The Politics of Urban Renewal in Outstate Michigan

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THE POLITICS OF URBAN RENEWAL IN OUTSTATE MICHIGAN

by

Lewis E. Soli

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the School of Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment of the Degree of Master of Arts

Western Michigan University Kalamazoo, Michigan August 1966
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Lewis E. Soli
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THE CHALLENGE OF THE 60'S

The city of the 1960's is awakening to its present condition and is attempting to take positive steps towards the alleviation or the solution of a multitude of problems. Typical of the problems is the erosion of the local tax base, a loss of population, an increase in crime and delinquency, and persistent demands by fringe area residents for extensions of municipal services. A problem that affects cities of all sizes is that of blight, deterioration, and decay. One method of dealing with this problem is through local participation in the Federally-sponsored urban renewal program.

American cities along with the vast urban complexes contain over two-thirds of the national population. With urban areas as the life blood of America, the increased academic examination of urban conditions and urban problems is not inappropriate. Many aspects of urban renewal projects have been researched. Studies have been undertaken to determine the effect of urban renewal on land
usage,¹ the problem and result of family and business relocation,² the impact of a project on the local or the national economy,³ and the financing of urban renewal by private enterprise or by local governmental units.⁴

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the politics surrounding the adoption of urban renewal projects in an effort to contribute to the answering of certain questions related to contemporary theory on the nature of political participation and of decision making in a democracy. The politics of


urban renewal is only one aspect of a larger political universe; but, through a focus on this one aspect, some contribution may be made to the applicability of contemporary democratic theory to current, local political behavior. By examining the politics surrounding the adoption of urban renewal in out-state Michigan, we will attempt to contribute answers to several questions. Is there a significant difference in the ability of organized groups, as contrasted with unorganized interests, to influence a policy decision?\footnote{Organized groups would include such organizations as businessmen's associations, religious groups, and service clubs. These are permanently established organizations with their main interest in some area other than urban renewal. Unorganized interests would be ad hoc, specially created organizations that enter the politics of urban renewal and also disorganized bands of individuals. Their main function, and often their sole purpose, is directed toward urban renewal.} Is there a difference in the organizational or disorganizational characteristics of either pro-renewal or anti-renewal forces? Is the process of local government one of decision making by majority rule or by community-wide consensus?

We must note that the politics of urban renewal has been researched. These studies have utilized a case study approach while focusing on renewal
politics in large metropolitan complexes. Typical of these case studies are: *Baltimore's Charles Center: A Case Study of Downtown Renewal*;¹ "Politics of Urban Renewal: Citizen Attitudes in a Small Oregon Metropolis;"² *The Politics of Urban Renewal: The Chicago Findings;*³ and *Urban Renewal Politics: Slum Clearance in Newark.*⁴ It is difficult, if not impossible, to draw generalizations from these case studies and apply them to either other urban renewal projects or communities of a non-metropolitan nature. This factor leads us to deviate from a case study approach.

Our examination of the politics of urban renewal will be conducted within the State of Michigan. Forty-two Michigan municipalities have 105 urban


renewal projects, as of January 1966. One project is located in the upper peninsula while eighty of the projects are located in the metropolitan complex of Wayne, Oakland, Macomb and St. Clair counties. This Metropolitan area has received considerable attention from social scientists on a wide variety of topics. Untapped by research and unsaturated with empirical researchers are lower Michigan's remaining sixty-three counties. This outstate area has thirty-three renewal projects located in sixteen cities: these sixteen cities are Albion, Battle Creek, Benton Harbor, Big Rapids, Buchanan, Grand Rapids, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Lansing, Muskegon, Muskegon Heights, Niles, Saginaw, St. Joseph, South Haven, and Ypsilanti. The municipalities vary in population from a low of 5,341 in Buchanan to a high of 202,379 in Grand Rapids.¹ This study will focus on the politics surrounding the adoption of these thirty-three urban renewal projects.

The Politics of Local Government

Meyerson and Banfield\(^1\) have conceptualized politics as that activity by which some issue is agitated or settled. Eulau, in *The Behavioral Persuasion in Politics*,\(^2\) finds politics as any issue or program concerned with the conditions and consequences of human action. In politics we have an issue or a program that is to be settled or agitated. The settlement or agitation of the issue is accomplished through politics. VanDyke\(^3\) places politics into perspective by viewing the political process as "a struggle among actors pursuing conflicting desires on public issues." To study politics one must look at influence and the influential; the influential are those groups or individuals who get the most of what there is to get.\(^4\)

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according to Dahl,¹ "is a relation among actors in which one actor influences other actors to act in some way they would not otherwise act." Politics is "that aspect of life in which certain people act to maintain or to shift the patterns of action of government officials."² The activity of attempting to influence policies, programs, and the actions of government is not reserved for state and national affairs. The process of policy determination and the application of that policy—at all levels of government—is conducted in a political market place.³ Whenever and wherever a decision must be made, the impact of which has some consequence on the life of others, politics is involved. No longer may one accurately view the city as "a struggle of interest groups, an administrative hierarchy working toward the perfect machine in a curious isolation from politics."⁴

We would expect urban renewal politics to exist

²Agger, and Swanson, op. cit., p.1.
in outstate Michigan where municipal government is a "grass roots government." The basic problems confronting community leaders are local in nature and are dealt with by local initiative. Almost invariably, local government is equated with democracy, while the residents conceptualize democracy as the spirit of community independence. The mainstay of this independence is provided by local initiative and a fear of outside (non-local) forces. Urban Renewal, in a joint effort between local and Federal units of government, presents to a municipality the feared outside forces. Any controls or restrictions placed on local authorities, due to participation in a Federal program, might be viewed by some residents as a violation of home rule. Although the powers of home rule are severely limited, "the local feeling of 'home rule' is still very strong and can always be counted on to arouse a violent emotional response."  

With (1) the political nature of local government, (2) the political decisions that must be made

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when initiating urban renewal, and (3) the divergent views of whether to enter or reject a Federally-sponsored program, we would expect to find conflicting interests vying for control over urban renewal decisions. Such decisions will be made in a political environment.

City Conditions of the 1960's

By and large the literature on urban renewal is directed toward large metropolitan centers. This literature, nonetheless, has some relevance to a study of renewal politics in smaller cities. Conditions necessitating renewal action are similar. What differs is the scope of the problem and the breadth of remedial steps.

Widespread blight is a common feature of American cities; formerly prosperous and attractive sections of our great urban complexes have deteriorated.¹ This deterioration has accompanied the migration of lower class and disadvantaged groups into the core city. The poor, the old, and the discriminated against have found refuge in deteriorating and slum

housing where squalor is the rule rather than the exception. Individuals with higher earning power have moved to the suburbs. The neighborhoods they leave decay and the tax base decreases. An inverse relationship exists; the tax base decreases while the cost of administering services to these areas increases substantially.¹

Decay and deterioration is not limited to residential areas. Central business districts are suffering from the loss or the decline of certain functions, the lack of adequate transportation arteries, and the absence of sufficient parking facilities. These conditions prompt industries and commercial establishments to move to the city's outskirts.² Dilapidated structures and empty buildings are the visual sign of blight creeping into a formerly well-kept and prospering business district.

Neither municipal governmental units nor private

¹Gulick, op. cit., p. 47.

enterprise have been wholly successful in eradicating or halting the spread of blight. The former have been placed into a straitjacket by an antiquated legal structure, a decreasing tax base, and limited borrowing powers.\(^1\) Private enterprise has been unable or unwilling to amass the volume of capital necessary to undertake city restoration projects.\(^2\)

The alternatives left to city officials and civic leaders are two-fold. Either (1) the problem is ignored and the city continues to wither away, or (2) new means are sought in launching an offensive against city blight and decay. It is the latter of these alternatives that has been adopted by an increasing number of cities.

The tools of planning and the powers of the state have been turned to for a weapon in renewing and revitalizing America's cities. Formerly, physical changes within a city had been due largely to

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\(^1\)Gulick, *op. cit.*, p.47.

\(^2\)Testimony by city officials and private businessmen before congressional hearings on the Housing Act of 1949 and before the President's 1953 Advisory Committee on Housing Policies and Programs clearly indicated: "That very few cities had adequate public or private resources...on the scale necessary to make an effective attack on slums and blight."; Urban Renewal Administration, *Twenty Questions and Answers on Urban Renewal*. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, February, 1963. 3.
laissez-faire development and natural expansion. Municipalities are now entering a stage of planned rebuilding.¹ To facilitate this rebuilding, local authorities and private enterprise join forces with the Federal Government. We now find a partnership approach to specific city problems.

This joint effort is known as urban renewal. As defined by the Federal Housing and Home Finance Agency (HHFA),² urban renewal is the term used to represent efforts of localities, with aid from the Federal Government, in preventing and eliminating slums and blight and in removing those factors that create these conditions.³ Efforts are locally initiated and guided, while the Federal Government provides substantial financial support and the private developer supplies his ingenuity and resources.⁴

¹Zimmer, op.cit., p.2.

²The HHFA is responsible for the principal Federal activities concerned with housing and community development. The Urban Renewal Administration (URA) is a part of the HHFA and administers the Federal program of grants for comprehensive urban planning and of financial and technical assistance to communities undertaking urban renewal.


⁴Hearle and Niedercorn, op.cit., p.2.
The Evolvement of Urban Renewal

Although the Federal Government demonstrated an interest in city deterioration as early as 1892, when $20,000 was appropriated for an investigation of city slums,\(^1\) intensified attention was not forthcoming until the early 1930's. The Great Depression and its threat of complete economic breakdown, stimulated the Federal Government to reduce urban unemployment. Public works projects poured millions of man-hours into the reconstruction of the city.\(^2\)

Surveys of housing conditions and land use, conducted with Work Project Administration assistance, discovered that (1) slums were spreading\(^3\) and (2) major housing projects could be made attractive to private capital under certain conditions.\(^4\)

To create these necessary pre-conditions, Congress

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\(^2\) Greer, op. cit., p. 17.


passed the National Housing Act of 1934. This Act established the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). The FHA insured loans for housing construction and improvement, with special provisions for locally sponsored, low-cost housing projects.¹

This 1934 Act was complemented by the 1937 Federal Housing Authority and Slum Clearance Act. The newly created United States Housing Authority (USHA)² was authorized to make loans and capital grants for low-rent public housing. Federal funds were not granted, however, unless a project included "the elimination by demolition, condemnation, and effective closing, or the compulsory repair or improvement of unsafe or insanitary dwellings equal to the number constructed."³

Government action was delayed by World War II. But soon after the war, legislation establishing the District of Columbia Redevelopment Land Agency was passed. The legislation was directed towards the elimination of substandard housing conditions around

¹Ibid.
²The USHA is not the Public Housing Administration of the HHFA.
the capitol area. Within the Act the term "urban renewal" was first used.¹

The first major step toward a community-wide program of urban renewal was the adoption of the Housing Act of 1949. The intent of the Act was to strengthen and broaden the private housing economy while assisting local authorities in serving the needs and improving the living conditions of the American people.² Projects dealing with blighted or deteriorated areas were to be initiated by the local governing body. Redevelopment of the cleared land was to be executed primarily with private investment. Federal grants were authorized for projects that cleared residential slums and relocated families, or for new housing. Up to two-thirds of the cost of a local urban renewal project, excluding redevelopment, would be financed by Federal grants. In addition, temporary loans for project execution were made available.³

¹loc.cit., p.23.
The Housing Act of 1949 was amended in 1954 to provide for the rehabilitation and conservation of deteriorating areas. Clearance, redevelopment, rehabilitation, and conservation were welded into a comprehensive program known as "urban renewal." The 1954 amendment provided for demonstration grants to test and report on new and/or improved urban renewal techniques and established the workable program for community improvement.¹ No longer was urban renewal to be limited to residential areas. Amendments permitted a ten percent utilization of project funds for non-residential construction.² The inclusion of non-residential construction was limited to areas containing substantial numbers of sub-standard dwellings, where the removal of the substandard units would promote public health, safety, and welfare, and where the area was deemed

¹Subcommittee on Housing, op.cit., pp.392-393; The workable program is a local plan of action for using private and public local resources to eliminate and prevent slums and blight. A workable program must be designed to bring permanent benefits to the community. See: Urban Renewal Administration, Twenty Questions, op.cit., p.6.

²The ten percent limitation on non-residential redevelopment was raised to twenty percent in 1959 and thirty percent in 1961; Groberg, The Impact of Urban Renewal on Downtown Areas, op.cit., p.1.
inappropriate for residential redevelopment. Also established was a new program of FHA mortgage insurance for the construction of new housing. New housing could be built either inside or outside of an urban renewal project area.¹

The urban renewal program was further expanded during the remainder of the Eisenhower Administration. Provisions for payments to aid in relocating families and businesses displaced by urban renewal were made. Monetary advances were authorized for the preparation of General Neighborhood Renewal Plans (GNRP) in areas too large or too complex to be executed as an individual project. In 1959 the Community Renewal Program (CRP) was established, whereby the blight and the deterioration of the entire community could be analyzed, resources necessary to deal with the problem identified, and a program of action developed to eliminate blighting conditions from the community. Urban colleges and universities in need of expansion or situated in a blighted area were also included under Title I provisions.²

¹Stewart, op.cit., p.5.

²Subcommittee on Housing, op.cit., p.393.
Authorizations for urban renewal programs were doubled during the Kennedy Administration.\textsuperscript{1} Greater emphasis was placed on the rehabilitation of sound, older buildings and on the revitalization of central business districts. Attention was given to metropolitan-wide planning for both the city and the suburbs. The Federal Government portion of urban renewal financing was increased to two-thirds of the net project cost.\textsuperscript{2} The Small Business Administration was authorized to make low interest, twenty year loans to assist businesses that suffered substantial economic injury due to displacement by a Title I project or by a Federal highway program.\textsuperscript{3} The existing family relocation payments were supplemented in 1964 to include a rent subsidy.\textsuperscript{4}

State legislatures must adopt the necessary enabling legislation before a locality may participate in the Federally-supported urban renewal program. As of November, 1963, all but five states had granted

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{2} Stewart, \textit{op.cit.}, p.6.
\item \textsuperscript{4} Stewart, \textit{op.cit.}, p.7.
\end{itemize}
this power to their local units.\(^1\) Enabling legislation has also been passed for the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands.\(^2\)

By June, 1965, 1,545 urban renewal projects had been approved by the HHFA. Many of these projects are in the execution stage or are nearing completion. The 1,545 projects are distributed among 765 cities.\(^3\) Approximately one-third of the projects are located in cities of over 100,000 population; the remaining two-thirds are situated in cities of less than 100,000 population. Seventy-two percent of the communities having Title I projects have populations of less than 50,000.\(^4\) Twenty states, which contain 78 percent of the population have 77 percent of the deficient housing and receive 78 percent of the urban renewal grants.\(^5\) New projects are being launched at the rate of almost twenty per month.\(^6\)

\(^1\)Subcommittee on Housing, *op.cit.*, p.394; States withholding the necessary enabling legislation are Idaho, Utah, South Carolina, and Wyoming. Louisiana's statute no longer permits their local units to qualify for HHFA assistance. See: Younger, *op.cit.*, pp.104–105.

\(^2\)Subcommittee on Housing, *loc.cit.*


\(^4\)Younger, *op.cit.*, p.20.

\(^5\)op.cit.

\(^6\)Hearle and Niedercorn, *op.cit.*, p.v, 1.
This Federally-supported program of urban renewal, as it has evolved to the present day, is a relatively new effort at revitalizing American cities. The decision of a locality to participate in such a program will be made in a political environment.

The role of government in the community is...nearly always a controversial subject; indeed, politics very commonly originates in controversies about this very point. It follows that governments are characteristically storm centers; they thrive on conflict; we never get through defining their functions.¹

Democratic Theory

Contemporary democratic theory tells us that a democracy is a government operated by conflicting elites. Political decisions are made by individuals who have acquired decision making power through institutional provisions.² The public becomes involved


²"Democracy means only that the people have the opportunity of accepting or refusing the men who are to rule them. But since they might decide this also in entirely undemocratic ways, we have had to narrow our definition by adding a further criterion identifying the democratic method, viz., free competition among would-be leaders for the vote of the electorate. Now one aspect of this may be expressed by saying that demo-
in the political process through conflict "that almost inevitably arises in a free society."\(^1\) The outcome of any policy decision is partly a result of the amount of political activity carried on in support of or in opposition to the alternatives present.\(^2\) Government is a process of adjusting the interrelations of individuals, institutions, ideas, and interests that are in conflict.\(^3\) The settlement of these conflicting interests results in public policy.

The people are involved in public affairs by the conflict system. Conflicts open up questions for public intervention. Out of conflict the alternatives of public policy arise. Conflict is the occasion for political organization and leadership. In a free political system it is difficult to avoid public involvement in conflict; the ordinary, regular operations of the government give rise to controversy, and controversy is catching.\(^4\)


\(^4\) Schattschneider, *op.cit.*, pp.138-139.
Contemporary theory maintains that political activity is directly related to such variables as income, status, and education.\(^1\) Political participation increases with an increase in socio-economic status.\(^2\) The lower classes are less active politically and this propensity for passivity in politics disenfranchises the poorer and less educated. These classes are barred by their inactivity; by our system of constitutional checks; and by their limited access to resources such as organizations, finances, and propaganda that weigh so heavily in elections, and legislative and executive decisions.\(^3\)

Schumpeter\(^4\) maintains that in a democracy there is "no such thing as a uniquely determined common good"

\(^1\) The notion that the pressure system is automatically representative of the whole community is a myth fostered by the universalizing tendency of modern group theories. Pressure politics is a selective process ill designed to serve diffuse interests. The system is skewed, loaded and unbalanced in favor of a fraction of a minority." See: Schattschneider, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 35.


\(^3\) Dahl, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 81.

\(^4\) Schumpeter, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 251.
and "that to different individuals and groups the common good is bound to mean different things."
This does not permit us to assume that conflict will necessarily surround all issues. Lipset\(^1\) states that "the more cohesive and stable a democratic system is, the more likely it becomes that all segments of the population will react in the same direction to major stimuli...." The lack of opposition directed toward current policy or the policy makers may be an indication of a general, community-wide consensus on policy. Public agreement or consensus exists when the favored alternative is "shared so widely as to be substantially universal."\(^2\) Substantially all the members of the community agree on either the initiation or the rejection of a governmental action.

In our attempt to contribute to the answers on the relationship of current democratic theory to local government, four propositions will be tested. These propositions are:


(A) The decision of a municipality to initiate and/or execute an urban renewal project will be made in a political environment.

(B) A municipality's major economic, social, and civic organizations, when active in urban renewal politics, will support city participation in the Federally-supported urban renewal program.

(C) The inability of anti-urban renewal forces to successfully oppose proposed projects is due to (a) a lack of organization and/or (b) an absence of organizations to effectively speak for their interests.

(D) The smaller a municipality the more likely will urban renewal evoke a spirit of community consensus on the wisdom of undertaking such a public project.

Support of Urban Renewal

Proposition A carries with it the assumption that those individuals with higher incomes, more education, and higher status occupations have an effective voice in urban renewal politics. Their role would be in support of a proposed project. We would expect these pro-renewal forces to be represented by established economic, civic, and service organizations. These organizations, in turn, are dominated primarily by those individuals who have a history of greater political participation—
the higher economic, social, and income groups.¹

Organizations likely to be active in registering their support for an urban renewal project include: city-wide betterment committees, businessmen's associations, real estate groups, financial associations, welfare organizations, religious institutions, and service clubs.² These interests are usually represented on the appointed Citizen Advisory Committee.

With some exception, civic-minded business leaders have supported some types of urban renewal. Business leaders may play an influential role in the initiation and planning stages of a local project, especially in the proposed renewal of a central business district.³ Businessmen are concerned with the deterioration of downtown areas.

¹"There is overwhelming evidence that participation in voluntary organizations is related to upper social and economic status; the rate of participation is much higher in the upper strata than it is elsewhere." See: Schattschneider, op.cit., p.32; "Upper-socio economic status persons, especially those with higher education, are more likely to develop a sense of citizen duty." See: Milbrath, Lester W., Political Participation: How and Why Do People Get Involved in Politics? Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1965. 63.

²Younger, op.cit., pp.97, 115.

They have an enormous investment in the central business district which is threatened by traffic congestion, deterioration, lack of parking, and competition from shopping centers and new office areas. The general concern over urban renewal plus such successful achievements as Pittsburgh's Golden Triangle has sparked a hopeful new vitality in downtown business people.¹

The American propensity for organization finds full expression in the domain of business² and it is the Chamber of Commerce which comes nearest to representing all local business interests.³ The United States Chamber of Commerce has taken a stand opposed to urban renewal. However, a 1964 survey conducted by the United States Confederation of Mayors⁴ demonstrated that of 220 local Chamber of Commerce groups polled only five were opposed to urban renewal.

Urban renewal is a good example...where businessmen's interest groups have opposed Federal action before Congress, and liberals including labor union spokesmen favored it. But on the local level, businessmen who are

²"...the business community is by a wide margin the most organized segment of society." See: Schattschneider, op.cit., p.30.
³Martin, op.cit., p.10.
⁴O'Neill, op.cit., p.73.
worried about the future of the central business district have favored Federal aid as necessary to get projects going, while the people in the areas to be renewed—most of them liberal voters in national elections—drag their feet.\textsuperscript{1}

We would expect to find the major community-wide, service, and business organizations supporting urban renewal efforts in outstate Michigan. Their support will be present particularly when projects involve slum clearance and/or renewal of a central business district. Strong opposition may be forthcoming from an individual businessman, realtor, or civic leader; however, this opposition would be a personal effort. The opposition would not be on behalf of or as a spokesman for a permanently organized group.

Opposition to Urban Renewal

The presence of a successfully adopted urban renewal program signifies that actors who opposed the program have not been successful in their efforts. However, this does not void the necessity of research into adopted programs. What is presented to the researcher are several unanswered questions. Why

\textsuperscript{1}Piser, \textit{op.cit.}, p.111.
were those actors in opposition to an urban renewal project unsuccessful in their efforts? By what methods did they oppose the proposed project? How did their methods and techniques differ from those of pro-urban renewal forces? Are there significant differences between supporters and opponents of renewal projects?

Programs for general renewal, neighborhood renewal, and slum clearance and redevelopment are usually administered in areas of blighted and dilapidated housing. Those who live in this environment are often poor and uneducated. High incidents of unemployment, juvenile delinquency, broken homes, and mental illness are present.\(^1\) Often an area of this type will possess inherent class or racial cleavages.\(^2\) These cleavages have little political power and in the appointment of the urban renewal Citizen Advisory Committee, "comparatively few members of the minority groups \([\text{are}]\) on the early advisory committees that guided urban renewal planning."\(^3\)

\(^1\)Stewart, \textit{op.cit.}, p.18.
\(^2\)Weaver, \textit{op.cit.}, p.98.
\(^3\)Stewart, \textit{op.cit.}, p.21.
These people represent the lower classes. Individuals who are employed are usually laborers who hold union membership. City officials can expect bitter opposition from individuals who are to lose their homes and businesses,¹ and "lower class people in general, particularly union members who tend to be more opposed to urban renewal."²

Political participation increases with higher incomes, education, and higher-status occupations. A slum clearance or redevelopment project would have few residents who fit into this category. This type of individual lives in better residential neighborhoods—non-renewal areas. In examining renewal areas, Younger³ has found that it is the people most affected by an urban renewal project who "have least to say on the politics of urban renewal." They have not been active in politics and have failed to develop a voice audible to the public ear.

We would expect opposition to urban renewal projects from individuals living in areas designated for clearance and redevelopment; however, their


²Agger and Swanson, op.cit., p.48.

³Younger, op.cit., p.116.
participation would be of a different nature. These residents have no history of professional or politically oriented groups. Their attempts to block urban renewal would be unorganized; their efforts would be individual rather than collective, group efforts. The only organized interest we would expect to find in slum areas might be the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

Policy Consensus

Propositions B and C assume that overt political maneuvers will surround an urban renewal decision. However, in some municipalities, overt political maneuvers may be the exception rather than the rule. In dealing with primarily non-metropolitan centers, we would expect to find a more homogeneous community. Large economic, social, religious, and ethnic divisions would not characterize the smaller cities. We recognize the fact that economic, social, religious, and ethnic divisions may exist; however, in the smaller municipalities these minorities would maintain the same community values as the majority of the residents. The residents will express confidence in the elected city council. These factors should make for community cohesiveness. We would expect this cohesiveness to
decrease with an increase in city size. The larger the population of the local governmental unit, the less likely that urban renewal will be viewed in the same light by all segments of the population. The residents of larger cities will react in different directions to the proposal of an urban renewal project. A decision to participate in an urban renewal project will be one of majority rule rather than one of community consensus or near-unanimous agreement on the wisdom of a project.
THE NON-POLITICS OF URBAN RENEWAL

In undertaking this study, the first proposition was that the decision of a municipality to undertake an urban renewal project is made in a political environment. Contemporary literature tells us that urban renewal may not be divorced from politics. Prior research has found that among each existing or proposed urban renewal project, "there is a separate complex controversy." Every decision and every policy adopted for an urban renewal program is politics.²

Private citizens and community groups do more than stand by and play chorus to the events in the center of the stage. They too are actors, and their actions are a part of the politics of urban renewal.³

This may be the case in large metropolitan complexes; however, the situation may differ in non-metropolitan areas. Our research does not support the proposition that urban renewal decisions are made in a political environment.

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1 "This Month's Feature: Congress and the Future of Urban Renewal." Congressional Digest, XLIII (April 1964). 128.

²Younger, op.cit., 98.

³loc. cit., p.112.
Non-Political Cases

While we found the presence of organized political activity in seventeen cases, overt activity appeared to be absent in the remaining sixteen cases. Eleven of the sixteen "non-political" cases, accounting for one-third of the total number of projects, are studies made to determine the feasibility and/or the advisability of a renewal effort. Forty-six percent of these eleven projects are Community Renewal Programs (CRP) which analyze the blight and the deterioration of the entire community. A plan of action is developed to eliminate blighting conditions. An equal number of programs are General Neighborhood Renewal (GN) studies. Only one municipality utilized Federal funds in conducting a Feasibility Survey (FS) of its central business district. Of the remaining five "non-political" urban renewal projects, two are commercial re-use programs and three are residential re-use projects.

The eleven planning efforts are void of condemnation, clearance, and rehabilitation. Condemnation of private property is an issue that tends to be surrounded in controversy. Homeowners frequently view condemnation as the confiscation of private property without just compensation. In
planning efforts, private property is not acquired. There is no immediate threat of an individual being forced to vacate his home and property. Federal funds are joined with a smaller percentage of local funds in financing a study deemed either necessary or appropriate for the individual municipality. The Federal funds that are made available for such a program make the cost to the local governmental unit seem minute. City fathers appear to view the urban renewal study as an inexpensive analysis and political gain that probably could not be conducted if local funds were required to finance the total effort.

Residents of the municipalities, if they are aware that a study is to be undertaken, seem to realize the purpose of the renewal project; a study will be made but neither a clearance nor rehabilitation project will be the direct result. There seems to be no need to attempt to influence the city council's decision as the program will not infringe on individual property rights. A program involving renewal of a particular segment of a municipality will have to be initiated in a project apart from the GN, FS, or CRP study. Neither is there a fear of "outside" forces which might attempt to invade the community and impose stringent requirements and/
or regulations on the local governing unit. These factors help to perpetuate a non-committal attitude toward the study. This apathetic position seems to be maintained by organizations, most individuals, and the community-at-large. Residents appear willing to accept the planning effort and the matter is left in the hands of the elected city commission.

Two commercial re-use projects were also initiated in a political void. In neither community has the project proceeded past the planning stage. City council members in both communities emphasized that a project need not be executed after the study phase is completed. In March of 1964, Big Rapids Mayor, Donald Page commented: "...If we do go ahead with the planning stage, we can carry it all the way to completion and still back out without having to repay the $73,000 if we decide that we don't want urban renewal after all." The man who was mayor of South Haven, at the time of project initiation, similarly stated: "We felt that we could go ahead and do the planning and get some plans. There is nothing to loose...We need not be obligated to

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1 "City Commissioners OK Step Toward Urban Renewal Plans: Seek $73,000 Grant; Ask for New Spotlights." The Big Rapids Pioneer, (March 17, 1964), 1.
go ahead with an urban renewal project."

Residents of these two municipalities appear to view the renewal effort much the same as if it were a CRP, GN, or FS study. Opposition has not arisen to the planning stage. At this point, neither renewal officials nor municipal officers have presented concrete renewal proposals. Future researchers may find either organized opposition or organized support coming to the fore as time approaches for a decision to be made on project execution. No longer will it be necessary to oppose the whole concept of urban renewal. Specific proposals may be challenged and alternative programs presented. The time of decision making may become the appropriate time for one to become active in renewal politics.

The remaining three projects initiated and executed in an environment appearing to be absent of organized efforts are residential re-use programs. These projects are unexplainable deviations from the remaining seven residential re-use projects, all of which experienced some overt political efforts. All three projects are in racially mixed

1Interview.
neighborhoods. Two-thirds of the residents in Saginaw's Eddy No. 1 project and ninety percent of the residents in the Muskegon Heights project were non-white. In Saginaw's Eddy No. 2 program, one-fourth of the residents were non-white. These three programs are situated in an area out of the community mainstream. Organized interests are not directly concerned with the projects as they have no direct contact with either the residents of the area or with the area itself. The only exception to this situation of "no contact" is the local NAACP and religious institutions. In Muskegon Heights and Saginaw, neither the NAACP nor the area churches took a stand on the urban renewal question.\footnote{Interview: The Saginaw Ministerial Association did notify the city manager that they were opposed to future urban renewal that would perpetuate the getto. With the racial composition changed in Eddy No. II, the Ministerial Association did not back up their threat with any type of action. Concern was never again expressed by the group.}

Reasons Stand

Two reasons were consistently stated as to why opposition did not develop to the Muskegon Heights and Saginaw Eddy projects. First, the city
administration maintained "good public relations" and "kept those involved well informed."\(^1\) Second, the residents of the area were "pleased at the prospect of finding a buyer who would pay a...fair price,"\(^2\) while the opportunity was provided for the residents "to get new housing at an easy entry price."\(^3\) The idea for renewal and action leading to the initiation of each of the three projects originated with the city administration.

The theory that urban renewal is a political question is not supported by an examination of the politics surrounding thirty-three projects in out-state Michigan. The researchers that have demonstrated the political aspects of renewal programs have generalized from individual case studies. Possibly their generalizations carry a built-in bias. The case studied may have been selected due to some colorful, political actions. The authors might thus have been drawn to the individual projects. On the other hand, case studies on urban renewal have been limited to projects in large,

\(^1\) Interviews.
\(^2\) Ibid.
\(^3\) Ibid.
metropolitan complexes. Our research does not support the theory developed from case studies on urban renewal politics in metropolitan areas. That is, in outstate Michigan, an area primarily non-metropolitan, urban renewal is not generally a political question.

Policy Consensus

Our research in outstate Michigan does not support the proposition that:

The smaller a municipality the more likely will urban renewal evoke a spirit of community consensus on the wisdom of undertaking such a public project.

We assumed that the degree of consensus on policy is reflective of the amount of opposition expressed against a program. Lipset\(^1\) states that "the more cohesive and stable a democratic system is, the more likely it becomes that all segments of the population will react in the same direction to major stimuli...." From this we deduced that the lack of opposition directed toward the policy makers might be an indication of a general, community-wide consensus on policy. We felt that this might result

\(^1\)Lipset, op. cit., 47.
in policy agreement and thus consensus on policy. Projects with neither overt support nor opposition might indicate community consensus on the wisdom of the renewal effort. The presence of only anti-renewal forces may indicate the most extreme position of non-consensus.

Ranking Buchanan, the smallest municipality, with the numeral one (1) and progressing to the municipality with the largest population, we assign the numeral sixteen (16) to Grand Rapids. City size is then equated with the political characteristics of each project. An examination of Table I demonstrates that there is no relationship between the size of a municipality and the degree of consensus on policy.

We assumed that consensus is reflected in a situation in which we find no politics. Our research questions this assumption and the current political theory on consensus. This apathetic characteristic and the void created by the absence of expressed opinion is not an indication of consensus. To measure consensus one must be aware of the degree of agreement and disagreement on a policy question. The apathetic attitude surrounding many of outstate Michigan's urban renewal projects fails to serve as an accurate indicator of policy consensus.
Table I

City Size and Degree of Consensus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Smaller City Size</th>
<th>Neither Support Nor Opposition</th>
<th>Organized Support</th>
<th>Both Support and Opposition</th>
<th>Organized Support and Opposition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Larger City Size

| Total            | 16    | 11    | 4     | 2     |
This apathetic attitude is reflective of at least two positions. First, some residents have no interest in renewal and they maintain the position that a study and planning grant is of no direct concern to them. Second, a portion of the residents are opposed to a planning effort, but they take no overt action. The general attitude is one of "you can't fight City Hall." Residents are aware of the power and the resources available to the municipal government.

In a general neighborhood renewal study, the residents of the project area are most generally from lower socio-economic backgrounds. These people do not have the finances, the time, or the political knowledge necessary to wage a fight against a highly organized and well financed institution. Feeling a weakness in the presence of such an awesome force, residents fail to mobilize and take overt action against the renewal program. Anti-renewal activity remains "over coffee opposition."

Our research brings serious question to bear on the notion of "consensus" on public policy. This area is in need of further research by social scientists.
A POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

While the non-political characteristics of urban renewal is a significant finding, those projects initiated and/or executed in a political environment are also worthy of examination. Generalizations may be drawn on the basis of the politics surrounding seventeen projects in outstate Michigan.

Contemporary democratic theory points out that political participation declines with a decrease in socio-economic status. The lower classes are barred from complete political effectiveness by their previous inactivity and their limited access to resources such as organizations, finances, and propaganda. The findings in the politics surrounding urban renewal projects in outstate Michigan support both contemporary democratic theory on the nature of lower class political participation and the proposition that:

The inability of anti-urban renewal forces to successfully oppose proposed projects is due to (a) a lack of organization and/or (b) an absence of organizations to effectively speak for their interests.
The Politics of Opposition

Overt maneuvers attempting to stop a planned renewal effort are present in the politics surrounding seven projects (See Table II). Six are residential re-use projects while the seventh is a commercial re-use program. The opposition comes from ad hoc or specially organized groups. Permanently established, community organizations never publicly oppose a renewal effort.

Ad hoc, pro-renewal forces were present in three projects to counter the efforts of ad hoc, anti-renewal organizations. One residential re-use program was executed due to the political efforts of an ad hoc group; no other organizations took a position on the urban renewal question.

Ad hoc organizations, in both supporting and opposing residential re-use projects, were concerned with the future of their homes and of their neighborhoods. Those opposing a renewal effort wished to retain their present homes; they were unwilling to sell their property and relocate. An urban renewal project was believed to be unnecessary by those to be affected. Many home owners worked through ad hoc, anti-renewal organizations in an effort to protect an investment which they believed could not
**TABLE II**

Incidence of Anti-, Pro-, and No Renewal Forces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Type of Project</th>
<th>Only Organized Support</th>
<th>Only Organized Opposition</th>
<th>Both Organized Support and Opposition</th>
<th>Neither Organized Support nor Opposition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>ST</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Central</td>
<td>RR</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Jewell Street</td>
<td>RN</td>
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<td>Benton Harbor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRP</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Riverview</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>Big Rapids</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cent. Bus. Dist.</td>
<td>CR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buchanan</td>
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<tr>
<td>GNRP Area (GN)</td>
<td>ST</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Side</td>
<td>RR</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Rapids</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grand River</td>
<td>RN</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Core</td>
<td>CN</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Core (GN)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Core-North</td>
<td>CN</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRP</td>
<td>ST</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jackson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beldin</td>
<td>RR</td>
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<td>Beldin (GN)</td>
<td>ST</td>
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<tr>
<td>East Michigan</td>
<td>CR</td>
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<td>Location</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Project Description</td>
<td>Symbol</td>
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<td>Count</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kalamazoo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>RR</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBD (FS)</td>
<td>ST</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Pkw. South</td>
<td>RR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lansing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Project No. 1</td>
<td>CR</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Muskegon</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Marquette Nghb.</td>
<td>RR</td>
<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muskegon Heights</td>
<td>ST</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRP</td>
<td></td>
<td>East Manahian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Niles</td>
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<td>CR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saginaw</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eddy No. 1</td>
<td>RR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eddy (GN)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eddy No. 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRP</td>
<td>ST</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Salina</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Joseph</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Court House Square</td>
<td>CR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>South Haven</td>
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<td>CR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ypsilanti</td>
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<tr>
<td>Park Ridge</td>
<td>RR</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL N = 33</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>30.3% (10)</td>
<td>6.1% (2)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>15.2% (5)</td>
<td>48.5% (16)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


2. ST - community or neighborhood studies; RR - residential re-use; RN - residential no re-use; CR - commercial re-use; CN - commercial no re-use; M - mixed residential and commercial projects.
be re-acquired with monies to be received from the purchase of their homes. The amount of money paid for a sub-standard house would not permit the home owner to purchase another house without incurring substantial indebtedness.

Ad hoc, pro-renewal forces are also concerned with the future of their property. Some persons visualized the end result of the project as a benefit for the community while other persons viewed the renewal project with self-interest. To some, a Federal renewal project would permit the sale of substandard, unwanted, and unmarketable housing. Federal financing would enable project area residents and businessmen to secure new property at a low entry price. Tenents have not, in most cases, established sentimental values to their rented homes. Renters seemed to feel that a project would help them in seeking newer and more adequate housing.

Means Employed

The methods used by all anti-renewal forces are similar. The public column of the daily newspaper is extensively used in an attempt to publically question the wisdom of a project and to arouse sentiments for their cause. The vocabulary of these
letters generally make use of the words condemnation, confiscation, un-American, and communistic. Opponents of Kalamazoo's Lincoln project published *The North Side Slum Reporter*. Typical of the editor's comments is the charge that:

Title I SLUM Clearance is legally CONDEMNATION for CONFISCATION of Private property, HOMES, for Industry, of Off Street Parking Lots, without paying YOU what your property is worth to YOU,...and forcing you to sell it whether you wish to sell it or not -- Is there now any question in your mind, Kind Reader, -- That this City Commission, mayor allen presiding, will do the same to you? Could the basic principles of COMMUNISM be more rampant in the LAND Here in Kalamazoo under mayor allen that voted the North Side area a SLUM Clearance project --/One of the first steps in ruthless CONFISCATION by this City Commission by Voting Your Home in a SLUM Area. √[sic]

A protest march and picketing was employed against two projects. Petitions were circulated against programs in two cities. These petitions were signed by persons opposed to the projects; however, signatures were limited to neither project area residents and businessmen nor to registered voters.

By far the most general tactic used is for renewal

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opponents to attend city commission meetings and public hearings. Protests are stated and the verbal exchange between city commissioners and the audience often becomes a heated, verbal battle. In Albion, the first public hearing on urban renewal "turned into a real hollering session."¹ Debate on Ypsilanti's Parkridge project led to the charge that the anti-renewal, Ypsilanti Property Owner's Association was "subsisting on half-truths, fabricating truths (and) digging out skeletons in leading organized opposition to the city's proposal."² The president of the Jackson NAACP led a walkout and his supporters "stalked angrily out of the meeting after claiming city officials were 'insulting their intelligence.'³ Generally public hearings and commission meetings are poorly attended, but occasionally a hearing might attract as many as 500 persons.

Organizational Characteristics

Ad hoc, anti-urban renewal groups are poorly

¹ Interview.
³ __________, Jackson Citizen Patriot, (June 5, 1960).
and weakly organized. Membership is usually open to any person willing to support the cause. Neither a payment of dues nor a pledge of monetary support is required. Leadership positions are given, usually by default, to the person with the most initiative. Usually this person lacks anything approaching charismatic characteristics; and he may lack leadership ability. Often leaders are inarticulate and unaware of the processes of government. Anti-renewal leaders have had little, if any, previous experience in politics. They are neophites in the local political arena. In many such neighborhoods, the church is the only organized group in the area; there are no organizations to effectively speak for the residents' interest. Service clubs and politically effective, fraternal organizations are not present. The majority of the residents in residential re-use project areas are from the lower socio-economic groups. These people have no history of political participation. Due to this history of inactivity, residents opposed to renewal efforts lack the experience and the know-how which is necessary in most political battles. Project area residents do not have previously established contacts with public, community leaders.

Possibly the greatest obstacle to the effective-
ness of anti-renewal forces is their lack of adequate finances. Most groups operate on shoe-string budgets and personal contributions. Generally, little money is spent on behalf of the anti-renewal cause.

Political Effectiveness

Anti-renewal forces are not totally unsuccessful in their political efforts. Although their major goal is not obtained, decision makers are occasionally forced to alter a project area and/or a project's execution is retarded by several months. Pressure applied to the Jackson (Beldin) effort resulted in the reduction of the project area by several blocks.1 Persiant opposition also slowed project execution by several months. In Ypsilanti, opponents of the Parkridge project were successful in securing a temporary reversal of the city commission's decision to execute a residential re-use program.2 The Lincoln project in Kalamazoo was reduced to one-fourth its original size. The Kalamazoo City Commission was of the opinion that

1Letter, April 1, 1966.
2Interviews.
relocation would force integration and that "the public wasn't ready to accept the Negro."\textsuperscript{1} Opposition was considerably stronger in the area scheduled for clearance and "this is why they [The council] cut out clearance."\textsuperscript{2}

The Politics of Support

Research on the nature of political participation in a democracy supports current theory that individuals with higher incomes, more education, and higher status occupations are more active politically than are the lower classes. Schattschneider\textsuperscript{3} states:

There is overwhelming evidence that participation in voluntary organizations is related to upper social and economic status; the rate of participation is much higher in the upper strata than it is elsewhere.

\textsuperscript{1} Interview; Letter, January 24, 1966: "The Lincoln Project started out to be a much larger project than the project that finally evolved...In the area that was eventually deleted from the program a large scale clearance program was planned....At that time the area to be cleared contained a large number of non-white families and the problem of relocation of these families was the main reason that the City Commission scaled down the project area. There was a fear raised that the dispersal of these families into other areas of the community would lead to a social problem that Kalamazoo was not ready for at that time.

\textsuperscript{2} Interview

\textsuperscript{3} Schattschneider, \textit{op.cit.}, p.32.
We would expect such individuals to be members of established economic, civic, service, and fraternal organizations. In initiating this study, we realized that the study contained a built-in bias; our effort is limited to projects which successfully passed the initiation stage of a Federally-supported project. We therefore assumed that the passage of a project may be hinged on the fact that major community organizations supported, rather than opposed, the renewal effort. The politics surrounding those projects initiated and/or executed in a political environment in outstate Michigan, support the proposition that:

A community's major economic, social, and civic organizations, when active in urban renewal politics, will support city participation in the Federally-supported urban renewal programs.

Types of Projects

The politics surrounding 15 of the urban renewal programs in outstate Michigan witnessed organized efforts urging project execution. Six of the ten projects involving residential re-use had organized support. Buchanan (North Side), the smallest city in our study, had only organized support. The Albion (West Side), Jackson (Beldin), Ypsilanti (Park Ridge),
and two Kalamazoo programs (Lincoln and Central Parkway South) had both pro- and anti-urban renewal forces.

The two communities that cleared residential areas for non-residential re-use had political characteristics similar to each other. Battle Creek (Jewell Street) and the Grand River urban renewal program in Grand Rapids had support from organized groups. There was no organizational opposition and there appeared to be little, if any, individual anti-renewal sentiment.

Of the seven projects in commercial areas, five involve commercial re-use. Organized support was present in only the Jackson and Lansing downtown projects. The Central Core and Central Core-North projects in Grand Rapids, neither of which contained plans for commercial re-use, had pro-urban renewal groups active in the politics surrounding the projects.

All three projects that cleared and/or rehabilitated areas partly commercial and partly residential, experienced organized support for renewal. There was no organized and unified opposition to the Benton Harbor (Downtown Riverview), St. Joseph (Court House Square), and Saginaw (Salina) projects.
Pro-Renewal Activity

Permanently established organizations, when active in the politics of urban renewal, always support project initiation and/or execution. At no time did such a group oppose a project. This includes businessmen's associations, service clubs, church affiliated groups, real estate associations, and civil rights organizations. When residential areas are to be renewed the general attitude of pro-renewal forces is one of paternalism. Those with a history of participation in civic affairs wish to correct a problem of decay and deterioration. An urban renewal project is viewed as a necessary action for the future good of the total municipality.

Eight projects were pushed into the execution stage with the assistance of politically active, pro-renewal forces. These forces had a direct interest in the project. In each case, those residing or doing business in the area realized that some form of government action was necessary as a means of halting blighting conditions and removing substandard structures. In Lansing, businessmen had previously attempted to enact a private renewal plan. This group was unable to proceed due to their
inability to acquire certain parcels of land. Several property owners refused to sell their downtown investment while other land parcels were tied up in estates. Due to this experience, businessmen realized that governmental action was necessary if the dreams of downtown redevelopment were to ever become a reality.

Organizational Objectives

At times the drive for an urban renewal program is somewhat self-motivated. Persons to be affected feel that they might realize a benefit from a project. The Jackson East End Merchants Association watched the improvement of the western end of the central business district while their eastern end of town continued to deteriorate and buildings were vacated. A drive for Federally-supported urban renewal was initiated by the Merchants Association in an effort to stimulate an economic come-back for their section of the business district. Organized labor in Jackson "pushed for urban renewal so that they could get rid of their downtown building." ¹

¹Interview.
A two part program in the heart of Grand Rapids is made up of 40 acres of older commercial, industrial, and public buildings. In 1959 the Downtown Council, the Grand Rapids Real Estate Board, and the Chamber of Commerce raised $60,000 to hire Esbaco Services of New York to create a master plan for the redevelopment and the salvage of the decaying central business district. A 1960 millage election to raise the local share of the Federally-supported project received the backing of major community organizations in Grand Rapids. Benton Harbor urban renewal plans were revealed in November of 1962. Immediately the Twin Area Chamber of Commerce indicated its willingness to share in the financing of the project.\(^1\) A group of downtown retailers and land owners launched a campaign to raise $150,000 to aid in financing the Benton Harbor project.\(^2\)

The Salina area in Saginaw is mainly residential, with a small, decaying commercial district. It is merchants in this area who comprise the South Side Businessmen's Association. The Saginaw mayor and

\(^1\) __________, News Palladium, (November 15, 1962).

city manager presented the concept of a Salina urban renewal program, in a private meeting, to the Businessmen's Association. This group, in turn, requested a renewal project for their deteriorating area. The St. Joseph Greater Community Corporation, a group of merchants and industrialists, conducted a three year community study. From their report the "idea was given to the city fathers that something should be done." The program was endorsed by the St. Joseph Improvement Association and the Twin City Area Chamber of Commerce, both of whom wished to see an up-grading of the central business district and the development of property along the St. Joseph River.

Means Employed

The methods used by pro-renewal forces are less public than the efforts of anti-renewal organizations. Public pleas of support are not usually made. Actions are directed toward the decision-makers. Resolutions are frequently passed with the decision of the group made known to commission members. A representative of an organization urging

1Interview.
urban renewal adoption normally attends a public hearing and, if necessary, publicly states the group's position. The majority of the commission members are also members of a business association, the Chamber of Commerce, a real estate group, or a service club. City fathers are aware of the membership's attitude toward a project.

The city council usually appoints what they consider to be a "representative cross section of the community" to serve on the urban renewal citizen advisory committee. To secure this "representativeness," advisory committee members are selected from established service clubs, church groups, business and industrial associations, labor unions, and civil rights groups. Unorganized interests are not represented. Many organizations work through the Advisory Committee in their push for urban renewal. Publicity is given neither to their political efforts nor to the effectiveness of their political actions. However, it is highly probable that this tactic is the most effective effort employed.

Organizational Characteristics.

Unlike ad hoc, anti-renewal organizations, a majority of organizations in support of urban renewal are permanently established and well-financed.
Membership is on a dues paying or contribution basis while organizational operations are based on an annual budget. Leadership positions are filled through organizational elections and many such officers have a long history of civic participation. Day to day, informal contacts are generally maintained with the members of the city commission. Businessmen and industrial leaders also have a public relations and organizational professional at their disposal. The Chamber of Commerce manager and his staff can devote a considerable portion of their time and energy in working for project adoption.

The Role of the NAACP

One organization that is active in the politics of urban renewal deserves special attention. The various chapters of the NAACP play a unique political role when compared to the activity of other permanently organized groups. At times, the actions of the NAACP lead one to conclude that they are opposed to residential projects. This is not an accurate impression. Upon closer examination, their concern is over relocation procedures. The efforts of the NAACP has led to the passage of fair housing resolutions and alterations in the planned location for public housing units. Several projects were reduced
in size from their original plan. Political pressure has led to the establishment of a relocation office in the project area and the hiring of Negroes for relocation staffs. After the demands of NAACP leaders are met by the city council, the civil rights organization either publicly endorses the renewal effort or they remain silent and do not oppose project initiation and execution.

The NAACP is similar to all other permanently established, community organizations. Such organizations were organized prior to the mention of a prospective urban renewal program for their city. Membership is on a dues paying basis while leadership positions are filled through organizational elections. The main purpose of these groups is not to enter the politics of urban renewal. Motivating factors leading to political action appear to be (1) a need to fulfill a paternal role, (2) personal gain, or (3) direct contact with the projected plans of the proposed project.
CONCLUSIONS

Political scientists, as well as the public at large, have assumed that urban renewal decisions are surrounded by politics because the decisions are made in a political environment. This may be the case in large metropolitan centers, but not in outstate Michigan. This study shows that projects limited to planning and survey work are initiated in a political void. On occasion, of course, a city council member may vote against a CRP, GN, or FS study on the basis of his personal, political philosophy.

In analyzing the incidence of anti- and pro-renewal forces, we noted the absence of such groups in the eleven planning studies and in two commercial re-use and three residential re-use projects. These sixteen projects accounted for forty-eight percent of the thirty-three renewal programs. The presence of both organized support and organized opposition is peculiar to five projects that account for 15.2 percent of the urban renewal programs in outstate
Michigan. Ten urban renewal projects, or 30.3 percent of the total, had organized support working for the adoption of the project but no organized opposition. Of the ten projects, four were commercial, three were residential, and three were mixed commercial and residential. In only two cases has a renewal project been executed in an environment where there is organized opposition but an absence of organized support.

The highest incidence of a project decision made in a political setting surrounds residential re-use programs. Six of the ten projects of this kind had organized support. Organized forces also opposed the same number of residential re-use projects. Only one residential re-use program had organized support and no organized opposition. Another residential re-use effort lacked organized support; however, opposition was present. Five programs had both pro- and anti-urban renewal forces. There was neither organized support nor opposition in three re-use projects.

Support was forthcoming from organized groups in the two programs that cleared residential areas for non-residential re-use. There was no organizational opposition and little, if any, individual anti-renewal sentiment.
Of the seven projects in commercial areas, five involve re-use. Organized support was present in two projects; there was no organized opposition. Only one outstate Michigan municipality witnessed opposition to a downtown project. Neither overt group support nor opposition characterized the participation of two cities in the Federally-supported program. Two commercial projects, neither of which contain plans for commercial re-use, had pro-urban renewal groups active in the politics surrounding the projects. Organized opposition was not prevent in either downtown effort.

All three projects that cleared and/or rehabilitated areas partly commercial and partly residential, experienced organized support for renewal. There was no organized and unified opposition.

Opposition to urban renewal solidifies when the proposed project involves the re-use of residential areas. Project area residents do not wish to see their property used as the location for another person's home. When a residential area is cleared for non-residential re-use, the residents of the area find it difficult to oppose the planned new use of the property.
Organizational Characteristics

There is a difference in the organizational characteristics of pro-renewal and anti-renewal forces. Pro-renewal organizations are permanently established, well organized, and politically aware of the governmental process. Anti-renewal forces are specially created, weakly organized, lack leadership, and fail to possess knowledge of local governmental procedures. The awkward position maintained by those in opposition to renewal, places them at a disadvantage when attempts are made to influence policy.

Organizations opposed to renewal are not long standing, well-established groups. They are ad hoc, specially created, associations. The sole reason for the existence of such groups is either the alteration or the defeat of a proposed program. Success of ad hoc opposition groups has been limited to the alteration of proposed projects, reduction in the scope of projects, and the temporary delay of project execution. Ad hoc, anti-renewal organizations have not been successful in their attempt to halt the initiation and/or execution of an urban renewal project. Permanently established organizations, when active in renewal politics, work for the initia-
tion and/or execution of urban renewal projects.

The political actions of pro-renewal forces are significantly different from the means employed by those in opposition to renewal. Those individuals most directly touched by a residential renewal effort are not generally represented on the appointed advisory councils. Neither are these non-represented residents experienced in political activity. Therefore, special groups must be formed in an effort to present the project area resident's position on the issue to the decision makers.

A Challenge to Contemporary Works

To generalize from projects in a non-metropolitan area and apply the findings to projects in a large urban complex, would not be permissible. Further research is necessary in the metropolitan setting. However, the current research methodology employed to study the politics of urban renewal must be shifted from a case study approach. A sampling of urban renewal programs ought to be employed. The findings of this study questions the assumption that all policy decisions, such as urban renewal, are made in a political market place. Overt efforts to influence policy are the exception, rather than the rule, in non-metropolitan areas.
We must maintain serious reservations when reflecting on contemporary theory as related to decision making in urban centers. The case study approach may be presenting social scientists with an inaccurate and misguided image of the politics of urban renewal.
APPENDIX A

To gain an understanding of the politics surrounding each of the thirty-three projects, local newspapers, magazines, and renewal publications were examined. A list of individuals, groups and organizations who either played a role in the local project or were in a position to affect the final decision was compiled. A substantial portion of those individuals, along with the local urban renewal director, were selected to become a part of this study.

Through the administration of an interview guide, by the author, data was gathered on the politics surrounding each project. Probe questions, based on prior research in the community, was used in seeking in-depth responses. The acquired data was hand tabulated. Due to the small size of the universe (thirty-three projects), any attempt to transfer the interview and research information to either Hollerith IBM cards or McBee Keysort punch cards would have been nothing more than an unnecessary, time-consuming procedure.

A statistical test of significance was not administered. In dealing with thirty-three projects in sixteen communities, we are working with a total
universe. Statistical tests are administered only when working with samples of a larger universe.\(^1\) This study does not fulfill this necessary qualification.

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