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 bureaucracies 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.
a larger pool of potential followers. They also show suffering collective 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 outrageous you."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 even more true 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 skirmishes do not "cause" slums; rent increases, heating failures, and so forth may turn one landlord into a symbol for bad housing and a target for collective action.5

A South Omaha leader echoed that, "It is hard to involve week after week unless the results directly and materially affect their lives".6

5Max 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 that of an ideal type. It is also linked to the transparency of the connections between the causes and the consequences of the "class situation". H. Garth and C. W. Mills (eds.), From Max Weber (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 154. Hard the level of political education seems less important; some issues transparently cognized 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.7

Involvement of some organizations, content, and sources having 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 innocuous 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, while activist social welfare institutions (including Community Action Programs etc.), churches and civil rights organizations do.8 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 leader who had been a target of group action lamented, "We’ve always had too many social agencies: we have non-violent 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 than conch, latory, 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 ature 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 organizers 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.

7The 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 HDP'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.

8Most of these issues center around urban development projects such as bulldozers moving new shopping centers and the like. See Berndt J. Friedler, "Housing and National Urban Laws, Old Policies and New Solutions" in James O. Wilkin (ed.) Peter Elisberg, "The Condition of Poorer Behavior in American Cities" (APSS TEST March 1973) pp. 11-29. Elisberg found somewhat different results in his newspaper survey of 43 cities. He found 36% of the protests directed at the schools, 12% at the city council, 10% at the police and 8% at the welfare depart-

9Saul Alinsky was fond of "community" as a substitute positive plan. As Max Weber (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 154. Hard the level of political education seems less important; some issues transparently cognized under development in the same way rifle bullets pierce the skin; they get through no matter how much schooling you’ve had.


11Robert C. Benfield, The Moral Basis of a Backward Society (Glencoe: Free Press, 1956). He argues, for example, that "a moral tradition" was dominant Southern Italy and deterred political organization.

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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 internecine 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., Wesly House, Woodson Center, such alliances exist. 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 militancy 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 and beneficial, something which rewards leaders for their efforts, prevents organizational classification, spreads around borders, 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 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 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 bums such as urban renewal demolition. For a time at least they acted as "veto groups" although more often than not they ultimately failed to 'veto' the intrusion. Such collective gains are undeniably 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 massed up and charged to the non-militants is inevitable.

Activities in these neighborhoods contribute heavily to collective gains outside the area. In response to general protests of these neighborhood 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."

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 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
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 taking place. The question of 'why' and 'how' more women are keeping the child, to relinquish the child (adoption), or to terminate the pregnancy (abortion). The majority of the data appearing in simultaneously being challenged both nationally and locally. The discussion presents some sanctions make a decision about an unplanned pregnancy. The following discussion presents some sanctions that existed, information was simply not available.

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 regardless of financial 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 women, b) single girls wishing 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 years, abortion represented 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 evidence 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 slightly 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 by available agency statistics. In 1972, approximately 51 percent of the illegitimate births recorded in the Omaha-Douglas County area were to mothers between twenty years of age (see Table 2), and approximately 49 percent were to mothers under twenty. Although the percentages have not changed much over the 1965-1972 period, recent 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.

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 facet 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 Saving Institute (World Herald, "Job, Not Secretory, 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 29 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 numbers exist, 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 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>BIRTH-RATES OMAHA-DOUGLAS COUNTY</th>
<th>UNITED STATES</th>
<th>FERTILITY-RATES OMAHA-DOUGLAS COUNTY</th>
<th>UNITED STATES</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>89.7</td>
<td>87.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>85.3</td>
<td>85.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>88.3</td>
<td>86.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>85.6</td>
<td>84.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>75.8</td>
<td>73.1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1Source: Omaha-Douglas County Bureau of Vital Statistics

### Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Under 20 Years</td>
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<td>51.3</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>51.8</td>
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<td>20-29 Years</td>
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<td>45.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>30-44 Years</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2An estimate that, over the twelve year period from 1944 to 1956 the number of live births in the United States was from 3,650,000 to 3,800,000 (downward with the market for adoption developed in this country).

3This phenomenon has not been unique to the U.S., but appears to have crossed cultural boundaries as well. In England and Wales, 50 homes were closed between 1968 and 1971, but some of these may have 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, due in part to the fact that they can no longer expect to gain access to these facilities from the point in the country to the point where 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 report for 1968 placed the average age of children under two years old available for adoption at 1972 report of only 608 and they were all over two years old.

4Source: Omaha-Douglas County Bureau of Vital Statistics

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**ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

Lynn R. Dobrofsky, Research Associate at the Center, received the Ph.D. in Sociology from St. Louis University. Prior to joining the Center's research staff, Dr. Dobrofsky was a visiting lecturer for the University of Maryland, Far East Division, Tokyo, Japan.

Barbara J. Briggs, Graduate Research Assistant at the Center, is completing work on the M.S.W. at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

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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.
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.