superintendent and a cohesive group or groups of "community actives" (often called the "faithful half-dozen" by persons close to school affairs, though the number may be much greater) who are relatively unopposed and are able to maintain non-involvement in "political" (i.e., controversial) matters, although this latter qualification may not be necessary. This group may take the form of a local service or

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[3]Unpublished tabulations of the "Five Community Study" of the Michigan Communications Study, 1954, Dr. Leo A. Haak, consultant and research analyst, Mid-West Administration Center of the Cooperative Program in Educational Administration, Michigan State University and University of Chicago cooperating.

businessman's club, a PTA, a church, etc. Or it may have no
formal association whatsoever. This relation between the
superintendent and the "community actives" in his district
is of importance in the consideration of the structuring of
support of the Forum which follows.

CHAPTER VI

THE STRUCTURING OF SUPPORT AND
THE SIGNIFICANT AUDIENCE

Support

The support which the Forum has received from the var-
ious districts has varied both within single districts over
a period of time and between districts. By support is meant
participation in the Forum's activities by individuals from
the districts as appraised by persons of long experience
with the Forum.[1] In undertaking to obtain these evaluations
it was anticipated that the respondents would have some dif-
ficulty in ranking the districts as districts. It was thought
that heavy participation of particular individuals from dis-
tricts which were otherwise less active might make difficult
the assessment of such districts by the respondents. How-
ever, only one such instance appears to have occurred, and
the respondents evidenced little difficulty in allowing for
it in appraising the district as a district.

Configuration.--Three of the eleven districts were
consistently selected as the most active in support of the

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[1]In practice at the present time, this means attendance
at meetings, particularly those of the Executive Committee
and program committees. The "judges" were in general agree-
ment that this is the best rough index available.

Forum. Three other districts were pointed out as inactive.
One district was indicated to have been relatively active
but to have become inactive in recent years. Three districts
were indicated to be moderately active. The last district
was appraised as having been relatively inactive but probably
in process of becoming active.

This configuration of relative support does not appear
to be significantly related to the "objective" needs of the
districts in terms of urban-type services, i.e., the "have-
nots" might be expected to display more interest than the
"haves" in an organization which has shown some capacity in
the past for influencing the development of such urban ser-
vices, but this is not the case. The district which is best
supplied with such services was the one consistently indi-
cated to be most active in the Forum. The district which is
next most fortunate in this respect was consistently indica-
ted as least active in the Forum. Similar, though less stri-
king, differences would hold for other districts.

However, certain factors can be set forth which help
to account for the amount of support from a given district
at a given time. These include: (1) the disposition of the
superintendent of schools toward the Forum; (2) the number
of "active" persons in any district; (3) the structuring of
relations between "community actives", particularly in terms
of clique development; and (4) the relation of the superin-
tendent to any group or groups of "actives".

<u>Dispositions of Superintendents of Schools</u>.--It was
noted previously that the Forum is so structured that sup-
port is channeled through the school superintendents. As
might be expected, some relation is evidenced between the
disposition toward the Forum manifested by particular school
superintendents and the amount of support from their districts.

While no superintendent voiced definitely negative ap-
praisals of the Forum in interviews, two superintendents were
often indicated by others as holding negative evaluations of
the association. Some corroborating evidence was also appa-
rent; in response to queries on the Forum's proper function
both indicated that "It ought to be dealing with small local
problems." At a meeting of the Forum held in the high school
gymnasium of one of these districts, no one from the district
was present for the program. A local businessman arrived
with cider and doughnuts for the refreshment period and then
excused himself to attend another local meeting. The super-
intendent was reported to be attending another meeting outside
the district. The other district is the one indicated to have
been active in support of the Forum in the past but to have
become inactive in recent years. This is related to the for-
mation of the Flint Area Study and its relation to the Forum.
The superintendent commented:

> "The Forum has been detrimental here in one way. When
> the Area Study was formed people out here got scared
> about annexation to Flint . . . And they don't distin-
> guish between the Forum and the Area Study . . . /Also/
> people farther out /who might potentially be consoli-
> dated into the district/ are afraid of a higher tax
> rate here now."

The superintendent of another district was pointed out as a "neutralist" in respect to the Forum and as a strong superintendent who " . . . really runs that school board". The district has been the site of extensive new industrial plant locations and has a relatively high ratio of taxable property to students. Several respondents suggested that this was of importance. One said, "___X___ has gone high-hat with all that money . . . /and/ . . . figures they don't need any help."

In all three of the districts in which the superintendent of schools does not manifest a positive disposition toward the Forum, recent participation in the association has been low. However, it may be inadvisable to infer that this is a function of the personal disposition of the superintendent, i.e., of his private appraisal of the Forum in relation to the needs of his own district and in the context of metropolitan affairs. While the factor of the superintendent's personal disposition is undoubtedly important in the process of maintaining support, it is possible that the disposition manifested is a result of his inability to oppose strong interests in his constituency. Of course, these remarks apply equally to superintendents displaying a positive disposition toward the Forum. It is not intended to characterize superintendents as opportunists (which, indeed, seems far from the truth), but to point up the fact that they cannot completely determine the character of support for the Forum. But, in view of the channeling of sup-

port through the superintendents, it is not surprising to find some association between the apparent dispositions of the superintendents and support from their districts for the Forum. However, positive disposition of a superintendent does not guarantee support and other factors must be considered.

Community Actives.--The question of the existence of groups of "community actives" was mentioned in discussing the role of the superintendent of schools and his potential for undertaking activities within his district.[2] Some indices which reflect the existence and extent of such groups can be suggested, although it is not possible to indicate any positive and direct combination of factors which accounts precisely for the variations observed.

The length of time which the district has existed as a "community" (i.e., as a social entity distinguishable from adjacent areas) in approximately its present form appears to be positively related to the proliferation of internal networks of relations, as would be expected. In terms of population, the smallest of the eleven districts is also one of the oldest by the present criterion. It is often referred to as "very active for its size" and "well organized". By way of comparison, the next largest district is relatively "inactive". This district is new by present standards; much of its present population is the result of a residential subdivision developed since World War II. Other districts in

[2]See above, Chapter V, s.v. "Superintendents of Schools."

which the significant influx of residential population has occurred relatively recently also exhibit this tendency to be "under organized". Still other districts which had developed as "communities" somewhat earlier appear to have absorbed later in-migrations more rapidly, i.e., they have integrated some of the persons involved into already existing sets or relations.

Another apparently significant index of development of "actives" is the extent of local retail business and the concomitant development of business and service associations. Of course, this characteristic is often, though not necessarily, associated with the size and age of the district. In each of the three largest districts (they are also among the oldest) there are indications that a major point of articulation of local activities lies in a service club and that these resources are much used by the respective superintendents of schools.

A third index which may be suggested is the relative status characteristics of the various districts as residential areas. These districts are largely what have been called "lunch pail suburbs".[3] Within them there are larger

[3]N. L. Whetten and W. C. McKain, "Suburbanization and Metropolitan Growth," an address delivered by Dr. McKain during the Workshop for Chamber of Commerce Executives at the Kellogg Center, Michigan State University, Oct. 11-12, 1955, pp. 5-6. The authors have devised a rather rough and ready typology of suburban areas according to differences in socio-economic class which seems nicely suited to present use since we are not in a position to utilize any precise indices. They remark that " . . . there are at least three

or smaller enclaves of the "station wagon" variety.[4] The

presence of the latter type appears to be positively related

to the existence and extent of a body of persons interested

and active in community affairs.[5] One of the districts

which is at present most active in the Forum was often poin-

ted out as one which had been relatively inactive at the

time of the association's inception several years ago. Since

World War II, a "station wagon" residential district has

progressively developed in a previously unsettled area of

the school district. Persons living in this area are often

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kinds of suburbs on the social ladder: the 'estate suburb',
the 'station wagon suburb', and the 'lunchpail suburb'."
Synonyms for the last two terms would be "white collar" and
"working class" respectively. No significant areas of the
first type appear to exist in the present case.

[4]For similar appraisals of one of the districts and of
other smaller areas in other districts, see Form, et al,
op. cit., p. 3, and W. Firey, Social Aspects to Land Use
Planning in the Country-City Fringe: The Case of Flint,
Michigan, Michigan State College Agricultural Experiment
Station Special Bulletin 339, passim.

[5]On the relation between socio-economic position and
associational participation, see such studies as W. Lloyd
Warner, American Life, Chicago: University of Chicago Press,
1953, pp. 56-57, 193-194; Allison Davis, Burleigh B. Gardner
and Mary R. Gardner, Deep South: A Social Anthropological
Study of Caste and Class, Chicago: University of Chicago
Press, 1941, pp. 74-75; Mirra Komarovsky, "The Voluntary As-
sociations of Urban Dwellers," American Sociological Review,
11 (1946), pp. 686-698; William C. Mather, "Income and Social
Participation," American Sociological Review, 6 (1941), pp.
380-384; Walter T. Martin, "A Consideration of Differences
in the Extent and Location of the Formal Associational Acti-
vities of Rural-Urban Fringe Residents," American Sociological
Review, 17 (1952) pp. 687-694. These constitute only a part
of the extensive literature on the subject.

referred to in reply to queries aoout individuals who are active in and well acquainted with the district. Persons from these middle statuses are usually selected for membership on the Executive Committee of the Forum, although more than half of the employed persons in every district are engaged in "blue collar" jobs.[6] Some persons currently active on the Executive Committee are employed in the automobile industry, but mostly in technical and managerial positions. One township supervisor who served on the Executive Committee in the past was employed as an industrial worker. That this is unusual was reflected by one of the informants who remarked that " . . . he worked right in the shop . . . on the line."

Taken together, these indices provide a rough guide to the existence of a base of persons interested and active in community affairs, i.e., of a reservoir of human relations which will be of importance in undertaking programs involving community decision-making processes. However, they are of little value in predicting the character of such relations, particularly the existence of intra-community rifts between various clique groupings. Put another way, these indices are suggestive of the amount of community activity within a given district but not of its effectiveness in terms of decision-making, i.e., the undertaking and successful implementation of programs or courses of action. There is some reason to believe that, as has been found in other studies, one basis

[6]Zimmer, op. cit., p. 57, et passim.

of such clique group antipathies is the divergence of inter-
ests between old and new residents. Again, there is insuffi-
cient evidence in the present study to justify more than the
suggestion that sizeable numbers of both old and new residents
is one possible basis of the existence of opposing cliques.
For present purposes, the existence of such cliques may be
assumed.

Superintendent-Clique Relations.--This section is a
discussion of the ways in which the superintendent may be
related to these groups of "community actives" and the con-
sequences of such relations for his possibilities of under-
taking and executing particular programs or courses of action.
The kinds of possible relations which appear to be important
for present purposes will be delineated in terms of certain
kinds of clique group relations which may exist and of cer-
tain ways in which the superintendent may be identified in
relation to such cliques. For simplicity, four types of
superintendent-clique relations derived from the possible
combinations of two dichotomous attributes will be discussed.
These attributes are: (1) whether or not any strong and
approximately equal division of social power exists between
two or more cliques having interests in similar areas of
community affairs; and (2) whether or not the superintendent
is positively evaluated by and identified with the members
of a particular clique, in either a leadership or rank-and-
file capacity. A note of caution is appropriate at this
point. Specific illustrative examples are drawn from various

districts for the discussion of the suggested types, but no one district could be absolutely assigned to any one type. Every district has elements of more than one of the types, and a sufficiently detailed examination might reveal that each district displayed elements of all types under varying circumstances. However, districts do approximate toward the configurations suggested.

1. If a body of interested and active persons exists and there is no important clique division in the present sense and if the superintendent is positively evaluated and identified, it would appear that his potential for effectively engaging in decision-making activities is very high. In the district which was consistently cited as the one which had been most active in support of the Forum throughout its history, this kind of relation seems to exist. The superintendent is an old and widely respected resident of the district who has held his position for many years. The district is the largest of the eleven in terms of population and has an extensive system of schools. A strong support group is evidenced in the district PTA which in turn draws upon the local school PTA groups for representation and support. The superintendent was instrumental in founding a local chapter of a national service association. The local school board was the nucleus in the creation of this group, which now includes local businessmen. The superintendent is also well-known and respected in many other parts of the metropolitan area and appears to occupy a position of prestige and leadership

among the other superintendents. He was instrumental in the
founding of both the Forum and the Flint Area Study; he un-
dertook the initial contacts with other superintendents in
the latter case.

Certain other districts also manifest this kind of
relation between the superintendent and the active element
of his constituency, although the leadership of the superin-
tendent is less definite in other cases. It seems worthwhile
to note that superintendents involved in this kind of relation
often manifest moderate, middle-of-the-road, "neither too
fast nor too slow" approaches toward community decision-making
activities.

2. The next general kind of relation to be discussed
is that in which two or more cliques exist in the present
sense and in which the superintendent is aligned with one
such clique. This appears to be the modal kind of relation
existing among the eleven school districts; elements of it
are found in almost all districts. Such a condition appears
to impose some limitation on the likelihood of efficient
community decision-making processes, and therefore upon the
possibility for the superintendent to effectively undertake
programs. This category includes the district cited above
as an instance of a superintendent's success in opposing
members of his school board. The district is a relatively
old (by our present standards) "lunchpail" residential area
and there is some indication of fairly extensive kinship ties
among the older residents. Several years ago, a group of

older residents came into active dispute with newer ones over
the dismissal of the person who was then superintendent. He
had lived in the area for twenty years and had kinship ties
there. The newer "progressive" group wished to have him re-
moved, on the grounds that he had no professional training
for the job. This was accomplished, but succeeding relations
have been marked by disputes between these groups. The as-
cendancy of each group has varied as indicated by alternation
in control of the school board. The present superintendent
has occupied the position for about three years. The recent
success of the new group in attaining school board control
seems closely related to this superintendent's strong leader-
ship of this group.

As might be expected, strong superintendents in this
category of superintendent-clique relations manifest more
positive stands on the course and pace of community action.
That is, they are more definitely "progressive" or "conserva-
tive" than those found in districts having the first type of
superintendent-clique relation discussed above. However, not
all superintendents of districts approximating to this second
type hold strong leadership positions in the cliques with
which they are identified. In such cases the superintendent's
position is even further restricted, although close ties with
persons holding leadership may, in part, circumvent such re-
strictions.

In closing discussion of this type, it may be remarked
that there is no direct relation between this general kind of

superintendent-clique relation and the support of the Forum
by individual districts. The category includes districts
which have actively supported the Forum, ones in which ele-
ments of active opposition are in evidence, and ones which
have shown little interest in the Forum and its activities.

3. The third type of superintendent-clique relation
is one in which divisions between cliques exist and the su-
perintendent has no significant clique affiliations. In this
case the superintendent's potential for entering community
decision-making appears to be very small. His position be-
comes one of somewhat uneasy neutrality and partial isolation.
Although elements of this type are found in other districts,
only one can be fairly clearly assigned to it. This district
is fairly old, but has little retail business, is largely
"lunchpail" in character and is somewhat "underorganized"
by comparison with districts similar in size. It has a re-
cent history of factional disputes between small cliques.
Such disputes have often centered about the superintendent,
and the turnover of personnel in the position has been fre-
quent. The present incumbent has occupied the position for
a short time and remarked, "We aren't getting anything done
here. I'm trying to stimulate other people's ideas . . .
but Mr.   B   /school board president7 runs things."

4. The fourth type of superintendent-clique relation
is, that in which there exists a cohesive group of persons
with no important clique divisions, and in which the super-
intendent is not positively identified with and evaluated by

this group. There is no present instance of this sort of relation, and it would appear to be inherently unstable, though not impossible. Given the emphasis placed on "good community relations" both in training for educational administration and by administrators, it would appear to be unlikely that no attempts would be made by a superintendent to establish a positive relation with persons actively interested in the schools and community. It is possible that the failure on the part of a newly appointed superintendent to achieve some measure of rapport with a single, relatively strong group of "actives" would be the result of definite antipathies which could lead to his resignation or dismissal. There is some indication that this may have taken place in in the recent history of one and perhaps other districts and superintendents.

Again, it must be emphasized that this set of possible types of superintendent-clique relations does not possess analytic or predictive value but is intended as a way of ordering observations. Even in the rather loose way in which it has been used here, it does not account for all eleven districts. Another category, which is residual in respect to the other four, is needed, viz., a district in which no significant cohesive group exists, although there are interested individuals. There is some evidence that in this kind of situation negative behavior on the part of individuals may have a more adverse effect than in districts where some clique support exists. In the relatively inactive

district mentioned above in connection with the "age" of

districts, one person was reported by the superintendent to

have expressed strongly negative sentiments toward the Forum.

> "Mr. ___C___ is quite a talker and he didn't do the
> Forum any good. He told people that it wasn't doing
> anything. I can only get three or four people for it
> now."

However, other reports of similar activities in areas which

are "better organized" were not adjudged important by those

reporting them. In remarking on the effects of individuals

on the superintendent's position, we may also note that the

existence of strong leaders, other than the superintendent,

seems to restrict the superintendent's power in any district.

But, as noted in the discussion of the second type of super-

intendent-clique relation, the superintendent may circumvent

this through ties with such leaders.

Summary.--The support for the Forum from any district

appears to be associated with the concatention of several

factors. In those districts which show a high degree of

support, the superintendent of schools manifests a positive

disposition toward the Forum and appears to be positively

evaluated by a group of "community actives". The presence

of such groups appears to be associated with the length of

time which the district has existed as a relatively integra-

ted and stable social grouping, the development of local

retail business, and the presence of residential areas of

middle socio-economic status. However, it is not necessary

for a district to be "high" in all of these factors for such

groups to exist.

The disposition of the superintendent of schools is not adequate to account for variations in the amount of support from the districts. The districts in which the superintendent manifests a positive disposition toward the Forum include ones which are moderately active and one which is inactive in support of the association. In these districts the superintendent appears to have a smaller reservoir of relations with "actives" to draw upon. The districts in which the superintendent does not manifest a positive disposition toward the Forum are all inactive in respect to the Forum. But these superintendents do appear to have some relations with numbers of "actives".

We cannot attribute causal efficacy to these factors, but their linkage appears to be associated as a limiting condition with the amount of support for the Forum from any district. This configuration of support will be of interest in the discussion of the audience in the next section.

Audience

The audience of the Forum is made up of those persons or groups for whom the question of the association's legitimacy is of importance. This will include those from whom support is desired for participation in the association and those whose actions or agreement are necessary for the implementation of programs. These may be designated respectively as the support and target segments of the audience. However, as will be noted, important overlappings between

these segments may occur. Further, the significant audience
has varied from time to time depending on the activities in-
volved. Among the characteristics of the Forum which bear
on the determination of significant audiences, the following
seem to be particularly important.

Consequences of Internal Structure.--The internal struc-
ture of the association is such that the Forum exercises
very little instrumental control over the activities of its
members. The officers and committees are not vested with
binding authority for decisions or with devices (e.g., trea-
sury) to implement decisions. Dissenting members may freely
undertake opposition to any actions. This may be due to the
nature of a voluntary association in which ingress and egress
are subject to few direct negative sanctions.[7] Under such
circumstances, a high degree of consensus and loyalty are
functionally necessary and the membership becomes an impor-
tant segment of the audience.

Another important characteristic of the internal struc-
ture of the association is the inclusion of persons occupying
positions of authority in governmental structures, such as
the township supervisors. In those instances when the Forum's
activities required the influencing of these governmental
structures, the result was an overlapping of the support and

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[7]Bouma, op. cit., Chap. IV, et passim. It was found
that the effectiveness of the Grand Rapids Real Estate Board
in community decision-making was strongly influenced by the
social cohesion of the group provided by the control of the
Board over the business activities of its individual members.

target segments of the audience in the persons of these su-
pervisors. (Of course, this is important not only to the
delineation of the significant audience, but also as a rather
unique tactical device for participation in community deci-
sion-making processes. Its use short-cuts the necessity of
overcoming objections of individual administrators by gaining
their participation in the formulation of decisions.)

Consequences of Support Configuration.--The configu-
ration of support which was discussed in the previous sec-
tion has important consequences for the actual structuring
of the audience. Ideally, support is desired, however in-
directly, from all persons in all of the districts. To this
end, the greatest practicable extension of the audience
would be desirable. In practice, the extent of the audience
is strongly limited by the support configuration. The key
position of the school superintendents in the structure of
the Forum in respect to recruitment of personnel has limited
and focused the potential audience. The possibility for
persons outside the scope of the superintendents' normal
interaction to become involved in the association is greatly
reduced. For those persons whom the superintendent requests
to attend meetings, the initial impetus is conditioned by
felt obligation. "Well, the super asked me to come down and
I wanted to help him out." In the instance of those districts
in which the superintendent, for whatever reasons, is reticent
to support the Forum, the activation of such reciprocal obli-
gation is less likely, and the association may remain rela-

tively unknown to others. However, if other leaders from the district have become interested, such opposition may be overridden. Even when the superintendent is positively disposed toward the Forum, the number of "actives" in the district and his relation to them may serve to reduce the audience. Also, if the superintendent does not hold a position of leadership in the district, interest in the Forum may be dependent upon other persons who have achieved leadership.

Relation to Activities.--As was suggested above, the significant audience of the Forum may vary over time for different activities and sets of events. During the early action phase of the Forum's history, the significant audience sometimes included persons outside the Forum and its area, i.e., the eleven school districts. For example, in the formation of the county fire association and the unified call-in system for fires, the office (both physical and social) of the Flint Fire Chief became important as a focus for organization of the association; meetings were held there and the participation of the Flint Fire Department was crucial to success. Similarly, elimination of duplicate street names required the participation of the four townships and the County Road Department. Again, the development of the township zoning ordinances necessitated the cooperation of the townships and the Flint City Planner. The program for the education of mentally retarded children brought the association into contact with the Flint city schools. However, the importance of such persons and groups appears to be limited to the

decisions in which their participation is required.

An important characteristic of this early action phase of the association is that the articulation of the Forum with community decision-making processes was in the area of public or governmental authority rather than that of public elections or referenda. Thus, although the Forum does receive regular publicity in the form of newspaper notices of meetings and activities, there has never been any concerted attempt to make use of these or other avenues to develop general public consciousness and approval of the association. Members generally express doubt as to whether most residents of the districts "are even aware of its existence" and whether the few who do know that it exists "know much about it at all". If the Forum should attempt to enter the area of public elections in the future, this would present a serious problem in the form of a new and untested audience. While this kind of development seems unlikely at the present time, it is not beyond the realm of possibility. It has been suggested by some "metropolites" that the Forum ought to "carry the results of the Area Study's work out to the people". Opposition to this is evident among "localites" but if "metropolites" should succeed in "capturing" the association, the implementation of such a program would introduce the audience of the public electorate.

As the emphasis of the Forum's activities has shifted from "action" to "deliberation", the significant audience has shrunk to the support segment. As indicated above, the

importance of the target segment appears to be limited to
the decisions where such participation is required. When
no "action" is undertaken, no significant target segment
exists. Consequently, the overlapping of the target and
support segments, in the persons of the township supervisors,
also disappeared, and the importance of the supervisors to
the Forum has diminished. This is reflected in the fact
that while all four township supervisors were on the Execu-
tive Committee of the Forum in 1951, only one is a member
at this time. Thus, at the present time, the most signifi-
cant audience of the Forum is the support segment. The acti-
vities are largely "deliberative", i.e., four general meet-
ings conducted around panel discussions. And the burden for
the maintenance of these activities falls on the Executive
Committee and the program committees. This is the group for
whom the question of the association's legitimacy is of great-
est importance.

Summary.--Two important and at times somewhat over-
lapping segments of the audience may be discerned. The tar-
get segment is constituted of those persons and groups holding
positions of authority in areas of decision-making in which
the Forum has been concerned. At the present time there is
no target segment of importance. The support segment is
made up of persons to whom the Forum must look for partici-
pation in its activities. Over time, this is constituted of
the "faithful half-dozen" of "actives" in any district. For
most purposes, the single most significant segment of the

audience is the Executive Committee of the Forum itself,
since it includes a core of persons in all groups and, in
practice, it is responsible for the maintenance of the asso-
ciation's activities.

CHAPTER VII

ELEMENTS OF LEGITIMACY

The purpose of this chapter is to indicate the elements which have had consequences for the legitimacy of the association. As was indicated in discussing the methodology of the case study, it is not assumed that the present treatment is an exhaustive inventory nor that it ought to be. The discussion is made around three general dimensions: the program, the structure, and the institutionalization of the voluntary association. The method of presentation has been adopted partly for convenience in ordering somewhat diverse observations and partly to achieve saliency of particularly important points.

Program

Perhaps the most immediately apparent dimension which is of importance for the association's legitimacy is the programmatic, i.e., the activities of the association and other related events as perceived and evaluated by the members of the audience. Whether or not the Forum is thought to be a legitimate agency depends to some extent on the character of the program undertaken. Some activities are similarly evaluated by all, but others are not. Some of the most important differences between those making differential

evaluations appear to be those previously indicated in discussing "metropolites" and "localites".

Importance of Specific Accomplishments.--General agreement is manifest in regard to certain of the Forum's activities. Those activities undertaken in the early "action" phase of the association's history are the ones most often cited in manifestations of approval of the Forum. As was pointed out previously, some persons question whether the Forum should receive sole credit for these accomplishments, but there is agreement that these accomplishments are worthwhile. Even persons who are otherwise thought to be negatively disposed toward the Forum evidence approval of these actions. And insofar as these activities are thought to be important and worthwhile their appraisal appears to lend approval to the association. The specific actions referred to include the improvement of fire control, the elimination of duplicate street names, and the development of zoning laws. It is of interest that the program for education of mentally retarded children and the summer youth camp were seldom mentioned. Both of these activities directly utilized the facilities of the local school systems and it seems possible that credit for them is attributed to the schools rather than to the Forum. It is also possible that either, or both, of these activities is viewed as unimportant, but no evidence to suggest this is available.

Occasional reference is also made to what might be called the educational benefits of the Forum. Superintendents

of schools, in particular, sometimes suggest that the Forum
has had some effect on the perception of problems in such
remarks as: "I think it has shown the commoness of the pro-
blems of all fringe areas"; "The Forum has made this area
conscious of what's going on elsewhere"; "There is certainly
a better understanding between communities now"; "It has
informed people, if only a few of them". An objective ap-
praisal of the consequences of the Forum's activities would
seem to indicate that the last remark is most accurate. How-
ever, it is not this factor which is of most importance here,
but rather that these educational consequences appear to be
of less importance for appraising the worth of the Forum
than the specific accomplishments discussed above.

In the formulation of the purpose of the Forum at its
inception, it was stated that the association was to serve
as a "clearinghouse for ideas"; that it would also "indentify
the common problems" of the fringe areas and "make recommen-
dations" to appropriate agencies; that it was interested in
"specific accomplishments". However, it appears that the
purpose has been somewhat reinterpreted in the intervening
years; there is general emphasis at the present time that
the Forum is constituted to be a "deliberative" rather than
an "action" agency. Thus, in partial contradiction to the
presently understood objectives of the Forum to "disseminate
ideas" and "deliberate" rather than "act", the specific ac-
complishments are apparently deemed most important. It also
appears likely that the anticipation and realization of

specific accomplishments were important in the formation of
the Forum. The emergence of a "normative crisis" was re-
counted in Chapter III in describing the events prior to the
Forum's organization. It may be noted there that objection
to the formation of the association was raised in relation
to the specific purposes involved, and that the reply was in
terms of a concrete problem which needed solution, viz., im-
provement of fire control.

Deliberation and the Flint Area Study.--The importance
of concrete achievements is manifest not only in positive ap-
proval of them and of the Forum for their accomplishment but
also in evaluations of the "deliberative" character of the
association's recent history. This is closely related to
the formation and activities of the Flint Area Study. As
was indicated in the discussion of the Area Study and its
relation to the Forum, differential evaluations are made of
the consequences of the Area Study and its activities for
the Forum. In relation to this it was pointed out that in-
dividuals may be classified as "metropolites" and "localites",
respectively, according to whether they fix their attention
on the importance of the commoness of the problems of the
various fringe areas and the necessity for concerted action
or upon the importance of maintaining the identities of the
various localities. Further, that "metropolites" generally
appeared to favor the Area Study and "localites" to be some-
what skeptical of it, but that some differences of opinion,
seem to exist among both "metropolites" and "localites" as

to the consequences for the Forum of the existence of the Area Study.

One "metropolite" remarked, "The Forum has been superseded by the Area Study . . . It can't do anything now as it's playing second fiddle." Another said, "I don't know if the Forum is needed any more. Perhaps the Area Study has replaced it." However, others have suggested that the Forum "ought to carry the results of the Area Study's work out to the people". And another said, "The Forum hasn't done our district any good yet, but it's about to because the Area Study is the child of the Forum and the Area Study is cracking things." Some "localites" appear to view the Area Study as a threat to the Forum. One said, "It seems to me that the Area Study is stealing the Forum's thunder and the Forum may die if something isn't done." Another remarked, "The Forum ought to be taking hold of some issue and doing something. It shouldn't let the Area Study take over and get all the credit." Another said, "We're not doing anything and the Forum is dying. The Area Study has taken over much of its area. But there is still a lot that could be done. Perhaps we ought to make it into an action group." Still another said, "We just sit around and talk now and it's interesting but what happens? . . . The Forum should do something." However, as was indicated in Chapter IV, other "localites" appear to have withdrawn from the Forum because of its connection with the Area Study.

<u>Differences over Kinds of Programs</u>.--It is apparent
that the importance of specific accomplishments is accepted
by both "metropolites" and "localites", but there is some
difference between them on the "how" of concrete action. The
early actions which received general approval were all capable
of being undertaken within existing structures. The improve-
ment of fire control was accomplished by strengthening existing
township fire departments. Duplicate street names were eli-
minated by the coordinated action of the townships and the
county. Zoning ordinances were developed by the townships.
However, the development of certain other facilities might
require a somewhat different solution. For example, the
development of adequate sewerage in any of the townships
could not be carried out without reference to the needs and
capacities of other areas. Further, the plant facilities
required for adequate sewerage are somewhat beyond the abili-
ties of any of the townships and would seem to require the
intervention of the county or the city or the creation of a
metropolitan area for this purpose. In any event, the out-
come would be a relative loss of control at the more local
levels. This outcome would be undesirable from the viewpoint
of "localites". "Metropolites" would focus upon the impor-
tance of solving the problem "efficiently", i.e., on an area
basis, which would require the participation of the city.
It seems of importance that the Forum never actively sought
to implement the accomplishment of such a program while it
was the first activity undertaken by the Area Study.

<u>Activities of Members</u>.--The question of the Forum's
legitimacy is conditioned not only by its activities but also
by those of its members. Activities carried on outside of
the Forum by persons who hold positions of leadership within
it are evaluated in part as reflecting upon the association.
That is, there is some tendency to identify the association
with such persons. It was pointed out that the Flint Area
Study was organized by members of the Forum but that the Forum
itself was not used as an organizational resource for these
purposes. In part, this seems to be a consequence of the dif-
ferences between "localites" and "metropolites". No attempt
was made to expand the Forum into an area study by adding
other personnel. However, some respondents appear to believe
that the Area Study resulted "from the Forum" not just from
the acts of the members involved; this is evidenced by such
comments as: "The Forum gave birth to the Area Study", "The
Area Study came out of the Forum", and "The Area Study is the
child of the Forum". However, the fact that others view the
relation as somewhat less direct is indicated in such remarks
as: "The Forum is indirectly responsible for the Area Study"
and "The Area Study is a step from the Forum". The conse-
quences of the particular perception of this relation between
the Forum and the Area Study depends, of course, on other
beliefs held by the individual. However, the perception of
the Area Study as a direct consequence of the Forum is more
often manifested by "metropolites", and the view of the Area
Study as an indirect result of the Forum through the action

of certain members is more often expressed by "localites".
The importance of these differences for appraisals of the
Forum has been indicated above.

Another example of extra-associational activity by a
Forum leader will serve to further illustrate how such acti-
vity can come to be of importance in relation to the associ-
ation's legitimacy. In an earlier chapter an attempt at the
incorporation of one of the townships was described. The
township supervisor had campaigned in favor of the incorpo-
ration, but it was defeated by an eight to one majority. At
the next election of township officers the incumbent was not
a candidate but campaigned for his choice for a successor,
who was unsuccessful. The ex-supervisor reported that a
leader of the Forum who was not from the township had worked
against the incorporation.

> "Mr. __A__ came out here and talked around to the
> school board members and stirred them up against it.
> He abused his position . . ."

It is unlikely that Mr. __A__ had any deciding influence on
the outcome of the election, but the ex-supervisor felt it
improper for him to become involved in township affairs.
Mr. __A__ held the view that the incorporation was premature
and would complicate the solution of the problems in which
the Forum was interested. Since that time the ex-supervisor
has refused to participate in the Forum although he has been
appointed to the Executive Committee. He voices the opinion
that the Forum is no longer valid since "the Area Study has
taken over".

<u>Summary</u>.--From the above discussion of the activities
of the Forum and its members and their relation to the Area
Study and its activities we may suggest the following conclu-
sions. The specific accomplishments of the association are
more valued by members of its audience than "deliberative"
activities for which it is organized, although the latter
are deemed important particularly by school personnel. It
appears that the earlier "action" phase has had a lag effect
in maintaining the Forum's legitimacy to some extent. In
relation to the Area Study, the Forum may appear to be legit-
imate to different members of its audience for different pur-
poses depending upon their perception of it. Similarly, it
may be judged illegitimate by different persons for different
reasons. To some extent the association is identified with
and appraised by the actions of its leaders outside of the
association. The general effect of the shift from "action"
to "deliberation" and the formation of the Flint Area Study
has been to reduce the legitimacy of the Forum.

Structure

A second general dimension of importance for the legi-
timacy of the Forum is made up of those elements involved in
the structuring of the association. The bearing of these
factors upon the legitimacy of the association are less di-
rectly manifest than those considered in relation to the
Forum's program, but they are nonetheless important.

<u>Purposes</u>.--The manifest purposes for which the Forum
was organized include the intention that it should act as a

"clearinghouse for ideas and a voice for suburban opinion"
and that it should "identify the common **problems**" of fringe
areas and "make recommendations" to agencies responsible for
their solution. The organization was to remain "as elastic
and responsive as possible" and to be a "deliberative, not
an action agency". Interest was also expressed in "specific
accomplishments". Certain characteristics of these purposes
and intentions require comment.

The statements are sufficiently abstract that widely
differing interpretations may be included. The investigation
of the need for recreational programs, concern with the im-
provement of roads, consideration of the adequacy of police
facilities, suggestions for cultural programs--all can be
seen as "identifying the common problems" and considerable
divergence of interest is allowed for. Again, "recommenda-
tions" are to be made to responsible agencies but no speci-
fication of what kinds of recommendations may be made to
which agencies. These agencies might conceivably include
any level of government or private organizations and allow
for the possibility of individual preferences. Further, the
level of abstraction allows for the inclusion of intentions
which may in practice become contradictory, but which may
be valued by participants. Thus, the association is to be
"deliberative" not "action" but in pursuing "specific accom-
plishments" some "action" may be required in practice. For
example, the formation of the County Fire Association requi-
red the use of a Forum committee as an organizing agency,

and the maintenance of the Suburban Youth Camp has utilized the continuing participation of the Forum. Also, kinds of action are implied by the statements which are generally valued and would seem to appeal particularly to the Forum's support audience. A general aura of democratic, yet practical, activity is infused in an organization which will be a "clearinghouse for ideas and a voice for suburban opinions", which will "identify common problems" and be interested in "specific accomplishments", and which will be as "elastic and responsive as possible". It seems probably that this kind of activity would be valued by persons interested in educational affairs, as was indicated in discussing the Forum's activities.

The Association as an Authority.--Another structural element which bears upon the legitimacy of the association is the perception of its competence in relation to its areas of activity. In American life there is a generally positive attitude toward "an authority", i.e., one who is seen as technically competent. One of the symbolic techniques available for the justification of an influence position's participation in power processes is to create an image of it as "an authority". In part, this may be accomplished by identifying the association as "having studied the problems", i.e., as having attained a level of technical competence. Recommendations made in the name of the association will be possessed of an aura of authority that would not be accorded any of the individual members. That is, a certain legitimacy is involved in the name itself. This device is much used by

the Area Study at the present time, and it may also have been employed by the Forum during its early "action" phase.

The Agent, the Superintendents, and the Schools.-- While the importance of the agent and the superintendents of schools for the structuring of the association and its support are fairly clear, the consequences of their positions for the legitimacy of the Forum are less apparent. The agent is more closely identified with the Forum by others than is any other member. Occasionally, statements with reference to the proper function of the Forum are couched in terms of action that the agent should take. The agent voices a desire to play a passive part in the activities of the association and let others "run it", but in practice this is not accomplished. Some other members suggested that "He wants to run the Forum and name the officers." However, this did not appear to affect their appraisal of the association. Other activities in which he has taken part have had consequences for the legitimacy of the Forum, particularly the formation of the Area Study.

The position of the superintendents of schools as key recruitment agents for the Forum appears to condition the initially perceived legitimacy of the association for new members. As suggested earlier, resources of reciprocal obligations are evident to some extent, and the negative disposition of a superintendent seems to be reflected in non-attendance of members from that district. Most superintendents do not appear to be identified with the Forum by others to

the extent that the agent is so identified.

The articulation of the Forum with schools has had important long range consequences for its legitimacy. In a sense, the agent's belief that they offered the best "entree" available may be accepted. In American life, schools are generally positively evaluated and possessed of institutionalized approval. The attachment of the Forum to them provided access to their approval and to a somewhat ready-made audience.

The Institution of the Voluntary Association

A third general dimension of importance for the legitimacy of the Forum is made up of those elements involved in the institutionalization of the voluntary association in American life. While these elements might also be largely referred to the structural dimension, it is felt that they are of sufficient importance to merit separate attention. It must be noted that the operation of these factors is largely at the latent level, interwoven with multiple other factors, and correspondingly difficult to assess.

In Chapter I it was pointed out that the voluntary association is an institution in the sense indicated by MacIver, i.e., that institutions are the "established forms or conditions of procedure characteristic of group activity".[1] Insofar as the present writer is aware, neither MacIver nor any other writer has used the term "institution" in specific reference to the voluntary association. Perhaps this is a

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[1] MacIver and Page, Society, op. cit., p. 15.

result of the terminological confusion of "association", as distinguished from institution, with "voluntary association".[2]
There seems little doubt that the voluntary association is an established form or condition of procedure characteristic of group activity in American life. Considerable evidence to this effect has been amassed by observers from the time of De Toqueville to the present.[3] Goldhamer says:

> "We may be sure that the organized group or association could not be so widespread in its application and so adaptable as an instrument for achieving the most diverse aims without being deeply rooted in the conditions and nature of American life."[4]

However, specific manifestations of voluntary association include many instances of fraternal, religious, civic, and other organization not directly concerned with community decision-making processes. The concern here is with those characteristics of a voluntary association which lend validation to a position of social power in the context of community decision-making. Two such elements will be suggested.

One characteristic of decision-making processes in contemporary American society is the potentially negative ap-

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[2] Hertzler criticizes "The Over-emphasized Dichotomy between Associations and Institutions" and points out that " . . . any association thoroughly incorporated within the general cultural pattern may be assumed to be an institution." J. O. Hertzler, Social Institutions, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1946, pp. 23-26.

[3] For example see Herbert Goldhamer, "Voluntary Associations in the United States," in P. K. Hatt and A. J. Reiss, Jr., Reader in Urban Sociology, The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, 1951, pp. 505-511, or Robin M. Williams, Jr., American Society, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1952, pp. 466-473.

[4] Goldhamer, op. cit., p. 507.

praisal of the accrual of social power. Negative evaluations of social power are manifest in statements about "special interest" or "pressure" groups and groups which "do not have the interest of the whole community at heart". In this connection it may be recalled that the agent rejected certain organizations as means for "entree" in initiating the Forum. These organizations included township boards, churches, business groups, and press on the grounds that they could be seen as representing special interests and might bias public view of the association. The correctness of the agent's appraisal might be questioned, but the appraisal is of interest here as a reflection of concern over possible negative evaluations. Also, persons interviewed who evidenced negative evaluations of the Forum suggested that it was not reflecting the needs and desires of "all the people" and that it had "taken sides". The one respondent who was openly and categorically opposed to the Forum said, "Well, you know, it's just another pressure group anyway." However, these evaluations are not generally held and they do not appear to have had an extensive effect on the association's legitimacy.

The possibility of the negative appraisal of social power is of particular importance when consideration is being given to associational or positional legitimacy as contrasted with the legitimacy of particular decisions. In specific sequences of decision-making activities it is generally necessary to acquire the approval of particular groups in order to assure the implementation of the desired action. That is,

the legitimation of a decision consists, in part, of proper processing through interested groups. "Clearing with" business, labor, civic, religious, educational, and other kinds of organizations (depending upon the character of the decision sought) is a recognized and accepted necessity.

When attention is shifted from the validation of decisions as such to the right of a group to participate in community decision-making processes, a somewhat different appreciation of any particular organization becomes possible. Any association for the pursuit of interests which involve participation in community decision-making processes (and thus the pursuit of social power) is brought into a potential problem area associated with negative evaluations of the acquisition of social power. This is not intended to suggest that insurmountable problems are created by these possible negative evaluations. Nor is it suggested that these potential problems are necessarily or even often actualized in terms of a direct contestation of the legitimacy of a particular position. Indeed, this hardly could be the case within the present conception of power, else few activities would be accomplished. Rather, the concern here is with the resources provided by the voluntary association in American life for the avoidance of the negative appraisal of social power.

Certain techniques are available for the circumvention of this potential problem area. In part, these techniques are built around the theme of interest in the general welfare

as opposed to special interests. As has been seen, the Forum
is declared to be concerned with "identifying common problems".
Further, interest in active pursuit of power is denied on the
grounds that the Forum is a "deliberative, not an action agen-
cy". These factors have been considered above in discussing
the consequences of the association's structure and purposes
for its legitimacy.

The avoidance of this potential problem area of the
negative appraisal of the acquisition of social power also
may be involved latently in the cultural definition of cer-
tain forms of association. That is, some validation of an
intended power position may be afforded through the choice
of certain forms of procedure. In the present instance it
is suggested that the voluntary association as such is poten-
tially less subject to certain "criticisms" (e.g., "vested
interest", "pressure group") which may be brought to bear on
other kinds of organization. Since any concrete association
partakes of many institutional forms, there is no assurance
that this potential will be achieved. Further, the particu-
lar configuration of any associational situation may be such
that this resource is more than offset by other factors.[5]
Also, the imputation of "vested interest" may carry little

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[5]For example, the articulation of an association with
other devalued organizations, as in the case of "Communist
front" organizations. In the case of the Flint Area Study,
a few respondents said that it was "really run" by General
Motors and The Flint Journal. Some "localites" fear that
both the auto corporation and the newspaper desire the anne-
xation of fringe areas to Flint.

weight in given instances. Overriding interests of the audience, their lack of credence in the speaker, contrary beliefs and other factors, singly or in combination, may result in rejection of such imputations. However, some potential for legitimacy is involved in the "ideal" definition of the voluntary association in American social life. This is manifested in concrete instances in such statements about an organization as "It is open to all" (although membership may in practice be closely circumscribed) and thus, in the context of community decision-making, "serves the interests of all the people". A group which proclaims specific interest in community problems and which does not appear to have such culturally defined interest bases as business or professional ties has some degree of legitimacy "built in".

A second characteristic of the voluntary association which may lend validation to a social power position is its articulation with the ideology of democracy. In a sense, this is "the other side of the coin" of potential negative appraisals of social power. However, it is in the form of the positive values of democracy that the justification of a voluntary association's participation in community decision-making is familiar. In the present instance, the Forum is described in public communications as "a representative group from the suburban area", "a democratically representative spokesman for suburban people" and "a voice for suburban opinions". Also, an important continuing source of legitimacy of the association appears in statements made during meetings

and in conversations which serve to reinforce opinions mutually held by members as to the character of the association. At a meeting of the Steering Committee the president opened the session with the following remarks:

> "Before we get started here tonight, there's something I'd like to say. You know I've said it before but I'd like to say again that this is real democracy . . . Being able to come together like this and think together and talk over our problems . . . You know I think the Forum is pretty generally recognized as a voice for suburban opinion. . . . Well, I just wanted to say that I think it's fine to have such real democracy."

Similar statements are often made during the opening and closing of meetings, particularly by officers in the association. Again, this is not intended to suggest that the possible articulation of the voluntary association with the values of democracy will be necessarily actualized in the instance of any concrete association. Nor is it thought that this resource is necessarily effective. However, this articulation does provide some potential for the validation of any such association engaged in community decision-making processes.

Two related elements of the voluntary association in American life have been suggested as potential sources for the validation of a social power position in community decision-making processes. These are its character with respect to negative appraisals of social power and its articulation with democratic ideology. It has been pointed out that numerous other resources and conditions enter into the process of legitimation of particular organizations. As was indicated

in the introduction to the discussion, the operation of these multiple factors makes any assessment of their relative consequences extremely difficult. However, the voluntary association would seem to offer a favorable backdrop for proclamations of interest in the general welfare and democratic representativeness.

Summary

The following elements appear to have been important in structuring the legitimacy of the Forum. The specific accomplishments of the early "action" phase of the Forum are more valued than "deliberative" activities for which it is presently said to be organized, and the specific accomplishments have had a lag effect in maintaining the Forum's legitimacy. The general effect of the shift from "action" to "deliberation" and the formation of the Area Study has been to reduce the legitimacy of the Forum. The appraisal of legitimacy is not made on the same grounds by all. The manifest purposes of the association allow different interpretations and imply kinds of action that are generally valued. During the Forum's "action" phase some legitimation of it for the target audience was probably achieved by identifying the Forum as "having studied the problems". The identification of the Forum to varying extents with the agent, the superintendents, and the schools has had lasting consequences for the legitimation of the association. Some legitimation of the Forum may be provided by the institutional character of the voluntary association.

CHAPTER VIII
CONCLUSIONS

The present study has by no means exhausted possible insights into the dimensions of importance for the study of the legitimacy of a voluntary association participating in community power processes. As indicated in the discussion of the methodology of the case study, the purpose of the present study is the development of a set of hypotheses which would be worth examination with greater intensity and extensity in other studies.

Suggested Hypotheses

The present study suggests the following hypotheses:

1. The membership of a voluntary association constitutes a significant and important audience for the process of legitimation of the association to a greater degree than does the membership of a non-voluntary association.

2. The recruitment practices of an association have important consequences for the structuring of the significant audience.

3. An association may continue in existence and retain a measure of legitimacy after it has ceased to meet the most strongly felt needs of its membership through the recall of its previous successful performance with respect to those needs.

4. Evaluation of an association's legitimacy by its members may be based on purposes other than those manifested and accepted by the members as the purposes of the association.

5. The legitimacy of an association is conditioned by the existence and character of other associations aimed at the same area of community decision-making and by the relation of the association to such other associations.

6. The institutionalization of the voluntary association provides a possible resource of legitimacy for participation in community decision-making processes through the symbolic articulation of such associations with the values of democracy.

Relevance to Other Problems

In the introduction to this report it was suggested that the study may be of significance in respect to certain characteristics of contemporary American life, viz., the growth of the rural-urban fringe and the functioning of voluntary associations. As new groupings come into being, old integrating and controlling forms often are no longer adequate to the problems which result. The proliferation of population in the rural-urban fringe areas of American cities may be seen in this perspective. In many cases, the growth in population may be such as to constitute practical changes in the kind of grouping involved. In such cases, the pre-existing governmental (and other) structures may not be geared to deal with these new kinds of groups. In the present instance, the Flint Suburban Forum may be viewed functionally

as a device (however effective) to bridge the organizational vacuum which had resulted from population growth and social and economic changes.

It is possible that the voluntary association is well suited as a means of procedure in initiating activities in "new" areas, i.e., ones in which felt needs are present and no social form is available to implement them. The rural-urban fringe is an area which is relatively "under-organized". As the recognition of needs by participants in such groupings develops, it may be expected that the increasing integration of fringe areas will be significantly effected by activities undertaken through voluntary associations. In order to comprehend this process, further studies of different associations in similar settings are needed.

Final Note on the Voluntary Association

This study has assumed that the voluntary association as a means of pursuing interests is an institution, as defined here, in American life. The assumption is based on evidence of the proliferation of voluntary associations in the United States which has been amassed in a considerable body of prior observation and research. Technically, there is no necessity to demonstrate the validity of the assumption for present use, although its tentative nature should be made plain. In terms of a theoretical and empirical perspective somewhat broader than the present study, the assumption might be unsound.

The further specification that the voluntary association is symbolically linked with the values of democratic procedure

finds less support in prior investigation. In a sense, it may be derived from the observation of the possibly negative appraisal of social power in American life and its manifestation in concern with "special interests" and "pressure groups" and from the potentially "representative" characteristics of the voluntary association. This assumption has proved useful in understanding certain somewhat latent aspects of the situation which might otherwise remain obscure. Although the proposition that the voluntary association is an institution and is importantly linked with the values of democracy in American life does not constitute a readily "researchable hypothesis", it does indicate a problem area worthy of further research.

APPENDIX

INTERVIEWING PROCEDURES

The purpose of interviewing members of the association was to get a more detailed understanding of the event sequence and to develop insight into areas of significance for the problem of legitimacy. The attempt was to adopt procedures which would implement these concerns. Since it was assumed that the variables were to be discovered rather than tested, it was felt that a detailed questionnaire would be inappropriate. The problem was to focus the interview on the area concerned and elicit responses to this area. Thus, interviews were not unstructured, but interviewing proceeded in a somewhat open-ended manner in order to follow up expressions of interest on the part of respondents.

Interviews were varied with respect to the nature of the position which the respondent held within the association. Particularly, all of the superintendents of the school districts involved were interviewed and were asked for certain information not requested from other respondents. This was done because of the key position in the association occupied by superintendents and because it became apparent that others were not in possession of relevant information or interested in it.

Similarly, it was felt that the problem of event reconstruction would be facilitated by extensive interviewing of a person or persons whose relation to the association had been close and continued. Fortunately, it was possible to secure the cooperation of the Associate Agent and of a person who had been president of the association and a long-time member. Numerous interviews were conducted with these persons and considerable information was acquired in this manner. Also, information secured from other sources was cross-checked against the knowledge of these persons as to accuracy and detail. It should be emphasized that the problem of final construction and emphasis of facts rested with the observer and not with these persons. It could not be assumed that these relatively knowledgeable informants had all the facts, and many questions of fact and possible bias had to be arbitrarily resolved.

The format of single interviews with other respondents did not follow that of the interviews with the above-mentioned informants. The format of these single interviews was changed somewhat after early interviews indicated that changes would be desirable. In undertaking the study it had been assumed that for methodological purposes the interviewer should not adopt the role of assessing the worth of the association, in terms of its achievements in the community context, since this was not the purpose of the study and the adoption of such a role might seriously limit the kinds of information elicited. In order to implement this, it had been decided

that interviews should be opened with relatively neutral requests for information about the local area situation, resources and needs, and proceed to questions about the association's relation to these needs. However, early interviews indicated that most respondents expected to be questioned about the worth of the association, that it was an area of interest to them, and that opening interviews with a request for an evaluation of the association in respect to the local area facilitated the establishment of interest for the respondent.[1] Thereafter, interviews were opened with the question, "Do you think that the Forum has done any good around here?" The intended geographic reference and the possible ways in which the association might have had an effect were purposefully left indefinite to allow the respondent to impose his own referents if he should choose to do so. Requests for clarification of intended area referent were answered by indicating what was assumed to be the probable locality referent for the individual respondent; e.g., the name of the township for a township supervisor, the school district for a superintendent of schools, or the locally applied name for the immediate area for other respondents. (In the latter case, the name is often the same as that of the school district.) The reference to the association's possible effect often elicited the question, "How do you mean? Directly or indirectly?" Both lines of inquiry

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[1]Since the observer had been introduced to the group at a meeting before any interviewing was undertaken, the need for justifying the interview through a cover story was minimized.

were then pursued.[2] When some general evaluation had been established, the respondent was encouraged to explain his attitude in terms of concrete examples or anecdotal material, if he had not already volunteered such information.

Further questioning in other areas proceeded at the convenience and interest of the respondent. That is, if he opened a line of discussion which seemed relevant to the purpose of the interview, an attempt was made to follow this up and guide the interview into the other areas of interest, although in no fixed order. Sometimes all other areas of interest were covered in this manner. If this occurred and the material was somewhat disjointed, an attempt was made to briefly summarize the other areas through direct questioning at the end of the interview.

If the respondent did not voluntarily proceed into other relevant areas, the next question area introduced was that of the local area's needs and the relation of the association to them. This was introduced with the question, "What do you think your community needs now?"[3] If explanation of the question was required, possible problems were cited (e.g., sewage, water, schools, roads, police protection,

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[2]Early discussion very often led to discussion of another association, the Flint Area Study, which is closely related to the Flint Suburban Forum. It was then pointed out to the respondent that the primary interest was in the latter, but that discussion of the former was desirable if it was important to the latter. The relation between the two associations is discussed in the text.

[3]The term "community" is used here in its popular sense rather than its special sociological definition.

etc.). The purpose of this line of questioning was to develop a better understanding of conditions within the various areas as seen by the respondents. After some areas of concern had been elicited, the respondent was asked if he thought the association could do anything in these areas and, if so, how. The purpose was to further explore conceptions of the association and its proper domain.

At this point a question in respect to the relative support received by the association from the various districts was asked of all school superintendents and certain other persons who had had considerable experience with the association. The informants noted above were also asked this question. The purpose was to establish a rough ranking of the various districts in terms of support and to investigate its relation to legitimacy. The question was not asked of other respondents. It was felt that rather extensive and intimate connection with the association would be necessary to make the evaluation. To implement the responses to the question a black and white county road map was obtained. The names and boundaries of the districts were entered in red pencil. This was presented to the respondent and evaluations were elicited for each district. The general question asked was, "From your experience with the Forum, which of these communities have been most active in supporting it?" Attendance at meetings of the association was taken as the criterion of support. If the respondent did not proceed to point out the least active districts, he was

asked to do so. Then unmentioned districts were checked individually.

The question was followed up with a request for opinions as to the factors involved in the amount of support rendered by different districts. This was done in order to cross-check the evaluations, consensus, and the impressions gained here and elsewhere (especially, see below) regarding the nature of interpersonal relations within the association, within the districts, and between the districts.

Some resistance to answering the question had been anticipated. A probe was devised for this contingency in the form of remarks to the effect that variations in support configuration were usually found in such organizations. However, no such resistance was manifested and the respondents to whom the question was addressed usually displayed considerable knowledge as to the part that other districts played in the association.

Resistance was also expected in response to the final question area and sometimes did develop. Since the question area involved naming names and implied evaluations, it was felt that respondents might be more sensitive to answering it than any of the other questions. The question was an indirect sociometric device aimed at checking the possible existence of clique groupings in the various districts and their bearing on support of the association and perception of its legitimacy. The respondent was asked, "If you wanted to do something around here, who would you ask to help out?"

The respondent was encouraged to name as many persons as possible. He was then asked, "Are there any people that you wouldn't ask to help?" As was expected, responses to this question were very limited, and respondents were encouraged to explain their selections in order to allow justification. If resistance was offered to the first question, it was explained that it might become desirable to gain a better understanding of the local area, and that to do so it would be very helpful to have the names of persons who were well acquainted with the area. When resistance to the second question was manifested, it was explained that the interviewer wished to avoid unintentionally exploiting rifts in the community, and that it would therefore be useful to know if such rifts existed. Continued resistance in this area was not extensively probed.

Note-taking practices varied with the nature of the occupational position of the person being interviewed. It was assumed that some persons occupied positions for which role-expectations were more likely to include formal opinion questioning behavior (e.g., school superintendents) and that note-taking would be less distracting for them than for other persons. In some cases, the only notes taken during the interview were the names elicited by the final question. In all cases, an attempt was made to summarize interviews immediately to facilitate the recall of the interviewer.

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