THE POTENTIAL OF LOCAL CITIZEN ORGANIZATIONS FOR CONTRIBUTING TO THE PLANNING DECISION MAKING PROCESS

THESIS FOR THE DEGREE OF M. U. P.
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ABSTRACT

THE POTENTIAL OF LOCAL CITIZEN ORGANIZATIONS FOR CONTRIBUTING TO THE PLANNING DECISION MAKING PROCESS

by John C. Freeman

Urban planning as a positive force in shaping urban growth is gaining increased stature with the passing of time. Techniques of the planner have become increasingly sophisticated, and indications are that this trend toward greater specialization and precision in making planning decisions has only begun.

However, as planning affects more and more the lives of the urban citizen, his involvement in formulating plans to direct the course of development in his community has not increased proportionately. Aside from the planning commission and occasional citizen advisory committees, citizen participation in public decision making for community development is minimal. The citizen, acting alone or through his associations, can and should affect the formulation and implementation of plans for his community.

The effectiveness of the individual and neighborhood group depends upon the scope of the planning toward which attention is directed. Local groups can have the most influence on planning affecting the location in which they

live. As the geographic planning area increases in size, the potential for constructive involvement of the local citizen diminishes.

The degree of involvement of individuals and small groups in public decision making has been influenced by the general trends of the American democratic system. Participation in the sense associated with the pioneering days of the country will likely never return. Changing concepts of government, the professional versus the amateur, and the need for affiliation have all affected participation in political decision-making by the isolated group or individual.

Participation is, essentially, a function of the cultural context, the organizational structures within which participation must occur, the forces motivating groups to participate or remain disinterested, and the communication channels within a community through which information about public decisions must travel.

In any other country, at any other time, and under any significant alteration in the life style of the American people, participation would have neither the same potential nor the same problems as it has in the United States today. In other words, the cultural context establishes the framework for participation.

Of the many factors influencing the effectiveness of participation, the organizational structure of local government and voluntary group associations likely has

as much effect as any other. It determines the ultimate effectiveness of communication between those people with ideas to contribute and those individuals or organizations that make public policy.

Motivational factors for participation are vitally important in determining whether or not people will participate even if their ideas would be given considerable weight. The most important factor in this regard is crisis. More participation is brought about in situations of crisis than by any other situation of chance or design.

Finally, the role of communication is important in making people aware of their potential contribution to the community developmental process through comprehensive planning. It is also the vital educational channel through which people may become sufficiently informed about the community so that they can make a significant contribution to planning.

Of the alternatives available for utilizing citizen participation in the planning process, a number of common practices should be followed. The planner should be genuinely committed to using citizen involvement in the formulation of plans; the citizen should be given the opportunity to review elements of the plan as they are formulated rather than after constructive suggestions cannot be incorporated into the plan; and an adequate cross-section of community interest groups should be represented on some form of council to review and discuss plan proposals as they are presented.

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By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, urban planning has become accepted by most officials and lay people as a field of knowledge capable of making significant contributions to the logical growth of local and regional communities. The technical prowess of planning practitioners continually increases, and reliance by public officials on professional advice also seems to be encouraging for planners. However, the growth of planning is not without its problems. With the expanded use of technical innovations for urban forecasting, analysis, and estimation of needs, there is a growing tendency to underestimate the importance of utilizing lay citizens in the planning process.

Aside from the planning commission and occasional citizen advisory committees, citizen participation in public decision making for community development is minimal. This is evidenced in many master plans for former years and, regrettably, those being formulated currently. The urban complex seems to be typically viewed as a mechanism composed of a multitude of parts that the planner must integrate into a whole that will function efficiently.

The human element, as part of this complex, is dealt with, apparently, as a stereotype, i.e. how the typical person would act in a given situation; where he would shop; how far he would be willing to travel to reach various destinations; what his basic desires would be; and other deductions about a specific population based on a perceived norm. Whether this "average man" is a valid basing point from which to formulate plans for communities (the average community, that is) in some ways is quite beside the point. The serious flaw in this method of procedure is the assumption of the "average man." Very few people envision themselves as personifying the norm when this is the basis for someone else telling them what is good for them. There is some duplicity evident here but perhaps one that planners should be more ready to recognize. People seem to seek conformity. They seem to strive for an equilibrium state with no outstanding deviations from the group standards that might impair their chances of "fitting in." However, when these group standards, whether preferences expressed by opinions or observed habits, are used as a basis for planning recommendations, many arise to defend their "individuality" and protest the idea that they are being told what is best for them.

Quite possibly, what the planner recommended as being "good" for them might be a much less dramatic departure from the status quo than the citizens imagined.

However, it is the notion that someone else is telling them how to live their lives that disturbs people. It is what they think that is important--not really the verity of what they think.

A number of experienced planners observe that public opinion surveys concerning urban development offer little information other than what the planner "knows" intuitively. Also, that information which is, in some way, unique (for example, as might be obtained through the use of an open-ended questionnaire calling for opinions) covers such a broad range of subjects and is so often ambiguous that the information is virtually useless as being any representation of a majority opinion. However, in some ways, the value of the information gathered is not the major return for the time and effort put into an opinion gathering device. In essence, the surveys are valuable public relations tools. They impress the citizen with the idea that someone is interested in his opinion of how future development should take place. If the utilization of such techniques is no more than paying lip service to the ideal of citizen participation, it can only be to the eventual detriment of planning and the future development of the community to use them. It is the individual citizen who must live with a plan and determine its ultimate success or failure. Plans are without value if they have no life infused into them by the people they are to guide.

The preceding background gives some indication of the confusion currently plaguing the planning field as to the place of the citizen "amateur" in the community development process. There seems to be considerable cynicism among planners regarding the potential of lay citizens for contributing to the planning process. But there is also great hope held by some for this role. One segment of this controversy revolves about the untrained citizen organization such as the neighborhood association. It is with this type of citizen participation that this thesis is primarily concerned. More specifically, sources of information and opinion have been sought to determine whether or not a group of homeowners, whether large or small, and other unassociated area residents have the potential for constructively affecting public planning decisions.

There are various levels of planning, of course, and active participation at the local level cannot really be effective in all types. At the regional or metropolitan level, few untrained people can perceive the overall goals of such planning. Also, because of the long-range nature of such planning plus the fact that there are no effective implementation measures at this level, the local citizen is not likely to realize the personal implications of such planning. The individual citizen acting alone or through a local group can most effectively cope with

problems that can be related to his personal life in the next five or ten years. It is the problem at the neighborhood level with which he can most constructively cope and feel confidence that his suggested innovations may reach fruition.

FIGURE 1

THE PLANNER AND THE PROFESSIONAL
IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

Figure 1 indicates that the lay citizen may have real value in planning at the neighborhood level. But the larger the geographic area of concern, the more the planner must assume the role of innovator and analyst.

The potential of the local neighborhood association to effectively cope with planning and contribute to community development decision making is a function of at least three broad factors. These are the motivations for participation that confront the citizen, the organizational structure through which participation occurs,

and the communication process. Although dealt with in detail in subsequent chapters, some mention of the basic contentions regarding these factors can be made at this point.

It is contended, first, that the principal motivating factor for participation at the local level is the maximization of self-interest. This does not rule out altruistic motives. It is obvious that these do exist. When a neighborhood group forms to carry out a function, however, it can reasonably be assumed that in most cases self-interest is the overriding motive. That the interest of the group coincides with the interest of the majority of the constituents is also a logical assumption to be made early in the analysis. Otherwise, there would be little reason for the group's existence.

The study of the individual's participation in community development decision-making, then, is a valid method of arriving at an understanding of group participation. Consequently, some of the discussion will concentrate on individual participation and later will be applied in the context of the group situation. A common, well-defined goal, however, is not the only reason for group formation. Other reasons for groups coming into existence will be discussed later.

Subsequent to group formation, the method and effectiveness with which the group carries out its function is largely dependent on the organizational structure

of the group. It will be shown that neighborhood groups suffer under a makeshift organizational structure intended to meet, but not always capable of meeting, "emergency situations." The nature of the goals of these types of organizations also results in a lack of continuity of activities and flagging interest after each crisis has passed.

The role of communication is also emphasized since, without adequate flows of information, little can be accomplished regardless of the organizational attributes of a local association. The channels for effective communication within the hierarchy of government and down to the individual citizen are often too obscure and ineffective for a potentially successful effort of using citizen participation as a positive tool.

The three influential factors in citizen participation may be manifested in many types of activity. Voting and group protests are not the extent nor the limit of citizen participation. Other types of participation and their relationship to urban growth will be emphasized.

Finally, it is significant to observe that the various types of participation caused by the interplay of communication channels, organizational types, and motivating factors occur as part of a unique cultural situation. The circumstances to be explored would be

otherwise in any other country, at any other time, and under any significant alteration in the life style of the American people. In other words, citizen participation (or its absence) and all its aspects are a functional operation of a particular cultural context.

To understand the potentials of citizen participation at the neighborhood level or at any social level, the peculiar cultural context must be understood. It is to this subject that attention is now given.

CHAPTER II

CULTURAL CONTEXT FOR PARTICIPATION

Initially, the setting for modern day citizen participation may be formulated by reviewing the background of the traditional concept. Some of the problems of modern American society in relation to community life were born in the Industrial Revolution. Since that era, the American society has been one of unrestrained growth and expansion in technology. Chemistry, physics, and mathematics have seen unprecedented increases in growth and application in our society. Government, education, and other institutions have become more complex, more interdependent, and more subtle in variation than ever before. And people of this society are enjoying the highest standard of living the world has ever known.

In spite of this successful coping with the physical world, the American mind has created many problems with its technology. The "dust bowl" of the thirties was largely a result of an unbalanced technological emphasis. Great machines were available for cultivation

and the harvest, but knowledge of how to cope with the cruelties of nature was far behind in technology. Fields were ruined and topsoil lost as winds swept into the midwest with technology unable to cope with the problem. The Great Depression, too, was a manifestation of an imbalance in accumulated knowledge. A financial structure that controlled the economic life of an entire nation toppled because, in part, of the inability of men to see beyond the immediate prospects of fortune.

Perhaps this is tangential to the subject of citizen participation, but in many ways it is most pertinent because it illustrates a changing trend in values. From the frontier society upon which the philosophy of this nation was founded, the United States has moved through an accelerated transition to a society wherein democracy is quite different in meaning.

A Changing Democracy

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, democracy meant town meetings, small communities, and face-to-face relationships. Then, there were close family ties and a feeling of neighborliness encouraged by physical proximity and similarity of needs. If there were local problems, little recourse was available to the citizens but to seek a solution themselves. This

fostered a spirit of cooperation and participation among the residents. A community in the most traditional sense of the word existed when this spirit arose. Then the new technology brought specialization and mass methods to the community. Institutions enveloped communities and whole regions within their purview. Mass communication and pressure groups eliminated the necessity of close, intra-community ties and changed the orientation of the average citizen to a much broader community (or area of concern) than ever before. Since that time, community life at the local level has declined in vitality. Richard Waverly Poston describes this change:

> Slowly but steadily the new technology with its mass methods gnawed deeper and deeper into the foundations of community life. Like a great parasite it sucked away the strength of neighborhood society until men and women by the millions lost their motivation for community responsibility. An attitude of what's-the-use-anyway spread like a plague across America. Many lost confidence even in their own ability. The majority became bystanders in public affairs, and in all parts of a great nation men and women had assumed an attitude of leaning on someone else...The legislative process became largely a system of specialized pressures all competing for the legislative favor, while the voice of the individual was smothered further and further beneath top-level strategy. Community action of the people had changed largely to a kind of action which was determined from the top down by national organizations, impersonalized institutions, and great trade and

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> professional combinations. And today in an all too realistic sense millions of Americans no longer have a genuine say in the affairs of their own destiny.[1]

Although a little melodramatic, Poston does make a convincing presentation of the issue that the free democratic society that the majority of Americans so vehemently profess is gradually becoming a myth when compared to the traditional notion. He further points out that the initiative, drive, and ideals of a larger democratic society should come from the communities. Only in the local community can democracy be practiced in a day-to-day, face-to-face setting. Only at this level can the interchange be intimate and personal enough to fulfill the ideals of our government. Without it the national government may become top heavy and all-pervasive even in local affairs, and the development of leaders at the local level will be eclipsed.

It is significant that democratic theory which professes a substitute for an autocratic or aristocratic hierarchy assumes just such local communities through which the individual can relate to the larger whole of the society. On the other hand, democratic notions of individual participation in the heterogeneous, impersonal, fragmented structure of large cities are rarely carried

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[1] Richard W. Poston, Community Organization in Action, eds. Ernest Harper and Arthur Dunham (New York: Associated Press, 1959), pp. 32-33.

out. Some even argue that, in the large metropolitan centers, the primary group and the individual are actually being replaced by the formal secondary groups in the organization of work and civic life. In this way, the formal organization becomes the effective subcommunity which relates to society as a whole, and the citizen becomes further removed from effectively coping with the government under which he lives.

Scott Greer expresses a more realistic appraisal of the changing democracy than does Poston:

> Few areas approach the anonymity of the urban stereotype, yet few are the kind of subcommunity envisaged in the democratic ideology. Community is generally defined by the sharing of values or by functional interdependence. The metropolis fits the second part of the definition but only the primary community of the past fulfilled both requirements. As scale increases, commitments are made to widespread social groups. The need for predictability results in integration and organization. The boundaries of these organizations are no longer coterminous, as in the small community, so that the area is part of one network for work, another for education, etc. Americans have never been completely independent of the larger community but the village of the early 19th century was so in terms of the present situation. As this community disappeared, communion also disappeared and only communion within the family unit remained. Democratic theory assumes a stable community but today's residence is in the "community of limited liability" from which the citizen can move at will. ...The voluntary organization is also unlikely to be the basis of participation for most citizens. These formal organizations are run mainly by their professionals. Few individuals participate in any part of democratic activity. Democracy is a byproduct

> of the warring of professionally directed groups rather than the result of participation. Most individuals today have greater leisure which they avoid spending in participation outside of the family group. Perhaps we need to lower the standards of participation that we require for a democracy. Limited community participation is a modest enough goal to realize and may still keep in check the formal leadership groups.[2]

Unlike Poston, Greer is willing to accept the changing democracy and adapt to it. Where Poston would return to the intimacy of the frontier community with its lively social interchange, Greer feels that the cross-community ties are quite strong and are unlikely to be broken--even less so in light of recent trends in business and pressure group activity and citizen apathy in public affairs. Greer's view is admittedly one of pessimism compared to the possible realization of Poston's goals of active citizen participation. It is especially interesting to note that Greer feels that voluntary organizations are unlikely to encourage much citizen participation. He feels, as does Poston, that ours has become a world of professionals and experts.

It is thought by most, though, that the voluntary association is a type of institution that is emerging to bring some of the traditional democracy back into civic life. Voluntary associations frequently cross over political party lines. Also, they do not perform

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[2] Scott Greer, "Individual Participation in Mass Society," Main Street Politics, ed. Charles Press (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University, 1962), p. 78.

functions as in the past century that are eventually taken over by the government. Associations are or can be pressure groups that form a dynamic part of the government process. To what degree they bring the individual citizen into the policy-formulating process depends on the size of the association and the complexity of the issues with which it deals. This is pertinent to neighborhood associations which try to cope with city planning problems. The types of problems the neighborhood association is capable of dealing with will be explored in more detail in a later chapter.

Need For Citizen Involvement

The extent of group participation in community planning can only be secondary to the acceptance of the need for some kind of citizen involvement. Although contested by some, the need for citizen involvement beyond the voting booth is encouraged by most commentators on American democracy as well as public officials. The acceptance of local participation in a society dependent on centralized government for many of its vital services is not inconsistent. Alexis de Toqueville, in Democracy in America, expresses this philosophy:

> Indeed, I cannot conceive that a nation can live and prosper without a powerful centralization of government. But I am of the opinion that a centralized administration is fit only to enervate the nations in which it exists, by incessantly diminishing their

> local spirit. Although such an administration can bring together at a given moment, on a given point, all the disposable resources of a people, it injures the renewal of those resources. It may ensure a victory in the hour of strife, but it gradually relaxes the sinews of strength. It may help admirably the transient greatness of a man, but not the durable prosperity of a nation.[3]

De Toqueville describes the power structure of a nation from the grass roots upward. Therefore, he would feel that these roots, being local involvement in governmental affairs, should be nurtured, encouraged, and enriched in order to maintain or increase the capacity of a nation as a whole for growth and development.

One early manifestation of such thinking was the communitarian movement in the early part of the nineteenth century. Many cooperative settlements were founded in America on a truly community-centered basis. Some of the Utopian thought which gave rise to these settlements contained principles such as those cited by Severyn Bruyn in Communities in Action:

> 1. Society should not be conceived of as comprising only a group of separate individuals, but rather as groups of associations related to one another. The association (such as the community) is the fundamental unit of society.
>
> 2. A fever of centralization is sweeping the world. What is needed is decentralization of power into smaller communal units, where true authority and responsibility for living can be exercised.

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[3] Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America (New York: Knopf, 1945), p. 86.

> 3. Only the free, voluntary association of people can solve the great organic problem of society; social change must take place gradually, starting at the local levels and moving toward the top levels of society.[4]

Most communities arising out of this movement did not last long. Those based on religious motivations lasted longer, and some continue to persist. What is significant, however, is that a need was seen to instill grass roots government into an ever-expanding society.

Later, the Garden City movement would again place emphasis on the local community, face-to-face relationships that were disappearing in the metropolitan complex. The great mass of humanity, though, has not tried to fight the evolutionary changes in community living patterns.

So, throughout American history, the attitudes about democracy have been evolving. Because of the changing demands on time and interest of the contemporary citizen, it has become necessary to alter the traditional concept of participation. However, few argue against the assertion that participation to some degree is still needed. Some important changes that have taken place from earlier days of the nation are alterations in the importance of one's locality as a determinant in life style, the changing emphasis on the need for ties and a "we" feeling, the changing proportions of professional and

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[4] Severyn Bruyn, Communities in Action (New Haven, Connecticut: College and University Press, 1963), p. 162.

amateur involvement in public affairs, and general attitudes about planning as a method of guiding cultural development.

Changing Concept Of Neighborhood

One of the more important notions in studies of urban society is that the local area is becoming relatively less important. As functions become organized as parts of a large social structure, the local area becomes less a place for meaningful interaction than than it becomes a place for mere spatial location. Residential areas become dormitories and not communities. This is certainly a vital difference although it is not universally true. Some places within a larger urban complex retain their identity and are even referred to in some distinctive manner. "Indian Village" in Detroit is such a place. A small island of well-preserved homes surrounded by a deteriorating area, this section is distinguished by its relatively higher class residents and their efforts to maintain an older area in fine condition. It is a "place," but it is more than that. Its identity is not limited to its locality but to the type of residents and their degree of common interests.

The reasons for a place being distinguished as a neighborhood are varied. One might be the unique style of homes to be found in the particular locale. Franklin Village, a small suburb of Detroit, is an example. Colon-

ial architecture has become a matter of pride with the inhabitants of the town, and policies of the village and its residents are directed toward preserving its small colonial village character. There are certainly residents of the village who do not share the interests of the majority; however, it is evident that enough do share these interests to maintain support for the type of corporate policies that continue the present village pattern.

Greenwich Village, in New York, would be another example. Because of some unique character of this place people identify with it as more than a locale. There is a peculiar spirit and a singularity about the way of life that distinguish it from all the other "places." It can be seen that physical structure alone does not create a neighborhood from a "place." It is the commonality of interests of people in the locality that creates a viable neighborhood.

In recent decades, however, there has been evidence that the above examples are the rare exceptions rather than the pervasive way of life. Some of the findings of Svend Riemer's study of neighboring are helpful:

> Social contacts of the city dweller are found at greater distances from his home than commercial contacts.
>
> Under the era of laissez-faire, the average family contact is found beyond walking-distance from the family residence.

> The number of family contacts--both social and commercial--decreases in number as the distance from the family residence increases.
>
> Family contacts--both social and commercial--are more frequent where more and better cars are available for the housewife.[5]

With new modes of transportation, with the changing pattern of industry on the landscape, with the changes in merchandising, and with the affluence attached to a dominant money economy, man has become increasingly detached from his home community both physically and psychologically. This social detachment has significant repercussions for individual personality patterns, local democratic activity and organization, and for community autonomy.

Where a person's contacts are dispersed over an ever-expanding region, it is unrealistic to expect him in the majority of cases to take as deep an interest in his immediate environment as in former years. The proportion of his waking hours spent at home is continually decreasing in the urban area, and the proportion of the time that he allots to local democratic activity is likewise diminishing. Community democratic activity is but one of the uses of time competing for the citizen's leisure, and what it now seems to offer the citizen as a reward for his time does not put it in a good competitive position.

The neighborhood, of course, is not without significance. The neighborhood is important for children, housewives and some aged. However, it can be contended with

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[5]Svend Riemer, Community Structure and Analysis, ed. Marvin Sussman (New York: Thomas Crowell Co., 1959), p. 444.

some assurance that any "program built upon the assumption of strong neighborhoods is a program hitched to a waning social unit."[6]

Defining The Neighborhood

The problem of defining the neighborhood and the community becomes apparent. Initially it is good to distinguish between the neighborhood and the community. In this paper as is the case with most of the writings on the subject of community organization, the two entities differ in degree rather than kind. When not used interchangeably, the neighborhood is something less in size or scope than the community. This is about the only area of definition on which most authors agree.

Planners have defined the neighborhood and community in terms of population, characteristic public facilities to be found within each, and by land area. Others define it in terms of geographical area modified by social interaction patterns. And still others define the community only by interaction patterns.

One author offers an interesting distinction between the objective community (defined by proximity and that definition most often utilized by planners) and the subjective community (defined by interaction patterns). The latter is referred to by Bessie McClenahan as a "communality." "The communality is an interest circle character-

[6]Bryce Ryan, "The Neighborhood as a Unit of Action in Rural Programs," Rural Sociology, IX(March, 1944), 33.

ized by the social nearness of members whose places of residence may be widely separated...Its members belong, not because they share a place of common residence or are identified with the same community, but simply because they share like interests."[7] There seems to be considerable validity for such a term and such a definition. Not only have the automobile and improved highway system allowed the suburban commuter unparalleled freedom in home-to-work travel patterns, but leisure time patterns are also becoming characterized by dispersion throughout the urban area. People are now, more than ever before, able to select their acquaintances in terms of similarity of interests and personality rather than physical proximity. There does not seem to be the "we" feeling within the objective neighborhood and community that was once attributed to them. Some implications of this alleged change may contribute to the understanding of the new patterns of neighboring and the concomitant changes in associational activities at the neighborhood level.

Need For A "We" Feeling

The need of some kind of identification with a group and its "we" feeling is evidenced by the persistence of primary group relations within the city. The family,

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[7]Bessie McClenahan, "The Communality, the Urban Substitute for the Traditional Community," Sociology and Social Research, (March-April, 1946), 267.

school, and fellow employees offer the individual primary group relations. The urban dweller also has secondary group relations. However, these are most often highly specialized. "They are temporary also and easily terminated when the goal of the secondary group is terminated."[8] An example is on the job where different people get together to do the same kind of work for the same wages as the next person. The life or endurance of any of these groups is a function of its ability to satisfy certain needs of the individual.

The need for ties, affiliation, and the "we" feeling is assumed to be a very real need by the developers of Park Forest as evidenced in some of their promotional material:

> You Belong
> in PARK FOREST!
> The moment you come to our town you know:
> You're welcome
> You're part of a big group
> You can live in a friendly small town
> instead of a lonely big city.
> You can have friends who want you--
> and you can enjoy being with them.
> Come out. Find out about the spirit of
> Park Forest.
>
> a cup of coffee--symbol of Park Forest
> Coffeepots bubble all day long in
> in Park Forest.
> This sign of friendliness tells you how
> much neighbors enjoy each other's
> company--feel glad that they can share
> their daily joys--yes, and troubles, too.
>
> Come out to Park Forest where smalltown
> friendships grow--and you still live so
> close to a big city.[9]

[8]Sussman, op. cit., p. 443.

[9]William H. Whyte, Jr., The Organization Man (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company), p. 325.

Appealing to the needs of people to affiliate apparently proved to be very effective advertising. The participation level in Park Forest is comparatively high. Although much is reportedly accomplished, this is not always the principal contribution of meetings to Park Forest society. "Sometimes they appear to be chiefly a medium by which anxious, uncertain people can vent aggressions they must elsewhere repress. Without the disciplining effect of a dominant older group and of custom, they are enticed into precocity; and this, unfortunately, stimulates many to a form of free expression in which name-calling and rancor seems to be an end in itself."[10] So, at least in Park Forest, civic activities grow out of personal needs as well as community needs.

Planners must be cautious, though, in attributing such needs to all communities and sub-communities. In American Community Behavior, Jessie Bernard contends that community planning is often done from the point of view of the person who looks at the town rather than lives in it. The planner may like to think of the neighborhood as having a "we" feeling whereas people in the community may not want this.[11] So to assume a widely felt need for a "we" feeling in community life may not be logical.

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[10] Sussman, op. cit., p. 318.

[11] Jessie Bernard, American Community Behavior (New York: The Dryden Press, 1949), p. 621.

Professional Versus The Amateur

To further define activities of neighborhood and community groupings within the cultural context, attitudes concerning the roles of the professional or expert and the amateur or lay citizen may be compared. Jean and Jess Ogden express the feeling that voluntary teamwork of many interests and skills is superior to subordinating them to an already established leadership.[12] Perhaps this ideal is unrealistic in a society so dependent on experts. It is perfectly obvious that voluntary teamwork is not in all ways superior to the expertise of established leadership. Expertise of the professional and the personal interest and involvement of the lay person should be complementary, with neither existing as something to which society pays lip service.

For the trained planner to contend that planning is too complex and technical for the amateur to contribute is not reasonable since so much of planning is based on value judgments which the average lay citizen is perfectly capable of considering intelligently.

Perhaps, though, leaders and officials do not want more participation but rather a broader concensus and support for their own views and proposals. Exemplifying this attitude is a situation when neighborhood and community groups are brought into the planning process

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[12]Jean and Jess Ogden, Small Communities in Action (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1946), pp. 234-235.

only after the plans have been formulated. Approval is what is most often sought rather than advice and consultation. It is doubtful that citizen participation would ever become a dynamic force in urban development if this continued as the only process by which citizens could voice their opinions as to the future of the urban environment.

A suburban community outside Detroit, Southfield has utilized local meetings with neighborhood groups whereby opinions of local citizens as to perceivee problems in the immediate area are expressed. This has been a reasonably successful public relations tool as well as a source of information and sentiment for the planner. Obscure details of land use and historical information of value to the planner not available elsewhere came to light in these sessions.[13]

The planning principles advanced by Harleigh Trecker further illustrate the alleged effectiveness of consulting with the lay citizen <u>during</u> the planning process:

> To be effective, those who will be directly affected by the results of planning should have a share in the making of the plan. This is a long standing principle of democracy. It is axiomatic that persons are more important than plans and that the meaning of planning in terms of its direct implications for people must be a first consideration.

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[13]Ronald Clarke, Personal Interview (August, 1965).

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> The most effective plans have come out of a process which combines face-to-face methods with the more formal methods of committee work. Here we have an opportunity to set in motion a network of influences that will make for acceptance and implementation of the plan with a minimum of objection and resistance.
>
> Planning requires the efforts of volunteer, non-professional community leadership, as well as professionals. The division of responsibility between these groups is a prerequisite to a satisfactory prosecution of a program. It is necessary to allocate and coordinate these responsibilities as well as to divide and integrate them.[14]

However, it is not only with the professionals that the process of citizen participation is stifled. In concerns of government, the lay person for a variety of reasons is not always eager to involve himself. Although many may have the technical skills that might be of use in associations interested in community development, they may regard the use to which their skills are put as beyond their technical competence. Although professionals in their respective fields, most of these experts are amateurs in public affairs. The reasons for people participating or not participating will receive more attention in a later chapter.

Some of the reasons why participation is not encouraged more than it is and some of the problems of bringing citizens into the planning process are brought

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[14] Harleigh Trecker, Community Organization in Action, eds. Ernest Harper and Arthur Dunham (New York: Associated Press, 1959), p. 219.

out in a series of questions included in an article by Harleigh Trecker:

> To what extent do our members understand the nature of the agency and their obligation to participation? Perhaps we have a job of interpretation to do.
>
> To what extent have we established channels of communication so that there is a two-way flow of ideas, opinion, experiences, and contributions? It may be that we have yet to set up such avenues of exchange.
>
> To what extent do our members, our boards, and our staffs possess ability to participate with ease and effectiveness? It could be that we must do considerably more training in the arts of group thinking, of fact finding, and of planning.
>
> To what extent do we organize our work so that units demanding attention are sufficiently clear for participants to see where they may take hold? It sometimes happens that we expect people to take on jobs which are too large for them to handle.
>
> To what extent does participation with us result in personal satisfaction as well as agency accomplishment? There may be need for a careful study of the basic human satisfactions received or not received in working together.
>
> To what extent are we able to direct a process of participation so that results can be seen without too much delay? In the future we might make more use of progress reports, or recognizing step-by-step gains, even though the ultimate has yet to be achieved.[15]

From the content of some of these questions and comments, it is apparent that they are directed not explicitly to the city planning or community development

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[15] Ibid., pp. 220-221.

process. As a matter of fact, they are more concerned with participation in a social work context. Nevertheless, they have definite implications in the problem of balancing professional and "amateur" involvement in the planning process. It seems evident that some "spoon feeding" is necessary in order to encourage participation. To assume that people will take an active role in municipal decision making in other than crisis situations may not be logically sound. The professional must work hard to help the amateur help him.

If this is true, however, is it worth it? Could not the planner glean from personal experience generalized attitudes and desires of the public? Possibly. However, this prevalent thinking is likely the reason why so many plans are misunderstood and lack public support. In our society it is important that the amateur have a voice in the decisions as they are being made. In another cultural context, this might be otherwise. For example, in Canada the citizens' participation goes little beyond the ballot box in community decision-making. By electing an official to public office, the electorate is assumed to have invested in him trust to carry out the duties and consignments of his office as he sees best for his jurisdiction. If his conduct or the decisions he renders are disagreeable to the public, they have recourse to the ballot box to initiate change. This should make the importance of the cultural context even more evident. In the context

of the United States and its governmental philosophy, the citizen is expected to take an active part beyond that of the election of representatives.

Advisory committees, commissions, and public hearings are all evidence of participation. To refute this philosophy of government by omission cannot, certainly, be in the best interests of the communities for which plans are prepared. Significantly, the attitudes of the professionals toward involvement of the lay citizen in the planning process does much to influence the attitudes of the lay citizen toward planning.

Participation And Representative Government

One of the basic premises of democracy is that the masses of men have a right to govern themselves. Inherent in this philosophy is the faith in the capacity of the common man to rule. To carry on such a philosophical framework, a society must have the fullest measure of participation possible. However, this does not rule out representative government. Elected representatives of the people are vested with authority to make decisions for the masses. However, in questions of basic policy, decisions of officials should be tempered by the current attitudes of the electorate.

Without this responsiveness, control may become so impersonalized between elections that true democracy will not occur. This poses the question of whether or

not scientific control can be democratic. Can purposive, rational control be reconciled with democracy? Does this type of control forbode an usurping of citizens' rights? The answer is one of degree. Planning in one cultural context implies one level of control; planning in a different context implies a different level.

Conflict In Planning

In any society where there is planning, and this includes all societies, planning usually implies a conflict since goals are not universally agreed upon. The conflict may be between the general community welfare and private or vested interests, or it may be between a number of special interest groups within the private sector. In any case, the plan bears the threat of coercion, so it is suspect to many people.

One of the frustrating facts with which planners must cope is that those who benefit from a lack of planning are often stronger than those who are for planning. These are typically the vested interest groups concerned with little beyond expectations for profit. This, in no way, means that planning and the profit motive are inconsistent or mutually exclusive. However, it shows that it is all the more vital that those who would benefit from planning voice their opinions and support them. And this type of support must be solicited by the professional.

Compounding the problem of gaining support for planning in order for it to be effective is the fact that, in recent time, there has been a change in attitude so that planning is now widely advocated as a substitution for competition in assigning land to its various uses. In order that this change can be palatable in a democratic context, the citizenry should have some reasonably direct channel of influence over the assignment of these uses, and they should be encouraged to use it.

Otherwise, it is unlikely that people will accept the assignment of land use types or projects designed on the basis of rational, "scientific" planning as being consistent with democratic ideals. In the Hyde-Park Kenwood conservation project in Chicago, public officials became convinced that citizen participation was not only useful but vital if any plan were to be effectuated.[16] This is being found true in other conservation and redevelopment projects as well as acceptance and implementation of city plans. Urban planning is becoming increasingly more acceptable to the American people, but in a time when there is an abiding fear of bureaucracy and impersonalized control, planners must work to bring more citizens into the planning process. In this way only will the attitudes of the people who must implement the plans and live with them have a tendency to accept and support them.

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[16]Julia Abrahamson, A Neighborhood Finds Itself (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), p. 269.

The Local Citizen Group

The type of citizen participation that is being directly or indirectly alluded to in this paper can be distinguished from other types. The form to which the attention of this paper is directed is the voluntary citizens' group at the local level. Typically, this would be the neighborhood association. Here it is assumed that these types of groups are more interested in the public interest than more formalized special interest groups such as manufacturing associations or business associations. There is not, however, a dichotomy between the public interest and private interests. As mentioned earlier, many think of the democratic process as a compromise reached among competing special interests. In fact, the neighborhood association may have less of the broader public interest at heart than some of the more private-goals-oriented groups that can be cited. The household group, represented at the local level by the neighborhood association, is in a very real sense a special interest pressure group. More will be discussed on this subject in a later chapter.

To summarize the first chapter, it may be noted that the voluntary citizen participation, individually and through associations, is a vital issue to be discussed because of its growing place in a democratic system that is subject to continual redefinition, adaptation, and compromise. Also, the importance of citizen participation

as a contributor to the successful implementation of plans can be seen from discussions by various authors. Above all, the importance of the voluntary association as representing a sub-community of the larger society should be stressed. The scale of the association is important because it is by means of a personal, face-to-face group of people with common interests that the spirit of democracy can retain some of its traditional meaning and value.

CHAPTER III

MOTIVATING FACTORS FOR GROUP PARTICIPATION

There are a myriad of factors which motivate people to engage in citizen group activities or to avoid such matters. These factors are mostly human needs that require fulfillment. The following list of psychogenic needs (caused by psychological factors) includes those most apparently related to motivation for group interaction:

> Superiority: the need to excel, a composite of achievement and recognition.
>
> Achievement: the need to overcome obstacles, to exercise power, to strive to do something difficult as well and as quickly as possible.
>
> Recognition: the need to excite praise and commendation; to demand respect.
>
> Exhibition: the need for self-dramatization; to excite, amuse, stir, shock, thrill others.
>
> Inviolacy: the need to remain inviolate, to prevent a depreciation of self-respect, to preserve one's "good name."
>
> Avoidance of inferiority: the need to avoid failure, shame, humiliation, ridicule.
>
> Defensiveness: the need to defend oneself against blame or belittlement; to justify one's actions.
>
> Counteraction: the need to overcome defeat by restriving and retaliating.

Dominance: the need to influence or control others.

Deference: the need to admire and willingly follow a superior; to serve gladly.

Similance: the need to imitate or emulate others; to agree and believe.

Autonomy: the need to resist influence; to strive for independence.

Contrariness: the need to act differently from others; to be unique; to take the opposite side.

Aggression: the need to assault or injure another; to belittle, harm, or maliciously ridicule a person.

Affiliation: the need to form friendships and associations.

Rejection: the need to be discriminating; to snub, ignore, or exclude another.

Nurturance: the need to nourish, aid, or protect another.

Succorance: the need to seek aid, protection, or sympathy; to be dependent.[17]

Any of these needs might be reason enough for the existence of a primary or secondary relationship. The duration of the relationships would depend on whether these and other needs were fulfilled. It would also depend on the willingness of an individual to sacrifice the fulfillment of one or more needs to fulfill others. The observed temporary nature of secondary associational groupings perhaps is due to the fact that primary associations are sufficient to serve the needs of most indi-

[17]Ernest Hilgard, Introduction to Psychology (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1962), p. 126.

viduals on a long term basis. The primary relationships provide the stability and the secondary relationships provide the variety and a change of pace.

More specialized needs or perceived needs may be the causes for secondary group formation. Examples would be to gain political influence, to protect one's neighborhood from a change in the status quo perceived to be undesirable, to promote some desired change in the status quo, or to improve one's monetary situation. These are all, more or less, related to the basic needs cited, however. When the needs are not met, or when there is no channel to serve these needs, frustration may occur.

In the Chicago suburban development, Park Forest, the zeal with which participation is undertaken is evidence of a need for ties of more than a superficial social kind. In writing of this development that caters to those "on their way up" in industry and commerce, William H. Whyte expresses the opinion that it is important for the "organization man" to develop ties other than within the organizational confines of his place of employment. "One of the dangers in the transient life is that these young people, because they must move about so frequently, will more and more identify their total destiny with one particular organization. For society as well as for themselves, the organization transients need to multiply their allegiances--to the church, to the community, and the like."[18]

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[18]Whyte, op. cit., pp. 314-315.

So, at least in this community, secondary group affiliation caters to those needs not served by the place of employment. Although it might seem that the organization could provide outlets for those needs previously mentioned, the need for autonomy requires a wider range of affiliations.

Two Basic Questions

In all communities, two of the most basic questions that must be answered are: (1) If there is a scarcity of something, whether it is a good or a service, how is it decided who gets what there is? and (2) if there are many goals and values, whose shall prevail? The first question is directed toward the problem of scarcity. Traditionally, this question in America has been solved by competition tempered with certain welfare considerations. The second question concerns the problem of incompatible wills. This results in conflict. The two problems are often related, but there is a distinction. Scarcity is one of the basic problems of life, and competition is one method of seeking a solution to this scarcity. In some ways, the second problem is the opposite of the first. Here people want different and mutually incompatible alternatives from a range of choices that may be extremely broad since the conflict may be in the realm of values. This type of conflict may involve the wills of many people or the internal value conflicts of an individual.

Neither of these problems result in inherently good or bad situations. They are inherent in a social organization. Conflict is as basic as competition. One is not good and the other bad. As one author states: "So long, indeed, as there is change, so long as personalities are not wholly standardized but want different and incompatible things, so long as there are two sexes, so long, in fact, as the conditions of life make for heterogeneity, there will be conflict."[19]

Conflict At Local Level

Conflict exists at the neighborhood level just as much as it does at the national level. The parties to the conflict may be families against families, cliques against cliques, young versus old, women versus men, or conflicts with religious and racial implications. Home ownership and the fear of devaluation is a source of conflict when some neighbors do not maintain their property to the norm.

Children's behavior is another issue in neighborhood conflict. There is more neighboring and more conflict in neighborhoods with many children. Play space, recreation facilities, late hours, noise, rowdiness, and delinquency are some of the issues that would likely appear.

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[19] Jessie Bernard, American Community Behavior (New York: The Dryden Press, 1949), pp. 104-105.

Some types of neighborhood conflict affect the whole community. For example, racial conflicts have implications beyond the immediate physical neighborhood. Not all cultural differences create conflict. Only those that are mutually incompatible do. Also, cultural conflict is not a personal matter; it is institutional—mores, customs, habits, or large groups are most at issue rather than isolated individuals. The isolated individual problems can be assimilated into the larger group. It is when two larger groups are at odds that conflict becomes overt.

Conflict As A Positive Force

Conflict sometimes is viewed as only a destructive force. This is not necessarily true. Conflict can be creative. In order for it to be so, however, it must be understood. The elements of the conflict situation must be recognized. The parties, issues, techniques being used, rules regulating the situation or that should be regulating it, at what level of accomodation it is taking place, whether or not one side should be eliminated or whether a compromise should be reached--all of these factors must be identified and understood. The problem is to grasp the conflict so that it may be made to be constructive rather than destructive.

The formation of local action organizations is related to this view of conflict resolution. From a

theoretical standpoint, voluntary associations may be seen partly as a result of the tendency to offset the coercive power of a strong central government by an organization with some ability to represent the individual's interests better than he personally could do. Robert Dahl states the principle:

> The likelihood of peaceful adjustment of a conflict is increased if there exist institutional arrangements that encourage consultation, negotiation, the exploration of alternatives, and the search for mutually beneficial solutions. Conversely, the prospects of deadlock and coercion are increased if institutional arrangements severely inhibit such activities.
>
> ...
>
> The larger the area of agreement among different actors on what would constitute a desirable solution, the better the chances for a peaceful adjustment.
>
> ...
>
> The extent to which peaceful adjustment or coercion is used depends on past experience. The more satisfied people are with the results of past trials, the more likely they are to repeat the same methods.[20]

Although these points are more appropriate to a cold war or revolutionary situation than to a less volatile local set of dissatisfactions, it indicates the potential of neighborhoods for productive action. Because of the stability of American government, the climate for negotiation at all levels of government is excellent. Consequently, the atmosphere for local political action on a voluntary basis is perfectly acceptable in our political context. In all phases of private and pro-

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[20]Robert Dahl, Modern Political Analysis (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), p. 77.

fessional life, the conference table has become the accepted way to settle differences. It is understandable, then, why citizens feel the possibility of action by organization to accomplish some form of peaceful conflict resolution.

Forces Encouraging Local Action

The forces that actually encourage action by groups are general in nature. Citizens may feel dissatisfaction associated with the present situation. They may not have their opinions adhered to individually, so they may feel that an association will increase their bargaining power.

Sometimes the dissatisfaction arises from a perceived discrepancy between what is and what ought to be. For example, there may not be a real feeling of dissatisfaction within a community or neighborhood until another area with better improvements or organization is seen. Then the community citizens are aware of the possibilities for change and may encourage it.

Internal pressures such as an inherent desire to bring about more efficiency and economy in government can be one motive for local political group action. In urban areas, it usually takes one of these types of dissatisfaction to enlist an organized community association. Otherwise, proximity is no longer the determinant of associational activity as it once was. Adrian and Williams observe:

> On occasion the neighborhood was the basis of organized political activity. For instance, in the previous chapter it was seen that the renewal neighborhoods did organize politically in opposition to threats to the status quo. But this is because they were the affected areas, not because they were homogeneous political-action units, and this was the typical pattern. While neighborhoods were not natural political units, geographic proximity did define a shared interest for specific policies, and this was usually the only occasion for neighborhood-oriented interest-group activity.[21]

As with most generalizations, there were exceptions to this. Where ethnic groups were described by geographical boundaries, there was frequently more a feeling of group identity, and associational activity arose easily. Usually, though, "the politics of the neighborhood was only a function of crisis. When the neighborhood was threatened, group activity emerged."[22]

In the cities discussed by Adrian and Williams, threats to the status quo which encouraged group formation came in three forms of proposals: (1) traffic routing changes, (2) zoning changes, and (3) urban renewal projects. Where the status quo was supported by citizens, it usually was supported by the legislative body. However, the conclusion of Adrian and Williams as to the potential of neighborhood associations forming for a positive community goal would give no encouragement to that agreeing with Boston's plea for a return to the grass roots.

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[21] Charles Adrian and Oliver Williams, Four Cities (Philadelphia: University of Penn. Press, 1963), p. 172.

[22] Ibid., p. 163.

Neighborhoods As Political Action Units

Except for those particular situations where city policy affects a specific neighborhood, there is little reason to expect neighborhoods to be political-action units from the evidence in Adrian and Williams' study. While physical proximity may be the necessary condition for grass-roots politics, it was not a sufficiently sound basis for political action on the majority of subjects in these cities. A decentralized form of politics in juxtaposition to centralized services appears unrealistic. Consequently, the neighborhood was an unimportant unit both for administration of city policy and for political interaction among the citizens.

There were two principal exceptions to the characteristics and conclusions of the Four Cities study. One city came close to the model by having wards redrawn along ethnic group lines. This was held together by the legal system, however, and was not at all a spontaneous social action system.

Another exception was a city where some of the wealthier neighborhoods had improvement associations; some were designed to retain desirable physical characteristics. Most of these groups had a formal organizational structure to ensure their interests would be represented at city hall.

Arnold Ross offers a reason for the existence of this and similar types of voluntary associations at the local level:

> Voluntary associations are present in democratic urban communities because no one institution dominates and the citizens are heterogeneous in background and interests. Members join groups for self-expression (including recreation and group identification) or to achieve interest through group action. To satisfy these desires other societies have depended on the extended family, the church, or the community as a whole. The group also serves the psychological function of providing a sense of security. One question deserving further research is whether attachment to the group weakens attachment to the larger whole.[23]

Both motives cited in this passage might be attributed to neighborhood voluntary associations. These motives are consistent with the problems of contemporary American democracy pointed out by authors previously quoted. With the centralization of government activities growing as it has been in the last few decades, people are searching for a unit with which they can identify and cope. There remain a number of problems that can be effectively dealt with locally. A slightly different approach to the motivations for community organization on a local scale is offered by Arthur Hillman:

> The enlarging interest in community organization and planning, which is demonstrated by the marked attention it is getting in many quarters, stems basically from certain broad developments in the national life. Among these is the experience gained in the last war which can be applied to peacetime problems of community cooperation. During the war many American communities met emergency problems with boldness and vigor. There was

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[23] Charles Press, Main Street Politics, ed. Arnold Ross (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University, 1962), p. 86.

> then a special concern about the internal health of democratic society, and more specifically a need to plan community services to meet wartime demands. Some community leaders now seem to recognize that what was defensive community action can become an offensive against the unresolved problems of democracy in peace.[24]

The "offensive" though may not receive the participation at the local level that might more logically be expected in a wartime context. But in a time of peace and affluence, interests are diverted to a wide variety of pastimes. The communalities ("communities" defined by people with similar interest) discussed earlier vie for interests of people who might otherwise be interested in community and neighborhood associations.

Even in 1944, the comment was made that even in rural life, the neighborhood was losing ground because of growing urbanity of rural dwellers--declining birth rate, commercialized recreation, extensive secondary contacts. This might lead to the belief that urbanization destroys the neighborhood. In fact, much of current urban sociology postulates that as neighborhoods become more urban, memberships in formal voluntary organizations become more important and intimate, primary relationships become less so. However, Greer's study of four California neighborhoods refutes this and, in fact, indicates the opposite. Other authors, too, indicate that the tenuous relationship between

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[24]Arthur Hillman, Community Organization In Action, ed. Ernest Harper and Arthur Dunham (New York: Associated Press, 1959), p. 97.

the small conjugal family and its residential environment sometimes is overstressed.[25]

If the energies of citizens are to be directed towards localized civic activity, there must be some motives. Some of these are listed below:

Civic pride and conservation of property values

Organized expression of social consciousness

Enjoyment of fellowship or a sense of power in getting along with or manipulating people.

Resentment and grievances

Outlet for energy

Desire for prestige

Conforming with peers

Need for business contacts

Likewise there are a number of definable reasons why people do not participate or are reluctant to do so. A partial listing of these follows:

Lack of time, energy, or money

Fear of losing job

Sense of futility at overwhelming problems

Lack of knowledge of the function of organizations.

Opportunity for participation not concrete enough to be grasped by inexperienced individual.

In general, an individual's willingness or capacity to participate in local political activity can be

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[25]Sussman, op. cit., pp. 221-234.

reasoned to be situational--determined by income, occupation, ethnic status, work place, education, and so forth. Explaining a lack of participation as apathy, as some do, is blaming inactivity on inactivity which is little help in solving the problem.

Social Participation As A Prerequisite To Action

In order for participation to take place, there must be some degree of neighboring or interaction among residents in a physical neighborhood. Some observations on this phenomenon shed light on one aspect of the reasoning for or against participating. It is interesting that in one study of neighboring, housing built by developers had more neighboring than in housing that was built by private realtors on an individual basis.

Women tend to neighbor more than men. Children neighbor more than women. However children's neighboring is a result of lack of mobility, so this form of interaction is not so significant except insofar as it acquaints parents with each other.

> Greer concludes that the greater the amount of family life in a neighborhood, the more neighboring; the more persons who have friends in their neighborhood, the more likely a person is to attend a cultural event in his neighborhood; the larger the percentage of persons who belong to formal organizations whose memberships are drawn from the local area, the more husbands who belong to organizations which hold their meetings in the local area, and the more persons who could name at least one local leader.

[26] Ibid., p. 79.

It is also evident that the social participation of an individual is closely associated with the social participation of other members of the family. These patterns that determine the social character of local areas (economic, ethnic, and family characteristics) are important in predicting attitudes and social organization. "It is crucial in determining the extent to which a local area in a city can even be considered a community in the sense of having flows of communication, interaction, community identification, and social integration among its residents."[27]

Leadership at the local or neighborhood level is very important to define and understand in enlisting active participation. This problem and that of reorienting a group culture are discussed in American Community Behavior:

> (a) The change has to be a change of group atmosphere rather than of single items... Technically it means that the change cannot be accomplished by learning tricks. It must be deeper than the verbal level or the level of social or legal formalities.
>
> (b) It can be shown that the system of values which governs the ideology of a group is dynamically linked with other power aspects within the life of the group. This is correct psychologically as well as historically. Any real change of the culture of a group is, therefore, interwoven with the changes of power constellation within the group.
>
> (c) From this point it will be easily understood why a change in methods of leadership is probably the quickest way to bring about

[27] Ibid., p. 80.

> a change in the cultural atmosphere of a group. For the status and power of the leader or of the leading section of a group make them the key to the ideology and the organization of the life of that group...Lecture and propaganda do not suffice to bring about the necessary change. Essential as they are, they will be effective only if combined with a change in the power relations and leadership of the group....
>
> (d) It is...very important that the people who are to be changed...be dissatisfied with the previous situation and feel the need for a change...[28]

In addition to participation of other members of the family, there are many other reasons why some people participate differently from others. Income, education, and occupation influence the extent of citizen participation in voluntary associations. Contacts with other people vary with these three determinants. So does the person's ability to communicate. A businessman who daily confers with many people in many walks of life will be much better equipped to communicate effectively in a citizens' organization than will a factory or machine shop worker who has not had the opportunity for communication in his work.

Time and financial capacity are also influential. A person who frequently works nights is less likely to devote one of his free nights to voluntary public service than is the person who has considerable leisure time. Financial capacity also has some influence.

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[28]Bernard, op. cit., p. 628.

Sometimes volunteer service costs money. Transportation costs, distribution of materials, and other incidental expenses incurred in these types of groups may discourage the less affluent from participating.

The expectations of others is an influencing factor that should not be discounted. In some communities, participation may be fashionable. In others, those who participate may be considered rabble rousers or pests. It is reasonable to say that the American personality is as other-directed as any, so this is considered to be a vital factor in determining what to expect from citizens.

Functional relevancy is another determinant of participation. If a person can establish some relationship between his life and the purpose or function of the group activity, he is much more likely to be willing and eager to participate than if philosophical motives are the only ones evident to him.

Different value systems will enlist different degrees and kinds of participation. Throughout his life, a person absorbs attitudes and opinions about the value of participating, the individual's responsibility in a democratic society, the possibility of isolating one's self from society, the notion that politics are inherently corrupt, and the idea that no one cares what the individual thinks anyway.

All these factors have relevancy to citizen participation. There have been observations about some of these and other factors as how they influence participation. Sussman attributes a positive correlation of citizen participation with higher income, higher education, and higher family status.[29]

Higher income people participate more than lower income people. People with a high formal education have a higher participation level than those with lower educational attainment. This is largely because those with more formal education occupy positions in the social system where social participation is possible and functional. As a generalization, too, level of education correlates with level of income.

Also, "men living in high family status neighborhoods...when compared to the men living in low family status neighborhoods...are somewhat less socially isolated from informal group participation, have more social contacts with neighbors and kin, and are more likely to have met their close, personal friends in their neighborhoods."[30]

One illustration of how the expectations of others can be an important influential in citizen participation is given in Sussman's book. In a campaign

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[29]Sussman, op. cit., p. 321.

[30]Ibid., p. 78.

to establish a community hospital, a professional campaign manager was used and nearly equal contacts for the entire population were maintained. Communication channels were thus opened and remained so. Participation became "fashionable." Also, the basic value of health is universal, and this value reinforced the fashionable nature of the project.

Strategies For Encouraging Participation

If there are recognized influential factors in citizen participation, it would seem apparent that they can be exploited to encourage more participation. Of the strategies for participation that are cited, a combination would be in order since it is usually a combination of factors that cause a lack or limited degree of citizen participation.

One strategy would be for leaders and other active members of the decision making process to make the community issues more relevant to a broader range of people and to communicate this relevancy to them. People can often best perceive the relevancy of a given program to their lives if they have had a part in locating and defining the problem.

The problem is often that a small group decides what is needed and then seeks general support for a proposed solution. This is especially true in urban planning. The problem is not internalized by the wider

group; and, therefore, no motivation to participate occurs among the majority of citizens.

A strategy that recognizes the diversity of the value system may be effective in encouraging active participation at the local level. Programs relevant to basic, widely held values receive more participation than programs catering to values of a small, or exclusive group. When only a small sector of society is served by a program, it cannot be expected that wide participation will occur.

Another strategy that might be used for increasing the level of participation is one that compensates for or modifies the lack of ability to communicate effectively. People may not have the opportunity to communicate and participate. There can be a conscious effort to provide communicating experience in groups thereby building a broader base for participation.

Innovations in the time, place, and circumstances of participation would be another means for seeking a broader base of citizen participants. In this way differences in time and resources available to individuals would be made less important. People not normally in contact with particular need situations could be sought out. Then they would be consciously involved in the decision making process rather than just having their support solicited for a preconceived solution.

In addition, participation needs to be made more respectable and a source of prestige for everyone. It must be a rewarding experience rather than a source of censure. This is not something that will happen in a short time due to preaching the value of participating. Rather, it will be a long process and one that will require a change in values.

In the Hyde-Park Kenwood project in Chicago, there was a direct correlation between the success of block groups and the methods used to encourage participation. In her book, A Neighborhood Finds Itself, Julia Abrahamson cites a number of methods used that she considered valuable:

> Orderly problem-solving procedures
>
> Use of own resources before calling for help.
>
> Work on short-term projects even where the over-all objectives seem impossible to attain
>
> Shared leadership
>
> Continuing effort to keep membership inclusive of everyone on the block.
>
> Provision for social as well as achievement rewards[31]

After having experience working in block groups, many citizens of the Hyde-Park area began taking individual initiative on problems and their horizons altered to those of the city rather than only their immediate physical neighborhood.

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[31]Abrahamson, op. cit., p. 43.

It may be hoped, then, that a conscious effort to increase citizen participation would in most cases prove worthwhile. However, the effectiveness of such a program is not unlimited. John Foskett expresses the limitations:

> The fact of limited or unequally distributed social participation is too deeply rooted in the very nature of our culture to be subject to facile manipulation. Indeed, full and equal participation can only be a fascinating utopian idea.[32]

In the highly diversified social system of Western culture, large segments of the population have become isolated from the general community activities and interests. To be realistic and establish attainable goals for citizen participation, this should be understood and accounted for. The motives of individuals and the alternatives presenting themselves to him are too great in number to encourage expectation of complete participation in local political activity.

Importance Of Crisis

The importance of crisis as a motivating factor for citizen participation becomes apparent when various case studies are examined. This is probably one of the most important and most frequently occurring causes of active citizen involvement in politics. Generally speaking, the political activity of a neighborhood is a

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[32] John Foskett, Community Structure and Analysis, ed. Marvin Sussman (New York: Thomas Crowell Co., 1959), p. 328.

function of crisis. Sometimes this activity is highly effective in forestalling the actions of the city government. This is especially true when the citizens are fighting to maintain the status quo.

Although it is usually assumed that crisis is a valuable starting point for community action since it prepares citizens for social change, it may not always be a positive force. It may make conditions unfavorable to community action. Political, social, and economic crises are each likely to be reacted to in a different manner. Each may have a different effect as to its function or disfunction in community development.

Also, the same internal conditions in different communities may produce a different interpretation of the severity of the crisis and the logical action that should follow. However, the concept of crisis is an important factor in evaluating the potential participation of a group. Bruyn concludes:

> The concept of crisis may become an integral part of the ideal model and be applied to any community regardless of its condition. A crisis touches upon the survival energies of participants and provides a deeper source of motivation toward collective action than the process of calling upon latent interests for community improvement. In short, the concept of crisis may be both a reflection of the unique internal condition of the community and a part of the philosophy of action underlying the framework of the ideal model.[33]

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[33] Bruyn, op. cit., p. 123.

The Four Cities study found that renewal neighborhoods organized politically in opposition to threats to the status quo. But this was done because they were the affected areas rather than because they were homogeneous political action units. In other words, the crisis situation was focused on their immediate areas, and this spurred them to action.

At Park Forest, Illinois, with the emergency pressures of a new community gone, some of the emergency spirit that it became noted for also disappeared. Without the necessity pressing them, people can take issues or leave them and fewer turn up at meetings than in the past. Some people who were especially active participants in the early days of Park Forest became so disillusioned at the ebbing participation and complacency that they left the development.[34]

In a different cultural context, a similar situation can be observed. As the Kibbutzim of Israel have grown, it has become more difficult to keep the spirit of communitarianism alive. "It seems much easier to maintain a communal setup in a poorly developed, impoverished society where there is little to divide and no opportunity to become an 'executive' than it is when the community begins to expand its wealth and activity."[35]

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[34] Whyte, op. cit., p. 324.

[35] Ibid.

This is a common problem. A similar problem results when the crisis endures so long as to result in the acceptance of the situation by many citizens. Also, when an attempt to cope with the crisis fails, citizen involvement may ebb. In the Hyde-Park Kenwood conservation area, when some groups did not accomplish their objectives, they became so discouraged that block activity ended. The central organization, therefore, encouraged new block groups to begin on projects simple enough to be accomplished. Then, confidence grew along with the ability to overcome frustrations.

When, in time, the city or some professional organization took over the tasks begun by the block groups, care had to be taken to divert the energy released to other constructive activities and to impress on people that neighborhood programs depended for success on their advice, information, and action. Skillfully handled, this type of cyclical relationship between the lay citizen and the professional may lead to continuing citizen interest in local affairs. It would then possibly follow that citizens could be a real source of information and innovation for the community development process.

It seems, then that the principal motivation for voluntary group formation on a neighborhood basis is a threat to the status quo or some other crisis situation rather than any long-term objectives being dominant.

A possible exception to this is the "citizen advisory committee" which has grown out of the Workable Program requirement of Urban Renewal Administration programs that there be an extensive degree of citizen participation involved in urban renewal projects. Where a viable organization exists, it does much to overcome citizen apathy in regard to civic affairs. It does this largely by facilitating the communication process. More will be discussed about this in later chapters. But in the majority of cases, it seems as though citizens' groups operate as a functional unit only in crisis situations.

Thus, there are many reasons for the formation of these types of local citizen action groups. However, once these organizations are formed, their impact on decision making is a function of their operations as organizational units. Organization theory is turned to next in exploring the potential of voluntary associations for productive contributions to the urban planning process.

CHAPTER IV

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Perspectives

Organization can be viewed from many perspectives. It is a method of bringing about cooperation and integration, of bringing about a balance between needs and resources resulting in a balance between grass roots democracy and specialization.

Organizations have a characteristic structure by which they assign functions to participants and integrate these functions into an efficient system. Also, organizations are concerned with the way jobs are performed by means of the cooperative system. These structural and functional components of organizations are, if the organization is dynamic, always changing and adapting to a changing environment. Organizations are characterized by behavior which is motivated by the necessities of cooperation in order to achieve some end which is seen as desirable by a group. The element of predictability must be present in a successful organization. Organizations, then,

limit individual behavior, direct it into channels designed to benefit the operation of the total group, resulting in individual behavior which is frequently highly predictable.

Advantage Of Organization

Organizations have certain advantages over unorganized action. Some of these are discussed by Irwin T. Sanders:

> 1. An organization provides mutual stimulation among the members. The greater the number of people working on a topic, the broader will be the social experience brought to bear on that topic.
>
> 2. An organization fixes certain responsibilities and duties both upon its officers and its members. For example, a man elected to a club office knows that the members will expect him to do the job the leader is supposed to do. He in turn can call upon the members for assistance and advice, since they are expected to live up to their part of the bargain. Thus, through organization, people can be more certain that specific jobs will be done.
>
> 3. An organization gives continuity to a program since it provides for one set of officers to succeed another and for self-renewal in the taking in of new members.
>
> 4. Forming an organization gives public recognition to programs, because most people upon learning of a new group will ask what it has set out to do. When a national organization, for example, establishes a local group and publicizes its formation, people begin to ask, "What is this new group trying to do?". Those doing the organizing, then, have an opportunity to explain; they can get their point of view before the public.

The author then goes on to explain some of the disadvantages of a formal organization and the corollary advantages of more informal organizations in community life:

> 1. An informal group at times may assure the cooperation of everyone on a more equal footing. Electing officers may permit those who hold no positions to settle back and let the leaders do the work...
>
> 2. An organization may meet the opposition of vested interests or of other groups already strongly established. An informal group, however, may carry on its activities unopposed and eventually win wide support for its unofficial program.
>
> 3. If the activity is of a short-run nature and must be accomplished quickly, there is no need to give it the permanence implied in a formal organization. The time used in organizational activity could better be spent on an informal basis with key leaders who are willing to work hard and act promptly.
>
> 4. In some communities, people do not have a good record of working together in organizations. Formal groups often become debating societies where more friction than cooperation results. This is especially true where the community is sharply divided into various factions.
>
> 5. People representing different groups and interests often can work out programs requiring compromise much better on an informal basis.[36]

Perhaps the neighborhood association is supported by the points in favor of the informal group. The absence of a well-defined hierarchy, definite platform, and other formalities parallel the typical voluntary local citizens' group.

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[36] Irwin Sanders, Making Good Communities Better (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1953), pp. 61-63.

One must be careful when defining the neighborhood since even small barriers may be where "the line is drawn" in social participation. These barriers would affect citizen participation levels in the area and would determine the difficulty of a viable organization arising to meet problems.

In terms of effective working organization, "A city of 50,000 people appears to be too large a political unit for the democratic processes to operate according to the grass-roots model of local government."[37] This model stresses the importance of keeping primary relationships in the process of making local political decisions. This is no longer likely in an urban society of increasing complexity.

This complexity in organization leads to more communalities replacing the neighborhoods until now determined by physical proximity. Communalities are as varied as the interests of the people. They form a shifting overlay over the community pattern. These are becoming more and more the real neighborhoods. Where people in a physical neighborhood may share only a very few interests in common, people in communalities share interests in common by the very definition of the term.

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[37]Adrian, op. cit., p. 171.

Likelihood Of Neighborhood Organization

It is a fallacy in thinking that people sharing a few common interests will love or even like each other. Neighbors may all belong to the local improvement society but have little else to do with each other. People do not necessarily like each other because they they share one or two common interests.

This leads to the observation that neighborhoods may be better adapted to act as functional units in some social structures more so than in others. Perhaps in America, it is unrealistic to expect them to function well in this role.

The decline of interest in local affairs, however, does not have to mean the people lack social contacts. People with common interests get together--limited only by time and transportation. At the neighborhood level, informal spontaneous associations develop by probing likes and dislikes. Cliques, coteries, or autonomous groupings form this way. Some people become nuclei of groupings; some stay on the fringe. An organization must have a common aim of purpose and rule. Rules at this level are unwritten but real--etiquette, custom, and other rules of behavior.

It does seem though that the neighborhood is not what it was in earlier days. This disintegration of the neighborhood as a social unit may mean a number of things. It might epitomize the deterioration of our

social structure, and some writers seem to feel that it does. More likely, it represents a transition to a somewhat different organizational form. Bauer states the traditional concept of the neighborhood: "A functionally efficient neighborhood will not only include people of varied talents, training, and social-economic status; it will, of course, also provide a wide range of shops, services, and community institutions."[38]

But there is no guarantee that primary and intermediate functions can better be performed by groups in spatial arrangements than by groups cutting across identifiable areas of physical proximity.

The skepticism about the neighborhood as a unit for action rests upon two grounds in an article by Bryce Ryan: "(1) The neighborhood has serious weaknesses as an instrument for joint secular action in many parts of our country; (2) such utilization of neighborhoods in order to strengthen them reflects a value judgment which should be subjected to further examination."[39] Ryan goes on to say: "The 'natural' subunit of a community is the institutional or service group, not the neighborhood, and if community organization is desired, it would seem more reasonable to

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[38] Catherine Bauer, "Good Neighborhoods," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, CCXLII, (November, 1945), 109.

[39] Ryan, op. cit., p. 36.

work through the subunits of the community rather than through extraneous groupings which partially reflect them."[40]

For any kind of organizational framework construction or program construction, the vital question is whether or not the realm of secondary and functional associations offers as feasible basis for program organization as does a neighborhood. Perhaps it does. If so, the great concern about the declining vitality of neighborhoods could better be directed towards other problems.

Many planes of activity--family, neighborhood, district, city-wide--can be linked in a variety of ways in a conceptual organizational model for participation. However, the weakness of this conceptual organizational model for renewal can be broken into two parts: (1) When comparing the real situation to the model, one must consider the existing social structure and equivalent variations to the model in order to evaluate strengths of the real situation; and (2) the model can only evaluate the structural strengths and weaknesses but tells nothing of the way a group functions or how the communication channels function.

Some of the variations in the community social structure result in problems of organization for social issues. Some of those observed by Jessie Bernard follow:

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[40]Ryan, op. cit., p. 32.

1. Individual non-conformity to generally accepted community norms, i.e. disorganization.

   a. subjective motives
   b. objective motives

2. The presence in the community of groups with greatly differing mores, customs, values, goals, or creeds.

3. Conflicting values or goals within ourselves, e.g. conflict between professed norms and practiced custom.

4. Norm which controls community behavior is demonstrably wrong in terms of other goals or values sought by the community. This problem is one of control.

5. The effect of organizations on personality.[41]

The unfortunate fact of these types of social characteristics is that they often occur in renewal and conservation neighborhoods. The neighborhoods usually in greatest need of political organization and activity are often in the poorest position to act. New neighborhoods where people are strangers and possibly no organized local government exists are also examples of this type of problem.

Even where the problems are evident enough to elicit aid from a higher level of government, organization is not a simple problem. The rapid mobility within large urban areas, with people moving often, makes it difficult for paid community organizers to come in for a short time and then leave to allow local citizens to carry on the process. With a continual

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[41]Bernard, op. cit., pp. 78-79.

state of flux in the local population, it is difficult to establish any sort of leadership to spearhead desirable political activity.

Some organizations do have a long enough existence to allow time for leadership to emerge, though. When this happens the organization may mature into more productive enterprises than originally might have been envisioned. A sign of increasing maturity is when neighborhood groups collaborate on broader-based problems. Julia Abrahamson cites one example of this:

> The beginning of collaboration by block groups on neighborhood and community-wide projects was a welcome sign of increasing maturity.
>
> The first such effort came in the fall of 1950 as the result of concern over purse snatchings and burglaries. Several blocks joined together, secured six-hundred signatures to petitions asking for increased police protection and, through the conference office, presented them to the mayor and the new police commissioner. Three teams of plain-clothesmen were promptly assigned to the area.
>
> ...
>
> also: Deciding that "kids have problems, too," the two block organizations turned from the idea of hiring a worker to serve the needs of the entire area--if other block groups could be interested. They were. The Hyde Park Neighborhood Club agreed to supervise a recreation leader who would go out to work with the teen-agers on their own ground. The money to employ him was raised by a "street jamboree" sponsored jointly by the block groups, the conference, the Neighborhood Club, and the Hyde Park Youth Project.[42]

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[42]Abrahamson, op. cit., pp. 69-70.

So in this instance, some horizontal integration on a functional basis occurred among the neighborhood groups. Although the needs of this area were, in some ways, unique, the concept of this type of cooperation can feasibly be applied to other contexts where isolated action by local groups is not sufficient to cope with a problem.

CHAPTER V

ROLE OF COMMUNICATION

Benefits Of Participation And Communication

America's faith in the capacity of the common man to rule is based on his having a sufficient background of knowledge and an intelligent understanding of the issues, facts and social perspectives. In order that this faith might have some basis in fact, people must have access to facts and an inclination to use them constructively. There must be a free exchange of ideas and opinions.

With many people participating in the community development process, many benefits may arise. Decisions and actions should be enriched by the knowledge of many people with diverse backgrounds. The plans that are made are likely to meet all or most of the varied needs of the people involved, and they are most likely to fit the uniqueness of each situation.

Also, people are likely to be more concerned and interested when they help make the decisions. This means helping to formulate the plans, not only accepting

what has been formulated by a small group who expect the stamp of approval of the citizens. When the people take a vital part in the planning process, they do not have to be sold.

Not the least of the good that can come from active and extensive participation is the opportunity for citizens to learn and mature their citizenship obligations. A community that successfully carries out such a process is an "educative community." This is a community in which citizens grow as they contribute to the improvement of their community. Sussman cites an example of this "educative community":

> Laurel, Indiana, is a small town which with aid from a neighboring college moved in three years from discouragement and economic depression to the vigor of democratically planned achievement.
>
> ...
>
> The college took the initiative to assume some responsibility for improvement. It sought the opportunity to work with and inspire developing citizens, but it did not come upon the scene until invited. And it continues to operate only so long as citizens welcome the cooperation of students and professors.
>
> ...
>
> The college hoped for an active project involving many people, one that would introduce personnel from the college favorably to the town as a whole. After weeks of considering suitable projects, the board members decided to rehabilitate two parks. A committee structure was set up. College people met with these committees while continuing to attend board meetings. In discussion, the strategy for the park cleanup was laid out.

> On several weekends, citizens of all ages, students, and faculty members came together to work. Local people supplied tools, seeds, plants, lumber, paint, and food and hospitality. College people supplied muscle, ideas, enthusiasm, and confidence. Together, each group stimulated the other. The parks were mowed, replanted, made into pleasant picnic spots. Their upkeep has become a permanent town board responsibility. Money is appropriated for maintenance and the junior class of the high school is employed each year to keep the public property in order.
>
> Residents discovered there was satisfaction in achievement for the common good. Even more, they discovered that they could accomplish beyond their timid fears when they cooperated. With one solid achievement in memory, they began to look about for some larger task. The self-educative process of growth was moving toward the next stage.[43]

Need For Positive Action

This is obviously not something that is just going to happen. It takes conscious effort to mold a citizenry disinterested in its community into an active political interest. Catherine Bauer feels the obligation is with the planners themselves: "If the party politicians can organize a neighborhood for voting purposes, and if realtors can frighten neighborhoods into fascist isolationism, the progressive planners and housers had better learn how to do a little organization and education at the neighborhood level themselves."[44]

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[43] Sussman, op. cit., pp. 120-124.

[44] Bauer, op. cit., p. 115.

Dorothy and Curtis Mial list six requirements necessary to encourage active citizen participation:

> 1. Must be a system of social authority and channels for participation.
>
> 2. Activity must have sufficient wholeness so that he can find meaning in participation and see that it makes a difference.
>
> 3. Efforts to secure participation should be on matters that interest them.
>
> 4. Opportunities for participation should include making and acting on decisions.
>
> 5. Participation is most likely to continue and develop into responsibility when participants can see results and how action worked.
>
> 6. Participants must have a chance to make a difference; activity related to minute parts that prevent a person from grasping the whole is not participation.[45]

Another point of view along the same line of thought is offered by Eduard Lindeman. He feels that there is some hope for the community and neighborhood organizations as he spells out ten steps in community action. He later admits that it is not a foregone conclusion that all ten steps will be carried out. The emphasis on communication in his formula for community action is apparent and worth noting:

> 1. Consciousness of need: some person, either within or without the community, expresses the need which is later represented by the definite project.
>
> 2. Spreading the consciousness of need: a leader within some institution or group

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[45]Dorothy and Curtis Mial, Our Community (New York: NYU Press, 1960), pp. 98-100.

within the community, convinces his or her group, or a portion of the group, of the reality of the need.

3. Projection of consciousness of need: the group interested attempts to project the consciousness of need upon the leadership of the community; the consciousness of need becomes more general.

4. Emotional impulse to meet the need quickly: some influential assistance is enlisted, in the attempt to arrive at a quick means of meeting the need.

5. Presentation of other solutions: other means of meeting the need are presented.

6. Conflict of solutions: various groups lend their support to one or the other of the various solutions presented.

7. Investigation: It appears to be increasingly customary to pause at this point, and to investigate the project with expert assistance. (This step, however, is usually omitted and the following one takes its place.)

8. Open discussion of issue: a public mass meeting or gathering of some sort is held, at which the project is presented, and the groups with most influence attempt to secure adoption of their plans.

9. Integration of solution: the various solutions presented are tested, with an effort to retain something out of each, in the practicable solution which is now emerging.

10. Compromise on basis of tentative progress: certain groups relinquish certain elements of their plans in order to save themselves from complete defeat, and the solution which results is a compromise with certain reservations. The means selected for meeting the need are not satisfactory to all groups, but are regarded as tentatively progressive.[46]

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[46] Eduard Lindeman, Community Organization in Action, eds. Ernest Harper and Arthur Dunham (New York: Associated Press, 1959), pp. 169-170.

The author points out that many projects end at step number four on the emotional plan and many projects end along the line from that point. Of course, this order is not rigid or applicable to all community problems. The formation of the group consciousness resulting in a decision to act or not to act as a group would come early in this series of steps--probably between steps one and two. The group would grow or other groups would form in support of the original associations as the consciousness of need was spread.

Available Channels Of Communication

One of the most important factors in the community-wide communication process is the available network of channels of communication. One of these channels is through formal organizations. Another channel is by neighboring. Still another channel is through the community press, One measure of the effectiveness of these types of communication is the ability of local residents to name local leaders.

The communication process in this context is not at all a simple one. Part of the difficulty stems from the possible inability of some planners to give explicit theoretical and practical reasons for every proposal they make. Rather, the reasons may be so complex that it may be difficult to explain it to the satisfaction of untrained citizen volunteers. Enlisting

citizen participation in a meaningful way requires competence in carrying out public relations. If voluntary organizations are viewed as being apathetic, at least part of the reason is because the issues are not presented to them in such a way as to impress them with their importance.

Of course, the communication process must be a two-way affair rather than local and city-wide planning having relatively little contact in the process. Violet Sieder in writing of social work planning, makes comments significant to city planning in general:

> ...to achieve its greatest potential, planning in the district or neighborhood cannot be carried on in a vacuum, but must be related through established channels to city-wide planning bodies. This is important to prevent extremes of local self-interest and chauvinism, to keep neighborhood leaders aware of community-wide planning objectives, and to temper city-wide planning with the expressed needs and attitudes of local citizens. Such organizations as city planning commissions, housing authorities, boards of education, civil defense organizations, as well as community welfare councils, find district councils a two-way street to the citizens they want to serve and from whom they need support to implement their plans. The district councils have proved an effective action arm for city-wide planning projects.
>
> There are three major channels between districts or neighborhoods and city-wide planning bodies: (1) the vertical flow of information to and from district advisory committees and their city-wide public and private agencies and membership organizations, which, in turn, are represented in city or metropolitan planning bodies; (2) the direct channels between autonomous councils and central planning

> bodies; and (3) the formal relationships between an association or federation of councils and central planning organizations.[47]

In many instances, it would seem that some of these means for effective communication are not available between neighborhood associations and city-wide planning agencies.

One means of increasing the chance for these channels to be used when they do exist for communication between public agencies and private associations is to increase the awareness of people of their availability. This could be done through some form of adult education. In a report by the Committee on Community Organization, Adult Education Association, the following were listed as possible aids adult education could give community organization:

> --improve the ability of the local citizens to identify their community needs.
>
> --improve the ability to identify resources.
>
> --improve techniques for group action.
>
> --improve the ways in which personal needs are met through community activities.
>
> --improve techniques for intergroup relations.
>
> --improve the ways in which basic information is made available to all citizens.
>
> --improve the techniques for continuous evaluation.

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[47] Violet Sieder, Community Organization in Action, eds. Ernest Harper and Arthur Dunham (New York: Associated Press, 1959), p. 339.

> --increase the general level of understanding in the community.
>
> --by supplying a reservoir of active participants in community organization...[48]

Through adult education, the learning process would be related to the action process of community organization and involvement of citizens in the community development process.

This is the type of activity that must take place in relieving citizen apathy toward the types of political affairs that they otherwise could significantly affect. People must be allowed to learn through various processes of the chances for their participation and the potential manifestations. A viable citizens' association may have just as much affect on city planning as the more formalized citizen advisory committees that are being set up on a representational basis for whole communities and regions. In writing of this type of organization as well as smaller neighborhood associations, Lyle Shaller comments:

> If the committee acts only as a one-way channel of communication in which the citizen members attempt to convey the views of the greater community, the effort may yield significant dividends. Where this becomes a two-way channel of communication, important additional benefits may be realized. Popular reaction is provided the government agency while simultaneously the formulations of city hall technicians and officials are exposed to citizen scrutiny. For example,

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[48] Community Organization Committee, Community Organization in Action, eds. Ernest Harper and Arthur Dunham (New York: Associated Press, 1959), p. 102.

> in many communities advisory committees can arrange neighborhood meetings in which "the experts from city hall" come out and discuss their proposals with residents of the neighborhood. When the citizen committee itself schedules and presents these forums, considerable pressure is removed from elected officials who do not even have to be present and certainly do not have to be on the defensive. The resulting atmosphere is frequently more conducive to a helpful interchange of ideas and facts than the official public hearing where the administration frequently is on the defensive and less open to constructive criticism. This procedure has been especially beneficial in the preparation of plans for neighborhood conservation and rehabilitation programs.[49]

These meetings provide a focus for public interest and constructive suggestions that might not otherwise take place. It also helps avoid planning proposals being torpedoed at more formal public hearings because it involves people in the development of the proposals, thereby increasing the likelihood of support by the citizens involved when the proposal comes before the legislative body.

As a more concrete example of this type of activity, the Philadelphia experience might be cited. There, the capital improvements program is reviewed by the Citizens Council and neighborhood representatives. This is not merely a token process, but a genuine commitment. As Aaron Levine comments:

> This capital program evaluation is not a duplication of the Planning Commission's work. Rather it is a careful review and

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[49] Lyle Schaller, "Is the Citizen Advisory Committee a Threat to Representative Government," Public Administration Review, XXIV-3, (September, 1964), 176.

> support of it by a completely independent citizen group--a group composed of residents of the actual areas involved, as well as of interested citizens from the technical, business, and professional fields. Last year, these citizens devoted sixty-two meetings in the three month summer period to this assignment. This was a source of manpower and added strength for the planning function which no planning commission could afford to purchase.[50]

This process facilitates communication vertically throughout the community to the public officials who decide on the final policy. It gives evidence that the process of citizen participation in planning decision making has some potential for other cities.

Participation Planes

Community organization for urban renewal requires two kinds of links in participation planes. The first is a horizontal linkage on one participation level. The second is vertical linkage that unites groups of different planes. The example of the Philadelphia experience illustrates this vertical linkage. There should be easy communication in both these directions, and there should be some coordination between group activities and the progress of the city in the many stages of urban renewal. Some of the planes that can be defined in the urban complex are the block, the neighborhood, the district, and the city as a whole.

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[50]Aaron Levine, "Citizen Participation," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, XXVI-3, (August, 1960), 198.

FIGURE 2

COMMUNICATION LINKAGES IN THE
PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Sweetser comments on horizontal communication:

> Horizontal relations of neighborhood associations with dominant structures are built up, characteristically, where the inclusion of family heads who are also identifiable as members of a given church, profession, or occupation group, in addition to being residents and parents. Horizontal relations among neighborhood associations are formally provided for through the joint participation of their delegates to the District Council..?[51]

The importance of the inclusiveness of the neighborhood organization is stressed by the same author:

> The very character of neighborhood associations as civic groups oriented generally to neighborhood improvement requires that membership be open to all residents of the neighborhood area who share a common interest in the improvement of the area as a place to live.[52]

Further, it is important that this inclusive communication process be established early. Levittown, Pennsylvania, straddles four townships. Early in its existence it had the chance to incorporate. The attempt failed due largely to an ineffective communications network within the community. After that, participation fell off. The sections are active but there is little unified action, so there is little hope of future incorporation.

It can be safely observed, then, that communication is at least as vital as motivation and organization in encouraging active citizen participation in the community

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[51] Frank Sweetser, Community Structure and Analysis, ed. Marvin Sussman (New York: Thomas Crowell Co., 1959), p. 199.

[52] Ibid.

developmental process. Each one of these three factors reinforces the other. If one breaks down, the momentum of any activity that exists would likely disappear. And it is much easier to keep something going than to start with prevailing disinterest.

Only after these factors are fully in play can any effective type of participation take place. The forms that participation can take will be explored in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VI

TYPES OF PARTICIPATION

A Social Invention

Citizen participation is a social invention characteristic of American community life. This is congenial to the conception that superior wisdom comes from enlightened citizens. Some also claim that better mental health results; some claim that better decisions result; most claim that the final outcome of the decision-making process has a better chance for acceptance by the public when the public has some say during the earlier stages of decision making.

In the broad sense, any human interaction is social and can be included as participation in the social system. However, the types of participation considered most relevant here are much more limited than this. In fact, in the context to which this thesis is limited, voting is not considered as sufficient participation activity to be discussed at length. Rather, participation is limited by definition to acts of individuals which in some way relate to issues, problems, and proposals having to do with community life above and beyond what is decided in popular elections.

To make any kind of a vision a reality requires widespread understanding and acceptance of responsibility by the persons whose lives are affected by the program. Some of the best programs may have their initiation or leadership in the lay people of the community. In such cases, the American system most closely approaches the traditional democratic action that many feel is so urgently needed in this nation. There is general agreement that planning should be done locally. National and state plans passed down vertically with little local participation seem to be a threat to democracy. However, at the local level, much the same accusation could be made concerning the locality and its subdivisions. Plans made without the involvement of citizens in specifically-affected areas are also removed from the democratic context that people are concerned about in state-local and national-local relations.

The Necessity of Conflict

Perhaps it is because planners and political officials do not care to become involved in the conflicts resulting from local participation that seemingly so little of it is encouraged. True planning on a comprehensive scale may be almost impossible because of the conflicts involved. Planning for a whole community requires some individuals or groups to make sacrifices. It can be generalized without a great deal of risk that

most feel that sacrifices are acceptable if made by someone else. This results in severe conflict when one group is required to make a sacrifice, and it slows the planning process to a pace unacceptable to some planners.

However, it is in just such conflict that democracy finds its truest expression. Compromise between competing interests is most likely to result in the fairest solution for all. To allow such a process to function, it must be recognized that pressure groups will form and compete for their own interests. The individual and his affiliates comprise pressure groups at the most basic scale.

The simplest and most direct way of putting pressure on local officials is by citizens themselves. At the local level, pressure of interested groups finds fairly direct expression since it is nearer to the citizen; he is likely to be more active at this level than any other if he can see his own self-interest in working to influence local policy. Bernard cites some examples:

> Thus, when a certain area in one community was to be rezoned, to the detriment of interested property owners, they protested at an outdoor meeting. When a local Committee for a Fair Employment Practices Ordinance wished to have a bill passed authorizing the submission of a proposition to the voters in a primary, its members picketed the local Board of Aldermen until they got the bill passed. When the citizens of a dry county wanted to have an election to pass on the sale and manufacture of intoxicating liquors, they circulated a petition to this effect. When citizens feared that an unsatisfactory clean-restaurant bill was to be enacted because of

> pressure from restaurant owners, they formed their own pressure group to see that one which met their approval was passed instead. When white citizens wished to protest the designation of a playground as a Negro playground, they held mass meetings, burned fiery crosses, and wrote letters to the editors of local newspapers.[53]

If participation is accepted as an activity with the potential of altering and influencing public policy at the local level as well as state and national levels, a corollary observation is also likely to be accepted. This is that policies and their execution will be biased in favor of the values of those groups having the highest participation level. Usually, this is the higher socio-economic segment of the social system. This is not always the case. However, because of advantages of education, income, time, and personal contacts, it is this higher slice of the social system that is more likely to substantially influence policy.

This obviously results in problems in urban renewal areas where incomes, educational levels, and interest in community well-being are very low. It is also significant in that the upper strata of the population are frequently those vehemently opposed to change. They are the people who can afford to pay for the "good life" and would benefit perhaps the least from governmental community development activities.

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[53] Bernard, op. cit., pp. 432-433.

The Inertia of the Status Quo

In the Four Cities Study, the advantage in almost any case was with the proponents of the status quo. Even when only a small group of householders protested strongly in a town with recent zoning, that relied upon planning, they often won out in favor of the status quo. It is evident, then, that councils and commissions can be very sensitive to citizen demands. And they are even more sensitive when citizens are demanding the maintenance of the status quo rather than proposing a change. Maintaining the status quo is much easier on the municipal budget than promoting or supporting change in many instances.

It is one of the basic problems of planning that it takes many more proponents to sensitize a legislative body as to the need of any given program than does it take opponents to sensitize the legislative body as to its undesirable characteristics. Compounding this problem is the fact that when a plan is presented to the public, even a preliminary plan or progress report, it is the opponents who immediately arise to comment on the plan. Grass roots groups can only react to proposals made by professionals, and thus the reaction is often negative.

Despite the competence of a local organization, its function ends up to be giving the appearance of consent upwards and participation downwards. The function of participation in the Four Cities of Adrian and

Williams was to support, not to create. The citizens became progressively committed to a plan while their right to dissent was being undercut.

The Possibilities Of Plan Modification

If citizens are brought in only at the final stage of planning, they are likely to listen politely at a meeting, then go home and stay there. In other words, it is not what happens at the meeting that determines its success, but what happens after the meeting--discussion, exchange of opinions, and subsequent recommendations and action. The Hyde-Park Kenwood community understood the plan because of the care in keeping them informed throughout the planning process. Consequently, the community remained united behind it and the plan was approved even though it was fairly drastic. Julia Abrahamson comments:

> The chairman of the City Council Committee on Planning and Housing said the hearings were "the most impressive" he had ever seen and that the (community) witness (for or against) were extraordinarily well informed and competent. Another alderman added: "It is amazing that fewer individual property owners voiced objections than in any other public program in my memory, and this is the largest and most ambitious we have ever undertaken." [54]

The incorporation of citizen suggestions resulted from a constant interaction and compromise by officials involved in the plan formulation and by the citizens affected by the plan.

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[54] Abrahamson, op. cit., p. 270.

Among the changes brought about as a result of citizen objections and suggestions at the Hyde-Park redevelopment project were the following:

1. The size of the shopping center was reduced.

2. The location of commercial and residential sections was modified.

3. More space was provided for housing; also more emphasis was placed on low-rise buildings.

4. Street and traffic changes were made.

5. The developer agreed to sell one-fifth of the single-family houses to a cooperative group.

6. The saving of many sound structures was attributed to citizen suggestions.

7. School sites were expanded.[55]

This also illustrates the personal value of citizen participation for planners. By explaining ideas to citizens, the planner must clarify them in his own mind and express himself in understandable terms. This is a valuable result of citizen participation in itself. In addition, citizens do come up with knowledgeable points and useful suggestions.

Informal neighborhood gatherings probably allow the most people to take part in expressing opinions concerning planning matters. These types of groups would include many people excluded from downtown luncheon meetings. It also is more likely to result in active

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[55] Ibid., p. 267.

citizen support of a neighborhood oriented program than if the decisions are merely passed down from the top.

Hyde-Park Kenwood exemplifies this. The neighborhood organization sponsored on-street recreation programs. Other area-wide activities included clean-up projects, joint community play lots, help to special committees to improve facilities and services, and working with the city to make possible mechanized sweeping of the streets.

The example of the work done by four block groups in the Hyde-Park Kenwood area reinforces the notion that local participation is vital for the ultimate success of any type of project. Where neighborhoods are changing, it is important to get old and new residents to work together for improvements of properties in their common neighborhood. Lawn care, tree trimming, porch repair, rat elimination, alley sanitation, and other activities leading to an improved environment can draw people of different social and ethnic backgrounds together. There is a great need to develop bonds of integration through open communication, shared problems, and shared values.

The Need For Continuing Involvement

Where citizen support for a program is achieved, it is important to maintain the interest of the people

over a period of time. In Park Forest, things are so good that citizens get restless for something to get excited about. One reporter commenting on the odd situation hoped that the developer would bring up a new issue to "redynamize" the citizens. "We need a common enemy we can magnify into a monster, whisper about, conspire about, hang in effigy."[56]

Political activity is not the only outlet for neighborhood citizens. Sharing of implements, a baby sitting service, and discussion groups are all types of participation in Park Forest. This is encouraged by the close proximity and the moderate incomes of residents.

In Park Merced, in San Francisco, another planned unit development, patios function like the courts in Park Forest for social activity. There is not much political activity however. It is a subdivision within a community and old residents don't ask help of the newcomers and none is offered. Within the development, issues stay latent. The developers are afraid of tenant organizations starting. In this example, participation is discouraged.

In Drexelbrook, in Philadelphia, the developers encourage social participation. They subsidize garden clubs and a Christmas decorating contest which are both

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[56]Whyte, op. cit., p. 323.

highly successful. Residents have no need to protest within the development although some complain of paternalism. There is little activity among the Drexelbrook people with the surrounding township. They are not interested except for issues close to home like school buses. They do not have the time.

Park Forest differs from both Park Merced and Drexelbrook in that it is a real town and it had a socially-conscious developer. The developer of Park Forest encouraged participation, but the citizens organized in opposition to him. Perhaps for this reason other developers have balked at the idea of promoting citizen organizations. There is a price to pay for citizen participation--on the parts of the developer, the government, and the individual citizen.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING

A real dilemma faces planners. It has been shown that the identification of people with their local governments is becoming more and more tenuous. Although it may be unreasonable to expect a return to the active participation such as existed in the frontier days of the United States, there is every reason for concern over the gap of understanding and involvement between citizens and their government. The need for some kind of participation can hardly be refuted. The real and pressing problem lies in identifying the most effective forms of participation and the most effective timing for whatever type of participation is seen as most appropriate for a particular situation.

Participation is needed at some level for many reasons. Initially, the planner should feel some moral obligation to allow the citizen to express his opinion as to the pattern of future growth in his community. The commitments that can conceivably follow a planning

program, such as relocating families, reshaping neighborhoods, and committing millions of dollars of tax revenue, are so crucial that it seems only right that lay citizens should be given every possible opportunity to express their opinions.

Further, the diversity of information that can arise from participation of amateurs in the planning process can be of very significant benefit in the formulation of plans. It is illogical to assume that the planner knows more about all the local decisions and problems that have taken place in a neighborhood than do the people who have lived there for many years. Through the collection of all the diverse viewpoints and biases, a clearer understanding of neighborhood and community problems can be gleaned. Also, diverse abilities of citizens can be learned this way and their talents potentially employed in the formulation of local plans and the review of plans.

Finally, it is almost axiomatic that plans will have more support given them if those who are to be affected by decisions based upon the plans have some part in their formulation.

At the local neighborhood or small community level, it is usually a situation of crisis which stimulates citizens' group action. If, in initial efforts, the group meets with some success, it can be expected that

it will gain strength and continue as a permanent organization if pertinent issues to the neighborhood do not arise too infrequently.

Actually, action at the local neighborhood level is an example of a small scale social movement. The features of such a movement are outlined below:

I. Stages of Development
   A. Stage of social unrest
   B. Stage of popular excitement
   C. Stage of formalization
   D. Stage of institutionalization

II. Mechanisms Through Which the Movement Grows and Becomes Organized
   A. Agitation
      1. Period which acts to loosen people's hold on previous attachments, awakens new impulses and ideas.
      2. Leadership exists to intensify, release, and direct the tensions already present.
   B. Esprit de Corps
      1. Its basis is constituted by a condition of rapport--feelings of intimacy and closeness sharing common experience--reinforcing the members' new conception of themselves.
      2. Means of development
         a. Informal fellowship: mass meetings, rallies, parades, huge demonstrations, and commemorative ceremonies which foster feelings of common identity and sympathy, slogans, songs, etc.
   C. Development of Morale
      1. While esprit de corps gives enthusiasm, vigor, and life to the movement, morale gives persistency and determination; its test is adversity, met by group will.
      2. Faith or conviction is the ultimate attainment, by the movement, of its goal.

D. Development of an Ideology
   1. Ideology consists of a body of doctrine and beliefs.
   2. Ideology has a two-fold character:
      a. Much of it is erudite and scholarly, in response to outside intellectuals, as a defensible position in the world of higher learning.
      b. Other forms are "popular" in the form of folk arguments which the tenets of the movement have ready for comprehension and consumption by the public.[57]

Also important in this process is the process of two groups identifying each other as enemies. It is unfortunate that in so many cases, the citizens' groups identify the government as the "enemy" rather than identifying the problem at hand as the enemy.

The problem of the planner is to identify the appropriate time within this social movement when encouraging an interchange between the planner, and his ideas, and the lay citizen, with his ideas, can be most productive.

The timing aspect of participation is crucial. Participation requires interaction and an exchange of ideas. Such interaction takes time. The time lapse caused by this interaction may result in a decision that comes too late for effectiveness. This danger is more applicable to short range planning decisions than to long ones, but it is these types of decisions that the average citizen is most apt to be interested in.

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[57] Bruyn, op. cit., p. 153.

Time is also an issue from another aspect. If the planner really commits himself to the ideals of active citizen participation, he may find that this phase of his work is consuming a large percentage of his work time. In each instance, the planner must ask himself whether the participation is worth the time it takes away from other work.

The time involved may be worthwhile if people with a high mental ability are involved, if they have confidence in their ability, if they are willing to devote effort to participation, if they are realistic, and if they have faith that their work is important to the planning of future growth in their community.

The last point is particularly important. The planner must be cautious in his encouragement of participation for the reason only of mustering support for a preconceived plan. When participation is used merely as a motivational device, citizens are led to believe that their ideas are being solicited sincerely when in fact the planner may have little or no real interest in their suggestions. Sooner or later, the citizens will sense that what is being done under the guise of participation is an attempt to maneuver them to support the planner's ideas and decisions. Asking for participation may do more harm than good if the citizens feel that the request is insincere.

Many cases in planning will be borderline cases. The planner may want participation but may hesitate soliciting it because of the time involved or the questionable value of the ideas that will be contributed through participation. In such cases, the support that participation may draw for planning decisions may be cause enough to make the task of encouraging participation worthwhile.

There are a number of specific limitations to worthwhile participation in planning. Because of the volunteer nature of participation, citizens may in some cases take only enough time to review a situation superficially and therefore not significantly contribute to the decision-making process. Another problem is when one member of a local group dominates it to the degree that the group stand on an issue is little more than the reflection of one person's thinking. Finally, there is the problem of bias. A group representing a geographical neighborhood or a community is unlikely to take a broad perspective of community problems as the planner does. Economical motives and other self-interests, in most cases, prohibit a local group from offering objective opinions on urban development decisions.

Consequently, it seems logical for the planner to try to relate planning decision making to the self-interests of citizens at the local level. This would

utilize a natural bias rather than combating it. By encouraging citizen suggestions at local group meetings as to how the community should develop, and by relating the ideas of the citizens and the planner to the self-interest, both short-and long-range, of the citizen, local groups may see their most productive contributions to planning.

Appealing to the self-interest of citizens, participation should be able to be solicited in other than crisis situations. Effective communications, keeping citizens informed of planning studies, is of extreme importance in this participation process. This will prevent suspicion and mistrust of planners and legislators which often happens when plans are unveiled only at the end of the planning process.

It is concluded, then, that through periodic consultation with interested local groups, regardless of their bias, the planner is most likely to breathe life into what otherwise would be two-dimensional plans unlikely to realize substantial implementation. The planner should feel obligated to draw citizens into the planning process whenever there is reason to assume that significant value will result. In this way, plans may come to have more validity and more success as determined by the degree of implementation and benefit to the community.

Specifically, citizens should be given the opportunity to review material as it is being gathered rather than as a part of a completed document that leaves little room for changes even if such changes would be appropriate. Even in the basic research phases, findings should be made available to citizens for their review and comments. This could be done through the use of memoranda distributed periodically during the plan formulation phase. This technique should be supplemented by periodic meetings with the citizens to work out some of the problems brought to light through the review of the material.

Not all citizens would be able to have this kind of opportunity, of course. There would not be time or money enough to distribute intermediate reports to every citizen. Consequently, the planner must work with some representative group. Such a group should include representatives from a cross-section of the community from both the standpoint of geographic distribution of the population and interest group affiliations not confined to precise geographic boundaries.

With this type of involvement, citizens would not be overwhelmed with an enormous quantity of data at one time. They would also have the opportunity to make suggestions and contribute to the formulation of the plan as it is being made, while value judgments may be

put into the plan, and while the ideas of the plan can be discussed among the various interest groups in the community with the knowledge that plan ideas are still flexible and subject to change on their initiative.

Involvement of citizens throughout the planning process would also introduce plan ideas to the general public gradually. Through news media involvement, the logic of ideas can be explained slowly and methodically. Then, when the final plan or set of alternatives is presented to the public, there should not be the feeling that something has been put over on them.

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