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NEIGHBORHOOD MOBILIZATION IN BLACK OMAHA: SOME OBSERVATIONS

Kwame Poku Annor

Introduction

The decade of the sixties was a period of major economic, political, and social change in large central cities; yet few major institutional innovations were adopted to enable the cities to cope more effectively with the new conditions. The failure of central cities to solve their more pressing problems and rising expectations among the disadvantaged led to agitation for major reform in the institutions of municipal government.

The principal functions of municipal governments, notably the supply of goods and services and the management of conflicts, are being tested today as perhaps never before. Hardly a major urban community stands untouched by citizen demands for greater governmental responsiveness. Characteristically, these demands have focused upon governmental decentralization and greater community participation in municipal governance. They are orchestrated in catch phrases like community "self-determination", "citizen participation", "neighborhood mobilization" and increased "representativeness" in consumer services, political offices, and public service employment. The specific goals inherent in these demands of course, vary from city to city and are shaped by different urban cultures, institutional arrangements, urban cleavages, and population compositions.

This paper is primarily concerned with Omaha. Specifically, it deals with neighborhood mobilization in black Omaha. Emphasis is placed on the character of issues relative to a community organization's success in influencing public and private policies. An attempt is made to explain sources of community organization, the nature of the issues involved (primarily adverse and widely felt intrusions through the urban development process) and the nature of pre-existing community leadership.

Character of the Issues

At the outset it seems likely that many different issues would motivate organization. Perhaps few could be ruled out a priori, but urban problems like poor schools, rampant crime, and unresponsive bureauracies should, or so it would seem, produce school improvement groups, law and order groups, and community control movements. For at least two reasons, such is not the case.

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First, more fundamental issues are at work.[1] Second, this repertoire of urban problems tends to be intermittant, avoidable, and applicable to collectivities with no social cohesion. They engender individual responses which reinforce isolation rather than encourage collective action.

Like most urban communities, development issues have dominated the city's black community problems.[2] In North Omaha, one major issue is the continuation of the 'North' bound freeway which will have to pass through the community. In addition, other issues revolve around land utilization and allocation for the Missouri River Development Project, housing development, and employment issues prevalent in low income neighborhoods across the nation. While such factors as adverse changes in the job market, underrepresentation in the municipal civil services, and so forth, evoke some efforts, they appear secondary to development issues.

Housing and development issues have distinct characteristics which make them potent mobilizers. They are collective, non-gradual, intrusive, and costly. Their agents, or at least a useful proxy for their causes, stand out (e.g., the Riverfront Development Project housing survey, Omaha Housing Development). Finally, they demand an essentially defensive response. As issues move away from these characteristics, their mass mobilizing appeal decreases.

The notion that more collective issues (up to a point, at least) favor mobilization contradicts a central point of recent collective action theorizing.[3] Sharply redistributive issues create a larger pool of potential followers. They also show suffering collectivity members that they are in the same boat; they not only create a pool of emotion, but actually force people together. Further, such issues create an easy coalition of opposition. Opponents can agree on a veto if they cannot coalesce around a substitute positive plan. As Saul Alinsky was fond of saying, "Let the system organize for you. Get them to do something that outrages everyone".[4] This fall's Department of Justice episode in the Omaha Public Schools affair is a clear example of this.

Because such issues as quality education and housing are intrusive, costly and collective, their causality is likely to be clear even to the most untutored. When the Riverfront Development Project bulldozers start to work, the implications will hardly be fuzzy or open to academic dispute. While slumlords do not "cause" slum; rent increases, heating failures, and so forth may turn one landlord into a symbol for bad housing and a target for collective action.[5]

Issues must have this intrusive and collective character because, as one North Omaha Community organizer put it, "you have to deal with what people feel are immediate, concrete concerns, and build up faith in the organizer and the organization". A South Omaha leader echoed that, "it is hard to get involvement week after week unless the results directly and materially affect their lives".

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[1] Most of these issues center around urban development projects such as building new 'belt' ways, shopping centers and the like. See: Bernard J. Frieden, "Housing and National Urban Goals, Old Policies and New Realities" in James Q. Wilson (ed.) Peter Eisinger, "The Condition of Protest Behavior in American Cities" APSR G7(March 1973) pp. 11-29: Eisinger found somewhat different results in his newspaper's survey of 43 cities. He found 39% of the protests directed at the schools, 12% at the city council, 10% at the police and 8% at the welfare department.

[2] This is suggested by results of a survey conducted by North Omaha Community Development, Inc. (NOCD).

[3] Mancur Olson, The Logic of Collective Action (New York: Schocken, 1967).

[4] Saul Alinsky, Rules for Radicals (New York: Random House 1971), p. 36.

[5] Max Weber wrote, "The degree to which 'communal action' and possibly 'societal action' emerge from a 'mass action' of individual unorganized responses of the members of a class is linked to general cultural conditions, especially those of an intellectual sort. It is also linked to the transparency of the connections between the causes and the consequences of the 'class situation'. H. Genth and C. W. Mills (eds.), From Max Weber (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 184. Here the level of political education seems less important; some issues transcent cognitive under development in the same way rifle bullets pierce the skin; they get through no matter how much schooling you've had.

Aside from the mutual support and communications functions of social networks, evidence from the Omaha black neighborhood suggests they are central to mobilization.[6] Networks vary according to strength, content, and source; holding constant the issue, as networks grow, and as the institutions which generate them are more politically and collectively oriented, the propensity for mobilization should increase.[7]

If we accept the innocous statement that networks are created by such institutions as family, church, social agency, lounge, bar, social club, etc., we are led to the more interesting corollary that the generating institution's character will strongly influence the kinds of mobilization to which the resulting network is prone.

Business and kinship tend not to create extensive community oriented and fostered ties,[8] while activist social welfare institutions (including Community Action Programs etc.), churches and civil rights organizations do.[9] While these institutions constrain the strategy and outlook of collective action through their own maintenance interests, they also provide other crucial organizing resources in addition to networks.[10]

A glance in the Omaha UCS directory will show that the black neighborhood is populated by institutions creating relatively collectivity-oriented ties. Community action programs, legal services, churches, ethnic organizations, and service agencies abound. As one North Omaha based realtor who had been a target of group action lamented, "We've always had too many social agencies: we have non-active ones too; they aren't solving problems, they are creating them." Whatever their efficacy, such agencies generate important interlocking networks.

The same institutions which provide contacts, a sense of joint interest, and the resources necessary for organization, additionally provide what must be considered one of the major causal factors: an organizing cadre of leadership.

The Role of Leadership

If one were to ask a random sample of community organizers, social workers, or bureaucrats what was the most important factor in group strength, no doubt the majority would answer "leadership". One North Omaha resident, long active in community work, distinguished between the neighborhood's blacks and other minorities:

"The black community in the city is more identifiable than the 'others' due to a strong commitment to survive. City blacks have to be more aggressive rather than conciliatory. If we don't, we get 'beat' up".

Leadership is crucial in at least two senses: First in terms of leaders' central roles in social networks, and second, in terms of leaders' access to organizing resources. In the first capacity leaders educate and motivate others; they articulate what is widely felt and focus the resulting impulse toward action. In the second place, they are an organizing cadre, both agitating and carrying out organizational maintenance tasks.

Omaha black leadership varies according to the issue and organization. The school issue in the city, last August mobilized a broad spectrum of followers and leaders. The North Omaha Community Development Inc. sets its goals and objectives to include the provision of a plan to identify the "extremely blighted" areas and foster a detailed analysis of the North that will include plans for land utilization in attune with the city-wide plan to develop the Missouri Riverfront which encompasses most of the black neighborhood.[11]

Considered as a whole, members of most of the organizations leadership stratum have certain uniform characteristics. They hold positions in key institutions which help them create wide contacts among neighborhood individuals, other groups, and resource supplies. They are in good position to disseminate information, coordinate sources, and concert action. Community oriented institutions like the UCS, churches, social welfare agencies, the community action programs, and to a much lesser extent local businesses sustain them.

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[6] This point is made impressively in Maurice Pinland. "Mass Society and Political Movements: A New Formulation", in Hans Dreitzel, Recent Sociology (London: McMillan, 1969), pp. 99-114.

[7] Noel Chrisman argues in "Situation and Social Network in Cities", Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology, 7, (November, 1970), pp. 245-247, attention must be paid to the institutions which generate ties. Blacks and Puerto Ricans in poor neighborhoods have a double sense of stake because it is much more difficult for them to relocate than poor whites. Obviously ethnicity involves considerable differences in networks.

[8] Edward C. Banfield, The Moral Basis of a Backward Society (Glencoe: Free Press, 1958). He argues, for example, that "a moral familism" was dominant Southern Italy and deterred political organization.

[9] It is a generally accepted fact that participation in one politicized group leads to the reinforcement of participation in others.

[10] Some analysts have focused on the question of organizational resources as a determinant of organizational strength. A good example is in the works by Wilson and Lipsky.

[11] The body of a report submitted by a study team from the Community Relations Service, U. S. Department of Justice recommended ways to involve the minority groups in the Riverfront Development Project. Most of the recommendations centered around the RDP's Human Resources Task Force the only one of the several that has representatives from the entire minority community and because it is closer than the other minority advocate groups to the RDP system. Two minority community concerns consistently brought to the attention of the CRS team were RDP housing and transportation planning and the potential disruptive effect of such planning on the minority community.

Each of these institutions has a resource environment which limits it: these limits show through in leaders' outlooks, although they by no means determine outlook totally.

It follows from this analysis that a hidden coordination among group leaders and a tacit agreement among them about the importance of certain basic goals considerably strengthens their chances of success.

Such an agreement assures that criticism is taken in a comradely fashion, that internicine conflict is kept within bounds, that mutual support flows to the most vulnerable activists, and that the target does not find the price of cooptation cheap. Where mobilization was strongest and most successful, i.e., North Omaha Community Development Inc., Wesley House, Woodson Center, such alliances exists. Groups with differing approaches interlock through key leaders who attempt to resolve conflicts.

One Urban League Official put it this way:

"If people aren't jumping up and down the Urban League's rational militancy won't work. They put the heat on employers and then we get them to come across. The militance is necessary, but so is a behind the scene agreement among groups to orchestrate their activities."

Another community worker in North Omaha stated rather succinctly, the same thought:

"Blacks have power," he said, "but no chance against white power. Uncle Tom is a logical result without Booker T. Washington; maybe Malcolm X would never have had a platform. Behind the scenes in the black community, there is a very organizational concept of power, based on survival. Now younger groups are getting away from that because the lynching is more covert. There is freedom for militance while the moderate conservators of black values keep the ship afloat. They have tremendous sympathy for militants, and help them where possible, but ultimately militants are expendable."

In most of the groups in the neighborhood, this 'organizational concept of power' with multi-group 'orchestration' arose from mutual friendship, respect, and commitment among leaders. Whatever the disagreements among them, there was a tacit agreement not to throw militants to the wolves unless absolutely necessary to preserve the organizational framework.

If this sort of eclecticism offers the optimal strategy from the community's point of view, it must also be pointed out that it is so because of structural conditions the community does not control. At the systematic level the extent to which these dilemmas may be overcome and an optimal strategy pursued depends on conflicts within the dominant elite. Community organizations must therefore be prepared to capitalize on an opportune situation not consciously of their making.

The antagonisms generated by central city development trends pitted neighborhood against bureaucracy and neighborhood against developer, but it also created divisions within elites over how to pay for the political and fiscal costs of development. The integrating function of federal poverty money served a dual purpose here: it 'coopted' protest, but it also provided a means whereby mayors could add the neighborhoods to their electoral coalitions and increase their power over independent bureaucracies. These elite divisions ought to provide the climate in which community organizations could make gains.

Any degree of reflection about the evidence presented here should lead one to suspect any simplistic assessment of 'greater' versus 'lesser' successes. The community organizations in North Omaha, for very good reasons, had considerable difficulty in deciding whether an outcome was in fact good or bad. The typical evaluation tended to be conditional or apologetic: "It was the best we could do," or "we may not have gotten what we wanted but at least we got some jobs."

Individual short term gains are probably community organization's commonest result. The characteristic upward mobility experienced by the relatively small leadership stratum conforms to the rationalists' businesslike image of collective action, and confer benefits and poses problems at the same time.

Community organizations recognize both the benefits and problems this tendency creates. Sometimes (virtually always when it is happening to someone else) it is seen as a rank 'sell out'. At other times, it is viewed as necessary and beneficial, something which rewards leaders for their efforts, prevents organizational classification, spreads around burdens, and acts as an inducement for new leaders. In any case, the tendency causes problems.

One leader who worked his way through college while organizing recalled:

"I remember when I bought an old car. I needed it for the work; I was driving people everywhere. But poor people look at those things and worry you're moving away from them. And even education, a necessity for leadership, isolates you from the folk."

Upward mobility offers from the leader's perspective a more powerful and comprehensive position from which to achieve the same ends as well.

Community organization also commonly produces individual gains, by mitigating the pervasive feeling of incompetence so common and so discouraging among the poor.[12] One

[12]H. E. Freeman, "Correlates of Membership in Voluntary Associations," American Sociological Review, 22 (October, 1957) pp. 528-533, first pointed out this relationship.

Community worker spoke for many others about this key product of their efforts:

"The effects are not immediate, but sort of on-going. People get activated and change by the process. They develop different attitudes. They discover their humanity, and as a result they get indignant about having been deprived of that humanity."

Most residents are not affected by this process, of course; perhaps a hundred or two in the community experience a heartening solidarity by attending mass meetings, etc.

Collective gains, whatever the intrusion of individual interest, have nevertheless been made. Community groups have partially averted the imposition of collected buds such as urban renewal demolition. For a time at least they act as 'veto groups' although more often than not they ultimately failed to 'veto' the intrusion. Such collective gains are undoubtedly greatest in near Northeast Omaha where riverfront development projects will affect most of the people of the area. The North Omaha Community will make lesser gains. They will change the content of the state's largest renewal projects and secure limited participation through CDC and RDP and through housing redevelopment. The fear at the moment is the Northeast Freeway which appears likely to create a 'Berlin Wall' through the neighborhood. The overall negative impact to be made on housing and land use patterns appears inevitable.

Activities in these neighborhoods contribute heavily to collective gains outside the area. In response to general protests of which these neighborhoods are leaders, federal housing and renewal programs will be changed to promote more rehabilitation and resident participation. The National Housing and Economic Development Law Center has determined:

"Nationally, in large part due to administrative complaints and lawsuits filed by legal services attorneys, poor and minority persons have increasingly been able to halt and delay urban renewal projects which would displace large numbers of people without providing adequate relocation and replacement housing, and change redevelopment plans to provide for the inclusion of more low and moderate income housing, including rehabilitation."[13]

[13]"URPAC Guide Research," Law Project Bulletin, 2 (April 15, 1972), p. 1.

TRENDS IN DECISION-MAKING BY WOMEN CONFRONTED WITH UNPLANNED PREGNANCIES

Lynne R. Dobrofsky

Barbara I. Briggs

Introduction

One major American institution undergoing dramatic social change is the traditional patriarchal family system and the sex roles defined by it. Many women today are challenging the strict definitions of marital sex roles and responsibilities (wife and mother). The institution of marriage as the only alternative in which to consider motherhood and child rearing is being re-evaluated by women and men who manifest a change in the traditional system of values, norms, and attitudes. Such changes appear in social trends and social movements and become translated into socialization, an impact felt both on the current generation and on the next generation as well.

Some may suggest that these changes are a direct result of the recent Women's Liberation Movement. However, attention to these concerns has a history which dates back to August 18, 1920, when the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified to give American women the right to vote. Women's social roles were again challenged during World War II and today, the granddaughters of those early feminists, the Sufferagettes, are committed to changing the sentiments of American society which embrace a rigid Puritan ideology and morality governing family life and motherhood.

Attitudes toward illegitimacy, motherhood independent of marriage, and the legal and social norms regarding family planning, contraception and abortion are important areas of social inquiry. Whether these trends represent changes in attitude as well as behavior; whether they are representative of the majority; whether they are representative of the young or the older generation are all questions to be explored. Is this revolution, the overthrow of an established system of morals, or evolution, the process of growth and development oriented toward a new system of morals?

One mechanism through which these forces can be understood is the identification of decision-making patterns. Decision-making in any situation of change reflects the influences and internalizations of current values and attitudes. Patterns of decisions being made by women about and during pregnancy

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can be considered a good indicator of the trends and changes taking place. The question of 'why' and 'how' more women are arriving at these decisions can be regarded the most important issue which requires a study of: a) how women have been socialized by primary group values; b) the influence of peer or reference group values during adult socialization and c) whether there is a conflict between the two.[1] Necessary limitations, however, permit only a look at the decisions being made by pregnant women in light of the three alternatives available to them: to keep the child, to relinquish the child (adoption), or to terminate the pregnancy (abortion). The majority of the data appearing in this article relates to women in the Omaha community who must make a decision about an unplanned pregnancy. The following discussion presents some sanctions and social values which are simultaneously being challenged both nationally and locally.

If the pregnancy was legitimatized through marriage, the decision to keep the child has always been accepted by the dominant socio-economic group in America. If it was not deemed possible to keep the child, adoption represented the only other alternative. The decision to surrender a child for adoption or to relinquish the child at birth has been the acceptable decision to 'illegitimate' the problem pregnancies since it has always been possible to keep such incidents a secret in order to avoid stigma. If the intent was to hide the fact of illegitimacy, social forces drove the people into marriage, thereby externally turning an incident of moral shame and guilt into a celebrated occasion.

During the pre- and post-World War II period, minority women were denied the alternative of institutionalized adoption. Adoption agencies refused to handle minority or mixed-race infants on the grounds that they couldn't be placed. Since Black American women traditionally have chosen to keep their children, the stigma of illegitimacy did not emerge in the Black community. Those social values operating in the black community permitted all children to be absorbed irregardless of financial

[1]See: Lynne Dobrofsky, "Social Control as Implemented in the Decision-Making Process of Pregnant Women," (Unpublished Dissertation, St. Louis University, 1972).

or other difficulties. Therefore, there neither existed a need to 'hide' a pregnancy by leaving town nor to go to a maternity home should such an option have even been available. Social control mechanisms of prejudice which defined illegitimacy as immoral and sexually permissive were, therefore, reinforced within the dominant white middle and upper classes. This was based on evidence that black women made no effort to behave according to the dominant value system. The black and minority woman was thus viewed as a sexual and social deviant and served as a 'bad' example in the socialization of whites.

The decision to have an abortion or terminate a pregnancy has traditionally been considered a social problem, one cloaked in secrecy. Knowledge of abortion occurrences has always existed but popular choice was to ignore those known cases by refusing to discuss them. Historically, abortion was selected by a) married women, b) single girls wanting to avoid the stigma and embarrassment of illegitimacy, c) those who could not get married because of male refusal or d) where mothers of these girls did not desire another child. But the incidents of abortion for single girls with parental knowledge and support, were rare. For many today, abortion represents the only alternative in efforts to quickly dismiss all evidence which might disgrace one's family. In other cases, where adoption is not acceptable, abortion is the alternative decision. As available data will illustrate, consistent with national trends, women in Omaha today are making decisions which manifest a reverse in the traditional behavioral patterns.

Evidence for the Omaha-Douglas County Area

Regarding the Omaha-Douglas County area, there now exists a trend toward an increasing rate of illegitimate births and a simultaneous decline in fertility rates. The illegitimate birth rate in Douglas County was 44.1 per 1,000 live births in 1960, 145.9 per 1,000 in 1971, and 163.6 per 1,000 in 1972. This represents an average annual increase of approximately 10 illegitimate births per 1,000 live births. In contrast, the increase over the 1971-1972 period was 17.7 per year; an indication that the rate is increasing. Although data for illegitimate births on the national level was not available, information on birth rates and fertility rates (see Table 1) shows that the trend in Omaha is similar to that for the nation. Both the birth rate and fertility rate are slighly higher for the Omaha area.

In addition to an increasing rate of illegitimate births, the age structure of mothers involved is changing somewhat, as evidenced in available agency statistics. In 1972, approximately 51 percent of the illegitimate births recorded in the Omaha-Douglas County area were to mothers over twenty years of age (see Table 2), and approximately 49 percent were to mothers under twenty. Although the percentages have not changed greatly over the 1965-1972 period, the latest figures on illegitimate births show an increase, for the first time in three years, for women over 30 years of age and an increase over the 1971 rate for women in the 20 to 29 age category.

TABLE I
BIRTH RATES AND FERTILITY RATES: OMAHA-DOUGLAS COUNTY AND THE UNITED STATES, 1967-1972[1]

| | BIRTH-RATES | | FERTILITY-RATES | |
YEAR	OMAHA-DOUGLAS COUNTY	UNITED STATES	OMAHA-DOUGLAS COUNTY	UNITED STATES
1967	18.2	17.8	88.7	87.6
1968	17.5	17.5	85.3	85.7
1969	18.1	17.7	88.3	85.8
1970	19.2	18.2	88.7	87.6
1971	18.4	17.3	85.5	82.3
1972	16.4	15.6	75.8	73.1

[1]Source: Omaha-Douglas County Bureau of Vital Statistics

TABLE II
PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF ILLEGITIMATE LIVE BIRTHS: OMAHA-DOUGLAS COUNTY BY AGE OF MOTHER, 1967-1972[1]

AGE	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972
All Ages	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Under 20 Years	46.5	45.8	51.3	47.8	51.3	48.9
20-29 Years	44.2	43.7	41.2	46.3	43.1	45.0
30-44 Years	9.3	10.5	7.5	5.9	5.6	6.2

[1]Source: Omaha-Douglas County Bureau of Vital Statistics

Adoption. By the time formalized patterns were created to adapt to the needs of unwed mothers and adoption trends were in full swing, the forces of the 1960's swept the country in a great expression of change among attitudes and, as a result, the late 1960's and the early 1970's were forced into a process of reappraising the needs of clients based on a shift in decision-making of the pregnant females of the past five years.[2]

Homes for unmarried pregnant women have, since 1968, been closing down in most cases for lack of customers.[3] Currently in Omaha, such trends are expressed as a "shift in priorities...brought about by a fact of modern life - more and more unwed mothers are keeping their babies." While this quote is from only one agency - the Center for Human Services - Child

[2]An estimate that, over the twelve year period from 1944 to 1958 the unmber of adoption petitions filed in this country went from 50,000 to 96,000 illustrates the rapidity with which the market for adoption developed in this country.

[3]This phenomenon has not been unique to the U.S. but appears to have crossed cultural boundaries as well. In England and Wales, 50 such homes were closed between 1968 and 1971, but some of these have since been converted into small flats for unmarried mothers and their children. In Detroit, Florence Crittenton has closed for the same reason and in St. Louis, Bethesda Maternity Home closed in February, 1971 for lack of a population to serve. Others in the St. Louis and Eastern Illinois areas report a substantial decline or near absence of mothers who are willing to surrender their children for adoption. Reports from elsewhere in the country point to the impact they are feeling from the same trend. San Francisco County adoption services reported a sharp drop in the number of children placed for adoption being noticed in late 1969. Their figures for 1968 placed the average of 315 children under two years old available for adoption at all times with a May, 1972 report of only 80 and they were all over two years old.

Saving Institute (World Herald, "Job, Not Secrecy, Has Priority," October 21, 1973), other statistics from local agencies bear this out. In 1971, 48% of the unmarried mothers served by Douglas County Social Services were Black, 47% White, 3% Mexican and 2% other. Ninety-five percent of the mothers chose to raise their children as single parents and 5% made adoption plans. Among medical facilities in 1970, Creighton University St. Joseph's hospital reported 971 total births of which 270 were out of wedlock. There were 61 relinquishments, 4 kept, and for the remainder of the cases, the disposition is unknown. In 1971, 1,144 total births were reported with 311 being out of wedlock. Forty relinquished while 271 kept their children. In 1972, 1,066 total births were recorded, 263 of which were out of wedlock and of these, 21 relinquished for adoption and 242 kept their children.

Due to a lack of uniform statistical accounting practices, it was impossible to come up with valid comparative statistics for various years and/or by age, ethnic identity, level of education, marital status, etc. Charted below is a presentation of decisions by the nature of available services. Where no number exists, information was simply not available. In an isolated case where one agency was able to compile data according to the demographic factors mentioned above, it was revealed that in 1972 ethnic minority women were still choosing to keep their babies (73%). The same agency also reports that more White women, including a growing number who were anticipating a mixed-race baby, were choosing to relinquish for adoption (62%). Among divorced women, 60% chose to keep their baby.

TABLE III
DISTRIBUTION OF DECISIONS ACCORDING TO TYPE OF SERVICES[1]

TYPE OF SERVICE	KEEP	ADOPTION	ABORTION	REQUEST FOR SERVICE
Denominational Agencies e.g. United Catholic Social Services, Lutheran Family & Social Services	121	176	NA	353
Non-denominational Agencies e.g. Center for Human Service	42	39	3	84
Medical Facilities e.g. Creighton University St. Joseph's Hospital	242	21	NA	263
PERCENTAGE OF THOSE REQUESTING SERVICE	58	34	.4	92.4*

[1]Totals were obtained by sample of selected agencies where there was both a willingness to cooperate and/or where statistics were available.
*In the remainder of the cases, the disposition is unknown.

Abortion. Nineteen-sixty-seven marked the beginning of liberal abortion laws in the U.S. In the domain of public opinion, recent reports have attempted to assess the sentiments of society at large in relation to the changes in legal norms.[4] A recent and first systematic investigation of birth control practices around the world, conducted by Planned Parenthood, reported from a worldwide survey that "about one pregnancy in every three ends in abortion," (World Herald, "Survey Says Abortion Ends 1 in 3 Pregnancies in World," October 23, 1972).

Since New York has been viewed as the forerunner in liberalized abortion, and based on the constitution of the resident population as well as the non-residents who have taken advantage of "abortion on demand" and the wide variety of private and public services offered in this regard, the sociological patterns which have emerged in New York provide a framework for characterizing the contemporary population who decides to terminate their problem pregnancies. In the first twenty months of legalized abortion:

. the vast majority of women were over 18 years of age
. non-residents tended to be somewhat younger than city women
. 57% of all abortions in the first 12 months were performed on women who had never been pregnant before
. 26% were on women who had one or two children
. 65% of non-resident women interrupted their first pregnancy
. more residents had several children at the time of their abortion than non-residents
. estimates (since marital status was not a pre-requisite) in the first 11 months concluded that overall, 68% of abortions were performed on women who conceived out of wedlock (comparable to New York State figure of over 60%)
. 76% of out of wedlock abortions were terminations of

first pregnancies
. 19% of married women terminated their first pregnancy
. 20% of abortions to residents were first pregnancy under 21 years of age
. 33% of non-residents terminated their first pregnancy under 21 years of age
. 40% of married women (as of June, 1971) were 30 years old or more
. 71% of white married residents had none or less than 2 children
. 62% of black married residents had none or less than 2 children
. during the first year: 74% were white, 22% black and 4% were born in Puerto Rico
. discounting non-residents, more than 50% of the residents who received abortions were black or Puerto Rican[5]

Basically, for many women, whether single or married their belief is that it is the right of the woman to decide. In this sense, it represents American women's effort to control when they shall bear children and is one expression of changing their social status in an age when emancipation of women is a major cultural theme.

> "This perspective about her rights to control her role of mother is reflected in how she sees abortion and her marriage roles. In recent decades women have been able to exert greater personal control over their marriages through easier divorce opportunities. And now many are seeking greater control over the motherhood role through more liberal abortion laws."[6]

In Omaha, from May, 1972 through January, 1973, under the auspices of the Mayor's Commission on the Status of Women, a sample survey conducted by one counselor revealed that of the 154 women she alone counseled in that period of time, 149 were referred for abortion (5 decided against it). Of the 127 who were

followed, 104 obtained abortions in New York, 16 in California, 7 in Omaha, and in 22 cases the disposition was unknown.

On January 22, 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that for the first trimester of pregnancy, the decision is strictly between the woman and her doctor. State regulations cannot interfere in any way. For the second trimester, the state may impose reasonable safeguards to protect the woman's health but not to protect the fetus, and for the last 3 months of pregnancy, the state may intervene up to a limit; unless it is necessary to preserve the life and health (including mental) of the mother.

Since August 1, 1973, as a result of the U.S. Supreme Court decision and in response to an apparent need, Women's Services, a private clinic was established and has seen 555 women. Five hundred thirty-two of those women chose to terminate their pregnancy. Seven of the 51 pregnancies terminated in the second trimester were referred out of state. The following is a numerical breakdown of dispositions of cases seen at the clinic:

TABLE IV
SUBJECTS SEEN AT WOMEN'S SERVICES, P. C. [7]
August 1 - October 15, 1973

Endometrial Aspiration	172
First Trimester	309
Second Trimester (Omaha)	44
Second Trimester (Out of State)	7
Maintain Pregnancy	8
Unknown	15
Total	555

Source: Women's Services, P. C.

Conclusion

Although there is a lack of uniform statistics available in Omaha, it becomes clear that the decisions today's women are making regarding their pregnancy follow national trends.[8]

From local data in conjunction with other studies of women making the decision to keep their child, emerges a major trend of white, middle-class unmarried females who don't define the absence of marriage as morally wrong in which to have and keep a child and whose concepts of self welcome the role of motherhood independent of the role of wife. Their decisions are highly indicative of the cultural theme of changing roles and status of women in America.

Data and findings show that women who surrender their child for adoption do so because they identify with other's

role expectations - expectations which do not embrace motherhood for an unmarried female and therefore do not perceive the potential status of motherhood as rewarding or positive. This female population, in self concept and value orientation, generally mirrors those social values which judge their premarital conduct as undesirable. The choice of keeping one's child is viewed as an obstacle to productive futures in line with a work ethic and/or marriage-family orientation. This alternative decision transforms 'deviant' premarital conduct into acceptable problem solution, thereby avoiding the potentially disorganizing effects from other alternatives. The apparent decline in adoption services and supply for an adoption market (while the demand is still high) reflects the disappearing stigma of deviancy associated with the behavior in the first place and the absence of fearing the social and psychological disorganization from other decisions in the second place.

Women who decide to have an abortion generally have role expectations which are anchored in other than motherhood terms and therefore they choose to terminate their pregnancy in order to maintain their current life styles. If married, these women view their life style, in relationship to their husbands, as wives, but not as mothers. If single, abortion avoids the birth of an illegitimate child, and this decision demonstrates conformity to standards which negatively sanction pre-marital conduct of both whites and non-whites. The increasing number of Catholic wives and mothers choosing abortion, because an additional child no longer represents an increment in status, dramatically shows the powerful influence of identification with adult reference groups (as opposed to primary religious socialization) which is actively nurturing the seeds of social change. Their decision for abortion, is, perhaps, the strongest moral statement supportive of social change, since their religious orientation embodies the most sacred and strict moral prescriptions governing childbirth and family expectations.

A major trend discovered a growing acceptance of black or minority members who are integrating the values, traditionally characteristic of the dominant socio-economic organization of society, into their frames of reference by decisions (abortion) which support pregnancy, and therefore motherhood, in the legitimate context of marriage; while the white, middle class, unmarried female, by her increasing decisions to keep her child out of wedlock, is adopting the values and meanings traditionally characteristic of the black community which has sanctioned the role of mother independent from the role of wife and institutionalized marriage. A second major trend, also indicative of social change, was found among the growing numbers of Catholic women who are deviating from primary and religious value orientations by their decisions to have abortions.

Should these trends continue, as the data suggests, attention must be given to the allocation of resources to meet the changing needs of this female population in Omaha. Implicit in this recognition is a recommendation to diversify services. If the decreasing supply for the adoption market continues, an effort to re-distribute personnel, counseling, services, and funds should be channeled to accommodate the needs that arise from selecting other alternatives.

[4]A March, 1972 report by the U.S. Commission on Population Growth and the American Future states that 6 out of every 10 American adults favor abortion performed for reasons other than saving a woman's life, and of this 60%, half would remove all legal restrictions on the operations.

[5]Fishbein, Patricia, "Abortion on Demand," Sexual Behavior, Interpersonal Publications, Inc., New York, Vol. 2, No. 6, June, 1972. pp. 35-43.

[6]Bell, Robert R., Social Deviance, The Dorsey Press, Ill., 1971. p. 134.

[7]At the time of the initial writing, the University of Nebraska Medical Center was performing 15 abortions per week as directed by the University of Nebraska Board of Regents. The current situation is defined by a temporary court injunction restraining the Board of Regents from enforcing its abortion policy. A future court decision will ultimately determine UNMC's policy on the matter.

[8]What exists in Omaha parallels a recent in-depth analysis conducted in St. Louis from 1971-1973; a fact which is especially interesting since Omaha, in many respects, can be considered a "mini-St. Louis".

SYMPOSIUM AND SEMINAR ANNOUNCEMENT

In response to requests, the College of Public Affairs and Community Service is sponsoring a symposium on 'Revenue Sharing' jointly with the College of Business Administration of Creighton University, the Omaha Chamber of Commerce, United Community Service, Urban League of Nebraska, the City of Omaha, the League of Women Voters, and the Democratic Party of Douglas County. Dr. Murray Weidenbaum will give the major address on Friday, December 7, at 7:30 P.M. He is a former Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Economic Policy and fiscal economist for the U.S. Bureau of the Budget. He is now Professor of Economics at Washington University, St. Louis. All interested persons are invited to attend the free sessions, which will be held at the Eppley Conference Center at the University of Nebraska at Omaha on December 7 from 7:30 P.M. to 9:30 P.M. and December 8 from 9:00 A.M. to 4:15 P.M. and at Rigge Lecture Hall, Creighton University on December 14 from 7:30 P.M. to 9:30 P.M. and December 15 from 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.

The Center for Applied Urban Research is offering a series of seminars and a slide presentation on "Omaha's Changing Profile." The first seminar is to be presented to the Economic Development Council of the Omaha Chamber of Commerce on December 19. The hour long slide presentation will focus on change in income, employment, retail trade, property values, and characteristics of the population in Omaha over the 1950-1973 period. Groups interested in the slide presentation should address their inquiry to - R. H. Todd, Director, Center for Applied Urban Research, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

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