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A COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION TYPOLOGY OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT

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A B S T R A C T

This paper seeks to close a gap in community organization literature by analyzing the impact of strategy on small group development and role changes in both leadership and membership. Using literature from social psychology and community practice, it is argued that a tactical understanding of group dynamics can heighten one's effectiveness as an organizer. The paper then develops a typology of how groups change under different organizing methods. Finally, the work shows how an organizer can more easily "mix and phase" strategies inside the same community group.

Community organizers distinguish themselves from other social workers by their attention to collectivities rather than individuals; likewise, "treatment plans" are conceptualized as strategies, not therapeutic techniques. Nevertheless, while problems relate to community-based needs, the direct work of organizers is still with individuals and groups. It is therefore surprising that the community organization literature gives little attention to both the varying membership roles and changing group structures that are reflected within organizing strategies. ¹

This paper seeks to end some of that inattention. It shall delineate how an organizer can further his or her strategic effectiveness through a tactical understanding of group structure and processes. By viewing groups tactically, we shall explore two primary themes: (1) how group structure and development can reflect dominant strategic orientation. Organizers, especially new ones, often assume that the structural properties of a group are quite similar, not realizing that the initial structure of a group may predetermine future strategic outcomes before he or she actually begins active organizing. ² We shall analyze the phases of group development to see how they impact on strategy formation.

Secondly, we shall analyze how an organizer, once established, can more effectively "mix and phase" 3 strategies by altering particular membership roles and group assignments. Blending strategic orientation, as any organizer knows, is hardly an easy task. The difficulties go beyond the blending of precarious strategic goals. Problems also lie in balancing distinct group properties--with attendant membership demands, leadership roles, and stated goals--inside the same community organization. We shall develop a typology to help organizers achieve that structural balance.

We shall use Rothman's seminal analysis of community organization strategies as backdrop for our discussion. ⁴ His model, as is well known, emphasizes three primary organizing strategies: community development, social planning, and social action. Each strategy is comparatively analyzed along twelve variables--ranging from goal categories to perceptions of client role. For our purposes, however, three major factors stand out in relation to group structure. (1) Goals. ⁵ Using community development and social planning as polarities, we see that the former emphasizes process goals, those results that have less to do with concrete ends than with the psychological and educational rewards of participating within a group. "Leadership development," the process by which an indigenous membership develops the skills and self-confidence to run their own organization, is one of the more clearly-identified process goals and is associated with community development. Task goals, which are concrete and specified in advance, such as fact-finding and resource development involving, say, the starting of a health clinic, are most often associated with social planning strategies. While any strategy encapsulates elements of both task and process goals, we will see that the actual structure of any community group must vary according to the dominant goals of the group.

(2) The second important factor is the type of resources available, especially expertise. ⁶ Community development, with its emphasis on process, needs less expertise (and the intense level of resources associated with such skills) than does a group preparing a detailed grant for carefully-administered health care funds. As with goals, the varying importance of expertise in a group has direct bearing on the structure of any community organization.

(3) The final organizational factor of primary consequence to a group's development is its ideological stance. ⁷ While Rothman breaks down the ideological stance of each group into at least five variables, ⁸ the important elements relate to the level of group

cohesion brought about by its perception of power relations within the community and to the legitimation given all community group members to share decision-making within the group. Here social planning and community development are less dissimilar from each other. The latter views power relations as benign and that influence is shared equally. The former is non-ideological but assumes expertise is the basis of influence in decision-making. Social action, the method that most clearly blends task and process goals and its type of resources, distinguishes itself from the other modalities on this factor by its clearly-stated notion of sharp class or group cleavage in the community and (usually) its assumption that all people left out of previous decision-making arrangements should be included within its own group. As we shall see, such considerations weigh heavily on the structure of a group and the manner of its development.

This analysis, in short, will focus on three primary organizing factors--goals, level of resources and use of expertise, and ideological stance--to see how they distinguish not only the strategy chosen by a community but the actual structure of its group, the roles played by its members, and the process by which each group can more effectively "mix and phase" strategies. Indeed, we shall show how the conceptual distinctions used to discuss community organization strategies are concretely expressed in varying group forms.

GROUP STRUCTURE AND PROCESSES

Community groups, just like strategies, go through many changes in their growth and development. Bales and Strodtbeck,⁹ among others,¹⁰ located at least three phases of group development that have consequence for organizers. Labeled orientation, evaluation, and control, each stage differentially enhances or impedes three organizing factors: (1) its problem-solving ability; (2) the type of leadership most effectively used; (3) the level of expertise demanded.

Orientation is the initial stage of a problem-solving group's development. It is a time spent less in problem-solving itself than in discovering what the problem really is. Bales and Strodtbeck found group members spend the orientation stage engaged in "directed interaction in the discussion of the problem or potential problem;" people want to know if the problem is worth tackling and if it is

possible to deal with it effectively. 11 Initial fact-finding activities in social planning or the development of a newsletter for communication purposes in community development would be the type of short-term tasks a group might engage in during this phase, as members sought to find out what the group might concern itself with in the coming months. Even those minor tasks may be difficult in the very beginning. One organizer, involved in a community development project, wrote how difficult and amorphous this phase of group life can be:

Committee members...did not at first understand that 'committee' meant a specific group of people, the same people every time... Oral announcements were vague and misleading... (for a few months) my suggestions were passively accepted. With time they began to pose their own amused cynicism against my professed view that our monthly educational programs were justified if only one person derived some benefit... Only later did they actually take over the work. 12

Clearly, this phase is hardly one of dramatic movement or involvement for members or for the organizer. While the above case is undoubtedly extreme in its amorphous and passive character, the initial fluidity in group life is natural. It is a phase where efforts are spent in group interaction, feedback, etc., as much as they are in accomplishing an approved group project. An effective organizer will plan his or her work accordingly.

Evaluation is the second stage of group development. Here Bales and Strodtbeck found that "the problem cannot be an open and shut case...(It) involves several different values and interests as criteria by which the facts of the situation and the proposed course of action are to be judged." 13 In short, the group has proceeded from limited understanding of the problem (and thus little understanding or commitment to the group and its ability to ameliorate the issue) to an intermediate stage where people see the group as having potential value to resolve its problems but disagree on what the problem is and (more likely) how to correct it. It is not an easy time. (Tuckman called it the 'storming' phase of group development.) 14.

For example, a New Left political group had made the strategic decision to enter electoral politics and begin working as an electoral party. They found

...for a few of the organizers, this shift into pragmatic politics was more than a little unsettling. Use to activist-advocate roles within strategies demanding little long-term follow through (e.g., quickly-organized and easily-dissipated demonstrations), a few were unable to change their style... After many fights over what they should be doing, they left.... 15

Clearly in this phase discussion centers more often on the clarifying of procedures and possible actions than on any one set of directed behaviors. The group stage emphasizes a mixture of affective and instrumental behaviors, as members spend time on becoming comfortable with the group and its ability to deal with the now-defined problem at hand. This is the stage viewed as often the most talkative--and quite irritating--stage for the organizer. People in problem-solving groups now know the problem but are not yet acting on resolving it--in short, they are evaluating here. What is important, however, as will be seen below, is that the evaluation is not of the issue but the worth of the group itself. The organizer who feels he or she can skip such a stage because people know what the problem is will be making a mistake. People also have to know the group, and this intermediate stage allows for a clarifying of the group's worth.

Control is the final group stage, where "there is pressure for a group decision and the expectation of group action."¹⁶ The group is at a point of action in a planned set of behaviors and specified roles; the emphasis is on the task through concerted group effort. The implication of a tight organizational structure with little time spent on socio-emotional relations is suggestive of social planning, with its emphasis on expertise to achieve clearly-stated and well-focussed objectives.¹⁷ This stage, the most obvious for an organizer to identify due to its concrete set of individual and group behaviors (be it writing a detailed health care proposal, coordinating a major fund-raising drive for a block association, or organizing a set of coordinated demonstrations around housing problems). Nevertheless, it is usually the last stage of a group's development, not its first.

We can see that there are strong relations between the dominant group stages of development and the strategy type chosen by a community organization. Community development, being involved more often in communication and education and less in problem-solving, would tend to stress the orientation and evaluational stages of

group development; social planning, with its more directed demands and greater use of specific, expert roles, will function more within the control stage of groups. Social action, which combines elements of both community development and social planning, falls somewhere between the two extremes. But what does each stage actually look like? And how does a community organization move from one group stage--or one strategy--to another?

GROUP DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGING LEADERSHIP STYLES

Strategies, as stated, are not static conceptions--they change and develop to fit the needs and resources of one's organization. Groups, too, develop and change over time, and with them, so do their leadership demands. Hollander has stated "persons function as (distinct) leaders in a particular time and place and there, both varying and delineating conditions... to that leadership."¹⁸ These shifts in leadership style and group development are important for the organizer to note, for correct leadership "by definition facilitates the group's goal achievement."¹⁹ By helping emphasize the correct leadership style for a particular period of group development, the organizer may heighten the group's strategic effectiveness.

Bales specifically identified two primary types of leaders: the task leader, who is goal directed and concerned with the achievements of the group; and the socio-emotional leader, whose concerns are more with the maintenance of the group.²⁰ We all know these types, be it the well-informed woman who always wishes to close discussion on minor agenda items so that more pressing issues can be dealt with, or the friendly fellow concerned that time be allotted for coffee and cake and a little socializing.

Organizers also know that each leadership type can be the source for irritation or admiration--"depending on the situation." However, as Hollander suggests above, it is more likely that each person is appreciated or disliked for both situational needs and the organizer's need for an individual skills to enhance or move beyond a particular stage of group development. Each stage is most clearly associated with a particularly effective leadership style; that style is what one wishes to make congruent with the rest of the group's functions.

Fiedler found that task leaders perform best under "conditions that are either very favorable or relatively unfavorable to them."²¹ This finding is not as circular as it sounds. As one student wrote in her process on a community group:

Without Mrs. J. I don't know what I'd have done (in the early stages of the group). Mrs. J. was hardly a sweetheart, and she had few friends, but in the beginning she was terrific. Every meeting she's raise a million ideas for the (senior citizen's) club while everyone else just sat there... Finally she hit on a repair program she'd read about and they all started to move-- at last! ... She was a real powerhouse in the program, too...

Tasks that are ill-defined are the kind many find frustrating or too little worthwhile to bother pursuing. Such a time is highly conducive for those attracted to the task--and not just the group--to plow ahead with the often-nagging but necessary details of trying to understand and define the problem ahead. During this group phase--when there is hardly a "group" at all--such individuals play crucial roles. Clearly, Mrs. J.--and other such task leaders, including the organizer--will be found playing important roles during this orientation phase of group life.

Likewise, when community organizations are clearly engaged in concrete and immediate tasks, task leaders--who obviously are concerned with concrete work and achievement--would again be expected to function well within the control stage of groups. Indeed, this last phase should be their forte.

We can see that task leaders are of real value in the early stage of a group's development. But this doesn't seem to apply to community development, a method that from the start emphasizes process over task, social interaction over concrete goal directions. This makes sense at first glance, but community development strategies, if they do emphasize process over task, are by definition not problem-solving groups in their beginnings.²² Eventual action on concerted issues may lie far off in the future. As such, strategies here would not involve an in-depth orientation phase (where problems are specified for relatively quick solution) but would instead truncate this first stage for the interactional benefits and structure of the evaluational stage.²³

In this second stage, as Fiedler and others have pointed out, task leaders are much less effective.²⁴ Still concerned with the tasks ahead and relatively indifferent to the group's membership needs, the task leaders move from effective eye-openers who revealed the value of the group to overly-zealous irritants who bother other members with their constant agenda-setting and single-mindedness. See what happened to Mrs. J.:

After the group had a rough idea of where it was going, they started questioning everything--too much so. Mrs. J. infuriated people by her demands to head up the tenants' group when they still weren't sure how they'd operate...I had to smooth a lot of feathers, and spend time socializing more... It got to be a drag until Mrs. F., a quiet lady I'd barely noticed, volunteered to handle the refreshments... and then she came out a lot for a while at every meeting...

But it's not that Mrs. J. has changed; the group has. Seeing that the group may have purposes and not yet fully understanding the responsibilities that group involvement may demand, most members during the evaluational stage need to not only continue clarifying issues but to feel increasingly comfortable with the group. Here is where socio-emotional leaders become important. Such people, whose skills and interests are more effective than instrumental, perform the crucial roles involved in heightening the attractiveness of the group itself: serving refreshments, making certain that new members are comfortable and that older members are kept informed of group events, etc.

These social leaders usually view the group as more important than the task. Where earlier their personalistic orientation appeared slightly irritating (or at least distracting) as the group sought to clarify its mission, here their friendliness and non-instrumentality are highly valued. They achieve such high value because groups, like individuals, are resistant to change. ²⁵ Membership needs for understanding both group functions and future tasks can be psychologically unsettling to people. Bales found that the move into the second group phase was filled with the greatest level of both positive and negative feedback; it was also the phase with the greatest drop-out rate. ²⁶ Hartford identified groups as either moving forward in this stage or falling apart with some possibilities for regroupment. ²⁷ In such a stormy period, it is obvious what benefits the socio-emotional leaders can play.

An organizer would naturally appreciate those people who heightened the positive effective functions of group interaction during this phase. By intermingling positive group maintenance functions with the larger issues posed from the earlier stage, the socio-emotional leaders help heighten the group's attractiveness beyond the still unsettling work that lies ahead. New community organizations are often found scheduling moderately complex fund-raisers in this period. As a task function, it helps raise money for future work on the now-clear issue.

As a process function, it is still not so demanding in intensity that it discourages people from participating; indeed, the party, festival, or banquet held serves the effective function of heightening the group's value to the membership itself.

The above describes the first two stages in the growth of problem-solving groups. Community development, as mentioned, with its strategy emphasizing process goals, is somewhat different from these more task-oriented groups. It will not originate in manifest form as a "problem-solving" group, but will be formed instead, say, a sense of neighborhood pride in a deteriorating section of the community (see ff 12). The orientation period, with its demand for problem clarification and generalized task orientation and leadership, will be truncated, that is, made short so that members do not drop away too easily. Instead, as the group itself will have value (for the goal of leadership development), it will emphasize the evaluational stage of group structure and leadership type. Only after the process goals have been achieved, with leadership emerging and a sense of group value present, would the organizer move back to the previously-truncated orientation stage so that they begin the tasks of clarifying which problem they would like to solve.

For the organizer engaged in any strategy, this evaluational stage is often extremely difficult. Seeing larger issues ahead and at the same time realizing the need for the membership to value the group, he or she will often squirm in anxiety as the group prepares itself for the final, more demanding control stage of activity.²⁸ This is what often makes the process of organizing appear so long; but without it, as any organizer who quickly assigned tasks for a grant project (or any major task) and ended up preparing the whole report herself or himself knows, to skip this cohesion-building stage would be a serious mistake.

When the control stage begins, task leaders again come back into prominence and effectiveness. While probably chafing during the previous "motionless" time of the evaluational period, the task leader now is able to do what he or she has been waiting to do all along: get the job done. By now, the group members understand both the problem ahead and the value of the group in ameliorating it. What they must do now is act in a decisive manner, with set behaviors, shared expectations, and formalized assignments.²⁹ The demands common to social planning, with heavy task leadership style and the group cohesiveness necessary to carry out well-specified tasks, do not make for idle chatter and pleasant socializing.

Here, the formerly ingratiating social leader's informal conversation appears out of place on the directed group's work table. Now that the table is set for plans and action, the decisiveness and specificity of the clear task once again makes the task leader the more effective group member. ³⁰ Organizers, recognizing the need for concrete action, can be expected to develop a task leadership style to maximize the congruence between the group's structure and the group's direction toward goal achievement. As Eugster wrote of her once-passive and indifferent group:

The group finally elected its own leader...who emerged as a dedicated and determined leader. Works (in getting schools to establish tutorial projects in poor areas) were handled with great seriousness and tenacity... The program that evolved seemed beyond their resources, but they worked at it with real determination... 31

Real goal achievement was reached and maintained by a group that emphasized the structure and leadership style associated with the final stage of group development--not at the beginning of its life, but after months of work.

'MIXING AND PHASING' IN ACTION: THE USE OF EXPERTISE

So far we have seen that distinct community organization strategies tend to emphasize a particular stage of group development; in turn, each stage heightens the effectiveness of different leadership styles. We must now analyze what specific types of leadership can be emphasized by organizers if they wish to either maintain a particular stage of group development that is most conducive to their organizing strategy or, equally likely, mix and phase strategies by moving the group from one stage to another. This issue of structural differentiation is best understood by analyzing the use of formal and informal expertise within the group.

Guetzkow, in his study of group differentiation, delivered a crucial message to organizers. Writing on his findings of group processes, he stated:

...although some explicit understanding of the organization is necessary, understanding per se is not sufficient to induce the development of continuing, differentiated organizations. An analogous state of affairs exists with the respect

to the existence of roles (in groups): although differentiation of roles is imperative for articulation (of the group), such differentiation is not sufficient in itself to induce an interlocking of the roles. (emphasis added) 32

In organizers' terms, assigning clearly specified roles to members doesn't guarantee the making of a cohesive, permanent group. Developing cohesive group structure develops by differentiating roles through the use of expertise. ³³ This expertise is one of two types: the knowledge of one's functional complementarity to others' tasks ³⁴ in the group; (2) specified planning and/or other trained skills.

The former, more informal expertise is non-specialized and potentially available to all members of the group. The latter is more specialized and common to particular, trained individuals. For example, knowing who and why one is accountable for a group's financial state is learned by any member of a community organization; knowing the principles of accounting is another, more specialized matter open only to a few. Both are valuable in helping an organizer move a community group beyond the amorphous orientation stage of group development. Guetzkow's findings clarify an invaluable lesson for organizations--you do not "make" a group by giving people roles like fund-raiser, treasurer, publicity chief, etc. If the roles are not connected so that members see the group-structural value inherent in such role complementarity. Indeed, this is much of the knowledge being disseminated throughout the early stages of group development. Without it, the common problems bound up in goal displacement are inevitable. Whether community, group or complex organization, people unknowing of or unconcerned with overarching group goals will invest more of themselves in their own job than in the long-range group task. This holds with small groups, too--the fund-raiser becoming obsessed with raising more and more money, the publicity coordinator dreaming of eight-page newsletters instead of critical, ongoing leaflets, etc. Clarifying how each task (and concomitant role) connects to the overall group goals is one easy step for heightening the structural cohesion of the group itself. For the organizer wishing to move from one stage to another, the use of role complementarity heightens structure--the "sense of group"--and obviously speeds up group development.

The value of formal expertise, with its formal training and elements of "bureaucratic intensity" ³⁵ is understandably suggestive of even more group structure. As Eugene Litwak and Henry Meyer point out in their work on organizational and group structures:

The contrasting qualities of bureaucracies and primary groups as ideal types need not be further elaborated. It is sufficient to point out that professional expertise is maintained in social organizations that stress achievement, instrumental, specialized and impersonal relations, whereas the generalized qualities of the non-expert are maintained in social organizations that share the opposite characteristics...

36

In a community organization we would thus find the demands of more formalized interaction and direct planning carrying with them expectations for even more heightened role complementarity and differentiation that underpin structural cohesion. Just as Weber discussed the increasing bureaucratization of organizations through specialization, so it is with groups once they use expertise. Any organizer knows that the use of experts--be they lawyers giving legal advice or accountants tending to the group's books--forces the group to pay attention to the structural demands of the specialized roles. By being so specialized, these experts force the rest of the group to account for what the other group functions are, e.g., a lawyer gives legal advice on specific property issues confronting the tenant group, not all law, the accountant tends to fiscal issues only as they relate to the group's present solvency. Such focussed attention on the group itself, the true forte of any speciality, brings into clearer focus what any group is about. It will no longer be possible to open-endedly discuss problems or evaluate group worth. Both the content of the discussion--and the group structure--will be much tighter when expertise is used.

Role complementarity and the inclusion of group expertise help organizers differentiate group stages and, even more importantly, help the organizer move the group through various stages of group development. Looking first at the orientation stage, with its emphasis on group exploration, questioning, and individual searching for a group problem, we see that it is with the least amount of expertise. Only after task leaders push and prod the group to a greater awareness of group purpose--which by definition is an early element of the informal expertise needed for role differentiation--does the group enter the second, evaluational period.

In this stage, organizing strategies similar to community development would engage in short-range tasks bound up in the larger process goals of the organization. Indeed, one can see that the "informal expertise" bound up in recognizing the value of the group and its

members to perform tasks would be the dominant operational measures used to chart the group's success in achieving its process goals. Regardless of strategy, the evaluation spent in differentiating roles (and thus the functions) of the group would heighten the use of socio-emotional leaders here. By the social leader's attention to group maintenance activities, he or she is in fact focussing on the inherent worth of non-specialized knowledge underpinning the developing group's structure. This information, reinforced through effective means, helps others discover and become comfortable in the group--and with their own new role definitions. Tasks such as fund-raising activities that heighten the value of the group are appropriate here. By also assigning people-specific, interrelated tasks of a modest nature one begins preparing group members for the more demanding control stage that lies ahead.

Finally, the control stage, with its heavy emphasis on planning and goal achievement, will heighten the structure of the group to its greatest intensity. Both roles and group functions are the most salient in this period. The organizer will now be less concerned with group maintenance or socializing and will instead be heavily task-oriented, attempting to implement well-planned and orchestrated activities so suggestive of a cohesive and complex organization.

The paradigm we have developed so far would look like the following:

TABLE I

ORGANIZING STRATEGIES, GROUP PHASES, AND LEADERSHIP TYPES

| <u>ORIENTATION</u> | Initial Length of Time | Type of Leaders | Level of Expertise | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------|
| | | | Informal | Formal |
| Community Development | Truncated -Moderate | Very Modified Task | Low | Low |
| Social Planning | Short | Task | Moderate | High |
| Social Action | Short | Modified Task | Moderate | Low |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| <u>EVALUATION</u> | | | | |
| Community Development | Long | Social | Moderate | Low |
| Social Planning | Short | Modified Task | Moderate | High |
| Social Action | Moderate | Modified Social | Moderate | Moderate |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| <u>CONTROL</u> | | | | |
| Community Development | Short | Task & Social | High | Moderate |
| Social Planning | Moderate - Long | Modified Task | High | Moderate |

An example from community development will help flesh out the above paradigm. As often happens in community development, a settlement house's year-long program for involving community members in a neighborhood enhancement program did not even begin with the "problem" of community enhancement. Instead, the group of seniors first met as a social and supper club. Obviously there was no real problem-solving orientation period, but an extended evaluational stage where people first got to know each other, to discover leadership skills through minor social tasks (organizing dinners, planning a dance, etc.), and in general started to feel comfortable with the group itself. Only after three or four months, when leaders had emerged and people were relatively knowledgeable about the value of the group (informal expertise), did the organizer breach the possibility of getting involved in more task-oriented community problems.

Here the group shifted back to the orientation stage, for now they were an emerging problem-solving group. Social activities and social leaders slipped into the background as recently-identified task leaders and the organizer helped encourage the group to decide what specific problem was the most pressing and still manageable for them to handle. Numerous issues were raised--rat control programs, rent strikes, clean-up projects--but the one finally hit upon was a lunch program for their shut-in neighbors. The program was ideal for their members, combining elements of task (providing nourishing food for needy elders) with the already-internalized elements of process (consistent interaction with neighbors and other social activities).

Moving back into the evaluational period, the active seniors set out to detail the roles and assignments ahead. Some of the members, particularly those who enjoyed the social benefits of the group, expressed discomfort at the group's "overzealous" direction, but the occasional socials held by the settlement house kept most of them involved and met their affective needs. This social atmosphere helped move members into more task-oriented roles: collecting information on food programs, finding potential food sources, seeking finances, etc. Such responsibility was gently reinforced by giving reports on each assigned task during every social event.

Finally, after about nine months, the group felt ready to move into a more clearly defined "control" stage. Setting aside its social activities, the group spent all its time on two coordinated efforts: constant fund-raising and proposal writing and, concurrently, a mini-lunch program demonstrating the need for a larger

program. This mini-project, giving each group member a potential task role to play, served as a demonstration project that the group itself was invaluable for community enhancement--the care and feeding of needy senior citizens. The outcome: a commitment of private and public funds for the group to provide for 50 shut-ins throughout the neighborhood; and, not incidentally, a sense of group pride and strength that they as active, older community members could have an impact on their community.

Mixing and Phasing -- This community development strategy, evolving through all group stages and using different types of leaders and the varying forms of expertise to expedite group (and strategic) development, was obviously successful. The group is still going strong--but not just within the "control" stage. The "mixing and phasing" of two desired strategies--planning and development--had led to even greater structural differentiation. It maintains a more structured, control stage that emphasizes relatively high standards of formal, task-oriented expertise through both its lunch program and local community planning activities. At the same time, it maintains a commitment to education and community development by using its social leaders, well-steeped in the informal expertise of the group, to engage new members. "Mixing and phasing" has developed strategically, not by analytic abstraction, but by concretely structuring the group to be partially engaged in control stage activities, others in evaluational ones. The results are a task-oriented but moderately informal community group that enhances both its community and its own membership presence.

SOCIAL ACTION: THE SPECIAL CASE OF IDEOLOGICAL COMMITMENT AND GROUP STRUCTURE

Community development and social planning, by being strategic polarities in many ways, are relatively easy to analyze. But what about social action, the strategy known to mix elements of both planning and development in its stated goals and task orientation?

Social activists wish to educate people to longer-term goals of significant structural change; at the same time, specific tasks similar in intensity and role complementarity to those in social planning (such as in a rent strike) must be carried out. Social action remains the least-used community organization strategy not only because of the dangers of outside oppression and its potentially conflictual nature. It is also due to the organizational difficulty of maintaining

such a conflictual stance over a long period of time.

These problems relate in part to the ideological stance of many social action groups. I am not implying that projecting a clearly-state ideology is a mistake, only that those taking strong ideological positions in opposition to established organizations must also prepare their organization so that it can maintain the complex group structure necessary for long-term social action.

Community development, for example, avoids such problems by attempting to be non-partisan in their openness to all groups. This openness does not demand cohesion prematurely; the members themselves are able to slowly develop a program that moves through all stages of group development before opting for a task-orienting strategy. Expertise is used only as it fits the moderately intense task goals. Accordingly, the structure of the group is never so highly complex so as to exclude new members or to force people out of the group who may have opposing viewpoints.

Social planning also does not begin with a stated analysis of power relations in the community, although often social planners are obvious in their respect for technocratic authority in decision-making. Instead, the planning method limits itself to a clearly-outlined, concrete problem already agreed upon by most of its membership. The strategy then proceeds rapidly through group development by the legitimacy it gives formal expertise to control the direction of the group.

Most social action strategies have neither the openness of community development that allows for gradualistic, comfortable group process nor the willingness to give formal experts the legitimacy to expedite the group's direction. Instead, social action usually begins with the cohesive glue of cleavage due to its members' shared-perceptions of some basic problem that separates them from others in the community. The orientation phase will thus be short, for people wouldn't choose a social action strategy immediately if they were not in common agreement on the seriousness of the problem facing them. They instead will move quickly into the evaluational period as they attempt to determine the group means to achieve their ends. Members of the group who are not certain of the problem cannot remain easily within the group. Wrote one tenant activist about the first meeting of his tenant group:

They were tired of individual attempts to deal with bad housing...
At the first large organizational meeting, problems were identified,

officers elected, and Block Captains to handle weekly assignments were chosen...Fifteen major grievances were drawn up around which to organize...

37

This period is often quite agitational (say, for example, as a group prepares for a large rent strike). There will be strong cohesion wrought by the members' shared vision; at the same time, its moves toward the control phase will be slowed by at least two factors. First, the group has to have enough members to give it at least the appearance of real clout (e.g., enough tenants must join the rent strike before it is any real economic threat to the landlord). Secondly, the group's members, many of whom may view formal authority as illegitimate, will often resist the very real moves toward bureaucratization one finds in the use of formalized expertise. (With the rent strike example, there are often profound fears about lawyers dominating tenant strategy.)

This tension between the community development needs for an increasingly large membership for long-term power reasons and the planning responsibilities of getting specific and often complex tasks completed is the bane of many social action groups. Often they opt for one goal or the other. For example, some rent strike groups have dropped their analysis for the maintenance of a limited rent strike; others use their ideological perspective in militant, ad hoc settings that attract new members but do little to keep older ones.³⁸ The first choice leads to a lost ideology; the second heightens consciousness but can destroy the organization.

Those groups that avoid slipping into either option do so by clearly differentiating their group into "evaluational" and "control" sections. For example, many socialist organizations have a well-developed education program for new members. They are expected to attend and learn about the group's goals and activities at these sessions. This structured "evaluation" stage allows both the new members and the group to evaluate each other before one enters the demanding "control" tasks of the established membership. Here, once the value of the group is understood, formal expertise may relate to ideological training; but the point is the same whether it is a political organization or a well-developed rent strike organization.

The following typology helps explain the general structural development of groups, looking first at the dominant group stage of their initial development and then the structure of each organization once they seek to maintain themselves in the community.

Table II

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION STRATEGY AND LONG-TERM GROUP STRUCTURE

| Strategy | Initial Level of Cohesion | Initial Dominant Group Phase | Long-Term Group Stages |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Community Development | Low | Evaluation | 1. Evaluation 2. Control |
| Social Planning | Moderate | 1. Control 2. Evaluation | Control |
| Social Action | High | 1. Evaluation 2. Control | Evaluation/ Control |

The above table outlines the "mixing and phasing" of a group's structure once it has survived its initial period of growth and development. Most groups rarely get beyond their initial attempts at organizing, regardless of strategic orientation. For those who wish to continue their effectiveness, however, the initial goals, tasks, and strategies that propelled them into activity should not be mistaken for having the inherent structural ability of maintaining an on-going community organization. As this paper has tried to delineate, groups and their organizers that have a number of goals to achieve can concretely maintain their strategic orientation by developing an organizational structure that emphasizes different phases of group development, complete with distinctive leaders, tasks, and types of expertise. Once done, their chances for success should increase greatly.

Footnotes

1. There are a few exceptions. Hartford's inclusive review of groups in social work briefly touches on the present material. See Margaret Hartford, Groups in Social Work (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), p. 3. See also Hyman Weiner, "Social Change and Social Group Work Practice," Social Work, IX (July, 1964), pp. 106-112; John B. Turner, Neighborhood Organizations (New York: National Association of Social Workers, 1968).
2. Hartford discusses the importance of the "pre-group phase" in group development which are in fact the period in which the organizer develops a general strategic orientation to how the group should develop. She points out that this period "is often ignored in the analysis of group process," a charge even more true in community organization. Hartford, op. cit., pp. 67-77.
3. As Rothman and his colleagues make clear, strategies are rarely pure in form. They are instead "mixed and phased" -- where "one may use (strategies) in combination or in sequence as stages in community change processes necessitate shifts in tactics." See Cox, Erlich, Rothman, and Tropman, Strategies of Community Organization, (Itasca, Illinois: The Peacock Press, 1972), pp. 341-343.
4. Jack Rothman, "Three Models of Community Organization Practice," in Cox, et al, op. cit., pp. 20-36.
5. See also Alan M. Walker, "Some Relations Between Community Development and Rogers' Client-Centered Therapy," Community Development Review VI, No. 1 (1961), pp. 20-28; Jack Rothman, "An Analysis of Goals and Roles in Community Organization Practice," Social Work, IX, No. 2, 1964, pp. 24-31.
6. Mayer M. Zald, "Sociology and Community Organization Practice," in Zald, ed., Organizing for Community Welfare, (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1967), pp. 27-61; Charles Grosser, "Staff Role in Neighborhood Organizations," in Turner, op. cit., pp. 133-45; Robert D. Vinter, "Analysis of Treatment Organizations," Social Work, XIII, No. 3 (1963), pp. 3-15; and especially Eugene Litwak and Henry Meyer, School, Family, and Neighborhood: The Theory and Practice of School-Community Relations, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973).

7. See Lewis Coser, The Functions of Social Conflict (New York: The Free Press, 1968), especially sections I, IV, and V.
8. The five variables are: (1) orientation toward power structure; (2) assumptions regarding interests of community sub-parts; (3) conception of the public interest; (4) conception of client roles; (5) conception of the client population and constituency. Rothman, "Three Models," op. cit., pp. 24-25.
9. Robert Bales and Neil Strodbeck, "Phases in Group Problem-Solving," in Dorwin Cartwright and Alvin Zander, eds., Group Dynamics (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), pp. 389-400.
10. Rosemary C. Sarri and Maeda Galinsky, "A Conceptual Framework for Teaching Group Development in Social Group Work," Faculty Day Conference Proceedings, 1964 (New York: Council on Social Work Education); Warren G. Bennis and Herbert A. Shepherd, "A Theory of Group Development," Human Relations, IX, (1956) pp. 415-37; Bruce W. Tuckman, "Developmental Sequences in Small Groups," Psychological Bulletin, LXIII (1965); and Hartford, op. cit., Chapter Three.
11. Bales and Strodbeck, "op. cit.," p. 391.
12. Carla Eugster, "Field Education in West Helghts: Equipping A Deprived Community to Help Itself," in Cox, et al, op. cit., p. 243.
13. Bales and Strodbeck, "op. cit." pp. 391-393. See also Hartford op. cit., pp. 80-85; C. Heinke and R.F. Bales, "Developmental Trends In the Structure of Small Groups," Sociometry, XVI, (1953), pp. 7-23.
14. Tuckman, "op. cit."
15. Nancy Romer Burghardt and Stephen Burghardt, "The Changing Dimensions of Social Action: The Case Study of Ann Arbor's Human Rights' Party," in Cox, et al, Community-Action, Planning, Development: A Casebook, (Itasca, Illinois: The Peacock Press, 1973), pp. 66-67.
16. Bales and Strodbeck, "op. cit.," p. 393; Einke and Bales, "op. cit." pp. 301-3; Tuckman, "op. cit."
17. See Rothman, "Three Models...", "op. cit." pp. 21-23.

18. E.P.Hollander, Leadership, Groups, and Influence, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 18.
19. Cecil A. Cobb, "Leadership," quoted by Margaret Hartford, op.cit. p. 214.
20. Robert F. Bales, Interaction Group Process, (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1950).
21. Frederick Fiedler, "Personality and Situational Determinants of Leadership," in Cartwright and Zander, op. cit., pp. 362-381.
22. For example, according to Dunham, community development emphasizes the following themes: (1) self-help; (2) voluntary cooperation; (3) education. None is problem-specific. See Arthur Dunham, "Some Principles of Community Development," International Review of Community Development, No. 11 (1963), pp. 141-51.
23. See Bales and Strodtbeck, "op. cit." p. 392.
24. Fiedler, "op. cit." pp. 375-378; Cob, "op. cit." p. 220.
25. Bernard Berelson and Gary A. Steiner, Human Behavior (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jahonovich, 1964); Herbert Thelan, Dynamics of Groups at Work (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954).
26. Bales, op. cit., Chapter One.
27. Hartford, op. cit. pp. 80-81.
28. See Eugster, "op. cit."
29. Bales and Strodtbeck, "op. cit." p. 393.
30. Fiedler, "op. cit." p. 378; Cobb - 216.
31. Eugster, "op. cit." p. 247.
32. George Guetzkow, "Differentiation of Roles in Task-Oriented Groups," Cartwright and Zander, op. cit., pp. 514-531.
33. Ibid.
34. Litwak and Meyer, op. cit., pp. 2-18.

35. ibid

36. ibid, p. 14.

37. Tom Jennings, "A Case Study in Tenant Union Legalism," in Stephen Burghardt, (ed.) Tenants and the Urban Housing Crisis (Dexter, Michigan: The New Press, 1972), p. 48.

38. For contrasting examples see accordingly, Jennings, "op. cit." and Mark D. Naison, "Rent Strikes in New York," in Burghardt, op.cit. pp. 13-19.