

# GATHER THE PEOPLE

Community and Faith-Based Organizing and Development Resources

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SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

ORGANIZING TECHNOLOGY

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## Preface

The future of the United States is in its history. Our path is from understanding of the past to insight into the present and imagining of the future.

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries may be remembered best for industrialization and the clash of private and public systems over owning its tools and benefits. The chief organizations of our industrial society may forecast a coming century which, barring un-self-fulfilling prophecy, distant historians will describe as epochal decline of political liberty.

The long-running conflict between economic “isms” is confused beyond recognition, the old enmities and alliances no longer what they once were. Strange political bedfellows are common in world affairs, as events in Eastern and Western Europe, Southeast Asia, and Latin America show. National self-interest in development everywhere overrides economic ideologies, bringing together states formerly enemies and divorcing former allies.

Throughout the industrialized world an international citizenry is ascending. Ordinary people share drastic limits on opportunities for sustained action as citizens, a common compression of public space by bureaucratic behemoths. Mass governmental and corporate organizations eliminate rights, roles, and resources for people to act together in what they believe to be their common good. The rise of these leviathans is founded on the demise of political life.

It is the absence of public space, the most fundamental and critical fact of social life in coming decades, that must underpin the agenda of grassroots organizing. There is a continuing catastrophic loss of liberty to act politically, huge numbers of people without opportunities for contributing to their own public good. In time this may become the most compelling challenge to collective life, and thus the basis for social movement and grassroots organizing. This idea leaps beyond organizations that win concessions; it envisions vitalizing and shaping historic movement, institutionalizing the full citizenry as a permanent partner in the country’s political-economic decision-making.

It is a truism of political-economy that national development is rooted in a nation’s people. We may not control our country’s resources or enjoy its benefits, but without our combined acts the nation is nothing. These acts are realized in practice through local organization and culture, permanent social infrastructure. If we are to be beneficiaries as well as contributors, the infrastructure must be largely of our own making. Its organizations must be designed for citizen self-empowerment; its ideologies must be congenial to broad conceptions of citizen self-interest.

The goal is to restructure the state—to build it up, not to disassemble it. The vision is to institutionalize grassroots citizen action in the political-economy, by drawing on the long tradition and many worldwide models of popular assembly—the commune and kibbutz, landsgemeinde in Swiss cantons, early soviets, workplace councils, and our own New England town meetings.

This is not a capitalist or socialist vision. It is bottom-up infrastructural development for public industry, combining the best of both—public organization in a competitive market economy. It is not a romantic vision of transforming the bureaucratic state into small, self-governing communities. No one should imagine that mass organizations in complex industrialized societies could be replaced by “village meetings.”

There are three historical instances of popular assembly: In pre-national states, government may be entirely by small jurisdictions, as in ancient Greece—hardly the solution to modern problems. In pre-revolutionary states there are examples of emergent councils (citizens, workers, and soldiers), usually short-lived, during revolutionary chaos when there is a temporary power vacuum at the center of the state, as in Russia—but these too require institutionalization for survival. Far more relevant for our political practice are the popular assemblies that serve as anchors or bottom-most units in federal republics, as with Swiss *landsgemeinde*. Such national states are models of governance not by mass organization or town meeting, but by “polycentric” arrangements. These allow multiple independent and countervailing power centers, taking advantage of both large and small scale.

The embedded political wisdom, although with prominent exceptions, is that the transcending national and regional problems of the United States are immune to small organizations. Unfortunately, this point of view rarely contemplates these organizations as federated and institutionalized in the structure of the national state. Those who dismiss them often overlook the depth of immobilization and incompetence of large organizations when they alone are the dominant institutional mechanisms of government, production and distribution.

Most grassroots organizers, upon reflection, find they have in common the practice goal of permanent (institutionalized) direct citizen action in the political-economy. Through this they hope for redistribution of national resources, an objective that is responsive to the absence of public space. They work for a vision of justice, freedom, equality, and peace. Yet in nearly three decades of community organizing, we have accomplished very little of that. It is an outcome that is significantly linked to an absence or failure of technology for organizing the necessary permanent social infrastructure. On the micro level, we have had only a dim understanding of individual behavior and social action, especially in regard to the operation and interplay of social conditions and ideologies. On the macro level, organizing has floundered hopelessly—most of us are in confusion or ignorance—on the need for and method of institutionalizing direct citizen action.

A disclaimer may be the best introduction to technology for organizing social infrastructure. The problem is that most of our technology has led to hardware that, like the automobile, may have or once had utility but is now on balance ruinous to social life and human values. Yet it is virtually all “indispensable” because it feeds economic growth. Much of modern technology is thus distrusted justifiably. But what follows here is very different from all that.

There are two main traditions of knowledge development in the Western world. There is dialogue, continuing over centuries, to which each generation of scholars and intellectuals contributes and then passes on. And there is discovery, a coalescing of material from many sources to master particular recurring tasks and problems—the production of technology. While the knowledge base of organizing is not and should not exclusively be one or the other, organizers mostly have had to extract guides for practice from traditional but often only marginally related streams of intellectual inquiry and discussion. It is an unwieldy approach that tends to produce knowledge more in the vein of how to think about organizing than how to do it. Organizers need information that is not incidental to, but developed for, recurring aspects of practice. This is not, however, a signal that less theory or conceptual thinking is necessary.

The most important distinction between technology and other forms of knowledge for practice is that the former is designed to achieve a specific goal—micro, mezzo, or macro. Analogizing to medical practice, heart transplant technology has a single, specific medical objective—transplantation with recovery—and brings together various types of

information for that purpose. Equivalents in organizing are canvassing, housemeeting, and mobilization technologies. Practice technology, whether for physical or social health, integrates a range of information, from theory to specialized techniques: one learns epigenetics and suturing in medicine, and community power structures and role-playing in organizing. The technology is never entirely a scientific product. It incorporates history, maintains dynamic links with current practice, promotes values and ethics, and is sensitive to the biasing influences of organization, profession, and class.

Technology is a continuing response to the human condition, always growing and changing as people seek to meet the challenges of their existence. It is formulated by two distinct yet interdependent means: the application of theoretical principles to practice, and the development of complex “packages” of abstract knowledge and practical techniques. Both means were employed by the leaders and organizers of the American Revolution, as evidenced in the Declaration of Independence and *The Federalist*. Like many revolutionaries, they were more technologists than ideologists. These characteristics mark the social infrastructure organizing technology that follows. The micro technology is derived by application of organizing theory to case studies of practice; the macro technology is derived by combining multiple information sources. Each contains elements of the other’s means of formulation—and both are geared to specific, recurring problems of organizing practice.

The final product, a technology for organizing social infrastructure, is in some areas highly detailed. Extensive information about public administration and town meeting government, however, to mention two examples, is not intellectual argument but knowledge essential for organizing. Organizers working toward two-tier urban governance must understand polycentric political-economy and time-tested allocations of decision-making authority in popular assemblies, to guide their practice decisions.

Practice technology ultimately produces roles for practitioners. Although it may have a theoretical base, technology specifies behavior, and thus its impact is in action—organizers and leaders doing things. In *The Wisdom of the Ancients* (1609) Francis Bacon observed that the practical arts are two-edged, serving “as well to produce as to prevent mischief and destruction.” Organizing technologies in this genre are at times powerful levers for controlling or influencing human behavior. While the potential for abuse is clear (and already realized), the widest circulation of social change technologies—grassroots organizers and organizations certainly should not be denied access to them—is undoubtedly best in an open society where suppression is neither possible nor desirable. And rejection of organizing technologies for humanistic reasons, because they are forms of “behavioral control,” is more rhetorical than real. All efforts at social change involve attempts to direct human behavior. The use of organizing technology, like every understanding and practice among allies, can be justified and legitimized only by acceptance through open, democratic consent. Manipulation and coercion are not only unethical but also likely to be unproductive in the long run.

There is nonetheless a moral dilemma in formulating technology. It can be put to any use, and there is a long reach to unintended consequences. There are always unanticipated burdens that come with the benefits. Yet situational demands preclude foregoing new and potentially powerful resources—and this has always been true, from the first weapon to nuclear, electronic, biochemical, and social technologies. Still, it is no more possible to quit the search for better solutions to human problems than it is to fully halt the use of resulting technologies for special interests rather than the general good. There is the hope, however, that we will elevate more than enervate humanity—and there is the possibility of personally modeling the behavior that will fulfill that hope.



## PART ONE—PRACTICE THEORY

The theoretical ideas (or visions) of an organizer are a framework through which he defines his situation and notes those features of the world which are relevant to the creation of an organization.

—Warren C. Haggstrom

## INTRODUCTION

Organizers' conceptual understanding of their practice is necessary for many reasons. My most basic assumption is that our knowledge is advanced through praxis, by the interplay of practice and reflection, a continuous give and take between what we do and what we think about what we do. Theory for organizing is not for its own sake but for guiding action, especially in new and unexpected situations, when we have no prior experience, preparation, or knowledge. Theory for practice also allows us to analyze past and current events, and to make predictions about the future. From theory we derive practice roles, testable propositions (hypotheses), and technologies for achieving specific goals.

It is generally accepted that community organizing practice theory does not exist. Organizers tend to agree that there has yet to be proposed a set of abstract statements that convincingly describe relationships between crucial parts of our practice. The practice theory proposed here aids organizing by offering means for seeing apparently random events in their recurring, patterned relationships. Practice decisions then reflect imagined linkages between parts of the setting in which the organizer typically operates but often fails to understand—and thus are theory-based decisions.

A limited kind of theory is present now in community organization praxis, with organizers taking self-interest as the all-purpose gauge of social action. It is a helpful but hugely overly generalized idea.

A major obstacle to development of community organizing practice theory is the scope and complexity of organizing activity. Conceptual understanding must include individuals and collectivities (groups, organizations, and institutions), and explanations are needed for the dynamics of power and ideology. Theory for organizing must bridge traditional boundaries of the social sciences and integrate evidence and insights from psychology, sociology, and political-economics. To be useful for practice, a theory must set out not only relevant knowledge, identifying hypotheses and variables, but it must prescribe action too. Practice theory must specify the organizing arena, spelling out objectives and tasks.

This theory is a foundation for practice technology; it underpins it by conceptualizing a framework, with analytic, predictive, and prescriptive propositions that extend the theory to practice. Adding formal theory to praxis does not make contemporary practice knowledge obsolete or change most of what practitioners do. It may, however, dramatically change conceptions of practice, its purpose, the defined roles of practitioners, their tools and technical language.

### Field of Social Action

Every theory must have a central concept that can encompass the universe to be explained, connecting all its elements. Because the idea of a field of social action, more than any other, mirrors the main facts of organizing life, it is the heart of this theory. The action field depicts individuals and collectivities, their social processes, structures, and highest goals. It accounts for the functions and relationships of power and ideology in the political-economy. Its definition distills psychology, sociology, and political-economics.

The pivotal purpose of every organization in the action field of political-economy is survival. Resources must be accumulated beyond expenditures to ensure maintenance and growth. It is the cycle of cooperation, competition, conflict, and negotiation, in an

environment of scarcity, that animates the field of interorganizational action. Organizations seek resources to establish their domain and to achieve autonomy and movement toward their goals.

The field of social action has two significant facets for which the organizing theory provides explanations. These are (1) relations of power, accumulations and flows of resources, with “timely adjustments” by cooperation, competition, conflict, and negotiation; and (2) socially constructed ideological realities, including norms of social action, shared understandings about appropriate behavior and misbehavior, and their consequences. These action field strands are interwoven in a seamless web. Resources are thus valuable not only for their direct effects but also as means for orchestrating construction of shared ideologies that specify social action norms.

As already suggested, action field relations may be cooperative, competitive, and conflicting, and are frequently in transition from one status to another. Contrary to the popular view of the urban political-economy as unorganized and chaotic, the interorganizational field is comparatively stable and patterned. Much of the “coordination” is not formal but through marginal adjustments that are non-cooperative. This activity appears as coordination only from an inter-organizational plane. The bulk of coordination occurs in competition and conflict, and it appears that most formal cooperative arrangements do not produce tangible results and thus waste resources.

## Unified Theory

Briefly then, the field of social action is the setting for community practice and the central concept to be explained by practice theory for organizing. The main characteristics of the field, besides individuals and collectivities, are relations of power and socially constructed ideologies. These characteristics have psycho-social and political-economic dimensions for organizing.

My exposition of the psychological and sociological dimensions of the action field is summed up in a dialectic of social action, based on the interaction of ideological realities and contingencies of learning and exchange. The political and economic dimensions of the field are incorporated in the prescription for organizing social infrastructure, the most compelling imperative to be drawn from many concepts, cases, and commentaries.

When summarizing the theories that are brought together to describe the action field, since all the activity is nothing more than an extension of individual behavior, it is helpful to begin with social learning. Learning covers the main psychological factors of individual behavior: cues in the environment that precede action, cognitions (thinking and knowing), and rewarding and punishing consequences. To avoid explaining sociological processes with psychological theory, and building directly on principles of social learning, we turn to social exchange. Exchange introduces sociology of collective action, acquisition of resources and power, and injustices in their distribution. While both learning and exchange theories admit the importance of shared, valued ideas that are linked to centers of power—such ideas usually are called ideologies—they leave this realm unexplored, taking its effects as given but beyond understanding or control. Theory for social construction of reality makes it possible to connect ideology with learning and exchange—and thus to posit the dialectic of social action.

Concepts of social development lend to the description of the action field important features of local, regional, and national political-economy. The priority action prescriptions are for balanced social advances, not only economic but also social and po-

litical, by investment in social infrastructure. In industrialized states this development is achieved primarily through redistribution—and thus there is an implicit prescription for bottom-up-sponsored organizing of social infrastructure.

Seeking to mesh learning, exchange, reality construction, and development concepts in a unified theory for organizing, describing the field of social action, I have not tried to resolve or even explore all their discontinuities. My approach has been to indicate possibilities rather than look for contradictions. I have also avoided any attempt to outline or merge existing knowledge of organizing.

## Summing Up

Social action is the result of a dialectic—continuing and complementary interaction—between contingencies and ideologies. Contingencies of learning and exchange—people, events, objects, etc., on which action is contingent—are regarded as rewarding or punishing, profitable or costly, according to socially constructed ideologies. For the collective acts of ideology construction to continue, there must be explicit learning and exchange contingencies, such as cues, cognitions, consequences, conditions of power, distributive injustices, and so on.

To fully understand social action, then, it must be understood that good and bad events are such because of ideologies that define their meanings. The source of the ideologies is not a mystery but human construction, either in shared history or language experience. The everyday behavior that is necessary to construct ideologies does not occur without suitable incentives, contingencies of learning and exchange, which are in turn valued by ideologies. It goes round and round: it is not only that both contingencies and ideologies are operative, but that they are inseparable, that explanations of social action are incomplete without reference to their interaction.

The prescription for social development is bottom-up investment in social infrastructure. Requirements for developmental organizing in industrialized states call for democratization of the political-economy, a strategy of redistributive development, by establishing institutionalized roles for social self-management.

# SOCIAL LEARNING

## Overview

Social learning ideas are valuable to organizers for understanding, predicting, and influencing individual behavior, and as underpinning in a unified practice theory. It is through the contingencies of social learning—cues, cognitions, and consequences—that we can best understand individual behavior. Basic assumptions about learning are also a part of exchange theory, and they are significant in explaining construction of reality.

Self and personality are defined in social learning theory as repertoires of complex behavior patterns, primarily products of learning history. The self, in a reciprocal relationship with the environment, can launch counter-controlling initiatives that offset external forces. It is this capacity, among others, that demonstrates the basis for exchange relationships.

New behavior is learned mostly by the operation of contingencies in the observation of models. Whether modeling is planned or inadvertent, it is a pervasive influence in practice.

Social learning explanations do not fully account for behavior that creates ideological meanings, nor do they illuminate the playback of ideology on its creators. These matters are taken up later as a part of the social construction of reality.

## Respondent & Operant Behavior

The distinction of social learning theory for understanding what individuals do is a preoccupation with verifiable acts. The theory does not deny inner psychological or biological processes, but it does reject unobserved, unverifiable mental states. While environmental forces are powerful in learning, thinking and emotion are equally important.

Two types of behavior are identified in learning, respondent and operant. Respondent behavior is learned through prior cues and is generally thought of as emotional. Naturally pain- or pleasure-producing cues exist in the everyday world—other people, circumstances, information, etc.—that condition responses. These can also be paired with neutral elements in the environment which then acquire a similar capacity to arouse pain or pleasure. A citizen who once attempted to speak out at a public hearing and was belittled by an arrogant official may feel uncomfortable when entering the same building in the future. The neutral public building assumes a negative value by pairing with the unpleasant personal attack. On the other hand, a newly emerging citizen activist who participates in a protest demonstration that succeeds in gaining concessions may in the future have pleasant feelings in planning a mobilization. Respondent behavior, then, is what we generally call emotional and is understood in environmental cues that precede it in time.

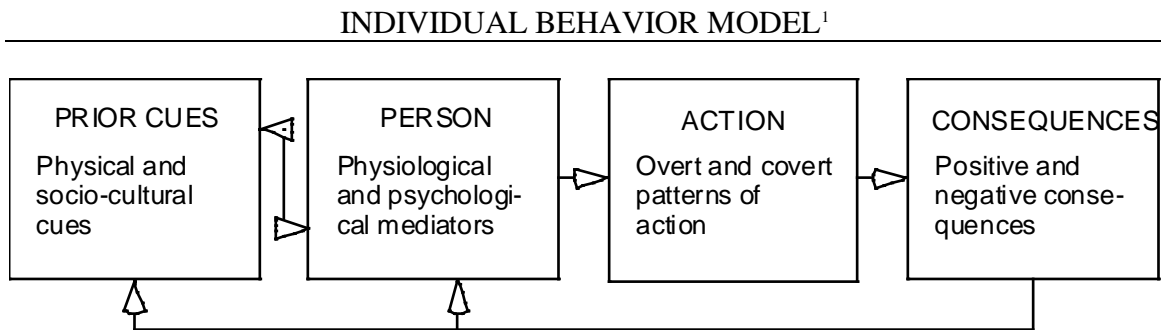
It is operant behavior, however, that is of special interest to community organizers. Behavior that changes the environment, thereby producing rewards or punishments for the actor, is termed operant. It involves easily visible actions (walking, talking, etc.) that are under conscious self-control, and it is influenced mainly by consequences that follow it in time.

The review of social learning begins with the contingencies of operant behavior, the events on which such behavior is contingent. After that we cover social learning ideas about the self, modeling, and the interaction of social learning and ideology.

## Contingencies of Learning

The social learning view of behavior is that people are neither impelled to act by inner forces nor buffeted helplessly by the environment. Instead there is a reciprocity between human behavior and the external conditions that influence it. This is an image of the environment as a behavioral creation that acts back on the behavior of the actor(s) who created it. To understand individual action, social learning looks to (1) cues that occur prior in time, (2) mental processes (cognitions) that mediate the cues, and (3) rewarding or punishing consequences that follow. Social learning theory also identifies feedback from consequences to cueing and thinking for future behavior. Taken together, these are the social learning *contingencies*. Figure 1, adapted from learning applications in organizational theory, shows them schematically.

Figure 1



The most powerful contingencies of operant behavior are rewards and punishments. An increased probability exists for behavior that has been rewarded (reinforced) and a decreased probability exists for behavior that has not been reinforced (punished). Reinforcement is intensified or diminished by psychological deprivation or satiation that originate in cultural and material facts of life and that are an integral part of learning. To the extent that one possesses a great deal of something, its value as a reward is lessened, and vice versa. But value, as we shall see, also has socially constructed ideological origins.

Prior cues.— Human actions are controlled partially through cues that suggest probable consequences—rewards or punishments—that either inhibit or encourage behavior. The cueing effect of a red traffic signal, a reminder that not stopping may lead to an accident, makes the point. This foresight stems from direct experience, learning by observing others, and symbolic information (via language). We control our own behavior by predicting the probable consequences of particular actions. Consider an illustration of the cueing effect, a poster or flyer announcing an upcoming organizational action or campaign. Based on prior social learning, the organization’s allies and adversaries differ drastically in the consequences they anticipate and the actions they initiate.

Thinking and knowing.— Social learning acknowledges human cognition, the capacity for thinking (sensation, perception, and conception) and knowing (recollection of the past, consciousness of the present, and anticipation of the future). The potential for

insight and foresight is emphasized. Behavior change is viewed much differently if it is assumed that regulation is mainly through external events, or, in the alternative, partly by thinking. Because of cognition, behavior is contingent on mediated rather than direct reality. We do not “passively register” the world as it really is, but construct what we call “reality.” Mental processes guide behavior: Memory, the mental encoding and storage of symbols for external events, exists as symbolic representations of the environment to direct subsequent behavior. Options for action are tested by explorations in thinking that imagine future consequences. Hypotheses are generated and, to the extent they are proven out in action, they continue to guide future behavior.

Rewarding and punishing consequences.— The lodestone for understanding and predicting what individuals do is reinforcement that follows behavior. Reinforcement can occur without awareness; however, because it has several potential functions—information, motivation, and reward—learning is more effective when contingencies are known. Reinforcement not only increases the probability that the same action will be repeated in similar circumstances, but it serves to bring the particular behavior under the influence of a matching environmental cue. The caution here is that neither the prior cue nor the rewarding consequence creates the behavior, but both increase the probability for it.

Consider as an illustration of reinforcement the mid-1960s Welfare Rights Organization member who attended a first meeting and follow-up protest at a welfare office, anticipating the rewarding prospect of immediately receiving a special grant for household goods and winter clothing. If the hoped-for benefits were won, a rewarding outcome, not only was similar action more probable in the future, but cues for such behavior were more potent.

## Self

Self-management.— The role of thinking in social learning takes the explanation beyond environmental factors. The thinking process in self-management is such that we set standards for ourselves, matched by self-rewarding or self-punishing outcomes according to the quality of our performances. We find two kinds of continuing outcomes when people are self-managing: internal (mental) self-evaluations and external (environmental) consequences.

Self-management is recognizable in “autonomous” people. The independent, differentiated person, with exceptional dedication and self-discipline, may be recalled as an outstanding example of self-management. The heroic figures of Mohandus Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., the best known modern proponents of aggressive nonviolence, come to mind.

Self-reinforcement systems are learned by earlier selective reinforcement. We learn to judge our own behavior partly from how others react to us. Standards are conveyed by the approval and disapproval of significant others. Observing models is another route to self-management, with standards for self-reinforcement learned by observation and imitation. We adopt standards offered by exemplary models. Regardless of how it is acquired, self-managed behavior is sustained by external reinforcement because most societies reward high standards for self-reinforcement.

Self-management is accomplished not only by control of cues and consequences, but also by symbolic, cognitive contingencies. Potential outcomes are translated into mental symbols that are reinforcing. An organization leader may self-reinforce difficult or unpleasant behavior through a tangible reward, say spending extra time with family or going to a movie, or through a symbolic reward, like allowing oneself a sense of successful self-reliance for adhering to difficult but valued standards. The strength of self-management by symbolic contingencies may be enough to maintain behavior with only minimum external rewards, and to override conflicting tangible reinforcers.

In addition to self-management by control of reinforcers, the same result may be realized by manipulating prior cues in the environment. Using an organizational example, a collective decision to outlaw alcohol at certain activities eliminates an important cue for inappropriate behavior.

Self and personality.— While risking the confusion of seeing pictures within pictures, there is an unavoidable question: What is the “self” in self-management? The self is understood as a constellation of interrelated behaviors. It is an individual’s repertoire of learned actions—a history of social learning—to survive and thrive in a changing social environment. Personality characteristics or, more precisely, behaviors that are characteristic to a person, are linked to complex patterns of cues, cognitions, consequences, deprivation and satiation. Although it is often thought that behavior is determined by personality, the personality characteristics themselves, while enduring, are learned. We acquire complex repertoires of behavior, one leading into another, with their relative permanence creating the mistaken impression of internal psychodynamic causation.

Counter-control.— Notwithstanding the importance of environment in forming the self, there is—to repeat—a reciprocal relationship between behavior and the contingencies that control it, which arises from thinking and the capacity for self-management. It is through this reciprocal relationship that counter-control is understood. Experimental studies demonstrate, as practice does, that hostile and aggressive actions bring about like responses in others, counter-offensives.

Counter-control is possible because of mutuality in relationships, a form of exchange, giving participants in social interactions some power over each other. The principle holds even between rich and poor. Although the wealthy may withhold resources, people with low incomes have the leverage of nonviolent direct action—protest, strike, and resistance—and physical force.

Aggressive attempts to control people usually result in strong emotional responses, such as fear, anxiety, rage, and depression. Counter-control has been labeled the “screw you” phenomenon. It is identified with lack of choices, heavy coercion or manipulation, and being exposed to models who are themselves unresponsive to rewards and punishments. It may also be that counter-controlling behavior is self-reinforcing because of the autonomy it signifies.

## Modeling



Most new behavior is learned by observation of models. This is especially true of complex behavior in natural settings. New patterns are learned in large segments, not piecemeal. Learning that occurs through direct experience, then, can almost always be achieved indirectly by observation of others' behavior and its consequences. This process is identified as modeling, observational learning, imitation, copying, identification, and so on. It may be overt, as commonly understood, or covert. In the latter, learning takes place by imagining modeling situations, without using actual external models. In either case, the effects of modeling are from the actions of the learning contingencies already described.

Competent models reduce the risk of learning new behavior because, usually, actions guided by following good examples are more likely to be successful. This type of learning is not exclusively imitative but can result in innovative behavior when opportunities exist to observe diverse models.

Effective observational learning relies on four practice keys: attention to modeled behavior, representation of the behavior to be learned in verbal or image form for long-term retention, physical ability to perform the desired behavior, and reinforcement for overt performance. The last point is important because there is a break between observational learning and actual performance. Although new behavior can be acquired by observation of a model, *performance* of what has been learned may not take place without reinforcing incentives. Observation without performance leads to acquisition of the modeled behavior in cognitive, representational forms (images or language symbols). Cues are encoded into memory and serve as mediators for later responses.

People are selective in the behavior they reproduce, an indication that imitation is as much due to imagined utility as it is to immediate reinforcement. Not all models are copied, only those whose behavior is judged to have some usefulness, based on past social learning. Observers learn to appraise models on situational cues, such as socioeconomic indicators, age, sex, etc.

Beyond acquisition of new behavior, exposure to models may inhibit or disinhibit previously learned responses. Inhibitions are strengthened or weakened by vicarious experience of a model's rewards and punishments. Vicarious punishment diminishes the probability for similar behavior, even when the punishment is self-administered by the model. In vicarious positive reinforcement, seeing modeled behavior that is ordinarily disapproved go unpunished has the same motivating influence as observing rewards for that behavior.

While modeling is frequently inadvertent, and thus often inimical to practice objectives, its conscious use by practitioners is essential in organizing. For example, modeling in one project was used to upgrade problem solving in meetings of a board of directors. The meetings had been fragmented, chaotic, and generally unproductive. The remedy was to teach board members to identify and isolate problems, specify and evaluate alternative solutions, make decisions, and plan follow-up actions. The successful training used behavioral modeling, plus role-playing and systematic reinforcement.

The probability for successful modeling is enhanced by the following procedural steps: specific identification of the desired behavioral outcome, selection of an appropriate model, determination that the "learner" has the necessary skills and resources to perform the desired behavior, creation of a favorable learning environment, modeling the desired behavior and its consequences, giving rewards for progress in learning, and strengthening new behavior by scheduling future reinforcers.<sup>2</sup>

## Social Learning & Ideology

For nearly two decades there has been fluctuating interest in questions about how valued meanings in thought relate to behavior. One concern is that while social learning shows how behavior is learned, it often fails to give insight into why a particular circumstance is found rewarding by members of one institution, organization, or group—even with different individual social learning histories—and punishing by individuals in others.

Learning theorists accept that symbolic meanings are transferred through language. Words elicit meanings (in thought) that, in turn, influence behavior. It is also known that meanings given to things in the environment can change solely through language experience, by spoken or written words. The relationship between contingencies of social learning and valued meanings in thought is apparent in collective ideologies that determine whether an event is rewarding or punishing. Such ideologies come about through shared history, or vicariously through verbal experience, without any other direct action, and they are selectively promoted by mass media.

Valued meanings have two origins that are of interest here, both only approximated in any individual life. These two origins are intimately related to mental activity. In both cases consequences of behavior—events, circumstances, information, etc.—gain their shape and influence through ideas of good and bad, right and wrong. Thus, thinking often accounts for whether an event or other consequence of action is experienced as rewarding or punishing.

The first source of valued meanings is accumulated personal experience of rewards and punishments, individual learning history. For instance, the prospect of attending an organizational activity may be good—involvement seems likely to be rewarding—because of prior experience an individual has in the same circumstances. But it is the second source of valued meanings, flowing from social (collective) construction of ideological reality, that is especially of interest to organizers. It is ideological reality that defines one kind of killing as murder and another kind as patriotism. Familiarity with this process allows organizers to understand, predict, and act more effectively in the development and impact of ideologies, particularly beliefs about social problems, goals and methods for change, the players and processes involved, and even so-called facts and tools for measuring them.

The point, one we will return to and treat at length, is that social learning contingencies—cues, cognitions, and consequences—are valued, that is, derive their valued meaning, from thought, following social construction of ideological realities. The same phenomenological process is found in exchange relations, to which we now turn.

# SOCIAL EXCHANGE

## Overview

Based on social learning and simple economic principles, social exchange theory gives organizers a systematic explanation of power relations in an action field of scarcity. The theory accounts for cooperation, competition, and conflict as transitory phases in a process to survive, accumulate resources, and achieve autonomy and instrumental goals.

Exchange theory sheds light on the relationship between social injuries and injustices and the emergence of reform and revolutionary movements. The theory also specifies the conditions of power—to both achieve it and remain independent of others that have it—and identifies areas of tension between those in superior and subordinate positions.

Like social learning, however, models of exchange have largely ignored the role of socially constructed ideologies in relations of power.

## Fundamentals

To make the theoretical leap from individual behavior to social exchange requires that we imagine two or more people in a field of social action, where the operant behavior of each has an environmental impact, each serving as a source of positive or negative reinforcement for the other. Almost magically, social power appears the ability to control others by arranging contingencies in exchange relationships, reflecting control of resources.

Exchanges include not only two-party transactions but multi-party arrangements with indirect repayment. Two types of these complex exchanges are common, illustrated in group aid to individuals, as with neighborhood crime watches, and when individuals provide for group needs, as when private homes are volunteered on a rotating basis for organization meetings.

Various characteristics of exchanges have been confirmed experimentally. It has been found, for example, that threats are resisted when punishment for refusing to comply is no greater than cost for compliance. Picture a seventeenth century New Englander subject to a fine for not attending town meeting, but ignoring the cost out of need to harvest a crop at a critical time, the loss of which would be a far greater cost.

## Organized Power

Exchange and organizations.— Given the axiom that organization potentiates power, the conditions of generalized exchange (by organizations) are of particular interest to community organizers. When people combine for common purposes, they significantly increase their resources, exceeding by a large margin those of any individual participant. Organized groups use their resources to specialize in production and distribution of contingencies that influence the actions of others, both individuals and groups. Looking to how contingencies work as incentives, organizations can be classed as utilitarian, solidarity, and purposive.<sup>3</sup> As with all ideal types, they are only approximated in practice; but

each, whether in near-pure or hybrid form, gives a different slant on organizational exchanges.

Utilitarian organizations, such as profit-making corporations, rely on material rewards for incentives to members. Priority is given to accumulating tangible resources to underwrite incentives, and conflicts tend to center on their distribution. Formal social goals are mostly ceremonial, as with a pesticide company's public promise to protect the environment. Internal conflicts in such organizations are usually resolved through bargaining, because tangible benefits can be divided and it is accepted practice to compromise on their distribution.

Solidarity organizations are service-oriented and either public or private. Their most important incentive is the organization's public image; it is the currency of exchange for attracting new clients and other resources. Attaining formal purposes is more important than in utilitarian organizations, and they are most often non-controversial "causes" rather than "issues."

Purposeful organizations rely almost entirely on their formal purposes and goals to recruit members and contributors. These organizations are sometimes called ideological. Examples are reform and protest groups.

Competition for scarce resources.— The drive for capacity to control contingencies as incentives is tied inevitably to cooperation, competition, and conflict for scarce resources. During these activities, power becomes divided unequally. While some writers draw a distinction between exchange and what they call competition or conflict, most treat the latter as a "special case" of exchange, that is, where zero-sum conditions are present and one party's gain is another's loss (+1-1=0).

The topic of competition and conflict for scarce resources has drawn out conflicting lines of thinking. While few deny that competition *is* an underlying if not dominating feature of past and present social relations, there are differences of opinion on its inevitability. Some believe that the advance of material technology portends the end of destructive conflict to acquire strategic resources.

Scarcity, however, is related not primarily to economic limits but to socially constructed meanings. These ideological realities serve interests of organized individuals who have shared histories, common backgrounds in thought and action. An example of socially constructed scarcity is the use of social status to include and exclude groups from access to resources, thereby reducing or expanding the supply for others, as with institutionalized discrimination in housing. So long as social life differs for different groups, even with the advent of universal affluence, so too will there be divergence in ideological realities, accompanied by competition and conflict.

Power.— Considering its origins, power is best pictured not as a possession but a by-product of social relationship and action. The confusion stems from its visible manifestation, the ability to compel the actions of others despite their resistance, through arranging contingencies. Power relations originate in the competition for resources and the resulting dependency of less successful competitors. The primary factor in that dependency is the need for things that are controlled by another party. Thus, possession of strategic resources, any means critical for achieving vital objectives, is a prime dimension of power.

The capacity to give, to initiate exchange, also signifies power. It denotes a superior status by obligating others. Benefactors are not peers but people who create dependencies. Failure to repay compounds the dependency and establishes lesser status. To the extent that one who receives a benefit does not possess resources that are attractive to a

“benefactor,” has no alternative source of benefits, cannot coerce the giver, and cannot do without the benefits, the advantaged party is in a position of power, able to compel compliance.

Exchange relations at this point have a balance-imbalance ratio in respect to unequal reinforcement between the parties. As the dependency of one party increases, so too does the power of the other, that is, the second party’s ability to decrease rewards or increase costs. Such power is never dormant when more resources can be obtained by its exercise and they are not offset by their acquisition costs.

Costs in acquiring resources include counter-costs imposed by exchange partners, and the ability to levy counter-cost is itself power. One view of exchange is that imbalance or dependency encourages people to explore options, leading to balance. A wider perspective is that benefits for one party—whether romantic suitor, business corporation, or government—are hooked to costs for another, although not necessarily in a zero-sum relationship. So-called balance is always calculated according to the interests of an individual, organization, institution, or class that seeks to subordinate the interests of others. While superficial balance may exist in the sense of compliance given for benefits received, this apparent equality rests on an imbalance of dependency and power.

Bargaining among exchange partners may be direct, as with an offer of exchange, or indirect, as in attacking an opponent to obtain a concession. Exchange theories sometimes exclude physical coercion, one writer citing armed robbery as something other than exchange activity. Overall, three main types of exchange have been proposed,<sup>4</sup> one of which includes physical coercion (or a close approximation): Reciprocative exchange includes “gift-giving,” where the obligation to repay is indefinite or vague; balanced reciprocity, where the quid pro quo is immediate and fair; and “negative reciprocity,” such as stealing. Distributive exchanges are one-way economic transfers, involving a central “mechanism,” government or private organization, and sometimes considered granting activity. Lastly, there is simple market exchange.

Conflict and exchange of punishments.— Conflict, as already noted, is commonly seen as zero-sum exchange, where winning and losing are directly related. The experience of The Woodlawn Organization (TWO), when it tried to take over what had traditionally been Chicago’s municipal authority, is a clear illustration of the transition from cooperation to conflict.

When TWO’s power became sufficient to effectively challenge City Hall in the control of local, neighborhood affairs, there was no longer any slack in their relationship. TWO’s victories became the City’s defeats. This characterization is somewhat overdrawn, however, since such competitors may always undermine the winner-take-all outcome by agreeing in advance to an artificial distribution of rewards and costs. The incentive for such an agreement, as with the Republicans and Democrats, may be to exclude others from the competition, thus ensuring minimum division of limited resources.

In any event, conflict in organizational life—among political parties, nation states, or neighborhood associations—realigns relations of power, reflecting new distributions of resources, and typically leads to cooperation and temporary stability through negotiated compromise.

Conflict and cooperation in exchange.— The quality of actual exchange is a changing mix of cooperation, competition, conflict, and negotiation. It is surface calm is pictured in an anonymous Czech writer’s description of the relationship between the citizens and the government of that vassal state.

He notes that most citizens are neither defenders nor detractors of the system. They are instead partners in an institutionalized compromise. In exchange for relief from fear that their privileges or mundane pleasures will be withdrawn by the authorities, or that far less likely harassment or jailing will occur, they agree not to be publicly disruptive, to forego embarrassing the government and endangering others, including co-workers, friends, and family—and only rarely do they violate that agreement. In fact, all these behaviors occur—from cooperation to conflict.

## Management of Resources

Accumulations and flows.— Previous discussion of competition for scarce resources mentioned the pivotal organizational goal of getting more resources than giving. When options exist, the choice of most exchange partners obviously is calculated to maximize gain and minimize loss. A second, less apparent implication is that organizations are partially controlled by their environments, by external forces in their action fields. They occupy an “ecological niche” because of their dependency on acquiring inputs for “production” and on distributing whatever they produce.

Several helpful propositions, taken together, translate knowledge about the environment into an internal organizational principle: resources for internal organizational incentives are, by definition, scarce; individuals join in organizational life because of such incentives, which consume resources; an organization’s strategy for internal distribution of incentives must match the resources it gets from the outside and those it uses for production; and an organization’s primary purpose in making decisions is to ensure a net surplus of resources for incentives by distributing them internally to maximize a favorable ratio of inputs to outputs.

In this conception, change in internal organizational priorities is interpreted as modifying incentives to meet environmental changes that shape resource flows. Stated more simply, organizations deal with two kinds of incentives, external and internal, with the character of the first usually determining the character of the second. A citizen action association that is rewarded for service delivery with large grants will react in part by redefining both its culture and structure to solidify such funding prospects.

Dependency problems.— The character of each organization determines its specific dependencies on external resources, and the degree each dependency is problematic. A statewide political organization will have different problems with funding, staff, and targets than a neighborhood association.

Two related hypotheses may be helpful to novice organizers: (1) Organizations are controlled by, or at least are vulnerable to, individuals and collectivities, internal and external, who command their most critical or problematic resource inputs. (2) To the extent that targets or consumers of an organization’s resource outputs (whether political action, service, planning, or some other) are fragmented and dispersed, they are less able to influence the organization’s actions.

## Social & Economic Exchange

Social exchange differs from the economic variety in so far as obligations for repayment may be vague and not exclusively economic. A reciprocal obligation is created but often is not specified, unlike economic exchange where mutual obligations are specif-

ic at the outset of a transaction. Social exchange creates more “diffuse future obligations” because the “commodities” that are exchanged ordinarily do not have precise, agreed-on values. Another difference between social and economic exchange is the character of opportunities foregone by using scarce resources. Social esteem, for example, is practically limitless, whereas land, stocks, and gold are not. In practice, of course, exchanges involve complex socio-economic mixes.

The distinction between social and economic exchanges can be seen in income maintenance programs that, in economic language, are granting activity, one-way transfers, but which are better understood as social exchanges. Motives for giving public assistance are an example. Assistance is given for social harmony and orderly change, and poor relief and public assistance create permanent unfulfilled obligations for repayment by recipients. Thus there is a serious distortion when welfare programs are defined as unilateral economic transfers instead of social exchanges.

Exchange theories largely reject the idea of gift-giving, what we might call pure love. While entirely selfless effort for others, without any thought of self-interest, is feasible, it is also exceptional, the behavior of saints. For most people, unselfish acts are contingent at least on the prospect of social acknowledgment. The principle has been put even more firmly for collectivities in the dictum that organizations have no permanent friends, only permanent interests in survival and achievement of goals.

## Exchange Accounting

Measuring value exchanged.— The two standard measures of the value of things exchanged are value foregone and quantity. The value of something exchanged is known partly by the value of other things—commodities, opportunities, etc.—necessarily foregone because of commitment to a particular relationship that entails use of resources. As an organization’s environment changes, marking shifts in its action field, so too does the value of foregone possibilities change.

Measuring value by quantity is reflected in the principle that, the more we have of something, the less we value possession of still greater quantities. This “declining marginal utility” in exchange corresponds to deprivation and satiation in social learning. From the “benefactor’s” perspective, as the supply of resources decreases, the value placed on each additional expenditure goes up. The two effects converge to reduce benefits for all participants, with the relationship ending when rewards diminish below what each partner expects to gain from the next most valued activity available.

Currency of exchange.— Many references have been made to “things” in exchange, to convey the broadest possibilities—transactions not only of rewards but costs or punishments, both material and intangible. We have yet to define, however, the qualities of things actually being exchanged.

Beginning with the obvious, tangible economic commodities may be exchanged—money, gems, art objects, stocks, etc., or opportunities easily converted to monetary value and consumable (such as purchase options). A second class of rewards that may be consumed includes goods and services that are not negotiable. These are a middle ground between economic and social exchange. Many government services fall into this category, with negotiable vouchers for public education an exception to the rule. Social rewards encompass innumerable intangibles, from approval and esteem to status and ideology. Ideological rewards, as in purposive organizations, often take the form of objectives and

victories that serve as incentives for participation, especially during formation stages and in crises. Compliance with another's demands is the universal currency of social exchange. It is a generalized means, like money, for attaining diverse goals.

Justice in distribution.— Distributive justice refers to equality in the distribution of rewards and costs, to fairness for all participants in an exchange. The basic rule is that parties to exchanges expect rewards in proportion to costs, and net rewards (profits) in proportion to total investments—for everyone. The issue leads to the question of whether one party is able to impose a “hard bargain” by monopolizing something of value. Within organizations, the value of rewards a participant receives should be in proportion to the value contributed in all areas. Applied to individuals, this condition is thought to be reinforcing in itself, enhancing social cooperation and productivity.

When tangible and intangible goods are monopolized, demands by those with a superior position become excessive and the result is unjust distribution of profits and costs. This failure, when one party's rewards constitute disproportionate costs to others, thereby intensifying their relative and absolute deprivation, has an emotional impact on all participants (reminiscent of counter-control in social learning). “Winners” are elated; “losers” are angry and resentful.

Distributive injustice leads not only to emotional reactions but broad social movement to avoid the same fate in the future. Communication among the victims generates retaliatory aggression toward established power, a tendency solidified by mutual reinforcement from talking about common injuries. This shared discontent leads to opposition movements and their ideologies.

Exchange theory, for the most part, accepts the idea that evaluations of distributive injustice and feelings of relative deprivation are purely local, with each party to an exchange comparing gains and losses with those enjoyed or suffered by immediate partners. But comparisons can also be made with “generalized others,” and the results may lead to markedly different conclusions about deprivation and injustice. These remote reference points, however labeled, are sometimes no more than individual recollections of personal history, but at other times they are reflections of socially constructed ideologies, more about which shortly.

## Conditions of Power

Both equitable and inequitable exchanges continue if they are more rewarding than other alternatives. Individuals and groups have several options when they need resources possessed by others: If they have attractive resources of their own at the start, they may trade what they have for what they want—engage in reciprocal exchange. If not, but alternative sources exist, they may obtain the needed resources elsewhere—opt for new exchange partners. Without optional partners, they may try to use coercion to get what they want—initiate conflict (“negative reciprocity”). Unable to manage that, they may resign themselves to do without. If none of these possibilities are workable, compliant subordination may be the only means to obtain the needed resources. These are the conditions of power imbalance and dependence.

Logic dictates that the conditions of power balance and independence are possession of strategic resources, presence of alternative exchange partners, ability to coerce, and capacity to forego satisfaction. These conditions all point to exchange-based principles for organizing. For instance, social change ideology that places positive value on re-



duced need and consumption bolsters autonomy and resistance to power imbalances. The table below suggests other possibilities.

To maintain superior power, the dominant party in an exchange must avoid vulnerability to costs imposed by other participants. This is accomplished by continuously acting to keep resources from out-groups that are potential opponents, securing needed resources from third parties, and encouraging “competition” (fragmentation) among, and a maximum number of, “suppliers” (needy subordinates). The occupant of the dominant position must monopolize resources required by others. Protest organizations seek to “monopolize” the means of socio-political harmony and stability, and thereby possess a strategic resource for exchange. Another condition of holding power over others is ensuring their need for the monopolized resources.

Beyond distributive injustices, tensions between those with dominant and subordinate roles in exchanges, played out in competition and conflict, stem from four kinds of activities, all related to the conditions of power. They are actions by the subordinated to pool their resources, to create options for acquiring resources, to coerce those in dominant positions, and to promote ideologies that justify demands for additional resources.

Table 1

CONDITIONS OF POWER BALANCE & IMBALANCE<sup>5</sup>

REQUIREMENTS OF POWER	CONDITIONS OF INDEPENDENCE	ALTERNATIVES TO COMPLIANCE	STRUCTURAL IMPLICATIONS
Indifference to what others offer	Strategic resources	Supply inducements	Exchange and distribution of resources
Monopoly over others' needs	Available alternatives	Obtain resources elsewhere	Competition and exchange rates
Materialistic and other relevant values	Ideologies lessening needs	Do without	Ideology formation

Exchange & Ideology

The conventional approach in the literature on exchange is to accept cultural values as given. Perception and other cognitive processes by which things in exchange gain meaning or value are typically ignored. It is recognized, however, that exchange is not motivated exclusively by rewards of absolute value but for “socially mediated” values as well.

Thus seemingly irrational behavior may be explained by reference to higher values that override immediate rewards. But the weakness of exchange theory in explaining value formation and influence shows in its failure to adequately account for social inaction, despite gross distributive injustices. It does not explain why people who are subjected to massive social and physical injuries—even with sufficient resources for counter-initiatives—remain indifferent and even hostile to opposition movements and ideologies.

This fact can be well understood, however, by augmenting exchange concepts with theory for construction of ideological realities. The social construction of these different ideologies is our next subject.

# SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY

## Overview

Theory for social construction of reality takes its imprint from face-to-face conversations, where subjective experience is “objectified” by mutual consent. The ideological meanings, once constructed, lend value to the contingencies of social learning and exchange.

The incentives to participate in the construction of ideological realities range from tangible to covert rewards. Most important is that the social construction of ideology is a necessary condition for organizational movement and exercise of power. It explains, justifies, and enables decision-making for action.

Ideological realities are grounded in institutions and their sub-worlds. They are attached to centers of power and influence, such as governments and corporations, and they are transmitted to successive generations through socialization.

## Realities

Social commentators and theorists have proposed several variations on the idea of socially constructed reality. They’ve drawn on philosophical, psychological, and sociological thinking and research. They understand that there is no “real” world, that social reality is of human manufacture and not immutable. It may be a good bet that some of the best known pathologies of social life in bureaucratized industrialized states—boredom, collapse of internal values, helplessness despite resources, normlessness (“mass betrayals of responsibility”) and anomie—originate in the disintegration of “mythical” or ideological realities.

Socially constructed political ideologies give substance and meaning to the disparate interests and direct the actions of citizen groups, unions, corporations, governments, and the like. Language media are used by the most powerful interests to structure beliefs about power and its distribution, to guarantee uncritical acceptance of the status quo. The aim is to foster compliance, to discourage questioning. It is usually no more or less than political myth-making to rationalize unconscionable benefits for special interests. There are too, of course, competing and conflicting political ideologies constructed by the people who suffer most from the society’s shortcomings or those of its governments and corporations.

Construction of reality.— “How is it possible that subjective meanings become objective facticities?” is the question asked in *The Social Construction of Reality*.<sup>6</sup> The answer, vastly oversimplified, is that people meet and construct their social realities by sharing subjective meanings, and then they confirm and objectify their realities by mutual consent.

Social realities congeal in face to face relations. It is there that “objectification” takes place, transforming subjective experience and its expression into the building blocks of an objective social world. The glue in the construction of social reality is language. It provides semantic categories for shared experience and gives rise to a commonly held stock of knowledge about social life. Marriage is a simple yet telling illustration of what happens and how. Marriage partners reconstruct the social world during their end-

less conversations. Each spouse contributes a picture of reality which, together with the other, is talked through, over and over again, until the new world is objectified. Socially constructed realities within marriage, as in other settings, stabilize or harden in time, are reified, a matter we will return to.

The idea of socially constructed reality has already been mined for praxis, as a means to political, economic, and social liberation. Reality as such must be understood and managed as a social construction if people are to escape oppression and achieve authentic liberation. This works through a person-to-person process that mixes individual ideas into a social whole. As each person tells how a particular event was perceived, the exposition challenges the perception of every other individual, forcing reconsideration of subjective realities, until consensus emerges. By discussion, mutual agreement is reached on a definition of the event, what parts and players in it mean, and how to act together about it.

Once created, the socially constructed reality, by valuating the contingencies of learning and exchange, constrains and spurs the actions of individuals and organizations. It may be surmised as a rebuttable presumption that when the collective definition of a shared experience does not subsequently influence individual or group action as might be expected, the situation was not experienced similarly, not fully shared in some important respects.

Everyday reality, then, is a collective objectivation of individuals' subjective experiences, with language as the connector and binder. Language, having standardized categories of ideas that are widely understood, permits mental reconstruction of social worlds that are removed in space and time from the here and now. It is these semantic classifications that transform or objectify personal and social history into shared stocks of knowledge.

The social construction of reality is a three-part drama: it begins with externalization—surfacing of individual experiences and perceptions; moves through objectivation—person-to-person interaction, using language, to transform subjective meanings into consensually validated objective reality; and ends with internalization—realities played back, through socialization, and thus acting on their creators' behaviors.

Maintenance of reality.— Realities are maintained in the consciousness of individuals partly by the repetitive routines of daily acts, and their associated contingencies, and partly through face to face conversations with significant others. Endless repetition and consistency reinforce the remarkable insistence of social reality when defining it in daily conversation. Social meanings are taken almost entirely for granted in casual talk.

Constructing and maintaining social realities with language requires “plausibility structures.” The conversations that maintain reality must be grounded in living institutions, organizations, and groups. These settings, with their vital contingencies of learning and exchange, including disincentives for questioning basic social meanings, underpin the maintenance of reality in consciousness.

Contingencies and realities.— Several traces of learning and exchange can be found in social construction of reality. These reflect contingencies for the three acts of reality construction—externalization, objectivation, and internalization. The question is, what are the specific contingencies that account for participation in reality construction? What are the incentives to create and accept realities that give weight and salience, meaning, to social life?

Learning and exchange contingencies for social construction of reality have been considered directly and indirectly by behaviorists. Social consciousness has been de-

scribed as the outcome of mutual cueing (interstimulation), a series of interchanges through which individuals acquire social meanings. Behaviorists have also observed that socialization, particularly the transmission of valued meanings between generations, occurs in direct social interaction and through language media (e.g., press and radio). The most widely accepted behavioral hypothesis about socially constructed reality is that the solidity of social reality, its degree of reification, is directly proportional to the singularity of shared perceptions of it. Obversely, any individual's idea of reality not reinforced by other people will, generally, become unstable and eventually disintegrate.

Group communication leading to collective ideas of social reality has been linked to opinion consensus, importance of subjects of disagreement, and group cohesiveness. Successful deviation from group reality requires resistance to both ideas and incentives. A classic 1932 experiment demonstrated the impact of shared group perceptions on individual ideas of reality, giving explanations for different degrees of acceptance. The extent of group influence on members varied according to the ambiguousness of the events being judged and the number of individuals not accepting the collective reality. An earlier but still informative study outlines additional sources of resistance by individuals to group definitions of reality. The most striking are stronger competing pressures from another group and lack of sufficient incentives. It may also be that new realities are resisted because in accepting them the security of one's familiar social reality is lost.

The outcomes of group directives in reconstructing subjective social realities have been explained by group social power. Included are rewards and punishments, legitimization, coercion, approval and esteem, and expertise. Many additional covert contingencies have been identified for participation in construction of reality and for its adoption as a source of ideological meaning in social life. Shared social meanings reduce environmental complexity for each individual who subscribes to the collective reality. The practical result is to diminish uncertainty and emotional tensions. Another covert incentive for constructing realities is reduction of "cognitive dissonance," ending the mental clutter of ongoing inconsistencies in thought and the accompanying uncomfortable feelings.

The social construction process, overall, serves to improve the economy of decision-making by reducing complexity and uncertainty. It is much easier to make decisions when the meanings of things are known than when they are not. One implication of the resulting economy is that it becomes possible to anticipate reality. It is this predictive capacity that stimulates action and movement of organizations in space and time, their locomotion. Organizations' goals and methods, rules for inclusion and exclusion, collective action, and much more, are not possible without shared realities. But with them, hopelessness is relieved and organized individuals act to remedy the causes of past and present injuries and injustices.

Still broader contingencies can be enumerated for this social behavior: acting with others to shape reality elicits group approval, while holding onto dissonant meanings raises the threat of group rejection; and constructing realities that control the actions of others is rewarding in itself—it denotes possession of resources and power.

Long-lived changes in individual behavior and collective action, following construction or reconstruction of social realities, must also be based on changes in contingencies of learning and exchange. New realities disappear, disintegrate, if not supported by desirable outcomes in the actions they target.

## Roles & Institutions

Roles represent institutions.— Institutions are represented not only in actual, recurring patterns of behavior but in language symbols too. Although institutions come to life through roles, the roles exist in language descriptions that reside in thought and that have been consensually validated as objective. Social life is realized through the objectivated roles, and they are the vehicles for participation in the world of socially constructed realities. Because roles are a representation of institutions, internalizing them makes the mythical institution meaningful for the individual. Only by reflection in actual role performance can the institution be manifested in human experience.

When newly forming institutions are limited to the interaction of two people, their joint act to transform subjective experience into objective reality, by mutual consent, remains tenuous, almost airy, certainly subject to ongoing changes. The two people, say marriage partners, alone have constructed their world and they may change or abolish it. Since their cooperative construction has occurred during a shared history that they both recall, their creation is completely transparent to them—they understand their world as their own social construction, as a puppeteer understands the action on a puppet stage in a way unlike an enthralled audience of children.

Reification of roles and institutions.— The transparency of social life is altered radically when passed to another generation. Institutions then “thicken” and “harden,” not only for the inheritors but their creators too. What was once spontaneous personal style becomes irrevocable practice. Examples exist everywhere in social life—in religious, political, economic, educational, even corporate institutions. Founders and charter members know that the life of the organization is bound up in their continuing effort, that without their regular investment it ceases to exist; while second and later generations of members are inclined to regard the organization as somehow a separate, non-human production, something permanent, apart from human activity. The paradox is that people are able to produce a world that they experience as something other than their own production.

This reification, perceiving human activity as non-human, literally dehumanizes the socially constructed world. In the reified world, the human fabrication of social institutions is lost from consciousness. Institutions are experienced as unchanging and unchangeable, manifestations of nature, cosmic law, or divine will. While this may have a humorous ring, the fact is that when the roles that constitute institutions become reified, individuals feel compelled to act in particular ways, believing that choices are not possible. It is common to see people destroy themselves and others on the basis of such beliefs.

## Power—Resources & Realities

Each institution is divided into smaller social worlds that together make up the whole—each producing separate yet interlaced social realities. The definitions are always grounded in collectivities or networks of individuals. To comprehend the institutional world and its prospects for change, it is necessary to know its origins in organizational life.

When a particular social construction of reality is attached to a center of power, to an organized group with resources, it becomes an ideology. Organizations in the action field have ideologies that explain and justify their existence, purposes, and styles of action. They establish ideological meanings that interpret social facts as problems or solutions, and mark other actors as allies, adversaries, or third parties. The individual ideolo-

gies, reflecting unique and distinct histories, often compete and conflict in defining how scarce resources should be apportioned.

In large and small conflicts we see several ways that socially constructed ideologies value events in the action field. Because ideology determines whether events are rewarding or punishing, profitable or costly for particular groups and organizations, it rationalizes both social tensions and actions to relieve them. Each group seeks to perpetuate itself, its own ideology and the interests it serves, and to eliminate or at least enervate opposing groups and their ideologies.

“Deviant” competitive ideological meanings are constructed to challenge the established realities when the social world of an organization or institution is imperfectly passed on to another generation, when socialization is less than completely successful (as it always is). These threats are repressed, often by active conflict, sometimes violence. The outcome is more a matter of resources and power than intellectual ingenuity: “he who has the bigger stick has the better chance of imposing his definition of reality.”<sup>7</sup>

Ideological meanings propping large power centers are imposed by experts who claim a monopoly on ultimate definitions of reality. They respond to challenges with therapy and nihilation. Therapy “treats” the deviant and develops a comprehensive body of literature for that purpose, much of which is aptly described as variations of social control. Unlike therapy, which is designed to return so-called deviants to normalcy (in the context of the established ideology), nihilation seeks to liquidate everything external to the conventional universe: deviants are treated here too—but as less-than-human outsiders, subject to unlimited punishment for the benefit of dominant interests.

Society’s authority structures are thus maintained by orchestrating ideological realities, myth-making to shape consciousness and conscience. The extent to which ideologies can be orchestrated by application of resources is revealed in a comment by Dean Rusk, former Vietnam-era U.S. Secretary of State. Said Rusk, “We made the decision not to start up any war feeling in the country because we thought it was too dangerous.” Even national crises are socially defined—those who benefit from them invent stories that mask their contributions and incentives and that befuddle the mass public.

## Socialization

It is socialization, carried out by significant others, that brings about internalization of the objective social world for second and later generations. Definitions of ideological meanings are imposed on the individual’s situation, potentiated by resources that are marshaled to arrange contingencies as incentives for acceptance. Not only are ideologies, roles and institutions transmitted, but an entire social universe. Developing in increments, realities that first take form in consciousness—socialized by individuals—are transformed, taking “generalized others” as their new reference points. The realities become internalized, no longer linked in consciousness to another individual but to an organization, institution, or society at large. Challenging authority becomes a social wrong, not just something that angers one’s parent or teacher.

Early in primary socialization, significant others enter the lives of children, without having been asked. Because the young people are exposed for an extended time to a single social world, primary socialization is deeply embedded in consciousness. Secondary socialization inducts an individual, whose basic personality is already socialized, into more complex sectors of the objective world, usually by socially constructed roles. Both primary and secondary socialization, the latter when designed to fundamentally transform

(alternate) an individual's subjective reality that is already set, require a plausibility structure and emotional attachment to the socializing agent.

Successfully alternating people to new realities requires not only trust but also legitimization, as a stamp of approval for the new reality, for the transformation process itself, and for the abandonment and repudiation (nihilation) of old realities. Legitimization does the explaining and justifying, providing essential rational and moral reasoning. The break between old and new ideological realities in the biography of an individual is bridged with variations of a basic language formula: "Then I thought . . . now I know." Old personal history and biography are nihilated by being placed within the framework of legitimization for new realities. The language formulas all have similar beginnings: "'When I was still living a life of sin,' 'When I was still motivated by those unconscious neurotic needs,' 'When I was still caught in bourgeois consciousness.'"<sup>8</sup>

The effectiveness of socialization is dependent on the similarity of objective institutional or organizational realities of the individual being socialized. The match is improved by simplicity of labor division and narrow knowledge distribution. Socialization is increasingly problematic in complex, heterogeneous, highly industrialized societies that have specialized divisions of labor and sophisticated mass communications. Contrariwise, simple division of labor and minimal distribution of knowledge confront individuals with more potent, less fragmented ideological realities. Socialization failures may also result from too many significant others, with different ideological perspectives, as socializing agents; and from presentation of substantially different, even conflicting ideologies by significant others.



# SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

## Overview

With the psychological and sociological aspects of the action field sketched in contingencies and ideologies, we now consider the political-economy of the field. It is in concepts of national development that the salient features of politics and economics encountered in practice are disclosed. Development concepts go beyond description, however, to prescriptions for action.

Conventional economic theories envision national development in linear stages, with success defined as economic growth. But contemporary development economists do not regard economic growth as a valid measure of social well being, with the U.S. an example often cited. Much of the problem is that the theme of capitalist development, both foreign and domestic, has been “civilizing exploitation.” Even with record-breaking affluence, there is an impacted culture of poverty and a growing inventory of social pathologies.

Social development, replacing the more narrow economic conception, contemplates human advancement on many fronts. This notion of development relies on institutionalizing roles for social self-management in industrialized states by redistribution of resources. The most promising strategy is long-term, bottom-up-sponsored investment in social infrastructure. The vehicle is infrastructural organization and culture that is politically and economically empowering, creating public space and enterprise through which the general citizenry can enhance overall social well being.

## Concepts of Development

Economic development.— National development has been defined mostly in narrow economic terms. Its theories suffer from limiting constructions of reality. Both capitalists and socialists envision a series of linear stages, with total social evolution given an economic interpretation. The best known model for capitalist development outlines five stages: traditional society, pre-conditions for take-off, take-off, drive to maturity, and high mass consumption.<sup>9</sup> Marx identified stages of feudalism, bourgeois capitalism, socialism, and communism.

Monumental differences exist, of course, between these two conceptions. Capitalist development is self-described as a non-conflict process, with less-developed nations on the same track as those now highly developed. The neo-Marxists interpret underdevelopment as the flip side of capitalism, sustaining an exploitative division of labor, and related primarily to class conflict over ownership of the production machinery.

The main problem with these models is that a diversity of conditions rather than any specific sequence of stages account for successful development. Problematic too, especially for the capitalist model, is that the strongest variable in unsuccessful development is political-economic power and its distribution.

“Dual mandate” in capitalist development.— The beginnings of contemporary capitalist-oriented development were in British colonial programs of the early twentieth century. They were based on benevolent paternalism and self-interest, the dual mandate of civilizing exploitation. After World War II, British development initiatives in India

sought to upgrade rural life without disturbing relations of power, despite the effects of caste and property. Far less defensible, in recent decades U.S. development strategies abroad have made large expenditures to blunt indigenous liberation movements in Southeast Asia and Latin America. U.S. aid programs have acquired a well-deserved reputation for sponsoring vicious but mostly ineffectual counter-insurgency by entrenched elites that are self-enriching through cooperation with foreign interests.

The core of capitalist development ideology is colonial, based on proprietary political and economic self-interest. It has served to boost declining profits in the domestic economy by exporting capital abroad, to maintain cheap supplies of raw materials and to ensure profitable export trade in manufactured goods. Over the past three decades parallel incentives have been present for the civilizing exploitation of U.S. domestic urban development programs.

Economic growth and underdevelopment.— Development economists generally agree that economic growth alone is at best a mixed blessing. But the idea of growth as an index of development is still a popular idea, although expanding gross national product (GNP) is not usually reflected in share of income or employment, two good measures of development. GNP growth rate is for the wealthiest sectors of society. It is seriously misleading because it ignores distribution goals. Even with rising GNP, distributive injustices and living conditions change little for people on the lower social rungs. While economic growth occasionally improves income shares for populations in poverty, income as a quality of life measure frequently does not give insight into social pathologies such as alcoholism, family violence, and crime.

Not surprisingly, the U.S. has been named repeatedly to show that GNP and similar measures are not good indicators of social development, even with historic material prosperity. Besides alienation and privatization in proportions not known previously, commitment to a narrow ideology of economic growth has led to gigantic consumption and depletion of resources, to unmanageable wastes and environmental pollution.

Three dominant ideologies rationalize the failure of social development in economically advanced, industrialized societies: (1) that science, material technology, and hierarchical organization will eventually guarantee full development (ignoring social needs and local problems); (2) that GNP growth in the industrial sector will trickle down, ending unemployment and poverty and their secondary effects (contrary to all evidence); and (3) that education is the key to long-term prosperity (not recognizing educational problems—some seemingly insurmountable—and needs). The continuing underdevelopment is not only a matter of selective material poverty and restricted opportunities—a punishing combination—but widespread social powerlessness. A ponderous segment of the population remains permanently vulnerable, defenseless against intrusive and exploitative power, public and private.

Apart from the question of whether growth is a good measure of development, and assuming the usefulness of rising GNP for social well-being, about half of economic expansion cannot be explained by economic development theory. Unexplained residual factors are operating—not exclusively economic—to influence productivity. Yet both capitalist and socialist development models, for different reasons, ignore radical reform of non-economic, social and political factors, those structural arrangements that harbor the vested ideologies and interests of governing regimes.

Social development.— Broad socio-political as well as economic change, for meeting the widest range of human aspirations and interests, is expressed as social development. Economic growth is but one of many means to uplift the human condition. Social

development refers to across-the-board movement—social, political, and economic. Raising the human condition is no longer a final goal of development but part of its instrumentality. The capacity to act in the political-economy must be realized as a condition of this development. Thus socio-political restructuring neither leads nor follows development but reinforces it in a process of “continual mutual causation.”

Social development is concerned not only with terminal benefits but also necessarily with the way change occurs. More than sensible policies and efficient administration are needed. Socio-political empowerment is also necessary, widening control over the forces that generate wants and that allow humane ways of satisfying them. Institutionalized roles for each citizen to act in self-governance are necessary for social development, for attaining substantively better overall allocation of the society’s benefits and costs.

Development in the U.S.— While most economic development literature has focused on the Third World, the concepts and strategies have also been applied to industrialized nations. Even with the remarkable U.S. economic growth since World War II, allocation of income and wealth has remained mostly unchanged. Income statistics show that growth in the U.S. has reduced poverty as an economic fact—but it has not diminished the culture of poverty that is a seedbed for social catastrophe. Urban centers have continually set records in the past two decades for breakdown in every institutional sector, from structural unemployment and continual crises in public education to a devastatingly depleted housing stock and exorbitantly expensive health care. In recent years hope has faded for Federally sponsored programs to halt the decline.

The culture of poverty remains, even with growth in income, because the marketplace and market interests guide growth. Production is geared to demand and profit, a mandate for more weaponry and luxury goods, while specific social conditions and general quality of life deteriorate. No one expects cures to emanate from the private sector, even with ideology about the wonders of private initiative, and thus no one is disappointed by the continued deterioration. But the failures of public jurisdictions, the centralized representative governments and their agencies, state and national, hamstrung by their own institutional and ideological biases and a countervailing political tide, are far more difficult for most of the society’s members to understand and accept.

## Development as Redistribution

Social development is constrained initially by unequal allocation of assets such as land, charters and licenses, bonds and stocks. Ironically, development aggravates the inequality because initial unequal allocation imposes unequal opportunities for secondary benefits such as education, health care, legal representation, and credit. In the credit market, for instance, assets and credit-worthiness go together. Permanently improving the allocation of political-economic resources for the general citizenry is possible only by greater production or redistribution. These are respectively the major developmental tasks for less-developed and industrialized states.

The traditional defense of the status quo is that redistribution is antithetical to growth, that by improving patterns of resource allocation, growth will suffer irreparably. The assumption is that the rich save (and invest) and the poor consume. But exceptions (and compensating mechanisms) are numerous. Salaried classes, with their pensions, and land-owning agricultural classes, are generally poor savers. Landed and other wealth-

owning groups often make sizable unproductive investments in gold, gems, art objects, etc. The poor but self-employed tend to be good savers. The old argument is less compelling too in a highly industrialized state where the purpose of development investment is often not growth in economic productivity, at least directly.

Three basic strategies are labeled as redistributive, although only two of them actually lead to redistribution: (1) transfers of income or other forms of consuming power through the fiscal system (via taxation, grants, subsidies, etc.) or by direct distribution of consumer goods; (2) transfer of existing assets, as in land reform and nationalization programs; and (3) channeling capital investment into human resources.

Several obstacles prevent redistribution by transfer payments. While they are necessary at some level to protect children, the aged, disabled, and others who are dependent, income transfers do not reach the culture of poverty and do not offer a solution for epidemic health, employment, education, and welfare problems. Transfers of purchasing power have only short-run payoff—they are exchanges rather than investments. Even when they are maintained indefinitely, they offer no prospect for reforming the undesirable characteristics of proprietary industrial capitalism.

Revolutionary transfer of assets—nationalization of land and industry—is an authentic strategy for redistribution. But such revolutions have not been particularly successful in modern industrialized countries. Social conditions are rarely punishing enough, for large numbers of people, to ensure support for vanguard parties and other “instruments of preparation.” The closest we have come to it in this century was the labor movement during the Great Depression, which was revolutionary only at the fringes. Revolutionary strategies are also problematic in industrialized countries because, whether capitalist or socialist, their ruling governments typically employ massive resources to arrange contingencies and ideologies to undermine threatening opposition movements.

That brings us to social infrastructure as a means to achieve redistribution in an industrialized state. Redirection of investment into human resources, as social infrastructure, is an authentic redistribution strategy. It spreads political-economic resources by an incremental but nonetheless structural alteration of the state, by forming new institutions. Ironically, even bottom-up investment in infrastructure, while not gaining immediate returns for its sponsors, has trickle-up effects that benefit owners of wealth by improving the productivity and consuming power of moderate- and low-income groups.

## Social Infrastructure

Infrastructure is the substructure or foundation of the national state. Both physical and social infrastructure are present, the first referring to utilities, transportation, and communications systems, the second to organized human resources. The latter concept is derived from economic development theory and describes social overhead capital, the human base of national political-economy.

Social infrastructure includes organizations—in the political realm, local governments, parties, opposition groups, special interest organizations, and nonpartisan associations; plus their cultural fabric, which exists as ideological realities, roles, and norms for action. Thus expenditures for social infrastructure may be directed at both ideologies and institutions.

Economics of infrastructure.— The economic purpose of investment in human resources, as with inanimate assets that yield benefits, is to improve the state’s political-

economy. In strictly economic terms, the investment is justified if returns (benefits) after costs exceed the general rate of interest or if the additional benefits yielded are greater than the costs to obtain them. This apparently clear calculus is instantly muddled because social infrastructure is neither a precise nor exclusively economic enterprise. The relationship between investment in social infrastructure and political-economic benefits is not mechanical. Part of the problem is that these expenditures do not produce short-term benefits. They are investments rather than exchanges.

The universal features of social overhead capital—long-term gestation and payoff, “lumpiness” or indivisibility,<sup>10</sup> and indirect returns—make governments the main investors in social infrastructure. The public sponsorship gives unearned benefits to private capitalists. These spillovers from the public to the private sector subsidize capitalism’s externalized costs (e.g., pollution, unemployment, and poverty) with extensive resources, such as a healthy and educated labor force, only a small part of which is recovered through taxation.

Infrastructure for democratization.— In making a case for significantly increasing investment in social infrastructure, it must be said that it is not a panacea for retarded development. Although social infrastructure is not a sufficient condition for social development, as the most promising redistribution strategy it is indispensable to the vitality of a mature capitalist society. The purpose of investment in social infrastructure, suggested in the following five brief summaries of critiques of industrial society, is political-economic democratization.

History of social welfare is A.H. Halsey’s point of departure.<sup>11</sup> Small social communities arose from England’s new industrial working class in the nineteenth century. Local associations developed—burial societies, cooperatives, and labor party clubs. Although “localized and communalized,” they had national impact on Parliament and successive governments. The nationalization of these associations in the early twentieth century, and the unanticipated loss of their fraternal ideologies, left most citizens with little enthusiasm for the bureaucratic welfare state that followed. The remainder is an alienated majority that has deserted party politics in particular and public life in general, becoming increasingly affluent and privatized. Halsey proposes that the way to deal with bureaucratic welfare statism, and the most likely means to redistribution, is re-creation of the small social welfare communities in what he calls “community governments.”

Denis Goulet makes a parallel argument, that the way out of the development failures of centralized planning is “democratic dialogue,” exchanging top-down goals for “multiplying agents of human promotion.”<sup>12</sup> Goulet’s view is that abundance of goods is not the best indicator of “the good life.” Participation must be enlarged so that all people become “agents of their own social destiny.”

Speaking to the theme of social welfare and development in the East and West, Eugen Pusic states that much of it is unsuccessful because of existing allocations of resources.<sup>13</sup> He suggests that excessive concentrations of power in industrialized societies are a “grave danger to the very survival of humanity.” His course for development is decentralization throughout the social structure. What is needed, says Pusic, is democratization, institutionalized structures for social self-management. These must be designed from the bottom up, allowing dispersion of powerful interests.

Alan Wolfe has a more economically-oriented view of U.S. development problems.<sup>14</sup> He refers to the contradictory capitalist state expenditures for promoting private capital accumulation and for legitimization to ensure mass loyalty and externalization of the system’s high costs in social pathologies. The outcome is a fiscal crisis of the state, a systemic incapacity to adequately finance both costs. Wolfe’s antidote is to democratize

capital accumulation. “What we should be working toward,” he says, “is the creation of new structures, not new programs. . . . to let the American people in on the discussion.”

The challenge of attaining social equality, the realization of genuine democracy, liberty, and individuality, is what David Gil proposes as the goal of social development.<sup>15</sup> Rejecting the current institutional forms of industrial capitalism, Gil argues that social development requires constructing new ideologies and organizing new institutions. “Self-governing” units, small enough to constitute authentic social communities, but sized to satisfy political and economic considerations, would be linked in federations—local, regional, national, and eventually global.

Sponsorship and ideology.— The basic outlines of social infrastructure can be drawn as institutional functions that are ideologically neutral, as with planning and service delivery. But specific investments in infrastructure invariably reveal ideological bias.

Table 2 shows some of the political and economic ideological flooring of bottom-up and top-down expenditures for social infrastructure. The typology is exaggerated in casting ideal types, and contains, as social life itself does, some obvious contradictions. In practice we frequently find (bottom-up) demand for (top-down) service, notwithstanding the bottom-up ideology of self-help. Similarly, (top-down) distribution often has the practical effect of encouraging, if only temporarily, (bottom-up) demand, even with the top-down ideology of having experts define need. Top-down-sponsored infrastructure typically is foundation for capital-intensive enterprise, while bottom-up sponsorship favors labor-intensive activity.

Decisions about infrastructural solutions to political-economic problems vary according to the ideologies of organized investors, whether they are established or challenging. Studies examining the effects of sponsorship on social change activities confirm unequivocal restraints on the autonomy of change agents. An inverse relationship is found between dependency on outside resources and independence of action. This seems to be universal, a general condition of community organization and development, wherein action styles, decision-making, selection of objectives, and accountability are determined by the source of resources. Initial staff recruitment and selection is aimed to maximize correspondence between the sponsor’s values and interests and the practitioner’s professional ideology and practice techniques. The sponsor’s influence extends to self-serving definitions of community problems and needs, conflicting with professional values and stimulating tensions and job security anxieties for practitioners.

Table 2

**OPPOSING IDEOLOGIES OF INFRASTRUCTURE SPONSORS**

Bottom-Up	Top-Down
<b>SOCIAL CONTRACT</b>	<b>DIVINE RIGHT</b>
Governments are formed and exist by consent of the governed.	Certain individuals and classes rule because of special qualities.
<b>COMMUNITY</b>	<b>MASS ORGANIZATION</b>
Face-to-face relations are best for preventing and treating pathologies of modern social life.	Hierarchical organization is necessary and best to manage complex industrial societies.

POLITICS	TECHNOLOGY
Solutions to problems of social life are mainly political.	Technical expertise is the best way to alleviate social problems.
DIRECT ACTION	SOCIAL CONTROL
The public good requires large numbers of citizens to act directly in self-governance.	Citizen participation must be “guided” to ensure continued (private) capital accumulation.
SELF-HELP	SERVICE
Local initiative and cooperation best satisfy programmatic needs.	Mass organizations must provide programs and services under professional management.
DEMAND	NEED
Public resources should be allocated according to citizen demand.	Public resources are best distributed by expert definitions of need.
REDISTRIBUTION	DISTRIBUTION
Resources should be <i>redistributed</i> to permanently alter relations of power.	Resources should be <i>distributed</i> to relieve extreme human suffering and to buffer citizen discontent.
DEMOCRATIZATION OF SURPLUS	EXTERNALIZATION OF COSTS
Surplus accumulation from labor productivity should benefit the general public.	Public expenditures should continue to subsidize private wealth by assuming externalized costs.

The opposing ideologies of citizen action and participation (direct action versus social control) in Table 2 are manifested in equally opposed institutional responses. Ongoing tension exists between top-down-sponsored agencies, seeking to control forms of participation in public life, and bottom-up-sponsored organizations, attempting to control the agencies and polities, to make them more responsive and efficient.

The purpose of social control through “participation” is to accommodate citizens without modifying or inconveniencing established power centers. An unmistakable emphasis is put on issues that can be resolved with education, public information, and other non-political approaches, exclusive of pressure tactics. Sponsorship from the top down is a force for system maintenance, not institutional change. Participation is expected to be “responsible,” focusing on distribution rather than redistribution issues.

Bottom-up-sponsored citizen action organizations are typically self-legitimated. They generally reject top-down ideologies—recognized as class-based and biased—that are out of touch with the experience and history of ordinary citizens. They also refuse to accept administrative and technical ideologies that rationalize and protect top-down-sponsored organizational domains. Citizen action issues focus on power transfers for community control, income and benefit redistribution, and similar goals.

The effects of sponsorship direction can be seen in planning. Apart from differences in priorities and action styles, there are other opposing characteristics. In top-down-sponsored planning, success is defined as decision-making speed and accuracy. Citizens provide advisory input to planners who are themselves, for the most part, on the output side of political decision-making. In bottom-up-sponsored planning, success is defined as maximum scope of citizen engagement in the exercise of public power. Planners provide advisory input to citizens who are, in turn, on the input side of political decisions.

Top-down sponsorship of social infrastructure, when oriented to structural change, inevitably results in zero-sum conflict, leading to cut-off of resources, the loss of

power by the community organization, and its subsequent collapse or severe displacement of goals. This scenario has been repeated again and again in recent decades.

Functions of infrastructural organizations.— Organizations that constitute infrastructure adopt or evolve one or more manifest functions. These are political, economic, religious, planning, and service. Latent functions of infrastructural organizations include socio-maintenance—reality construction and socialization which we have already reviewed; and socio-therapy—social bonding and personality development.

Infrastructure is central to political culture, to positive ideologies and action pathways for democracy. In top-down-sponsored political infrastructure, with its ideology of guiding citizen participation, administration and social control are the most important tasks. As carried out by urban governments, these include information gathering, promotion of state and Federal policies, implementation of programs and services, and generally managing contingencies and ideologies to protect resource flows and domain.

Bottom-up-sponsored political infrastructure, sustained in part by citizen action ideology, is designed to generate permanent and legitimate roles for social self-management, public space in the language of political philosophy. The theme is that political freedom is a deception if there is no room or way for individuals to make public contact with the lives of others in matters of collective concern. Public space translates into institutionalized roles in the state's political-economic structures, mainly governments, which are defined behaviorally, for people to act in their public capacity, as citizens.

The direction of sponsorship also colors the institutional and ideological profile of economic infrastructure. Top-down-sponsored economic goals are to protect capital accumulation, to ensure an adequate labor force, to enable central government to buffer with distribution (forms of patronage) demands for redistribution, and to control resources by connecting and coordinating peripheral and central markets. Economic infrastructure serves both top-down and bottom-up interests by revenue collection and regulatory activities. Bottom-up purposes extend, however, to articulation of demand, capital accumulation, and labor-intensive enterprise.

It is not necessary to do more than note the processes of socio-maintenance, reality construction and socialization. The socio-therapeutic functions of infrastructure, social bonding and personality development, are latent yet prime functions of infrastructural organizations. The nineteenth century social philosophy of idealism identified the relationship between personality and social community, that the former flourishes in finding a meaningful part to play in the latter. Early proponents of community organization in social work looked at organized group life as an exercise in mental hygiene. Contemporary studies along these lines generally confirm that civic activity offers an effective means to combat the alienation of modern society, while simultaneously contributing to community improvement.

## Social Infrastructure in the U.S.

Because the United States was a frontier nation during its first century, much of its development involved transcontinental movement of small, newly formed, self-governing communities. Settlers crossing the continent in clusters adopted political compacts for the course of their travel, not by chance or personal predilection but for survival. Public space was created from necessity—marked by democratic election of officers, establishment of rules, and subscription to mutual obligations, to answer the conditions of an historic mi-



gration. Disbanded at their destinations, they were often replaced by another informal and temporary political form.

“Claim clubs” and similar associations were organized to confirm, give notice of, and protect claims, filling the institutional void between settlement and formation of towns. These groups began with community meetings, subsequently drafted constitutions and bylaws, elected officers, established procedures for selecting juries to settle disputes, and in some places evolved into recognized local governments. Equally common was the organizing of some variant of town government on the New England model, departing ever farther from the original as the country’s second century and westward settlement progressed, but never entirely forsaking councils, schools, law enforcement, and the other accouterments of public life.

Paralleling the older cities of the East—Boston, New York and Philadelphia—small self-governing towns fed the growth of Midwestern and Western metropolitan centers. Neighborhoods in Chicago and Los Angeles, and many cities between, had their own governments, were independent political units making decisions about zoning, taxes, and other matters of public concern. Some, as in New England, sent representatives to state legislatures.

During the nineteenth century, when America’s rural and urban populations were reversed from their present distribution, small- and moderate-sized towns had usable public space. This was not always by explicit political right—there was little institutionalized direct democracy outside New England—but through social and physical arrangements that fit the geo-political scale of the period. The time was marked by a great deal more opportunity for, and actual participation in, public life by individuals, far less privatization.

Beginning in the middle of the 1800s and continuing onward, waves of immigration and the domestic population movements fueled urbanization and the growth of urban poverty neighborhoods. Historically impoverished populations peopled the local enclaves. They had come first from Europe, later from the Atlantic Coastal Plain, the Black Belt and Delta regions of the South, the Cumberland Plateau, and the high plains of central Mexico. Desperate to flee what for most had become an oppressive rural life, they were as cut-off from power in the political-economies of the cities as they had previously been in rural communities.

The partisan parties began to monopolize mid-nineteenth-century urban politics through the political machines. The machines isolated policy-making from local political demands and conflicts, most of which originated in race- and ethnicity-conscious populations, those most victimized by urbanization and industrialization. The trademark of the machines, like all top-down-sponsored infrastructure, then and now, was to express volatile redistribution issues in more placid distribution terms.

The “progressive” or municipal reform movement, dating from about the turn of the last century, was a somewhat ironic top-down reaction to machine corruption, urban deterioration and instability, which threatened economic growth. The reformers were liberal, Protestant, upper and middle class. The reform ideology was efficiency and economy. The strategy was administrative centralization in bureaucratic organization and rational policy-making by technical experts. The result was to remove public administration not only from the corrupting influence of machines but authentic political control generally, ending any semblance of local self-governance by unceasing municipal annexations and consolidations. The centralized urban politics and their bureaucracies quickly became mechanisms of social control, sublimating politics, permanently discrediting political process and transferring its functions to mass organizations. The municipal reform movement, responding to political machines no longer able to manage urban stability and

protect economic growth, led to bureaucratic gigantism and institutionalized the demise of public space.

Political scientists and commentators differ in their thinking about how much public space existed in the past and, for those who believe there was more, the reasons for its decline. But there is little argument that in our time the available public space is not sufficient. Permanent social infrastructure that is politically and economically empowering for the general citizenry is almost nonexistent—grassroots organizations are mostly too fragile for sustained citizen action—and thus the urban political movements of the mid- to late-twentieth century are interpreted as attempts to construct (or reconstruct) public space.

## Social Work Investments in Infrastructure

Since the beginnings of social work, the profession has had an implicit commitment to invest resources in organizing social infrastructure. Different practitioners and agency sponsors over the decades, notwithstanding divergent social philosophies, objectives, and action styles, have in common putting their energies into programs that established necessary organizational foundation to upgrade social life.

Achievement of the most important charity organization principle, coordination of welfare services, required neighborhood committees of local residents and representatives of relief and welfare agencies. The charity organization society (COS) movement viewed neighborhood organization as crucial to cooperation between providers and recipients, and also as necessary to energize the idea that urban ills could be cured by revitalization of local social life. The COS district office was also to be a neighborhood community center, a “village meeting house.”

Jane Addams linked the pathetic state of urban life at the end of the nineteenth century to the circumstance that citizens lacked local traditions, public spirit, and social organization. The settlement purpose, in functional terms—stripped of philosophy and goal statements—was to create local organizations that would improve social life.

Social work contributions to building infrastructure continued in the early decades of this century. Community practitioners attempted to establish “village life” in urban neighborhoods by forming block and neighborhood associations. Local neighborhood defense councils were organized throughout World War One to mobilize resources for the war effort. The short-lived Cincinnati Social Unit Organization is another example of social work-oriented infrastructure development to expand local citizen action in public life during this period. Less than ten years later, during the Depression, neighborhood councils were organized. After the councils the neighborhood organizing of the 1940s supported the new war effort. The locality-based activities of the 1960s were the last major social work investment in infrastructure.

Social work sponsorship of community organizing has had a checkered history, often serving top-down interests and ideologies. It has been marked by self-conscious avoidance of politics and conflict, resulting in the well-known political irrelevance of the profession’s mainstream practitioners. The thing to notice, nonetheless, is that building infrastructure is a traditional task of social work. It is now an essential activity in mature industrial societies that lack public space. Consequently, social workers are challenged to find ways and means to invest in infrastructure for bottom-up interests and ideologies.

## SUMMARY & APPLICATIONS

### Unified Theory

The main features of the organizing action field—power and ideology, and their effects on individuals and collectivities—have been specified by drawing together concepts of learning, exchange, reality construction, and development. They reveal a theoretical unity in both their tout ensemble and their comprehensive accounting of the action field characteristics.

The theory explains individual behavior as a reciprocal product of actor and action field. Learning and acting new behavior are contingent on prior cues, thinking and knowing, and rewarding and punishing consequences. These contingencies are encountered directly, by observation of others, and through symbolic information.

Concepts of exchange, underpinned by learning principles of mutual reinforcement, self-management, counter-control, and deprivation/satiation, explain collective behavior in the action field. Exchange gives a simple yet inclusive view of collective behavior that originates in cooperation, competition, and conflict, to maximize scarce resources. Attention is given to absolute and relative deprivation in the unequal resource distribution, power and conditions of its use, and distributive injustices. The pivotal objective of a political-economic organization is survival in its action field, with decision-making designed to manage resource flows for longevity and attainment of goals.

Learning and exchange concepts largely ignore collective ideologies and their impact on individual behavior and organizational action. But ideological realities account for why and how an event is perceived as rewarding by virtually all members of one collectivity and punishing by the whole of another. The social construction of reality explains the creation and effect of valued meanings that, when attached to centers of organized power, become political-economic ideologies. Formed with language in face-to-face interchanges of subjective experience, they are the collective standards against which learning and exchange contingencies are judged rewarding or punishing.

The ideologies are grounded in actual institutions—recurring patterns of behavior—and their subdivisions, lesser organizations and groups of individuals with shared histories or common language experience. The social construction of ideologies continues because of covert contingencies for individual and group participation, such as reducing environmental complexity and thus enabling organizational action, and more personalized rewards.

The juxtaposition of learning and exchange contingencies and ideological realities shows their inseparability in social life. Knowing their dialectical relationship, it is impossible to imagine social action as the singular product of one or the other.

Concepts of social development complete the unified theory as a description of the action field. Although many obstacles hinder development in industrialized capitalist states, the most important are proprietary interests and their allies in public organizations who oppose institutionalized citizen action for redistribution. The most promising strategy for democratizing the political-economy is long-term, bottom-up-sponsored investment in social infrastructure, creating permanent public space for citizens to act in their own self-interest.

### Theory-Based Roles

The unified theory implicitly pictures four major roles for practitioners. Learning, exchange, reality construction, and development suggest generic practice roles that have applications for many different organizing styles, settings, and sponsors.

Social learning, based substantially on observation, points to creating, testing, and refining models for micro to macro objectives, whether instrumental, structural, or processual. Learning and exchange both underline the importance of the organizer's role in identifying and planning contingencies, including analyses of power distributions, strategic resource flows, profits and costs in exchanges, and distributive injustices. Concepts of reality construction indicate the organizer's role as demiourgos—"the maker of the world"—in facilitating understanding of and participation in social construction and playback of ideologies. Lastly, the prescriptive role suggested by the theory is to organize permanent social infrastructure for redistributive development by democratization of the political-economy.

## PART TWO—MICRO TECHNOLOGY

What one relishes, nourishes.

—Benjamin Franklin

## INTRODUCTION

There are three notable practice benefits to be drawn from the psychosocial components in the unified theory. They are systematic understanding of social action—past and present, predictions about future action, and procedural guides for intervention—with the potential for combining all three as practice technology. These aids work together: the micro range of practice demands a composite technology of analytic and predictive skills, coupled with intervention procedures.

Concepts of learning, exchange, and reality construction lead to a large number of hypothetical propositions and practice procedures. In the following pages, modeling, one of the most potent of the theory-based procedures, is considered for some of its lesser-known implications for practice. Next, the social action dialectic, summarizing the psychological and sociological dimensions of the action field, joined with a number of related hypotheses, is applied to an analysis of the Peoples Temple. We see in this exercise the analytic advantage of moving beyond the generalization of self-interest to more elaborate theoretical explanations for social action. The last part of this section proposes specific micro technologies for three recurring organizing problems: survival without instrumental achievements, coalition maintenance, and self-management of morale.

I have drawn from the case literature of infrastructural development, particularly from the bottom-up-sponsored instances. What is presented, however, is not case analyses per se but showings of useful applications of theoretical concepts. Looking through the lens of practice theory, the objective has been to discern important events, decisions, and action sequences, to articulate the underlying dynamics and make predictions—and thereby to illustrate the most important elements in practice technology. What follows, then, is complete only insofar as it suggests the potential range of applications for extending theory to practice, using analytic, predictive, procedural, and technological approaches. I have not attempted anything so ambitious as a complete micro technology for community organizing.

My assumption throughout has been that it is not possible, by ex post facto analysis, to explain with certainty the success or failure of complex organizations. My intention has been to take care not to ignore the work of dedicated organizers, their resources and realities.

## MODELING IN PRACTICE

It is arguable that organizing is mostly modeling in one form or another. Certainly much of what organizers do entails development and presentation of models—often serving as such themselves—to enable the achievement of diverse goals and objectives. Modeling, then, as a procedure based on learning concepts, which in turn are central to the unified practice theory, is essential to micro technology.

To review briefly, observation of models is the vehicle for most social learning. While behavior can be learned by observing a model, performance of what has been learned does not occur without appropriate contingencies. Observational learning without performance—for instance, learning how to chair a meeting but not doing so—results in acquisition of the modeled behavior in cognitive, representational forms (mental images or language symbols). Exposure to models, in addition to promoting new behavior, may inhibit or disinhibit previously learned behavior. Inhibitions are strengthened or weakened by vicarious experience of a model's rewards or punishments. Seeing modeled behavior that is ordinarily disapproved go unpunished has the same effect as observing rewards for that behavior. We can see all these operations in the following practice sequence.

### Coalition Conflict

Substantial modeling effects can be identified in a social action coalition formed in the late 1960s.<sup>16</sup> Located in a low-income neighborhood of about 50,000 population, in a major West Coast city, the coalition membership was comprised of large established agencies, public and private, and a number of smaller, more militant organizations. The organizers and a small core of the leadership had very different goals than the established agency members. From the beginning, and intensifying throughout, there was internal conflict over the role of the organization—whether to merely support member organizations or to operate as a strong, independent federation. The latter option, preferred by the organizers and militant members, was opposed by the established agencies because it would make the coalition competitive with them for Model Cities funds and other resources.

At the coalition's third annual convention there was a mass walkout by about a hundred of the delegates over the slate of candidates put up by the organizer-leadership core. The nominee for president had already served two terms, and a third would require a change in the bylaws. Competition between the candidate and his main challenger, the head of a large member-agency, reflected the conflict over the ongoing issue of a loose versus a centralized federation. The incumbent president named himself to chair the bylaws committee that then recommended he be allowed to run for a third term. For many of the delegates this was a "glaring affront to democratic procedures." In a close vote the convention accepted the committee's recommendations, but the incident marked the hardening of intense factionalism—and before long the offending maneuver was mirrored in the reactions of the agency forces.

At the fifth convention, two years later, each of the two feuding groups charged the other with creating large numbers of "paper organizations" to gain delegates. Many resolutions were passed and the presidential candidate of the established agencies was elected, the remaining offices being split about evenly by the two groups. However, the

coalition was deeply divided following the convention, with control shifting back and forth between the two factions. This fratricide was capped at a post-convention meeting of the delegates' council. Open warfare erupted and the more powerful, newly strengthened agency leadership took control of the organization by subverting constitutional procedures and bylaws. That summer the organizers and their allies among the leadership withdrew from the organization.

## Inadvertent Modeling

This coalition history illustrates the potential for harmful boomerang effects from inadvertent modeling. While most leaders and organizers acknowledge that they consciously influence others by modeling, few give attention to the less constructive aspects of their behavior that, if imitated, undermine their own objectives.

At the third convention the organizer-leadership core, then holding the balance of power within the organization, managed to maintain control by severely bending if not openly subverting democratic principle, thereby inadvertently modeling a corrupting approach to resolving factional differences. The coalition's established agency members could hardly avoid observing the behavior of the leaders and organizers under conditions of conflict and crisis, nor could they have failed to see the consequences: the reward for violating democratic ethos was continued control; there was no punishment.

This observational learning found expression in performance two years later when similar conditions and potential rewards—intense competition for control and direction of the coalition—were present. With the balance of power shifted in their favor, the established agencies—their inhibitions loosened, and presumably anticipating their prospective reward of permanent control—performed the behavior earlier “learned” (disinhibited) by observing the organizer-leadership core at the third convention: they overrode the organization's ethos and principles to prevail over their opponents.

This is a realistic example of the damage that can be caused by inadvertent modeling. While it is not suggested that one should dismiss the possibility of other significant factors in the final outcome, the case points unequivocally to inadvertent modeling as a relevant if not pivotal variable. The chief lesson for practice is that organizers and leaders are models not only by conscious design but when they least expect to be. Negative behavior, inadvertently modeled, is also a source of learning—for allies and adversaries. A reasonable proposition for future practice is that early modeling of negotiation procedures within a coalition, especially prior to periods of conflict and crisis, may lead to practices that forestall destructive exchanges.



## ANALYSIS OF THE PEOPLES TEMPLE

Practice theory, regardless of how well conceived, does not have the capability to “prove” the “cause” of social phenomena, least of all the deaths of more than 900 people in the Guyana jungle. But theory for practice does offer unique analytical insight into social action. My use of it here is to get a better understanding of the members of the Peoples Temple. From an organizer’s viewpoint, there are too many questions about them, about their behavior and action, which have not been answered systematically.

Why did they join the Peoples Temple and sign over their property and possessions? It is difficult to understand why Temple members agreed to end relationships with family and friends and why, later, they felt so vulnerable to outside groups. What was the relationship between accepting the organizer and leader, Rev. Jim Jones, as a deity, and the members allowing themselves to be psychologically and physically battered? Members worked under conditions of near-slavery, and yet, few left and reported the Temple’s activities to authorities. Perhaps the most troubling questions are about the final events in Guyana. Why did people agree to suicide rehearsals? Why did some commit suicide? And why did some murder others, including their own children?

There have been answers to these questions, but they have not been keyed to community organizing practice. The least valuable have been limited by a constricted view, seeing Jones *or* the Temple members as the cause of the extraordinary events that marked the organization’s life and death. Some writers ascribe superhuman, if perverse, powers to Jones; others perceive in the Temple membership some pathetic emotional or intellectual flaw. There is of course at least a particle of truth in both ideas. But both are basically fragmented and insufficient explanations. Much more valuable, although still lacking theoretical coherence for decisively informing organizing, are the insightful anecdotal accounts and persuasive historical views of the Temple.

The Peoples Temple experience, if it is to be demonstrably informative for everyday organizing, must be explained by the same systematic theory that guides day-to-day practice. It is in practice theory, geared to change-agentry and designed to illuminate recurring problems and tasks, that retrospective analysis can be achieved for organizers’ purposes. This is true because analysis must reveal not only what happened and why, but how: it is a search for the technics the practical arts—of social action and change.

For background we will selectively review the Peoples Temple story, focusing on strategic themes in Jones’ practices and the more enigmatic actions of the members, first in Northern California and later in Guyana.<sup>17</sup> The analysis that follows employs the social action dialectic and a number of learning, exchange, and reality construction principles.

### Background

Jones was a gifted orator, with a well-modulated voice and a reassuring smile, unusually adept at gaining trust. There is unbroken agreement among observers that his practiced style of “active listening” and soft baritone voice—affecting sympathy and caring—were instrumental in recruiting new members. He actively sought out and applied his rhetorical skills to people with histories of oppression and deprivation. Black people with low incomes, former prostitutes and drug addicts, etc., made up the majority of the membership. Once their induction was finalized, often by transferring property to the

Temple or making irreparable breaks with family and friends, Jones' sympathy was replaced by harsh, exploitative treatment.

Jones structured the Temple to play on emotional themes in the backgrounds of the people he had targeted for membership. Temple services resembled Southern and Midwestern gospel-singing churches in which many of the members grew up. From the early 1960s he exaggerated the bitterness and hatred that confronted the mostly black membership in their past and present lives. Masterful vision-making of a Promised Land of equality and material security followed the exaggerated agitation.

Jones was an artful contradiction. At one moment he was fully engaged in the rhetoric of mutual caring, racial equality, and nonviolent socialism, and the next he was flaunting power and feeding his own personal appetite for money and sex. Within the Temple he imposed a double standard, a self-entitlement to extensive privileges and possessions, including food, clothing, living quarters, and sexual liberties. As early as 1964 he began to openly declare himself a deity.

The organizational structure of the Temple was hierarchical, with four levels: Jones was at the top; beneath him there was an inner circle known as "angels," numbering between 12 and 20, that handled money, media, and strong-arm tactics; below them was the planning commission, entrusted with daily management and enforcement of lesser rules; and at the bottom—literally and figuratively—was the general membership. Jones actively recruited whites, particularly women, for his chief lieutenants. Several in his trusted inner circle were the shills and tricksters in "faith-healing" sessions that, using three-day-old rancid chicken parts as "expelled tumorous masses," were staged to present Jones as a divinity.

Jones hooked people into the organization by isolating them, irrevocably, from former lives and ideas. As a condition of acceptance, he demanded that property and possessions be turned over to the Temple, thereby eliminating the temptation and means for disaffiliation. For those who lived in the Temple's communes, there was a requirement to turn over pay from regular, outside employment, receiving in return a two-dollar weekly allowance. To ensure isolation of members, they were not permitted unaccompanied movement, except to and from work, and they were warned repeatedly not to speak with outsiders. Presumably, it was in part to further this isolation that the Temple held separate "religious" services for the members and the as-yet uncommitted.

Jones was able to successfully define out-groups (the press, CIA, FBI, etc.) as bent on the immediate and total destruction of the Temple. He managed to undermine family unity and loyalty that might threaten his position or the organization, arbitrarily ordering sexual relationships and marriages ended and arranging new ones. And he was able to impose outrageous punishments that enforced his autocratic rule. Members were routinely whipped and beaten with paddles for smoking or lack of attention during "sermons."

Northern California.— By the late 1960s Jones had refined substantial political clout in the Mendocino county community of Ukiah, the first Northern California home of the Temple. Turning out 300 to 400 votes in elections with vote totals of only 2500, the Temple was the single most important political force in the area. Very little changed when the organization relocated to San Francisco. For political rallies Jones could deliver 2500 people on six hours notice. Many were also available to do get-out-the-vote precinct work on Election Day. In the December 1975 run-off election, Jones mustered more than 2000 voters and 150 precinct workers—with the mayoralty decided by only 4000 votes.

The survival of the Temple in the early 1970s, when the first critical stories began to be told by ex-members, was aided by important local political figures. The Temple had a well-deserved reputation for delivering crowds, a valuable bargaining chip in urban pol-

itics. The extent to which Jones successfully dealt with and compromised politicians is indicated by the fact that the District Attorney began an investigation of the Temple in July of 1977, with five investigators, but did not disclose the incriminating results until after the deaths at Jonestown in November of 1978. The report included allegations of murder, arson, kidnapping, extortion, child abduction, battery, illegal possession and use of drugs, and diversion of welfare funds. Jones was also successful in delaying press exposure of the Temple's more malevolent doings until resettlement in Guyana was accomplished. The mayor was enlisted to ask New West magazine to hold back their attack on the organization. And Jones contributed several thousand dollars, ostensibly for scholarships, to a dozen newspapers, a TV station, and a magazine, receiving kid-glove treatment from one and all.

Guyana.— Life at the Guyana settlement was, from the beginning, and remained, a marginal and punishing experience, with few redeeming qualities. Heavy rains, wood too hard to cut, and uncontrollable rat infestation were the ordinary problems of daily pioneer living. These were compounded by overcrowded dormitories and lack of simple amenities, such as hot water and toilet paper. The majority of settlers worked 11 hours a day, six days a week, and seven hours on Sundays. Their diet was almost entirely rice and beans, in various combinations, three times a day. The more extreme forms of punishment continued: "Sins" (minor infractions) resulted in public beatings. Devastating punishment became ordinary. For petty rule violations, adults were placed in a wooden box, 3 x 3 x 6 feet, for a week at a time. Children were subjected to psychologically brutalizing treatment, many being lowered into a dark well at night and pulled under the water by adults hidden there. It was terrifying for the youngsters, whose screams could be heard throughout the settlement.

The Temple's class structure persisted at Jonestown. The "community elite," in addition to receiving special food and living accommodations, as Jones did, controlled and regulated the lives of the remainder, down to the smallest details. The regimen included loudspeaker broadcasting of Jones' words on an average of six hours a day, endless nightly "re-education" meetings, and directed performances of the full encampment to placate outside visitors.

After the spring of 1978, Jonestown became a virtual concentration camp. As settlers arrived, their money and passports were confiscated. Jones told the colonists that he had an informer in the U.S. Embassy at Georgetown who would tell him immediately of anyone who tried to leave the country. He also told them on several occasions that he had authority from the government of Guyana to shoot anyone who tried to leave.

Once each week the whole community gathered and acted out a scenario of mass death. In the fantasy drama, they were surrounded by mercenaries who, in victory, would torture them. Thus their only alternative was "mass suicide for the glory of socialism." As each person drank a small amount of red liquid that simulated poison, Jones announced that all would be dead within 45 minutes. When the time had passed, he told them they had met the loyalty test but that before long the real thing would take place. Several members later stated that, because of their physical and emotional exhaustion, the suicide practice sessions were not traumatic.

Just before the mass death, at Jones' call, everyone in the settlement went to the pavilion, with the reluctant rounded up under threat of deadly force by armed guards. As the members convened they were encircled by the guards, each holding a gun or bow and arrow. The first deaths, according to reliable news reports, occurred when guards grabbed babies from "recalcitrant" mothers and held the children up to let "nurses" spray their throats with poison. When the assembled did not move quickly enough at Jones' exhorta-

tions to hurry, the guards physically forced people to drink the poison. The words of a guard to one woman: “you dumb bitch, you better do it or we’re going to shoot your ass off.” By eyewitness accounts, however, many took the poison without being subjected to personalized threats.

## Analysis

The social action dialectic provides an exposition of the Peoples Temple tragedy, as the outcome of continuing and complex interaction between contingencies and ideologies. At the outset we see in the protagonists the larger workings of these two forces.

In the members there was a collective history of deprivation and distributive injustice, which are the learning and exchange contingencies for counter-controlling behavior and for opposition institutions and ideologies. This fits the history of low-income black people in the U.S., a record of oppression and injury leading to escapist searches for the Promised Land. The Garvey “Back to Africa” movement and Father Divine’s “Peace Movement” are the best-remembered examples.

Jones embodied rhetorical skills for vision-making, and a facile personality that he used effectively to accumulate resources for exchange and to manage contingencies of behavior. These are the prerequisites for orchestrating construction of ideologies. Jones consolidated an unusual command of incentives for drawing others into construction and acceptance of his unique and sinister brand of ideology.

The primed, prospective Temple member was initially presented a highly contrived picture of the organization. With special Sunday services designed to show outsiders the positive ideologies of the Temple—racial equality, mutual caring, etc.—and Jones’ power of “divine healing,” exceptional socializing forces were at work. All were calculated to play on past respondent learning, the emotional experiences of former life to which individuals resonate. The promise of life within the Temple must have appeared for many, at that point, as far more rewarding than anything in their own past, present, or future. And first meetings with Jones to consider membership were doubtlessly reinforcing, communicating an impression of his intense concern.

It was but a short step for Jones to extract a commitment in exchange for the ideological incentive of a future Promised Land, a socialist haven of equality and love, made believable by the plausibility structure of the existing organization and its ideologies. Like the market player who doubles up on *losing* investments, as time went on each member probably found it reinforcing to increase commitment to the faulty course of action, despite new and punishing revelations—sustained throughout by the reward of not admitting a mistake of ever-larger magnitude and by the Temple’s ideologies.

Probably the most powerful aspect of the Peoples Temple ideology was its definition of Jones as a deity. While the Temple ideology was multifaceted, its centerpiece—from and to which all else flowed—was Jones as god, the messiah. It was the keystone of the entire overarching ideology and its sanctioning powers. It licensed Jones to freely create additional ideologies that, in turn, rationalized his whims for dispensing and arranging rewards and punishments, for himself, his aides, and the members.

Jones’ strategy of isolation, almost as if directed by reality construction theory, no doubt enhanced his efforts to alternate recruits to the new ideological world and its sanctions, and to nihilate former worlds grounded in family and friends. Isolation was assured by withholding resources and eliminating opportunities for contact with discrepant realities.

Exposure of the Temple's more malevolent activities was forestalled by Jones' adroit management of exchanges with politicians and the media, mobilizing votes, precinct workers, and other resources in trade for legitimization. The facts confirm that he was successful, that numerous complaints were made to public authorities but, despite their scope and seriousness, were slighted. Apart from the obvious political incentives for would-be or incumbent officeholders, it is reasonable to assume that Jones' articulation of Temple ideologies rationalized these exchanges for all participants.

By the time of resettlement in Guyana, individual investments by members in the faulty course of action had reached extreme proportions. They were "motivated" mainly by painfully coercive contingencies administered by Jones and his lieutenants, and by ideological realities that turned social life upside-down, defining pain as pleasure, family and friends as enemies, and death as life. The acts of reality construction went on unrelentingly at Jonestown, day and night, over loudspeakers and in meetings, with all resources under Jones' control. An average or even exceptional person, under the total circumstances, might hardly find rebellion or escape a reasonable alternative.

Yet the contingencies and ideological realities in the Jonestown culture were not monolithic. The presence of a community elite and "class" distinctions provided the institutional base, the plausibility structure, for two separate but overlapping worlds, one common to the membership at large, the other more closely held by Jones and his inner circle. While accounts of the Temple only hint at the details of that second realm of rewards and meanings, contained therein is the basis for explaining some of the more inexplicable behavior on the day of the mass death. Those members specially entrusted as armed guards and "nurses" shared not only their own exclusive ideology but also a range of practical incentives for deserting or completing their tasks.

We cannot retrospectively know why some Jonestown settlers took their own lives and the lives of others, including their own children. Given what is known, however, and considering the dialectic of social action, murder and suicide may very well be terms that lost their common meanings in the topsy-turvy culture of the Peoples Temple. It would not be the first time that a mix of perverted, self-serving ideology, and powerful, punishing contingencies of learning and exchange, made mass death "acceptable." Nor is there anything unique in how that combination was manifested in the present protagonists, that is, a history of deprivation and injustice in the victims and the fusion of brilliant rhetoric and resourceful personality in the perpetrator.

Conclusions.— The development and demise of the Peoples Temple, while indisputably affected by broad political and economic forces, can be understood in many respects by psychological and sociological concepts, encompassing social phenomena from individual behavior to organizational action, the micro to mezzo range. Entwined in the social action dialectic, theories of learning, exchange, and construction of reality offer explanations of how individuals and collectivities are influenced in practice by power and ideology. In the upcoming Practice Technology, the dialectic is used not only to analyze but also to make predictions, an implicit part of technology.

There is a final, very different lesson in the Peoples Temple story. It is a kind of national moral, admittedly not essential for this analysis, yet too moving to ignore. It is to be found in the revealed volatility of long-lived alienation. While no society, regardless of how just or healthy, can fully guarantee the absence of individual aberration, always thwarting the appearance of a Jim Jones, it is also true that none can afford indefinitely the social pathologies that reduce the resistance of citizens to such aberrant individuals. The issue is not Jones and the prevention of his type, but the vulnerability of so many others to his pathology. The present disquieting sum of that vulnerability, measured in the

depth of alienation of the country's low- and moderate-income citizens, is spotlighted in the epilogue of the Peoples Temple—the burial detail. In the midst of historic material wealth, it was difficult not to be dumbfounded by the incomprehensible fact of several hundred containers of human remains, of U.S. citizens, stacked in a Federal warehouse—no one willing or able to claim them for interment.

## PRACTICE TECHNOLOGY

The development of practice technology is a continuous process that certainly does not begin or end here. Technologies for reaching specific goals, often weak in theory but otherwise invaluable, have been devised for media relations, fundraising, mobilization, negotiations, canvassing, and other recurring practice tasks and problems.<sup>18</sup> But overall, far too little attention has been given to this form of community organizing literature. Practice technology is inherently based on praxis, on organizing and theorizing about it; and the underdevelopment of practice theory has stunted technology.

Progress in formulating organizing technology is likely to accompany a broad commitment to that end by professional organizers. Cadres of organizers over decades will advance organizing by applying theoretical principles to their professional experiences and, as practice progresses, by refining their theories. This is a beginning attempt in that direction.

The three micro technologies proposed here are only skeletons of their future possibilities. Despite the remarkable richness of the theories subsumed by the social action dialectic, I have relied entirely on the dialectic and purposely limited analytical detail because of time limitations and a scarcity of suitable case studies. Even with these qualifications and limitations, the applications of the theory to practice reveal significant options for organizing.

### Survival Without Instrumental Achievements

Organizations have different types of goals, their achievement producing the main contingencies for ongoing participation and action, which are the prerequisites for survival and growth. The goals are for processes, structures, and instrumental achievements. Organizations seek to establish various processes, such as democratic decision-making, leadership development, and responsible budgeting. They try to create usable structures that serve their purposes, formalized relationships with designated responsibility and authority, sometimes documented in constitutions and bylaws but often not. And every organization has one or more instrumental goals that, far more than process or structural objectives, serve as incentives for participation and action. The right to organize and bargain collectively were such for labor, as the vote once was for women and minorities, and political independence for the American colonials and, later, citizens in the Confederate states.

Yet instrumental goals are often long-range, natural enough considering their consequences, and accomplishing them may take decades rather than months or years. It is in this context that one of the recurring problems of community organizing practice can be identified: In the absence of attaining instrumental goals, or during the interregnum of struggle, how are participation and action to be maintained?

The accepted organizing knowledge on this question is conveyed in the case history of a small neighborhood council formed in the mid-1950s.<sup>19</sup> The Du Pont council, with individual and organizational members, was located in a racially and ethnically mixed downtown residential neighborhood. Although in time the council achieved many of its most valued instrumental goals, for a period it faced the almost universal organizational dilemma of how to keep the organization alive and growing while struggling in their pursuit.

Reliance was placed on a simple and well-known stratagem. Resources were managed to ensure short-term rewards. The principle was at the heart of Saul Alinsky's organizing. He understood the motivating power of *immediate* self-interest. Learning and exchange principles, similarly, suggest temporizing rewards to sustain organizations during long periods when instrumental goals, yet to be secured, cannot serve as incentives.

One pole of the social action dialectic, then, offers an approach that parallels conventional organizing practice on this problem. Thinking of the other pole, recalling the role of ideologies in social action, it is apparent that there is another major option for ensuring organizational survival without instrumental achievements. There is the possibility of developing ideology that redefines the meaning of interim events, from punishing ones, or failures, to necessary building blocks in long but "worthy struggle."

Probably the most successful recent example of this idea in practice has been the United Farm Workers Union (UFWU).<sup>20</sup> UFWU organizer and president Cesar Chavez has not shown any inclination to forget the importance of early and regular rewards to keep up participation and action. But Chavez has gone further by explicit acceptance of long-term struggle, to be sustained by ideological realities that redefine the punishing experience of intervening events. He has organized on his understanding of Hispanic culture, particularly Catholic ideologies of suffering and sacrifice. It is not unknown in Mexican culture to travel for several miles on one's knees out of religious fervor and conviction. Suffering has been institutionalized in the culture, defined by religious ideology as the way to growth and strength rather than decline and death.

Through understanding of Chicano culture and its ideological realities, particularly those linked with the Catholic faith, farmworker organizing has been able to exploit upside-down rewards, transforming events once thought unmitigated punishment into rewarding opportunities for suffering in a worthy cause. The personal satisfaction of remaining nonviolent despite severe provocation is an illustration of reinforcement by what would otherwise be thought of as punishment, a variation on the ideological theme of participating in worthy struggle.

This type of organizing, recognizing the interplay of contingencies and ideologies in social action, relies on two salient methodologies. There is the construction (or reconstruction) of ideologies, the collective creation of valued meanings, from common history or shared language experience. We need not recover this ground but it may be useful to review the Social Construction of Reality. The ideology of worthy struggle is brought to life by symbolic associations with human models. The idea of personal sacrifice as its own reward is fostered in the UFWU by promoting models such as the slain Kennedy brothers, Gandhi, Zapata, Martin Luther King, Jr., and others. Chavez himself serves as a model. At the end of a 25-day fast in 1968, he declared that sacrifice for others is "the truest act of courage, the strongest act of manliness."

Summing up, the social action dialectic highlights a novel option for organizational survival during long periods of struggle for instrumental goals. The theory takes organizing practice beyond the accepted insights of self-interest and exchange concepts, which nonetheless offer an indispensable approach in the form of immediate and intermediate rewards. What is gained, as shown by UFWU organizing, is the additional understanding and methodologies for altering the social meanings of interim events by construction (or reconstruction) and playback of ideological realities.

## Coalition Maintenance



The inherent presenting problem in coalition organizations is maintenance of the coalition. Such organizations have a natural tension, by definition, as all do to some extent, because of the diversity of their factions, their varying resources and ideologies. Organizations traditionally view negotiation, bargaining over competing interests, as the most direct means of coalition maintenance. But the social action dialectic suggests that maintenance of coalitions is also a function of ideology, and therein is another option for organizing practice.

The conventional exchange approach in coalitions is to have as few as one or as many as all of the organization's members brokering competing demands. In some organizations, one person, a leader, usually an officer, has this role; in others there is a leadership group brokering; occasionally there is "collective leadership," where large numbers participate. These arrangements are made in various combinations and proportions.

Applying the social action dialectic, the experience of a low-income Toronto neighborhood shows that the role of ideology is potent enough to transform zero-sum conflict into non-zero-sum relations, and that group or collective brokering facilitates construction of shared ideological realities by opposing factions.<sup>21</sup>

The two main factions within the neighborhood were resident homeowners and renters. Faced with an urban renewal scheme that threatened to totally demolish the neighborhood to the detriment of all concerned, except the private developers, owners and tenants began working together in a residents association. The owners were motivated by fear of "expropriation," losing their property at less than replacement value; the renters feared destruction of their low-rent, if dilapidated housing, without replacement—and both groups had a strong sense of identification with the neighborhood.

In time, however, these two groups found themselves to be in considerable conflict, with the renters splitting off into their own organization. Their differences were partly interest-based and partly ideological. While resident homeowners had a powerful interest in strong municipal enforcement of housing codes and health standards, the same action for renters spelled inevitable destruction of the only housing stock available and affordable for them. But these conflicting interest-based preferences were paralleled by equally opposed ideologies. There was a deeply felt ideological split on "product" versus "process." Played out in the conflict, the tenants' need for housing product was immediate. They valued quick action and tended to see the city as a benefactor, at least at the outset. The resident homeowners had a continuing need for accountability and fairness for everyone affected by urban renewal decision-making. They placed a premium on process and tended to see the city as a villain. These ideological divisions between homeowners and renters were fed by, and benefited, their mutual opposition, municipal officials and private developers who were attempting to impose a renewal scheme that would level the whole neighborhood.

For all appearances during a two-year estrangement of the two groups, the conflict could only be described in zero-sum terms by the leading neighborhood figures. Prevailing opinion at the time, especially among those representing tenants, was that if the homeowners won the tenants would lose. At the same time, however, the actions of Toronto's officialdom were unwittingly creating an incipient ideology that could be shared by both groups. In time, it would also redefine the meaning of events, transforming the conflict into non-zero-sum terms, where some outcomes were preferred by both factions.

Even with their differences, resident homeowners and renters began through their separate experiences to accumulate similar perspectives on the machinations, insensitivity, and plain abusiveness of Toronto's politicians and bureaucrats. While officials were skilled at using the rhetoric of citizen participation, their consistent corruption of its meaning was visible to large numbers of neighborhood residents. Residents were also

“shocked and strengthened” by the city’s urban renewal program in an adjoining neighborhood. Both homeowners and tenants observed that the design of urban renewal was to serve private interests, that questions and concerns raised by neighborhood residents were buck-passed from official to official, and that the neighborhood itself was and would continue to be excluded from decision-making which was crucial to its very survival.

As the long-unresolved situation became ever more punishing to both factions, although for different reasons, the incentives for exploring a reconciliation became increasingly powerful. Earmarking the neighborhood for renewal but leaving the implementation in limbo placed heavy burdens on both groups.

It was at this point that a working committee was formed, comprised of representatives from both factions, plus local business and political figures, and group or quasi-collective brokering was begun. Continuing for more than a year, these sessions had two significant outcomes. At their conclusion a common ideology had been constructed, reflecting a mutual need, acknowledged by both factions, that favored neighborhood empowerment to offset the proprietary bias of city officials and their hand-in-glove relationship with private developers. Through this shared ideology, zero-sum conflict was transformed into non-zero-sum relations: where previously one side’s benefits were automatically calculated as the other’s burdens, now there were outcomes acceptable to both. Oddly enough, where earlier there were two sets of demands that could not be reconciled, now they could coexist.

In coalition maintenance, then, the social action dialectic points beyond simple interest-based bargaining to construction of ideologies that alter the meaning of interests that are in conflict, making it possible to transform zero-sum conflict. The most important secondary implication for practice relates to the preferred form of brokering between organizational factions.

Organizations that tend to rely on single leader-brokers elect people to office for fixed periods to make brokering decisions for others. Short of gross malfeasance or non-feasance, they can expect to complete their terms. The leader-broker acts as an intermediary in complex negotiations between factions, brokering demands on the organization’s resources and action life. The advantages of narrowly controlled brokering are that it can be put into place quickly and it permits closely held management of the organization. The most serious trade-off cost, apart from simple vulnerability in relying on one or a small number of individuals, is that coalition maintenance suffers because ideological reconstruction among factions requires brokering that tends toward the collective rather than single-leader form.

## Self-Management of Morale

While the dialectical interplay of learning and exchange contingencies and ideological realities is readily identifiable in organizational life generally, it can also be seen in the behavior of individuals. Particularly interesting is the utility of the dialectic for self-management by organizers and leaders, especially in maintaining morale.

The approach and its implications can be illustrated through the role of the fund-raising canvasser. Mass-based door-to-door canvassing evolved during the 1970s into an entry-level position for professional organizing. In addition to offering immediate and unlimited job opportunities for aspiring organizers, canvassing encourages development of, and relies on, a pattern of skills common to many organizing activities. But more to the point, canvassing makes demands for self-management similar to other aspects of

community organizing practice.<sup>22</sup> Clearly the most difficult of these is maintenance of one's own morale.

Morale is especially vulnerable in canvassing at two times. Because of the potential for immediate abuse and personal rejection, anxiety is probably at its highest when the canvasser knocks on a door. Self-confidence is put to the test also when the canvasser has decided to cut losses with a failed prospect after a large investment of time and energy, particularly in a run of back-to-back rejections. Suggesting the intensity of morale loss, one Santa Clara Valley, California canvasser, apparently frustrated beyond control by a series of unpleasant doorknocking episodes, defecated under a tree on the front lawn of a particularly obnoxious householder.

Breakdown and revitalization of morale in canvassing specifically, and organizing generally, are intimately linked to both feelings and thinking. Aside from the immediate expression and dissipation of emotional turmoil, necessary for productive work to continue, the social action dialectic points to a self-managed maintenance of morale by control of behavioral contingencies and ideological realities.

Taking care of disruptive feelings on the spot is done in varying ways. Experienced canvassers develop the wherewithal to draw, at will, on their own individual techniques. A practiced one-word cue or image is usually enough to stimulate the process: the spontaneous mental declaration of "damn!" occasioned by the canvasser's frustration tolerance being exceeded, is sufficient to trigger conscious self-management. Some canvassers simply take time out, forget making quota, and allow themselves a quarter- or half-hour to relax and let feelings settle down; others gain some satisfaction and release by swearing at their tormentors, unfortunately sometimes within their hearing range; and for some, physical activity—one canvasser actually running around the block—accomplishes the same thing. There are endless means to resolve disruptive feelings that are not self-destructive or harmful to the organization.

More to present purposes, there are many instances of canvassers self-managing morale by arranging the contingencies and ideologies of their own "self-confident behaviors." Canvassers alter their actions to influence the cues and consequences on which their morale is contingent.

One method of controlling consequences is pacing, that is, self-regulating personal energy output over time. The goal is to avoid premature energy depletion. Canvassers are often looked down upon and, when energy levels are low, the rejection and abuse lead to resentment. It results in mistakes and then frantic attempts to catch up and make quota—a spiraling decline in morale. Seasoned canvassers know that beginning a workweek upset or exhausted is a set-up for undermining self-confidence. They consciously control these consequences by conserving physical and emotional energy, not just on the job but generally.

In a similar way a canvasser can feed self-confident behavior by attending to (or arranging) environmental cues that are connected to reinforcement of morale. Canvassers face a series of decisions about the "qualifications" of potential contributors. They continually judge the value of energy investment against the likelihood for success, given past experience. The long-time canvasser is likely to reject a prospect outright or cut losses quickly when, from learning history, recognized cues suggest that exorbitant investment of energy offers only uncertain probability for success. These cues to morale-busting canvassing, whatever their form, must not be ignored. Unmindful attempts to solicit contributions—from individuals who are openly hostile, who are actively engaged in outside work (car-washing, lawn-mowing, etc.), who refuse to open their doors, or who attempt to talk to the canvasser from a second-floor window—inevitably demonstrate the folly of ignoring cues to experiences that undermine self-confidence. Of course, self-

management of morale is further enhanced by designating and then remaining sensitive and responsive to positive cues, for outcomes that build self-confident behaviors.

Ideology is the canvassers second basic means to self-management of morale. In practice the canvasser redefines the meanings of punishing events (and sometimes rewarding ones too) by references to motivating ideologies, founded in profession, organization, social movement, class, etc. For example, bad experiences at the door—being insulted, patronized, or harassed—need not be viewed as “curses” (punishments), nor good ones as “blessings” (rewards), but both may be accepted as challenges that are inescapable in undertaking the ideologically-valued social change. Taking rejection as a curse stimulates resentment and breakdown of morale; treating contributors as blessings creates an attention-diverting euphoria that can lead to mistakes and, ultimately, compound morale problems. But by using ideology to define these intervening events as part of the day-to-day challenge in social change, to be effectively met by either soliciting a contribution or quickly cutting losses and moving on, a sense of achievement or satisfaction, heightened morale, follows virtually every encounter.

The recurring professional need of canvassers and organizers to maintain morale points to the value of the social action dialectic for understanding and achieving self-management in practice. Canvassing shows vividly the potential for attaining “self-confident behaviors” through the reciprocal process of consciously altering one’s actions to effect environmental cues and consequences that act back upon subsequent behavior, and by redefining bad experiences as challenges in an ideologically-valued social change enterprise.

## SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

The application of the social action dialectic and a number of constituent psychosocial principles to cases of infrastructural development is helpful for seeing the conceptual ingredients in micro technology. The value of praxis, particularly the informing of practice by systematic theory, is demonstrated.

Recounting observational learning in a social action coalition suggests the powerful but often overlooked practice variable of inadvertent modeling. It is, in the case described, at least a factor in the diminution or displacement of inhibitions toward violating democratic ethos and procedures.

Although the Peoples Temple is hardly representative of grassroots organizing—Jones' twisted ideology and autocratic power being the most obvious disqualifications—it is nonetheless relevant and valuable instruction for organizers. It reveals the vulnerability of populations with long-neglected, unmet needs. It shows the magnitude of social impact possible, given qualified actors, by the use of technics that have common theoretical underpinnings with those used by organizers. The analysis confirms the social action dialectic's operation. The interaction of contingencies and ideologies, discussed in terms of specific learning, exchange, and reality-construction principles, and played out in the persons of the members and leader-organizer Jones, lends insights into the underlying dynamics of the cult's tragic life and death.

The final applications of the dialectic, producing three skeletal technologies, is the first step to building substantively on the idea of self-interest, for understanding, predicting, and influencing individual behavior and social action. To the extent that survival without instrumental achievements, coalition maintenance, self-management of morale, and numerous other yet-to-be-developed micro to macro technologies are perfected, they are a bridge to successfully applying macro technologies such as that which is presented in the following pages.

## PART THREE—MACRO TECHNOLOGY

Trust the people—the wise and the ignorant, the good and the bad—with the gravest of questions, and in the end you educate the race. At the same time you secure, not perfect institutions, not necessarily good ones, but the best possible while human nature is the basis and the only material to build with.

—Wendell Phillips

## INTRODUCTION

Theory for social development in industrialized societies prescribes redistribution of resources and benefits by bottom-up investment in social infrastructure. The strategy is to afford public space, to create institutionalized roles for social self-management, to democratize the political-economy. The key to long-range social development is large numbers of citizens becoming engaged in their own uplifting. But an increasingly troublesome hitch, visible during the past two decades, is that modern industrialized societies have divested their urban landscapes of face-to-face civil communities, especially those institutionalized in culture and law, so necessary for redistributive development. Without infrastructural organizations and culture for action, citizens cannot effectively contribute to their own social development or to their country's future public life.

This is a three-part, bottom-up plan for organizing social infrastructure. It includes an institutional schematic, an organizational model, and an action strategy, plus an outlined plan for acquiring investment capital. The schematic provides a rough conception of existing governments in the urban political-economy, the form of those to be created, and an approximation of the means for integrating the two. New infrastructural organizations must fit within the present or some probable future ordering of urban institutions. The proposal here is for organizing neighborhood governments, as the bottom tier in a two-tier structure of urban governance, a compound system of neighborhood and metropolitan jurisdictions. Much of the institutional structure for the upper tier exists in incipient forms or is already in place, as with urban counties that conform to metropolitan boundaries. It is the lower or neighborhood tier that is missing and the object of investment.

The task of acquiring public powers for grassroots organizations begins with designing or adopting an organizational model to be replicated. The "local" served this purpose in the union movement. An old but still serviceable model of self-government, one that was a wellspring for the Revolution, and still part of current practice, is the "open" (directly-democratic) government of New England towns. For an action strategy we will examine the general approach of existing state laws that make it possible to form small public jurisdictions by local petition and election.

Finally, we will briefly outline a plan for acquiring investment capital. The resource arsenal includes mass-based, door-to-door canvassing for seeding and start-up expenses, followed by grants, service charges, sales of bonds, and direct taxation.

### Government as Social Infrastructure

Permanent bottom-up-sponsored social infrastructure for redistributing resources, notwithstanding its importance in the development of industrialized states, is almost non-existent in the U.S. It is in institutions of government, most notably, that public space may exist or be absent. Local governments can provide, possibly better than any other institutional rubric, the legitimization, legal powers, and fiscal mechanisms to underpin the institutionalized empowerment of citizen action for social development. Yet the loss of local government to centralized bureaucracies is an acknowledged fact of urban existence, along with the now-accepted insight that positive national development is unlikely if not impossible with overwhelming alienation of the citizenry from public life.

Since World War Two and the population growth and movement that followed it, metropolitan areas have expanded far beyond their original core cities. There has been a

significant increase in municipal annexations, growth in urban services by county governments, formation of more single-purpose jurisdictions to fill service gaps, and enlargement of the public bureaucracies. The *net* effect is contemporary urban “local government” that is not local and hardly government, at least insofar as those terms have traditional connotations of inclusive political participation. With gigantic constituencies, so-called local government officials have exited that extended political arena, except for public relations purposes, and have become members of boards of directors, attempting to oversee their centralized bureaucratic enterprises. Charged by a minority of the eligible electorate with supervision of public monopolies, they are primarily involved in policy decisions regarding resource flows in and out of their domains. Their political behavior, for the most part, entails negotiating exchanges with well-organized and endowed elites, pluralities, and special interests.

The colossal scale of urban public institutions, as mechanisms of not only service delivery but also overall political rule, obviates the burdens of representation, as those are commonly understood. In urban governments, with constituencies of several hundred thousand to more than a million, political action and participation costs are exorbitant. Not surprisingly, for those unable to meet the ante, public officials are cast as objects of fear and scorn: citizens in low and moderate-income brackets fear them in their presence and scorn them in their absence. For them, local government, the principal form of social infrastructure for public space, is historical artifact.



# INSTITUTIONAL SCHEMATIC

## Municipal Reformers

While it is easy to identify the public space deficit in bureaucratic urban governments, it is difficult to imagine a remedy. Proposals for their reform and restructuring vary according to one's theory of public administration. Various theories point to different events in the action field as important or not.

For 80 years, municipal reformers have supposed that the present structure of urban government is pathological. In their view, it is fragmented into parts that duplicate and overlap, in a way that is costly and ineffective. The earliest and most influential explanations of this theory were Woodrow Wilson's *Congressional Government* (1885) and Frank J. Goodnow's *Politics and Administration* (1900). Wilson conceived the state as unitary, with a single center of power, and constitutional separations and balances as little more than facade. He also argued that as power is more divided it becomes more irresponsible. Max Weber's writing on bureaucracy sustained Wilson's central themes.<sup>23</sup> Weber also thought that bureaucracies are inherently rational and efficient. The main idea was that, while government may have different political objectives, good administration has but one form—hierarchical organization, with top-down authority, directing technically trained civil servants. Its efficiency and effectiveness could be measured in economic terms: maximum output at minimum cost. Derivative principles of government reform have been repeated endlessly ever since. These include widening span of control, functional departmentalization, unity of command, consolidation of authority in unit heads, and centralization in a chief executive.

These principles, rationalized by theory that serves distinct ideological interests, have little or no empirical foundation. Nonetheless, with their support, municipal reformers justify reducing the number of governments within metropolitan areas, increasing the size of governments, placing greater reliance on hierarchical control, reducing the number of elected officials, and replacing limited authority jurisdictions (special districts) with those having general authority (cities and counties).

The strategy of municipal reform has had, as one of its aims, urban governance consolidated in mass bureaucracies, a goal that has been achieved to an unsettling degree. Defining the core of "the urban problem" as too many overlapping jurisdictions, the effect has been to treat citizens in their local communities as incompetent to govern themselves and to form institutions for that purpose. Withal, municipal reformers' claims for improvements in efficiency and effectiveness have not been borne out. The question raised by Vincent Ostrom is whether the municipal reform tradition has been the disease rather than the doctor of American public administration.<sup>24</sup>

The ideology of municipal reform—certainly it is not science—has overwhelmed public administration thinking and action. One of the more recent strategies in this vein, continuing the tradition of circumventing citizen capacity and consent, and denuding urban centers of social infrastructure, is the "umbrella multi-jurisdictional organizations" (UMJOs) in which Federal, state, and local officials cooperate. Their goal is to establish a new level of government, with policy control over planning and programming, and authority over special districts and other local governments and state agencies. Recommendations for UMJOs and similar organizations continue unabated, although their proponents have no firm evidence for their promised performance, no real constituencies, and no support from the electorate. Over the past three decades, voters rejected two-to-one

more than 60 proposed city-county consolidations that offered more centralization in this direction.

The forms and impacts of centralized bureaucratic governments should not come as a surprise. After his visit to this country in the early 1830s, the French nobleman Alexis de Tocqueville expressed the belief that centralized bureaucracy was the “despotism democratic nations have to fear” in the future.<sup>25</sup> He described a new type of public organization, for which he acknowledged having no name. Tocqueville imagined an organization that would “degrade without tormenting,” a powerful force for social isolation, undermining community, and becoming the unsatisfactory arbiter and guarantor of equality—while continuously narrowing the public space until the citizenry is reduced to “a flock of timid and industrious animals, of which the government is the shepherd.”

In their zealous purpose the municipal reformers ignored not only Tocqueville but also the dubious features of bureaucracy that Weber and others knew were endemic to “perfected” hierarchical organizations. The inherent anomalies include potential exploitation of the organization, its personnel and resource pool, by any political master; the impotence and dehumanization of individual bureaucrats; and the proven penchant of bureaucracies for exceeding—without political charter—virtually all other state-sanctioned authority, executive, legislative, and judicial. Moreover, urban government bureaucracies have shown a particular talent for remaining immune to the electorate. It is a verity of modern political life that so-called perfected bureaucracy is the antithesis of constitutional rule. It is hallmark has been the advent of “mass democracy,” a euphemism that cloaks the disappearance of local government and the transfer of responsibility for public life from its representatives and their constituencies to mass organizations.

Another destructive consequence of the municipal reform movement is the bureaucratic monopolization of public goods and bads. That is, the events—intangible and material—for which citizens have preferences and aversions. A great deal of bureaucratic inefficiency and insularity derives from its monopoly status, which limits citizens’ options for dealing with poor performance. To the continuous pain and resentment of people with low and moderate incomes, those who lack resources to leave the jurisdiction of an offensive, burdensome, or simply inept government, public bureaucracies have taken up the municipal reform practice of defining “producer efficiency” without reference to “consumer utility.” Monopolization raises an incentive for producers of public goods and services to realize cost savings, improving the appearance of economy, by placing greater burdens on consumers. For example, centralizing public health facilities in huge medical complexes imposes very large time and transportation costs on citizens who seek to use them, often deterring entirely the very groups that need them most. Succinctly stated, “producer efficiency in the absence of consumer utility is without economic meaning.”<sup>26</sup>

Inbred inefficiency in bureaucratic public organizations can also be traced to their being dominated by a single center of decision-making. The result is an exceedingly complicated, costly, and error-prone system of communication and control. The defect is accentuated by monopolization. It reduces sensitivity to large-scale diseconomies, inevitable with organizational growth and escalating management costs. Under bureaucratic management, public goods frequently erode into public bads, exceeding the organization’s capacity for changing social behavior.

If the call was once to “municipal reform,” it ought now be to “reform municipal reform.” The centralization-decentralization issue in urban governance is not, as so often characterized, whether small units of government are practicable but what can be done about mass organizations that, acting alone to produce and distribute public goods and to prevent public bads, are typically incapable of economy, efficiency, and responsiveness.

## Polycentricity

In contrast to the unitary municipal reform perspective, there is in the U.S. a competing history and theory of public administration. Reconstructing from *The Federalist* the theory implicit in a compound federal republic, Ostrom cites as its distinguishing feature the balancing of powers rather than their separation.<sup>27</sup> The idea is that in a compound structure of governments—local, state, and federal—each jurisdiction offsets the powers of the government above it, so that citizens can act through cities and counties to somewhat balance the states' powers, and act through the states to restrain Federal power. Ostrom's thesis is that this polycentric model was consciously employed by the founders of the Federal Republic in preference to the monocentric British state.

One characteristic of the compound structure is that each of the concurrent governments, although redundant in offering direct links between citizens and public officials, has limited and unique jurisdiction. The polycentric system is integrated by constitutional authority, a framework of law-making and law-enforcing beyond the reach of any government. The constitutional relationships are upheld by polycentricity in the judiciary.

In the quest to secure public goods and avoid public bads, polycentric government—compounded independent centers of public power—offers opportunities for a diversity of social communities to advance their interests. Communities of interest within this system may choose among competing governments for attaining a variety of collective goods.

Polycentric theory generates propositions for political practice and public administration that differ markedly from municipal reform principles—to wit: Public goods and services, depending on a number of variables, may be economically produced by organizations of every size; the existence of fewer public organizations within a given area is associated with greater reliance on hierarchy and monopolization, with attendant diseconomies; and larger monocentric governments are linked with irresponsibility of public officials and lessened citizen access and control.

Unlike the promised unity of the municipal reformer's idealized government, with polycentricity a patterned, stable, and productive structure may prevail only under an "illusion of chaos." Beginning with very different assumptions, polycentricity takes overlapping jurisdictions and division of authority as sources of strength. In polycentric systems it is possible to exploit diverse economies of scale, and to separate producer and consumer interests, thereby allowing responses to the broadest range of economies.

In brief, monocentric political systems concentrate public resources and authority. Polycentric systems have many independent authorities, none with a monopoly of power. Recognition of the compound Federal structure as a stable and productive polycentric system, composed of a vast number of independent yet federated public jurisdictions, is the first and essential step in developing an institutional schematic for urban government, retrieving it from the domination of centralized bureaucratic monopolies.

Public industry.— Unlike municipal reformers, urban development political-economists reject the a priori assumption that competition between public organizations is uneconomical. They also assume that a range of producers allows citizens more options—tailor-made packages of public goods and services—than available through bureaucratic monopolies. Thus government organizations in a polycentric system function very much as individual firms in an industry. Examples that approximate this arrangement on a national scale are public education, highways, and law enforcement. At the

metropolitan level, Los Angeles county has been described as a quasi-public industry because the County government provides many services to municipalities on a contract basis. Small jurisdictions bid competitively with larger ones, preserving both economy and the attributes of local autonomy. The catch in Los Angeles county is that for nearly half of the area's population, the "local government" is the City of Los Angeles.

Seeing a network of governments as an industry implies recognition that they share a base of knowledge and methodologies for producing and distributing similar goods. Competition between the producers, as with firms in the private market economy, has the benefit of inducing self-regulation through pressures for meeting valued performance demands. It is not necessary, however, to assume the presence of an "invisible hand" that ensures outcomes in the public interest from unfettered competition. Polycentricity in the public sector relies instead on the constitutional framework of laws and authority for their enforcement. Conflicts of interest are presumed to be inherent in the system and manageable with polycentric judicial organizations for their resolution.

In the public industry scenario it is not only possible to take advantage of diverse economies of scale and competitive incentives, but also significantly enhanced is the protest option for citizen dissatisfaction with public goods. There is a much-improved potential for articulation of demands and the alternative of self-help—but with access to public powers and resources. Individuals are somewhat relieved of the less satisfying and more onerous alternatives of moving from the jurisdiction or uncritical acceptance of its inadequacies.

While the advantages of polycentricity suggest that Adam Smith would not disapprove of public industry under capitalism, more striking is the idea that Marx and Engels too would accept the public market arrangement. It is, in fact, the direction in which a number of socialist and communist countries are moving.

## Urban Development Political-Economics

Polycentric theory is the foundation for what is now best known as "public choice" political-economics. Over the past few decades urban political-economists have been examining various organizational arrangements for producing public goods and services. They take individual choice as the basic unit of analysis, using assumptions about human behavior that neatly parallel social learning and exchange concepts. A major goal has been to determine the consequences of different organizational decision-making structures. They do not conclude that all polycentric systems are productive but that they may be optimized by varying several dimensions in their design.

Going further than municipal reform definitions of organizational performance that focus on the ratio of goods produced to their production costs, public choice political-economists look at production and consumption costs. Including consumers' burdens, such as travel and waiting times, ensures that "social" costs will be included in measures of performance. The complete criteria for evaluating government performance are efficiency, the ratio of production benefits (output) to costs (input); effectiveness, the quality of service as a function of cost; equity; the provision of special service to meet special need; equality, equal service for equal status; and accountability, citizen access and control.

The public choice approach to organizational design is based on a theory of public goods and bads. When proprietary capital markets exist, goods that can be divided and packaged for consumption according to individual preferences are usually in the private

economy. Because of the divisibility of such goods, however, those who do not pay, whether unable or unwilling, are excluded from enjoyment. Purely public goods and services are indivisible and, once produced, are (theoretically) accessible to all regardless of payment. Their costs are generally apportioned through taxes. Air pollution control and armies are examples of pure public goods. Some divisible goods are also produced publicly to maintain equity, to ameliorate hardship for those who are unable to pay for essentials. Also, when a good or service affects everyone equally by conditioning the total environment, as with police patrols or mosquito spraying, it may be public.

Production of a public good involves a transaction between consumers and producers within a jurisdiction. The benefits or burdens, resulting from the transaction, that spill over the jurisdiction's boundaries, affecting other parties not directly involved, are known as externalities or spillovers. Local public education, paid for by taxpayers and delivered by school districts, spills over unearned benefits to other parties outside of the districts; while a power generation plant may spill over burdens in the form of wastes that are buried in another jurisdiction. Public goods differ drastically in their geographic implications, with spillover boundaries ranging from neighborhood to nation. These infinitely variable externalities of public goods are one of the prime dimensions for optimizing organizational performance by design.

When goods that should be public are left to the private market, with the expectation that each user will voluntarily assume a fair fraction of the cost burden, the result is maximization of private welfare at the expense of the collective interest. There is no incentive to voluntarily share in the burdens. The bind for the individual is that, because the benefit is common and available to all, as in maintenance of local streets or financing medical research, no one can be excluded from enjoyment regardless of whether they pay. This logic partially accounts for the failures of grassroots community organizing: private individuals continue to reap their benefits whether or not they pay a share of the costs. Similarly, when a collective good is in short supply, as many are, even if many individuals in a private market voluntarily curtail their demands, some others with the necessary resources will act in their narrow self-interest and capture a disproportionate share of the available benefits. The energy shortage of the 1970s revealed this pattern in some respects. Ultimately, individuals without resources are forced out of the market as costs rise, leading to "poverty, deprivations, threats, and even violence," the benchmarks of distributive injustice. The bottom line is that when individual consumers of public goods are free to act independently, as with private goods, that is, to pay their share or not, the probable result is weakening and failure of institutions. It is necessary to have a sanction or attraction, usually a measure of government authority, to ensure a modicum of fair sharing.

Public bads are the reciprocals of public goods. The idea is that a good for the private individual may be a bad for the same person when considered as a member of the public. While the main goal of contemporary urban government is the provision of public goods, typically by increasing the quantity of facilities and services, there is an equally important need to eliminate public bads. In many situations the marginal yield of public goods is greater from achieving more effective usage of facilities, reducing public bads, than by enlarging their quantity.

The public choice view of organizational design is that each public good or service has an optimum scale of organization for production. In public services, economies of scale are associated with capital-intensive production, as with sewage treatment, power generation, water supply, and mass transportation. Small-scale economies are common with a variety of labor-intensive activities, such as teaching, maintenance, inspection, and various forms of policing.

## Organizational Design

Empirical studies have confirmed for several decades that economies of scale can be achieved in a diversity of organizational arrangements. Despite municipal reform rhetoric, there is an ambiguous relationship between shifting service responsibility upward and improvements in effectiveness or efficiency. A substantial and growing number of studies demonstrate that polycentricity does not result in higher service costs. It is clear that very few government functions should be entirely centralized or decentralized.

Historically, public organizations in polycentric systems are spontaneous creations, coming from the bottom up. A community of individuals have an incentive to act as public entrepreneurs, forming their own government, when it is generally apparent that through jointly risking investment, benefits can be realized over and above costs by a clear margin. Similarly, when the incipient civil community matches the jurisdiction of an existing government, the incentive is to rely on that organization for the desired good or service. So long as the necessary conditions for polycentricity prevail, a user-centered mix of public goods and services can be achieved by a combination of variously sized independent public organizations.

The main obstacle to achieving a polycentric system is that, in the absence of the private market's price-profit mechanism for regulating production and consumption, articulation of citizen demand and decisions about production are limited to currently inadequate political representation, voting, and protest. The shortcomings are not difficult to detect. At-large elections and mass constituencies, the absence of mass-based urban political parties, and the lack of social infrastructure usable for bottom-up citizen action, have made it impossible for citizens to effectively influence elected officials. Those who still believe that there is "civic accountability" operate with a number of doubtful assumptions: that government representatives can be called to account through the electoral system for the conduct of public employees, that each public organization has workable procedures for equitably resolving large-scale citizen complaints and demands, and that public officials are generally responsive to the broad public interest.

Systems for making political decisions involve resources—their development, allocation, and use—in an environment of competing claims. The design of organizational structure presents a problem of "constitutional choice," to select rules for making decisions and to assign decision-making responsibility to various communities of interest. The main design goal is to shape decision-making structures so as to maximize the overall system's output of public goods, while minimizing destructive conflicts. To do so requires that burdens and benefits are shared fairly, that relevant terms are promulgated for their distribution, that a capacity for conflict resolution exists, and that public organizations are accountable to their communities of interest.

The dilemma in designing organizational arrangements is to select decision-rules from along a continuum that specifies the proportion of individuals needed in agreement for collective action. The trade-off costs are of two types: When decision-making is contracted, becoming more exclusive, speed is improved but individual preferences are ignored, lessening support for decisions. When decision-making is expanded, becoming more inclusive, "ownership" of decisions is broadened, but open controversy causes delays.

In organizational design for metropolitan government, problems of both externalities and decision-making are best cured by polycentric arrangements. Small organiza-

tions, modeled to be politically inclusive, can act as producers and distributors of special goods and services desired by the communities of interest that constitute them. Higher levels of organization, encompassing districts and whole metropolitan regions, more exclusive politically, can function as producers, wholesalers, and retailers. The integrated system is a public industry in that, given the independence of units at each level, it is inevitable that there will be competition, bargaining, and cooperation.

In sum, organizational design for urban government must take several factors into account. Efficiency, effectiveness, equity, equality, and accountability must all be considered. Boundaries must include relevant events: air pollution problems, for instance, necessitate a regional approach; parks are generally better suited to neighborhood scale; and other goods, such as zoning decisions, are best divided between jurisdictions. Boundaries must be sensible not only for externalities and scale economies but political interests as well: those affected must be included in decision-making, at all levels, directly and by representation.

## Issues & Problems

The central issue in U.S. national development is not what is to be done but how. Self-governance in urban centers must be vitalized, not by exchanging central for local control, but by balancing the existing top-heavy system. The basic polycentric model for this purpose is two-tier metropolitan government, dividing government power and functions along area-wide and neighborhood boundaries. While governments at both levels are admittedly deficient now, the more serious deficit by far exists at the lower level. Given the presence of counties, regional public authorities, and councils of governments, the most pressing need is to introduce neighborhood jurisdictions into existing and incipient civil communities, thereby creating (or recreating) necessary social infrastructure.

We will speculate on the form of both lower and upper tiers, plus problems and potentialities in their integration. Before going further that way, however, there are several related issues and problems that require brief mention. There is first a question of whether by institutionalizing citizen action it is necessarily eviscerated. Second, there is an issue as to whether institutional forms can create social communities where none otherwise exist. Third, there is the matter of which rubric is preferable for institutionalizing citizen action, the main possibilities being corporate and governmental. And lastly, it is necessary to question whether institutionalization and empowerment of small political communities is antithetical to social justice goals.

Anti-institutionalization.— Critics of efforts to institutionalize citizen action have taken the point of view that it is insurgency, largely by itself, which compels redistributive development—and that organizational structure is invariably limiting. One readable version of this idea suggests that unionization, the structuring of the labor movement's organizations, unequivocally diminished the potency of strike power to disrupt production. From this perspective, organizing efforts are best focused on mobilization. This idea certainly suggests a fundamental fact that eludes many organizers: mass organization alone is not a power lever to compel changes in the state's political-economic structures. But to imply that organization generally is inimical to such restructuring takes the point beyond evidence and common sense.

To accept this anti-institutionalization viewpoint is to implicitly accept the proposition that labor's most valued insurgency tactics, such as the sit-down strike, were main-

ly manifestations of the insurgency itself. We are left to imagine that insurgency generates most of the sufficient and necessary infrastructural forms, without cultural roots and somehow disconnected from the historical conditions that stimulate and reinforce organized action. It is as if the contingencies and ideologies of all previous labor experience—the learning history of a movement—suddenly became disconnected from the new “unorganized” insurgency. What this ignores is the preceding century of labor organizing and the extent to which the insurgency of the 1930s was rooted in it. Union leaders and organizers had a long and weighty history in creating not only organizations but also the workplace labor-oriented learning and exchange contingencies and ideological realities. They had turnkey roles in developing the fabric of workplace culture, designing and testing, refining and rejecting models for roles, decision-making, and action. All this was passed across and down generations of workers until it converged with the conditions that impelled the insurgency.

There is another problem with the bias against institutionalization of citizen action. It is whether an unorganized movement, a mass insurgency, can collect its winnings, effectively enforcing the terms of concessions won. We know the organized parties play that role in revolutions. And nothing so distinguishes the grassroots organizations of recent decades as their ability to envision “winning”—an endless string of “victories”—but their inability to imagine having won. They have not projected, as the American revolutionists, the labor movement, the women’s campaign for suffrage, or even as the civil rights activists did, a scenario in which they effect a change in the structure of the state, a permanent modification in relations of power by long-term concerted action. The capstone for successful social movements that have political and economic objectives is usually a form of institutionalization, either by legislative or constitutional action, whereby basic goals are achieved and it is no longer necessary to invest a majority of movement resources in organizational survival.

One possible source of bias against institutionalizing direct citizen action is confusion about the goals of organized movements and the effects of sponsorship. Except at the fringes, the union movement was not a revolutionary development strategy, not even during moments of extreme insurgency. It was a strategy of redistributive development via bottom-up investment in social infrastructure, attained finally in the passage of the Wagner Act and related legislation. It was essentially irrevocable legislation that permanently restructured relations of power, backing with the authority and enforcement agencies of the state, the rights of workers to organize and bargain collectively. From then on, for many years, refinement and exercise of power replaced organizational consolidation and survival as the chief preoccupations of labor. To be critical of the unions’ new positions in the structure of the state, as if permanent insurgency should have (or could have) been maintained, may be an interesting idea intellectually, but not to working people and their families.

Then there is the link between sponsorship and debilitating institutionalization. There are a number of state responses to disruption of the institutional order. The state and its agencies, by extensive control of resources of all types, are able to divert and undermine threats by managing contingencies and ideologies. When the state itself has been the sponsor of action directed against it, there is a nearly unlimited capacity to prevent, blunt, and repel attacks. In the War on Poverty the state’s position of sponsoring infrastructural development gave it a telling strategic advantage, the ability to withdraw critical resources or make new allocations to displace the goals of its own institutional creations when they became threatening. On the other hand, bottom-up sponsorship, while not guaranteeing invulnerability to symbolic and tangible concessions designed to placate and



pacify, and to internal liabilities, is not similarly and necessarily incapacitated by institutionalization.

Social communities.— There is a point of view that neighborhood government can serve as the basis for urban social communities, that its establishment will lead to them. There has also been a critical response, that organization per se, whatever its form, cannot create social communities. My understanding is that the potential for neighborhood government, like that for labor union locals in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, is revealed not in the dearth of such organizations but in the presence of conditions, and shared ideas about them, that impel people toward organization. By 1875, urbanization and industrialization were producing, along with great wealth, intolerable conditions for labor. Even with criminal conspiracy laws and heavily repressive measures by public and private authorities, there was unflagging organizing of local unions—institutionalization of workplace social communities. The incipient rise of similar social communities, now neighborhood-based, is visible in the urban movements of recent decades. These are likely to flourish in coming years, given the systemic problems, weaknesses, and failures of industrial capitalism and urbanization—and likely to be potentiated by organizational means.

Before any organization can empower by legitimization, legal access to resources, or other advantages, there must be a common history that stimulates action, coupled with the development of related ideologies. An array of social, political, and economic conditions must compel the growth of social communities—as with the energy shortage and resulting decline in mobility that feeds localism—before there is a concerted search for organizational forms that aid in adapting to the changing environment.

Institutionalizing rubrics.— There are a number of possible rubrics for institutionalizing citizen action in public life. Religious institutions played this role in Western cultures for centuries, through the Middle Ages, and still do elsewhere. Commercial institutions, among which Americans count the Massachusetts Bay Company and others similarly chartered, have also served an institutionalizing purpose.

Community and economic development corporations are a more recent example of the commercial genre. There are several problems, however, in adapting private corporate organizations to purposes of public activity or governance. Even with more than a decade of successes in planning, service delivery, and enterprise, these corporations have not shown the slightest tendency to transform themselves into genuine public jurisdictions. The development corporations do not possess, and do not appear at all likely to acquire, powers and authorities accorded to governments as formal expressions of the state. Furthermore, while they have been valuable experiments in decentralization, the development corporations have not succeeded in establishing for themselves an effective role in metropolitan politics, nor have they become economically independent of the organizations that created them.

The choice of government as a legal and organizational rubric to institutionalize direct citizen action has several advantages. Social infrastructure requires large investments of social overhead capital, characterized by long-term gestation and indirect pay-offs. Permanent organizational substructure is costly, and the multiple revenue sources available to government make it a viable mechanism for capitalizing goods, services, and enterprises. Also, citizen action in small organizations, and incentives to share the burdens of public goods, are both closely related to the power of government to impose sanctions for support. Finally, unlike their corporate counterparts, government organizations,

as formal expression of the state, possess special and unique powers of law-making, taxation, borrowing, eminent domain, and policing.

Dilemmas of equity.— There are a number of concerns about empowering small urban communities. They've been described as "decentralization dilemmas." It is often asked whether there is a conflict between equal treatment and social justice—equality versus equity—in the creation of neighborhood governments. The problem can be illustrated by imagining an urban region overlaid with such public organizations. The difficulty is that if resources are equally accessible to, and divided among, all neighborhood jurisdictions, there may be equal treatment but without social justice that is responsive to the special needs of low-income, ethnic, and non-white areas. There is a related concern that decentralization may also shield the desire of some urban neighborhoods for racial or ethnic exclusivity, obstructing the broader social quest for integration. And there is a fear that "neighborhoodization" simply will lead to abandonment of the "have-nots" by the "haves."

It may be that metropolitan resources would be distributed among neighborhood jurisdictions more on an equality than an equity formula, on a per capita rather than need basis. But since local government appropriations are far from equitable at present, except in state and Federally mandated programs, the loss is likely to be imperceptible. In those situations where provincial or other negative tendencies threaten distribution of resources for ensuring equity, higher levels of government—their programs, regulatory legislation, and enforcement activities—are somewhat mitigating. There is another answer that bolsters this point of view. Although neighborhood empowerment will not bring about any instant changes in the status of the society's victimized classes, the acquisition of some authentic state power—something they are acutely alienated from at present—is hardly a setback.

Regarding predictions that public powers vested in grassroots organizations will intensify racial and ethnic isolation, there is a bottom-up view that is alien to the liberal and progressive rhetoric that advocates integration for others at all costs. It is that virtually all whites except those in the lowest socio-economic classes share the "benefits" of the present system of mass urban government, to not only maintain their own exclusive enclaves but to contain and exploit minority ghettos too. The view from the bottom is that trading the rhetoric of integration for some form of institutionalized neighborhood empowerment is not lamentable.

Equally not compelling from the bottom-up perspective is the argument that in the event there is an urban government structure of neighborhood organizations, the areas with resources (tax base) are likely to secede, leaving those without to fend for themselves. The idea is based on a limited and mistaken conception of urban government as either centralized or decentralized, rather than polycentric. In the latter, neighborhood governments are part of a compound structure that nominally includes a metropolitan government, plus state and Federal jurisdictions. It is not possible to secede from their authority, particularly their taxing, regulatory, and judicial powers. In present circumstances within the total urban political-economy, the relationship between rich and poor jurisdictions is closer to exploitation than charitable benevolence, barely camouflaged by local transfers of revenue. If secession were in fact possible, low-income neighborhoods might have the most to gain, winning for themselves the right to manage their own development, even at great cost, without the handicap of civilizing exploitation by powerful local interests.

There is a positive answer to predictions of more isolation of all types from institutionalized neighborhood empowerment. Unlike the present situation in which central-

ized bureaucratic governments deny public space to virtually all citizens with low and moderate incomes, the advent of new small neighborhood jurisdictions would offer real opportunities for self-interested cooperation between different racial, ethnic, and socio-economic urban communities. There will always be pressures for formal and informal service and mutual aid agreements in such a polycentric system. In the bureaucratic city, neighborhoods are often restricted to interacting, at the polls or elsewhere, only in destructive competition or conflict. While both will undoubtedly remain, formal neighborhood jurisdictions within the context of metropolitan government would also create genuine opportunities for cooperative joint ventures.

## Compound Urban Government

Polycentric urban governance by a two-tier compound structure of metropolitan and neighborhood jurisdictions, comparable to the relationship between the national and state governments, is the most promising institutional schematic for rendering public space through long-term investment in social infrastructure. It is not far-fetched to expect that future forms of urban governance will grow out of “prediction” and “promotion”—from necessity, from evolving conditions, both internal and environmental, and from active change-agency. It is in this context that the compound structure is suggested as the best institutional schematic for organizing infrastructure.

Aspects of this model have been demonstrated piecemeal for the past several decades, some imposed by incumbent officials, some placed before voters and accepted, and some gained by direct citizen action. Withal, the little city halls, community advisory councils, city-county consolidations, community-controlled schools, and similar experiments, while showing capacities or limitations, are far from definitive tests of a compound structure for urban governance. They are often fatally flawed for reasons that, at least retrospectively, if not entirely certain are also not completely obscure.

The participation bind for citizens in the low- to moderate-income brackets explains their reluctance to engage in top-down-designed and directed decentralization schemes: while they cannot achieve power without participation, the very same participation is uninviting in the absence of power. In the same way, even with an infinite number of explanatory variables, rejection of municipal reform ballot propositions for city-county consolidations is not an enigma: public antipathy to centralized bureaucracy, and the considerable disenfranchising effects of consolidations on political constituencies, explain a great deal. And the disappointing outcomes of attempts to achieve community-controlled schools in New York, if not predictable from the outset, at least must be admitted as probable. The educational problems were intractable, the social climate one of hardened racial-ethnic conflict, the solution strategy mixed up with a politically controversial city government, and the available resources so limited as to virtually guarantee an unsatisfactory outcome.

The two-tier compound structure defines the linkages between neighborhoods, districts within urban areas, and whole metropolitan regions. The compound structure is thus a more inclusive view of, and response to, the interests and constituencies—political and economic—which must be included in urban governance. The model divides public power and gains advantages from decentralization and centralization: it serves both the political and economic functions of social infrastructure. Metropolitan boundaries may correspond to an existing county or may require consolidation of two or more counties into a new area-wide jurisdiction, as proposed for some time in the San Francisco Bay

Area. Although in the Bay Area it remains an unattractive option without a lower tier of neighborhood governments to anchor the structure.

This vision fits well within the historic Federal framework and provides, at least theoretically, a hierarchy of public organizations for a restructured Federal system of “metropolitan states.” More than a decade ago, Robert Dahl imagined a constitutional convention that would adopt a system of overlapping public jurisdictions, a compound structure of neighborhood, metropolitan, regional, and national centers of government power.<sup>28</sup>

## Lower Tier Organization

Direct articulation of the political will in small social communities, neighborhoods corresponding to the lower tier in a compound structure, requires a mix of public powers. As with every other level of political expression, whether municipal, county, state, or federal, the successful production of public goods and services rests on a complex repertoire of organizational capacities. There must be the wherewithal to acquire, transform, and distribute resources. Even with acknowledged limitations on their authority, such as those stemming from externalities or preemption by higher jurisdictions, authentic political expression of the collective will within neighborhoods demands legislative, taxing, and other public powers. These, along with freedom to contract and to assume debt, are essential for capitalization and operation of services and enterprises.

There are three neighborhood-scaled forms of public organization that may constitute the lower tier in a compound structure. They can be distinguished by the direction of their formation sponsorship, their functions and authority, and the characteristic ways in which their powers vest. The generic types are administrative decentralization, political decentralization, and petition-election formation.

Administrative decentralization is easily recognizable from the imprimatur of its sponsors. Notwithstanding the decentralization, it represents an enlargement of the centralized bureaucracy, an ironic expansion, to fix an already legendary sluggishness. Branches are established at lower levels, like Boston’s “little city halls,” serving populations from 50,000 upwards, with managerial subordinates granted discretion to gather input and implement policies of central decision-makers. The professed goal is to upgrade the distribution of public goods and services, to improve equity and equality as well as efficiency and economy, by more accurate measurement of need and targeting or tailoring of delivery.

Political decentralization, too, is sponsored from the top down. It differs substantially, however, from administrative decentralization. Various limited political powers may be devolved to local organizations. The neighborhood organization is granted a limited franchise for a limited purpose under the supervision of the larger, public jurisdiction. The heart of political decentralization is not branch management but devolved decision-making, narrow and constrained to be sure, yet policy-making authority nonetheless. It is best manifested in neighborhood councils governed by locally elected representatives who have broad authority for top-down-delegated programs and services. The authority of the local representatives frequently includes a “legislative” mandate, to make decisions on policy circumscribed by higher authorities. While most writers recommend giving limited taxing authority to neighborhood councils, the practice is unheard of at present and entirely without advocates among big-city mayors and elected county officials. Political decentralization in its ideal form hardly exists.

Neighborhood-scaled jurisdictions formed from the bottom up by petition and election differ decisively from their top-down-sponsored counterparts. The most important yet least apparent distinction between governments organized by petition and election, say special and community services districts, and those created by devolutionary processes, is the way in which their powers vest. The decentralization of political decision-making in neighborhood councils, while a sharing of policy-making authority, never truly vests the authority in the local organization: the same quality of action that first effects the political decentralization may at any later time be repeated for purposes of dissolution or disempowerment. In contrast, organizing independent governments by petition and election, permitted in most states by existing laws, permanently vests power in the newly created jurisdictions. Withdrawal of the vested authority requires extraordinary conditions and actions, much as would be needed to eliminate cities and counties. Formation by petition differs also from devolutionary (top-down-decentralizing) approaches, in that jurisdictions thus founded commonly include permanent if somewhat limited grants of those powers that are unique to governments. They are usually entitled to enact and enforce ordinances, levy taxes or service charges, exercise eminent domain, etc.

The main shortcoming of top-down decentralization for infrastructural development is that it is inadequate to satisfy the functions of public space. Grassroots empowerment in the urban political-economy demands organization that has at least the potential to countervail hierarchical institutions. In the metropolitan arena of bureaucratic hegemony, organizations created by top-down initiatives can do little more than pledge their fealty in the struggle for redistributive development. In the inevitable zero-sum conflict between lower tiers so constituted and upper tiers of their bureaucratic superordinates, previews of which we had during a decade of ill-fated war on poverty, the predictable outcomes must be withdrawal of not fully vested resources and authority, possibly coupled with new allocations designed to displace the subordinate organization's goals, directly or indirectly.

In the best of top-down decentralization, that which at least temporarily devolves political authority, there may be said to be distributive development, a form of exchange that hopefully enhances government performance, but without substantive institutional alteration or redistribution of resources. In bottom-up organizing of independent governments by petition and election, there is both immediate and incipient redistributive development, by the instant vesting of public powers in previously powerless social communities and in the potential future countervailing application of those powers.

## Neighborhood Government

One of the persistent issues in the literature on neighborhood government is representative versus direct democracy, and the related matter of jurisdictional scale. Most writers quickly conclude that, with the size of metropolitan areas, minimum scale for neighborhood jurisdictions (usually estimated from 10,000 to more than 100,000) precludes direct democracy. The implicit argument is that if neighborhood governments were scaled to serve populations from 5,000 to 10,000, best for direct democracy, some 150 to 300 such jurisdictions would be necessary in an urban area of 1.5 million. Two assumptions are put forward to suggest that this is unworkable: first, that in a two-tier system the metropolitan government's legislative body would be outsized with so many representatives, assuming that the neighborhoods are to designate its deputies; and second, that even with jurisdictions as small as 5,000, the one-at-a-time rule—that the floor of an assembly

can be occupied by only one speaker at a time—precludes popular assembly. But both these assumptions are at least questionable.

Given modern urban demographics, with a single metropolitan area now comparable to the country as a whole at its founding, the legislative body for the upper tier in a compound (two-tier) urban government might be expected to be a congress—a congregation of representatives from independent governments—of several hundred neighborhood representatives. Most current metropolitan and regional public authorities are run by a handful of self-appointed city and county officials whose actions, in the absence of constituencies that are grounded in electorates, are unchecked by the voters.

The argument that neighborhood jurisdictions scaled below 10,000 are unworkable, primarily because their total number would create unwieldy representation in metropolitan government, has a further defect. There are other options, yet to be considered, which are more attractive and more likely to eventuate given existing alignments of interests in most urban areas.

The one-at-a-time rule is the least troubling argument against direct democracy. It is facile but misleading. While it is obvious that only one person may occupy the floor of a deliberative body at any point in time, public business may nevertheless be conducted simultaneously in a number of other quarters. Numerous departments and committees offer limitless additional settings for “popular assembly.” The threat of one speaker monopolizing the floor can also be dismissed, as it was in the French societies populaires, by the citizen assembly standing when a speaker digresses or gets tiresome.

“The economic” argument against neighborhood government sized to serve populations of 5,000 to 10,000 is that small scale is inherently inefficient for delivery of services. But both polycentric theory and public administration practice refute this point. The theory suggests that public services have logical divisions that match governments of many sizes. For example, research over the past decade confirms beyond doubt that urban law enforcement may be so divided, with gains probable on virtually all measures of performance. Feasible divisions might be along the lines of a three-part separation of (1) support functions (records, communications, laboratory services, detention, training, etc.), (2) crime-fighting (capture of criminals, stake-outs, SWAT activities, etc.), and (3) maintenance of public order (traffic control, public education, mediation of neighborhood disputes, etc.)—the first to metropolitan jurisdictions, the second to districts, and the last to neighborhoods. Similar divisions can easily be drawn for recreation, transportation, social and health services, judicial administration, and education.

“Enclave cities,” often municipalities with populations of 5,000 to 10,000, located in urban areas, demonstrate this idea in practice. They successfully finance and manage police and fire services and public works activities. Nearly all enclave cities operate refuse collection, parks and recreation, and street maintenance services. These small municipalities, limited in their capacities to undertake special functions (e.g., hospitals, sewage treatment, police training, etc.), contract with other governments as needed for these services. Also, safety services are usually supplemented by mutual assistance pacts with adjacent jurisdictions.

If the main arguments against direct democracy and the small scale it demands are not compelling, the most prominent ones in favor at least speak to its value and feasibility. They are based on the utility of public space and self-managed labor-intensive enterprise for urban social communities.

Public space.— In modern, centralized states, whether “democratic” private-monopoly-capitalist or “socialist” state-monopoly-capitalist, alienation of the citizenry is pervasive. Individuals are denied meaningful roles in decisions of governance and pro-

duction, which are reserved to distant and dehumanized mass organizations. There is also extensive alienation from consumption decisions. The familiar picture is frustration of human potential by denial of power. Alienation originates in isolation from power, lack of resources for exchange in the political-economy; and in a parallel decay of ideology in which the old systems of belief are no longer reinforced by the action outcomes they influence. Consequently, behavior becomes divested of values, moral purpose, and ultimate objectives, leading to public malaise and material obsession. We see the indicators of mass alienation in refusal to vote and drive for privatization.

People with moderate- to low-incomes who are not only dissatisfied but want to do something, albeit often reactionary, either find no way or are steered to positions and roles without power. They are denied what in the past was called “political liberty,” a better known expression for public space. For Thomas Jefferson and modern observers too, American independence created new political liberty but failed to institutionalize public space for its expression in action by the general citizenry, except for occasional elections. The Constitution granted all power to the citizens, but withheld opportunities for acting as citizens. Government discussing and deciding, the hallmark of political liberty, was closed to all but representatives.

Jefferson believed this lack of public space was a defect in the structure of the newly established state and would continue to threaten national well being. His conviction was that public space is a preventive measure and antidote to political tyranny, including the bureaucratic variety, and to endless cycles of insurgency and repression. He was convinced that without public space as a permanent platform for citizen action, “we shall go on in the endless circle of oppression, rebellion, reformation; and repression, reformation, again; and so on forever.” Jefferson also believed, however, that the presence of directly democratic government within a polycentric system would ensure that “every man in the state will let his heart be torn out of his body sooner than let his power be wrested from him by a Caesar or Bonaparte.” After his retirement from public life, he advocated subdividing the counties into “little republics,” patterned on New England town governments, most of which were founded and continue as popular assemblies.

The need for public space has grown rather than diminished over the course of our national history. Apart from the centralized bureaucracies, the country’s two-party-based system of representation is feeding a vale of political alienation. Not long after the Revolution a representative in Congress had about 25,000 constituents. The number today is above 500,000. Even with recent state and Federal reforms, candidates for contested House seats typically have six-figure budgets for primary campaigns. It is public knowledge that the money and “good will” that attracts it come from a relative handful of sources, many of which are corporations, despite the law. It is not difficult to understand how elected officials are recruited to serve special interests that hold irresponsible power and how the representative system is transformed from a means of articulating the democratic will to a method for subverting it. We have mind-boggling national problems of inflation, productivity decline, and hardcore unemployment—a fiscal crisis of the state; deeply-rooted organized crime, a self-directed covert intelligence community, and institutional racism; plus a veritable host of social pathologies—and all are impacted from age and neglect. But in the midst of this the Democrats and Republicans are fighting to maintain the political-economic status quo and their own immunity from the voters. Reputable studies confirm the common sense belief that voting and government policy are at best remotely related. Predictably, millions of people intuitively understand that going to the polls is not a remedy for their sweeping powerlessness, with school bond referendums and initiatives that limit taxes possible partial exceptions.

Our national decline is marked by deprivation and alienation that result in part from massive scale, accompanied by the breakdown of political representation and the advent of centralized bureaucratic organization. We can reasonably expect in coming decades that, as worsening conditions feed the growth of urban social communities, there will be more frequent and extreme attempts to initiate and renew broadly based public life. Transforming this energy into successful social development will depend heavily on the institutionalization of empowering roles in the political-economy for the general citizenry, on the creation of directly democratic public space.

Public enterprise.— Our existing laws and traditions, grounded in capitalist interests and ideologies, generally hinder governments from engaging in “enterprise,” those aspects of productive activity normally considered the preserve of private, profit-making organizations. The manufacturing of tangible goods and the production or distribution of private (inherently divisible) services in the capitalist economy, particularly, are excluded from legitimate public activity—although not absolutely. It is ironic because we trace our history from the English parishes that obtained income by brewing beer, renting pews, and other enterprise, and from the colonies that were founded by commercial exploration companies. But there are more modern and convincing reasons for neighborhood governments to engage in enterprise within the context of polycentric public industry.

Social infrastructure represents investment in a form of collective capital that serves individual beneficiaries yet is charged to the general social community through taxation. Public sponsorship for development of social infrastructure bestows unearned benefits on owners of private capital. Owners of large capital accumulations, of which there are relatively few, enjoy extraordinary advantages, without charge, from public investments in social infrastructure. This is verified in urban centers when such investments are withheld and the infrastructure begins to disintegrate or disappears. As public investment declines, private enterprise and capital accumulation suffer setbacks, victims of human resource shortages. There is decay of the labor force, slackening of training, education, and health care; and failure of public services, from policing and maintenance of streets to mail service.

Public subsidies to private enterprise, through uncompensated investments in social infrastructure, create lucrative incentives for more capital-intensive technology and production. Yet there is a deep and reasoned consensus among radical economists that long-term recovery and development of the mature capitalist political-economy requires a shift away from capital-intensive, socially wasteful industries. Their great demands for capital, energy, and materials tend to restrict ownership and control to a small minority, strain the state’s fiscal capacity to the breaking point, generate unmanageable wastes and social pathologies, and leave idle huge reservoirs of labor. The alternative is for the public to directly reap some of the benefits of their investment in social infrastructure by engaging in less-capital-intensive enterprise.

There is a panoply of opportunities for small-scale, publicly sponsored, labor-intensive enterprise, offering practical routes to beginning economic decentralization of the political-economy. Nothing in the U.S. Constitution prohibits the states from exercising proprietary rights of enterprise, and several—North Dakota most notably with state banks—have done so. In *People of Puerto Rico v. Eastern Sugar Association* (156 F. 2d 316, 1946), the U.S. Court of Appeals upheld the Puerto Rican legislature’s use of eminent domain to break up large concentrations of land holdings by sugar companies. The states may grant these proprietary rights to local governments, either through their chartering, by legislative enactment or initiative, or constitutional amendment. State courts have gone so far as to allow municipalities to engage in commerce beyond their own city



limits. Local governments in Michigan own and operate housing in Florida for older citizens. An early Ohio court decision allowed a city to run a railroad across its own boundaries.

Attempts by municipalities during the nineteenth century to own and operate utilities were first branded “gas and water socialism.” But at last count nearly 2,000 cities owned utility companies. Local governments in this century have run printing plants, telephone systems, public baths, laundries, theaters, markets, and much more. Visalia, California, at present, owns a basketball team, and 12 other cities own cable TV systems. More recently, one of the directors of the Golden Gate Bridge District, the multi-county public authority that operates a ferry fleet and bus system as well, recommended that the jurisdiction purchase or construct its own oil refinery, to satisfy its own needs and those of all other public transportation agencies in Northern California. Once the local government is granted proprietary authority, it may acquire an enterprise or supplementary resources either by purchase or eminent domain, although a public purpose must be served in both cases, and fair compensation made in the latter.

Intermediate technologies already exist for manufacturing enterprise, many as by-products of international development, making it possible to create large numbers of less-capital-intensive workplaces. This prospect does more than raise a hope for relieving what has become a near-abscess of alienation in the workplaces of industrial capitalism. Given the absence of any economic law that predicts a better capital-to-output ratio by concentrating capital at fewer sites, there is also a promise of greater total economic productivity.

Development of neighborhood government service enterprises is also likely to have beneficial implications for alienation and economic output. The decentralization experiments of recent decades have tested and refined many such enterprises—food cooperatives, daycare centers, community tool cribs, job exchanges, *ad infinitum*.

Public sponsorship of labor intensive enterprise, if by directly democratic neighborhood governments, presents the novel prospect of distant yet feasible long-range opportunities for worker self-management in the U.S., a direct cure for workplace alienation. The potential for productive worker-controlled, directly democratic enterprise has been demonstrated repeatedly, in Israel, Yugoslavia, Chile, and elsewhere. The most obvious approach to integrating self-managed enterprise in neighborhood government is a variation on the Yugoslavian model, a two-chamber assembly, with popular participation in the “lower house” based on residence and representation in the “upper house” based on workplace.

Implicit in the incremental vesting of public powers in grassroots organizations is a slow but abiding tendency to countervail corporate power. The union movement, in its early life, was an example of how long-range, bottom-up investment in organizational infrastructure can refine and consolidate new power, critically altering relations with the elites that monopolize private capital.

The scope of alienation in our urbanized industrial society, the isolation from decision-making power in residence-places, workplaces, marketplaces, and governments, promotes a strong bias to directly-democratic rather than representative neighborhood jurisdictions: it is a brief for public space and self-managed enterprise. The upper and lower population limits for such “open” government—10,000 and 5,000 respectively—do not present any insurmountable problems for organizing the upper tier of metropolitan government.

As many more social communities arise in urban centers during the coming decades, primed for organizing by the downwardly-spiraling conditions created by urban governance through mass organizations and the effects of mature industrial capitalism,

directly-democratic neighborhood government can be the most effective means for filling the infrastructural void.

## Upper Tier Organization

Achieving a single, unified upper tier in metropolitan governance is more or less problematic according to the number of counties and large cities in an urban region. Defining the area to be encircled by the metropolitan government involves estimating the urban population density and spatial distribution, and overall patterns of externalities. When the existing county government corresponds to the area-wide community, the main tasks are to expand its authority and responsibility, and to transform the structure of executive and legislative offices. When the urbanized area includes two or more counties, the task is to consolidate them into a new, regionally defined metropolitan jurisdiction. These objectives, seemingly fantastic, are all more feasible if there is parallel development of public powers in grassroots organizations, even on a modest scale.

The future success of urban governance by a two-tier structure will also be linked to the disposition of existing special and general-purpose governments. The list of possibilities is endless, and certainly none are predictable. Except for those special districts and municipalities that have unquestionably become obsolete, dissolving voluntarily, merging, or consolidating with metropolitan or neighborhood governments, it must be reasoned that such units will continue to represent genuine if not symmetrical civil communities in the urban political-economy. The future that I imagine is a compound, polycentric structure, two-tiers, metropolitan and neighborhood predominating, but not excluding the remaining special districts and municipalities.

Electoral options.— The central issue in the development of an upper tier is office-holding (or districting). There are a number of options: Metropolitan officials may be named by neighborhood governments and hold their upper-tier incumbency ex officio. They may be elected from districts that match neighborhood government jurisdictions. In either case, the legislative body of the metropolitan government would resemble a congress, with several hundred representatives. Another option is for the upper-tier officials to be directly elected from larger districts. Or they may be elected at large.

All these alternatives present problems and possibilities, and, for the most part, detailed discussion of them is premature and serves little practical purpose for organizers. It is useful for practice, however, to understand the general outlines of these possibilities. It appears in this regard that there may be a convergence between the electoral form that is the most appropriate for the upper tier and that which is most likely to eventuate in the actual emergence of metropolitan government.

There are clear disadvantages and dangers in constituting metropolitan governments as federations of neighborhood representatives, either ex officio or directly elected, or electing upper tier officials at large. There is the general drawback of focusing disproportionate attention on either neighborhood or metropolitan concerns. On one side is the disconcerting possibility of a metropolitan government of neighborhood representatives bogged down in ceaseless conflict, pursuing narrow interests without let-up, absent any institutionalized representation of larger geo-political interests. On the other side, the dangers of at-large elections for metropolitan government are high-cost election campaigns, resulting in severe financial burdens and restriction of office-seeking to a select

few—coupled with the tendency to undermine the voting power, in metropolitan elections, of sizable minority constituencies, usually Hispanic, black, or low-income.

There is an at-large electoral system that, without districting, ensures representation of multiple constituencies exactly in proportion to their voting strength. This “proportional representation,” unfortunately, is exceedingly complex in operation and very unlikely to gain public acceptance as a reform measure. While voting in this system is not complicated, ballot counting is—and has been known to go on for more than a week.

Electoral districting of the upper tier in metropolitan government, on the scale of existing large councilmanic and supervisorial districts, with constituencies of 50,000 to 500,000, may be both most likely and desirable. It is probable because of the bias to the interests of contemporary elected representatives and their constituencies; it is desirable because, given the choice between at-large representation that favors “metropolitanism” and neighborhood representation that favors “localism,” it offers a means for building district-wide alliances and resolving intergovernmental conflicts.

Insofar as neighborhood and metropolitan governments are organized and begin to operate in coming decades as compound structures, their successes in meeting the challenges of urban governance will reflect the linkages between them. There must be institutionalized communication channels and decision-rules, integrated in a system of mutual understandings, and sanctioned by state laws, formal contracts, and other covenants that define their respective domains and terms of interaction. One of the most important issues is how fiscal resources are to be divided?

Fiscal considerations.— A sizable part of the conflict between public organizations revolves around distribution of fiscal resources. The problem in urban areas is that the tax base varies unevenly across jurisdictional boundaries. There is “cutthroat intergovernmental competition” to internalize (take in) resources and to externalize (throw out) problems and costs, by effecting boundary changes, legislative mandates, or using whatever other means are at hand. The result is a persistent mismatch between needs and resources.

The economic problem in distributing resources is to define and assign costs and benefits of fiscal flows, the bases for implementing equalization strategies. Economic activities spill over political boundaries, with people living and working and playing—always earning and spending—in different government jurisdictions. Consider a small municipality within a metropolitan area, an enclave city, that attracts a new shopping center development. In line with state law, it adds a one-percent sales tax. If the center attracts shoppers in large numbers from adjoining jurisdictions, sufficient sales tax revenues may be received for the small city to significantly lower its property tax. Some of the new revenue, of course, is consumed by police, fire, lighting, and other services to the new development.

The task when assigning costs and benefits of fiscal flows is to prevent fiscal exploitation of, or windfalls to, any governmental unit and segment of the metropolitan citizenry. The best vehicle is a fully developed polycentric system, one in which political-economic empowerment of coherent civil communities is gained through variously-sized public organizations that can effectively manage their externalities.

There is good news and bad news for the proponents of this vision of unending competition for public resources. The bad news is that local officials in large cities and urban counties, managers of bureaucratic public monopolies, oppose in every way possible the formation of new, competing, independent centers of public power within their jurisdictions. In response to the proposal by the Carter Administration to give neighbor-

hoods “equal standing” with governments for direct Federal funding, the U.S. Conference of Mayors branded the plan as one that would threaten “progress and harmony” in the cities. The good news is that while the urban tax base may in places be insufficient for neighborhoods to become full service providers, prospects are good for gap-filling roles in producing and distributing goods and services. Service divisibility, accumulation of resources through enterprise, and fiscal equalization strategies show real potential.

Apart from shifting to higher levels the regulatory, program, or service functions of government, as with the transfer of city hospitals to county administration, there are two especially promising strategies for equalizing fiscal resources. Equalization may be achieved by delivering services in neighborhoods but transferring upwards the responsibility for taxing and financing. Developments in the education field have moved in this direction; and this may yet be an important outcome of California’s Proposition 13. Federal and state financial assistance takes many forms, several of them aimed at neighborhood governments. Senator Mark Hatfield (R-Oregon) has, for example, introduced legislation (not passed) to fund neighborhood governments by way of a Federal income tax credit.<sup>29</sup> The individual taxpayer would receive a dollar-for-dollar credit against Federal income tax for “contributions” to recognized neighborhood governments. It has been proposed that state sales taxes be rebated to neighborhood governments for implementing state-recommended improvement programs. And financial assistance might be given with vouchers that can be cashed only by neighborhood jurisdictions.

A second way of equalizing resources among competing urban governments is known as tax-base-growth-sharing, a plan to share future growth of the urban tax base. State enabling legislation for this approach was adopted by Minnesota in 1971.<sup>30</sup> The plan there takes 40 percent of the annual increase in non-residential property tax assessments within a metropolitan jurisdiction, pooling those resources at the area-wide level, then redistributing them back to all contributing jurisdictions on a formula tied directly to population and inversely to current per capita assessed valuations in each area.

Although not equalization strategies per se, among the least recognized possibilities for fiscal empowerment of neighborhood governments are locally generated resources. The resource base for urban governments can be considerably expanded by neighborhood sponsorship of labor-intensive enterprise and by effective control of public bads.

# ORGANIZATIONAL MODEL

## Introduction

Since the founding of New England towns three and a half centuries ago, many political scientists have commented on them. This examination of town government, as an organizational model for urban social infrastructure, is a selective survey of these historical commentaries. For convenience and because of the availability of literature, many examples are drawn from the history of Massachusetts. We begin with an overview of the origins and general characteristics of open town government, proceed to the viewpoints of Jefferson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Tocqueville, and James Bryce, then to the municipal reformers of the early 1900s, and lastly, to present-day political scientists.

In these historical perspectives there are shifting styles of political science: from a non-theoretical, action emphasis by Jefferson during the Revolutionary period, through the comparative methods of Tocqueville and Bryce during the nineteenth century, to the focus on public administration at the turn of the last century. These styles and their exponents, not surprisingly, offer different conceptualizations and opinions about the meaning and importance of various issues related to town government.

## Origins & Character

Open town meetings in New England are popular assemblies, with membership extended to every adult citizen for performing political functions directly and in person. They have more in common with *landsgemeinde* in Swiss cantons than other American towns and townships. The townships of the Middle Atlantic and North Central states were originally subdivisions of the states and possess far less extensive powers than New England towns. They are the result of a land survey policy by the national government rather than indigenous growth. Many do not provide for township meetings. Where meetings are held their authority is not comparable to the New England model. Many are not directly democratic but representative.

While the lineage of New England towns has been traced to settlements in ancient "Germania," the form of political institutions in the colonies was due less to historical precedents than to local economic conditions, direct experience in public life, and the land system and church government that were expedient. In any event, the geography of New England promoted coastal and river-based settlements of population clusters, and unlike colonies in the South where public authority was more centralized and monopolized by the upper class, in New England the control of public affairs was seized very early by the general citizenry.

The penchant for direct self-government must have stemmed in part from necessity. The 1620 Pilgrim landing in Massachusetts, outside the territory of the Virginia company's grant, was accompanied by the Mayflower Compact. Its most politically salient feature was the group initiated act to "covenant and combine . . . together into a civil Body Politic." The puritans, however, settled in Massachusetts in the late 1620s under a royal charter given to the Massachusetts Bay Company. The charter, although a commercial document, created civil government. Governance was by a quarterly General Court comprised of the governor, magistrates, and all freemen (company stockholders). The Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay colonies were combined in 1633. The following year

the towns informally appointed deputies to attend the Court: they removed the governor, replaced him with one of their own choice, and passed legislation recognizing themselves and their successors as official town representatives to the Court, with all legislative powers.

The first Bay Colony towns were informal assemblies of freemen. The founding of Hadley, for example, was by informal agreement of 59 persons, a compact for self-government, based on their shared purposes and ideals. By the mid-1630s, however, the General Court of Massachusetts had enacted the first “organic law” to regulate the towns, in the main authorizing them to manage their own affairs. In less than a decade 20 Massachusetts towns received official recognition.

Becoming a resident of a seventeenth century town was not automatic. In Salem a town official was appointed to go from house to house checking to see if any strangers had “privily thrust themselves into the town.” Least acceptable newcomers were those who might become a burden on the community. One point of view is that selection for admission cultivated uniformity; but an equally valid perspective is that screening was mainly religious and there was little interest in one’s political philosophy.

At the outset, only members of the company—“freemen of the corporation”—were enfranchised. By the late 1640s, Massachusetts’ law gave all adult male inhabitants the right to attend, participate, and vote in town meetings, but a property qualification was introduced less than a decade later and remained in force until the early 1800s. Despite this limitation it is estimated that 75 to 80 percent of the adult townsmen had the franchise. Extension of the franchise can be partially understood by the necessity, compounded by the perilousness of early colonial life, to effectively enforce decisions about public affairs.

Formal town meetings.— As evidenced by written records, formal town meetings began in the early 1630s. Attendance was compulsory and fines were levied for absences. At the close of the seventeenth century fewer than 60,000 people lived in Massachusetts, an average of less than 100 adult men per town. Meetings were first held weekly, then monthly, and by 1780, when the Commonwealth constitution was adopted, annually. As communities grew in size, meetings were less frequent and selectmen were picked to handle administrative matters during interim periods.

The practice of naming selectmen was an early development in town government. By the mid-1600s these offices consolidated diverse legal authority—to set and collect taxes, contract, convey property, initiate and defend suits, and regulate admissions and visits of non-residents. Yet both in theory and practice, every order required for its execution the *prior* approval of the town meeting. The difference in control of elected town officers, between Massachusetts and non-New England states, is that in the former, selectmen may plan roads and other public works and tax assessments for them, but neither the plans nor the assessments have any standing until the citizens “signify their satisfaction” in an open town meeting.

Each town selects an odd number of selectmen, usually three or five, but sometimes as many as nine or 11. The officeholders call annual and special meetings, enact laws, and generally supervise a broad range of town activities. Their powers also extend to appointment of other town officials. In many respects the viability of New England towns is due to the excellence of the selectmen system. There is virtually no evidence in the records of any serious encroachment by selectmen on the prerogatives of the town meeting.

Town meetings are chaired by moderators, elected for varying terms, and possessing the normal rights, obligations, and authority granted under parliamentary proce-

ture. The moderator in some cases has the power, in consultation with the selectmen, to recess the meeting for up to two weeks if citizens who wish to participate are being denied the opportunity for any reason.

The selectmen, by their own authority or on the application of a specified number of citizens, issue a warrant that calls the town meeting. The warrant sets out the agenda to which the meeting is bound by law. Eligible citizens are “warned” to attend; whatever number are present, no matter how small, may proceed with business. Very little of this has changed in more than 350 years.

There are different opinions about the extent of controversy and debate in New England town meetings, even to date. One view is that town business was (and is) transacted by acclamation, the function of the meeting being to generate consensus rather than coercion. Support for the contrary argument is that there has always been a significant proportion of town meetings dominated by intense debate, not infrequently to the point of disorderly antagonism. Another criticism of town democracy is that the franchise is functionally empty because pressures for conformity produce “deference voting,” with the alleged mindless majority compliantly following the lead of their supposed social and economic betters. One may reasonably conclude on this issue that the towns have never been genuine oligarchies, with office-holding restricted to a narrow class or group. Whatever the degree of actual democracy, a recurring theme in the literature of town government is that the meeting process itself has the incidental but powerful effect of reducing social distance and alienation.

Virtually all observers agree that the continued vitality of New England governments is closely related to their exercise of functions and powers that elsewhere are the responsibilities of cities and counties. County government was introduced in Massachusetts by the General Court in the 1640s for limited purposes, mainly judicial administration. Modern counties in most New England states are more truly administrative districts than authentic local governments.

The General Court has had continuing power of regulation over town governments in Massachusetts. While the degree of intervention has varied over time, the central authority has operated continuously to minimize the potentially destructive impacts of excessive provincialism. It must be admitted, however, that in response to some forms of intervention, towns have been known to ignore laws that proved “inconvenient” for local purposes. This posture may have been a legacy of the towns’ role in sending deputies to state assemblies.

Development of the towns.— Historians differ in their opinions on the highest period of development for New England towns. They are credited with producing public opinion in the eighteenth century that was “hardy, stubborn, and independent,” so essential to the Revolution. Yet the early to mid-1800s are also marked as a period in which the towns flourished. The close of this period, the middle-1800s, was the onset of dramatic social and economic changes: industrialization and refinement of transportation and communications, population shifts, and the displacement of rural New England life. The most significant visible consequence for town government was that several of the larger towns became municipal corporations. In the face of growing needs for regional and statewide financing and coordination, the central governments stepped up their interventions in local affairs.

As early as 1826, each Massachusetts town was required to have a school committee, for which certain functions were spelled out. Much of the central regulation has been in response to the need for health, welfare, and education reforms, either in financing or service delivery. From 1792 to 1820 there was a fivefold increase in costs for poor relief

in Massachusetts. The tallied number of “paupers” doubled between 1837 and 1847, a statistic that may indicate neglect or growing concern. As early as 1821 there was an attempt within the Massachusetts legislature to transfer all poor relief functions to the Commonwealth.

Aside from the slow but continuing pattern of state regulation of local affairs, New England town-meeting governments have undergone four structural alterations in their life-span: appointment of selectmen and, in the modern era, the adoption of representative meetings in a small number of towns, the introduction of finance committees, and the hiring of professional town managers. We will return to the more recent innovations.

## Jefferson

Jefferson’s comments about New England town government were expressed indirectly and in correspondence during his later years, after retirement from public life.<sup>31</sup> Retirement for him was an active time, creating, inventing, improving, and always corresponding. His purpose was not to examine the New England town but to propose the subdivision of Virginia counties—presumably those in other states as well—into town-like governments.

Jefferson was more an *actor* than a student in the world of political science, someone to be emulated by modern community organizers. While his political philosophy is often typified in the public mind by statements such as “kings are the servants, not the proprietors of the people,” these characterizations are misleading. Jefferson attributed neither saintly character nor remarkable wisdom to the people. There was, in his outlook, a tension between keeping the government weak enough to deny “aid to the wolves” yet strong enough to “protect the sheep.” Jefferson recognized two forms of aristocracy: the natural aristocracy, based on virtue and talent; and the artificial aristocracy, founded on wealth and birth, which was without virtue or talent. He believed that eliminating the “psuedo-aristoi” could best be accomplished by free elections. But the linchpin of his strategy for a republic was the proposal to subdivide the counties into small, independent governments resembling New England towns.

Jefferson’s definition of a republic was a government controlled by the grassroots citizenry—“acting directly and personally”—according to rules established by the majority. Governments, then, are more or less republican in proportion to citizen action in the exercise of public power, and the purest form of republic for Jefferson was reflected in the New England towns. He envisioned town-like “little republics,” direct democracies that would offer opportunities for every citizen to act in the government. It was his belief that the “regularly organized power” of town-meeting governments would prevent insurrections by giving the citizenry a practical means “to crush, regularly and peaceably, the usurpations of their unfaithful agents.” Then, too, he anticipated that the directly democratic governments would enhance public administration by drawing large numbers of citizens into management of public affairs.

Jefferson’s little republics were to be six-mile-square jurisdictions, another approximation of the New England towns. He recommended that they be given judicial and police powers, and responsibility for roads, the poor, and education. Town government had a fundamentally polycentric role in his scheme for public education. Each town would provide a free school, and from each year’s graduates the best students would be



selected for continued free education at a district school. The most promising district graduates would, in turn, be selected for university education at public expense.

Jefferson understood the need for small jurisdictions to have the capacity for cooperative (regional or statewide) action, and he imagined an appropriate mechanism. He proposed that they should conduct elections, so that a general call of their meetings on the same day would “produce the genuine sense of the people on any required point, and would enable the state to act in mass.”

One may wonder about the depth of Jefferson’s conviction about directly democratic town government. In a letter to Governor John Tyler, he mentions subdivision of the counties and general education as “two great measures . . . without which no republic can maintain itself in strength.” Six years later he declared, “the article nearest my heart is the subdivision of the counties. . . .”

## Emerson

Jefferson’s view of the towns was complemented less than a decade after his death by Ralph Waldo Emerson’s “historical discourse” at Concord, given in 1835 on the second centennial anniversary of the town’s founding.<sup>32</sup> He credited the successful settlement of the country to town-meeting government. For Emerson the New England town realized the ideal social compact. It was a means for the whole citizenry to express opinions directly on every question of public import. Town-meeting government showed “how to give every individual his fair weight in government without any disorder from numbers.”

Reviewing Concord’s town-meeting history, Emerson acknowledged that he was unable to discover any absurd laws, offensive legislators, witch-hunts, abuse of religious minorities, or bizarre crimes committed under the color of authority. He also noted that frugality had not stopped the town meeting from voting resources for education and the poor. Lastly, he described the political paradox, for the citizenry, of direct self-government:

In every winding road, in every stone fence, in the smokes of the poorhouse chimney, in the clock on the church, they read their own power, and consider the wisdom and error of their judgments.<sup>33</sup>

## Foreign Observers

The issue that cannot be evaded is whether Jefferson and Emerson idealized open town government. The principal nineteenth century observers who followed them, as political commentators, were also admirers of the “little republics.” Tocqueville’s fondness for town government is less surprising since he was, presumably, seeking institutional models to counter centralized government in France.

Tocqueville.— The young Frenchman considered the local self-governing town a natural institution, repeatedly emerging throughout the world.<sup>34</sup> At the time of his travels in America, the average Massachusetts town population was two to three thousand. He identified “independence and authority” as two of their main advantages. His understand-

ing was that citizen attachment to town-meeting government was not out of habit or sentiment but because its strength and independence claimed and deserved each citizen's stewardship and sagacity.

Tocqueville observed that the towns possessed unusual autonomy in managing their own affairs, yet complied with state authority, so that roads were not obstructed, criminal laws were enforced, and public education was not ignored. He discerned that the citizens valued the political process of direct democracy as much as its product in public goods. "If the government is defective," he states, "the fact that it really emanates from those it governs, and that it acts, either ill or well, casts the protective spell of a parental pride over its faults."

Tocqueville thought town government an ideal political institution because by its operation "a constant though gentle motion is thus kept up in society which animates without disturbing it."

Bryce.— James Bryce, an Englishman, carried on the tradition of Tocqueville's broad comparative study of American political institutions.<sup>35</sup> More a political scientist, and less biased than earlier commentators on town government, Bryce nonetheless characterized open town meetings in the late 1880s as the perfect school of self-government.

Bryce's observations of open meetings confirm good attendance and productive debate. He does say, however, that the efficiency of this institution is related in large measure to racial/ethnic homogeneity and meeting size. He adds that large numbers of newcomers, not of "native American stock," can undermine the meeting. But Bryce finds that even with these drawbacks, those who know the system are outspoken in its behalf—as the best possible school of politics and means to manage local affairs, prevent waste and dishonesty by public officials, and generally "stimulate vigilance and breed contentment." He cites the relatively low burden of town taxes as the result of the close supervision afforded by direct democracy. Bryce concludes that, of all the systems of local government he observed, the popular assembly was the best, the cheapest and most efficient, the most educative for the citizenry.

Despite his high praise for New England town meetings, Bryce anticipated regional government. He favored a mixed system, a compound structure of counties and town-meeting governments. He predicted that by the middle of the twentieth century this system would prevail over the whole country.

## Municipal Reformers

Goodnow's distinction between politics and administration is, as already noted, one of the hallmarks of the municipal reform tradition and of the commentary it spawned on town government.<sup>36</sup> Goodnow explained politics as the means for expressing the will of the state, through responsive and regulated party organizations; administration was cast as policy execution, an executive function of government. The reform strategy, devised to replace the deteriorating urban machines, was administrative centralization. Goodnow proposed centralization within each level of government, not spanning the vertical spectrum from local to Federal units.

The municipal reform movement gained momentum with the founding, under Rockefeller and Carnegie sponsorship, of the New York Bureau of Municipal Research. While the ostensible goal was to integrate efficiency and democracy, the resources of the Bureau were devoted almost exclusively to efficiency. Rhetoric to the contrary notwith-

standing, the strategy in practice was to formally restructure executive administration toward hierarchical control and unity of command, leaving problems of democracy and politics to be resolved by publicizing studies and investigations of municipal corruption. By 1916, more than 20 cities across the country had established “municipal research bureaus.”

Criticism of town government in the municipal reform tradition generally runs to recommendations for its elimination in all but the New England states. By the end of the first quarter of this century, it was recognized that the popular assembly had at least to be supplemented in growing cities, and that large urban town meetings could not continue without major changes—but that open town government was still an effective instrument for populations of less than ten thousand.

The effects of immigration and population movement on town-meeting government have been interpreted differently since the turn of the century. While some reports emphasize that immigration produced disharmony, others suggest that there was a positive effect, a dilution of ultra-conservative influences. One description of a depression-era town meeting pictures an evening punctuated by laughter and eloquence from the interplay of citizens with notably uncommon origins and styles.

Town-meeting attendance has always been a subject of concern or controversy but particularly with municipal reformers. One claim is that the meetings are poorly attended; also typical, however, is the charge that meeting halls will not accommodate the large turnouts, and citizens are refused entry. A related criticism is that meetings are only well attended when acute local issues are on the agenda. Whatever the facts regarding attendance, town meetings in the first half of this century are generally pictured as democratic and moderately efficient. The rare exception to Emerson’s observation that the meetings do not produce foolish decisions is the refusal of Hadley and other Western Massachusetts towns to accept the Daylight Savings law passed during World War I, a relatively minor and temporary lapse.

But if the municipal reformers were satisfied with the meeting, they were less sanguine about town government generally. With their view that service delivery is the most important function of local government, not civil responsibility or the practice of citizenship, their conviction was that the curriculum for government must include budgeting, debt control, personnel administration, and planning—and that the ordinary town was incapable of teaching any of them.

The municipal reformers, overall, gave mixed reviews to open town government. One side held the town meeting to be declining in utility as a policy-making institution, because of inadequate management in an industrialized society. The other side concluded that in the twentieth century the town meeting retained most of its democratic qualities, sustaining a politically astute citizenry and producing honest and efficient government—but still it required reforms.

## Reforms in Open Town Government

Social and economic conditions, perhaps with an assist from the municipal reform movement, led to the introduction of professional town managers, transformation from open to representative meetings in a small number of towns, and finance committees. There was also continued state regulatory intervention in town affairs. General Court interest in local affairs in Massachusetts was, in many instances, enabling rather than compelling. Local planning boards were mandated in 1913, zoning authority was granted in

1920 and, at the same time, provision was made for consolidation of numerous town offices and departments under selectmen. Legislation allowed for cooperative contracts between two or more jurisdictions to improve fiscal, administrative, and operating efficiency.

Representative towns.— Through a special act of the General Court, Brookline in 1915 was the first Massachusetts town to adopt the representative system. The town's population then was more than 33,000. The legislation mandated the creation of precincts, each of which would select more than two-dozen representatives to the town meeting. In representative towns generally, delegates are elected by nonpartisan voting in each district, with nomination by petition. Precincts often hold pre-town-meeting meetings at which attendance is fair to poor. The representative towns have many of the characteristics of municipal corporations, but unlike corporations, every citizen has the right to speak at representative town meetings. In spite of this privilege, they are still described as "routine, dull affairs."

Although one of the main arguments for representative rather than open meetings was the absence of town halls that could seat large turnouts, most towns adopting the system had the opposite problem of poor attendance. While the representative form is responsive to problems of increasing population, the plan does not of itself resolve accompanying breakdowns in administration and operations.

Whatever the views of experts, by 1971 fewer than an eighth of Massachusetts towns had voted to go from open to representative meetings, and almost without exception these were towns with populations greater than 12,000. Equally instructive in this regard are the results of a survey of 57 Vermont towns in the early 1970s. The directly democratic form was "overwhelmingly supported" by both officers and citizens, active or not. Fewer than five percent thought the open meeting out of date, and less than 12 percent thought the meeting was run by "big shots."

Town managers.— Town manager plans began to emerge in the early 1900s in response to administrative problems. Special legislation in Massachusetts was first passed in 1914, creating a manager plan for Norwood. By the 1950s, Connecticut, Maine, and Vermont had also passed enabling legislation.

The manager typically is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the selectmen. Common practice is to consolidate numerous departments under the direct authority of the selectmen rather than many minor officials, with immediate management supervision delegated to the professional administrator. The manager may have full control of all functions within a department, or the selectmen may reserve certain authority to themselves. Town managers can usually hire and fire department heads and other employees, make purchases, and prepare budget estimates. Their fiscal authority is limited in Massachusetts, with budget approval, tax assessing and collecting, treasury, and accounting located elsewhere.

The consensus of political observers is that town manager plans in New England have been successful in achieving government efficiency, and they have earned widespread respect and support. With little or no infringement on democratic values or processes, they have fortified fiscal administration, meeting the public demand for expenditure control and efficiency.

Finance committees.— Finance committees were the other innovation in town-meeting government designed to enhance fiscal administration. The committees were originally informal gatherings, dating from the late 1800s. Massachusetts law in 1910

mandated town finance committees at local option. The General Court in 1923 required finance committees in all towns where assessed valuation for state tax purposes was more than one million dollars. Most towns in Massachusetts with more than six thousand population have these committees. Membership ranges from nine to 15, with the moderator making appointments. Selection is widely acknowledged to be on the basis of competence, fairness, and reputation in the local community.

Finance committee business is usually confined to recommendations on articles in the upcoming meeting warrant. Committees in larger towns have more extensive business and may meet throughout the year. The recommendations of these committees are almost always taken with great seriousness, and rarely are they rejected. A number of writers concur that the committees have been an effective response to fiscal management problems.

## Contemporary Views

There has been relatively little change in New England's popular assemblies over the past three and a half centuries. Towns still enact laws, levy taxes, appropriate funds, and all the rest. They provide sanitation services, water supply, streets, parks, police, fire protection, and much more; and they are administrative arms of the county and state governments. Modern town budgets range from several thousand to tens of millions of dollars. While tax rates tend to be higher in cities and large towns, the issue is complicated because small towns tend to deliver fewer services. A 1971 report of the Massachusetts Legislative Research Council concludes that cost variations do not demonstrate economic advantages associated with larger or smaller scale.

The modern open meetings are generally sensible in debate and decision-making, although demographic changes have had important effects on the meetings. Data on 1970 Massachusetts meetings indicate that a strong positive relationship exists between length and number of meeting "sittings" and town size. Larger towns with populations over six thousand required bimonthly and sometimes monthly sessions to manage their affairs.

Permanent organized pressure groups are still the exception in New England towns. The old problem of accommodating non-Anglo Saxons has given way to concern about status as "native" or "newcomer." But minority rights are well protected, at least in formal procedures and rules incorporated in town bylaws and statutes, and apparently in practice too.

Town-meeting attendance has continued to be a subject for debate. Observers give widely varying reports, from turnouts of fewer than 50 to more than one thousand. Critics say that in some instances of good attendance, citizens remain only long enough to vote for officers, ignoring the lengthy business sessions that follow elections. Despite fluctuations, average town-meeting attendance remains substantial. Participation of eligible voters in recent decades has averaged 25 to 35 percent, respectable showings when Los Angeles' municipal elections turn out 15 percent of the voters and elections for community college trustees get three percent. Unfortunately, comparisons between current and early meeting attendance are not useful because of the compulsory aspect of seventeenth century town citizenship.

Pre-meeting informal agreements have also engendered criticism of town meetings. The objection is that citizens exercise their influence through these agreements by personal contact with town officials, without actually attending meetings. But the practice can also be seen in a more benign and favorable light. Town-meeting elections, as with all

healthy political decision-making, tend to proceed from informal negotiation to formal unanimity, a process that can also be identified in football teams, academic departments, religious congregations, and other groups that value unity and stability.

A particularly insightful if troubling comment on modern town meetings is that some of the people who attend, and apparently some that do not, are frightened by the face-to-face contact of direct democracy. It seems that the open town meeting creates emotional tensions for some people. Thus the meeting may increase rather than reduce feelings of alienation and low self-esteem.

Contemporary political scientists emphasize three areas in their comments on New England town government: capacity for technical solutions and efficiency, the need for regional integration in the provision of public goods and services, and the value of direct democracy—the latter usually an afterthought.

A frequently expressed opinion is that town meetings are antiquated in an era in which political decisions must be based on technical information and applications. One instance of the idea is that towns have been made obsolete by modern technology because heavy capital outlays for equipment and facilities cannot be justified by a small town. But New England towns make themselves an exception, as polycentric theory suggests they might, by their close working cooperation, sharing the costs and benefits of various goods through both formal and informal arrangements. Another claim is that modern problems are too technical and complex for the average citizen. The predicted results are immobilization and over-dependence on experts or a clique of leaders. Yet in practice, town-meeting inaction is no more typical than with other local governments, and although experts are utilized, the citizenry in open meeting continue to wield the ultimate power and often reject expert opinion and advice.

The need for regional integration of public goods and services had led a number of modern writers to recognize that narrow town boundaries, in the absence of metropolitan government, create spillover problems. Several structural remedies have been proposed. The more extreme municipal reformers desire the most drastic and least popular solution, abolishing the towns and transferring their functions to the counties and states. A more polycentric strategy, relied on extensively in practice, has been to deal with externalities by contractual service agreements and voluntary formation of regional authorities. Forced consolidation of the towns, yet another convulsive option, is far less appealing to the majority of political scientists than the two-tier metropolitan federation approach that would leave the towns intact.

The modern trend is to treat public jurisdictions as service providers and administrative bureaucracies. Rarely is primary attention given to government as political rule or as a means to economic empowerment, and what commentary does exist is often negative about direct self-government. There is an elitist perspective that advanced communications give voters sufficient knowledge of public officials, thus direct democracy is redundant. It is a point of view strangely at odds with contemporary jejune politics.

## Concluding Notes

Two interrelated ideas are important in considering the political commentaries and observations on town-meeting government. First, critics fault open town government because it fails to meet their idealized understandings of the past or their expectations for the future. Second, evaluation of the literature on open town meetings is difficult because the meetings differ substantially from one to another, despite structural similarities. There

is confirmation of the existence of several distinctly different types, explaining to some extent the conflicting accounts in the literature, for few if any of the writers, modern or otherwise, have claimed to systematically observe more than one or two towns.

Whatever the so-called true nature of town-meeting democracy, or its characterization by experts, the prevailing opinion in New England is that government decentralization preserves democracy. No town has abandoned the open form since 1922. The explanation is not sentiment and myopia but a conviction by the citizens that they are equally or better equipped than elected representatives to make political decisions.

## Analysis & Conclusions

Examining open town-meeting government as an organizational model for urban social infrastructure, as the lower tier in a compound metropolitan structure, it appears that they are well able to manage modern technical services. Many towns have adopted professional manager plans and finance committees. Nothing in the structure or workings of open town government shows any congenital inability to acquire fiscal resources, mainly through taxing and intergovernmental transfers. And voluntary authorities and contractual service agreements have accomplished regional integration of town-based services.

The ongoing vitality of open town government has been associated with weak counties, leaving local services and taxation to the towns. Still not fully answered is the question of whether this form of government can maintain the same service and fiscal liveliness in urban areas with strong counties, assuming their operation within a metropolitan federation. Greater division of services among jurisdictional levels, breaking the bureaucratic monopoly, and tailoring them to minimize externalities, is an approach to this problem that is now being tested and refined in urban decentralization experiments. Another potential source of vitality, for small open governments cultivated in urban areas, is manufacturing and service enterprise. And current practice here too, if only in experimental fashion, is becoming more sophisticated.

The relationship between personality and citizen action in direct democracy is clouded but not conclusively. The question is how town-meeting government influences individual alienation and feelings of self-worth and dignity. The bulk of human experience with New England's towns has been in small, mostly stable, and often rural communities. We find in them an historical tendency, still prevalent, to look askance at newcomers. This bias may stem from nothing more sinister than the exclusive religious preferences of the early settlers and the threat of an uncivilized and possibly hostile frontier that they encountered. Yet with all this, most commentators conclude that the open meetings reduce social distance and alienation. And others, most notably Emerson, indirectly suggest a positive relationship between the formal town power, which is vested directly in the citizenry, and their sense of dignity and self-respect. Even with the clinker of recent observations that indicate some people are threatened by popular assembly, the prospect for similar responses in urban applications of town-meeting government is uncertain, more a matter for concern and continuing observation.

Another demonstrated infrastructural capacity is local town planning. First carried on informally, state legislatures mandated these activities in the early 1900s by granting authority for local zoning and planning boards. The creation of finance committees and town managers also undoubtedly contributed to local planning efforts.

The open governments provide an effective medium for citizens to articulate their demands for collective goods and services. It is reasonable to hypothesize that the legendary contentment of New Englanders with the integrity and fiscal operations of their towns derives mostly from their own direct control. While inhabitants of small towns have authorized fewer and less comprehensive services, in their local affairs they have not been victimized by misallocation of resources to special interests on the basis of top-down definitions of “need.” Contrary to the general trend, appropriations and fundamental public policy, along with the privilege of making structural alterations, remain under direct citizen control in town-meeting government.

Open town meetings have produced equality of appropriations, the provision of equal units of goods and services to all similarly situated. If left to their own devices, however, like other local governments, towns might give less attention to equity—special spending for special need—than progressive sensibilities would dictate. But this tendency is offset by state and Federal programs for remedial education, health and medical care, income maintenance, and so forth.

Of all the infrastructural functions, New England town government has achieved the greatest acclaim for building the civic organization and culture of direct democracy. It is a continuing demonstration of the capacity for bottom-up-designed public space by popular assembly, even in the last quarter of the twentieth century. They have received high praise, and with justification, for giving discontented citizens alternatives to deal with higher levels of authority that become oppressive to their interests and well being. In early March, 1977, for instance, more than 20 Vermont town governments on annual meeting day approved similar resolutions to prohibit nuclear power plants and radioactive wastes within their borders.

But there are qualifications. This review strongly points to an upper population limit for government by open town meeting. While this figure might theoretically reach ten thousand, a lesser number is more practicable. There have been occasional claims of oligarchic rule in the towns, yet overwhelmingly the literature describes a highly refined system that exploits individual leadership in all aspects of governance except fundamental policy-making and structural changes, which are defined as within the competence of the full citizenry, either in open meeting or by balloting.

Fluctuating attendance has been the source of the most frequently repeated criticism of the open meetings. The pattern has been described as representative government by default—those who attend “represent” those who do not—and a poor quality of representation at that. But this picture underestimates the importance of high attendance at meetings when controversial items are on the agenda. The question is normative and ideological, a matter of how democracy is defined. By way of analogy, certainly no one suggests that because the majority of a corporation’s stockholders typically fail to attend annual meetings, they should be denied their formal rights and powers, or that stockholder meetings should be abolished. We recognize the prior right of corporate ownership—and so too there is implicitly a similar political right.

The right to participate in the popular assembly, like the annual corporate meeting, must include the right to decide for oneself those issues that are sufficiently of interest and importance to command attendance. It is only enough in a democracy if the right to attend and decide exists and may be exercised at the citizen’s (or stockholder’s) option. For it is the actual exercise of power on selected occasions by the majority citizenry, in their own name and self-perceived interest, that is democracy: it is the production of public goods or elimination of public bads by an assembly of citizens, residents of a common jurisdiction, deciding together of their own will, intelligence, and values what their poli-



cies shall be on taxing, spending, and law-making, that is crucial, not their record of meeting attendance.

One of the most intriguing aspects of the New England popular assembly is that the open meetings seem to have an internal feedback mechanism that effectively warns when a structural adaptation is necessary to meet changing conditions. Naming selectmen, the representative meeting, town managers, and finance committees cannot be passed off as inevitable or coincidental. The citizens become conscious of when they have to allow for a basic change in their government, not just a change in policy—and they do it. The answer is simple: because there is no separation or distance between the “consumers” and the “producers” of town-government public goods, the ordinary citizen has both roles, government behavior that is unjust or otherwise punishing directly stimulates policy or structural innovations. Poor government output lands on the same citizenry charged with the responsibility of decision-making in open meeting. It incidentally places in bold relief the flaw of political elitism in all its forms, that is, the practice of deciding for others without the parallel capacity to experience the consequences of the decision for them.

# ACTION STRATEGY

## Introduction

Throughout the country, in every state but one, it is possible to organize small, limited-purpose governments, called special districts—usually by petition and election from the bottom up. The districts are governments, responsible to territorially defined constituencies, and endowed with public powers. They differ from municipalities only in their functional specialization, and even in that most serve multiple purposes. They do everything we associate with government: accepting grants, subsidies, and subventions from other governments, engaging in legal actions with public and private organizations, contracting for services, acquiring and disposing of property, owning and operating all types of equipment and facilities, investing funds, and employing personnel.

Dependent districts generally lack both administrative and fiscal autonomy. They are extensions of other governments, usually counties. It is through independent districts, usually formed through a petition and election process—those governed by their own officers as autonomous governments—that there is a possibility for achieving public powers in grassroots organizations.

Boundaries of special districts tend to be very flexible, without regard for the jurisdictional lines of other governments. In some cases they may be formed only in unincorporated territory. In most states special districts may include non-contiguous areas, and need not have a minimum population, assessed valuation, or geographic area. There are, however, districts with boundaries that match general purpose-governments, whose governing officers are named *ex officio*.

About two-thirds of all governments in the U.S. are special districts, the majority being school districts. Excluding them, the number is about 23,000. They have more than 325,000 employees and spend about \$10 billion annually. Table 3 shows the revenues collected by local governments in California, with special districts bringing in nearly a quarter of the total.

Table 3

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVENUES COLLECTED IN CALIFORNIA<sup>37</sup>

GOVERNMENT UNIT	REVENUE	PERCENT
Special Districts	\$2,046,972,000	21
Cities	\$2,799,914,000	28
Counties	\$5,136,297,000	51

A substantial part of special district activity is enterprise, production of goods and services commonly provided by the private economy. This includes hospitals, airports, water and power, cemeteries, etc. Special district enterprise in California accounts for more than a third of district revenue.

Most independent districts are governed by four to six directors, but some have as many as two dozen, appointed or directly elected. Appointments are more typical in Southern states; they may be for fixed or indefinite terms, and are usually made by office-holders of another local governing body (city or county) in which the district is located.

Rarely, district officials are appointed by judicial officers, state executives, or legislative bodies. Only five states select district directors exclusively by appointment. These are Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island.

Elected or appointed, district directors may meet as often as weekly or as infrequently as annually, although monthly meetings are the most common. District directors usually appoint professional managers who then organize and direct administrative operations, sometimes with scores or hundreds of employees.

Districts are created primarily through general state enabling legislation, but also through special legislative acts when there is an unusual requirement or condition. Once authorized by the state legislature, an election for special district formation usually begins by petition or by the legislative act of a local government. When petitions are in order, determinations must be made regarding who may sign, what percentage of the population (or registered voters) must sign, and the time requirements. Petitions are usually accompanied by maps and other supporting documents. Notice of the proposed action must be given to affected residents, with the final result determined by submitting the issue to the electorate for a vote. In some states the petition for a special district formation election must be submitted first to a county, regional, or state agency for prior approval. The receiving agency's mandate may be very narrow, a simple check for "sufficiency," or very broad. If the latter, authority may include ordering changes in proposed functions and boundaries, or even summarily denying the formation.

There are three broad rationales for establishing special district governments. First, there is the inadequacy or unresponsiveness of other local government units. This is manifested in their inability or unwillingness to provide a good or service demanded by an identifiable social community. The problem is often political in that there is no incentive for the city or county to meet the demands of a small, inconsequential number of voters. Second, there are often legal obstacles that prevent existing governments from financing or operating certain services. Legislative and constitutional restraints on tax and debt limits are examples. In this regard, special districts are used to cure spillover problems and to undertake new functions that legislatures are reluctant to grant to all units of general-purpose government. Third, special districts are created to ensure local autonomy, "home rule," although in many cases the objective has been to guarantee that public power is closely held by narrow, barely disguised, profit-making interests.

## Past & Future of Special Districts

One of the main conceptual challenges in looking at special districts as instruments for empowering grassroots organizations is the need to distinguish between their past applications and their future possibilities. Their limitations are not congenital but instead reflect weaknesses that, once understood, can be fixed or accommodated.

Abuses and weaknesses.— The most frequent past abuse of special districts in California has been their formation, at the instigation of private developers, to obtain credit subsidies for private corporations. Through the districts, many no larger than a single subdivision of new housing, developers float tax-free general obligation bonds for financing capital expenditures. The land promoter and developer thus obtain risk capital without drawing on the credit resources of the corporation. There have been an infinite number of variations on this practice, from water districts that primarily serve private ag-

ricultural development at public expense to road districts that similarly make mining possible in formerly inaccessible areas.

But even with past abuses of special districts, they are the most practical and direct means in most states to vest public powers in grassroots organizations. Their single-purpose character is not a permanent disability since they may acquire additional powers and functions by consolidation, transfer, cumulative grants, or expression of “latent powers,” and thus may evolve de facto or de jure into multi-purpose governments.

The weaknesses and failures of special districts as a class may be ascribed to faulty institutional design, poor specification of communities to be served and the necessary structures and processes of governance—not inherent incapacity. Special districts in a polycentric system can be ideal forms of local governance. For this to be possible, however, three broad conditions must be satisfied: (1) They must be accountable to authentic, neighborhood-sized social communities, with boundaries that do not match existing local jurisdictions. (2) The citizens must be unable—for administrative, fiscal, or political reasons—to secure desired collective goods and services from local governments. (3) They must be allowed to assume only functions and authority commensurate with their ability to demonstrate economies of small scale or political advantages for their constituents.

Special districts have the means if not the ideal structures for becoming neighborhood-sized governments from the bottom up. Their main limitations, in most states, are their office-holding arrangements. That is, governance is typically by a board of directors, an essentially corporate form, rather than popular assembly or representative council. There is no single, developed tactic for bridging the gap. A number of strategies must be tried, while incrementally shifting the districts from filling gaps to multi-purpose neighborhood governments.

Seedbeds for neighborhood government.— Several developments in the past decade may be the seedbeds for neighborhood government by special district or similar forms created by local petition, giving us a glimpse of the future. Community services districts in California, variants of the special district, represent a move toward permanently empowering grassroots organizations. While these small, multi-purpose governments may at present only be formed in unincorporated territory, they may provide any or all of the following services, whether specified in the original formation petition or adopted later: water supply, sewage collection, refuse and garbage collection and disposal, fire protection all forms of public recreation, policing, street lighting, libraries, streets, airports, ambulances, and more. The state legislature has passed special acts authorizing particular community services districts to do transportation studies, operate TV facilities, and provide emergency health care.

These multi-purpose districts have taxing and eminent domain powers, and their bond issues are exempt from State and Federal taxes. Their weakness, as with conventional special districts, is in their structure of decision-making. California law presently requires community services districts to be governed by a three- or five-person board of directors.

One of the best examples of applying the community services district to purposes of neighborhood government can be found near Fresno, California. There, the Highway City Community Services District was formed in 1969 to provide general-purpose government for a Hispanic community of 500 low-income families.<sup>38</sup> Without full-time staff, the district’s main activities are planning and contracting for services with Fresno County. The district also plays a central role in the community’s voluntary, self-help programs.

In Isla Vista, California, took a different tack for parallel purposes.<sup>39</sup> Primarily a residential neighborhood for students at the Santa Barbara campus of the University of

California, the unincorporated vicinity was galvanized into a social community with explicit civic goals by persistent and widespread dissatisfaction and conflict with the county government and its agencies. In 1972 the community consciously embarked on the road to neighborhood government by formation of a parks and recreation district, as the first step in a phased strategy to achieve multi-purpose local self-government.

The most serious obstacles to full and productive use of special districts are officials of other local governments. The general-purpose governments are not unmindful of the competition from special districts for providing services to urban and suburban areas. And the districts obstruct their plans for growth by annexation. Testimony given at state legislative hearings on local government reform shows unequivocally that county and city officials feel “competition” from special districts, regarding it as “unnecessary and wasteful.” Conflicts between local governments about boundaries, services, police powers, land use control, and the like, reflect only in a minor way concerns about efficient and economical government. The real issue is the gain or loss of competitive advantage, of potential tax base, fees, etc.

These institutional opponents of competitive, small-scale, competing government have been highly organized and effective advocates of municipal reform ideology. In California, they have bolstered their position through the League of California Cities and the County Supervisors Association. They have maintained a symbiotic relationship with the National Municipal League, Committee for Economic Development, and the Advisory Committee on Intergovernmental Relations—the national organizational ideologues of municipal reform.

## Special District Powers & Functions

Governments can exercise three types of powers: those granted expressly, those necessarily implied or incidental to express grants, and those absolutely essential and indispensable. Express grants of power to special districts are contained in state constitutions, government codes, and specific statutes, and in formation documents. An example is the grant of authority to operate a public utility, say a solar power generating facility. The implied power, it may be argued, is to manufacture solar panels. Essential powers in this instance are authority to purchase property, hire personnel, and do other things absolutely necessary to operate a physical plant.

If a particular power is neither expressly granted nor denied, courts generally test the reasonableness of its exercise by looking at the relationship of the sought-after authority to activities that are expressly permitted. Thus a special or community services district operating a solar utility can plausibly argue for the authority to manufacture and retrofit solar panels for individual users. The same would be true for neighborhood health services and a number of other public goods.

About two-thirds of the non-school districts have taxing authority, but in more than half of these the power to tax is limited. Some special districts may not only tax and charge user fees, they also have the legal power to compel purchase of their services. Property owners may be forced to pay a front-foot assessment to offset the installation costs of sewer lines.

Not all special districts have eminent domain power, but such authority is commonly granted by government codes and special legislation. Property taken by eminent domain must be necessary for a public use and fair compensation must be made. In addition to complete taking, lesser forms of condemnation include rights of access, ease-

ments, including those limiting a landowner's use of the property, rights to enforce restrictive covenants, and leasehold interests.

Police power is the grant of authority to government to regulate, restrict, or prohibit personal or business activity, including use of property, without making compensation, to protect the public health and safety, general welfare, or morality of the citizenry. Like eminent domain, police power is not granted to every special district, but is commonly allowed when reasonably related to a district's main functions.

Table 4

SPECIAL DISTRICTS IN CALIFORNIA BY TYPE & NUMBER (1976)<sup>40</sup>

TYPE OF DISTRICT	NUMBER	TYPE OF DISTRICT	NUMBER
Abatement		Maintenance	
—Pest or Weed	8	—Miscellaneous	101
—Mosquito	53	—Road	12
Airport	4	—Sewer	32
Bridge	1	Mall	2
Cemetery	262	Memorial	26
Conservation		Park, Regional	4
—Soil	62	Parking	58
—River or Water	17	Port or Harbor	15
Control		Protection	1
—Air Pollution	1	Reclamation	35
—Flood	31	Recreation and Park	103
—Pest and Weed	4	Road	
Drainage	34	—Permanent	38
Fire	453	—County	113
Garbage	12	Sanitary	99
Health	1	Sanitation	122
Hospital	72	Sanitation Agency	1
Improvement		Separation of Grade	1
—Drainage	1	Service, Community	197
—Municipal	18	Service Area	
—Resort	7	—County	657
—Road or Street	1	Sewer	18
—Community Services	14	Transit	9
—Sanitation	4	Utility	
—Public Utility	8	—Municipal	3
—Water	374	—Public	56
Irrigation	22	Water	
Levee	11	—Agency or Authority	21
Library	16	—California	49
Highway Lighting	372	—County	192
Maintenance Area, Flood	9	—Metropolitan	1
Maintenance		—Municipal	50
—County	413	—Replenishment	2
—Storm Drain	75	—Storage	4
—Municipal Light	49	Waterworks	94

Special districts are empowered to deliver a wide range of services, from abatement of weeds to waterworks. Table 4 is an extensive but not complete listing for California. As of 1972 only eight states limited special districts to a single function. These are Delaware, Georgia, Hawaii, Iowa, Mississippi, Virginia, North Dakota, and Wisconsin. Even where districts are formally limited to a single function, however, implied powers may be very broadly defined. In California, for instance, recreation is defined in the special district statute as any voluntary activity that contributes to "the education, entertainment, or physical, mental, cultural, or moral development of the individual or group at-

tending, observing, or participating therein.” Municipal utility districts may do virtually anything necessary for the provision of their services, including constructing works or parts of works for supplying light, water, heat, transportation, telephone service, or other communications.

## Financing

The main sources of revenue for special districts are property taxes, user fees, service (user) charges, and transfers from other units of government. Borrowing by bond sales is also a major source of capital—sometimes requiring voter approval, sometimes not. In Georgia, Maine, West Virginia, Virginia, and Pennsylvania, taxes and assessments are not used to support special districts created by general legislation. Only New York and Hawaii prohibit district financing by service charges. For taxing purposes, special districts often use assessments of value made by county officials and state tax agencies, and have their taxes collected by counties. Cost for tax collection services is typically one-half of one percent of monies collected by the county for the district.

Borrowing.— Special districts, when authorized, may borrow funds for a short term in anticipation of tax revenues or income from special assessments. Long-term borrowing may be repaid in two ways. General obligation bonds may be sold and repaid from the combined treasury of all revenues, backed by the jurisdiction’s full taxing authority. Borrowing through revenue bonds requires that repayment be made only from related revenues. The success of borrowing through bond issuance depends largely on the marketability of the issue, often a function of the interest rate, itself a composite of many factors. Although local government bonds have in the past been sold in relatively large denominations, \$5,000 is typical, sales of bonds in the \$100 to \$500 range are not unknown. One small municipality sold an entire \$529,000 issue in small denominations in less than a week.

Special districts generally may borrow and incur indebtedness up to their ordinary annual income. While most states have statutory or constitutional debt limits, revenue bonds are not normally included in them, and the debt limits are often circumvented by long-term lease-option-to-purchase schemes.

Intergovernmental transfers.— To a much lesser degree than other local governments, special districts gain revenues and other resources from state and Federal governments. To date, unfortunately, the single most important transfer program, revenue sharing (The State and Local Fiscal Assistance Act of 1972), excludes special districts. But Federal programs provide direct funding to districts for transportation, public housing, open space land acquisition, urban renewal, public works, recreation, and medical facility construction. Insofar as special districts are transformed into multiple-purpose governments, this flow is likely to increase.

Property taxes and Proposition 13.— California’s special districts vary dramatically in their dependence on ad valorem (proportional to value) property taxes. Utility districts rely heavily on service charges, whereas fire protection and recreation districts derive most of their income from property tax.

Proposition 13, California’s tax limitation initiative, passed by the voters in 1978, limits the maximum amount of any ad valorem tax on real property to one percent of its

full cash value. This amount is collected by the counties and apportioned, according to law, among the jurisdictions—that is, between the special districts, cities, and the county itself, that have a claim to it. Proposition 13 requires a two-thirds vote of the legislature to change state taxes for the purpose of raising offsetting revenues, and prohibits imposition of new ad valorem taxes on real property. The law has caused special districts to lose as little as three percent to more than half of their total revenues. User fees and service charges are not affected, nor are assessments levied on the basis of direct benefit.

Some of the alternatives special districts have to offset these revenue losses include eliminating services, reducing service levels, and increasing fees and charges. For some districts, such as fire protection, these are not viable options. One alternative they do have, however, is legislative authorization for an annual assessment, based on potential benefit, for fire inspection, emergency rescue, and other services. A more immediate response of the state legislature has been approval of a “bail-out” measure, a one-time revenue-sharing plan. In the last analysis, however, it is apparent that Proposition 13 lessens the desirability and feasibility in California of organizing neighborhood governments using special districts.

The financial future of special districts is in their transformation into recognized small units of multi- or general-purpose government, accountable to their constituencies, productive units in a polycentric public industry. It is in this way that they are likely to become successful competitors for scarce public resources, especially revenues from taxes and intergovernmental transfers.

## Formation

The four main legislative approaches to creating special districts are (1) general legislation authorizing a broad range of functions, (2) general legislation authorizing a single function, (3) special legislation authorizing many functions, and (4) special legislation authorizing a single function. Special districts in 11 states are created entirely by general statutes. These are Vermont, Ohio, Indiana, South Dakota, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Utah, and Hawaii. In Maine, Massachusetts, Florida, and several other states, most districts are created by special legislative acts.

Special districts, although independent governments, are subdivisions of the states in which they exist. Most districts created pursuant to general laws require local citizen action in their formation. There is a wide range of procedural possibilities: Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island do not allow public hearings or referenda in establishing special districts under their general laws. Vermont, North Carolina, Maine, and Georgia only require public hearings or referenda when the district is being created by the state. At the other extreme, Arizona, Montana, and Oklahoma do not permit formation of any special districts without voter approval.

Voting rights.— In states where special district formation must be submitted to the electorate, voting eligibility is a concern. Based on the due process and equal protection guarantees of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that voting eligibility may not be limited to special classes of citizens except for the most compelling reasons. Limitation of voting rights to property owners and taxpayers is therefore suspect, *prima facie*, and very likely to be invalidated.

The most illustrative case on the point is *Salyer Land Co. v. Tulare Lake Basin Water Storage District* (410 U.S. 719, 93 Sup. Ct. 1224, 35 L. Ed. 2d 659, 1973). Resi-



dents of a California water district challenged the voting arrangements for members of the board of directors. They contended they were denied equal protection because only landowners could vote, and votes were weighed according to assessed valuation. The Court held that the Constitution was not violated because the district almost exclusively provided water for land-owning farmers, and the district could not have been organized without their participation, which in turn required giving them control.

Even with its negative aspects, the Salyer case suggests that the courts will allow state legislatures to “rationally” limit the franchise to landowners only when there is a very narrow allocation of benefits and burdens.

Formation commissions.— Following a 1964 recommendation by the U.S. Advisory Committee on Intergovernmental Relations, almost a dozen states have established various types of commissions “to control proliferation of local governments.” They are generally mandated to review and regulate the formation, consolidation, annexation, and dissolution of local governments, including special districts. The commissions are sited at the county, metropolitan, and state levels: California, Nevada, New Mexico, and Washington have county commissions; Oregon has authorized metropolitan commissions; and statewide commissions have been created in Minnesota, Alaska, Michigan, and Wisconsin.

## California’s Local Agency Formation Commissions

The legislative rationale for establishing Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFCOs) in California reflects a further extension of the municipal reform tradition. The stated purpose is to encourage “orderly” formation and development of local governments. Specifically, the goal in one respect was to halt formation and control of special districts by narrow, proprietary interests.

The LAFCOs are county-level agencies in California, empowered by state law to review and approve or deny the major structural changes proposed for local governments. They may make absolute or conditional orders, and their decisions are not subject to review by higher agencies of government. Membership normally consists of five persons, two appointed by the county supervisors from among their own number, two appointed by a committee of representatives from cities within the county, and one representative of the “general public” appointed by the other four members. Under certain conditions a LAFCO may expand its membership to seven with representatives from special districts, but this has occurred in only three counties.

In 1971 the LAFCOs were given responsibility by the Legislature to plan “spheres of influence”—projected ultimate boundaries and services—for all local governments within their jurisdictions. Most of the plans so far do little more than identify general areas likely to be encompassed by a city or special district sometime in the future.

The enabling legislation in California specifies criteria for LAFCO review of proposals. These include population variables, service needs and costs, effects on adjacent areas, likelihood for creating “fragmentation,” and conformity with existing plans and specified spheres of influence. As a practical matter, the criteria are vague and may easily be used to justify any decision. In fact, LAFCOs generally are guided by a fixed order of preferred actions, listed here from most to least desirable: annexation to existing city, annexation to existing dependent district, annexation to existing multiple-purpose district, annexation to existing independent special district, creation of new dependent special dis-

trict, creation of new multi-purpose independent district, and creation of new single-purpose independent special district. In sum, where social communities emerge and seek formal public powers, LAFCO policy in California favors annexation and opposes formation of new public organizations.

Conflicts of interest.— While LAFCOs are not county agencies, the counties must pay their operating costs. The commissions are dependent on the counties for staff, facilities, legal counsel, and other support. Withal, it is hardly surprising to find them biased toward the county viewpoint. Moreover, with four-fifths of their members tied to the interests of existing cities and counties, the arrangement approaches a cartel: the decision to allow entry of an organizational competitor is placed in the hands of confirmed monopolists.

While some proponents of LAFCO control by city and county officials see them as particularly sensitive to the political relationships in their own areas, opponents of this arrangement say the commissions suffer from “limited perspectives.” It seems that the expression “promoting orderly development” often translates into protecting and furthering existing public monopolies, rationalized by municipal reform ideology. A number of cases on this point have been documented.<sup>41</sup>

One example occurred in 1963 when residents of the Dominguez area of Southern California applied to the LAFCO for incorporation as a city. Within the territory proposed for incorporation was an industrial area with a high-value property tax base, which the City of Long Beach had hoped to annex. The LAFCO approved the incorporation but excluded entirely the valuable industrial section. Because one of the commission members represented Long Beach, the Dominguez community took legal action in Superior Court, successfully proving a conflict of interest. The court ordered a new LAFCO hearing and disqualified the Long Beach member. Dominguez was finally incorporated as the City of Carson in 1969, but was able to capture only a part of the industrial tax base from its organizational competitors on the LAFCO.

Given the competition for scarce resources by local governments, and the self-serving ideology of municipal reform, constituting LAFCOs with ex officio representatives of city and county governments is at best overweening and at worst leaves the fox guarding the hen house.

Forming special districts in California.— The procedures for establishing special districts in California demonstrate the worst-case restrictions imposed by formation commissions in a number of states.

In California, circulation of a petition-to-hold-an-election for establishing a special district requires prior LAFCO approval. Each application is reviewed by the LAFCO executive officer, who is then required to prepare and submit recommendations to the commission. A hearing by the commission must follow within 90 days. If the application is allowed, its proponents must obtain signatures of 10 percent of the voters within the boundaries of the proposed jurisdiction. These petitions to hold an election must be filed within six months of the date the first signature was obtained, and not more than 60 days after the last signature. The executive officer is responsible for preliminary certification of the petition, verifying that it has the requisite number of signatures. Petitions that are deemed “sufficient” only impose a duty on the LAFCO to conduct a formal hearing on the formation proposal. If the commission grants its approval, an election is held and, if a majority of the voters concur, the new government is established.<sup>42</sup>

Reforming municipal reform.— Marking a rare lapse in the pervasive influence of municipal reform thinking, in 1974 a local government reform task force in California published a major report and several technical papers that adopted the polycentric, public choice view of government political-economy.<sup>43</sup> The basic viewpoint was that citizens should have the right to form new units of government, subject only to a consensus within their community and protection of the legitimate rights of other parties that may be affected. They rejected explicitly the notion that officials of existing governments have the right, expertise, or sufficiently dispassionate interest to determine the best structures of government for everyone.

The Task Force considered several optional approaches to the problem of structuring governments and assigning powers and responsibilities to them. These included the state-local “partnership” approach, which typically fails to meet local expectations and needs; assignment by a regional, multi-purpose planning agency, such as LAFCOs, usually intensifying conflict of interest and monopoly problems; and assignment by community preference and local competition, typically lacking safeguards against proprietary exploitation and political unaccountability.

The Task Force opted to recommend a traditional hybrid system of redrawn state enabling legislation, local elections to form or modify governments, and inter-jurisdictional agreements. This approach allows flexibility in seeking multi-scale economies, permitting citizens to select services and tailor service packages to the needs of their communities. Two checks are built into the system: (1) accountability to the Legislature and electorate, and (2) competition between service-producing jurisdictions.

To ensure the viability of this approach, which has been undermined for several decades by bureaucratic monopolies and formation commissions, the Task Force made collateral recommendations on taxation, assignment of functions to various levels of government, and revamping of state revenue allocations. The most basic recommendation, however, was that the Legislature once again allow the citizenry to form and alter structures of local governments when there is a reasonable consensus for doing so, as indicated by a petition and election process. The only qualification they submitted would limit such rights when there is the likelihood of a substantial adverse effect on other citizens.

More specifically, the Task Force recommended curtailing LAFCO powers to obstruct the petition and election processes for forming or consolidating governments or including or excluding territory from them. Under a reformed charter, the LAFCOs would no longer dictate the interests of various communities but would arbitrate when those interests collided. To meet regional problems, the Task Force recommended that the State permissively mandate area-wide organizations, created by a majority vote of the affected electorate, to be “empowered to develop and implement solutions.”

Challenging and circumventing LAFCOs.— The creation of LAFCOs and other types of formation commissions demonstrates that, in the Federal system, state sovereignty is fully recognized in matters of local government. There are two important implications: There is no basic Federal constitutional right to determine the form of local government. And local governments, as subdivisions or chartered creations of the states, do not possess organic powers but are subject to state control. The states may act at will, with or without the consent of the citizenry, even against their active opposition in matters of local government structure. In establishing LAFCOs for this purpose, the effect is to shift the political process of government formation into the arena of bureaucratic yet politicized planning.

Experience shows that even with these considerations, LAFCO actions can be challenged successfully by lawsuits. Also, it is been clear since 1960 that state policy-

making on local government organizational arrangements is subject to Federal constitutional constraints. In *Gomillion v. Lightfoot* (364 U.S. 339, 1960), the court held unconstitutional a statute that redrew city boundaries to exclude black residents. Presumably, the actions of any government or its agencies may be challenged similarly when violating due process and equal protection guarantees.

LAFCOs may be challenged also by mobilization of public protest. This strategy is admittedly less than ideal, given the relatively small constituencies involved in formation of special districts. Yet where local commissions have been free to operate with little or no public visibility, unchallenged even with blatant conflicts of interest that are biased toward centralized bureaucratic government, imaginative and well-focused efforts, even by a community as small as five thousand, have good prospects.

There are a number of other interrelated options for circumventing LAFCOs and other restrictive state policies and organizations, all relying on local or statewide ballot initiatives. Because the initiative process takes precedence over legislative lawmaking, except for constitutional limitations, it is a direct means for grassroots organizations to acquire public powers or an indirect means to change policies and procedures that hinder their acquisition. While the subject is far too complex to treat here in any detail, it is apparent that the initiative may also be used to circumvent or radically modify the influence of LAFCOs.

## RESOURCE STRATEGY

One of the rarely perceived facts of organizing is that grassroots organizations and social movements that are long-lived either begin with or in time evolve a multi-phased strategy for self-funding. It should be obvious that as organizations and movements shift, responding to changes in their action fields, so too must there be changes in their strategies for obtaining resources. It is helpful to think of a cycle with beginning, transitional, and long-term stages.

A simple typology recognizes that the most common condition at the outset is an organization or incipient group virtually without resources. The problem is that although funds are usually obtainable, strings to sponsors eventually—sooner or later—will be pulled when the organization moves toward zero-sum redistributive development. The second phase is transitional, away from initial sources that are undesirable because they are “external,” even if without strings. In the third phase, long-term institutionalized mechanisms secure funding “automatically,” without continuously large commitment and collection costs. Examples of this are the union check-off, church tithe, and government tax.

Current technology for acquiring bottom-up investment capital for permanent social infrastructure is at a stage of development comparable to space technology in the early 1950s. The technical means were at hand to reach the moon—propulsion, metallurgy, guidance, etc.—but they were not yet tested and integrated. The technology exists now to fund the formation and federation of grassroots organizations vested with public powers.

Mass-based canvassing can provide seed money and start-up funding, answering the need for first-phase bootstraps. Service fees, small bond sales, enterprise, private grants, and limited intergovernmental transfers can meet the need for transitional funding. In time, self-funding can be institutionalized by direct taxation and, eventually, when secure and stable status is achieved, large intergovernmental transfers and borrowing become possible.

## SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

To achieve redistributive development in our advanced, industrialized society, it is necessary to forsake both electoral and revolutionary strategies in favor of organizing social infrastructure. The place is in urban centers, in government, ending the dominance of bureaucratic monopolies and their municipal reform ideology.

There is a hopeful vision for governance in the cities, in metropolitan and neighborhood government. The main task is to create, from the bottom up, directly democratic public organizations, popular assemblies giving people space to act as citizens. Such organizations are not the answers to our problems, only the means to the answers; in themselves they are nothing, but as instruments of authentic social communities, they are very powerful.

We have in the open town meeting an ideal organizational model for direct self-government. It is time-proven and nationally accepted as the touchstone of American democracy. It pictures the basic structures and processes, and the everyday rules and procedures. But no institutional rubric, organizational form, or legal mechanism, nor any mobilization strategy for that matter, can be counted on to *cause* permanent citizen action in the political-economy. That is more likely to be the outcome of much larger historical forces. We may not control these broader trends and movements, but recognizing both their inertia and momentum, it is possible to build organizations as models of empowerment in them.

While it is usually accurate to say that organization does not create community but is its manifestation, organizations with inherent powers, placed where there are social communities, almost instantly stimulate citizen action. We need only to imagine an organization created in our own neighborhood, with taxing, spending, police, and eminent domain powers. Few of us would be indifferent or stay aloof. The use of these powers, when coupled to enterprise in a public industry, offers an exciting picture of future urban political-economy.

The United States is now two decades or more into the neighborhood movement, the growth and refinement of location-based grassroots organizations. Most social, political, and economic indicators point to their expansion well into the next century. The conditions of social life and the ideologies that arise around them, seem likely to propel indefinitely the search for empowering models of action and organization. And state statutory schemes provide means for the neighborhood movement to build grassroots organizations with public powers.

The way is not quick, simple, or easy, but then union organizing at the start was a criminal conspiracy. Now at least we have embodied in culture and law the tradition of forming and altering governments by petition and election, along with the right of initiative.

We might also keep in mind the story about Marshal Lyantey, a famous French colonial administrator in North Africa. He was urging people to plant trees in a new city he was laying out. When told it would take 150 years before the trees would give any shade, he replied, "all the more reason to do it today."

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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Fred Luthans, *Organizational Behavior* (2d ed.), (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1977), p. 104.

<sup>2</sup> Fred Luthans and Robert Kreitner, *Organizational Behavior Modification* (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman, 1975), pp. 140-41.

<sup>3</sup> I've borrowed liberally from Clark and Wilson's incentive theory and typology of organizations. See Peter B. Clark and James Q. Wilson, "Incentive Systems: A Theory of Organizations," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 6(2):129-66 (September 1961), pp. 138-48.

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<sup>4</sup> The basic schema is suggested by Neil Smelser in *The Sociology of Economic Life* (2d ed.), (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963, 1976), pp. 120-22.

<sup>5</sup> From Peter M. Blau, *Exchange and Power in Social Life* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1964), p. 124.

<sup>6</sup> I am indebted for much of the material in this chapter to the work of Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann in *The Social Construction of Reality* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor/Doubleday, 1966, 1967).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>9</sup> See W.W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth* (2d ed.), (London: Cambridge University Press, 1971, 1974).

<sup>10</sup> The benefits of investments in infrastructure, whether in physical or social capital – public utilities or public organizations – usually can't be divided: a *complete* water works or government must be built.

<sup>11</sup> A.H. Halsey, "The Future of the Welfare State," lecture given at the School of Social Welfare, University of California, Berkeley, November 10, 1978.

<sup>12</sup> Denis Goulet, *The Cruel Choice* (New York: Atheneum, 1971, 1975).

<sup>13</sup> Eugen Pusic, *Social Welfare and Social Development* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1972).

<sup>14</sup> Alan Wolfe, "Capitalism Shows Its Face," *The Nation*, 221(18):557-63 (November 29, 1975). Also see James O'Connor, *The Fiscal Crisis of the State* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973).

<sup>15</sup> David S. Gil, *The Challenge of Social Equality* (Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman Publishers, 1976).

<sup>16</sup> See Robert Arthur Rosenbloom, *Pressuring Policymaking from the Grassroots: the Evolution of an Alinsky-Style Community Organization* (Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1976).

<sup>17</sup> My main sources were Marshall Kilduff and Ron Javers, *The Suicide Cult* (New York: Bantam Books, 1978); David Moberg, "'Revolutionary Suicide,' 1978," *In These Times*, 3(5):11-14 (December 13-19, 1978); "Confession Letters

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<sup>18</sup> For examples see Daniel Lynn Conrad et al., *The Grants Planner* (San Francisco: Institute for Fund Raising, 1977); Midwest Academy, *Direct Action Organizing: A Handbook for Women* (Chicago, 1974); Mike Silver, "A Canvassers Guide to Door Knocking," *Community Jobs* 4(1):18-19 (February 1981).

<sup>19</sup> Harold Henry Weissman, *An Exploratory Study of a Neighborhood Council: the Application of an Exchange Concept* (D.S.W. dissertation, Columbia University, 1966).

<sup>20</sup> See Peter Matthiessen, *Sal Si Puedes, Cesar Chavez and the New American Revolution* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1969); Ronald B. Taylor, *Chavez and the Farmworkers* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1975).

<sup>21</sup> Graham Fraser, *Fighting Back, Urban Renewal in Trefann Court* (Toronto: Hakkert, 1972).

<sup>22</sup> See Mike Silver, "A Canvassers Guide to Door Knocking," *Community Jobs* 4(1):18-19 (February 1981).

<sup>23</sup> Max Weber, "The Essentials of Bureaucratic Organization: An Ideal-Type Construction," in (Herman D. Stein and Richard A. Cloward, eds.) *Social Perspectives on Behavior* (Glencoe, Ill: Free Press, 1958), pp. 564-71.

<sup>24</sup> Vincent Ostrom, *The Intellectual Crisis in American Public Administration* (University, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1973, 1974), p. 113.

<sup>25</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York: Mentor Books, 1956), pp. 301-304.

<sup>26</sup> Vincent Ostrom, *Alternative Approaches to the Study of Public Organizational Arrangements*, paper prepared for the Workshop on Changing Natural Resource Property Rights, October 10-11, 1974, Galena, Illinois (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University, Department of Political Science, Workshop on Political Theory and Policy Analysis, n.d.), p. 14.

<sup>27</sup> Vincent Ostrom, *The Political Theory of a Compound Republic, A Reconstruction of the Logical Foundations of American Democracy as Presented in The Federalist* (Blacksburg, Va.: Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Center for the Study of Public Choice, 1971).

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<sup>28</sup> Robert A. Dahl, "The City in the Future of Democracy," *American Political Science Review*, 61(4):953-70 (December 1976).

<sup>29</sup> Mark O. Hatfield, "Bringing Political Power Back Home: the Case for Neighborhood Government," *Ripon Quarterly*, 1(1):19-26 (Summer 1974).

<sup>30</sup> See Charles R. Warren, *Guidelines and Strategies for Local Government Modernization* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy of Public Administration, 1977), p. 95.

<sup>31</sup> See Thomas Jefferson, Letter to Governor John Tyler, May 26, 1810, in (Albert Ellery Bergh, ed.) *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (Washington, D.C.: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1907), p. 393; Letter to John Adams, October 28, 1813, in (Paul Leicester Ford, ed.) *The Works of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 11 (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1905), pp. 343-46; Letter to John Taylor, May 28, 1816, in *The Works of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 11, p. 529; Letter to Samuel Kercheval, July 12, 1816, in *The Works of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 12, p. 9; Letter to Samuel Kercheval, September 5, 1816, in *The Works of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 12, p. 16; Letter to Major John Cartwright, June 5, 1824, in (Thomas Jefferson Randolph, ed.) *Memoir, Correspondence, and Miscellanies, from the Papers of Thomas Jefferson* (Boston: Gray and Bowen, 1830), p. 396.

<sup>32</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Historical Discourse" (at Concord), in (Edward Waldo Emerson, ed.) *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Miscellanies* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1904), p. 47.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>34</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *American Institutions and their Influence* (New York: A.S. Barnes, 1851).

<sup>35</sup> James Bryce, *The American Commonwealth* (New York: Macmillan, 1888).

<sup>36</sup> Frank J. Goodnow, *Politics and Administration* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1900, 1967).

<sup>37</sup> From Robert B. Hawkins, Jr., *Self-Government by District* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1976), p.21.

<sup>38</sup> Robert B. Hawkins, Jr., "Special Districts and Urban Services," in (Elinor Ostrom, ed.) *The Delivery of Urban Services*, Vol. 10, *Urban Affairs Annual Reviews* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1976), p. 172.

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<sup>39</sup> See Richard P. Appelbaum, "Community Control in Isla Vista," *Working Papers*, 1(2):16-28 (Summer 1973).

<sup>40</sup> Adapted from Winston W. Crouch, John C. Bollens, and Stanley Scott, "Schools, Special Districts, and Metropolitan Areas," in *California Government and Politics* (6th ed.), (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1952, 1977), p. 245.

<sup>41</sup> For examples, see Task Force on Local Government Reform, "Analysis of the Laws and Regulations Which Provide for the Formation of Local Governments and Modification of their Boundaries," in *Technical Papers* (Sacramento: State of California, Office of the Governor, Office of Planning and Research, n.d., 1974), pp. 35-49.

<sup>42</sup> Some of the main California Government Code sections are 54791, 54793, 54794, 56053, 56150, 56152, and 61127.

<sup>43</sup> Task Force on Local Government Reform, *Public Benefits from Public Choice* (Sacramento: State of California, Office of the Governor, Office of Planning and Research, 1974).