

FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

This memorandum attempts to formulate a general scheme within which the study of religio-ethical traditions and community organization can proceed. Central to the study is the task of differentiating and evaluating various types of community organizations. The framework offered here identifies the major categories and issues which need to be dealt with in the study. The evaluative criteria are not developed in this memorandum, although the relevant values are located under the general notion of communal competence. The line of further development, then, would be the grounding of the imperative of communal competence, the grounding of specific criteria of normative organizational development of community life. This memorandum sets the stage for this task. It also provides a framework for development of community life. This memorandum sets the stage for this task. It also provides a framework for development of schedules for observation and interviewing.

I. What is Community Organization?

The notion of community organization is extremely ambiguous. This ambiguity has led to much ideological conflict. We cannot hope to overcome this ambiguity by a definition, but we need to come to some consensus in order to set a discernible line of inquiry. The following definition represents the emerging consensus of our research staff:

Community organization is understood in this research as a strategy of communication (1) through which a definition of the social situation is developed by or for a community, (2) through which selected interests are brought to bear on relevant decision-making processes, and (3) through which agencies gain legitimation as spokesmen for particular communities.\*

---

\*As the definition suggests, we look to community organization as a form of "societal action" (cf. Weber), that is, self-conscious action in which ends, means, and consequences are rationally taken into account and weighed by community leaders in setting the objectives and program of the organization. Such action is in contrast to "mass" or "communal" forms of action characterized dominantly as non-rational, habitual, or emotionally expressive action.

## II. Typology of Community Organizations

In Developing our research, we have explored many dimensions of organizational structure which can be helpful in discriminating the variety of community organizations which we have encountered. We cannot and need not explore in full detail all types which are present in the metropolitan area, but we do need a typology on the basis of which we can determine what particular organizations need to be investigated and those which can be neglected for the limited purposes of our research.

The following typology is developed around the basic notions of part and whole, where part refers to the values, interests, power, and processes of a community, whether that community be local or formed around particular characteristics and interests, and where whole refers to the comprehensive system of interests, values, power, and processes within which that community operates. The principle of part and whole is used to discriminate basic types on the supposition that community organization refers to the "ordering of that which is common" in the part and whole processes of the society. Organizational strategies will vary according to how the problem of the part and whole is defined. This distinction leads to four definitions of the problem of generating common interests and values (problems of organization) which furnish a framework for selecting the general type or types which are relevant to our research.

### Problem 1: Influencing the Whole on Behalf of the Part

This is assertive organization; it attempts to coordinate the interests present in the part in order to gain adequate expression for them. However, the values present within the whole and the institutional processes through which those values are distributed remain unquestioned; the objective is to influence those processes by increasing the agency (visibility and influence of the interests) of the part. (e. g., neighborhood associations, Operation Breadbasket)

### Problem 2: Accomodation of the Part to the Whole

This is an adaptive organization, where the interests and the values of the whole as well as its institutionalized processes are taken for granted, but the adjustment of the elements within the part or even the part as such may be viewed as inadequate. There may be a number of diagnoses of the specific problems to be met, but in each case the task is to reform the part, to develop appropriate conditions within the part so that it functions more adequately within the whole. (e. g., welfare services, federal interventions-O. E. O., urban renewal, etc.)

### Problem 3: Transformation of Part and Whole through Change in the Institutional Relationship between Part and Whole

This is parapolitical organization in the full sense of developing new processes of representation which have a quasi- or para-governmental character. Values and interests in part and whole are acknowledged, along with disvalues, but the creation of a New Order which can overcome the disvalues requires the establishment of new relationships to negotiate between part and whole as well as to cope with particular problems or interests in part and whole. (e. g., T. W. O.; W. S. O., etc.)

### Problem 4: Creation of New Part and New Whole in New Society

This is revolutionary organization which is counter-political or counter-governmental in basic intentionality; however moderate its particular strategies in any particular period\* thus, the values and interests of both part and whole are deemed alienated or deformed to the point of uselessness. Part, whole, and the relationship between them must be re-created in a new society. (e. g., Black Muslims (so-called) or possibly some Black Nationalism)

In this research we are primarily interested in community organizations which develop around the third problem. Let us consider briefly the basis for this choice.

Through the years religious leaders have found little difficulty participating in neighborhood associations of the integrative type and they usually have supported welfare services and interventions of the adaptive type organizations. However, participation of religious leaders and organizations in public problems in recent years has increasingly centered in parapolitical organizations. While many of the problem foci of the parapolitical organizations are similar to those of the integrative and adaptive groups, the distinctive character of their direct engagement in developing alternative centers of power has confronted the religious groups with a whole series of ideological and institutional difficulties. Our research is primarily concerned to identify the difficulties which have been experienced by the religious groups and to clarify some of the concrete ethical problems which are implicit in these difficulties.

In order to carry through an adequate research on this set of problems, we need to gain some understanding of representative organizations of each of these types, including some grasp of the attitude of religious leaders toward them. However, the major focus of our study can properly be the third type. We could, of course, give considerable attention to revolutionary organizations, but our access to them is extremely limited.

---

\*it is marked by a clear attack on the legitimacy of the existing order;

The significance of our distinctions can graphically be suggested by the following fourfold table:

		Relative Locus of Value:	
		Part	Whole
Organizational Orientation:	Integrative	1. <u>Assertive Organization</u> -increase agency of part Success: effectiveness in defense of interest or influence for gain of part	2. <u>Adaptive Organization</u> - adjustment of part to whole Success: reduction of friction or problems in part
	Transformative	3. <u>Parapolitical Organization</u> - new order Success: changes in part and whole through new relationships	4. <u>Revolutionary Organization</u> - new society Success: conversion of part and overthrow of whole

### III. Styles of Parapolitical Organization

Several styles of parapolitical organization of the third type can be distinguished around the basic problem of legitimation, since these organizations set themselves up along side the institutionalized processes and attempt to represent those whom they claim are unrepresented by the legitimate structures.

The problem of legitimation in the parapolitical organization can be stated as follows:

1. The legitimate structures of representation do not represent the real interests of the community; and...
2. The parapolitical process is really representative of those interests, but it is not legitimate; that is, its negotiation and bargaining require justification on the basis of some warrant or appeal that transcends the legitimacy of the established structures.

Taking this formulation of the problem we can identify three general types of appeal or warrant which may be adduced to give legitimacy to a community organization. In drawing these distinctions, we recognize that these are ideal-typical formulations; particular organizations may well

represent mixed types or may make different appeals on different issues and/or in relation to particular publics. Nevertheless, the general types furnish clues to broad ideological and stylistic differences among these organizations.

### Types of Warrant for Legitimation

A. Communal Interests: the appeal is to the real interests of the community; in this sense, the warrant is the identity of the community conceived as a continuing structure of interests (somewhat in line with Weber's notion of traditional authority), that is, the very existence of this community, constituted as interests, furnishes the imperative on the basis of which the legitimate spokesman is distinguished from the false structures of representation. Hence, when the case is made that the spokesman represents the actual interests of that community, enough has been said to warrant his power to negotiate.

B. Polity: the appeal is to the democratic procedures through which the issues, claims, or terms of negotiation have been developed within the community; in this case the warrant is the consensus of the community reached through democratic processes (approximating Weber's notion of rational-legal authority except applied to a voluntary para-governmental organization), that is, the consensus provides the imperative which informs the legitimate spokesman and serves as a warrant for his power to negotiate.

C. Charisma: the appeal is to the quality of the vision of the individual spokesman (Weber's charismatic authority); in this type the warrant is the spokesman himself. His legitimacy is self-authenticating, although the evidence of charisma is usually validated by support of his followers.

D. Personation: the appeal is to the spokesman himself as a representative embodiment of the people (characteristic personal properties of those) for whom he speaks. His imperative arises from immediate identification with his associates. Legitimacy again is self-authenticating but supported by a following.

All four types of warrant for legitimation comprise dimensions of authority, and each undoubtedly has a place in the appeals made by community organizations in actual situations. We expect, however, that the significance given one dimension or another will vary according to the basic style of an organization (including its leadership and ideology).\*

---

\*Previous studies would lead us to expect that in lower status Negro communities strong charismatic elements will be present in any effective leader regardless of the style of his organization. By nature of the parapolitical organization, leadership requirements generally would call forth charismatic personalities; the Negro culture, however, accentuates this propensity. Where a Negro organization develops along lines of "societal" action we would expect its constituents to be comprised of the lower-middle and higher status elements of the population. Nonetheless, we offer initially four basic organizational styles which we suspect will provide some measure of discrimination according to the types of warrants outlined above.

Basic organizational styles can be discriminated according to the types of warrants outlined above.

#### Styles of Organization According to Warrants for Legitimacy

<u>Warrant for Legitimacy</u>	<u>Type of Appeal</u>	<u>Style of Organization</u>	<u>Example</u>
Communal Interests	Popular Interests	"Grass Roots"	Join
Polity	Democratic Consensus	Representative	T. W. O.
Charisma	Quality of Vision	Elitist	S. C. L. C.
Personation	Representative Man	Expressive	W. S. O.

Observation of various styles and clarification of actual warrants which are adduced have to be made in the context of specific issues which are raised and negotiated. For example, the study of the laundry strike by W. S. O. would be an occasion to clarify its self-understanding of its role as spokesman in parapolitical action; similarly, the warrants adduced by FIGHT in its struggle to hold Kodak to an original understanding on employment policy would be indicative of its own understanding of who speaks for whom and on what grounds.

It may be difficult to discriminate some of these elements since all parapolitical organizations will claim to represent the real interests of a constituency; however, the appeal to representativeness by T. W. O., for example, depends upon its basic theory that representation is constituted by an organization of organizations. In this sense, T. W. O. would feel no need to appeal to an opinion poll of unorganized publics in their larger community for endorsement of their representativeness. These are the kinds of distinctions that can move us beyond general ideological statements to actual styles. The importance of this distinction become more evident in the development of the notion of communal competence.

#### IV. Communal Competence

Our memorandum so far furnishes a framework to help distinguish types of community organizations, and within the parapolitical type, to distinguish styles of organizations. The next task is to provide a framework to guide our exploration of values, goals, and results which characterize different community organizations. In this area we are beginning to

provide the elements to develop a normative view of community organization. Such a normative view requires the development first of categories for observation and then of criteria for the evaluation of particular content within them and of the relative valuing among them.

We take as a basic supposition that community organizations of the parapolitical type are viewed as instrumental to the development of "communal competence," that is, the general capacity of people to act collectively to cope with the problems, responsibilities, and opportunities they share as a community. The specific nature of the communal competence engendered by an organization will vary, we expect, according to its style. Our categories, formulated below as dimensions of communal competence, should enable us to discriminate these differences and to facilitate evaluative consideration.

### Dimensions of Communal Competence

#### 1. Consent and Participation:

The dimension of consent and participation as part of the meaning of communal competence can best be examined through the study of styles of leadership. Three elements of leadership style are relevant to our concern: role of leadership, participatory structures, and nature of public consent engendered. These elements are to be discerned in the actually functioning of leaders in the development and expression of issues.

##### A. Role of Leaders -

1. Expressive - coordinating and articulating the issues as they arise from the people
2. Shaping - taking the issues arising from the community and selecting and cutting them to make them politically viable
3. Determinative - the issues and rallying the people to their support

##### B. Participatory Procedures -

1. Direct Assembly - members meet for discussion and build on common interests ("small town" model)
2. Representative Council - group representatives adjudicate differences and plan cooperatively
3. Mass Gathering - people are informed and indoctrinated, and lured into collective action

##### C. Source of Issues -

1. People - immediate felt needs of people; great pluralism recognized

- 2. Organization- needs expressed by sub-groups and found by the organization to be politically viable
- 3. Ideology- ideas and philosophies which lead to identification of issues; little pluralism tolerated

D. Nature of Public Consent Engendered-

- 1. Consent to Issue- people informally drawn into participation around issues they deem salient
- 2. Consent to Process - organized groups share in community forum and support consensus emergent from the formal processes
- 3. Consent to Vision - people responsive to claim of vision and offer themselves in its support

These general distinctions of types of leadership role, procedures, and publics need not be developed exhaustively into a typology of participation, but certain dominant types can be tested by observation of the development of actual issues.

Consent and Participation in Styles of Community Organization According to Leadership Styles

	Grass-Roots	Representative	Elitist
Leader Role	expressive	shaping	determinative
Participatory Procedures	direct assembly	representative council	mass gathering
Nature of Consent	consent to issue	consent to process	consent to vision
(Examples)	W. S. O.	T. W. O.	S. C. L. C.

2. Communal Values and Integrity:

In his paper, "Religion, Revelation, and the Strengths of the Poor," Don Browning points to the importance of the vitalities and values which exist in ghetto communities as the basis for development of worth and strenght. He notes that such weaknesses are also strenghts, although they

may need to undergo appropriate changes in the development of power to participate.

Don Browning's paper and the basic notion of intrinsic values of communal groupings point to a second major dimension of communal competence - the development of indigenous vitalities and possibilities. Our study of various styles of organizations should explore the degree to which the styles of organizations, modes of participation, types of recruitment, and rhythm of negotiations reflect values in the community and/or impose alien styles in the development of alien values.

This is a difficult aspect of our study. We may be able to draw important categories for appraisal of style from the studies of W. S. O. and S. C. L. C., perhaps contrasted with T. W. O. We may be able to discriminate certain basic styles of expression, such as:

- a. Informal styles of the expressive types
- b. Organizational styles of the technological types
- c. Charismatic styles of the ideological types

Several categories suggestive of aspects of this dimension of communal integrity are as follows:

A. Rhythm of the communal process - groups often develop their own sense of social time, a characteristic temporal flow. Organizational life may or may not be harmonious with this rhythm.

B. Typical Life Patterns - familistic patterns, relations between the sexes and generations, styles of authority reflect various sub-cultures. Such characteristics may or may not find expression in the organizational activity.

C. Ideology - certain modes of expression, world views, and psycho-social constraints are often prevalent in a given community. To a greater or less extent a community organization will reflect the same ideology.

D. Associational Patterns - modes of interpersonal and inter-group association, ways of choosing leaders, methods of accounting for funds and so on are culturally relative; such patterns may be adopted or neglected by organizational activity.

E. Médiative Capacity - since communities are parts of the larger society, channels of communication and reciprocal access must be provided. Such bridge organizations can vary in their "fit" to the particular communities they seek to serve.

The evaluative problems in the appraisal of these styles depends upon the validity of Browning's analysis, the modifications of indigenous values which seem appropriate, and the relation of aspects of this dimension to one another and to other dimensions of communal competence.

### 3. The Scope of Organization:

A further dimension of communal competence takes up the adequacy of organizational development to the total interests on the community. Here we are concerned with the scope of organization. We will want to observe two aspects of this dimension: 1) the range of issues, and 2) the saliency of issues that are dealt with.

1. Does the organization lift up one or a wide variety of issues evident in the community?
2. Does the organization pursue the issues that are, or become, salient for various publics within the community, or, does it serve principally limited and particular interests?

We need to clarify what we mean by "issue." An issue is an interest that has been identified, appropriated and given shape by a significant "influence group" and placed within a larger framework of meaning. In short, an issue is a politicized interest. Most people in the ghetto, for example, have an interest in poverty, slums, and delinquency in the sense that they are affected by these "social problems" and have an attitude toward them. But these are not issues until their interests are lifted up by a group which interprets them, places them in a more comprehensive orientation, furnishes them with tactics in order that they may be pursued to a successful outcome and, hence, presses them onto the public agenda. Community organization is, in this sense, an attempt to convert interests into politically relevant issues.

Our concern is to examine the extent to which a community organization taps the range of potentially salient issues that are either pursued in their formative stages by sub-groups within the community or are dormant as pre-politicized interests. We know very little about pre-politicized interests and such research would be time-consuming and expensive. Our concern about the adequacy of issue development to communal interests may be served by examining in various community organizations: 1) the range of issues, 2) the process of the development of issues, and 3) the community support for the pursuit of these issues.

### 4. Organizational Effectiveness:

A fourth dimension delineating the notion "communal competence" might

be called "measure of organizational effectiveness." What are the achievements? What counts as success?

At least four aspects of effectiveness can be distinguished usefully. While these aspects are somewhat interdependent, we are suggesting that organizations will vary in the amount of emphasis or value given to one aspect over another, and in fact, they will be able to get results more readily in one aspect more than another. Our research should test these categories, adding or deleting as deemed appropriate, and attempt to discern the relative hierarchy of these aspects in value and achievement.

- A. Organizational Capability - This aspect of effectiveness has to do with the capacity for survival and stability of the organization itself. How well does it sustain itself so that it can do the job it sets out to do? We must be careful here not to apply alien criteria. We know relatively little about the phenomena of continuity, growth, decay and collapse of various styles of community organization. Our research should attempt to identify the nature of organizational capability dominant in each style.
- B. Parapolitical Capability - In this case effectiveness pertains to the establishment of new channels of communication and negotiation between the community represented by the organization and the larger society. By examining the flow of communication and influence on issues of importance to community and established structures the character of the parapolitical intervention should be identifiable.
- C. Governmental Capability - Effectiveness in this sense refers to the substance of the "outputs" of an organization; the question is the manner in which the accomplishments of the organization contribute to conditions enhancing the general quality of life in the community. Is the community in any sense more of a community because of the organization. Here the referent for effectiveness is the internal development of the community, in the relatedness of its parts, and in the substance of its program.
- D. Prophetic Capability - Another aspect of effectiveness relates to the public agenda. In some instances it appears that the ability to negotiate or win an issue is relatively unimportant to just getting a hearing, getting the issue formulated so that those having jurisdiction will have to take it into account.

Again, these aspects of effectiveness are specified as clues to guide observations. Some of these categories may be irrelevant to some organizations, but on the whole, we suspect they will help reveal useful distinctions.

## 5. Vision of the Good Society:

The vision of the good society embodied in various styles of community organization provides a final dimension of communal competence. Two aspects of such a vision can be subjected to investigation: 1) the process by which issues are pressed and negotiating power is developed; and 2) the basic view of the good society embodied in the specific issues and goals.

### A. Vision as Expressed in Tactics of Organizational Negotiation -

The issue here is the expression of democratic process and the place of law in the overall view of negotiation, power, and change.

1. Kinds of Power Invoked: political, economic, moral, religious
2. Kinds of Tactics Employed: threat, protest, civil disobed., riot

### B. Vision as Expressed in Global View (implicit in issues) -

1. Opening Individual Access: equal opportunity, self-determination
2. Equalization of Participation by Corporate Interventions:  
(enhanced initiation)
3. Guaranteeing Full Participation by Massive Corporate Interventions

Other aspects may have to be developed under this dimension, but issues such as economic opportunity, education, integration, and political organization can be examined for implicit philosophies of the total community as envisaged by the organizations. Generally, are we, 1) actualizing the American way, or 2) developing a welfare state, or 3) projecting a new order of human dignity?

## V. Conclusion

This framework for our research, so far as it is adequate, should provide the basis for our observational schedules and for the drafting of reports on our data.

We have avoided an objective evaluation of various styles from a particular social philosophy, although this will have to be done. However, we can use the framework which is developed here as a basis for examining incompatibilities between organizational styles (e.g., the relation of T. W. O. to S. C. L. C.) and for investigating the attitudes of religious leaders toward various styles of community organization. For these purposes, our work can be descriptive.

In this framework the decision was made to lift up the notion of communal competence as the basic theme in the development of our study. This presents us with the task of refining and clarifying that concept before we move toward the development of evaluative criteria. We may wish now, if we hold to this decision, to review the major literature in this field with a view to giving further expression to the variety and essential character of this theme. Clearly, the selection of communal competence as the major theme accords with the general typology (under the principle of part and whole) since it poses the question of levels of competence in a mass society of major organizations; that is, it asks what kind of competence and accountability for decisions and consequences should be allocated on what levels of a complex society. (This is the question which Luther Gulick has treated as central to the political process in metropolitan areas.)

Our next major memorandum should clarify our interpretation of the dynamics of metropolitan development as a context for the community organization movement; in this context, we can elaborate some principles to guide the development of communal competence.