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**Civic organizations and racial conflict: A case study of the
Urban Coalition of Bridgeport, Connecticut, 1968–1976**

Cohen, Aviva Wertheim, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1994

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**CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS AND RACIAL CONFLICT:
A CASE STUDY OF THE
URBAN COALITION OF BRIDGEPORT,
CONNECTICUT
1968 – 1976**

by

AVIVA W. COHEN

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Sociology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1994

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This manuscript has been read and accepted by the Graduate Faculty
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the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS AND RACIAL CONFLICT: A CASE STUDY OF THE URBAN COALITION OF BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT 1968-1976

by

Aviva W. Cohen

Advisor: Professor Stephen Steinberg

This study, based on a case study, examines the relationship between legitimation, mobilization, and cooperation in an effort to facilitate progressive social change in the context of a metropolitan political economy. It employs various research methodologies—archival research, interviews, documentary interpretation and urban historiography—to examine the development and impact of a non-aligned, a middle-class urban reform organization, the Urban Coalition of Greater Bridgeport, Connecticut, in the context of the civil rights movement of the 1960s. In particular, it analyzes the relationship between two necessary but incompatible functions of that organization understood as an example of “representational coalition:” the need to refer to external constituencies in order to legitimize projects, and the need for cooperation in pursuing those tasks the outcomes of which determine how such a coalition can be evaluated by its members and their constituencies. The tensions generated by this relationship account both for tendencies toward a degree of rationalization

inconsistent with the coalition's general democratic program and for the emergence of internal conflict, along the lines of race and, to a certain extent, class. The effectiveness of the organization is evaluated in terms of its endurance in the face of these tensions and its influence on ongoing processes of politicization. The study provides a model of "coalition" arguably more applicable to political sociology than the rational choice models typically featured in the literature. It also provides support for rethinking the role of efforts by non-movement middle class groups to reform undemocratic aspects of American political life. Finally, it elucidates the ways in which principles are inevitably compromised in the context of inequality and structured discrimination, despite good intentions, transforming the conditions under which such reform organizations evaluate themselves and come to be evaluated.

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CHAPTER ONE:

OVERVIEW

Introduction

The Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport Area, founded in 1968 and dissolved in 1976, consisted of middle class volunteers from diverse groups and institutional sites including industry, government, and social and religious organizations. Its ostensible purpose was to “open channels of communication,” and to promote various reforms in regard to racial conflict and poverty.

My decision to focus on an essentially middle-class group was partly because it seemed an exception to the movement based efforts at reform that one usually identified with the 1960s; also because the emphasis on a human relations approach to social conflict and institutional rather than grass-roots resources were modified by the experience of the coalition as it encountered the problem of constituency, representation, and effect. I hoped to show that middle class based efforts at reform can not only operate in the midst of political turbulence, with some progressive impact, but that they are capable of modification interpretations that hold such efforts to be little more than defensive.

This case study attempts to show how the coalition dealt with problems generated both by the dynamics of its own form and those of the national crisis of which it was part, and how it attempted to promote social change locally by mobilizing existing organizations and institutions to that end. I examined this micro history primarily through the prism of its members’ experiences, focusing

especially on the coalition's development, its methods of coming to terms with its internal and external situation, and various extra-social constraints under which it operated. During its history, The Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport underwent radical transformations, though it retained something on the order of an identity throughout. It became more conventional, more hierarchical, and more detached from the constituencies its members purported to present. I will describe the micro-politics of these transformations in order to enlarge our understanding of those much studied attempts to develop vehicles for social reform that can (1) mediate popular mobilization, (2) through the integration of instrumental and substantive rationalities, (3) without violating the institutional framework assumed and confirmed by the attempt at reform.

The focus of this study will be the conditions under which the Bridgeport Urban Coalition developed *as a coalition* whose development in key respects reflects the history of The Greater Bridgeport Area. I will evaluate the coalition in terms of its internal development, changes in its relationships with the constituencies and social forces comprising its environment, and its effects, apparent or real.

Parenthetically, if one were to evaluate the impact of the coalition exclusively in terms of its original statement of goals, I would probably draw one kind of conclusion—it either succeeded or failed. But if I evaluate it in terms of the processes of goal-formation and legitimation, I must use different criteria related to durability over time and through changing conditions. Thus, while I will discuss effects, these will appear subordinate to the micro-politics of tension-management, information-control, and self-transformation that bear on the relationships between tensions inherent in the coalition form and the durability, or lack thereof, of the coalition's identity as this particular urban coalition.

In regard to the first, subsidiary, problem, the coalition was able to influence politics in the area of education, but not in the area of housing or employment. There is presumptive evidence that it did have some effect on intergroup relations in Bridgeport, at least at the level of elites, and some reason to believe that this effect was realized secondarily in subtle institutional ramifications carried by former coalition members into the normal operations of other organizations.

The formation of The Bridgeport Coalition was one instance of a larger phenomenon, the emergence of racism and economic inequality as issues defining the transition from popular mobilization to social movement. However, it represents a distinct type of political response, consistent with the history of institutional reform within the limits imposed by the established configurations of class and power. In this respect, the urban coalition can be seen as an instance of top-down, what I will call “managerial,” reform in contrast with the politics of social movements thought to be oriented to what C. W. Mills called “structure.” As such, the urban coalition represents a middle-class impulse and may well be the typical form protest takes for those who are not obviously labor or capital.

Bridgeport, Connecticut was incorporated in 1800 as an industrial center. Pewterware, weaving, the manufacture of house furnishings,¹ carriage building, and the production of sewing machines,² began in the middle of the nineteenth century. The Bridgeport economy diversified in a relatively short time as a result of efforts by the Hawley Brothers, local bankers who were interested in developing opportunities for investment in Bridgeport, and the Barnum Brothers

¹Staff of Bridgeport Public Library, *Selected Chapters on the History of Bridgeport*, (Bridgeport, CT: Public Library, 1953) p.38

² Weil, Robert, *Old Class in New Form: the Modern professional Petty Bourgeoisie*, Doctoral Dissertation, (New York: City University, the Graduate Center, 1991) .

who owned local property and were interested in developing it for industrial use.

Throughout the nineteenth century, and during the first half of the twentieth, immigrants from European countries settled in Bridgeport, as in other parts of the industrial North, in search of jobs. This migration was supplemented, toward the end of the 19th century, by an influx of emancipated blacks to the North from the southern states. The increased presence of black people as job seekers in the traditionally white-dominated industrial centers was part of a vast urbanization bringing different groups, experiences, and interests together in the contradictory context of what Durkheim called “moral density” and the centrifugal pressures of a multi-dimensional diversity.³ Conditions were hard, and the scarcity of housing often forced workers to sleep in shifts in housing located close to the factories, intensifying pressures within working class communities to spread toward other neighborhoods. World War I further concentrated these impulses, as war industries grew and found it necessary to incorporate workers in production processes often at odds with their previous experience. These periods of expansion were primarily of benefit to Bridgeport’s white residents who moved steadily into upper-level positions denied to blacks and certain European immigrants.

The 1929 depression passed in Bridgeport without as severe crises as were experienced by many Connecticut cities, such as Waterbury, New Haven, and Norwalk. With the onset of World War II, the production of munitions provided employment for large numbers of workers. The suddenness of this expansion created housing shortages, yet more pressure for a rationalization of community

³ Ossowsky, Stainislaw, *Class Structure in the Social Consciousness*, (London. G.B. Rautledge and Kegan Paul, 1963).

facilities. For example, large companies such as General Electric and the Brass Company doubled production between 1938 and 1942, with a corresponding enlargement of the number of workers employed by them. In order to cope with the need for housing, and to translate that into greater control over the work force, some companies opened real estate offices, or constructed housing near the factories, on the order of company towns. The constant competition for jobs and housing can be seen in racial terms, since white workers, encouraged to advance within their companies, were often able to move to more comfortable residential areas of the city and to the suburbs. Blacks had few opportunities to advance, and were in any case discouraged from moving out of their designated neighborhoods. Thus, segregated areas grew in size and number, creating an ecology of white multi-ethnic suburbs and a heavily black-populated central city.

Military demands continued to draw heavily upon the nation's manpower throughout the war. Black as well as white factory workers enlisted or were drafted into the armed forces, leaving jobs vacant that were filled by the new white immigrants, women, and black workers who remained.⁴ White immigrants were trained immediately to fill those jobs, competing with black workers who remained at a disadvantage due to racism. This competition exacerbated tensions between blacks and whites.

It has been argued by Sowell that cultural differences between blacks and whites, including different attitudes toward work and community, and a relative lack of understanding by blacks of the functions of social institutions,⁵ contributed historically and generally to the relative disadvantage of blacks. But the bulk of the evidence suggests that racism plus a desire on the part of factory

⁴ Lincoln, Eric, *The Negro Pilgrimage in America*, (New York: Bentam Books, 1967).

⁵ Sowell, Thomas, *Ethnic America*, (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1981).

owners to lower wages by dividing workers in a "dual labor market" account for most of the variance in the inequality engendered by the expansion. The process of concentrated diversification continued in Bridgeport through the 1940s and into the 1950s. It only began to stabilize at the beginning of the 1960s, when urbanization assumed the dimensions of a process of metropolitanization as populations spread to increasingly interdependent suburbs.

This movement out of the central city took place in two stages. First, those who could afford to moved to the outer circles of the city. However, the inner city continued to serve as the primary source of employment and such services as police and recreation. The second stage occurred as more affluent people moved to the suburbs. This transformed the process of racial and ethnic separation into one of segregation. Thus, suburban enclaves were established, each with relatively homogeneous population, a degree of municipal self-government, and the right to tax for services and facilities. In this way, patterns of segregation became institutionalized along the lines of material interest and legal organization. However, suburban residents continued to depend on Bridgeport as their source of income, and for services too expensive or otherwise too difficult to decentralize, such as libraries, banks, medical care, social services, and recreation.

This two-stage process was typical of United States cities from the 1950s through the 1970s.⁶ The central cities and their surrounding suburbs developed into metropolitan areas as the suburbs changed from satellites to areas of control resembling, in some ways, quasi-colonial power relative to the urban centers of

⁶ O'Connor, James, *The Fiscal Crisis of the State*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973).

socialized production. In this way, segregation developed along class as well as racial and ethnic lines.⁷

Bridgeport and its surrounding towns, Easton, Fairfield, Monroe, Shelton, Trumbull, and Stratford, form the Bridgeport Metropolitan Region, or The Greater Bridgeport Area. Each community has its own government with the power to tax and the responsibility to provide public services for its residents. Despite this relative independence, each is part of the larger interdependent metropolitan region.⁸ Scott Greer and Raymond Vernon argue that this form of separate but interdependent administrative municipalities and townships results in a lack of coordination and cooperation, and often creates conflict the impact of which is felt mainly in the central city.⁹ The history of the Greater Bridgeport Area indicates that just such a process had indeed taken place, by the mid-1960s, setting conditions that would qualify all efforts at reform including those of the urban coalition.

The duplication of functions increased the overall cost of metropolitan administration and made it difficult to establish the kind of coordination necessary for the delivery of services to be adequate to the operation of the metropolitan political economy. For example, the central city has different priorities from the suburbs, since its residents require more elaborate public services, such as transportation, and a housing policy consistent with a concentrated population.¹⁰ These contradictory demands on the metropolitan

⁷Vernon, Raymond, *Anatomy Of The Metropolis*, (New York: Anchor-Doubleday, 1959).

⁸Schlichting, Kurt, *Bridgeport, Urban Observatory Occasional Paper*, (Fairfield Conn., Fairfield University, 1977,) p.3,4; cf also Wood, Roberts, *Suburbia; Its People and Their Politics*, (New York: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1958).

⁹Greer, Scott, *Governing The Metropolis*, (New York: John Wiley, 1964).

¹⁰Greer, Scott, *Governing The Metropolis*, (New York: John Wiley, 1964).

budget are, to some extent, part of the background of conflicts of interests that exacerbated racial antagonisms in the 1960s.

This is the material context in which the urban coalition advocated a feasibility study in the Greater Bridgeport Area, aimed at greater educational and cultural cooperation between Bridgeport and its six surrounding towns.¹¹ The resistance of the suburbs even to such a study was vividly apparent in open hearings held during the summer of 1969. The videotape of these hearings exposed an unanticipated level of hostility of whites toward blacks, and suburban residents toward inner city residents. Opponents used epithets, unmistakable in their racism, to express this hostility, but they often found other reasons, less difficult to defend for their position—the need for local authority and fairness in redistributing the effects of urban crisis from ghetto to suburb. As we will see, these arguments glossed over the names which the urban coalition wanted to raise and, in any case, were easily incorporated into racist arguments.¹² Moreover, due to the need of the suburbs for the productive resources of the city, including labor, an element of class antagonism was visible, and audible, as well.¹³

At the beginning of the 1960s, Bridgeport was said to have, among its population, 170,000 laborers. The city earned the title “industrial capitol of Connecticut.” Although its industrial base was diversified, it was still heavily dependent on the production of war goods. After 1967, with the decline in war-related manufacturing, Bridgeport’s economy went into sharp decline. Unemployment increased even as the population of job-seekers continued to

¹¹ Fairfield Public Hearing, Videotape, *A proposal for an Urban suburban educational cooperation*, Fairfield, Connecticut, September 1969.

¹² Void, Frances, *Public hearing*, Fairfield, September, 1969.

¹³ Videotape of *Public Hearing*, Stratford, Summer, 1969.

grow. Concomitant with this decline, the capacity of Bridgeport's government to provide services dwindled, and the decline became systematic, creating what Neil Smelser called "system strain."¹⁴ Since most of Bridgeport's residents were black, and strain tends to generate anxiety and frustration, it was inevitable that social tensions in the forms of racial scapegoating and popular mobilization would follow. Strain of this sort became acute by 1964 in hundreds of urban and metropolitan centers of the U.S. The pattern was evident during the 1960s in Bridgeport and its surrounding municipalities.¹⁵

By the middle of the decade, 73 percent of the black population of the United States lived in urban areas. While blacks migrated into the cities, whites emigrated to the outer rings and to the suburbs.¹⁶ Blacks were increasingly concentrated in those areas of the big cities in which services were increasingly scarce. Poverty, inadequate housing, poor schools, anger over the U.S. involvement in Vietnam, and the emergence of social movements gave increased focus to inter-racial tension. The pressure was enhanced by escalating frustrations and a growing sense of futility within black communities. These are some of the conditions listed by the Kerner Commission in its reports on the "riots" of 1968.¹⁷

¹⁴ Smelser, Niel, *Theory of Collective Behavior*, (New York, The Free Press, 1962).

¹⁵ Reagan J. William, *Community Development Action Plan*, (Bridgeport, Connecticut, 1971). p. 27.

¹⁶ Klibanow, Diana, and Leonard, Jonas, *Urban Legacy the Story of America's Cities*, (New York: Mantor Books, 1977).

¹⁷ Note: There is extensive literature on the development of violence, and the riots of the 1960s. Some of those are: Cloward and Piven, 1965; Connery, 1969; Oppenheimer, 1969; Canot, 1967; Jacobs, 1968; Klebanow, Franklin and Leonard, 1977; Packard, 1971.

The Vietnam war and the urban insurrections brought to the surface many of the unresolved problems of American society.¹⁸ The Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport hoped to address these by attempting to lessen the degree of inter-group tension, that is to act on the symptoms of what was increasingly characterized as a disease. Sam Hawley, in cooperation with a black lawyer, John Merchant, brought together a number of white bank presidents and corporate executives from the Greater Bridgeport Area to meet with a group of black professionals, members of the 1800 Club, who were seen as leaders in the black community.¹⁹

The purpose of the first meeting, according to John Merchant, was to discuss the possibility of establishing a vehicle by which the white corporate establishment could help the black underclass in Bridgeport to acquire better jobs, better housing, and better education.²⁰ According to Hawley, however, the purpose of the meeting was to start a process of communication between blacks and whites to prevent unrest in Bridgeport, as well as to discuss ways of improving the life of the underclass in the city.²¹ Since the agendas of the groups were different, it took several long confrontational meetings to come to a minimal consensus. Among the ideas presented was a proposal to investigate the national response to the growing tension, and to see if it was relevant to the

¹⁸ Skolnick, H. Jerome, and Elliott, Currie, *America's Problems*, (Boston: Scott, Forsman, and Company, 1988).

¹⁹ Note: The 1800 Club, established in 1957, was an organization of black professional males who sought out the problems of the black community, and tried to propose and seek solutions for them.

²⁰ John, Interview by author, Tape recording, Bridgeport, Connecticut, 24 November 1982.

²¹ Sam, Interview by author, Tape recording, Bridgeport, Connecticut, 7 October 1982.

Note: Since the agreement was that no minutes will be taken in the first meeting or the subsequent ones, I can only rely on interviews with some participants.

special situation of Bridgeport. In the background were the emergence of social movements and their definitions of the general problem, for example the New Left, consumer protection groups, environmentalism, women's liberation, and The Civil Rights Movement.

It was evident that governmental action by itself could not adequately address the problems identified by a newly politicized populace. The Bridgeport Coalition, without roots among the poor and the activists, chose to emphasize the relationship between government and the private economy of banks and corporations. In fact, banks and corporations in Bridgeport had already begun discussing becoming involved in reform with local government.²² Thus, the consensus that framed the work of the Bridgeport coalition was built on a policy already in motion before its first meeting. Indeed, such a policy had already made its appearance nationally, as federal and state agencies, and religious and civic organizations initiated programs aimed at addressing the problems of communities throughout the United States.²³ These efforts focused on initiatives by what were called citizen participation groups, requiring collaboration among racial minorities, lay leaders, and black and white officials. They were based on the assumption that such collaboration could at least mute the tensions engendered by racism, poverty, and urban decline, thereby reducing the likelihood of violent outbreaks. One of those efforts was The National Urban Coalition which served as an umbrella organization for local coalitions such as that organized in Bridgeport.²⁴

²² Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 1967.

²³ Yanich, Beverley, *The Urban Coalition of Metropolitan Wilmington: A Study of Community Action and Dynamic Conservatism*, Doctoral Disertation, (Delaware: University of Delaware, May, 1980).

²⁴ Sam, Interview, 1982.

The National Urban Coalition was established in Washington D.C., in the summer of 1967. Twelve hundred white, black, and Hispanic national leaders, delegates from the fields of business, education, consumer affairs, politics, and labor assembled there to form this new organization, the first time such a gathering had taken place. The coalition was proposed as a joint venture between government and the business community to deal with the causes of racial unrest.²⁵ Its aim was to address the problems of black and other minorities in the "inner-cities" of the United States. To this end, it encouraged communities throughout the country to establish local urban coalitions.²⁶

The Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport

Twenty two individuals from Bridgeport, among them a banker, two lawyers, two college professors, two teachers, a corporate executive, two social service workers, and volunteers representing social and religious organizations, attended the Washington conference. They returned to Bridgeport prepared to develop an urban coalition for The Greater Bridgeport Area.²⁷ After their return, Mayor Hugh Curran went to Washington for a meeting of Mayors in which the ideas originally presented at the Potomac Institute were discussed in conjunction with a detailed plan for assisting cities in instituting local coalitions. As a consequence, with representatives of various social organizations, banks, and industrial firms, the Mayor called for the establishment of The Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport.

²⁵ Cauty Donald, "Urban Coalition Turning The Country Around, *City*, October, 1967, p.16.

²⁶ *The Incorporation Papers of the National Urban Coalition*, (Bridgeport: Connecticut, 1967.)

²⁷ Wasserman, Helen; Knepler, Abraham; tisdale, James; Hunter, Patrick were among the people who went to Washington. These people were interviewed by me in 1982 and 1985.

The Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport, like its sibling associations around the country, was born in the midst of interracial crisis. Among the conditions to which it was expected to respond were the demand for civil rights, long-standing local political and economic grievances, and a desire on the part of local elites to preserve as much of the status quo as possible. At the same time, it was to operate in a radically different political situation from that which existed prior to 1960,²⁸ and in a context of racial polarization which reflected that situation. The Bridgeport Coalition was officially established in March, 1968.²⁹ According to one of its founders, Sam Hawley, circumstances “forced us to look into our community and see the hardships of the blacks. We realized that if we did not do something about it, riots would soon occur here too.”³⁰ Hawley, president of the People’s Savings Bank, was to remain active in the coalition throughout its history.

The Bridgeport Coalition was conceived by its founders as a community-based civic organization, to be led by prominent citizens and oriented to the solution of two problems: how to enhance intergroup communication, and how to facilitate proposed reforms in the areas of education, policing, jobs, and human services, with resources primarily from private sources.³¹ It was to function as a “catalyst” rather than either an activist organization or an agency initiating programs. The principles which informed its founding documents were those adopted by the National Urban Coalition’s Steering Committee at the August, 1967, meeting in Washington, D.C. :

²⁸ Skolnick and Currie, 1988.

²⁹ *The Urban Coalition Incorporation Papers*, The Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport, (Bridgeport, Connecticut, 1968).

³⁰ Sam, Interview, 1982.

³¹ *The Urban Coalition Incorporation Papers*, 1968.

- 1) A belief in justice, social progress, and equality of opportunity for every citizen.
- 2) A belief that the problems of each city had to be addressed in terms of local conditions.
- 3) A desire to include federal, state, and local government, as well as private corporations and organizations within each coalition.
- 4) A commitment to opposing urban riots, according to the obligation of the government and its citizens to maintain law and order.³² In addition to these fundamental principles, the Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport aimed to improve relations among races, religions, and ethnic groups.³³

Thus, the Bridgeport Urban Coalition began as a programmatic rather than action-oriented effort. Its relation to its community was consistent with the stratification by race and wealth that characterized its social structure, just as its program was conceived within the specific dimensions of state power and governmental authority. However, its membership was racially divided, and this was to bear heavily on the organizational form finally adopted, interactions among members, and the ways in which members began to define their responsibilities to segments of the community increasingly conceived of as constituencies.

³² *Statement of Principles, Goals and Commitments*, Emergency Convention: The National Urban Coalition, Washington D.C. August 23, 1967.

Note: this statement was unanimously adopted by members of the Bridgeport Steering Committee and their representatives at a meeting on August 23, in Washington D.C.

³³ The Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport, *Incorporation papers*, 1968.

Research Objective

The objective of this dissertation is to study the Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport, as a self-defining community organization, and to examine the ways in which its membership reconciled itself within what I refer to as the form of a “representational coalition” and, as such, mobilized resources for conflict resolution and to some extent social change. Thus, I will be describing the growth and transformation of a type of association whose ultimate organization and self-definition bore only vague resemblance to what was intended at the first meeting of the National Urban Coalition in Washington. Moreover, because the membership of the Bridgeport Coalition was composed for the most part of relatively affluent members of the upper middle class, my study emphasizes how the element of representation, agency, operates among racially-divided elites who wish to engage in a joint project oriented to social change.

Methodology and Resources

I have made use of primary and secondary resources in the archives of the Bridgeport public library, and in its historical section known as the Bishop Room. Fifty-three interviews of varying length were conducted with individual members, representing a wide range of affiliations. In addition, I made use of field notes, and various publications, including reports, newspaper articles, newsletters, and correspondence. Of particular interest were two important videotapes of public hearings conducted by the coalition in Fairfield and Stratford in 1969. These were recovered after an arduous search for such material. They provided a perspective on local racial attitudes during that period,

as well as on the tensions that existed between the central city and its surrounding towns.³⁴

This study analyzes the structure and functioning of the coalition. It emphasizes those activities that were involved in mobilizing support for the coalition's work, the tensions surrounding the acquisition, definition, and redefinition of resources, the coalition's connections with institutional and extra-institutional constituencies, and problems having to do with the rationalization of its actions, the legitimation of its goals, and the maintenance of its identity over time. I address these issues in terms of the theory of representational coalition outlined in chapter one, and in regard to the historical, socio-political, and economic contexts in which the coalition conducted its operations.

I had access to the archive of the Bridgeport Public Library by virtue of having been involved in community affairs as a volunteer for over ten years prior to this research. This collection consists of eight boxes of uncatalogued material on the coalition, including minutes of some of the coalition's board meetings, and meetings of its steering committee and various task forces. It also contains annual reports, documents of incorporation, correspondence, programs, various project descriptions, newspaper clippings, articles, and commentaries. It contains as well some material on the predecessors of the Urban Coalition, for example, the Intergroup Council and The Community Chest. One of the greatest difficulties I had involved dealing with material stacked in boxes which were marked by years but neither catalogued nor otherwise indexed. In doing my research, I had, essentially, to transform the collection into a usable archive which, upon completion of the study, will be made available to the library for its collection.

³⁴ Note: A copy of the videotapes of the public hearings in Fairfield and Stratford are in the media center of Fairfield University's library.

The Bishop Room contains books, pamphlets, documents, descriptions of community organizations, minutes of meetings, oral histories including a black oral history, and a vertical file of newspaper clippings from the early 19th century to the present.³⁵ Some of this material is not catalogued. The archive and the historical library provided both primary and secondary resources for my section on the historical background of Bridgeport and the context in which the Urban Coalition operated. Various maps, charts, and statistics were available and provided reasonably hard data on the development of the city and the conditions in which its residents lived and worked over time.

A Number of books have been written on the history of Bridgeport and its economic, industrial, social, and community development. Some contain biographies of Bridgeport's business people and prominent families during the nineteenth century. There are several studies on the history of ethnic groups in the city, on the Hungarian community,³⁶ the Italian community³⁷ and the Portuguese community.³⁸ I could find no studies of the black or Hispanic communities. Since information on these communities is not otherwise available, I had to make use of newspaper clippings, oral histories, and interviews which I conducted and transcribed. This part of my project represents a provisional reconstruction of the background of intergroup relations in the 1960s and 1970s.

³⁵ Note: Many of the newspaper clippings from early years do not have exact dates, pages or section indicated.

³⁶ Ross, J. Steven, *In Search of Wordin Avenue: The Hungarian Community in Bridgeport*, (Fairfield, Connecticut: Sacred Heart University, 1980.) (Documentary).

³⁷ Crispino, A. James, *The Assimilation of Ethnic Groups: The Italian Case*, (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1980.)

³⁸ Penzer, O. Lynne, *Resources and Family Power: Portuguese Adolescents in a New England City*, Doctoral Dissertation, (Yale University, New Haven, CT, 1986.)

More work obviously needs to be done, though what I have is, I believe, sufficient for the specific topic at hand.

I interviewed over fifty black, white, Hispanic, and Jewish individuals who participated in the work of the Bridgeport Urban Coalition. Some had been involved in community affairs since the 1940s, and continued to work on issues having to do with intergroup relations throughout the 1950s and 1960s. The general consensus was that, throughout the years, members developed an unanticipated level of mutual trust, and a capacity to work together despite differences among them. Some were central to the development and operation of The Bridgeport Urban Coalition, while others acted at its margins. Some were established community leaders, and others represented constituencies only informally. A few claimed to represent organizations for which the terms of representation were not clear.

These interviews were conducted in the homes of the interviewees and, occasionally, at places of work. Each interview lasted approximately an hour and a half. A few respondents were interviewed a second time. Questions were, for the most part related to the Bridgeport community and the Bridgeport Urban Coalition, and to the interviewees' involvement in and perception of the coalition and its work. The interviews were based on predetermined topics but were unstructured since not all the planned questions were appropriate for each subject. Interviewees were encouraged to elaborate on those topics with which they were most familiar and about which they had knowledge. For the most part, interviewees seemed comfortable. Some requested I not use their names, and, as a result, I have used only fictional first names.

In the basement of a former member of the Bridgeport Urban Coalition, I found two large, dusty, videotapes hiding in a box full of papers. These were video recordings of two public hearings conducted by the Bridgeport Urban

Coalition during the summer of 1969. One took place in Fairfield and the other occurred in Stratford. The Bridgeport Urban Coalition initiated both hearings in order to begin public discussion of a concrete proposal to study the feasibility of cooperation between the city and its suburbs on cultural and educational projects. The coalition had approached officials of six communities surrounding Bridgeport, and asked them to sponsor that study for the purpose of collecting information relevant to the possibility of cooperating on projects related to education, recreation, and intergroup relations. Each community was asked to hold a public hearing so that local residents could decide whether or not to participate, since public funds would have had to be allocated for the project. The videotapes dramatically illustrate the underlying feelings within the white communities toward the central city and, especially, black people. Some participants openly objected to any coordination of programs with "those people,"³⁹ or "the ghetto children."⁴⁰ This provided me with yet another tool for assessing the relationship between the central city and its suburbs, and between whites and blacks.⁴¹

Organization of the Study

Chapter two presents the model of the coalition form on which I relied in analyzing the development of the Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport. The tensions inherent in what I call the "representational coalition," having to do

³⁹ Robert Chira, *Public Hearing*, Fairfield, September, 1969.

⁴⁰ Francis Void, *Public Hearing*, Fairfield, September, 1969.

⁴¹ Note: These 3/4 inch videotapes were in poor condition, and do not fit the video machines of today. With dedicated help of professionals in the media department at the University of Bridgeport, these tapes were transferred to VHS 1/2 inch cassettes. The tapes are by no means complete, nevertheless, they cover most of those two public hearings. They provide a verbal and a visual illustration of the thinking and feelings of the participants in those two public hearings.

with the relationship between agency and participation, provide me with a set or orienting hypotheses, or expectations about how such a coalition operates in regard to the limitations of its form, how it changes as its operation exacerbates the normal tensions inherent in its contradictory functions, and how pressures toward instrumental rationalism undermine the capacity of the representational coalition to continue operating as a coalition. This model is applied to events in a particular context, the history and organization of the greater community of Bridgeport, itself situated in the context of a particular national conjuncture, at once economic, political, social, cultural, and integrative, defined by crises of legitimation, rationalization, and orientation.⁴²

The socio-economic history of Bridgeport follows the line of the city's development as an industrial center. It was created in 1800, when a section of Stratford was given the integrity of a municipality. Chapter three describes how this atypical moment of industrial concentration—the establishment of a city as, at the outset, something on the order of an industrial park—developed as a settlement the diversity of which was a feature of it from its beginning. This chapter emphasizes factors giving rise to a political economy of difference—racial, ethno-national, and class. This political economy, at the time the Bridgeport Urban Coalition was established, was, of course, a gendered one. But the sexual division of labor was not yet a theme of the social movements that formed the background of reform in the 1960s. Thus, my focus is on the history of the emergence of what I call “constituencies” against a background of racial and ethnic discrimination, class antagonism, and the effects of metropolitanization on patterns of segregation, opportunity, and oppression.

⁴² Habermas, Jurgue, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Translated by McCarthy, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984).

This context, in turn, is used to account for certain features, and limitations, of the Urban Coalition For The Greater Bridgeport Area.

The struggle for civil rights, and efforts at healing intergroup tensions, did not begin in the 1960s. In the Fourth chapter, I will summarize the history of “intergroup relations” in greater Bridgeport from 1946, when the State Of Connecticut first officially recognized the problem as something for which governmental policy might be appropriate. There was, of course, a prior politics around the issues of equality, justice, and the proper role of the state. But because the Bridgeport Urban Coalition represented an attempt to promote reform from within, I begin with the history of similar efforts from World War II until 1968.

Chapter five describes the coalition from 1968 until its dissolution in 1976. It focuses on the constitution of the coalition as an association of institutionally-oriented elites that gradually assumed the form of a representational coalition under conditions—racial crisis, war, and urban “decay”—that were essentially incompatible with its original mandate. Formally, the coalition followed the format of the National Urban Coalition. Its governing body consisted of a board of directors, an executive director with limited staff, and six steering committees focused on education, police and community relations, housing, economic development, public support and communications, and cultural affairs and recreation.

As we will see, neither the ambitious agenda nor the organizational chart could be sustained in the day-to-day course of coalition work. While they remained as the “formal” surface of the coalition, the key to understanding and evaluating the coalition lies in looking beneath that surface, at the relationships between constitutive tensions and operational conditions. This is studied specifically in chapter six, in regard to the work of the task force on education. There, I discuss the relationships among resource mobilization and definition,

constituency representation, and the course of interaction and decision-making within the coalition. "Project Concern" aimed at promoting educational and cultural cooperation among various sectors of the community, was one of the important programs of the education task force. It reveals, more than any other project, the operations of racism and economic interest with which the coalition had consistently to contend. It is in regard to this project that the power of the model of representational coalition is "tested," with a focus on the relationship between coalitional identity and extrinsic standards of instrumental success and failure.

The implication is that any reform effort that operates as a representational coalition of elites, must be evaluated not in terms of the "measurable" differences it makes in regard to specific and isolatable *goals*, but in terms of its capacity to generate replicas, or exemplars, of itself as a representational form, and its capacity to influence the moral context of social action and governmental policy. Whether or not a generalization can be made about the viability in this respect of an elite-led, institutionally-limited association such as The Bridgeport Coalition depends on the particular setting for which it is designed and in which it operates. The longevity of the coalition, the publicity it generated, and the example it set as a representational coalition, suggest that it had at least a modicum of impact at the level of community identifiable as middle-class.

CHAPTER TWO:

COALITIONS—ISSUES OF THEORY AND PRACTICE

This research examines an example of a type of association which, because of its distinctive features, can be referred to as a “coalition.” By “coalition” I mean a temporary alliance of various groups or socially definite categories which operates through the interactions of agents representing or claiming to represent these groups or categories as constituencies. Members as agents do not act on their own behalf but are oriented by purposes imputed to their principals. These purposes, to the extent to which they can be composed as a single coalition value, are by their nature in constant formation and transformation according to the momentary relationship between the purpose formed by any given constituency and that formed by the coalition—between “value” (which is the representative quality of the agent’s coalition work) and “task” (which is the activity constituted, and given focus, by and among agents as coalition members). This implies (1) that interactions among agents are characterized by tensions associated with the constantly shifting limits of agentic jurisdiction, and (2) that presentations by the coalition such as statements of direction, are invariably ambiguous or provisional and, therefore, continually subject to review and reformation. The latter will be referred to as *tensions of presentation*; the former will be considered as *tensions of representation*.

A coalition, like any association, can therefore be seen in two aspects: as an ensemble of actors and as an aggregation of resources.¹ Coalition resources are constantly subject to the opposing pressures of aggregation (collection and deployment for specific tasks or purposes) and disaggregation (accountability by reference of resource values to the relationship of representation they presumably serve and which presumably defines the range of their legitimate generalizability as resources, that is the range of permissible uses). The former is justified by reference to a common purpose; the latter is part of the unavoidable politics of representation intrinsic to agency (representation) when it is governed by considerations of legitimacy other than formal rules or law (e.g., contract).

Resources, then, are used jointly within a coalition, but limited by the need to justify any use by reference to deliberations undertaken and decisions made elsewhere. However, to remain a coalition, to survive in this form, this type of association must achieve a certain level of autonomy. It has its own imperatives—the least of which are the need to sustain a process of negotiation (e.g., trust,) and the need to mobilize some portion of its resources for coalition work independent of the obligation to account for its decisions according to the values and interests of diverse external constituencies.

¹Bales' early work on "interaction process" distinguishes between "dynamic" (Functional) and static (Structural) modes of conceptualizing forms of interaction. While there is still much of value in Bales' work (cf. Bales, 1970), my approach is intended to avoid several presumptions not appropriate to the present case. First, Bales' work relies on a version of methodological individualism unsuited to an emphasis on the development of a collectivity. Second, it assumes both boundry and boundlessness as prior features of joint action rather than features to be explained by the latter. Finally, the version of functionalism on which Bales relies does not take adequate account of agency, and therefore the most important dynamic feature of what I am calling "representational coalition" (cf. Bales, 1950, pp 126-129). In his later work, Bales uses the term "coalition" primarily to refer to a strategic pooling of resources and effort (cf. Bales, 1970, pp. 36, 46, 47), among individuals for whom such pooling is advantageous according to criteria set before interaction actually begins.

Political science has attempted to account for joint undertakings by theories of "alliance" or "coalition." But the concepts underlying the use of these terms by political scientists are somewhat different from those outlined above.² They emphasize relatively autonomous decision-making processes; and, when addressing the issue of agency, they treat representation as an attribute of the decision-maker fixed at the precise moment of decision. Decisions are points at which factors are reconciled, not processes in which the representational conditions of agency (components of value) are continually active as elements of what Max Weber called "substantive rationalization." That is, individuals are conceived as having attributes which are strictly prior to their participation in any joint undertaking. Decision-making processes are, then, understood as a *series* of discrete logical or paralogical operations: a diachrony, succession of small structures, rather than an ongoing process in the full sense of the term. The result, as described in this literature, is an actual decision or rational basis for such a decision rather than a movement toward and within the processes of affirming and transforming the conditions of working together.³ The emphasis, in other words, is on the *production of something* separate from the *activity of producing* rather than production seen as an activity that essentially reproduces (and therefore transforms) itself.⁴ This is why the theory of coalitions in political science typically takes the form of a "theory of rational choice."⁵ A brief review of a few assumptions of this literature will clarify the difference between the

² Hinckley, Barbara, *Coalitions and Politics*, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981) Pp. 5-9.

³ Garfinkel, Harold, *Studies in Ethnomethodology*, (New Jersey: Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, 1967).

⁴ Brown, Michael, "Issues in Collective Behavior," *Socialism and Democracy*, No. 5, 1986.

⁵ Coleman, James, *Foundations of Social Theory*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1990).

rational choice model of political science, appropriate for strictly instrumental instances of joint undertaking and the reproduction model used in my research to account for coalition work that is simultaneously instrumental and representational.

Eric C. Browne defines a coalition as a group of two or more actors who come together to make decisions and to accomplish something which cannot be accomplished by members acting alone.⁶ Such a form of association is said by such writers as Riker, Lieserson, and Gamson, to display at least a modicum of hierarchical order, a distinction between leader and rank-and-file;⁷ members of whatever status, are considered to be essentially separate from any other context at the moment of deliberation⁸ and exclusively oriented strategically to the twin values of payoff and efficiency.⁹ The external social attachments of the parties are seen as stable personal traits, modifying their deliberations by defining limits of goal formation and the selection of means, or otherwise influencing the setting of terms for negotiation and settlement. These traits are seen, then, as limitations of rationality. The process of decision-making appears as a logical variant rather than a process as such, as if a decision is a theorem rather than a moment in the life of the decision-making entity.¹⁰

This interpretation of the individual as decision-maker divorced from sociality, fits the model of rational choice to situations in which actors themselves

⁶ Browne, C. Eric, *Coalition Theories: A Logical and Empirical Critique*, (Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publication, 1973). p.5.

⁷ Riker, H. William, *The Theory of Political Coalitions*, (New Havens: Yale University Press, 1962).

⁸ Leiserson, A. Michael, *Coalitions and Politics: A Theoretical and Empirical Study*. Doctoral Dissertation, (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1966).

⁹ Gamson, William, "Experimental Studies of Coalition Formation," in *Advances in Experimental Psychology*, Leonard, Berkowitz, ed., (New York: Academic Press, 1964).

¹⁰ Riker, 1962; Lieserson, 1966; Gamson, 1964.

take sociality for granted. The actors define the rational choice model as their own and act accordingly. While it is interesting to consider under what circumstances individuals could be momentarily without significant sociality, or indeed if such circumstances are possible, it is important to note that the rational choice model, as outlined above, does not apply to situations in which agency is problematic (as to the conditions of representation) and in which the terms of representation are formed to a significant extent in the course of activities which transpire among agents, as part of what Garfinkel called the “reflexivity” of the ensemble.¹¹

It is clear that the conditions of individual autonomy, availability of standards of comparison, and clarity of boundary that give the rational choice model its power also limit its applicability to extremely rare cases. It is altogether inappropriate for cases in which questions of value and authority are as crucial as those of outcome and efficiency. I believe that these cases are more often found and are, arguably, more relevant to understanding the practices of social life as ‘ordinarily’ lived. Therefore, I will discuss them in terms which I take to be their own. Above all, this means treating the *representational coalition* not as an instance of the ideal decision-maker of political science and political sociology, since its deviance in that respect could be seen only as a defect of rationality, and its form could be defined only according to this negative feature of a relative ‘lack’ of good reason.

My revision of coalition theory implies that the rationality of the representational coalition is intrinsically social¹², and that considerations of efficiency, social order, and payoff are never free, and cannot be analyzed as if

¹¹ Garfinkel, 1967.

¹² Garfinkel, 1967.

they are, of the process of value determination or “substantive rationalization.” It follows, further, that an exclusive orientation by actors to calculation, required by the rational choice model, is, *for this revision*, deviant and in any case, as we shall see, dysfunctional.

The following presents a description of the main features of the representational coalition in order to analyze the singular tensions that give its activities their special attributes and provide the dynamism by which they can be understood as moments of processes. First, the representational coalition (henceforth, coalition) is composed of special subjects, namely agents, whose interactions are constituted in their relations with principals, or constituencies considered to be principals. Because a coalition begins only with a *general* intention or project, regardless of other conditions, both the jurisdiction (authority) of the agent and the terms of agency (representation) are intrinsically and irremediable problematic. That is, *the subjects, the agents, are in these respects never formed but always in the process of formation*. This implies that there is a politics as well as a sociality at the base of the coalition form, that is a process in which each act of agency refers simultaneously to the immediate conditions of interaction among agents *and* to the interactions and deliberations of others in altogether different settings. Parenthetically, it should be noted that this simultaneous reference, or reflexivity, does not imply real events, though such realities may be assumed for the task at hand. Indeed, the fact that there might always be a question about whether or not a claim to represent is justifiable in regard to real conditions of representation emphasizes the tensions implicit in the relation of agent to principal, and especially since the principal (constituency) itself may be in the throes of formation and/or transformation. *Thus, my analysis will often refer to issues having to do with legitimation, actual practices, and moments of*

ostensible composition (interaction) which are tied to these complications of reference and which, in turn, affect the course of activities among agents themselves.

At the same time, *from the perspective of agents as members*, the coalition operates as a decision-making process. But, it does not operate on the terms Weber claimed were necessary conditions of instrumental rationality, namely, a *prior* settlement of the “value” or “substantive” question. Because representation is inherently uncertain and because a demand for accountability incessantly arises from beyond the coalition itself, the question of “value” is never suspended. But rather than this compromising rationality, it should be taken, following Schutz, to define rationality as a social operation, a practice, not the idealized asocial operation that constitutes the myth of social action operative in the standard literature on joint undertaking.

Thus, converting an instance of the collective form I propose to that of the classical individualistic model proposed by Browne, Riker, and Gamson, would not improve coalition functioning but would, on the contrary, diminish it. It would be both counterproductive and functionally irrational *for the modality of social action constituted by the interpenetration of value determination and instrumentality*. However, there are specific pressures within a coalition, as a matter of its practice, to move toward precisely that conversion.

Indeed, such pressure is implicit in the interaction among those actors constituted as *agents*. As a result, members of a coalition regularly exercise initiative, invariably develop secrets about their joint activities, and necessarily commit themselves to interpretations of their work, ostensibly in the interest of carrying out the terms of their agency but to some extent in unavoidable disregard of those terms. These collegial processes which take place within a coalition create a fragile unity and unsteady commitment among members. As it is not consistent with the imperatives of representation (agency), *the longer this*

collegiality continues, (1) the greater the pressure to terminate the coalition and, simultaneously, (2) the greater the pressure to constitute it as another type of formation. The reasons for this apparent paradox follow.

As inter-agent collegiality, hence boundary and reciprocity, develops in the context of the external dependencies necessary for a coalition to mobilize resources and *therefore* to establish and clarify goals and their means of likely attainment, the coalition increasingly redefines itself as a particular ideal type, namely one for which the unavoidable compromises of agency (representation) are considered deviant, or as imperfections to be corrected. Such redefinition invokes the agent-principal relation *as a problem and only secondarily as a condition of action*. Thus, the very success of the instrumental aspect of coalition work, its capacity to make and act on decisions, constitutes a crisis of the very relations of agency on which it depended, threatening either dissolution or transformation, extremes with no stable opportunity lying in the “middle.” This suggests that over the time defined by a coalition’s project, relations among partners will come to be clique-like and polarized. It also suggests that this transformation will not be gradual but critical, in which case there should be a relatively sudden acceleration of pressures to change, and some controversial degree of discreditation of formerly legitimate external procedures.¹³

More prosaically, a coalition is limited *in* but not *by* time. It is based on the sense of a finite and disposable project that can be expressed only over the course of time. But, the relation of agency entails that there are few if any clear points of temporal definition, since if a project could be so specified in definite stages it could not sustain the proliferous obligations of representation on which its formation depends. The main effects of this are, paradoxically, to increase the

¹³ Wooglar, S. *Science: the Very Idea*, (Chichester England: Ellis Horwood, 1988)

need for a paralyzing accountability, increased resistance to demands for accountability, increased tension between representation and interaction, and increased pressure to convert specified resources (targeted and therefore limited by quality) “to generalized resources” (capable of being mobilized for various purposes). This last suggests that, at a certain point, the problem of constituency representation will be further complicated by a need to increase access to the types of donor capable of providing “generalizeable resources,” types that often operate themselves as constituencies, demanding representation and therefore, in this tertiary moment of coalition politics, limiting the very generalizability of the resources they donate.

Finally, a coalition’s success or failure cannot be evaluated by reference to prior specific and fixed goals, since it is of the essence of the representational coalition that its goals, and especially the values that inform their choice, are always in the process of formation. Rather, an evaluation consistent with the coalition form must emphasize historical integrity and persistence of the concrete coalition *independent of any particular instrumental accomplishment*. Unlike “identity politics,” in which the test of what has been called “new social movement” is its consistency with individual *member* identification at any given time, the test of the coalition is *the durability of its identity as a coalition even beyond its own ostensibly originating project*. This is why I focus on the “development” of the Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport rather than on its specific impact and instances of “goal attainment” or “payoff.”

In regard to the specific research at hand, the Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport is not conceived as a group of individuals, but as a *group of groups*, and more generally as an *ensemble mediated by interactions among agents and by a politics of representation* (which characterizes all noncontractual instances of agency). Each member has an active or virtual connection to a constituency

which constitutes the implicit principal to which the agent refers as the source of his or her authority within the coalition. Just as the member's participation in the coalition is mediated by his or her ostensible constituency, each member *as agent* can be said to mediate the relationship between a given constituency and the coalition as such in a way that resembles the mediation by elected officers of the relationship between popular associations and official organization. The mediation in the case of a coalition, however, takes the form of a particular practice in which *value and instrumental rationalities are irreducibly intertwined in a continual reflexivity, or process of self-definition and redefinition.*

A question may still be raised about whether constituencies operate as authentic principals in a relation that constitutes the subjectivity/membership of agents/representatives, or can be more effectively accounted for as externalities qualifying but not defining the actions and individuality of coalition members. My answer is two-fold. On one hand, the conceptual analysis thus far suggests that the former more than the latter allows the researcher to explore the dynamic aspects of coalition life and the otherwise hidden politics of decision; it places the research in the context of deeper and, therefore, more expansive theoretical considerations. On the other hand, it seems more fruitful to use the model of representational coalition since the premises of the rationalistic alternative are not consistent with even a minimalist notion of sociation. The former allows for a description of conditions that yield an analysis of tensions that cannot otherwise be derived, and it is these that must be made explicit and accountable in any study of popular movements and human interaction which aims at elucidating processes of social change. To conceive of a coalition, not as a *decision-making organization* but as an *association that makes decisions*, allows one to explore the ways in which decision-making and goal-setting are integrated as mutually-constituting operations within the modalities of *interest* and *representation*. For an

individual agent, this means that coalition work requires not merely “prioritizing” values in advance, but acting in such a way that the instrumental and the representational aspects of work are *mutually referential*, not a matter of coordination so much as a matter of sustaining a process independently of measurable outcome, payoff, product, or specific external effect.

This process, rather than “red tape,” is the singular source of “pathos” in coalition work. It is what makes the activities of agents intelligible as instances of agency. In a sense, it is the imperative of *indecision* rather than of *decision* which constitutes the rationality of the agent *qua* agent. But, as we shall see, this imperative generates many of the dilemmas on which coalition development is predicated: trust versus distrust, secrecy versus disclosure, responsiveness versus indifference or “neutrality,” and spontaneity versus accountability.

From the perspective of agents, the coalition appears at any moment of its work as competing rationalities whose values are irreducible and equally imperative. This is why “impatience” is the fundamental experience which interactants always address, directly or indirectly, a tension that explains the otherwise curious tendency of coalition members to resist the requirements of their own form of association.

Nevertheless, once formed, a coalition maintains itself through precisely that type of internal interaction which constantly threatens, by its own tendencies toward insularity, the equally necessary function of representation. In fact, it is necessary for coalitions to present themselves as the sort of instrumental, problem-solving arrangement that they cannot be, even though such presentations are themselves, in the long run, inconsistent with the imperatives of representation. The ideal definiteness of *goal-attainment* is not consistent with the constant “external” demand for accountability in terms of *value*. It follows that though analysis must begin with the artificially articulated task, it must

immediately move to the relationship between the independent solidarity of the collectivity of agents and the need to justify every manifestation of task by reference to the obligations of representation implicit in agency.

A representational coalition defines and redefines its purposes constantly, and each individual agent is oriented to the process of redefinition as much as to the rationality of attaining a given goal. The focus of analysis is, then, on the process rather than on the results or the conditions of negotiation taken apart from process. This study focuses on the relationship between value and instrumental rationality, specifically on what an association of agents looks like within a context in which the determination of value is a constant and irreducibly troubling factor, in the light of which the accomplishment of specific tasks is epiphenomenal, incidental, and by no means a defining characteristic of the association as such. The success of a coalition is then, measured by the ability of its members to continue to operate together as agents, sociologically by the persistence of the coalition form through the various transformations that define and redefine its activity.

The Urban Coalition For The Greater Bridgeport Area, the subject of this research, is not the sort of association typically taken as exemplifying joint undertakings. However, it is an example that I believe is typical of social action. Parenthetically, it provides, in my view, an adequate paradigm for studying much that is listed under the rubric "new social movements"¹⁴ as well as what are usually thought to be forms of life which constitute the normal activity of collectivities in general. The term "urban coalition" was coined during the 1960s to refer to a specific kind of officially sponsored, reform-oriented association of

¹⁴ Mouffe and Laclau, 1984.

members purporting to be agents (representatives) or otherwise subject to that claim.

Such associations were established around the country in what appeared to some investigators,¹⁵ to be an attempt to deflect the energies of otherwise militant social movements, particularly in the area of "civil rights." In virtually all instances, these coalitions were made up of part-time volunteers, and elites drawn from various institutions, interest groups, and social categories. In almost all cases, the members were seen by one another both as actors in their own right and as representatives of constituencies. Their primary function, indicated consistently in statements of program, was to provide some degree of mediation of the relationship between popular movements and government. As such, they focused more on "social problems" tied to discrimination than on what C. Wright Mills used to refer to as "structural" aspects of society.¹⁶

My research on The Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport provides *prima facie* evidence for the more general validity of the model of representational coalition. It is intended also to explore some problematic aspects of "movement organizations" that have been recalcitrant to the use of the rational choice theories of "resource mobilization" that still dominate the field of political sociology. Indeed, the need to mobilize resources that are themselves always being defined rather than definite at the outset, reinforces attention to questions of "substantive rationalization," the role of values in decision-making, and the problematic of representation. Thus, the decision-making process in coalitions is significantly different from other types of association in that the activities of

15 Piven, F. Frances and Richard A. Cloward, *Regulating the Poor*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1971).

16 Mills, C., *White Collar*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951).

constituencies are, beyond mere consultation, implicit in the process of joint decision, the activities of decision-makers being simultaneously collectively instrumental and individually representational. This suggests that the *politics of time* and the *time of politics* are different from what the rationalistic idealization of joint action might lead one to expect. Two concepts, "project" and "resource," provide a basis for theorizing this palindromic relationship.

Despite the fact that a coalition is initially defined by a project, its duration is determined neither by a definite span nor by a definite ratio of resources to reasonable period of use, nor by any other clear criterion of failure or success. Indeed, although a schedule may be determined in principle at the outset, the relationship of value determination to instrumentality insures constant revision. This, in turn, makes it difficult to translate generalized resources, such as money, skill, and energy, into the particularized resources required for any goal-related activity that is subject to accountability. This has two immediate consequences. *First*, whatever a coalition does, its operation may and likely will be challenged as to the adequacy of its definition of purpose and of its deployment of resources. *Second*, external constituencies, which may or may not be fully composed as such, will have difficulty in recognizing the legitimacy of their putative agents' advocacy of priority for a given coalition project in allocating what, to those constituencies, can only appear as *scarce* resources. These ambiguities no doubt play an important role in the duration of the coalition's operational life since, apart from other factors, they exacerbate significantly the problem of acquiring the kind of resources necessary for its operation.

If the duration of a coalition depends on the maintenance of its form as such, on activity that reiterates and concentrates that form, which is to say processes of negotiation regardless of content, then it is also clear that, relative to its constituencies whose organizational lives do not necessarily refer to

intergroup negotiation; there must be at least a semblance of content and an intimation of success. This is why public relations, formal self-presentations, and constant revisions of coalition history, play so important a part in sustaining a coalition, apart from other material restrictions on resource acquisition and mobilization.

It is clear that the two sets of relations that define a representational coalition are in constant tension with one another, and that reference to this tension is in all respects a feature of the analysis of coalition work, in particular the interaction of agents and the transformation of the coalition from a collegial form to something hierarchical and power-driven. It follows that the coalition is an inherently unstable form, that its legitimations continually shift between the charismatic and the instrumental and from an emphasis on values to one on efficiency with little intermediation.

These relations make of the coalition a polity in which pressures for autonomy, for increasingly exclusive interaction among agents, compete with pressures to account to constituencies. The latter are reflected in coalition work as reluctance, indifference, and hidden agenda. In other words they are barriers to communication and to negotiation. This is why trust is difficult to maintain throughout the course of a coalition-based project, and why the interaction process of coalition work cannot be understood as well by reference to stages as by reference to interactions among the different and competing modes that are usually thought of as stages (e.g., socio-emotional, task-oriented, etc.).

Though the politics that emerge in such a setting may appear to be conventional, e.g., over power, words, priorities, resources, etc., that is an illusion of the tendency to interpret the surface phenomena of social action according to the model of rational choice. For a coalition, assertions of power (or claims of leadership) are typically accompanied by the retreat of participants to an

exclusive emphasis on representation, therefore, on their constituencies, a sense of failure, or a tendency to redefine the terms of agency by appealing to the greater politics of the settings in which their constituencies take form and operate. Thus, the emergence of any form of leadership that operates hierarchically and thereby raises the issue of power, must be seen as either a change of associational form or a decisive constraint on representation that can only increase the tension inherent in any group composed of agents, that is any representational coalition.

Under these circumstances, the identifiability of a coalition over the long run will depend on, in addition to factors already discussed, the capacity of any emergent leader to present his or her position as one of authority rather than power, therefore, to present that position as a reflection on the requirements of a task or project. To the extent to which such an assertion of leadership succeeds in reorganizing the functional imperatives of coalition, the coalition will *appear* to have maintained its form despite its radical transformation. Since this type of leadership is inconsistent with the coalition form as such, it emerges as only a momentary solution to the standing crisis of any representational coalition. However, the politics that accompanies the determination of leadership, regardless of success, can only be expected to intensify the tension between the two imperatives of agency, representation and coalition work. While these considerations will govern my analysis of the operations of the Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport, it is possible to identify several requisites of coalition continuity general enough to provide an initial point of orientation, and a justification of the historical chapters that follow.

The first requisite is the relatively unproblematic availability of resources over time, independent of the apparent success or failure of goal attainment. Because of their origin as part of *the work of setting values*, resources are not

strictly on the order of ideal typical system-relevant generalized resources.¹⁷ They are constitutively tied to external factors that both restrict their general availability within the operating coalition and, for all practical purposes, create uncertainty about *any* possible use or deployment. Thus, if one were to analyze a coalition as a social system, there would be no relatively closed sub-system devoted to what Parsons calls “adaptation” though there would be relatively unintegrated mechanisms oriented to the possibility of such a subsystem. In other words, relative to resources, the capacity of the system to remain adaptive, a representational coalition does not and can not operate as a social system in the rigorous sense of the term. It lacks, therefore, the capacity to deal with disequilibrium or “strain,” from the standpoint of the functional imperative to establish the possibility of mobilizing resources for the pursuit of goals consistent with general values.¹⁸

Second, a coalition must, to endure, be able to mobilize and make efficient use of generalized resources in pursuit of specific goals. Since the definition of a goal is constantly vulnerable to externally-based considerations of value, the greater the effectiveness of mobilizing resources for the accomplishment of a specific task, the more attention must be paid to the evaluational requirements of legitimacy. This, in turn, and contrary to what is expected of social systems, undermines the further procurement of resources from the external universe of constituencies, represented in coalition work by putative agents.

Third, tolerance and equanimity must be maintained among groups represented in a coalition, regardless of the pressures they otherwise exert on their representatives, and regardless of the diversity of interest that constitutes

¹⁷ Parsons, Talcott, *Essays in Sociological Theory*, (Glencoe Illinois: Free Press, 1954).

¹⁸ Smelser, J. Niel, *Theory of Collective Behavior*, New York: Free Press, 1962).

their own settings. The problem is that there is no mechanism available to an operating coalition for managing intergroup tensions and controlling the causes of tension aside from the coalition itself. Thus, the tensions *implicit* in the representational coalition are *explicit* in the space occupied by constituencies. This explicitness, and the form of politics to which it corresponds,¹⁹ makes constituency demands more intransigent than those arising from coalition work itself, and adds another political imperative to that of maintaining the quality of representation as such. The stronger the identity, the organizational quality, and the power of a constituency, the less likely relations with other constituencies can be mediated by agents working in coalitions. That is, a coalition operates most effectively in a context of *inexplicit*, covert politics, something rare at best.

An interesting aspect of the relationship between constituency politics and the resource problem posed to coalitions, is that when resources are actually deployed by a coalition toward some end, the increased specification of task (and, therefore, an increased reliance on numerical measures of success and failure) contributes to a special process of adaptation consisting of responsiveness to the particular rather than the general aspects of the external situation. Consequently, deployment presupposes an ability to remain concretely focused on the task as originally defined, and therefore to redefine the deployed resources as the exclusive property of the constituencies themselves, as evidence of their own identity, organizational quality, or power.

When the representational quality of agents is compromised or otherwise fails, there is a crisis of solidarity, or trust. Then, a coalition will either disintegrate or become a markedly different type of collectivity. This outcome

¹⁹ Brown, Michael, and Amy, Goldin, *Collective Behavior*, (Pacific, Palisades: Goodyear Publishing, 1973).

can be avoided only if leadership emerges, with all that it entails, that minimizes the likelihood that coalition work toward goals will become inconsistent with the work of establishing and transforming values. This type of leadership can operate at best implicitly and flexibly since the claims of members to represent authentic constituencies are both difficult to assess and subject to politics outside of the coalition itself. Then and only then is it functional to the process of negotiation in which participants are at least themselves as much part of agenda as operatives within the organization of coalition work.

We have already discussed the problems that accompany the assertion of leadership and its variations. In regard to my research, members of The Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport must be seen as having brought with them externally determined ideas, interests, obligations, and senses of identity which may not be consistent with each other's terms of reference and the internal imperatives of coalition work²⁰. At the same time, coalition work must be seen as *simultaneously* task-oriented and "externally" oriented. The first implies increasing interdependence, compromising representation; the second implies an increasing subjection of the coalition parties to the "external" politics of representation, compromising interdependence. This tension is, as will become clear, particularly evident in the development of The Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport.

As I will try to show, the Bridgeport coalition was characterized both by a noticeable degree of uncertainty in representation and by a special need for a type of publicity that could only compromise the interdependence of its members, that is, coalition work. Due to this, my analysis focuses more on changes of orientation within the coalition than on the instrumental rationality of

²⁰ Goffman, Erving, *Strategic Interactions*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1969).

decisions. It focuses, in other words, on changes of organizational form rather than on the outcomes of specific projects, although the latter will occasionally be discussed as well.

A representational coalition always constructs new goals that replace old ones, not merely in regard to success or failure but in regard to the value-rationality aspect of representation for which any goal may be an occasion for substantiating values. However, something is lost when new goals are constructed. A degree of ambivalence is inevitably created that easily transforms coalition work into an internal *politics of definition and reevaluation* around such issues as how consistent a specific goal is with the "purpose" of the coalition, and whether or not the choice of a new goal implies a failure to have attained the old.

In a sense, a coalition reflects, "organizationally," *a contradiction between the tendency to form a system of action and the tendency to express the dynamics of the coalition's context*. This, as suggested above, is particularly poignant in the areas of resource acquisition and mobilization. The commitment of coalition members to their constituencies must always be explicated and reiterated, as a condition of representation and therefore of legitimacy. This bears on the relationship between coalition-based authority which is derived from the collegial character of coalition work seen as a process of negotiation, and power which is a result of coalition work under the externally imposed conditions that operate as imperatives of representation through extra-coalitional relations among constituencies considered as interest groups.

Integration of members into a coalition is itself attained through processes of negotiation in which collegiality develops as the preferred form of project-related sociation. Since the process of negotiation is always unsteady, and mediated, collegiality itself is never sufficiently reliable to depoliticize the formation of tasks and the continuity of the coalition's operation in general. This

implies that the timing of activity, e.g., *scheduling*, will be unreliable and therefore itself a source of tension. That is, the *specific timing* of the integration of effort is always “compromised” by the *ineffable time* of representation.²¹

The goals that a coalition puts forth are presumably sustained through coalition work. Their accomplishment, however, is constantly delayed because of the mutually interfering imperatives of *relations within the coalition* and *relations between the coalition's participants (agents) and their constituencies*. Nevertheless, the capacity of the coalition to operate continuously depends on some degree of clarity and reliability in its most troublesome process, that of boundary maintenance, which we have seen is both a continuing problem and one impossible to solve without a transformation of organizational form inconsistent with the initiating conditions of the coalition. Representation requires a permeability of boundaries inconsistent with (1) the efficiency of coalition work according to instrumental standards, (2) the need to acquire resources, and (3) any unequivocal definition of goals. The tension introduced by each of these contradictions with the requirements of representation occupies a considerable portion of my research.

Collegiality among parties to a coalition, agents, is a product of its internal processes. If we hold constant and in abeyance the external imperatives of representation, the success of a collegial association of agents depends, as indicated above, on power (or any insidious differentiation) not being a factor in interactions among agents.²² As long as members of a coalition maintain the basic functions of negotiation and boundary maintenance, power will not

²¹ Heirich, Max, *The Spiral of Conflict*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1971.

²² Weber, Max, *Economy and Society*, Berkeley, California: University of California press 1978,) vol.,I, p. 272.

become an overriding issue. Yet, the peculiar politics of coalition work, generated by the relationship between work and representation, inevitably creates suspicion, a sense of secret, unstated agenda, and, therefore, constant apprehensiveness about the possible intrusion of power.²³

Where there is a conflict of interests of the status groups [constituencies], it may work out to the advantage of a chief through negotiations and struggle with the various groups. For organizations which are composed of delegated representatives of conflicting interests, whether their basis be ideal causes, in power, or in economic advantages, may at least in external form be collegial bodies. What goes on within the body is then supposedly a process of adjustment of these conflicts of interests by compromise,²⁴ something which we have seen as being relative to its bearing on coalition work.

Intrusive power may be less a problem when a coalition moves from a collegial to a less externally responsive form of association. Thus, it is reasonable to hypothesize that this tendency toward the apprehension of power, and related pressures to change, will be expressed in various ways throughout the life of any coalition. Specifically, it is likely that functions (e.g., legitimation, adaptation, decision) will be increasingly defined, segregated, and stratified, and that the issue of power will become increasingly poignant.

For example, when negotiation reverts to a standardizing process (e.g., of rationalized decision and implementation), questions of legitimacy (representation) may overwhelm the capacity of "rational" authority to act authoritatively. The problem is not one of restoring equilibrium within the coalition, but one of sustaining the base of representation by reconciling

²³ Clasters, 197 , (on the relationship between sociation and power)

²⁴ Weber, 1978, Vol. 1, p. 275.

operational agenda with external determinations of value. The latter entails egalitarianism among agents—difficult to maintain as a coalition becomes increasingly rationalized. It is a problem in any case, because of mutually ascribed differences of interest inevitable among agents of otherwise inaccessible but increasingly identifiable constituencies. The situation becomes even more complex when agents have formal authority in their constituent bodies, as when a politician or a bank officer participates in coalition work.²⁵

Since coalition members presumably represent outside constituencies, mutual suspicion within the coalition is unavoidable, all the more so when their representation overlaps positional differences among them. This is true no matter how much experience members have in working together. Members cannot avoid mutual suspicion, nor can it be corrected, because they know that each brings value considerations based on the unknowable agenda of inaccessible constituencies. It is, of course, exacerbated by the impossibility of demonstrating the representational claims of agency within the operational settings of coalitions, that is when claims to represent become, indeed, “putative.”

The upshot of these unavoidable “defects” of agency is that if at any point representatives make decisions according to the strictly internal imperatives of coalition work, their coalition is subject to transformation by that fact into a different form of association almost certain to be vulnerable to a politics of power. The general point is that as long as the coalition has not been transformed, and as long as it attempts to function as a coalition, i.e. through agents or what are claimed to be instances of agency, there will be tension between loyalty to constituencies and loyalty to the collegial order of negotiation. Most of the interesting points of the analysis to follow, flow from this discussion

²⁵ Weber, 1978, Vol. 1, p. 271.

of contradictory imperatives, and it is, at least, some of these that I will try to make explicit.

CHAPTER THREE:

SOCIOECONOMIC HISTORY OF BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT

Introduction

The Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport operated within a context formed by the historical development of the city and the greater political economy of which Bridgeport was part.

Bridgeport's history seeps through the pungent, musty smell of the yellowing, wrinkled texts in the Henry A. Bishop Room of the Bridgeport Public Library. The Bishop Room houses books, maps, newspaper clippings, and documents having to do with local history. The particular story of The Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport is found in the archive adjacent to the Bishop Room. There, letters, notes, reports, minutes of meetings, and related materials are stored in boxes, neither indexed nor otherwise catalogued.

This vast amount of local historical material is the main source of information about the background of a multi-ethnic community that was settled by Europeans in the eighteenth century. Soon after, Negro and Mulatto slaves were imported in great numbers, providing a lower base of cheaper labor that would, through transformations associated with industrialization and the end of slavery, remain a structural feature of Bridgeport's economy throughout its history. My purpose in this chapter is to trace the development of the multi-ethnic base of what was to become one of the earliest industrial cities in the

United States, and to describe the impact of that development on the polity and society of modern Bridgeport.

In 1774, the Negro population of Connecticut was recorded as 5,101, including Fairfield county's 315 Negro slaves.¹ The Connecticut Legislation passed its first act limiting slave trade in 1784. This act stated that "no Negro or Mullato born in Connecticut after March 1st of 1785 be held a slave after reaching the age of twenty-five".² In 1797, the Assembly lowered the age to twenty-one. In 1785, a special act of the Connecticut Assembly held importers of slaves liable for a fine of three hundred dollars for purchasing slaves, and ship owners were held liable for a fine of one thousand dollars for transporting slaves.³

Nevertheless, trade in slaves continued despite efforts to enforce these and other anti-slave laws. Indeed the trade was reinforced institutionally, even as it was being limited by legislature action. That is, the indirect activities which supported the trade were not subject to law, and were therefore able to provide support for what the law prohibited. For example, *The American Telegraph and Fairfield County Gazette* regularly published advertisements of the following sort: "For sale a healthy Negro girl, fourteen years of age, inquire of printer".⁴ The newspaper also ran stories in defense of slavery, including anecdotes testifying to the humane treatment of slaves by slave owners. Thus, Aaron Hawley, a large land owner with interests in the Boston and India Coal-Trading Company, was said to have freed one of his slaves in recognition of his services at Valley Forge

¹ Van Dusen, E. Albert, *Connecticut*, (New York: Random House, 1961), p.106.

² *Acts and Laws*, 1784, p. 235; S.R., pp323-324; IX, 38-39.

³ "Did Slavery Exist in Fairfield County Before The South?" *Bridgeport Sunday Post*, May 15, 1935, p.4.

⁴ "A Negro Girl For Sale," March 3, *The American Telegraph and Fairfield County Gazette*, 1818, p. 2.

with General Washington.⁵ Similarly, Samuel Gould, a merchant from Fairfield, was said to have written a will in which he left his “Negro boy named Lurly” to his wife, with a request that Lurly be freed upon her death and provided with a parcel of land.⁶

What the law proscribed continued to find support from within the community of the middle class in Fairfield. In fact, until 1821, and despite the apparent intent of its legislature, Connecticut had the largest number of Negro slaves among the New England colonies. This situation changed as industry began to develop and a pool of white workers became available for employment in the developing industries of the state. By the time that masters began to free their slaves in large numbers, black people had already become a “surplus” population vis-a-vis the new extra-local conditions of local economic development. They were increasingly subject to segregation and increasingly characterized in invidious racialist terms—as inferior and possibly dangerous—by virtue of innate traits tied to color and fixed by “blood.”

A separate working class consisting of white immigrants, including some whose skills were unsuitable for the new discipline of industry, was forming at that time in the big cities of Connecticut, as elsewhere.⁷ A dual labor pool, not yet a market in labor, was beginning to take shape composed, on the one hand, of “free” white laborers and, on the other hand, of an increasingly impoverished black proletariat that would eventually be employed primarily to undercut gains by white workers’ organizations or otherwise to cheapen the cost of labor. While

⁵ Dannenberg, Elsie, Nicholas, *The Story Of Bridgeport 1836-1936*, (Bridgeport, Connecticut: Colonial Press, 1937), p.36.

⁶ Gould, Samuel, *Will*, November 21, 1769, p.2.

⁷ Taylor, J. Robert, *Colonial Connecticut*, (Millwood, New York: U.S. Devision of Krons-Thompson Organization Limited, 1979), p. 158.

some skilled black workers were part of the first pool, their numbers were few and inconsequential.

Segregation , racist ideology, and the bifurcation of the labor pool formed the background of what was to become institutionalized discrimination, resistant to changes in the law and attempts at social reform up to and through the 1960s. Nevertheless, progressive citizen organizations were evident throughout the middle of the twentieth century in Bridgeport.

Shortly after the end of World War II, in 1946, the State of Connecticut offered a workshop in New Britain, conducted by Kurt Lewin. Its topic was "Social Control and Intergroup Relations".⁸ The workshop, was attended by several individuals who had been active in various reform-minded organizations in Bridgeport. It was, as a whole, racially and ethnically diverse.⁹ Those who represented Bridgeport were relatively few but experienced in civic work and, from their own accounts, committed to a human relations approach to "intergroup tensions." While I was unable to document the precise connection between the workshop and the formation of the urban coalition in 1968, it seems reasonably clear that there was an affinity between the two approaches. Both attempted to operate nonpolitically, through existing institutions, and on the basis of good will and a theory of social change that emphasized attitudes and communication rather than power, structure, and interests. In addition, there is some evidence of more concrete connections between some who participated in the 1946 workshop and some who were involved in establishing the Bridgeport

⁸ State of Connecticut, *Workshop, "Social Control and Intergroup Relations,"* (New Britain, Connecticut, summer, 1946).

⁹ Note: Some of Bridgeport participants in the workshop were A. Knepler, p. Hunter, and J. Tisdale.

Urban Coalition in 1968.¹⁰ In order to understand the conditions under which the interest in reform followed so consistent a pattern over time, and to understand the pattern itself, it is necessary briefly to review some aspects of the history of Bridgeport.

Unlike other cities in the Northeast, Bridgeport developed from the beginning as an industrial center. This explains the precipitous waves of immigration that characterized the demography of the city throughout its history. Freed black slaves who came North competed with the indigenous population and the growing ranks of white immigrants over jobs in Bridgeport's factories. Industry needed this flexible labor force of unskilled and semi-skilled workers, but its demographic characteristics, including sheer numbers, guaranteed that there would be social costs beyond what the private sector could or would provide. Given the relative absence of artisanal and agricultural employment opportunities throughout the history of Bridgeport, these costs increased at an accelerating rate relative to the growth of industry and the expansion of industrial firms. This inevitably put pressure on the state to provide resources which it either could not finance according to need or could only deliver selectively, creating for some sectors of the population an economy of scarcity and for others opportunities that needed constant defense. What distinguishes Bridgeport from other cases of urban industrial development was the suddenness of the onset of its industrialization and the character of its class economy.

¹⁰ Interviews with Aib Knepler, Patric Hunter, and James Tisdale about the workshop in New Britain, in 1946. They were also among the founders of the Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport.

Bridgeport's Early Years

In 1638, Connecticut secured, by treaty with the Indians,¹¹ a section overlapping Stratford and Fairfield called "Pequonnock". On October 28, 1800, Pequonnock was incorporated as the Borough of Bridgeport.¹² Although it was established as a borough and intended through that status to exercise a degree of self-management, the territory was governed under the municipal authorities of Fairfield and Stratford.¹³ Immediately following Bridgeport's incorporation, a post office was established linking New York and Boston. The borough's first bank opened its doors in 1806, reflecting the general process of "modernization" tied to commerce.¹⁴ The first census of Bridgeport, taken separately from Fairfield and Stratford occurred in 1810. At that time the borough had "94 heads of families, with the total population including a Negro slave".¹⁵ 1815 marked the beginning of expansion of manufacturing, with the establishment of firms such as Saddleboxes, The Pewter Company, the Coal and Wood Yard, and shops specializing in producing patent leather goods, carriages, and furniture.¹⁶ These

¹¹ Note: It is not mentioned what tribe of Indians the treaty was done with.

¹² Mills, S., Lewis, *The Story Of Bridgeport*, (New York: The Free Press 1932), p. 412

¹³ Palmdquist, David W., *Bridgeport a Pictorial History*, (Virginia: The Donning Company, 1981), p. 9.

¹⁴ Donnenberg, 1937, p. 99

¹⁵ Orcutt, Samuel, Rev. *A History Of The Old Town Of Stratford And The City Of Bridgeport Connecticut*. (New Haven, Connecticut: Taylor Press 1886), p. 694.

Notes:

1. It does not mention if the Negro slave is a head of family or a single person.
2. Its the first time that Negroes are included in count of population in the region.
3. The registration of Blacks is not consistent, and does not indicate if the negroes counted are slaves or emancipated.

¹⁶ Waldo George Curtis, *The Standard's History of Bridgeport*, (Bridgeport, Connecticut: The Standard Association Press, 1917), p. 13.

Note: Waldo, like other writers of Bridgeport's history, does not write about the Negroes or blacks and the development of their institutions in the city.

formed the strength of Bridgeport's commercial life. In addition, the new borough had three printing offices, two weekly newspapers, one pottery shop, two flour mills, seventy-three stores, and two churches serving the white population.¹⁷

In 1818, a survey of the borough's population by the Methodist church showed the presence of "5,532 white and 114 negro communicants."¹⁸ Three years later, in 1821, Bridgeport was incorporated as a town. At that time, according to the Reverend Mr. Philo from Shelton, "The number of free blacks is about twenty".¹⁹ The survey does not indicate the ratio of free blacks to slaves. In fact, Reverend Philo's report appears to be the first reference in the history of Bridgeport to "free Blacks."

By Act of the General Assembly, in May, 1836, Bridgeport became a city under the name of "The City of Bridgeport,"²⁰ and rapidly grew into an ethnically diverse cosmopolitan center, with many languages heard on its streets. This ethnic mix was essentially white. Race was not to become a political factor in Bridgeport until well into the twentieth century, by which time the black

¹⁷ Note: The source does not indicate where the Negroes were worshipping, we know that they did not belong to the white churches.

¹⁸ Purcell, J. Richard, *Connecticut In Transition 1775-1918*, (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan Press, 1963), p. 73.

Dannenberg, 1937, p.142;

Note: The inclusion of Negroes in the statistics indicates the recognition of their becoming an entity in Bridgeport. The records mentioned do not indicate if those were free blacks or Negro slaves.

¹⁹ Palmquist, W. David, *A Pictorial History of Bridgeport*, (Virginia Beach, VA: The Canning Company Publisher, 1981), p. 25.

²⁰ Orcutt, Samuel Rev., *A History of Old Town of Stratford And The City of Bridgeport*, (Fairfield, Connecticut: Published under the Fairfield County Historical Society, 1886), p. 45.

Waldo, 1897, p. 14.

population was confronted with compromises along ethnic lines that could not, institutionally, include those categorized solely by color.

Situated at the mouth of the Pequonnock River, Bridgeport is one of the few enclosed harbors on Long Island Sound. During the early 1800s, it provided safe mooring for sailing vessels threatened by pirates. Located between the ports of New York and Boston, it drew on both economies.²¹ The trade between Boston and New York grew until, by 1840, steam ships were carrying one thousand passengers a day in and out of Bridgeport Harbor. The harbor traffic attracted entrepreneurs, among whom were craftsmen and manufacturers. The latter, major employers, produced valves, lace, brake lining, scissors, and adding machines, as well as heavy equipment such as locomotives, the gasoline version of the Stanley Steamer, and firearms.²² Several turnpikes were constructed, increasing the flow of traffic into and out of the city, and the New York to New Haven railroad was completed in 1848, providing an even more regular pattern of movement for goods and people. Historians regularly list the development of transportation among the major causes of Bridgeport's emergence as a vibrant commercial and industrial center.

By 1850, Bridgeport had 7,269 inhabitants, among whom 291 were colored and 1,493 were foreign-born.²³ Manufacturing had become the base of the city's growing economy, while its commercial life became more and more intertwined with the major centers of commerce and finance in New York and Boston. Singer

²¹ Palmdquist David, 1981, p.72.

²² Matuszeski, Bill, *Gritty Cities*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1942), p. 72.

²³ Department of Interior, Census Office, *The Statistics of the Population of the United States*, 1872, p. 42.

Note: There is no breakdown of the countries of origin for the foreign born, neither is there any indication how many negroes were still slaves and how many free people.

Sewing Machines opened in 1853, employing at the start over 1,400 people.²⁴ By 1865, the Brass Company had 3,250 workers, and by 1867, Remington Arms had 1,800 workers. These companies, as others, eventually expanded beyond Bridgeport, retaining their main offices in the city.²⁵ In 1871, when major improvements were made in Bridgeport harbor,²⁶ space was opened for the establishment of the East End Coal and Oil Company.²⁷ These developments exacerbated the need for industrial labor power, though increased migration prevented a scarcity of labor as such. Manufacturing drew laborers, and the availability of labor drew manufacturing. White immigrants found jobs, training, and opportunities for upward mobility, primarily because of a growing pool of cheap labor. Thus, Negroes were employed temporarily and, as whites became available, were often replaced. In this way, race became a factor in the division of the working class into a dual labor market, with a consequent division of interest between blacks and whites. Segregation ultimately transformed this by the 1940s into a social structure resistant to even the best-intended efforts to reform relations, compromising the work of those, such as Lewin, who had hoped to ease tensions by opening channels of communication.

Many who came to Connecticut during the 19th century were English people from The Massachusetts Bay area. They were readily accepted by the existing Anglo-American population and were integrated quickly into the

²⁴ Dannenberg, 1937, p.131

²⁵ Dannenberg, 1937, p. 125-127

²⁶ Rev. Orcutt Samuel, 1886, p.37

²⁷ For reference of the Industrial development of Bridgeport, Connecticut, consult Dannenberg, 1937; Waldo, 1917; Mills, 1932; O'Dell 1939.

Note: Neither one of the books refers to the Negroes in Bridgeport, although they were a growing community in the city.

mainstream of Bridgeport life.²⁸ Other immigrants came from various countries: e.g., Italy, Hungary, Poland, Ireland, and Germany.²⁹ The first Italian immigrants were young and unskilled. According to John Crispino, they were met with a "solid wall of prejudice and open hatred. They were given the lowest paying and hardest jobs, and they were often told that was all they were fit for".³⁰ Like many ethnic minorities, they formed organizations, such as burial societies, youth clubs and associations for recreation. These provided at least a semblance of community, and helped to establish the foundation for what would later become a common interest affirmed through local political organizations and labor unions. Like the Italians, Hungarians were also exploited as cheap labor. Their acceptance into the community was even more difficult due to language and to the stereotyping associated with Eastern-European accents.³¹ Church and religion became, for this group, a source of social and political integration, as the Hungarians too came to identify themselves as an ethnicity, and through that as an interest group.³²

²⁸ Taylor, 1979, p.75

²⁹ Waldo, 1917, p. 290

³⁰ Crispino, A. James, *The Assimilation of Ethnic Groups-The Italian Case*, (New-York: Center for Migration Studies, 1964), P 122.

Note: This book is a study of the Italian community in Bridgeport. It was written as a doctoral dissertation by a Bridgeport resident from Italian descent.

In addition to his book I also interviewed him about the Italian community in Bridgeport and its response to his study. The elders were reluctant to share and publicize their opinion on how they were treated by the yankees. The younger people were more open and free in their discussions.

³¹ Ross, John, S. *In Search Of Wording Ave.* Documentary Movie on the Hungarian community in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Produced under a grant with Sacred Heart University, 1980.

³² Bardin Hillel. *The Hungarians in Bridgeport* , (Bridgeport Connecticut:University Of Bridgeport, Department of Sociology, 1959).

These community building institutions provided moral support and material assistance to their increasingly ethnically-solid members, providing a degree of mutual aid otherwise impossible to obtain. But, even more significantly, they formed the bases for internal stratification within the ethnically-defined populations. The construction of boundaries to what Anderson calls "imagined communities," and the positioning of certain images of "nationness" in the growing polity of Bridgeport, added to its ethnic character. Although blacks were counted by the census, they were not welcomed into the institutional context dominated by whites and the established ethnicities. Thus, they were excluded from the polymorphous fabric of politics which would come to determine the material well-being of groups, the social limits of reform in the area of race relations, and racial discrepancies in the quality of life illustrated by Theodor Lancaster's recollection of his parents being prevented from entering certain public places in Bridgeport.³³ There were neither community organizations within the black community nor black churches until the middle of the 19th century.

In 1852, the first black church was built in the inner city of Bridgeport for religious services and recreation. A second was built shortly thereafter. Both churches were established in the center of the black residential area, and became identified by residents as a resource for various community functions. Clarence Williams, a black church member whom I interviewed, said that he had started a small black business bureau within the black church, receiving support for it from the congregation and the preacher.³⁴

³³ Lancaster, Theodore, Interview, 1982. An eighty year old man, born in Bridgeport. He recalled the stories of his parents on the limitations of entrance to public places.

³⁴ Williams, Clarence, Interview by Author, October 27, 1982.

The Barnum Circus was formed in Bridgeport in 1852. In 1870, the first theater, Franklin Hall, was built and the Sagee Opera House opened its doors, providing entertainment.³⁵ These cultural resources were oriented across ethnic but not class and race lines. They were followed by the establishment of infrastructural facilities. Thus, a professional fire department was inaugurated in October of 1872; Bridgeport Hospital was founded in 1884;³⁶ at the same time, the Southern New England Telephone Company was formed and stationed in Bridgeport.³⁷ These facilities completed the long-term systematic development of the city as a relatively autonomous economy, cultural center, and multidimensional polity.

At the close of the 19th century, Bridgeport's industry was prosperous, but its residents were rigorously stratified along class and racial lines. Basic services, including health, transportation, recreation, and entertainment, were available to those who chose and could afford to use them.³⁸ City government had become modernized, and power was distributed according to the relative economic and organizational weight of the various constitutive categories of Bridgeport's population. The economy had, even through the depressions of the 1870s and 1890s, stabilized itself as a site of capital accumulation and the differential exploitation of its divided labor force.

³⁵ Dannenberg, 1937, p. 119

³⁶ Dannenberg, 1937, p. 111

³⁷ Dannenberg, 1937 p. 129

³⁸ Note: I could not discern from the documents if blacks were allowed into the entertainment facilities. Geraldine Johnson recalled, from oral history in her family, that blacks were allowed into the movie houses but, they had to sit in the back. As a child, she remembers, sitting in the corner of the restaurant, but vacating her seat when there was not enough place for whites to sit.

Bridgeport Enters the 20th Century

This was how Bridgeport entered the twentieth century. But it was the onset of World War I that brought the city's affluent and otherwise advantaged groups their most prosperous years. During the War, Bridgeport's factories produced arms and munitions. Indeed, military production came to characterize the city's social and even cultural life. David Palmquist described this situation in its extensiveness: "All of Bridgeport is either making munitions, making parts of machinery to manufacture munitions, or making money feeding, clothing, and amusing the army of laborers that overflow the city."³⁹ Bridgeport's population increased by forty-five per cent during the first twenty months of the war.⁴⁰ The demography of the city was radically transformed from a city of yankees to a city of socialized labor, white immigrants, and blacks whose capacity to work required a range of community support.

Rapid growth of manufacturing had always been an important factor in the unprecedented growth of Bridgeport's diversified population,⁴¹ but this period put a particular strain on municipal and community resources. As a result, the Bridgeport Housing Company was formed in 1916 as a public corporation assisted by the Federal government and supplied with State funds. Its aim was to mitigate housing shortages in the city. Under its authority, one thousand units were constructed in eight different locations.⁴² This was still insufficient as population pressure, and what Durkheim called "moral density", increased. In order to sustain low wages, exploitation was intensified, with employees

³⁹ Plmquist, 1981.

⁴⁰ Proctor, Mary and Bill, Matuszseki, *Gritty Cities*, (Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1978), p.73

⁴¹ Waldo, 1917, p. 290.

⁴² Waldo, 1917, p.74

required to work long shifts. Consequently, there was considerable support among workers for the drive by labor organizations to reduce the work day from twelve to eight hours. More than one-hundred strikes took place during the summer of 1917. These were attributed by the press to foreigners, but there seems little evidence that they were anything less than popular revolts by workers for a reduction of the rate of exploitation.⁴³ Despite their numbers and their discipline, the only gain the strikers were able to achieve was a shorter work day, but no increase in the hourly wage. Similarly, working Conditions did not significantly improve, and an atmosphere of distrust came to pervade labor-management relations. Nevertheless, the strikes reinforced efforts to unionize Bridgeport's growing work force.⁴⁴

These efforts had, above all, to deal with the tremendous diversity of the working population. By 1917, Bridgeport's population included people from at least forty-five nations, and almost two thousand Blacks born in the United States (see table 1). The largest numbers were from nations subsequently subjected to stringent immigration quotas—Hungary, Italy, Poland, Greece, and Slovakia.

⁴³ Grimaldi Lennie, *Only in Bridgeport*, (Windsor: Windsor Publication. 1986), P 41

⁴⁴ Harrison Edward, Interview by Author, February 11, 1985.

Table 1: The Different Nationalities of the Male Population in Bridgeport 1917

Austrians	1,144	Italians	6,452
Americans	453	Irish	1,008
Arabians	25	Japanese	1
Africans	3	Lithuanian.....	401
Albanians	62	Mexicans	6
Australian.....	5	Macedonian	9
Belgians	24	Norwegian	82
Bohemian	73	Polish	1,739
Bulgarian	17	Portuguese	408
Brazilians	3	Persians	1
Canadians.....	409	Russians	5,062
Chinese	110	Rumanians	250
Cubans	16	Swedish	792
Danes	146	Slovaks	1,589
Egyptians.....	2	Serbs	131
English	1,216	Scotch.....	324
EastIndians.....	1	Swiss	40
French	219	Syrians	136
Finns.....	57	Spaniards	460
Germans	384	Turks.....	58
Greeks	1,670	Welsh	10
Hungarians	4,227	WestIndians	3
Hollander	59		

Italians, Russians, and Hungarians were among the organizationally most developed sections of the work force. The fact that organizations had been formed and had created a base of power for elites within these communities provided advantages for those factory workers who, by weight of numbers and organization, were able to occupy positions of supervision.⁴⁵ In his book, *Connecticut Past and Present*, O'Dell comments that Connecticut was established by English people and remained mostly homogeneous for 200 years. But, he pointed out, by the turn of the 20th century no more than 10% of the population

⁴⁵ Note: The Black male population of Bridgeport is not mentioned in this statistics, or in any other statistics of Bridgeport population.

were, in the full sense, "Connecticut Yankees", especially in big cities like Bridgeport and Waterbury.⁴⁶

Companies expanded as the war progressed. Remington Arms, located on the East Side of Bridgeport, employed approximately 1,800 people at the height of the war. The costs of Remington's conversion from the peace-time production of sporting goods to the war-time manufacture of munitions, were relatively small compared to the profits and expanded equity gained by the company between 1914 and 1917. *The New York Times* noted, in January of 1916, that the "Twelve million dollars spent in less than a year, have brought into being what will probably be the greatest small arms and ammunition plant in the world."⁴⁷ Remington's development gave it greater control over its employees and therefore greater control over its costs of production, an added benefit of the sudden subsidized increase in its scale of manufacture. Thus, establishing a housing office for employees, whatever other purpose it might have served, functioned primarily to integrate workers into an ethos of efficient profitability and to undermine whatever possibilities existed for independence among them. This model of development was general throughout the city, creating the pools of wealth and the class divisions which would characterize Bridgeport throughout the rest of the twentieth century.⁴⁸

In 1920, Bridgeport, like other cities, went through a recession. Manufacturing, however, continued to be attracted by the city's location and the

⁴⁶ Shepard, O'Dell, *Connecticut- Past and Present*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1939), p. 291.

⁴⁷ "Twelve Million Dollars to Expend Remington Arms Company," *The New York Times*, January 19, 1916, p. 6.

⁴⁸ Note: Bridgeport Brass Company, located in the heart of the city, turned its manufacturing to war-related material. It enlarged the plant and doubled its working force to 3,250 in 1915.

Dannenberg, 1937, p. 112; Matuszeski, 1978, p. 77.

strength of its industrial base. Wages declined and workers were laid off as companies strove to sustain their levels of profitability. The average hourly wage for unskilled workers, labor-helpers, and handymen had fallen to forty-six cents an hour. The 1920s was the first decade in sixty years that Bridgeport experienced a decline in immigration due to the loss of jobs and new federal restrictions on immigration from the Eastern and Southern European countries.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, during the great depression of 1929, Bridgeport's business community showed great resilience. Although its industries suffered, as did all industrial cities, it maintained its industrial base throughout the 1930s.

However, while approximately five hundred manufacturing concerns and industries employed 19,608 men and 11,408 women in 1936, this "recovery" was unevenly distributed.⁵⁰ Nineteen firms employed five hundred or more workers, approximately one third of the entire manufacturing work force.⁵¹ General Electric, located in the northeastern part of the city, was the largest manufacturer, employing approximately 6,000 workers. G.E. provided a relatively self-contained community with broad-based services available to its employees, including medical care, a restaurant capable of seating one thousand people, an athletic field, and life insurance. As a quasi-company community, it offered opportunities for its workers to save and invest, a pension system, and a vague, restricted program of profit sharing. Further, it had its own housing and real estate offices to help those who wished to move from the central city to the outer circles or the suburbs. No doubt, these services attracted workers, and

⁴⁹ Grimaldi, 1986, p. 41.

⁵⁰ Bridgeport Library Staff, *Selected Chapters of The History Of Bridgeport*, Bridgeport, Connecticut: Bridgeport Public Library Press, 1953, p.84. In this study, as in many others, there is no mention of blacks.

⁵¹ Danenberg, 1937, p. 147.

undermined their capacity to act in regard to a common interest. White immigrants were encouraged to join training programs while blacks were restricted to unskilled or semi-skilled positions.⁵² This program of community construction must be understood in relation to a general industries-wide attempt to prevent unionization or to undermine unions, and was fairly successful where industrial unionism had failed. It also contributed toward combining racism, segregation, and the dual labor market into complex structures of interest with strong connections to other socially-regulative institutions themselves tied to the racial division of labor and society.

A few other companies followed the G.E. pattern in Bridgeport. For example, Singer employed about fourteen hundred men and women in the 1930s. The plant in Bridgeport housed the company's main offices and was its main site for manufacturing sewing machines. Like G.E., Singer offered housing services to its workers, subsidized an employees' cafeteria, and provided a health care facility. Similarly, the Bullard Company, a tool manufacturer, employing thirteen hundred people and located in Black Rock, on the west side of the city, provided transportation to and from work for its 1,300 workers. Still another company, Bryant Electric, which manufactured wiring devices, supplied horse-drawn trolleys for those of its 1,200 workers who lived far from the factories in the new neighborhoods. While other companies did not follow this model,⁵³ the dependency of the Bridgeport economy on a relatively few large employers gave this semi-paternalistic treatment of workers a weight comparable to that of

⁵² Note: I could not find a source that indicated to whom those services were available.

⁵³ Waldo, 1917, p. 40.

Underwood, Elliott, Fisher, for example, a billing and accounting machines manufacturer, located in the heart of Bridgeport, employed 1,112 people. The company did not provide any services to its workers.

company domination in the steel towns in Pennsylvania.⁵⁴ Paradoxically, then, this form of sponsored community, designed to give order to populations of workers in the interest of employers contributed to the racial division on which Bridgeport's fate, like that of so many other American cities, would ultimately depend.

Recovery from the Great Depression was evident by the late 1930s in the expansion of other firms as well. For example, Warner Brothers, the first company in America to manufacture Corsets, had grown to employ 1,000 workers by 1936. Stanley Works Company, famous for its marketing of the "Magic Eye" remote control device for doors,⁵⁵ employed over 1,000 workers at the end of the 1930s. The Total labor force of Bridgeport in the midst of the recovery, 1936, consisted of 15% skilled, 53% semi-skilled, and 32% non-skilled workers.⁵⁶ Thus, the city remained hospitable to industry during the decade. Yet, the concentration of population in low-paid jobs made it impossible through ordinary taxation to finance the infrastructure of recovery. The resulting decline in services had an inordinate effect on blacks, who by then were 39% of the city's population. Since black people could not move to the suburbs, dwellings were designed to serve the needs of industry by providing cheap rental housing to factory workers.⁵⁷ This had the effect of integrating racial segregation and poverty, creating an altogether different base for community than what was no

⁵⁴ Kornblum, William, *Blue Collar Community*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), p. 92-93.

⁵⁵ Ibid, p.129-138.

⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 148.

⁵⁷ Reagan J. William, *Community Development Action Plan*, (City Of Bridgeport, January, 1971), p.6.

doubt intended,⁵⁸ as well as a foundation for a new, human-rights-oriented politics.

Following the Second World War, Bridgeport experienced another influx of immigrants. This was, for some, a first stop in their new country. Many, however, remained in Bridgeport. These tended to settle in cheap housing, and therefore lived in close proximity to blacks. Rather than change the content of race relations, however, this led, in the context of competition for jobs, to a patchwork of ethnic groups increasingly constituted *against* others, though one still primarily qualified by the racial division. As the migration of blacks to the center of the cities grew in the 1950s, those whites who could afford to moved into the suburbs.⁵⁹ All of this took place unevenly, so that the transition was experienced by both blacks and whites as unending social conflict and not merely as a transition toward homogeneous communities.⁶⁰

The Hispanic population of Bridgeport also grew during the 1950s, as Spanish-speaking groups came to the city in search of jobs. As they did for black workers, companies provided services for Puerto Rican and other Hispanic employees, including transportation and, for some, housing. Their housing was in any case poor; their wages were lower than those of Whites; and assembly line work with its long hours and constant surveillance and control was experienced as oppressive by them. The Hispanic community began to compare its situation with that of blacks and to display a degree of resentment that would eventually become political. Lacking obvious centers of leadership, they had no power or organizational resources to act collectively in their common interest. As a result,

⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 8.

⁵⁹ Benfield, 1968.

⁶⁰ Allport, W. Gordon, *The Nature Of Prejudice*, (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1958).

they relied on city government and private firms for social and economic support. In this way, they tended to become, relative to blacks, conservative, though they were not accepted as equals by the white ethnic groups who increasingly shared their conservatism. Resentment among the Hispanics toward blacks whom they viewed as inferior but with whom they shared neighborhoods, schools, and everyday life,⁶¹ began to assume an ideological dimension, all the more so since the two groups were in direct competition for jobs, wages, and status.⁶²

Bridgeport, like other Northeastern industrial cities, continued to change demographically during the 1950s and into the 1960s. Mass emigration of "well to do" Whites to the suburbs, combined with the continued migration of Hispanics and blacks into the central city, created distinct urban and suburban populations. Blacks and Hispanics were discouraged from attempting to move into the all-white neighborhoods."⁶³ The suburban population continued to commute to work, and to draw income from the central city, leaving the city increasingly unable to support those services necessary for this pattern of use and with a rapidly diminishing tax base.

In 1957, Samuel J. Tedesco was elected Mayor of Bridgeport. He inherited a city with a majority of low income population and in need of physical renovation. City buildings and schools needed repair, as well as residential structures, older churches, and the masonic hall. A program for "city renewal" was initiated to pave the way for a "Brand New Bridgeport." With federal

⁶¹ Cesar Bettalia, Interview by Author, November, 1983 , June, 1986.

⁶² Carrero, Rosa, Interview by Author, April 4,1989.

⁶³ "Blacks discouraged from buying homes," *Bridgeport Post*, April 6, 1958, p.3.

funding, new buildings were constructed first in the downtown area.⁶⁴ Plans were made to renovate other parts of the city, including some residential neighborhoods.⁶⁵ But Federal funds were withdrawn in 1959, as part of general withdrawal of the Federal Government from social programs, effectively leaving the socially most significant renovations undone.

By the 1960s, most of the black population lived within the boundaries of the downtown area. In that year Bridgeport had 46,588 dwellings. 15,640 were occupied by owners, of whom only 332 were non-white. 30,360 dwellings were occupied by renters of which 1,250 were inhabited by non-whites.⁶⁶ White workers, who were paid higher wages, continued to move to the outer circles of Bridgeport and its suburbs.⁶⁷ Discrepancies in income between the suburban population and central city residents were increasingly evident across strata; professionals, including educators and social service workers, were paid substantially lower than those working in the suburbs.⁶⁸ This cross-strata income differential overlaid the racial distinction to such a degree that class politics inevitably assumed a social dimension that defied all official efforts at amelioration.

Mayor Hugh A. Curran was elected in 1965, with a mandate to improve intergroup relations and to promote the cultural facilities necessary for what

⁶⁴ Note: In the archive of Bridgeport City Hall, there are few boxes with unindexed meeting minutes, notes, correspondence and reports of the city renewal project in Bridgeport.

⁶⁵ Palmquist, David, *Pictorial History of Bridgeport (revised edition)*, (Norfolk, VA: Danning Press, 1983), p. 62.

⁶⁶ United States Census of Population, 1950, *Census Tract Statistics Bridgeport Connecticut*, United States Government Printing Office, 1952, Volume III, chapter 7, p. 16.

⁶⁷ Waldinger, Roger, "Changing Ladders and Musical Chairs: Ethnicity And Opportunity In Post-Industrial New York", *Politics and Society*, 15:4 (1986-87).

⁶⁸ Johnson, Geraldine, Interview by Author, April 7, 1987.

Talcott Parsons referred to as the systematic “integration” of functions. Curran, a Democrat, initially found support from within the black community. However, as it became clear that material conditions could not be improved under the circumstances, resentment among blacks increased and found the beginnings of a political voice.

To be sure, some black businessmen advised patience, and were able to point to facts that they believed justified it. For example, in 1967, The Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency found that 795, or 74%, of the region’s manufacturing establishments were located in the City of Bridgeport, earning it the title of “The Industrial Capital of Connecticut.”⁶⁹ With 373,500 residents, Bridgeport remained the hub of a metropolitan complex composed of six municipalities. Its labor force was estimated at 170,000. Despite this, opponents of “patience” were able to point to the unequal distribution of “prosperity” and to a steady decline in the condition of black neighborhoods. Moreover, toward the end of 1967, Bridgeport lost manufacturing firms while the surrounding municipalities experienced a net gain.⁷⁰ With this decline in manufacturing, unemployment rose and, with the loss of federal funding for urban renewal, the housing shortage had, by the late 1960s, become a crisis.⁷¹

The Blacks in Bridgeport

The history of blacks in Bridgeport is similar to the history of other black communities in America. It consists, on the one hand, of economic and political struggle and, on the other, discrimination and segregation. As I have argued, the

⁶⁹ Reagan J. Williams Ed., *Bridgeport Community Development Plan Agency, Report On Housing*, (Bridgeport, Connecticut: 1971), p.27.

⁷⁰ Research done by the staff of the public library under the direction of David Palmquist.

⁷¹ Williams, Clarence, Interview by Author, May, 12, 1985.

two are linked by the facts surrounding the general development of the city as an industrial center and its region as a multi-ethnic metropolis whose diversity was qualified institutionally as well as in everyday life by a racial division of labor.⁷²

At the end of the Civil War, emancipated blacks migrated in large numbers from the South to other parts of the country and from rural to urban areas. This process came eventually to be represented in the demography of urban life in the Northeast. Those who migrated from the South became free of the semi-Feudal relations under which they had lived. With emancipation and the movement of blacks to other parts of the country, new patterns of mutual support and conduct were established, replacing those experienced in the South.⁷³ Southerners, including blacks, had adapted to a discipline of time and rhythm of work quite different from the intensity of labor typical in the Northern factories. This was, as Guttman has pointed out, true of many Europeans who migrated to these same cities at the turn of the twentieth century.⁷⁴ The factor of race, however, placed blacks at a disadvantage, 'last hired and first fired', and consigned them to the status of a reserve of army labor. Conditions in the most concentrated, factory-dominated areas of Bridgeport were not as dramatic as those Engels described in early 19th century Manchester, but they were harsh, requiring endurance and a degree of creativity in the construction and maintenance of community.⁷⁵

Bridgeport's black community, which grew rapidly after the Civil War, faced hardships based on the influence of racism and class exploitation. It is in

⁷² Weaver, Richard, A. and Frances F. Piven, "The Urban Crises and the Consolidation of National Power" in Robert H. Connery, *Urban Riots*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1969).

⁷³ Wilson, Julius, *The Truly Disadvantaged*, (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), p.4.

⁷⁴ Gottman, Herbert, G. *The Black Family in Slavery And Freedom*, New York: Pantheon books.

⁷⁵ Liebow, Elliot, *Tally's Corner*, (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1967).

that context that a culture of diverse elements and church-focused norms of mutuality began to take form in the inner city. Connecticut soon had the largest black population in New England, and Bridgeport found itself with a relatively high concentration of black people who were hoping to find jobs in its developing industry, but who were increasingly absorbed in a relatively autonomous cultural, social, and political setting quite different from that experienced by whites.⁷⁶ The points of cultural interaction, few though they were, depended on the growth of an inchoate class consciousness, most evident on the job.⁷⁷

Restricted to unskilled and semi-skilled jobs, paid at the lowest wage scale, and treated as second class citizens, the black community of Bridgeport took on some of the features of a "culture of resistance."⁷⁸ This was evident toward the end of the 19th and throughout the 20th century,⁷⁹ and formed a covert polity of personal influence, intense frustration, and fragile institutions of cooperation and mutual support. In this, the church played a significant role, especially during the war years. Thus, the inequitable distribution of services in Bridgeport, the growing replacement of social programs with indifference by the white establishment, and intensified surveillance by a police force increasingly deployed in black neighborhoods, contributed to the willingness of blacks to rely more and more on an internal polity relatively free of dominant white institutional power.

⁷⁶ Purcill, 1963, p. 75

⁷⁷ Kornblum, 1974.

⁷⁸ James Scott, p. 29

⁷⁹ Taylor, J. Robert, *Colonial Connecticut*, (New York: Millwood, 1979), p.75.

Black churches in Bridgeport, from the middle of the 19th through the 20th century, provided emotional, social, and spiritual support for their communities. The Newfield Recreation Center, opened in 1937, the first all-purpose community center for adult Negroes, was established and supported by the five black churches of Bridgeport. In addition to providing recreational facilities, the center attempted to assist people in finding housing and jobs.⁸⁰ In these ways, it filled needs which the individual churches had helped clarify but could not themselves satisfy. Together, these two types of institutions, the center and the churches, represented that aspect of the black community which had to do with solidarity and shared experience. Thus, they provided the community with that dimension of development which Thompson refers to as "prepolitical."⁸¹ It was in this context that the experiences of individuals began to have a public aspect. This was especially so for educated blacks, for whom jobs were even less available. Thus, Bertha Lancaster, a Registered Nurse, reported that her application for a position at Bridgeport Hospital was rejected on the grounds that the hospital did not have the required separate facilities for blacks. Such stories circulated in the black community, giving it greater political focus. Other such stories had to do with discrimination in housing.⁸²

Black professionals struggled to find housing outside of the central city. Theodore Lancaster, a full time state employee in the highway authority, and his wife, Bertha, a full time nurse, attempted to purchase a house in Trumbull during

⁸⁰ Williams, Clarence, Interview by Author, May 12, 1985.

⁸¹ Thompson, 1963.

⁸² Lancaster, Bertha, Interview by Author, November-15- 1982. Bertha Lancaster was interviewed in her home in Bridgeport. A black registered nurse, married a Bridgeport black lawyer and moved to Bridgeport in 1937. She was seeking a nursing position in a hospital, and replied to a newspaper ad. She was invited to an interview in which she was told that the hospital does not have facilities for blacks, therefore, she could not get the position.

the 1930s. According to them, real estate agents in the area discouraged them; and although they were able to meet monthly mortgage payments, their mortgage application was rejected by three banks.⁸³ Lancaster continued to press his case, and after a great deal of time, effort, and expense, the family finally received a mortgage. Lancaster attributed the original rejections to discrimination on the part of the banks,⁸⁴ a policy documented in Lee Frank's *Negro And White In A Connecticut Town*.⁸⁵

Despite prejudice, discrimination, and segregation, the number of blacks in Bridgeport continued to grow. The 1930 census showed Bridgeport's population to be 146,716, of which 40,759 were foreign-born and 3,314 were black.⁸⁶ The number of blacks grew rapidly throughout the 1930s,⁸⁷ and, given the institutional structure of a class economy and a racial division of labor in the metropolitan area, segregation was virtually absolute. Blacks were all but confined to the central city, their conditions becoming increasingly defined in political terms.

Separate housing markets for blacks and whites in urban areas had existed for many years, but population growth gave it the form of a self-motivating structure. Segregation came to feed on itself, and therefore came to bear the quality of what Parsons called a "value," by which he meant a cultural pattern reinforced by obligation.⁸⁸ In this way white society began to take on the aspect

⁸³Lancaster, Theodor, Interview by Author, November-15-1982.

⁸⁴ Lancaster, Interview by Author, November, 15, 1982.

⁸⁵ Lee F. Frank, *Negro And White In Connecticut Town*, (New York: Bookman Associate, 1971), p.68.

⁸⁶Department of Interior, Census Office, *The Statistics Of The Population Of The United States*, 1930.

⁸⁷ Grimaldi, Lennie, *Only In Bridgeport*, Bridgeport, Connecticut: Windsor Publication, 1986, p. 42.

⁸⁸ Parsons, , 1954.

of a racist social system in which economy, polity, and organization were subjected to legitimations and motivational inputs increasingly driven by racism. This is clear from the ecology of race and class that came to characterize Bridgeport as it did so many other American cities. Housing stock closest to the center of the city was occupied by the poor and transients. Blue collar workers and those with careers occupied the next zone from the center, while white collar workers and the upper middle class lived in yet more distant zones.⁸⁹ The black population, though not transient, remained poor and was housed in segregated neighborhoods, with all that implies in regard to the delivery of services and political influence.

The tendency toward increased concentration of blacks was the opposite of that pattern displayed by white ethnic groups which, over time, tended to disperse from early centers of concentration. Part of this was due to a discriminatory housing market that over-priced housing when blacks sought to buy in white neighborhoods. However, even in black-dominated areas, prices were often higher for blacks than for whites.⁹⁰ Regardless of the economics of housing, mortgage practices showed that racism was a major cause of concentration, with other major related causes being the operation of a dual labor market and the quasi-colonial relation of the suburbs to the central city.

There were drastic differences between the types of housing available to blacks and whites. In major cities such as Bridgeport, black residents tended by the 1940s to be concentrated in a small area. Those in public housing often felt

⁸⁹ Bogue, Donald J. and David J. Hartman, *The Ecology of Race and Class in Metropolitan America*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

⁹⁰ Straszheim, Mahlor, R. *An Econometric Analysis of the Urban Housing Market*, (New York: Colombia University Press, 1975). p.52.

stigmatized.⁹¹ Whites who remained in Bridgeport earned 25% below the average income of all whites,⁹² and, in any case, left the central area when possible. Overcrowding was typical in the black ghettos. However, overcrowding and concentration were indices only of population density. As we have seen, something on the order of an increase in “moral density” was also taking place in black neighborhoods, which is why I refer to a “pre-political” culture of resistance as a key feature of racial segregation in Bridgeport.⁹³

On the side of whites, there was some concern about the implications of the “social problem” for the economy. Thus in 1936, the People’s Savings Bank began to finance purchases of homes by factory workers. This decision was made in anticipation of recovery, with the additional assumption that allowing people to buy with low down payments and helping them to live within a budget would allow them to make their monthly mortgage payments. The bank’s president, Sam Hawley, recounted his belief that property owners would keep their dwellings and neighborhoods in better condition than others who rented their homes.⁹⁴ Hawley, admits that the program was engineered for the profit of the bank as well as to improve the neighborhoods.⁹⁵ However, others argued that the bank limited its mortgages for blacks to housing in the central city.⁹⁶

⁹¹ Cooper C. Clare, *Easter Hill Village*, (New York: The Free Press, 1975). Pp 154-155.

⁹² Straszheim, 1975, p.58.

⁹³ Straszheim, 1975, p.116.

⁹⁴ Hawley, Interview, 1983.

⁹⁵ Hawley, Interview, 1982.

⁹⁶ Lancaster, Interview, 1982.

Williams, Interview, 1982, 1989.

With the outbreak of World War II, public housing was considered to be an instant cure for the housing crisis. Bridgeport received large amounts of money from the federal government in support of its effort to wipe out old neighborhoods in favor of projects. These projects were immense concentrations of tiny individual units, poorly built, and lacking in privacy.⁹⁷ They also replaced neighborhoods of mixed use with monolithic residential buildings hostile to the practices of community that had been previously established .

Yet, housing remained one of the main issues of contention in Bridgeport as in other cities, if only because it directly addressed the intersection of class and race in the growing "urban crisis." The Federal Housing Act of 1949 was, for example, long on promise and short on results so far as its effects on race relations were concerned.⁹⁸ In 1950, the city appointed a housing authority to study the situation in Bridgeport, and to develop a plan for improving housing conditions.⁹⁹ Of the total 13,484 substandard units in the Greater Bridgeport region, more than 10,000 were located in Bridgeport proper (12.9% of the city's housing stock), a proportion over twice as high as that in the suburban communities comprising the rest of the region (5.1% of the total stock outside of Bridgeport). This discrepancy had, by 1960, increased to 20.5% for Bridgeport and 8.0% for the suburbs. Thus, the work of the housing authority was unable to dispel the growing sense of futility among minorities and the poor in the city. This was to haunt the political life of Bridgeport until the formation of the Bridgeport Urban Coalition and throughout the period of its work. In 1960, 23.1

⁹⁷ Palmquist, David, W. "Father Panik Spearheads Drive for Public Housing", *Bridgeport Times*, December, 1983.

⁹⁸ Housing Act, 1949, Public law 171, 81st Congress, Section Two.

⁹⁹ Note: By 1958 79% of the blacks in Bridgeport lived in rentals. *Bridgeport Post*, "Scarcity of Housing in Bridgeport." April 6, 1958, p.3.

per cent of urban black families were headed by women.¹⁰⁰ In addition to the increased social costs of single-parent families, whites saw in them the potential for social disorder, as did some middle-class blacks.

Bridgeport's black population grew gradually replacing whites who moved to the suburbs, thereby changing the demography of the city. As in other cities blacks were increasingly segregated from whites in their daily activities and in the schools. The following table shows the increase of the black population in Bridgeport from 1840 to 1970.

Table 2: Population and Number of Blacks in Bridgeport from 1840 to 1970

Year	Bridgeport Population	Bridgeport Black Population
1840	3,294	
1850	7,269	291
1860	12,900	399
1870	18,969	269
1880	27,643	443
1890	48,868	857
1900	70,996	1,149
1910	102,154	1,332
1920	143,555	2,228
1930	146,716	3,314
1940	147,121	3,767
1950	156,730	
1960	156,748	15,332
1970	156,542	25,546 ¹⁰¹

In June of 1961, Bridgeport's black community was visited by Martin Luther King. Inspired by King's visit, blacks expressed their distress over segregation, inferior education, a lack of jobs, and poor housing conditions. King gave voice to their concerns in his speech following the award of an honorary degree of

¹⁰⁰ Wilson, 1987, p. 68.

¹⁰¹ United States Department of Interior, Bureaus of Census, The Statistics of the Population of the United States, 1970.

Doctor of Law from the University of Bridgeport. Among other things, he expressed the need for equality and for swift action to end segregation, improve living conditions, deal with unemployment, and upgrade education for black people.¹⁰² The most significant consequence of King's visit to Bridgeport was its contribution to the process, well under way at the time, of movement from the "prepolitical" to a more overtly political level of community concern. The culture of resistance that had developed in Bridgeport began to assume the organizational and ideological features typically associated with the onset of a social movement.¹⁰³ The division by class remained a problem within the black community. But the emergence and the strengthening of national organizations, and the presence of some of them in Bridgeport, provided for a variety of political responses, enabling people to pursue common goals through differing means. The latter was to provide a background of conflict among blacks during the period of the Bridgeport Urban Coalition.

By 1968, the year the Bridgeport Urban Coalition was founded, statistics showed a change in the racial composition of the city's population. The non-white population had increased from 10% in 1960 to approximately 16% in 1970, white population had declined, thus maintaining the overall size of the population relatively constant for that decade.

Table 3: Population-Minority Groupings And Growth In Bridgeport

	1960		1970	
	number	% of total	number	% of total
White	141,183	90.1	129,394	82.7
Negro	15,332	9.8	25,546	16.3
Others	233	.1	1,602	1.0

¹⁰² "Dr. King Raps Ruling on Riders Visit," *Bridgeport Post*, June 5, 1961, p.1.

¹⁰³ Curry, Elliott, and Jerome H. Skolnick, *America's Problems*, (Boston, MA: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1988), p. 241.

This was in sharp contrast to the increase of 21.3% in Fairfield, and the 19.6% increase for the State of Connecticut over the same period as shown in Table 3. The population growth in the suburban communities of Monroe and Trumbull was also substantial.

Table 4: Non White Population, Greater Bridgeport Region, City and Suburban Towns, 1960

	Total population	Non White population	% of total
Greater Bridgeport Region	278,131	17,353	6.2
Bridgeport	156,748	15,563	9.9
Total Suburban Towns	121,383	1,788	1.5
Easton	3,407	15	0.4
Fairfield	46,183	273	0.6
Monroe	6,402	24	0.4
Stratford	46,012	1,367	3.0
Trumbull	20,379	109	0.5

The demographic change in Bridgeport had implications for the revenues of the city, since the earnings of blacks were lower than those of whites. By 1970, over 51% of the families in the City of Bridgeport earned less than \$10,000 per year. In the Metropolitan Region of Bridgeport, 5,176 people lived below the poverty level, of whom 66.1% lived in the City of Bridgeport and the other 33.9% were distributed between the six suburban towns and Stratford. Blacks and Hispanics, the majority of Bridgeport's residents, earned on the average well below the state average as shown in Table 4.

Table 5: Median Family Income 1970 In The State Of Connecticut, Fairfield County And The City Of Bridgeport.

	City of Bridgeport	Fairfield County	State of Connecticut
All families	\$ 9,849	\$13,086	\$ 11,811
Negro	\$ 7,867	\$ 8,058	\$7,792
Spanish Language	\$ 7,609	\$ 9,059	\$8,591

At the beginning of the 1970s, Bridgeport's population growth and composition had stabilized, remaining the same throughout the rest of the decade. Thus, Bridgeport remained a center of production for a wealth that

increasingly gravitated to outlying areas, a quasi-colonial situation increasingly defined by whites in racial terms and by blacks in terms of economy and power. This was more than a "legitimation crisis." The crisis had finally revealed the instability of those institutions of wealth that drew on the productivity of socialized labor to sustain the social order of production. At the level of everyday life, the crisis appeared as inequality based on the confluence of class and racial discrimination. However, to those who were to form The Bridgeport Urban Coalition, the crisis was one primarily of racial tension, a failure of communication, and a failure of politics.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1964 established a commission to implement its provisions.¹⁰⁴ Despite the optimism that accompanied the passage of the Act, it did little to redress the effects of prior inequalities, in Bridgeport as elsewhere.¹⁰⁵ While there were doubtless positive effects, the main effect of the Act and the uneven enforcement of its provisions was to add to the substance of the themes of the enormous oppositional movement then emerging in the United States. The insurrections of 1968¹⁰⁶ were emblematic of the "crisis of American Institutions," and no doubt occasioned by the failure of official efforts of reform, such as the EEOC.

Bridgeport did not experience what the press, the Kerner Commission, and most social scientists called "riots" during the late 1960s. However, racial tension was exacerbated in the context of 1968, as was evident in police reports and newspaper accounts of relatively confined confrontations.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Connery, H. Herbert, *Urban Riots*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1969).

¹⁰⁵ Fuke, 1993

¹⁰⁶ Brown and Goldin, 1973

¹⁰⁷ Public Hearing, Fairfield, Proposed Urban Suburban Educational Programs, Video-tape, Summer, 1969.

CHAPTER FOUR:

INTERGROUP RELATIONS IN BRIDGEPORT

Bridgeport was, from its inception, a city of immigrants who came to it from within the United States and from continental Europe. Diversity formed the base of Bridgeport's polity from the beginning. At first, divisions and alliances reflected the ethnic composition of the population. Later, religious differences added a dimension that overlay that of ethnicity. Race became important in the 1930s, in the city as in the state.¹

Evidence suggests that efforts were made during the Depression to address the issue of racial tolerance in various ways, often in connection with yet more comprehensive political programs.² Examples are the Community Chest, the Committee on Unity, Freedom and Friendship, and The Conference of Christian and Jews. These were only a few of the organizations that attempted to establish community-based programs for the advancement of intergroup tolerance. However, the most significant development in this area began immediately after World War II.

To a great extent, this was due to pressure from below. Black ex-servicemen began to demand greater equality in the context of the increased labor activism that characterized the 1950s, and in the ideological context of a resurgent social

¹ Note: For some Inter-Group committees I could not find primary sources and had to rely on newspaper articles and interviews.

² Proctor, Mary, and Bill, Matuszeski, *Gritty Cities*, (Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1942). p.8.

liberalism beginning to make itself felt by the mid-fifties. The decision in *Brown vs. Board of Education*, the reemergence of the "human relations" approach to "social problems," and the beginnings of the civil rights movement were part of this new liberalism. In Bridgeport and elsewhere this produced different political tendencies depending on the ecology of the metropolis and on how class and race were articulated within that structure. In Bridgeport, a group of Black Veterans formed The Black Economic Council, aimed at helping individual Blacks to establish small businesses.³ Veterans were to become increasingly involved in promoting opportunities for Blacks to move into the middle class. Inevitably, some became involved specifically in race-related issues.⁴

Under the influence of clergy and political activists, the State of Connecticut sponsored and organized a weeklong workshop directed by Kurt Lewin, on "social control and intergroup relations." This took place in June, 1946, in New Britain, Connecticut. The purpose of this series of seminars was to discuss the possibility of overcoming prejudice by enhancing intergroup communications in the big cities of Connecticut. Those in attendance were either chosen by middle class community organizations or were sent by clergy and other groups already involved in efforts to improve intergroup relations.

Bridgeport was represented by a delegation of six professionals of whom three were white and three were black.⁵ During the week, the delegation from Bridgeport began its own informal discussions about race relations. These gatherings were, according to Geraldine Johnson, the black superintendent of

³ Williams, C., Interview by Author, 1985.
Hugh H., Interview by Author, October 2nd, 1988.

⁴ Williams, Clarence, Interview by Author, 1982.

⁵ "The Community We Want To Live In," *A Summary Report Of The Workshop*, Camp Mirimichi, August 18-29, 1947.

schools in Bridgeport, tense and occasionally antagonistic.⁶ One important result, however, was that they provided a basis for further contacts among the members of the Bridgeport delegation. Those, in turn, set the stage for attempts to formalize something on the order of a working group on race relations for the city.⁷

The delegation returned from New Britain with a proposal, developed by Kurt Lewin and the workshop participants, for establishing a volunteer organization to deal with certain aspects of intergroup relations and discrimination in Bridgeport. The fact that they had participated in Lewin's seminar accounts for their emphasis on a "human relations" approach, that is an unsanctioned communication based on interaction conducted democratically rather than under the auspices of centralized leadership. Interviewed with the local newspaper *Bridgeport Post*, reporter, upon his return Aib Knepler said:

We must see the problem of inter-group relations as part of the over-all problem of human relations. For too long, we have regarded our problem with as air of sentimentality, completely disregarding the fact that this is a vital community matter which must be solved for the welfare of the community... From every practical economic standpoint, the problems of group discrimination must be solved because of the tremendous waste involved... We should consider the money spent on ducation that is literally poured down the drain... We educate a person to become an engineer and then, because of his group affiliation refuse him the right to utilize his knowledge and talents... We have an obligation to stop thinking of people according to stereotypes and to start thinking of them as individual human beings.⁸

⁶ Johnson, G., Interview by Author, March 11, 1986.

⁷ O'Connor, R., Interview by Author, September 9, 1986.

⁸ "The Intergroup Council to Attack Ills of Bridgeport", *Bridgeport Post*, September 27, 1946.

As a result of the workshop in New Britain The Inter-Group Council was established in September, 1946, by a merger of two groups, the Committee on Unity, Freedom, and Friendship which represented various social organizations in Bridgeport, and the Bridgeport Round Table of the Conference of Christian and Jews, composed of clergy and lay people from various local churches and synagogues. Ray O'Connor was The Inter-group Council's first executive director. Shortly after his appointment he addressed the Women's League in Bridgeport and said that "Inter-group problems are not confined to racial and religious differences," that "prejudice also arise between labor and management groups, and between young and old people. These prejudices grow out of feelings of insecurity. We are just beginning to realize that hatred can be as deadly a disease as any physical ailment."⁹ He invited them to participate in the attempt to deal with this social ailment in a humanly fashion. The Inter-Group council's charter members, primarily educators, social service workers, and members of religious organizations, composed its board of directors. Its stated goal was to contribute to "more fruitful interactions" among the different segments of the city's population.¹⁰ Its method was to enhance face-to-face communication among members of those segments. Their assumption was that what happens interpersonally can lead directly to higher-order forms of cooperation, subject only to the continued availability of "channels" of communication.

However, the Council was not conceived as an action-oriented group, but as a catalyst for encouraging intergroup relations through existing organizations. It

⁹ "Ray O'Connor Talks On Group Prejudice," *Telegraph*, March 21, 1947.

"Church Women Hear Ray O'Connor," *Bridgeport Post*, March 21, 1947.

"O'Connor addressed the PTA of Nathan Hale School, in Bridgeport", *Sunday Herald*, 3-23-1947.

¹⁰ O'Connor, R., Interview by Author, 1986.

attempted further to act as an advisory board to facilitate interaction among different groups involved in developing action-oriented programs. Abraham Knepler recalls that “the most important function of The Intergroup Council was that it forced people to work together. For many, it was the first time they discussed, argued, and negotiated on an equal basis with people from different origins, religions, or color.”¹¹ The first committee that was formed by the Council was intended to intervene in an advisory capacity in racial and ethnic disputes within the community. According to Knepler, the volunteers who made up this committee were particularly concerned with concrete incidents of prejudice against Blacks occurring in Bridgeport at the time.¹²

Some Jewish members of The Inter-Group Council, with interests in Bridgeport, participated in this work of mediation.¹³ Coming from a community already organized and relatively prosperous, they were instrumental in promoting the work of the Council.¹⁴ As has historically been typical of such reform-minded voluntary associations, women played an important role in the Council, though they were not well represented among its leadership.¹⁵

Black educators and social service professionals were also among those who became involved in the Intergroup Council. They provided a different perspective on segregation and its effects on the black community. Meetings often became confrontational. However, class ties allowed the Council to continue as an interracial group aimed, according to Patrick Hunter, at “making

¹¹ Knepler, A., Interview by Author, 1982.

¹² Knepler, A., Interview by Author, 1985.

¹³ Wolfe, M. interview by Author, 1983

¹⁴ Beck, D., Interview by Author, 1982.

¹⁵ Wasserman, H, Interview by Author. 1982.

Bridgeport a better, and safer place in which to live,"¹⁶ but at the expense of acknowledging the growing politicization of the community.

The fact that participants in The Inter-Group Council were primarily drawn from the ranks of service professionals disposed it toward a human relations approach, regardless of other differences, and therefore toward a belief that reform was possible within the context of existing institutions. Activists remained outside of that context, as did the growing constituency for activism and militancy. Eventually, this would appear as a class division within the civil rights movement, and a division between Blacks and Whites. That the Council had no explicit political agenda, given its source of funds, meant that there was little pressure to organize specific constituencies and little reason to doubt the possibility of changing society merely by the exercise of good will.

The Inter-Group Council, funded by Federal, State, and city governmental agencies, viewed intergroup relations as part of the over-all problem of civil society in Bridgeport.¹⁷ The organization grew rapidly. Four months after it was established, it had over 1200 members. Its board of directors formed its decision-making body. Many participants were members of other organizations. However, they participated in The Inter-Group Council as individuals, without any obvious external obligations, though they occasionally informed their other organizations about the activities of the Council. The Council's approach favored the mediation of what were called "opinion leaders", and assumed that otherwise unguided populations typically formed masses rather than affinities of interest capable of self-organization. This assumption was typical of the academic

¹⁶ Hunter, p., Interview by Author, 1985.

¹⁷ "The Intergroup Council To Attack Ills Of Bridgeport," *Bridgeport Post*, September 27, 1946. p.1.

Note: I could not find minutes hence, I rely on newspaper articles from that period.

literature of the period, which relied on a diffusion model of social change finally dislodged by events as well as by radical revisions in social theory.¹⁸

Part of the Council's legitimacy depended on its focus on the economic consequences of discrimination, the major one of which was said to be waste. It did not emphasize the consequences for the desocialization of labor, therefore for the effects on the productivity of the social labor that accounted for Bridgeport's industrial development. Thus, at the first board meeting, the Chairman of the Council said: "We should consider the money spent on education that is literally poured down the drain... We educate a person to become an engineer and then, because of group affiliation refuse him the right to utilize his knowledge and talents... We have an obligation to stop thinking of people according to stereotypes and to start thinking of them as individual human beings."¹⁹ In this way what had been a far more progressive view of human relations was recast as part of the ideology of capital accumulation. This allows us to understand why the Council's initial emphasis on good will gave way to community-wide programs that focused on established authority in schools, libraries and recreation enterprises. It was assumed that sensitizing these institutional authorities would have a general effect on the community, through a process of diffusion of values and norms constituted at the level of elites.

Bridgeport was the leading community in Connecticut implementing the ideas and programs recommended by government officials for dealing with race relations. From August 18th to 29th, 1947, the Council organized Bridgeport's first

¹⁸ Brown and Goldin, 1973.

¹⁹ "Excerpts From the Report of the Executive Director Given at the Annual Meeting of The Council," Bridgeport Inter-Group Council, January 20, 1947. p.1.
Annual Meeting of the Bridgeport Inter-Group Council, *Minutes*, January 20, 1947.

workshop on intergroup relations at Camp Mirimichi.²⁰ The title of the workshop was, "The Community We Want To Live In."²¹ It dealt with issues connected with housing, recreation, public health, employment, and mass production.²² Out of this came a 14-point social action program to be implemented in 1948.²³ One of these points was to oppose bigotry, since it was agreed that race discrimination and bigotry were the main causes of unemployment among Blacks. In support of this proposal, figures were cited to the effect that Negro unemployment was two to four times higher than that of whites.²⁴ The Council ultimately had no discernable effect on either discrimination or unemployment, though it continued operating until 1964, when funding ran out. Its main accomplishments were to have established a certain liberal presence in the city, to have developed working relationships among the Council's participants, and to have provided stimulus for other such organizations.

The Council was not the first association of its kind. As early as 1918, the International Institute was formed to "help reunite immigrant families"²⁵ by helping them integrate into American life and into the community of

²⁰ "Social Control Comming Science," *Bridgeport Post*, July, 22, 1947. p.1.

²¹ "The Community We Want To Live In," A Summary Report Of The Workshop, Sposored by The Bridgeport Inte-Group Council at Camp Mirimichi, August 18-29, 1947.

²² "Intergroup Relations Theme of Workshop at Mirimichi," *Bridgeport Post*, August, 17, 1947. p.1.
 "Intergroup Workshop Starts Tomorrow," *Herald*, August, 17, 1947. p. 1.

²³ Bridgeport, Inter-Group Council, Program Committee Report, Annul Dinner Meeting, January, 29, 1948.

"Inter-Group Council Lays Plans For the Coming Year," *Herald*, December 10, 1947. p. 12.

²⁴ "Bigotry Cited In Unemployment," *Sunday Herald*, October 19, 1947. p. 28.

"Intergroup Workshop Work Just Beginning," *Bridgeport Sunday Post*, October 19, 1947. p. 15.

²⁵ "International Institute To Help Reunite Immigrant Families," *Bridgeport Post*, April, 27, 1928.

Bridgeport.²⁶ Soon thereafter it began to focus on what we would now call ethnicity, though it did not address issues of race. The Institute continued to operate through World War II, eventually expanding its activities along the lines of the Intergroup Council, with an educational focus on ethnic differences and mutual understanding.²⁷ This involved exposing the community to the variety of its cultures,²⁸ and promoting the study of the various nationalities in order to better appreciate their customs and traditions.²⁹

The Institute continued its work through the 1950s.³⁰ However, it became evident that the limited inclusion of blacks in its programs would have to be revised according to the new pattern of segregation that had come so thoroughly to articulate the relationship between class and race in Bridgeport. During the 1960s, the International Institute ventured more formally into ethnic and race relations, promoting programs for "greater understanding and communication between the nationality groups and the Negroes in the Greater Bridgeport Area".³¹

²⁶ Oliver, M., Interview by Author, February, 12, 1985, April 5, 1992.

²⁷ "18,000 Aliens In City, International Institute Becomes Busy Place," *Bridgeport Post*, March 14, 1939.

²⁸ As Sample of the International Institute Inter-cultural activities:

"Eight Nationalities Friendship Program," *Bridgeport Post*, April 30, 1941;

"Americanism A Theme Of Festival Planned By International Institute," *Bridgeport Post*, May 2, 1941.

"Institute Plans Folk Festival," *Herald*, May 9, 1941.

²⁹ "International Institute Plays an Important Part in City's Cultural and Patriotic Life," *Bridgeport Post*, October 3, 1943.

³⁰ "Institute Invites 1,200 to meeting," *Bridgeport Post*, April 9, 1953.

"International Institute Guides Foreign-Born In Bridgeport," *Bridgeport Post*, August, 1953.

"Institute Speaks On Future Of Today," *Bridgeport Post*, April 4, 1954.

"International Institute Tackles Hungarian Crises," *Sunday Post*, December 2, 1956.

³¹ "Institute to Open Communications Between Minorities, Ethnic Groups," *Sunday Post*, September, 17, 1967.

Other community organizations and religious institutions developed their own inter-group committees, no doubt influenced by the two councils, as well as by events themselves. Although their overall aims varied, the specific goals were often similar, revolving around community relations, interorganizational relations, and quality of life.³² Differences existed over strategy and ideology, but all of these groups operated within the context of established institutions rather than emerging social movements. However, organizations rooted in the black community began to embark on a rather different path closer to the work of Dr. Martin Luther King's SCLC. One such group was The Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of Greater Bridgeport. This committee, formed in 1955, represented a majority of black churches in the area. It met once a month to discuss racial and religious issues, with particular reference to the national situation and the popular base of activism that was becoming increasingly evident in the incipient civil rights movement.³³

In this increasingly politicized environment, during the 1950s, a decade in which more strikes occurred in the United States than in any previous decade, it could only have been expected that efforts would be made to conventionalized the growing unrest and neutralize the mix of class and race issues that were beginning to define them. Thus, *The Bridgeport Post* editorialized that "intergroup relations in a community have a powerful bearing on its social and economic progress and well being."³⁴ The focus was still on "intergroup relations", a point on which a large portion of the nation's population was increasingly beginning to disagree.

³² Knepler, A. Interview by Author, 1982.

³³ "Black Churches to Form a City-Wide Committee," *Bridgeport Post*, October 7, 1971.

³⁴ "Bridgeport's Community Formed The Intergroup Council," *Bridgeport Post*, January 26, 1947. p. 1.

In May of 1962, The Catholic Interracial Council was established,³⁵ with the main goals of racially integrating the Bridgeport Catholic community and improving the standard of living of minorities. That year, it sponsored a panel discussion on the "Viewpoint of Race Relations," held at Fairfield University for the purpose of educating the Catholic community on the teachings of the Church about social and interracial justice.³⁶ The Pastors' Association, also formed in 1962, Included Protestant and Jewish clergymen from the Greater Bridgeport Area. At its first annual meeting, members supported the efforts of Negroes to gain equal rights according to their religious beliefs:

the obligation to work for equal rights and privileges for all men, and to support the efforts of those who are dedicated to the task of winning an equal place in society for citizens deprived of rights because of the color of their skin...We subscribe to the principles of orderly and non-violent protest, and recourse to courts of law as means of bringing about social change in a democratic society...³⁷

This was a program quite liberal in its overall intent, but aimed specifically at marginalizing the more militant activists who were, at the time, beginning to define the direction of the civil rights movement. Reliance on courts was the traditional method of the NAACP, which was itself drifting to the margins of the movement. But the shift of attention from communication to inequality had, according to Rabbi Arnold Share, a profound effect on many of the association's participants. He pointed out that certain members of his Temple, Temple Bnai-

³⁵ "Catholics Form An Inter-Race Group," *Sunday Post*, September 2, 1962.

Subsequent articles on the organization in the *Sunday Post*: August 23, 1963, December 13, 1963.

³⁶ "Catholic Inter-Race Group to Sponsor Discussion On 'Viewpoint If Race Relations,'" *Sunday Post*, October 24, 1962.

³⁷ "Pastors' Association Elects Backs 'Equal Rights Effort,'" *Bridgeport Post*, February 1, 1963. May 10, 1963. May 19, 1963, May 27, 1963.

Israel, made continues effort to participate in discussions and intergroup functions to develop direct contact with different religions, ethnic and race groups in the community. However, the response they received did not exemplify a wish for communication, rather a distinct need to raise class and race issues with an undertone of blame. It had a profound effect on many of the association's participants. Rabbi Share recalled in an interview that "it discouraged some members of the Jewish community from continuing their participation in those programs, but others persisted."³⁸

During the life of the Intergroup Council other inter-group committees, more specific ones, were established. The Council Of Churches was formed in 1956, as an umbrella organization and therefore something of a coalition in the sense defined above, in chapter two. Thus, its agents were clergymen and the constituencies were members of their respective churches and temples. While it was concerned with policy, its approach was essentially educational and a meliorative. In 1960, it sent a delegation to a state-wide meeting of clergymen to explore race issues in Connecticut, especially in regard to inter-race relations, housing, and employment.³⁹ The Council of Churches was also involved in programs directed at drug and alcohol abuse by young people.⁴⁰ Later in the decade, the Council became active in mediating between the police and the black community.⁴¹

Thus, as the decade wore on, more and more established institutions began to turn their attention to issues of race and racism, doubtless as a result of

³⁸ Share, A., Rabbi, Interview by Author, February 22, 1983.

³⁹ "Churches to Explore Race-Relations Role," *Sunday Herald*, September 1, 1960.

⁴⁰ "Church Push Drug Abuse Aid," *Bridgeport Post*, April 3, 1963.

⁴¹ "Council of Chuches to Reinstate Cleric With Police Plan," *Bridgeport Post*, April 20, 1968.

pressure from “below”. Their efforts diverged strategically and in regard to whether or not race and class were joined in defining goals. The YWCA exemplifies one limit within the context of elite-based reformism, just as the Pastor’s Association represented another. There were two branches of the YWCA in Bridgeport in the last quarter of the 19th century. One served whites, and the other served blacks. By the 1930s they had merged into one organization, adding to the “Y’s” traditional focus a new concern for the welfare and needs of black women . After the merger, black women were elected to the YWCA’s Board of Directors.⁴²

These organizations were only the most prominent groups that emerged during Bridgeport’s recent history to deal with inter-group relations. They varied, as I have indicated, along a number of lines. Some were formal, professional organizations, like the International Institute, while others, such as the Inter-Group Council, were volunteer committees. They were all oriented to the solution of problems concerning intergroup and race relations. All, in one way or another, were connected to established institutions and, through them, to the interests of the middle class. In each case, intra-organizational relations came to be part of the focus of members, and in no case was there a disposition to consider the issues from the standpoint of popularly based social movements.

In this last regard, the Bridgeport Urban Coalition resembled the other groups. The Internal Operation Guide of the Coalition specified that it was to be “a collection of time-limited community leaders, volunteer manpower, and manpower contributed by industry.”⁴³ Its funds were limited and it was intended to be operated efficiently and accountably. From the outset, the

⁴² Johnson, G., Interview by Author, 1982.

⁴³ Urban Coalition For Greter Bridgeport, *Internal Operation Guide-rational*, p.1.

Coalition's work was predicated on the assumption that racial inequality was due in part to the difficulty Southern Blacks had in adjusting to the new conditions of modernity they found in the North, especially inasmuch as they were presumably, cut off from their traditional institutions, and especially from their churches.⁴⁴

While there is certainly some truth in this, Herbert Guttman has noted that some European immigrants faced a similar difficulty. The Coalition's overemphasis on the side of black adjustment, rather than the political economy of racial inequality,⁴⁵ led to tendencies in its practice that could not take account of either the identity politics that came to weigh so heavily in the anti-racist movement of the 1960s or the growing insistence among many black people that the struggle against racism was also a struggle against an economic system.⁴⁶

The Coalition tended to focus on youth rather than workers, family rather than the super-exploitative features of a dual labor market, education rather than politics, and attitudes rather than social structure. It was in that light that the founders of the Bridgeport Urban Coalition addressed the possibility of "civil disorder" in the city.⁴⁷

The summer of 1967 was tense throughout the country, with "riots" reported in a number of cities. The business community in downtown Bridgeport became concerned, as people in black neighborhoods began to demonstrate in

⁴⁴ Piven Fox Frances and Richard A. Cloward, *Regulating the Poor*, (New York:Vintage Books, 1971), . 223.

⁴⁵ Guttman, G. Herbert, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom 1750-1925*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976).

⁴⁶ Carmichael, Stokely, and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power: the Politics of Liberation in America* , (New York: Vintage Books, 1967).

⁴⁷ Caldron, C., Interview by Author, March 18, 1982.

the streets and picket local factories.⁴⁸ According to Carlos Calderon, The newspaper, *Harambi*, gave voice to popular feelings of frustration and anger.⁴⁹ *Harambi*, circulated widely in the city, influenced events in two ways. First, it increased the awareness of Blacks that a social movement had emerged in response to racial injustice and inequality. Second, it motivated Whites in the business community and city administration, to take a serious look at tensions in Bridgeport.⁵⁰

Indeed, on a Thursday morning in June, 1967, following the riots in Watts and Newark, Sam Hawley, president of the People's Savings Bank in Bridgeport, heard a rumor that riots were likely to erupt in the city.⁵¹ Hawley immediately initiated a meeting with John Merchant,⁵² a member of the 1800 Club since its inception in 1957.⁵³ Hawley expressed his concern that riots might occur in Bridgeport that coming weekend. He asked Merchant if there was any truth to the rumors. Merchant replied that even if riots were being planned, he would be excluded from any information, since he was seen by some in the black

⁴⁸ Harrison, E., Interview by Author, 1985.

⁴⁹ Note: *Harambi*- means togetherness. The newspaper *Harambi* was sponsored by a Hispanic-Black Young Leadership group. It recieved administrative help in from ABCD.

⁵⁰ Williams, C., Interview by Author, 1982.

⁵¹ Hawley S., by Author, 1982. He could not recall who he heard the rumer from, but he remembered vividly his reaction, and the action he immediatly took to communicate with black leaders and encourage intervention.

⁵² Merchant, J., Interview by Author, May 4,1982.

⁵³ Note: The 1800 club was an all Black male professional club. Its members organized themselves in 1957. The group met every Monday on the 1800 hour. They did not take any minutes, and had no organized structure, nor did they have stationery or letterhead papers. Therefore, there are no written resources on this club. These professionals felt that they had an understanding of the problems of the black community in Bridgeport, and that they had information and knowledge of how to help solve some of the problems. The group remained a small one, but there are hundreds of affiliates who supported it. No one could give me the exact date of the establishment of the 1800 club. There are no ducuments, no minutes of meetings or reports. Its members insisted that it will be a voluntary specialists club without documenting its discussions.

community as part of the establishment. He further indicated that being Black, even if he had any knowledge that an action was being planned, he would not pass the information on to a white person. Merchant added that he would rather work in any case within the black community of which he was part.⁵⁴

Hawley expressed his concern for the welfare of the Bridgeport community and the safety of its people, and asked Merchant to recommend a course of action that would help prevent riots. Merchant felt that this was an opportunity to convey to Hawley some of his thoughts about, as well as the goals of, the 1800 club.⁵⁵ He explained that the 1800 club was an association of black professionals committed to improving their community by providing advice and assistance to schools and social agencies.

Merchant insisted that official institutions had not responded adequately to inequality and its effects. He asked Hawley to try and convey the urgency of the problem to his colleagues, and suggested a face-to-face meetings in which Whites in positions of power, including businessmen, would discuss the issues with members of the 1800 club. Merchant also suggested a more limited meeting of bank presidents, directors of local firms, and prominent members of the 1800 Club, to discuss the concrete needs of the black community in Bridgeport in regard to prospects for serving those needs. He emphasized that only those who had access to or control over resources, those able to make political decisions and monetary commitments, should attend this meeting. Merchant argued that no notes or minutes should be taken and that there be no formal procedures, in

⁵⁴ Haywood, A., Interview by Author, December 11, 1990.

⁵⁵ Note: The goals of the 1800 club were never written nor were they publicized, but they were clear to those involved. The 1800 club members' mission was to help poor blacks in improving their housing, income and education. They also fought against the notion of "separate but equal", segregation and discrimination.

order to allow participants to communicate freely. Hawley agreed with all the suggestions and arranged for the meeting to take place.⁵⁶

The meeting was convened the following afternoon in the boardroom of the People's Savings Bank.⁵⁷ Blacks sat on one side of the long table and the Whites faced them from the other side. During the two hours that followed, Blacks accused white business people of prejudice and discrimination. They argued that Blacks had been prevented from learning the skills they needed to achieve a decent standard of living and a reasonable opportunity for upward mobility. Whites replied that Blacks did not even apply for jobs, and if they did, rarely completed applications.⁵⁸ The Blacks responded that the distribution of goods and services was unequal and placed black people at a disadvantage compared to Whites.⁵⁹ The Whites, somewhat defensively, said that they had not been aware of the feelings in the Black community or the severity of the conditions of life there. They claimed that their experience with black workers was, for the most part, unsatisfactory, that Blacks were not punctual, did not remain at a job for more than a few days, and did not follow rules.⁶⁰ Blacks responded that minority jobs were menial, low paid, without benefits, and with no chance for advancement. The discussion was antagonistic, loud, and bitter. However, It was the beginning of a longer dialogue between White and Black elites in Bridgeport.

⁵⁶ Merchant, J. Interview by Author, 1982.

⁵⁷ Note: My account is from interviews with S. Hawley and J. Merchant, 1982.

⁵⁸ Note: In an interview with S. Hawley in 1982 he suggested that blacks assumed that they could or would not get jobs in banks. Therefore, they did not even apply. To the question of stimulating black people prepare for employment in banks, he answered the People's Savings Bank did not have any such plans prior to the 1960s. New initiatives of the bank to employ blacks started after the meetings with the 1800 club in 1967.

⁵⁹ Williams, C., Interview by Author, 1982.

⁶⁰ Liebow, Elliot, *Tally's Corner*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1967).

The first meeting ended indecisively, but with an agreement to meet again the following week.⁶¹

The 1800 club members did not have the clout or prestige of the white elite in the city at large. They were willing to participate in any initiative which might concretely address the problems of the Black community, and agreed to Hawley's meeting in the expectation that they would be heard by those in positions to divert resources toward the solution of those problems. The defensiveness of the Whites reflected both their own participation in a culture in which either racism was taken for granted or racial issues were otherwise suppressed, and their belief that their framework for understanding the city's problems was correct, and that they were here only to permit black people to express themselves.⁶²

Similarly, expecting to be heard but not listened to, the Blacks in attendance were often vociferous and accusatory. Nevertheless, the meetings continued for several weeks, with constant accusations from both sides. Blacks demanded social change and whites stressed what they felt were the limits of change. For the Blacks, the meeting was an interracial encounter;⁶³ for the Whites it was fundamentally an encounter across class as well as racial lines. Each group asserted its privilege according to these perspectives. Blacks demanded deference by virtue of superior knowledge of the problem; Whites demanded deference because of their positions and because they controlled the resources and, presumably, the vehicles for rationally allocating resources. These different

⁶¹ Note: I could not find an exact date of the first meeting between the members of the 1800 club and the white executives. In interviews with Marchent, Hawley, Hunter and others they all suggest that it took place at the end of June 1967.

⁶² Haywood, A., Interview by Author, 1990.

⁶³ Williams, C., Interview by Author, 1982.

perspectives were late to be transformed during the development of the Bridgeport Urban Coalition. While these meetings were taking place in Bridgeport, a National Urban Coalition was being formed in Washington, D.C., to deal with some of the issues put on the local agenda by the 1800 club.⁶⁴

The National Urban Coalition

Meanwhile, racial unrest continued across the United States. Programs were put into operation, such as Vista, which functioned under federal auspices, particularly through the office of Economic Opportunity and The Manpower Act. Johnson's "Great Society" was partly a result of his belief in the programs of the New Deal, partly a result of the openings for progressive legislation created by Kennedy's assassination, and partly due to The Civil Rights Movement and its redefinition of the field of American politics. The Federal Government was an essential partner in the National Urban Coalition, legitimizing the organization as an umbrella organization, and providing resources and direction. The establishment of a National Urban Coalition was part of what progressive in government believed would be a new "contract" between the state, the minority working population most of whom were urban, and private industry.⁶⁵ In fact, it represented a joint venture between government and industry aimed at promoting reform without threatening privilege. The key to its success was thought to lie in the promotion of local, constituency-based coalitions. Its authority derived from the Equal Opportunity Commission, and it was funded under an act of Congress.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Wasserman H, Interview by Author, 1982.

⁶⁵ Canty Donald, "Urban Coalition Turning the Country Around," *CITY*, October 1967, p.16.

⁶⁶ Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 1967.

In the summer of 1967, twelve hundred white, black and Hispanic national leaders, from the fields of business, education, consumer affairs, politics, and labor, assembled in Washington D.C., to form the National Urban Coalition. It was the first time that representatives of so many different organizations had met face to face in an attempt to consider ways to deal with an urban crisis of long-standing that had become acute.

Among the delegates to Washington were twenty two White, Black and Hispanic people from Bridgeport. Six of those representatives had participated, in 1946, in the Kurt Lewin's workshop on intergroup relations.⁶⁷ They had a long experience of working together in community concerns, and were part of an extended network of like-minded citizens.⁶⁸ Having this history, and having momentary concerns in common, they hoped to built upon the personal trust established during the previous twenty years.⁶⁹

The Birth of the Greater Bridgeport Area Urban Coalition

Upon returning to Bridgeport in June 1967, the delegation met with Mayor Hugh Curran to explore the possibility of forming a local Coalition. The rationale was that the situation was urgent and the time propitious.⁷⁰ According to Parker

⁶⁷ Note: Patrick Hunter, Geraldine Johnson, Clarence Williams, Abraham Knepler, Sam Howley, Clara Stern, James and Charles Tiesdale, and Dorothy Back participated in the Connecticut workshop on intergroup relations with Kurt Lewin in New Britain in 1946. They were among the twenty two delegates who went to Washington in May 1967 for the establishment of the National Urban Coalition. All of them were active in community affairs throughout the twenty years, and interacted for community relations programming.

⁶⁸ Hunter, p., Interview by Author, 1982.

"I Know that it sounds like a cliché, but it was like that. We were a group, not a bunch of astranged individuals. We were involved with the Bridgeport community before, and we went to Washington because we felt responsibility on one hand, and ability to work together, on the other."

⁶⁹ Knepler, A., Interview by Author, 1982.

⁷⁰ Tiesdale, J., Interview by Author, 1982.

Lansdale, "We could no longer be indifferent to the deterioration of the physical and social fabric of Bridgeport."⁷¹ Helen Wasserman remembers her own motivation: "Simple justice and intelligence had to help to find better ways of understanding and of responding to the basic needs of this community."⁷² The Mayor issued a statement urging industry and social organizations to collaborate with the city in providing resources for the work of the Bridgeport Urban Coalition.⁷³

The delegation continued to meet with Mayor Curran over the role a local coalition could play in revitalizing Bridgeport. During this time, Curran went to Washington for a Mayors' meeting with the Board of the National Urban Coalition. The Mayors decided to embrace the idea of, and to assume leadership in, creating a local coalition. Upon his return from Washington, Mayor Curran told the delegation that he would spearhead the establishment of the Greater Bridgeport Area Urban Coalition.⁷⁴ Thus, from the outset, the Coalition was fundamentally a project of state, though its members would increasingly define their role in terms of agency and in regard to increasingly articulated constituencies not directly related to government.

In his initial presentation to the City Council, Mayor Curran said that the time had come to deal with unemployment, underemployment, inferior housing, inadequate education, and an increasing crime rate.⁷⁵ Later, in his description of the rationale for establishing an urban coalition, he stated that rising welfare

⁷¹ Lansdale, P., Interview by Author, 1983.

⁷² Wasserman, H., Interview by Author, 1982.

⁷³ Curran, H., Interview by Author, 1987.

⁷⁴ Curran, H., Interview by Author, 1984.

⁷⁵ City Council Meeting, *Minutes*, July 9, 1967.

costs, inefficient tax structures, and hardening attitudes were all symptoms of cancerous conditions which, if allowed to persist, would weaken and eventually bring down both the central city and its suburban towns. He warned that these and other problems were not new but were at that time explosive in their social ramifications. The Board of the Bridgeport Urban Coalition summarized the emblematic feature of its project: "Often intertwined with our urban maladies ran the corrosive thread of racism—practiced either consciously or unconsciously by many Whites and Blacks. Such conditions could not be wished away. There were no miraculous cures. Experience had shown that local problems required local ingenuity and local solutions." ⁷⁶

Although the principles of the National Urban Coalition were adopted as its foundation, the Bridgeport Coalition was conceived as an independent entity. In an interview, conducted in 1984, Curran recalled that the atmosphere in Bridgeport had been similar to that of other urban centers, apprehensive and violent. Bridgeport had been fortunate in not having riots. This, he said, was because "we had a continual dialogue within the community which was established more than forty years ago." He described his desire to "create a channel for communication in the city, so that people would talk rather than take their frustrations into the streets." ⁷⁷ Curran said that he had hoped for cooperation among the various organizations, service agencies, corporations, and government to provide ways of transferring resources to wherever the need was greatest. He felt that an Urban Coalition could have become such a vehicle for redistribution and reform. The first step, according to Curran, Hawley, and Merchant, was to bring join together those community leaders who were thought

⁷⁶ Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport, *Rational*, Presented in June of 1967 and formally accepted in a Board meeting on March 5, 1968.

⁷⁷ Hugh C., interview by Author, 1984.

to have best understood the problems. These were presumably members of the 1800 Club, and white professionals, businessman and civic activists. According to John Merchant, many meetings took place during the following five months, in an attempt to establish a framework for the coalition.⁷⁸

On January 11, 1968, one hundred and fifty Black, White, Hispanic, Christian, and Jewish people, representing business, labor, religion, government, social services, and education voted formally to establish an Urban Coalition for the Greater Bridgeport Area.⁷⁹ A month later, fifty "leaders" from the metropolitan Area received an initial proposal for the operation of such a Coalition. Those individuals, putative representatives of specific groups and organizations, unanimously endorsed the plan.⁸⁰

The Bridgeport coalition was legally established as a community-based, institutionally-oriented, problem-solving association of elites. Its stated goals were as follows:

"This organization shall be known as the Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, Inc., and its purpose shall be to unite all citizens and groups in the area who are concerned with the elimination of poverty, discrimination, and all the attendant ills of bad housing, crime, delinquency, inferior education, unemployment and underemployment and lack of equal opportunity. The Coalition shall endeavor to enlist or recommend the creation of forces of all private groups in the community in this effort to solve the problems of the inner city and the surrounding

⁷⁸ Merchant, J. Interview by Author, 1983.

⁷⁹ " Bridgeport Accepts the Idea of a Local Urban Coalition," *Bridgeport Post* , January 12th, 1968. (page no. is not indicated on the clipping).

⁸⁰"50 Area Leaders Asked to Stear Urban Coalition," *Bridgeport Post* , February 29, 1968 (page no. is not indicated on the newspaper clipping).

towns, in cooperation with existing public and private agencies.”⁸¹

Those on the Board of Directors were Bank presidents, directors of companies, politicians, and a few other interested professionals who were well placed socially and politically.⁸² The group was, according to Parker Lansdale, perceived by the entire community as elite because of their wealth, power, and prestige.⁸³ The black members belonged to the 1800 Club. They were prominent in the black community, but relatively unknown to most of the white people in the Bridgeport area.⁸⁴

The Bridgeport Urban Coalition was portrayed by its founders as a “force for good,” intended to stimulate positive action,⁸⁵ but not to be an action-oriented enterprise. Rather, it was described as a vehicle for inspiring others to correct wrongs, to chart possible new courses of action, and to settle disputes harmoniously.⁸⁶ What distinguished it from earlier associations, such as the Intergroup Council was its focus on the relevance of economic factors to understanding and solving the City’s problems.

The original membership decided that the primary function of the coalition would be to obtain public support for, and public involvement in, reordering local priorities. Much of its initial work involved clarifying its own

⁸¹ Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport, By-Laws, Artical 1, P1.
Note: The By-Laws state clearly the rules of membership in Article II, p. 2,3.

⁸² Hawley, S., Inerview by Author, 1985.

⁸³ Parker L., Interview by Author, 1982.

⁸⁴ Merchant, J., Interview by Author, 1985.

⁸⁵ Kent, J., Interview by Author, September 17, 1982.

⁸⁶ Note: Some of the wording in the purposes and goals for the urban coalition Initial papers, were similar to those of the Inter-Group Council, especially emphasizing intergroup relations and intergroup communication. However, the urban coalition’s added dimention was to be an action oriented entity for social change and improvement of the quality of life for blacks.

responsibilities and methods of operation. The board members agreed from the beginning that the Coalition would have to be defined in the very process of its work, though they were aware of the need to be as specific as possible even before that work began. Thus, it was stated in its "internal operation guide" that the Coalition was to be "a forum to exchange ideas between the ghetto community and the Greater Bridgeport power structure," as well as to "mobilize the resources of the community to study problems, to recommend solutions and to aid in implementing action programs." In addition, the guide described the Coalition as "a visible collection of community power" for mobilizing and effecting change. Finally, it was to serve as "a focal point for the collection of information from, and dissemination of information to, the National Urban Coalition and other local coalitions."⁸⁷

Such goals are not necessarily consistent, nor could they have represented wide-spread agreement among citizens divided by race, class, location, organizational facilities, and experience. Moreover, the information-gathering function was bound to create uneasiness among at least some in the community, and the intention "to study" could only appear to others as ambiguous. Ultimately, the internal life of the Coalition, those aspects that had to do with the quality of representation of constituencies, what I have called agency, would become its most important feature determining both what it did not accomplish and what it could or could not constitute as a moral and political presence in Bridgeport.

The mayor's view of the Coalition was consistent with his political interests and position as a public figure. For him, the Coalition's significance lay in its capacity to elicit private support for public projects and to establish the presence

⁸⁷ Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport, *Internal Operation Guide*, p. 25,26.

of a consensus among elites over the need to reduce intergroup tensions through conventional means. Therefore, he said, it was neither a “debating society” nor an agent of social change as such.⁸⁸ However, divisions among the members in outlook, perspective, and interest, guaranteed a stormier and more multi-faceted history than the Mayor, and no doubt the Federal authorities, had envisioned.

The Coalition’s internal guide stated the following operational principles: (1) “Confrontation,” between those who are aware of the problems and those who hold power, (2) “Involvement” of the community as a whole, (3) an “orientation” toward getting things done, (4) “Flexibility”, (5) “Efficiency”, and (6) “Equality” among participants.⁸⁹ But, as the Coalition developed, the line between action and influence became blurred, and the inconsistencies among its operational principles became more and more difficult to avoid.⁹⁰ This was to some extent due to problems of legitimacy concerning constituencies, and to some extent a result of the way in which the Coalition operated in regard to interactions among members as agents or representatives.

So far as legitimacy was concerned, Parker Lansdale said in an interview that too often there were good intentions unmatched by good performances.⁹¹ Indeed, interviews with other members suggest that Lansdale’s view was generally conceded in principle. The problem of legitimacy arose, however, in the course of making actual decisions (see chapter 6). Then, the difference between diffuseness and specificity, instrumentalism and program became internally motivating in interactions among members, therefore intrinsic to

⁸⁸ Curran, H. Interview by Author, 1986.

⁸⁹ Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport, *Internal Guide*, p. 26-28.

⁹⁰ Appendix 1, diagram of the Bridgeport Urban Coalition’s proposed structure.

⁹¹ Lansdale, p., interview by Author, 1982

coalition work. Moreover, the external political situation in which it operated threatened at all times to compromise the Coalition's capacity to function even as a catalyst.

For example, on January 17, 1967, members of the proposed board of directors held their first meeting, chaired by Mayor Curran. Echoing the human relations emphasis on opinion leaders, the Mayor issued the following charge: "You mold public opinion in your communities, and if you are determined that we are going to solve the great social problems of our time here in the Greater Bridgeport Area, then it will be done."⁹² This emphasis on molding opinions, indifferent to the nature of the social, cultural, and political communities themselves, was wholly consistent with a top-down view of social problems and their solutions, not to mention with the existing structure of power. Thus, Curran's statement was at least implicitly political. He was to be the Coalition's primary constituency. In my interview with him, the Mayor reflected on that meeting, saying that it was the right time for him to have "hit the nail on its head." He added that the members of the Board had a long history of working together, and that he had hoped that with hard work and a broad base of participation, the Coalition would have become a catalyst for change in Bridgeport.⁹³ Sam Hawley, too, remembered the January meeting. In my interview with him, apart from expressing agreement with the Mayor's charge, he added that, "though everybody had said that they wanted to correct social wrongs, there were different ideas as to what to correct, how far to go, and what method to use."⁹⁴

⁹² Board of Director's meeting, *Minutes*, January 17th, 1968, p.3.

⁹³ Curran, H., Interview by Author, 1986.

⁹⁴ Hawley, S., Interview by Author, March 14, 1987.

Thus, despite the limitations implicit in the Mayor's charge, and regardless of Hawley's emphasis on communication, the program of the Bridgeport Urban Coalition was revised over and over again as unanticipated conflicts arose over its goals and the means required to accomplish them. On the one side was the private economy and government bent on reaffirming stringent institutional parameters of change; on the other were various communities, divided internally, and the day to day problems members had in reconciling the need for legitimizing the coalition in the eyes of those constituencies with their need to establish projects that could demonstrate the role they wished to assume in promoting social change. The fact that the Mayor was to be the first president of the Bridgeport Urban Coalition guaranteed that these tensions would persist.

On March 5, 1968, The Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport was formally established at an open community meeting at City Hall, and introduced by its president, Mayor Curran.⁹⁵ The members of the Board of Directors were introduced to the public, and the six proposed task forces were announced as follows: education, police and community relations, employment and economic development, recreation and cultural affairs, public support and communication, and housing. At that time, the Coalition had no executive director. It was housed in an office space in City Hall, with a secretary and limited supplies.

Parker Lansdale, executive director of the United Way in Bridgeport, and an active member of The Urban Coalition, prepared a paper with several other board members entitled "The Mission of The Urban Coalition." It was to be

⁹⁵ Curran, H., Interview by Author, 1987.

Note: In the Mayors meeting in Washington, it was suggested that the Mayors will serve as the presidents of the local Urban Coalitions. What was the motive behind it one can only guess. One assumption is that having the Mayor as president of the urban coalition, gives the city legitimacy, clout and maybe power when dealing with city officials in behalf of the urban coalition. Curran did not recall any discussions on the issue.

discussed at the meeting of March 12, 1968. Its preamble stated: "... the scope and complexity of urban issues defy independent or fragmented solutions. We must prove we are mature enough to put aside our personal prejudices which we all have. Whites and Blacks should strive together to make Bridgeport a better place to live and to work."⁹⁶ This manifesto anticipated many of the problems the Bridgeport Urban Coalition would face in establishing trust among its members, something Lansdale, as others, felt was fundamental to its capacity to work within the moral framework of "communication." Thus, Lansdale initiated discussions in which board members could share experiences toward a commonality of interest that could bridge what were otherwise irreducible differences.⁹⁷ One effect of these discussions was to reinforce a climate of dialogue. However, as we will see, differences constantly re-emerged, ultimately affecting the coalition's structure and operation.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Board Meeting, *Minutes* , March, 12,1968.

⁹⁷ Lansdale, P., Interview by Author, 1984.

⁹⁸ The Greater Bridgeport Area Urban Coalitin *Annual Report*, 1968, p. 15.

CHAPTER FIVE:

THE BRIDGEPORT'S URBAN COALITION

STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION

Introduction: The Structure of the Bridgeport Urban Coalition

The Urban Coalition of Bridgeport followed the format proposed by the National Urban Coalition. Its presidency, an honorary position, was held by the Mayor, and his chief obligations were to serve as a chairman of the annual meeting and to appoint the first co-chairs of the steering committee to serve for one year terms. After a month the steering committee became the board of directors. The first co-chairs were white, black, and Hispanic. Subsequent chairs, chosen for ethnic diversity, were nominated in yearly elections by the board itself.¹ The chairs were responsible for executing the decisions of the board and the operations of its staff.² In some cases, responsibilities to chairs of designated task forces were delegated, particularly when it was necessary to expedite a specific project under a definite budget.³

The board of directors acted as the coalition's governing body. Six of its members, volunteer lawyers, wrote the coalition's articles of non-profit

¹ Note: It is not mentioned in the by-laws how the board chairmen be appointed. In the interviews I found out that the first co-chairmen were appointed by Mayor Curran, and after the first year, the board of directors elected its own co-chairmen.

² The Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport, *By-Laws*, p.4. (see Appendix One)

³ Ibid.

incorporation.⁴ In its meeting of March 12, 1968, the board decided to hire a paid executive director.⁵ Among other responsibilities, the director was to coordinate the six task forces formally established in April, 1968. In addition, he was to assist the four specialized service groups, planning, information, finance, and manpower,⁶ and was responsible for preparing the Board's annual report and its annual budget.

Given the political disposition of the coalition's founders, previously discussed, the lack of a permanent budget and the need to rely primarily on volunteers led to a greater degree of centralization than had been anticipated at the beginning. While this allowed the coalition to act coherently and without interfering in the work of other organizations, it also tended to emphasize the collective work of coalition members over and above the work they did as individual agents representing constituencies. This, in turn, introduced at least some degree of difference between those who were more tied to their constituencies and those for whom representation was merely formal.⁷

The Board of Directors

The tendency to centralize was evident from the outset in the designation of a steering committee⁸ on which there was at least one representative from banking, industry, religion, and social services. The steering committee became the board of directors after the first month of operation. In the first year, the

⁴ Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, Internal Operation Guide, Section three, By-Laws, p.38. (See Appendix Three).

⁵ The Urban Coalition *By-Laws*, p.5.

⁶ Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, Internal Operation Guide, p. 6.

⁷ Curren, H., Interview by Author, 1987.

⁸ See, Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport diagram.

board itself was composed of fifty-three members of whom thirty-five were white men who represented banking and industrial interests in Bridgeport. The seven white women members represented religious organizations and social services, as did the nine black and two Hispanic women members.⁹ The domination of the board by white males was to continue throughout its history, limiting the coalition's capacity to sustain its legitimacy vis-a-vis a large segment of the population, and sharpening the differences between those who could speak directly for their institutions and those who represented constituencies for whom value questions could neither be known in advance nor resolved by a simple decision. In a sense, this was a division between those who represented power and those who represented people.¹⁰

Some on the board held strategic positions in their sending organizations. Although they had influence and decision-making authority within those organizations, they could not undertake monetary obligations on their behalf without consultation. Thus, as agents for their sending organizations, they had two occasionally competing loyalties in attempting to mobilize resources and gain support for the coalition's proposals.¹¹ These contributing organizations, although outside the coalition, competed to exercise influence on the coalition's decisions. Other members, such as Clarence Williams, were involved in other reform efforts which overlapped those of the coalition. In these cases, discussed below, the coalition was able to operate more effectively in promoting specific projects.

⁹ Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, Bridgeport, CT 1968 p. 16

¹⁰ *Internal Operation Guide*, p. 32.

¹¹ Haywood, D., Interview by Author, 1987.

During the first year of the coalition's existence, \$26,000.00 were donated by fifty private organizations. The amounts varied and this created tension among those contributors as to their relative influence on the coalition's expenditures and projects.¹² Lansdale said that although the contributions were combined into a single budget and were used jointly, there was "a feeling of superiority by those whose companies contributed more."¹³ Despite this, decisions were determined by a process in which each member had a single vote, regardless of the amount contributed by his or her constituency. Funds were allocated to the six task forces according to needs and programs agreed upon by the board and approved by the constituency. Each task force was chaired by two or three board members, one white, one black, and, in some cases, a Hispanic. Those who worked on the task forces operated primarily as functionaries, essentially carrying out the board's decisions. This lack of autonomy was alienating to those who claimed to represent community-based groups, since in reality they did not have clearly-defined constituencies and, therefore, had to demonstrate the relevance of coalition work on a day-to-day basis. This may be one reason why the coalition had difficulty accomplishing specific goals.¹⁴

By the second year, the board had grown to eighty-five members,¹⁵ of whom ten were white women, eleven were Hispanic,¹⁶ nine were black men and

¹² Lansdale, P., Interview by Author, 1982

¹³ Lansdale, P., Interview by Author. 1984.

¹⁴ Note: See chapter six.

¹⁵ Note: Although the By-Laws indicate a maximum of seventy five members on The Board of Directors, in this year it had eighty five of them. No documentation was found on the matter, and the interviewees could not recall any discussion on the matter at any time.

¹⁶ Note: No breakdown of Hispanic men and women.

five were black women.¹⁷ In 1971, the coalition had decreased in size to seventy-six members.¹⁸ However, by 1973 there were only fifty-eight members, including five women, six Hispanics and eight blacks.¹⁹ The last report, published for 1974-75, listed seventy-two board members.²⁰

The board needed a quorum of two-thirds to legalize its decisions. It was responsible for submitting an annual report and establishing and publicizing a budget prior to each fiscal year.²¹ Turnover was relatively insignificant among the core of forty who chaired the task forces and the service committees under the executive director.

The Decline of the Urban Coalition

The precipitous decline in membership during the last year of the coalition's existence reflected, according to several members whom I interviewed, a shift of interest away from efforts of the sort represented by the coalition toward existing public agencies, and from an emphasis on influencing public attitudes toward one on directly influencing policy in the areas of education, employment, housing, communication, and intergroup relations. The impetus for this shift among "interested citizens" was said by Sam Hawley to have come from the business community and government,²² and was no doubt responsive to the urban fiscal crisis of the mid-1970's. Anne Finnie, the last director of the coalition,

¹⁷ Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, Bridgeport, CT: 1969, p. 17.

¹⁸ Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, Bridgeport, CT 1970-71, p. 15.

¹⁹ Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, Bridgeport, CT 1972-73 p. 17

²⁰ Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, Bridgeport, CT 1974-75 p. 4.

²¹ Ibid, p. 40.

²² Hawley, S., Interview by Author, 1982.

volunteered her services from April, 1975, to the closing of the coalition in January, 1976. On the date of the coalition's closing, she submitted a final report.²³

Clarence Williams claimed, in an interview, that the people he represented advocated closing the coalition in the mid-1970's on the grounds that it had not had a significant impact on the prospects of blacks in the area. In any case, banks and industrial firms, many of whom left the city, withdrew or sharply cut back their financial support of the coalition.²⁴ While this was not a cause of the coalition's termination, it was a symptom of a loss of general support for its original project from within the elite groups for whom that project was designed. Carlos Calderon, a Hispanic member of the coalition, argued that Hispanics wanted the coalition to continue since they saw the value of communication for community cohesiveness. According to him, the urban coalition did not have an opportunity to fulfill its mission since it closed while still in its first phase of operations. He was of the opinion that communication among coalition members and the development of trust had already been accomplished to a sufficient extent, and he was optimistic about the coalition's ability to promote change in the future.²⁵

I believe that one of the explanations for why the coalition ended is that as its autonomy increased, it posed problems for its white constituencies. These problems of representation became all the more acute in the context of the urban

²³ Finnie, A., Interview by Author, October 14, 1983.

I could not find the closing document.

Note: This is not written in any place, but from discussion with H. Wasserman, 1982, P. Lansdale, 1982 and S. Hawley, 1982, it became clear that from the outset the initiators of the Urban Coalition depended on having the support from the political and financial power structure.

²⁴ Williams, C., Interview by Author, 1989.

²⁵ Calderon, C., Interview by Author, 1988.

crisis of the mid-1970's which reoriented business toward extra-local markets, the relative neutralization of the Civil Rights movement which reduced the sense of urgency on the part of white elites, the re-emergence of white racism in the face of local scarcities imposed by extra-local financial policies, the pressure of new political forces within the black community less optimistic about the prospects for reform "from within," and the decline of the "human relations" perspective with its substitution of "communication" for politics and of "intergroup tensions" for exploitation and oppression.²⁶

Conflicts with Elected Officials

From the start, key administrative officials were suspicious of the coalition, possibly for political reasons since the Mayor was committed to it, but also, arguably, because of a reluctance to confront the significance of racism to their own interests. For example, the chief of Bridgeport's Police Department insisted that elected officials had the right to operate their departments according to the terms of their authority and without interference by non-elected groups. The chief was an elected official and thought of himself as both independent of the Mayor and a power broker in his own right. The Urban Coalition was, so far as he was concerned, merely a public relations vehicle for the Mayor, and a possibly divisive presence that could only exacerbate conflicts with which the police had to deal.

The Chief of Police was especially opposed to the appointment of James Tisdale as the first executive director of the coalition. He felt that Tisdale was not the right man for the position because of his disputes with the policies of the

²⁶ Merchant, J., Interview by Author, 1984.

Merchant stressed that it was essential for the blacks to be equal partners in the Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport.

police department and criticisms of its attitudes toward blacks. In spite of the chief's opposition, Tisdale was appointed by the board of directors at its meeting of June 11, 1968, effective on July 1st, 1968. Protesting this decision, the chief left the meeting at which Tisdale took office.

Tisdale was known to the police department as an advocate of black youths in conflict with the police. He had confronted police officials on numerous occasions when he believed that a young person was being mistreated. Ann Biggs said, in an interview, that Tisdale's family had been harassed by the police, and recalled an incident in early May of 1968, when James' mother was standing near the exit of a shopping mall waiting for her son to pick her up. A policeman asked her to move saying that she was blocking the entrance to the mall. She replied that she was not the only person standing there, and that she had a right to be there, to which he replied that she no had such rights and pushed her away from the doors. At that point, James Tisdale appeared and asked the policeman to stop. A heated argument developed between the two, during which the policeman called for help and Tisdale was arrested. The incident was witnessed by white and black bystanders, who then escorted the police car to the police station in which Tisdale was charged and released on his promise to appear in court. Many who observed the incident came to court ready to stand witness for Tisdale. The trial was long and took place in a packed court room.²⁷ Tisdale was finally cleared, and the Judge called for mutual respect and tolerance by the police as well as by Bridgeport residents.²⁸ At the board meeting of July, 1968, at which Tisdale assumed office, the police superintendent, Joseph A. Walsh, left the meeting angrily. He said: "I do not believe in a super-agency taking over

²⁷Williams, C., Interview by Author, 1988.

²⁸ *Bridgeport Post*, March 2, 1973.

functions of elected city officials or city boards and department heads.” While leaving the room, he added that he had no intention of participating in the board’s meetings in the future.²⁹

The Financial Structure of the Urban Coalition

The coalition’s fiscal year ran from April 1st to March 31st. The director was responsible for closing the books and submitting them to the board of directors for annual audit and for presentation at the annual meeting scheduled for within ninety days of the end of the fiscal year.³⁰ The board was then responsible for publicizing the budget for the following year.³¹ The following chart presents summaries of these annual statements.

THE URBAN COALITION’S STATEMENTS OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

1968 Fiscal year ending March 31,1969.

Receipts of contributions	\$26,072
Expenses	\$36,054
Total expenses over income	\$9,982 ³²

1969 Fiscal year ending March 31,1970.

Receipts of contributions	\$53,446
Expenses	\$51,355
Total income over expenses	\$2,091 ³³

²⁹ *Bridgeport Post*, May 14, 1973.

³⁰ Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1972-1973.

³¹ Strickland, L. Elliott, Urban Coalition of Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1973-1974, p. 1
Note: these are all the financial reports that I found.

³² Urban Coalition Of Greater Bridgeport, *Annual report*, 1968, Financial Statement ,p. 15.

³³ Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport, *Annual report*, 1969, Financial statement. p. 16.

1970 Fiscal year ending March 31,1971.	
Receipts of contributions	\$ 54,941
Total expenses	\$65,138
Excess of expenses over income	\$10,197 ³⁴

1972 Fiscal year ending March 31,1973	
Receipts of contributions	\$36,544
Total expenses	\$31,484
Total income over expenses	\$4,696 ³⁵

1973 Fiscal year ending March 31,1974.	
Receipts of contributions	\$41,489
Total expenses	\$41,888
Excess of expenses over income	\$419 ³⁶

[The last financial report of the Urban Coalition was presented on March 31st, 1975.]

1974 Fiscal year ending March 31,1975.	
Receipts of contributions	\$32,522
Total expenses	\$35,674
Excess expenditures over revenues	\$ 3,152 ³⁷

These reports do not include funds for specific projects provided by other agencies and organizations. Nor do they measure contributions of time and resources by volunteers, or space and materials contributed by City Hall. Much of its work did not require funding, and even small sums were sufficient to operate its office. Therefore, fluctuations in direct cash contributions were not responsible for the coalition's termination, nor do they adequately measure degree of community support. Lansdale's claim, that the termination of the

³⁴ Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1970-1971, Financial Report, p. 12.

³⁵ Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1972-1973, Financial Report, p. 9.

³⁶ Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1973-1974, Financial Report, p. 8.

³⁷ Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1974-1975, Financial Report, p. 6.

coalition was due to declining contributions is not supported by the evidence.³⁸ What the evidence does support is the turn by private sector organizations away from urban reform as it was conceived by the National Urban Coalition and the coalition in Bridgeport.

Professionals and Staff

The endorsement of James Tisdale as the first executive director of the coalition came from the 1800 Club members and some white leaders who knew him as an educator and as an activist in the black community. He was a member of the delegation that went from Bridgeport to Washington in the summer of 1967, to establish the National Urban Coalition. As a member of the 1800 club and a leader in the black community, he was thought to have considerable knowledge of the community's needs and was familiar with its resources.³⁹ Active in the local Civil Rights Movement, and a Bridgeport representative on the National Board of the NAACP, Tisdale had broad connections with people from all strata of the community. He led the Youth Commandos of Bridgeport and Stratford, an action-oriented youth group in the NAACP. He had been active in the Inter-Group Council, and had served on the Inner-City Housing Committee and on the board of Black History Month. Tisdale was a leading figure in the battle against drug addiction, serving on a committee appointed by the Mayor to study the use of drugs in Bridgeport.⁴⁰ It was not only his knowledge and involvement that drew attention to him, but also his personality. Helen Wasserman described him as a person who had the ability to focus on the

³⁸ Lansdale, P., Interview by Author, 1982

³⁹ Tisdale, J., Interview by Author, 1982.

⁴⁰ "Coalition Names First Director", *Bridgeport Post*, June 12, 1968 (No page no. in the newspaper clipping).

important matters, and to listen to all the reasoning. He combined, she said, the “gift of a mediator with an ability to make decisions.”⁴¹ With his background and qualifications, the board of directors decided that Tisdale would be able to pull the various groups that made up the coalition together into a working relationship.⁴²

Tisdale understood that the coalition’s project would take time, and time meant different things to different groups. Thus, he attempted to mediate between different elements within the coalition, and between the coalition and the community.⁴³ The task of mediation reflected the most sensitive points of division within the coalition, those which corresponded to the contradictory aspects of the coalition form itself (see Chapter Two). Indeed, it was to be proven difficult for Tisdale to reconcile his functions as a mediator with those involved in guiding the coalition in its specific projects, since the latter had more to do with the internal life of the coalition than with its relationships to the world of its various constituencies. Thus, Tisdale was obliged to assist the task forces in preparing proposals for projects that would be accepted by the board, to advise the service committees, and act as administrator of the coalition’s affairs. As an executive director, Tisdale was the first paid employee of the coalition. He was assisted by a paid secretary. All other participants were volunteers.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Wasserman, H., Interview by Author, 1982.

⁴² Wolfe, M., Interview by Author, 1986.

⁴³ Tisdale, J., Interview by Author, 1982.

⁴⁴ Meeting of the Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, *Minutes*, March 12, 1968

The Service Groups

The coalition developed subgroups, specializing in planning, information, finance, and manpower, that acted under the executive director. Each service group had two co-chairs, one white and the other either black or Hispanic. It included five to ten members from the board of directors.⁴⁵

The planning group developed methods of acquiring volunteers. In addition, it coordinated the activities of the service groups and the task forces, and worked on internal communication. It also evaluated organizational arrangements within the coalition, and developed plans for cooperation between the coalition and city government, including model city programs.⁴⁶ Its meetings raised questions concerning the choice of programs, possible areas of conflict among programs, ways of facilitating coalition work, and methods of promoting communication and cooperation between the coalition and community agencies.⁴⁷ Ethel White noted, in an interview, that the planning group gradually developed into a problem-solving committee in regard to the above issues. While it operated precisely at the point at which coalition work encountered its greatest problems of legitimacy with constituencies, white's emphasis on its "catalytic" function suggests that it was saved from too much conflict by the fact that it operated primarily in the area of planning rather than implementation.⁴⁸

The information group focused on two broad areas: research and evaluation of community's needs and resources. It provided summaries for presentation at

⁴⁵ The Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, *By-Laws*, p. 33.

⁴⁶ The Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport, *Organization Report*, Section one, Service Groups, 1968, p.7.

⁴⁷ Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport, *Organization Report*, Section One, Service Groups, 1968, p.8.

⁴⁸ White, E., Interview by Author, 1886.

board meetings and for the task forces. It also served as a central source of information on urban affairs, both national and local, for coalition members and subgroups.⁴⁹ The information service group worked closely with the planning group and the public support task force.⁵⁰ It developed a format for minutes and progress reports, and published a monthly newsletter, *The Reporter*, which included reports on the activities of the coalition.⁵¹ The newsletter served to provide constituencies with information in such a way as to mute issues of legitimacy that might have arisen within the coalition. In this sense, it performed as a public relations organ of the coalition.

The financial group was responsible for accounting, auditing, budget control, financial investigation, and fund raising. Volunteers with professional experience developed a system of accounting and auditing for the coalition's operation. They established the yearly budget, reviewed employees' salaries, and calculated the available funds from local, state, and federal government, and from private foundations. Further, they assisted the treasurer and the executive director in preparing funding requests, and designed methods for raising funds.⁵² Most of the group's work involved making all aspects of the coalition accountable. Thus, it was the least controversial of the service groups, though its reports on differences among contributors were often occasions of controversy.

The manpower group was designed to coordinate relations among volunteers and assign them to tasks according to their interests and qualifications. It was also to compile lists of specialists available for consultation by sub-committees or

⁴⁹ Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport, *Organizational report*, 1968, p. 10.

⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 11.

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 12.

⁵² Ibid, p. 14-17.

the task forces.⁵³ However, it was never able to establish itself, and its functions were distributed to other service groups. The three functioning service groups effectively oriented the coalition inward, toward its own processes more than outward toward its constituencies. This accounted for the increasing separation over time between the rationalization of tasks and the development and publication of program, exemplifying how an increased emphasis on instrumental rationality can come to compromise a representational coalition's capacity to endure in its original form.

The Task Forces

Immediately after the establishment of the coalition, its board, and the service groups, the six task forces were developed around police and community relations, housing, education, employment (later employment and economic development), and public support, communication and recreation.⁵⁴ The co-chairs, volunteers, were appointed by the board of directors for two year terms. Their responsibility was to collect ideas from various sources about the needs of the community, hold weekly meetings of sub-committees for deliberation and the establishment of priorities, and conduct monthly meetings to prepare reports for the board meetings. At least five members of a task force had to be present to have a quorum. Minutes were taken and distributed.⁵⁵ The task forces were the cutting edge of the coalition. Each one operated at the point at which legitimation

⁵³ Ibid, p. 19.

Note: The manpower service group was actually never implemented, although it was the coalition intention to develop it. I did not find any resource that discussed the question why it was not actualized.

⁵⁴ Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport, *Annual report*, 1968, p. 6.

⁵⁵ Note: Minutes were suppose to be taken in each meeting of each task force. I found only limited number of task force meetings minutes. Most of those are of the education task force.

was most likely to interfere with coalition's work. Most of the conflict reported by interviewees as having occurred at board meetings involved task force reports and disagreements among the task forces.

The Police and Community Relations task force attempted to define areas of conflict between the police and the community, particularly those having to do with discriminatory practices and racial hostility among officers. It also suggested methods by which the police department could function as a protective service, especially in areas where people traditionally had negative attitudes toward law enforcement officials. In the third year of the task force operation, it was reinforced by a representative from the judiciary, the office of the Prosecutor, and private attorneys. Plans were also made to add police chiefs from area communities besides the Bridgeport representation.⁵⁶ The task force also invited the general community "to use metal making tools to inscribe such things as televisions and other items which are great theft targets. The numbers of such items would be registered with the police department and could be readily identified if stolen and recovered."⁵⁷ However, since the police department did not cooperate, this effort did not bare fruit.

Margaret Cromwell, a Headstart supervisor, who co-chaired the task force, recalled that the superintendent of the police department was a major obstacle to the amelioration of police-community relations: "We all tried very hard with him, but he was a tough nut to crack."⁵⁸ The standards for entering the Bridgeport police department were geared to exclude minorities, and those few who were admitted had little chance of advancement. Cromwell described the

⁵⁶ Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1972-1973, p. 5.

⁵⁷ Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1973-1974, p. 7.

⁵⁸ Cromwell, M., Interview by Author, June 12, 1987.

"bitter fight" waged by the chief, who came to board meetings a few blocks from the police headquarters with the only black officer on the force,⁵⁹ as if flaunting the tokenism of the department. Her account was corroborated by other interviewees, who added that, in their opinions, the negative way police related to the black community, intensified tensions in Bridgeport during the 1960's and 1970's.⁶⁰

The task force searched for a model that might be put into practice in Bridgeport. Cleveland's black Mayor, Carl Stokes, had, under similar conditions, established an integrated police department headed by a black superintendent. The chairs of the task force went to Cleveland to observe the operation of the reorganized department. "We had to see how it worked" recalled Margaret."⁶¹ Bridgeport's police superintendent opposed their trip, and rejected all suggestions made by the chairs after they returned. This was consistent with his opposition to the urban coalition itself and finally undermined the coalition's capacity to develop a visible program for improving police-community relations.⁶²

The Employment Task Force was a joint effort of the coalition, the Bridgeport Chamber of Commerce, the Manufacturer's Association of Bridgeport, Manpower, and the youth center named ABCD.⁶³ Its first task was to develop

⁵⁹Cornwell, M., Interview By Author, 1987.

⁶⁰Kent, J., J. Merchant, H. Wasserman, C. Stern, G. Johnson, A. Biggs, A. Finnie and C. Calderon.

⁶¹Cornwell, M., interview, 1987.

⁶²Yarrington, B., Interview by Author, May 26, 1982.

⁶³ Note:ABCD was formed in the late 1950s by the 1800 club. Its first director, Charles Tisdale said in an interview in May of 1982, that the main purpose of ABCD was to become the center for minority youth in bridgeport. It provided recreation, homework supervision, sports, several clubs and classes. In addition ABCD was concerned with keeping the youth of the streets by getting part time jobs for those interested.

summer employment opportunities for teenagers. It created Youthpower, an employment agency directed towards and staffed by teenagers from the Greater Bridgeport Area. Youthpower, working with ABCD and supported by the 1800 Club, formed a year-round employment agency for part-time employment of high-school students and full-time employment of high-school dropouts.⁶⁴

In 1970, the Employment Task Force expanded its operations and became the Employment and Economic Development Task Force. In its first meeting, it was agreed that the task force would survey all minority-owned businesses in the Greater Bridgeport Area, and list them by types of product. This survey was then to be furnished to all businesses in the area for use in evaluating contract bids. In addition, the task force provided assistance to minorities who wished to establish small businesses.⁶⁵ A consulting team, including a lawyer, a certified accountant, an insurance agent, and several retailers was established to provide back-up support and to staff a seminar for minorities who were interested in developing their own businesses. Thirteen people enrolled in and completed a series of seminars on "How to Manage Your Own Business".⁶⁶ In the same year the task force contributed to the development of *The Greater Bridgeport Business and Professional Men's and Women's Association*, A non-profit organization formed to assist minority businesses and minority professional personnel. To this end, the GBBPMWA undertook several tasks consistent with those adopted by the coalition: to consolidate an up-to-date list of minority businesses, to categorize

⁶⁴ Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1968, p. 5.

⁶⁵ Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1969, p. 7.

⁶⁶ Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1970. p. 6.

businesses and list them geographically, and to contact owners and make them aware of available resources.⁶⁷

Clarence Williams became the first director of the GBBPMWA,⁶⁸ which published a minority business directory for the Greater Bridgeport area in 1973. Its preamble stated that "...It is our hope that industry will use this directory to seek out those services and products they may need and thus help alleviate the critical economic status of our inner-city residents. It is also our hope that inner-city churches and social agencies will use it to direct their members and clients to these various businesses located in their own communities, and thus help keep economic resources within these communities."⁶⁹ For the next two years, the task force, under the leadership of Ethel White, concentrated on ameliorating conditions in the P.T. Barnum housing project. Twenty business leaders were involved in helping the P.T. Barnum residents actively to improve their living conditions, by renovation, attracting small businesses to the area, and restoring services where they had lapsed.⁷⁰

Affirmative action was very much on the minds of the members of the Economic Development Task Force, since blacks and Hispanics were the prime victims of layoffs in the mid-1970s. In May 1974, the task force sponsored a one day seminar for minorities concerning inequality and job seeking.⁷¹ Following the seminar the task force released a statement saying that "in this period of

⁶⁷ Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1972-1973. p. 7.

⁶⁸ Williams C., interview by Author, February, 18, 1991.
Williams was the director of the minority Business organization until 1989.

⁶⁹ Economic Task Force, Greater Bridgeport Urban Coalition, *Minority Business Directory-Greater Bridgeport*, Bridgeport: Southern Connecticut Telephone Co., Publisher, (No year of publishing is given in the pamphlet. According to Ethel White it was published in 1970). p. 1.

⁷⁰ Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1973-1974, p. 6.

⁷¹ Employment and Economic Development Task Force, Special Meeting, *Minutes*, May 1, 1974.

layoffs and increased unemployment, black and Spanish speaking persons should not suffer disproportionately in employment opportunities".⁷² The Employment and Economic Development Task Force functioned until the coalition terminated its operations. While the results of its efforts were less than satisfactory, it nevertheless had a significant impact on the employment situation of young minority residents of Bridgeport. The ability of the task force to operate efficiently and with clearly defined objectives was partly due to the fact that its goals had considerable legitimacy among blacks and Hispanics, less among white members of the business community.⁷³ As a result, even though the tangible results were meager, the project raised the level of political awareness in the black and Hispanic community.

The Housing Task Force aimed at participating in any effort to improve housing conditions in Bridgeport. It was formed in 1968, and focused on desegregation, neighborhood improvement, and ameliorating conditions in inner-city residential housing. During its first year of operation it encouraged tenants to form associations which could mobilize people to demand fair rent policies for state-owned units, rehabilitation of existing apartments, rehabilitation and partial co-op conversion of Father Panik Village and other projects. It also completed a survey of housing needs in principle poverty areas, and formulated recommendations for meeting future housing needs of the city,

⁷² Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1975, p. 2.

⁷³ White, E., Interview by Author, 1984.

White expressed frustration at the business community in Bridgeport. She said that the business community gave more lip service than actual help to the minorities of the city.

urging the Mayor's Housing Council to support requests for zoning variations and changes designed to accommodate higher density housing units.⁷⁴

In 1969, in addition to the above goals, the task force emphasis was to support meliorative legislation and to enforce its effectiveness, establish complaint and enforcement procedures, and monitor real estate industry practices in greater Bridgeport.⁷⁵ Once more, City officials refused to cooperate with the urban coalition. They prevented task force members access to housing projects, and forbid tenants associations from having any contact with the coalition's housing task force.⁷⁶ Continued pressure on city officials, during 1970 and 1971, to improve matters was not effective. The resistance to the task force was fierce, and eventually its members decided to cease operations temporarily.⁷⁷

In May 1973, the Housing Task Force resumed its functions, working closely with the Connecticut Housing Investment Fund which "was established to help minority families buy their own homes by providing guidance and assistance with loans."⁷⁸ Its director, Clarence Williams, was a member of the urban coalition. The two agencies agreed to survey the housing needs of major poverty areas to promote the establishment of a Department of Housing for the City of Bridgeport.⁷⁹ In addition, they suggested including minority real estate agents on

⁷⁴ Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1968 p. 7, 1969, p. 8.

Note: The Housing task force was inactive from 1970-May of 1973 due to internal difficulties and outside resentment.

⁷⁵ Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1969, p. 8.

⁷⁶ Note: letters regarding this disputed interaction are available in the library's archive.

⁷⁷ Wolf, M., Interview by Author, 1986.

⁷⁸ Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1972-73, p. 5.

⁷⁹ William, C., Interview by Author, 1982.

state and local real estate boards, to provide a task force consultant to act as a liaison between the city and tenants, and "to establish a fair housing office to investigate and to seek out patterns of discrimination."⁸⁰ Determined to continue its function, the task force developed a housing information bureau in 1974, with an emphasis on housing for minorities and the elderly. It also endorsed the idea of creating a historic park in Bridgeport, and called for city action in building new housing⁸¹

The housing task force had numerous disputes with elected officials who did not want "outside interference." This prevented the task force, whose main concern continued to be the needs of the poor, minorities, and the elderly, from being effective.⁸² Like the task force on employment and economic development, it operated at a point at which the need for legitimacy overwhelmed the imperatives of internal organization. Also, because of its emphasis on policy, it was dependent on the good will of public officials. In this respect, it resembled the task force on police-community relations and experienced some of the same results.

The Public Support and Communication Task Force was the coalition's voice in the community. It attempted to interpret the coalition's work to local organizations, including local firms. To this end, the task force prepared a comprehensive document to be for used for speeches about the coalition and also for publicity purposes. A letter was sent inviting community members to join its various committees in their work. The task force supplied a tape for spots on WICC (the local radio station) to explain "why the coalition is important for The

⁸⁰ Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1972-1973, p. 5.

⁸¹ Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1975. p. 2.

⁸² Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1975. p. 2.

Greater Bridgeport Area.”⁸³ It also coordinated a speakers’ bureau for educating women which had two purposes: to educate women about the the urban coalition and to inform the general public about the coalition and its purposes.⁸⁴ A brochure on the coalition and its work was distributed to agencies, schools, and libraries. A bi-monthly newsletter, *The Reporter*, was published to summarize the activities of the coalition.⁸⁵ A “hot line” was established to assist residents of Bridgeport in dealing with problems of housing, employment, and education. The task force also coordinated the summer teenage volunteer program in hospitals and community organizations. Youths were encouraged to assist in making displays and distributing information about summer reading programs for adults, teenagers, and children in order to increase their awareness and understanding of the urban crisis.⁸⁶ In 1969, the speaker’s bureau enlisted thirty-six volunteers to brief community organizations about the urban coalition. *The Reporter* continued to appear every other month, the “hot line” operated with volunteers twenty four hours a day to assist residents with problems, and taped spots about the coalition continued on WICC.

Although the task force accomplished a great deal in publicizing the urban coalition, in building up support for the crisis “hot line,” and in establishing an information center it failed to gain financial support. It was unable to convince

⁸³ Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1969, p. 8.

⁸⁴ Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1968, p. 9.

⁸⁵ Note: I could not find the brochure, and I discovered only few newsletters.

⁸⁶ Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1969, p. 10.

city officials to cooperate because their belief that the task force was intruding in matters under public jurisdiction.⁸⁷

The Recreation and Cultural Affairs Task Force operated as a catalyst for programs funded by existing agencies. During its first year, it proposed a number of projects to be carried out by ABCD, city and state governments, local manufacturers, and social and religious organizations. These were city-wide, multi-cultural projects using existing facilities, such as playing fields for sports, libraries, and spaces suitable for programs in the arts. For example, during Black History Week, Katherine Dunham and members of the Performing Arts Training Center of Southern Illinois University appeared at the Klein Memorial Auditorium and visited schools in the Greater Bridgeport Area⁸⁸ to perform a play produced and directed by the Black Unity Organization. She also offered an annual scholarship to students talented in drama. This event stimulated the development of a drama group in the West End. A consultant was assigned by the board of education which also helped to finance the project.⁸⁹ In 1968, the task force encouraged the establishment of operation Good Sport which organized school remedial and sports programs for 150 target area youths. As the summer began, a basketball program was organized involving approximately 270 youths from the area. The following fall, the ABCD and the YMCA

⁸⁷ Back, D., Interview, 1984.

D. Back was the assistant director for the Jewish Federation, and a member of the Urban Coalition from its inception.

⁸⁸ Note: Although it was reported that the black performing group from Illinois visited schools in the greater Bridgeport area, in effect, according to few interviewees they visited only schools in bridgeport.

⁸⁹ Tisdale, J., Interview by Author, 1982.

sponsored an Urban Coalition Junior Football League, with 260 youths participating.⁹⁰

These programs were directed and funded by existing agencies with the help of the recreation and cultural affairs task force. The football and basketball programs extended into the following year with the addition of a track meet held in August, 1969 involving 100 boys and girls from Bridgeport. The main cultural event of 1969 was a Puerto Rican cultural exhibit, sponsored by the Hispanic community with the assistance of the urban coalition. In addition, the community celebrated the Afro-American Week with local exhibits, dance performances, and lectures.⁹¹ Programs such as these continued and were expanded in 1970 and 1971.⁹² However successful in their own terms, they did not bring and urban suburban young people together, a goal that the urban coalition had initially set for itself and for the task force.

A youth leadership program, coordinated by Dorothy Back, of the Jewish Federation was also organized by the task force. It was intended to combine recreation and leadership training in a context of enhanced intergroup contact.⁹³ Back was also responsible for the first Greater Bridgeport Area Youth Conference, which provided for direct contact between young people from different ethnic groups, races, and religions. *The Greater Bridgeport Area Youth Council* was established at the conference as a sponsoring agency for city-wide programs, such as sports and dance events, which provided an opportunity for young people of different backgrounds to interact free of the invidious norms of

⁹⁰ Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1968, p. 11.

⁹¹ Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1969.

⁹² Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1970-1971, p. 10.

⁹³ "Dotty Back Leaves Bpt. UJC After 18 Years' Work", *Jewish Ledger*, 12-6-1973, p. 1, 4.

discrimination and prejudice. The Council also sponsored workshops on teenage issues, "good will" projects such as visits to children in area hospitals, and the collection of food and clothing for the poor.⁹⁴ In its second year, the Youth Council sponsored exhibits of various sorts by Puerto Rican and Afro-American young people. These were supported as well by city and state funds.⁹⁵

Despite the publicity surrounding these events, and their evident success, financial support remained scarce. Thereafter, some programs shifted exclusively to other agencies, such as public libraries, the YMCA, the Jewish Community Center, and the ABCD. Their continuation in this form suggests that the task force succeeded in its general program, but the subsequent lack of overall coordination reduced the significance of each project to the coalition's overall plan of promoting a community-wide transformation of race and ethnic relations.

The Education task force was designed to support on-going programs in the school system of Bridgeport and to initiate new programs which could encourage favorable intergroup contact. To determine the specifics, it proposed to conduct a needs assessment through a feasibility study of Bridgeport and its surrounding towns.⁹⁶ The Education Task Force will be discussed in detail, in the next chapter.

The two most successful task forces, on recreation and cultural affairs, and public support and communication, were terminated in 1972, suggesting a transformation in the coalition from an emphasis on legitimizing programs at the

⁹⁴ Back D., Interview by Author, 1984.

⁹⁵ Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1969, p. 11.

Johnson, G., Interview by Author, 1984.

Note: Exhibits like the Puerto-Rican and the Afro-American in 1969, provided information about different ethnic groups, races and cultures. The Urban Coalition was strongly committed to multi-culturalism.

⁹⁶ Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1968, p. 13,14.

point of application with the communities of interest, what I have called constituencies, to one on autonomous projects aimed at influencing policy and directed at policy-makers. My discussion of the Task Force on Education will explore this transformation and illustrate the ways in which increasing emphasis on the logic of goal attainment, undermined the coalition form and, through that, the capacity of the coalition to operate effectively in key areas of community development.

James Tisdale justified his resignation after one year by claiming that the business community, on which the financing of the coalition's office depended, had failed to fulfill its promises.⁹⁷ After a search, the board of directors, in October, 1969, hired Walter B. Hill to serve as the coalition's second executive director. Hill was a member of the coalition's board, the NAACP, and the 1800 club. Like Tisdale, he grew up in Bridgeport and was active in the black community. He listed as his goals the improvement of administrative procedures, strengthening of the task forces, and creating a system for evaluating the coalition's work.⁹⁸ To this end he sought the help of Allan Ballard of Ballard Brothers Corporation, and Ethel White of the Southern New England Telephone Company. They were able to develop an efficient system of coordinating the coalition's work according to specific goals. Hill's approach was more managerial than Tisdale's, and was therefore more focused on administration and specific projects than on the question of "value" and the corresponding need to give priority, as Tisdale had, to the legitimization of the coalition in regard to its constituencies. Thus, the transformation of the coalition form to the more conventional form of an instrumentally oriented group began almost at the

⁹⁷ Tisdale, J., interview by Author, 1982.

⁹⁸ Hill . Walters, Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1969, pp 4-5.

outset. The tension that accompanied this transformation was to define the internal life of the coalition from that time until 1976, when its operations ceased altogether.

Struggle over the use of the coalition's increasingly limited resources occurred periodically among its members, especially between Hispanics and blacks, the latter representing the intersection of race, class, and ethnicity. The Spanish speaking members came to demand a stronger voice, and after long discussions early in 1970, Antonio D. Diaz became Deputy Executive Director of the Urban Coalition. As such, he was able to represent the interests of the Spanish-speaking community to the board, including the need for bi-lingual education in the Bridgeport school system. At the end of his first year in office, Diaz said that "increased educational opportunities would help the Spanish speaking people to bridge the gap between the two cultures."⁹⁹ Since he was seen as representing only one group among various constituencies, his deputy chairship was often challenged on the ground that it had ceased to operate for the coalition as a whole. Antagonistic confrontations between Hill and Diaz eventually led to the resignation of both at the end of 1972.¹⁰⁰ At that point, the board of directors decided to conduct a national search for a professional director who had no ties to Bridgeport and would serve no particular constituency. When Dr. Elliot L. Strickland, a sociologist from Cleveland, Ohio, was chosen as executive director in January, 1973, the transformation of the coalition from a constituency based operation to an organization in its own right was virtually complete. Along with Ethel White, the new Deputy Director of the coalition, Dr.

⁹⁹ Diaz, D., Antonio, Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1970-1971, p. s.

¹⁰⁰ Note: The Mayor of Bridgeport, Hugh Curran resigned in 1972. He was replaced by Nicholas A. Panuzio, who was also supportive of the Urban Coalition. H. Curran continued to serve on the board of directors of the Urban Coalition.

Strickland was expected to turn things around.¹⁰¹ In his first board meeting he called for increased community financial support and for a reduction in internal antagonism.¹⁰²

In the annual report of 1973, Strickland emphasized two points: that the coalition should operate primarily as an advocate for institution-based change, and that it should attempt to enhance its ability to procure funds from the business community.¹⁰³ The change of focus ultimately led the coalition to subject its operations increasingly to criteria of efficiency; and, since financial contributions rather than community support, grew to define success and failure, it was inevitable that the coalition would reconsider its future based on amounts of contributions.¹⁰⁴

1974 was a year of crisis for the Urban Coalition. The board of directors questioned Dr. Strickland's ability to maintain adequate levels of effectiveness and efficiency. City officials became increasingly vocal in expressing dissatisfaction with the coalition, and community agencies which had developed expectations about the coalition's willingness and ability to contribute tangibly to reform, expressed their own disappointment. After a thorough investigation, the board, in November, 1974, requested the resignation of Dr. Strickland.¹⁰⁵ Ethel White, the deputy director, became acting director.

¹⁰¹ White E., Interview by Author, 1983.

¹⁰² Strickland L. Elliott, Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1972-1973, p.2.

¹⁰³ Strickland, L. Elliott, Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1973-1974, p. 1.

¹⁰⁴ Calderon C. C., Curran, C. Hugh, Grantham, M. J., Co-Chairmen of the board of directors of the Urban Coalition. Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1973-1974, p. 3.

¹⁰⁵ Wasserman, H., Interview by Author, 1982.

Wasserman remembered vividly the loud meeting in which the board of directors decided the resignation of the executive director. She said that a group within the board, and she among them, felt all along that he could not lead the Urban Coalition.

At that point, the Spanish-speaking members of the board demanded a Spanish-speaking executive director, arguing that, up to 1974, all the executive directors had been black.¹⁰⁶ Joel Kent recalled, in an interview, that the problems between black and Spanish-speaking members of the coalition were by no means new. "The pie was getting smaller and poor people were scrapping over it. It was a competition based on dire needs."¹⁰⁷ The next executive director, he argued, would have had to be able to work with both groups.¹⁰⁸

The coalition was reorganized in January 1975. Ethel White became the Chairperson of the board of directors and Anne Finnie was appointed as Executive Director.¹⁰⁹ Funds were limited, and later that year, Anne Finnie chose to continue as an unpaid Executive Director.¹¹⁰ The determination to continue was suspected by the board which issued a statement that "The Urban Coalition should continue because the urban crises continues."¹¹¹

Although urban crisis, a worsening economy, and increasing financial constraints continued in 1975, the urban coalition enjoyed renewed commitment by its staff, its volunteers, and some contributors who believed the coalition could help mitigate the growing potential for "civil strife" in Bridgeport. The core of volunteers, many of whom had worked together since the 1940's, believed

¹⁰⁶ Bettalia, C., Interview by Author, January 10, 1987.

¹⁰⁷ Kent, J., Interview by Author, 1984.

¹⁰⁸ " Little Real Service Provided For Money Spend, Coalition Told" *Bridgeport Post*, 9.2. 1974, p. 4.

¹⁰⁹ Finnie, A., Interview by Author, 1982.

¹¹⁰ Finnie, A., Interview by Author, 1982.

¹¹¹ *Bridgeport Post*, 12-12-75, 12-16-75.

that the legitimacy of the coalition was sufficient for it to withstand the pressures to close it.¹¹²

In spite of these efforts, the board, in January, 1976, voted to empower the officers to take all necessary steps to disband the coalition and dissolve it as a corporation. This decision followed a report by a study committee appointed in December to investigate the state of the coalition and advise on the course of its future operation. At the end of its investigation, the committee stated that "it had not been able to complete its charge to establish goals and objectives and develop ultimate solutions for operating the coalition under its new method of functioning."¹¹³ Ethel White, in an interview, said that she had agreed that "the urban coalition has been slowly disintegrating for the past five years, as has been evidenced by declines in financial commitments, in upper level business management, and in community participation."¹¹⁴ Given the board's decision, there was little choice but to dissolve the coalition. It is notable that Bridgeport's problems increased toward the end of the 1970s. Whether or not a continuation of the coalition could have helped can not be determined. It seems unlikely that the city could in any case have avoided an increase in the same tensions that had existed in the 1960s.¹¹⁵ The collapse of the coalition was itself a symptom of this growing crisis of American institutions.¹¹⁶

In the next chapter I will discuss the Education Task Force, detailing its procedures, resources, and internal tensions as an example of the complex

¹¹² Finnie, A., Interview by Author, 1983.

¹¹³ Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport board meeting, *Minutes*, January 4, 1976.

¹¹⁴ White, E., Interview by Author, 1984.

¹¹⁵ *Bridgeport Post*, 1-13-76.

¹¹⁶ Skolnick and Currie, 1988

relationship between a representational coalition oriented to reform and its heterogeneous and politically volatile community.

CHAPTER SIX:

THE EDUCATION TASK FORCE

Introduction

The Education Task Force served as a catalyst for efforts directly aimed at improving education for Bridgeport's children, increasing retention of high-school students, and increasing the number of minorities attending college.¹ It also attempted to facilitate programs to bring young people from both urban and suburban areas together.² At its preliminary meetings, additional areas of concern were identified, such as the need for city-wide day-care programs, programs for enhancing direct interaction of young people in educational and recreational settings, and educating the community about the financial aspects of public education.³

The Organization of the Education Task Force

The task force board was originally composed of twenty-two members and co-chaired by a white, a black, and a Hispanic chosen from the membership of the coalition board.⁴ Specific areas of concern were identified, and sub-

¹ "List of Problem areas in the City of Bridgeport where the Urban Coalition Could Possibly Focus." *Memo*, September 13, 1969.

² Wasserman, H., Interview by Author, Fairfield, Connecticut, October 28, 1982.
Note: H. Wasserman served as a co-chairperson of the Education Task Force from its beginning, and until the committee ceased to exist.

³ Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1968, p. 7.

⁴ *Ibid.*

committees were appointed to oversee the development of projects. Each sub-committee was co-chaired by two or three members of the task force composed of a white, a black and/or a Hispanic.⁵ Projects initiated by sub-committees were proposed at monthly meetings of the task force board, debated, and endorsed or rejected with recommendations. If a proposal was accepted, it was sent for consideration to the various agencies with which the task force was to work. Since projects could only be undertaken with the cooperation of those agencies, their approval was necessary, a process which occasionally created delays and, as a result, increased tension around the relationship between representation and joint action.⁶

Educational Need Assessment in the Greater Bridgeport Area

Initially, the Education Task Force convened a series of meetings at which it was agreed that a problem existed regarding the coordination of educational facilities, with the need for equal opportunity in the Bridgeport area as a whole. The task force concluded that this problem warranted a need assessment study under the auspices of the Urban Coalition.⁷ Consistent with its being an "action starter", it became the sponsoring and coordinating agency.⁸ A sub-committee chaired by Parker Lansdale and Geraldine Johnson, was established to develop a proposal for the conduct of such a study. Concretely, the aim of the study was to ascertain whether or not it was feasible to introduce new educational programs

⁵ Wasserman, H., Interview by Author, 1982.

⁶ Lansdale, P., Interview by Author, Bridgeport, Connecticut, September 1, 1982.

⁷ *Public Hearing on the Feasibility Study*, Video-taped, September, 1969. Presented by The Urban Coalition Of Greater Bridgeport and Fairfield Board of Education, Fairfield, Connecticut. Note: The Public Hearing took place in the auditorium of the local high school. The auditorium was packed with residents of Fairfield.

⁸ Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport, *Education Committee Report*, November 15, 1969.

aimed at integrating curricular and extracurricular programs already in operation in various communities,⁹ thereby reducing duplication and increasing intergroup contact. The research would be conducted by the General Learning Corporation, an educational service division of General Electric and Time,¹⁰ for the purpose of identifying particular educational and cultural needs that might be met by a coordination of resources between Bridgeport and its suburbs.¹¹ In Order to gain cooperation of the various suburban communities, co-chairs of the Education Task Force and the sub-committee were to meet with school superintendents and representatives of the boards of education of Bridgeport, Fairfield, Trumbull, Westport, Wilton, Stratford, Monroe, and Weston to clarify the content and method of the proposed feasibility study.¹² Segregation was identified as the major problem restricting educational reform in the inner city, but it was also presumed to have long-term effects on the education of suburban students.¹³ The task force was aware of the difficulty of selling too radical a program. Therefore , as a first step, it focused on the possibility of establishing a relatively small number of integrated educational and recreational activities which could attract urban and suburban students.¹⁴

⁹ *Public Hearing*, Fairfield, September, 1969.

¹⁰ Note: I could not the sponsorship of the General Learning Corporation. However, in his introductions during the public hearings Lansdale said that it was a subsidiary of General Electric.

¹¹ Wasserman, H., Co-Chair, Education Committee, *Annual Report*, Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport, May, 20, 1969.

¹² Wasserman, H., Interview by Author, 1982.

¹³ Wasserman, H., *Annual Report* May 20, 1969.

¹⁴ Tisdale, C., Interview by Author, Bridgeport, Connecticut, November 2, 1982.

The proposed study was intended to decide which types of activity would be most attractive to students from both settings.¹⁵

After a series of meetings between the board of the task force and its sub-committee, several decisions were reached. First, Parker Lansdale, as co-chair of the sub-committee, was to convene a meeting of superintendents of the towns scheduled to be involved in the study in order to determine whether each superintendent would independently initiate contact with his local board of education, or the board of the Education Task Force would formally invite the presidents of each school board to participate in the program. Second, the co-chairs of the sub-committee were to ask the presidents of several local universities to select experts from among the faculty to continue the study if it became necessary to continue it beyond the six month period initially agreed to with the General Learning Corporation. Third, expenditures would include not only payments to the General Learning Corporation, but additional costs of administration, including those incurred by each local board of education. It was assumed that the project would be funded externally, with sources still to be determined. Fourth, it was agreed that if the project was undertaken, the Education Task Force would appoint an additional sub-committee to work with the various boards of education, to provide opportunities for public input and participation, and to provide educational and technical assistance for the conduct of the study. Finally, it was agreed, in principle, that all those residing in the Greater Bridgeport Area should have an opportunity to participate in the study. The primary function of the Education Task Force, therefore, was to encourage

¹⁵ Meeting of the Urban Coalition Education Sub-committee, *Minutes*, September 5, 1968. McLevy Hall, p. 1.

community involvement, especially of those residents who seemed to have the most to gain and the most to lose from the proposed study.¹⁶

Since it was agreed that there was, in fact, a division of social as well as juridical significance between the central city and its suburbs, and that this division had reached a level of crisis, the first challenge was to identify its practical, policy-relevant features. It was commonly assumed that the crisis only existed in the central city, and that the cost of educational reform would be borne, without benefit, by the suburban communities. As a result, the project could succeed only if those communities could be convinced that the crisis was essentially a regional one, requiring cooperation between both the city and its suburbs. The Education Task Force issued the following statement to that effect:

The General Learning Corporation's proposal that will be submitted to the area Boards of Education by the Urban Coalition for the Greater Bridgeport Area is based upon the conviction that there is an urgent necessity for our community, the core city of Bridgeport and its neighboring towns, to evaluate primary educational objectives and to develop means for achieving them.¹⁷

This, according to the Education Task Force, was "a response to the needs of our children."¹⁸ The proposal began with a generalization, namely that in this technological age, children were being raised in a society that often lost sight of human relationships. Given the centrality of education to the process of socializing children, school systems would have to play a great role in promoting the value of social harmony than ever before. Along with providing basic skills

¹⁶ Op. Cit. p. 2.

¹⁷ Boards of Education from the Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport, *Proposal*, December 5, 1968. p. 1.

¹⁸ Ibid

such as reading and mathematics, schools would have to teach social skills, including tolerance and respect, as well.¹⁹ Moreover, as James Tisdale pointed out on behalf of the task force, the material interdependence of communities had to be recognized in developing educational policies, since the social experience of children in one neighborhood in the Greater Bridgeport Area would inevitably affect the lives of those in every other neighborhood.²⁰ In other words, the task force operated under the premises of an informal systems theory, in which interdependence and functionality were considered of primary significance to the formation of policy. The fact that such premises were not consistent with definitions of community interests along particularistic lines, and the politics in which those definitions were formed, was ultimately to compromise the efforts of the task force. In order to mitigate the problem, the coalition attempted to cast its project in the language of local self-interest and to promote programs that were likely to be relatively unobtrusive, such as those involving intergroup contact without institutional change.²¹

Discussions with Lansdale resulted in at least guarded support from the superintendents of the local boards for the proposed study.²²

In early 1969, several months after the originally scheduled date, the proposal was submitted to the boards of education in Bridgeport, Westport, Easton, Wilton, Fairfield, Trumbull, Monroe, and Stratford.²³ Weston had,

¹⁹ Tisdale, J., *Public Hearing*, Stratford, summer, 1969.

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Wasserman, Helen, *Interview*, 1982.

²² Note: Communication between the Urban Coalition and other entities was discussed with most interviewees. Most of them agreed that the struggle for cooperation for the feasibility study was a "turning point" in communication between professionals and social organizations in the Greater Bridgeport Area.

²³ Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1968, p. 13.

independently, begun a cooperative educational program with Bridgeport, and was therefore not involved.²⁴ The proposal anticipated the results of the the study by listing ten projects:

1. Distribution of curriculum materials on minority history for various grade levels;
2. Sharing of instructional resources among urban and suburban schools through closed circuit educational television;
3. Sharing by students of the cultural heritages of minority groups, through personal accounts, by sessions with representative artists and authors, by lectures, and through assignments of appropriate texts;
4. Development of a children's performing art series under black and white leadership;
5. Exchanges of instrumental and choral groups, dramatic performances, and assembly programs by urban and suburban schools;
6. More extensive scheduling of inter-scholastic competitions involving urban and suburban students;
7. Tutoring of disadvantaged children by groups of volunteer students;
8. Joint program development by staff and students of urban and suburban schools;
9. Inviting a limited number of inner-city children to attend suburban schools on a non-resident basis;
10. Inviting a limited number of inner-city children to reside with suburban families on a full time basis (like the "AFS" program).²⁵

The outcome was expected to provide program options for the various school systems, ways for each community to determine which, if any, programs fulfill their particular needs, means by which schools can work with local universities and extra-academic agencies and institutions on the problems of

²⁴ Ibid;

Note: Norwalk did not respond to the invitation; Milford and Easton rejected the invitation.

²⁵ General Learning Corporation, *Initial report*, September, 1969.

integrated education, and a method for identifying community-wide goals through greater community involvement and dialogue.²⁶

The coalition, consistent with its self-identification as a catalyst, or, as James Tisdale called it an "action starter," coordinated the feasibility study.²⁷ General Learning Corporation was asked to submit a proposal which would specify a methodology and define the limits of their investigation, that is, the practical domain to which it would refer.²⁸ Its analysis was to emphasize program orientation rather than a fixed list of measures to be undertaken, and to suggest a process that would allow for as much community involvement as possible in moving from program to specific projects.²⁹ The primary areas in which needs were to be assessed included library programs, sports, summer activities, and educational projects. But the study was also intended to provide information about the feasibility of integrating the various student populations through busing. This became the flashpoint of much of the debate among suburbanites, exposing the racism that lay under the surface of the civility they claimed to want to preserve.³⁰

While negotiations and public hearings were in progress, the superintendent of schools in Bridgeport initiated contact with some suburban boards of education. Most immediately successful were meetings with officials in Westport. All such contacts had been made possible by the previous meetings among school superintendents organized by representatives of the Education

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1969.

²⁸ Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1969, p. 7.

²⁹ General Learning Corporation, *Annual Report*, October, 1970.

³⁰ General Learning Corporation, *Final Report*, October, 1970.

Task Force of the Urban Coalition. In the case of Westport, a summer program, initiated for students from Bridgeport in 1969, was jointly coordinated by *Action for Bridgeport Community Development (ABCD)* and Westport's Board of Education. At the end of the summer, Charles Tisdale, director of ABCD and a brother of James Tisdale, wrote to the Westport Board of Education:

I was most impressed with the planning and development of the Summer School Program; without question, the elementary age children and teenagers from the Bridgeport target neighborhoods received education of the highest quality. . . . I look forward to a similar effort on the part of the Westport Board of Education for the summer of 1970.³¹

Other programs, such as sports competitions and library activities, were planned for 1969 and the early 1970's. Although planning for those programs was separated from the feasibility study and other work of the coalition, most of those involved were either members of the coalition's board or active on one of its sub-committees. As a result, this planning process, even in areas not directly tied to the coalition, expanded the network of activities to which the coalition's work may have been relevant. As expected, the relationship between the structuring of network and the development of programs accounted, to a great extent, for the relative success of the Education Task Force.

The Boards of Education of Bridgeport, Trumbull, Westport, Wilton, Fairfield, and Stratford endorsed the feasibility study, subject to the approval of their constituencies in public hearings to be held in each community.³² The proposal was circulated in each community, and publicized in local newspapers,

³¹ Tisdale, Charles, *A Letter To Joan Schine*, December 16, 1969.

Note: Enclosed with the letter was a budget proposal as well as program ideas.

³² Note: The two video-tapes I recovered are from the public hearings in Fairfield and in Stratford.

and was then presented at public hearings conducted by the chairs of each local board of education.³³ Parker Lansdale, co-chair of the sub-committee on the feasibility study, presented the proposal at those hearings,³⁴ the first of which took place in Stratford on March 29, 1969. In contrast to the large number in attendance there, relatively few attended the hearing in Fairfield. As a result, upon the request of many Fairfield residents, a second hearing was scheduled for September, 1969.³⁵

During the September hearing, opponents of the feasibility study expressed objections, and petitions against the proposal, signed by thousands of residents, were presented.³⁶ The hearing began with a statement of purpose by the chairman of the Fairfield Board of Education, who also called upon the audience to exercise restraint and to show respect for all who wished to speak. In summarizing the purpose of the hearing, he said that

The reason we are here is because the Board of Education was invited by the urban coalition to participate in a study. The purpose of the study being to ascertain a program which the boards of education in the metropolitan Bridgeport area might participate, which will help to deal with some of the problems of education for urban minorities. The board, in coming to the decision on whether or not to join in the study, listened to interested citizens in the town, and we certainly listen to people tonight. We see many more tonight than there were a month ago. This is healthy, and this board is definitely concerned that the will of

³³ Note: I am not certain if all the public hearings were video-taped. I recovered only those from Fairfield and Stratford. They were on 3/4 inch tape, and with the help of the media department of The University of Bridgeport, they were converted to 1/2 inch VHS. Since these are the only available ones, my discussion will focus on the Public Hearings in Fairfield and Stratford.

³⁴ Note: Some information on Westport was provided, to me, by Joan Schine.

³⁵ Chair of the Board of Education, Fairfield, *Public Hearing*, Septemeber, 1969.

³⁶ Note: The videotapes of Fairfeild and Stratford show clearly the mobilization of opposition to the proposal.

the people be properly served. The difficulty, of course, is, in a group like this, ascertaining what the will of the people is on the one hand, and what the best interest of the people is on the other hand. The two are not necessarily exclusive, and it is our job to find out and decide the course to follow.³⁷

During his speech, the audience repeatedly had to be called to order.

Lansdale, a Fairfield resident as well as co-chair of the sub-committee, was then called upon by the chairman to present the proposal. Lansdale was introduced as the newly appointed director of HECUS, the Higher Education College for Urban Studies, housed at the University of Bridgeport. As he began his presentation, people from the opposition began to interrupt him. He ignored the disruptions and continued to introduce himself and the other members of the coalition who were residents of Fairfield. He summarized the background of the National Urban Coalition and the Urban Coalition For the Greater Bridgeport Area, and identified many of the key people on the board of the coalition who were Fairfield residents, "who have their children in Fairfield schools as I do."³⁸

He said that the idea was to study the cultural divisions that existed in the greater Bridgeport area, and to find ways of improving public education by addressing, specifically, those divisions. He explained that the General Learning Corporation was selected to conduct the study because it had been involved in developing "Project Spread," a collaborative effort by schools and businesses in seventeen school districts of Southern Connecticut that develop cooperative and innovative educational programs. Several members of the Education Task Force who had worked on Project Spread convinced the task force and its associates that the General Learning Corporation would be best able to conduct the

³⁷ John, Cowen, Chair of Fairfield board of education, *Introduction, Public Hearing*, Video-tape, September, 1969.

³⁸ Parker L., *Public Hearing*, September, 1969.

feasibility study.³⁹ Lansdale, amidst considerable disruption, concluded his introduction :

I would ask you to consider two major points of the proposal in front of you. The first is to assist in determining the objectives that you have as a community, and what you want to accomplish from a feasibility study of programmatic innovation. The second major point is that you are asked to review the proposals, and decide which points you want tested.⁴⁰

At that point, following Lansdale presentation, a Mr. Marsilius, another coalition board member from Fairfield, confronted the audience. He accused the opposition of being overly preoccupied with the busing issue (item no. 9), and neglected the larger picture. Despite interruptions, he continued:

the urban coalition in its short time of operation has done lots of good for the greater Bridgeport area. Yes, we live in Fairfield, but we also live in the Greater Bridgeport Area. There is much regional cooperation in this area and there needs to be. We are in a dynamic society and we have to be receptive to change. We cannot close our minds. . . . I try to tell you but you do not want to listen. The college task force of the urban coalition has developed an admission program which guarantees college opportunities to minority students qualifying by finishing a college track high school course. Other programs in recreation, housing, and community relations have been started. I can tell you that the quietness and calmness in Bridgeport this past summer did not just happen; it was a result of a great deal of work on the part of concerned citizens in the region.⁴¹

³⁹ *Public Hearings* , Noise of dissatisfaction interrupted Lansdale's introduction in Fairfield, while the Stratford the audience was relatively quiet.

⁴⁰ Fairfield Board of Education, *Public Hearing* , Fairfield, September, 1969.

⁴¹ Marsilius, J., *Public Hearing* , Fairfield, September, 1969.

Following Marsilius, others who claimed to represent some of Fairfield's residents, voiced their opposition to the proposed study, concentrating on the busing issue and ignoring the other points of the proposal.

Robert Chiro, the first person in the audience to speak for the opposition, claimed to represent a large number of residents. He spoke fiercely against busing, attacking not only the urban coalition and the Fairfield Board of Education, but also the State Board of Education and the state legislature for imposing programs on local communities aimed at eliminating racial imbalance in the schools. He criticized proposed changes of school and attendance districts, which in his view would mix children of different communities under the centralized state plan: "we did not bring up racial issues. It was only brought up because we are losing all types of control in our own town."⁴² Chiro continued, saying that "the wording of the coalition's proposal and the legislation is nearly synonymous; that's why we are here tonight."⁴³

Another resident, Lindsey Smith, said that he had come to Fairfield from Massachusetts where he had gone through a similar process several years before. Pupils from Roxbury had been transported thirty-one miles each way to Sharon in order to racially balance the schools. "It did not work. If you want their culture, say yes to the proposal. Your kids will learn a lot from those ghetto children."⁴⁴ Many in the crowd laughed and applauded in support of Smith's comments.

Sam Lang, another resident, accused "politicians" of misleading the citizens of Bridgeport:

⁴² Chiro, A. Robert, *Public Hearing*, Fairfield, 1969.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Smith, Lindsey *Public Hearing*, Fairfield, September, 1969.

they deliberately and cold-bloodly have made things impossible for the Negroes by causing them to lose their jobs as a result of setting minimum wages, creating urban renewal programs which caused them to lose their homes, which were replaced by luxury stores and superhighways, and by overloading Bridgeport with foreign workers who pushed the Negroes to the side.⁴⁵

He further claimed that it was the responsibility of those politicians to solve the "Negroes'" problems, and not that of the citizens of Fairfield. "What is stopping them from building homes on top of Lafayette Plaza and the Algonquin Club? That will solve the urban problems; we do not want Bridgeport's problems here."⁴⁶

Other speakers expressed similar feelings. Only a few spoke in favor of the study. Among them was Alfredo Don, the only black resident in the audience, who introduced his comments by saying that "no man is an island to himself. If one man is denied his rights today, than who is there to say that other's rights will not be denied tomorrow."⁴⁷ His statement was not well received, and he showed considerable discomfort in speaking to a mostly white audience. He attempted to lighten the situation with humor, but the chair asked him to get to his point. He concluded by saying

It behooves us all to give the board a chance to see if there is any way that we can look at other communities who are in dire straights educationally before we begin to introduce legislative moves. Let's stick to Fairfield and leave Hartford.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ This reference appeared also in "Where Business Is Good", *U.S. News & World Report*, October 6, 1969, p. 94. (92-95).

⁴⁶ Lang, Sam *Public Hearing*, Fairfield, Connecticut, September, 1969.

⁴⁷ Don, Alfred, *Public Hearing*, Fairfield, Connecticut, September, 1969.

⁴⁸ Ibid

Being a black person in a white community, Don attempted to express himself. However, although he supported the proposal, he was ineffective in his presentation.

Dave Gambino was the next speaker. A businessman who had recently moved to Fairfield from Bridgeport, referred hostilely to “those people” who, “if you give them one hand they will take the other one with it.”⁴⁹ Addressing the representatives of the board of education, he asked

Why should our children be shipped out to give some lower class people, or lowerly educated, places in our classrooms.... I am sure that teachers will show more importance to the underprivileged kids coming in than to our children. Why should our children be put down to their grade? Why should we bring them up to our grade? Why shouldn't Bridgeport bring them to our grade?⁵⁰

One speaker, Frieda Kay, endorsed the proposal on the grounds that “it would be beneficial for Fairfield’s children to be in the same classrooms with deprived children. They will become better citizens. I hope my children will go to an integrated school. There are people here with closed minds....”⁵¹ She was unable to finish her sentence because of interruptions. In conclusion, Kay said:

If they [the children] will study and play together now, they will have a chance to function better than us when they will be adults. If the children from Bridgeport would be here today, I do not think they would like it very much.⁵²

⁴⁹ Gambino, Donald, *Public Hearing*, Fairfield, Connecticut, September, 1969.

⁵⁰ Ibid

⁵¹ Kay, Frieda, *Public Hearing*, Fairfield, Connecticut, September, 1969.

⁵² Ibid.

The audience was silent when she finished speaking; no one spoke in support of her.

A similar process took place in Stratford. Seventeen hundred people attended the Stratford hearing, packing the high-school gym. Lansdale summarized the history of the coalition and the purpose of the feasibility study. According to his later account, he explained that local school superintendents and boards of education had been and would remain involved in the decision-making process.⁵³ During discussion, Anne Rome, a school administrator claiming to represent almost three thousand Stratford residents, opposed the Urban Coalition's proposal on grounds quite different from those referred to at the Fairfield hearing. She argued that the proposal would lead to duplication of existing programs as well as amount to a loss of local control over schools. She mentioned Project Spread as one program that had been shown to have had such effects. She pointed to the Community Development Action Plan (CDAP) that had been instituted in Bridgeport to serve the inner city schools,⁵⁴ as an existing program already addressing the problems described in the proposal. Other such programs she mentioned were Project Learn, a regional long-term program for children with special educational needs, Project Concern, which bussed inner city children to suburban schools, and ABCD, which offered diversified programs for young people in Bridgeport. She illustrated her objection to a "loss of local control" by referring to extra-curriculum programs on closed circuit T.V. which she felt might be offensive to "our children, who would be a captive audience, and we could not do anything about it." She further illustrated the point by describing a performance by black students in the Bridgeport high schools

⁵³ Lansdale, P., Interview by Author, September 1, 1982.

⁵⁴ "CDAP Notes \$ 4.3 Million In State Aid," *The Bridgeport Post*, December 29, 1969. p. 2.

which, according to some who attended, was offensive to the students who were not permitted to leave the auditorium.⁵⁵ She summarized her remarks by stating that, in addition to the loss of control, the duplication of programs would be costly to Stratford. "It is not surprising," she concluded, "that the expenses of education in Connecticut went up sixteen per cent in the past year while the cost of living went up only four per cent."⁵⁶ The audience responded angrily and called for the rejection of the urban coalition and the repudiation of its proposal.

Although a large number of people in both communities opposed the proposal, they did so for different reasons. The major concern of Stratford's residents, as expressed by most of their speakers, was the loss of control over educational decisions.⁵⁷ Fairfield speakers argued, for the most part, against busing, "busing in and busing out."⁵⁸

Thus, issues of race were mingled in both cases, though with different degree of emphasis, with issues of democracy (local control), cost, and the uncertainties that policies such as those advocated by the coalition inevitably introduce. Evidently, the coalition's attempt to democratize the process of change was not seen as sufficiently sensitive to local interests. On the other hand, the contamination of this issue by racism made it virtually impossible to gain the consensus the coalition believed was necessary to carry out the needed reforms. The complexity of this political situation was dramatized in comments by the first black speaker in Stratford. He opposed the proposal, saying that he was familiar with racism in Stratford, but that "opposition to the study has nothing to

⁵⁵ Mrs. Rome, Stratford Board of Education, *Public Hearing*, March 29, 1969.

⁵⁶ Rome, *Public Hearing*, Stratford, March, 1969.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Gambino, *Public Hearing*, Fairfield, September, 1969.

do with racism; it has to do with us [Stratford residents] having control over our children's education."⁵⁹ He called the proposal "a monster" and said that "we are here to bury it." He then turned to Lansdale and said: "if the coalition is stuck, we have alternatives." To the board of education, he said: "Since you took over leadership of our children's education, you either shape up or ship out."⁶⁰

In contrast, a second black speaker endorsed the coalition's proposal, arguing that Stratford is part of a region in which Bridgeport is the central city with factories "that most of us work in," and with facilities that serve the region as a whole. "Our children cannot grow isolated; we should bring children from different places and different backgrounds together so that they will learn to interact with each other as individuals."⁶¹ The audience was vociferous in its reaction, and the chair called for order. His voice was overwhelmed in the noisy auditorium, those opposing the proposal far outnumbering all others. This was repeated again and again, regardless of the reasons given by speakers in support of the proposal. For example, when Robin Fishman spoke of her experience as a Jewish mother whose children had not been taught in a way designed to enhance their appreciation of the experiences of others.⁶² The crowd was again disruptive and there were shouts that she should leave the podium. She nevertheless continued, saying that it is "a disgrace" that the ninth grade text on American history contains only one paragraph about slavery. Again the tangle of issues, interests, attitudes, and beliefs made it difficult for the coalition to establish the consensus it needed if its proposal was to be kept separate from political

⁵⁹ Stockman, Gill, *Public Hearing*, Stratford, 1969. Stockman used poetry and the audience accepted him with laughter and hand clapping.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Barns, John, *Public Hearing*, Stratford, March, 1969.

⁶² Fishman, Robin, *Public Hearing*, Stratford, March, 1969.

processes that had always been seen by members of the coalition to have been non-rational and intrinsically disruptive of reform.

The last speaker, James Tisdale, executive director of the Urban Coalition, and a resident of Stratford, attempted to neutralize the more aggressive elements of opposition by restating the coalition's goal at a level that seemed to respect at least some of the concerns expressed at the meeting, to provide a positive, supervised educational environment. Perhaps his most compelling point was that "the proposal will not fail if Stratford rejects it, since many communities have already accepted it."⁶³ The audience was silent when Tisdale finished. Yet, though he had neutralized the anger, Tisdale's remarks could not, ultimately, displace the politics of race, the particularisms of local interests, and the fear of difference that animated the public hearing. Thus, the general disposition was still to reject the kind of cooperation between Bridgeport and Stratford that had been advocated by the coalition. Despite this, the coalition proceeded with the feasibility study in several communities, and developed programs with at least a modicum of cooperation among the various school boards.

However, the degree of opposition to the proposal was a source of tension within the coalition, exposing its dynamics and the limits of its capacity to endure in the pure form of "representational coalition" which had been its ideal source of inception. For some members, cooperative educational program was not so vital and its rejection was not seen as undermining the coalition itself. This was true for those whose links with outside constituencies were relatively weak, diffuse, or extremely generalized. For others, especially those whites who identified themselves with the business and professional "community," the extent of opposition, and the difficulties engendered, meant only that there

⁶³ Tisdale, James, *Annual Report*, 1969.

needed to be a shift in focus from education to other less controversial goals. Finally, for black and Hispanic members, it meant either that the coalition's avoidance of politics needed to be challenged or that it would, in any case, have to re-affirm, unequivocally, its commitments to desegregation and equal opportunity.

These divisions contributed to the growing separation between those who represented constituencies motivated by social interest, such as blacks and Hispanics, and those whose mere presence *constituted* an interest—those who presented themselves as representatives of business, and therefore embodied interests in neutralizing politics and sustaining the political economy in which they operated effectively. Clearly, the term “representation” had come to mean two different things. On the one hand, it came to refer to agency, imputed or real, as in the case of blacks. On the other hand, it referred to “exemplification,” as with those whose “representation” of business or banking meant only that they were *of* the category or class. The opposition of significant number of whites to the proposal was to increase the distance between these two, leaving the third group, the professional reformers, of whom Helen Wasserman was typical, to fall somewhere in-between and, hence, to vacillate at moments of decision. This vacillation tended to undermine their legitimacy with the representatives of the minority groups, though their persistence made their presence increasingly important in the day-to-day operations of the coalition.

These tensions were dramatized in the work of the Education Task Force, and its co-chairs attempted to mute them by expanding and diversifying the sub-committee. In October, 1969, the number of its members grew to thirty-two with two school superintendents and a Rabbi included among them. One major point of contention that remained was the structure of representation regarding the feasibility study. Helen Wasserman emphasized:

... the needs for a sub-committee structure that would be truly representative; for a pool of resource consultants that would be available to the 32-member task force; and for machinery, via the Higher Education Center for Urban Studies, that would make possible the communication and coordination demanded by the study.⁶⁴

Increasingly, board members saw each other as having hidden agendas, and, more and more, those committed to the original democratic values of the coalition began to push for less emphasis on representation (agency) and more on joint action. One crucial result was that the form of association moved even further toward an instrumental structure, at odds, ultimately, with the dialogue-based coalition form, and somewhat inconsistent with the original intention to operate as a catalyst. The program, as finally adopted, reflected a more centralized conception of coalition work than had originally been thought appropriate.

In spite of these suspicions and the accompanying antagonisms, members of the board and the Education Task Force presented the proposal to their various constituencies. For example, Mrs. Lawrence Lesser, a member of the coalition board and chair of the Social Action Committee of Temple B'nai Israel, submitted

⁶⁴ Education Committee Meeting, *Minutes*, October 1, 1969.

the feasibility study proposal to the Temple's board of trustees for the congregation's endorsement:

... the Social Action Committee wishes to propose that Congregation B'nai Israel Board of Trustees will have the Social Action Committee support the recommendation of the Greater Bridgeport Urban Coalition at the various town boards of education.⁶⁵

The League of Women Voters in Fairfield, some of whose members were also members of the Urban Coalition, supported the feasibility study. They decided to participate in the community planning, evaluate its components, and recommend the proposal's adoption by the Fairfield Board of Education.⁶⁶ One of those members, Bonnie Yorrington, described how she, along with others, convinced the League of Women Voters to support and endorse the coalition's initiatives,⁶⁷ suggesting a division even within the League.

At the same time, the Bridgeport superintendent of schools was seeking separate arrangements with individual towns. Lester Silverstone, the Bridgeport superintendent of schools wrote to Gordon Peterkin, the superintendent of schools in Westport, that

The Bridgeport School System is presently engaged in finding ways to solve the problems of racial imbalance of some of its schools. One possible source of assistance might lie in the placing of urban children in some suburban elementary schools.

We would like to discuss with you ways in which the suburban school system could aid in the attempt to find solutions to this problem.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Social Action Committee, *Proposal to the Boars of Education*, Temple B'nai Israel, January 8, 1969.

⁶⁶ League of Women Voters, *School Survey*, February, 20, 1970. p. 2.

⁶⁷ Yorrington, B., Interview by Author, Fairfield, Connecticut, 1982.

⁶⁸ Silverstone, Lester, *Letter*, Board of Rducation, Bridgeport Connecticut, March 6, 1970.

There is no reference in the letter to the Coalition's feasibility study or any other attempts to deal with racial imbalance in the Greater Bridgeport Area. This initiative cast doubt on the legitimization of the coalition and the willingness of the Bridgeport superintendent to continue supporting the study and its implications for policy. This doubt was, however, overcome when the letter was read in April 13, 1970, at the meeting of the Bridgeport Board of Education. The board decided to wait for the results of the feasibility study.⁶⁹

Following this, officials in Bridgeport, Fairfield, Trumbull, Westport, and Wilton decided to proceed with the study. Funding for the first six months was made available by the Department of Community Affairs, through ABCD, as well as by private sources.⁷⁰ The Education Task Force met on March 18, 1970, and was briefed by the General Learning Corporation's project director, to the effect that public "participation" would be interpreted as "input" rather than "decision".

one of the more important ground rules established by the urban coalition and General Learning Corporation is that all the task force and subcommittee meetings are open to the public and that a maximum public input be sought for the study.⁷¹

At the same meeting, it was agreed to restate the purpose of the study to read that it would "develop programs to facilitate contact among urban and suburban students of participating communities *in a manner consistent with the policies of the local boards of education.*"⁷²(italics mine)

⁶⁹ Westport Board of Education Meeting *Minutes*, Staples High School, Westport, April 13, 1970.

⁷⁰ Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, p. 13.

⁷¹ "Task Force is Briefed of UC Schools Study," *The Bridgeport Telegram*, March 19, 1970.

⁷² Urban Coalition Education Study Task Force, *Final Report*, General Learning Corporation, Washington, D.C., October 13, 1970. pp. 1-8.

As co-chair of the Education Task Force, Helen Wasserman sent a letter to the organizations connected with the Urban Coalition, informing them of the decision to proceed with the study and that five study teams had been formed to "establish criteria of community acceptance for such a program." She added that there was a need to identify the strengths of the school district and the community at large to see how those strengths could be applied elsewhere. Third, she reaffirmed the need to collect statistical data about the various school systems. She concluded, "for this and for every phase of the study we need the involvement of a large, cross section of area citizens."⁷³

One of the study teams scheduled to work with the General Learning Corporation, included representatives of the Education Task Force and the superintendents of schools in Fairfield, Bridgeport, Westport, Wilton and Trumbull. It also included several residents of the five communities. This was the first opportunity for superintendents of schools from different towns to meet over a long period of time to discuss problems of common concern. In itself, it represented a degree of success for the Education Task Force. The team recommended twenty-two possible reforms, including improving career guidance, establishing cooperative curricula, instituting a regional athletic league, enhancing programs in theater, film, and the arts, establishing a five-town summer school, building an intercommunity summer day camp, reinforcing Project Concern, designing a program of student exchange, and increasing the availability of tutoring services.⁷⁴ The study was published in October, 1970,⁷⁵ and a final report was presented to the urban coalition on

⁷³ Wasserman, Helen, *Letter to Area Organizations*, June 11, 1970.

⁷⁴ Urban coalition For Grater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1970-1971, p. 7.

⁷⁵ Urban Coalition Education Study Task Force, *Final Report* , 1970, p. 6.

November 18, 1970.⁷⁶ In the following months, the project committee worked with the various boards of education to begin the process of reform.⁷⁷ Each board was to select those programs best suited to its children's needs, and to coordinate programs with other communities.⁷⁸ Because of the intricacy of the project, the committee members began to operate relatively independently of the coalition as a whole. The members of this committee were, toward the end of the coalition's life, to see themselves more and more as the core of it than as a working association.⁷⁹

Almost as important as the study itself, was the process of involvement by the community-at-large, qualified though this had become. At the outset, the urban coalition committed itself to a broad-base of participation by residents of the participating towns. The Education Task Force had assumed the responsibility of fulfilling that commitment, and made a major effort to reach individuals and organizations throughout the area, finally concentrating on the five participating communities. According to Helen Wasserman, through personal phone calls, mailings to all residents, radio announcements, and press coverage, all interested parties were invited to provide input to the study.⁸⁰ On the other hand, it became increasingly clear that input was not participation. As a result, citizen involvement was less than had been expected. Moreover, the emphasis of the program was not fully responsive to the types of opposition that

⁷⁶ Wasserman, Helen, *A Letter to Mayor Curran*, November 13, 1970.

⁷⁷ Lansdale, Parker, *Public Hearing*, Stratford, March, 1969.

⁷⁸ Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport, *Annual Report*, 1970-71.

⁷⁹ Finni, A., Interview by Author, Fairfield, Connecticut, 1982.

⁸⁰ Wasserman, Helen, *Letter to Area Organizations*, March 2, 1970.

first greeted the proposal. In this sense, and despite Wasserman's efforts, the program was seen by many residents as politics as usual.

Some private institutions in the Bridgeport area endorsed the study and offered their support to the coalition. For example, Edward Harrison, president of the Harrison Foundation and a member of the coalition's board, wrote to Mayor Curran that he reviewed the final report on the feasibility study

and shared the desire to seek realistic understanding and possible creative innovations. . . to prepare our young people for a meaningful place in this complex society. . . You will see that I am sharing this note with those who privately financed this study. I know they share my confidence in its constructive suggestions and in the continuing development of our educational resources for more adequately preparing our youth for tomorrow's maturity.⁸¹

Harrison not only endorsed the study, but became one of its strongest advocates among area organizations.⁸²

The task force established a citizens' committee as a link between the towns and the study team, made up of members of the coalition and from the other organizations. Local control was channeled through the boards of education, an institutional solution to what had been a problem of participation in decision-making. Because of this, and the implicit politics of such a solution, the study and its implementations looked more like traditional reformism than an exercise in democracy. This was rational to the accomplishment of the educational goals of the coalition and its allies, but not to the problem of community building in the greater Bridgeport area. While it was the consensus of the coalition's board that the Cooperative Educational Study had to be "a microcosm of the coalition

⁸¹ Harrison, Edward, *A Letter to Mayor Curran*, December, 7, 1970.

⁸² Harrison, E., Interview by Author, Bridgeport, Connecticut, 1982.

itself,"⁸³ the fact remained that both the coalition and the operation of the study had come to be more instrumentally rational, hierarchical, and less representative than had been originally intended. Thus, the success of the coalition in the area of education, while considerable, was not in the area of its foundational purpose, the enhancement of the social life of a regional community.

One of the study's recommendations was, implementing Project Concern throughout the Greater Bridgeport Area, was based, as mentioned above, on a model derived from a similar experience in the Greater Hartford Area. It was more a "delivery of services" model than an instance of citizen participation, though it had a number of positive effects.⁸⁴ Although the coalition reiterated its desire that area residents become involved in the project, the specific invitation issued by the coalition asked for input and not actual participation in decision making. From the standpoint of the coalition board, this was a satisfactory degree of citizen involvement. But the consensus for which they had hoped did not, and, arguably, could not, have developed under the circumstances.

Project Concern

Project Concern was designed under the auspices of Harvard University and the General Learning Corporation. Its primary goal was to test the effects of placing black "ghetto" children in white suburban schools, where those chosen for placement had experienced declining scores on achievement tests, as their schools became more segregated.⁸⁵ Alexander J. Plante, the originator of this program, had suggested limited rather than total integration of inner-city pupils

⁸³ *Annual Report*, 1969. p. 14.

⁸⁴ Schine, J., Interview by Author, Westport, Connecticut, 1985.

⁸⁵ Mims, Michael, "Desegregation", *Connecticut magazine*, May, 1991, No. 44, p. 118.

into suburban schools,⁸⁶ though the intention was ultimately to expand the numbers as that became feasible. His premise was that "insofar as imprecise measuring instruments ... allow, the ghetto school is doomed no matter how many compensatory programs are cranked into the curriculum."⁸⁷ The only viable answer, according to him lay in adopting a regional solution based on a regional policy of integration.

Such a solution would have to begin by redressing the imbalance in the allocation of educational resources. Thus, minority students would have to have equal access to resources, including those affecting the ratio of teachers to pupils. In addition, they would need experienced teachers and diversified facilities, as well as the presence of "advantaged" peers.⁸⁸

Plante also believed that integration enhances the quality of education for black children, even where there is white opposition. This counter-intuitive hypothesis is consistent with Derrick Bell's observation that integration, even under hostile conditions, allows blacks and whites to confront the more enduring problems of racial hostility and ignorance in a context in which such a confrontation can be educational for all concerns.⁸⁹ Indeed, education that ignores racial differences and conflict can not, Bell thought, prepare students for living in America. It was clear, if this argument was correct, that integration would enhance rather than diminish the social skills of all students, white as well

⁸⁶ Bumstead, Richard, "Hartford Finds Integration Works", *Educate Magazine*, 1970, p. 25.

⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 31.

⁸⁸ "Lines, M. Patricia, Race And Learning: A Perspective on Research," *Inequality In Education*, No. 11, March, 1972, p. 26.

⁸⁹ Bell, A. Derrick, Jr., "Integration: A No Win Policy For Blacks", *Inequality In Education*, No. 11, March, 1972, p.41-42.

as black." Access for some inner-city pupils was thought of as having advantages for all students.⁹⁰

In the early 1960's, the Connecticut State Board of Education conducted a study of the local boards of education and concluded, consistent with Plant's views, that Waterbury, New-Haven, Hartford, and Bridgeport could only improve the general level of public education if reforms were instituted regionally. "Project Concern" was a response to this conclusion. It was adopted in 1966, in Hartford, for a two year trial, in order to evaluate the general educational effects of increased racial and inter-community integration, and to develop ways to make busing more effective and acceptable.⁹¹

A number of other towns considered adopting the program in 1966. Among them were Westport and Wilton, all-white, small, suburban towns with superior school systems and unused space in many classrooms. Despite some support, and a willingness of the state and the federal government to fund the program,⁹² attempts to institute it regionally failed.

Westport, in particular, became a center of debate over busing students in from Bridgeport. Douglas Robinson, writing in *The New York Times*, described the controversy in a way that begged the questions raised by the complex mixture of reasons given for opposing regional integration:

The political hurricane. . . resulted in a resurgence of the familiar Northern code words for 'we-do-not-want-blacks-in-our-community,' a jargon that

⁹⁰ Schine, J., Interview, 1984.

⁹¹ Cable, K., Robert, and Edward F. Iwanichi, *Almost Twenty-Five Years of Project Concern: An Overview of the Program and its Accomplishments*. Storrs, CT: The University of Connecticut Press, 1990 p.1.

⁹² "An Intercommunity Program for Disadvantaged Children "Project Concern", *Public Records*, 1989.

includes such words and phrases as 'regionalization,'
'neighborhood schools,' and 'local autonomy.'⁹³

Nevertheless, after a public hearing,⁹⁴ the proposal was put to a vote by the Westport Board of Education and was passed by a ratio of three to two, representing the division between the Democratic majority and the Republican minority.⁹⁵ The project that was finally approved provided that only a limited number of students would be bussed from Bridgeport to Westport. The board issued a pamphlet aimed at enhancing the legitimacy of their decision, summarized by Francis X. Fay:⁹⁶

Many safeguards both for the receiving school system and for the urban school system were established . . . Participating Boards of Education are in no way committed to the plan, or any contractual agreements beyond the current school year. Moreover, participation in the program by cooperating boards of education, in no way indicates an official interest in a regional or metropolitan educational system.⁹⁷

The pamphlet contained the provision that "the right to withdraw from the program is a privilege maintained by each participating Board of Education."⁹⁸

⁹³ "Robinson, Douglas, "Drive to Recall School Board Head Divides Westport," *New York Times*, December 22, 1970, p. 1.

⁹⁴ Note: I could not find documentation of the public hearings in Westport or Wilton. However, it was confirmed by several interviewees that they took place during the summer of 1969. Wasserman, Helen, Interview, 1987.

⁹⁵ "A time for Reason and Practicality," the *Westport News*, November 24, 1970.
"Westport Votes Busing For City Black Students," *Bridgeport Post*, December 8, 1970, p. 1, 4.

⁹⁶ An Informational pamphlet issued by Westporters for Equality of Education.

⁹⁷ Fay, Francis X. Jr., "Project Concern Contains Safeguards", *The Hour*, February 13, 1971. p. 1.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

The same arrangement was approved for Wilton, again despite opposition.⁹⁹ Project Concern began to operate in Wilton in early May, 1971, with twenty five black and Hispanic children. As a result of Westport's experience, Wilton's teachers and children were better prepared for the new students. In Burr Farms school, for example,

teachers were advised to develop the same range of expectations for the black children as they have for the children already in their charge. They were urged to respect the culture of the black child and to recognize the opportunity to use it to enrich the experiences of all the children.¹⁰⁰

With the adoption of Project Concern, the politics surrounding the integration of schools reverted to a more conventional, organized, and manageable form.¹⁰¹ For example, Joan Schine, chairperson of the Westport Board of Education, and a member of the Urban Coalition and its Education Task Force, was accused of withholding information from Westport residents and of arbitrarily rejecting a proposal for a referendum on Project Concern. A recall committee was formed and a recall petition filed containing 3918 signatures.¹⁰² When the petition was submitted for judicial review, the Board of Education sued to prevent the recall election.¹⁰³ The League of Women Voters supported Schine, claiming that she had acted appropriately in attempting "to promote equal educational opportunity."¹⁰⁴ The League sponsored twenty-five

⁹⁹ Stein, C., interview by Author, Fairfield, Connecticut, 3-24-84.

¹⁰⁰ "Concerned Parents, Teachers Meet," *Westport News*, May 4, 1971, p. 2.

¹⁰¹ Fay. X. Francis, "Arguments Abound On Project Concern" *Norwalk Hour*, December 1, 1970.

¹⁰² "Recall Committee Files 3918 Signatures," *Westport News*, December, 30, 1970. p. 1,5.

¹⁰³ "Hatred is Destructive," Editorial Comment, *the Westport News*, p. 14.

¹⁰⁴ LWV Claims It Spearheaded Busing, Backs Mrs. Schine, *Westport News*, December 22, 1970.

neighborhood meetings, sent spokespeople to thirty-five organizations to discuss the issue, and met with the Board of Education. A compromise agreement was finally reached that Project Concern would not begin until February, 1971, with a limited number of students from Bridgeport.¹⁰⁵

A meeting of the twenty-five Bridgeport children who were selected for Project Concern, and their parents, was held in Westport on the first day of school, February 1, 1971. Leonard Metelits, the school principal, addressed them with considerable optimism. He described how two teachers from their school in Bridgeport would join them in their new school.¹⁰⁶ The program began despite an attempt to institute a second recall, an attempt which failed in court.¹⁰⁷

Apprehensive about Project Concern's prospects, the Westport Board of Education convened a meeting with Bridgeport's Board of Education, including school officials, the co-chairs of the Urban Coalition's Education Task Force, and Dr. Alexander Plante. The purpose of the meeting was to clarify how children were to be selected, to discuss what would be expected from them, and to anticipate the problems that were expected to emerge.¹⁰⁸ Bridgeport's school superintendent, H. Rosenstein, told the assembly that Bridgeport "did not skim the cream" of its student body, but identified students with a wide range of abilities, who seemed likely to benefit from the experience and who were unlikely to pose problems.¹⁰⁹ Joan Schine expressed her appreciation that

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ "Final Project Concern Meeting Set for February 1," *the Westport News*, January 22, 1971. p. 3.

¹⁰⁷ "Second Recall Petition Validated", *Bridgeport Sunday Post*, January 29, 1971.

PC, Recall 'Fsc't' Booklet Mailed to Westporters," *the Westport News*, January, 27, 1971. p.2.

"Schine Defends Role," *the Westport News*, January, 29, 1971. p. 1.

¹⁰⁸ "First 'Concern' Class Begins in Westport Monday," *the Westport News*, January 29, 1971. p. 6.

¹⁰⁹ Op Cit.

Westport had been given an opportunity to host such a program from which, she believed, Westport's children would also benefit.¹¹⁰

February 1, 1971, the first day that the twenty-five black and Puerto Rican children from Bridgeport were bussed to Westport, captured the attention of the media. Cameramen from CBS and ABC were on hand to record the event. The children were escorted to their classes, and the principal later remarked to the media that "it was an uneventful day."¹¹¹ Joan Schine, as chairperson of the Westport Board of Education, was the link between Project Concern and the Urban Coalition.¹¹²

Throughout its history, Project Concern in Westport was faced with attempts at disruption. Opponents were alarmed when it was announced by the Board of Education that five more schools would be included in the program, with a corresponding increase in the number of Bridgeport children. By the Fall of 1971, the controversy had increased as the opposition flooded newspapers with their objections to the prospect that "150 ghetto children will attend schools in town."¹¹³ Despite this, the program endured and continues to the present day.

The Urban Coalition was instrumental in helping Bridgeport, Westport, and Wilton to establish Project Concern. Once the program was in operation, the Education Task Force of the Urban Coalition withdrew, although it continued to receive progress reports annually. As in the community, the controversy about Project Concern and busing continued within the coalition. Helen Wasserman wrote a letter of appreciation to members of the coalition who were active in the

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ "Concerns First Day," *the Westport News*, February 3, 1971. p. 6.

¹¹² Schine, J., Interview, 4-17-84.

¹¹³ "Westport Storm Rages in Minority Pupils' 3rd Week," *Sunday News*, February 14, 1971.

project, in which she expressed concern about two issues. The first had to do with reconciling the general goal of achieving an acceptable level of racial balance in schools in the Greater Bridgeport Area, with disputes arising among the coalition members when specific programs were ready for implementation. Her second point was that the coalition had failed, up to that point, to mobilize a sufficient degree of citizen participation on the coalition's committees.¹¹⁴

Wasserman's points reflected both the political limitations accepted by the coalition at the outset, and the special dynamics of a representational coalition when constituencies have become politicized. What she failed to mention was how concrete tasks had come to dominate the coalition's operation, reducing its capacity both to represent constituencies and to exemplify the principle of representation. The very success of the coalition in educational reform was a condition of these problems.

¹¹⁴ Wasserman, Helen, *Letter*, February 12, 1971.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The Bridgeport Urban Coalition was a middle-class reform organization without tangible connections to social movements or “grass roots.” My research focused on those aspects of it that involved (1) agency, (2) organization, and (3) operation. Agency refers to the representational claims of members. Organization and operation refers to the practices by which members are mobilized to perform a joint task and the internal contexts of instrumental function. I refer to the ensemble comprised of these aspects as a “representational coalition” and analyzed it dynamically, according to the tensions promoted by these aspects in combination. This research provides a *prima facie* reason to look more closely at middle-class reform organizations from the standpoint of their development in and adaptation to social, political, and economic contexts. The main source of tension in the Bridgeport coalition, what gave it its dynamism, lay in the difficulties involved in reconciling the representational claims of its members with the types of interaction required for it to function as a goal-setting and problem-solving group.

The coalition was not organized as an agent of change in the direct sense of a lobby, party, or union. Rather, it was intended, at best, to be a catalyst, to contribute to an ongoing political process. I wanted to understand how such an

association operates in its own terms, and the conditions under which it have succeeded or failed.

The available literature on coalitions provides little that is useful for analyzing the types of tensions that arise in an association of people who wish to work together but who consider themselves as representing outside constituencies. The relationship between these two incompatible but mutually essential coalition functions create dilemmas which determine the course, and to a certain extent the content, of coalition development.

The history of the Bridgeport coalition illustrates this dynamism, and the model provided me with a set of hypotheses which were neither obvious nor trivial. In particular, these dilemmas account for many of the internal changes the coalition experienced during the course of its life, independently of the specific contributions of individuals, and, to some extent, of purely material circumstances. In turn, these changes had significant bearing on the self-evaluation and longevity of the coalition as well as day-to-day operations and interpersonal relations. At the same time, I was able to use the model to identify aspects of context—e.g., the informal politics of constituencies—that were otherwise difficult to detect in their effects on the coalition's activities. On the other hand, it was possible to understand how official resistance to the coalition operated in regard to the coalition's internal features rather than merely as a condition of success or failure as such. Finally, the model provided a way of understanding some of the difficulties involved in those coalition projects—e.g., education—that put the coalition into direct connection with people in the process of forming coalitions. Thus, it was possible to analyze community

resistance to certain educational reforms as a relation between the operational conditions of the coalition and the discourses available to its various public.

In order to understand the relationship between the coalition and its context, it was necessary to develop a history of Bridgeport and its region, including a brief summary of local reform organizations. This allowed me to understand how different constituencies emerged over time and the kinds of conflicts that emerged with them. The Bridgeport coalition developed at a time perceived as a period of crisis. But the real crisis lay, in fact, beneath the surface of overt conflict, not in the threat of riots but in the economic, social, and political relations which had developed over the course of the city's history. The language of public discourse of the "urban crises" in the 1960s reflected a general atmosphere of uncertainty and tension that accompanied the growing economic difficulties of the underclass, the Vietnam War, and the rise of various progressive social movements including civil rights.

In such a context, and given the political volatility it engendered, the problem of racism provided a central focus of activism. Between institutional racism and the grass-roots struggle for equality lay an ambiguous terrain of gradualism that seemed to some to offer less painful prospects for social change. This had its appeal primarily to progressive members of the middle class. The urban coalition expressed these hopes in Bridgeport, and their fate is fairly well illustrated by the coalition's activities, including its successes and failures.

The urban coalition, initiated by government and well-to-do private citizens, can easily be seen as an agency of "the establishment." Its premises were derived from a "human relations" emphasis on communication as the key to

reducing intergroup tensions. Its members were initially committed to working "within the system." However, its composition and the instability of its context made it far too responsive to circumstance to remain merely part of "the establishment." This responsiveness stemmed from the tension between its collegial form and the claims of its members to represent various constituencies. One can see some of the difficulties involved in such an effort in the coalition's education project where, it attempted to provide opportunities for citizen participation. The inability to reconcile its diverse constituencies led to a redefinition of citizen participation no longer along the lines of dialogue but ultimately as a highly qualified and unsatisfactory "citizen input." While some reforms were actually introduced, counter-movements hostile to integration were able to appeal to many whose disaffection was due to their sense of having been excluded from key decisions.

Even more generally, as antagonism among constituencies escalated, the coalition itself began to undergo changes toward a more rationalized model. While more efficient so far as the use of material resources was concerned, this was incapable of providing the internal harmony among interests necessary for the coalition to continue in its original form. Eventually, conflicts within the coalition and significant changes in its environment caused it gradually to decline and finally to terminate its operation.

Evaluating the success or failure of any reform effort is always difficult. It is not clear what to measure, nor is there usually sufficient data to come to an evaluation even if one knows what the significant indices might be. In any case, it is necessary to distinguish between direct and indirect effects, and between those

intended and those which happen for reasons difficult to elucidate. In the case of the urban coalition, direct effects were few though, I believe, significant—e.g., in its regional educational projects. Even those were developed in the course of a far more politicizing experience than the original coalition members could have anticipated.

On the other hand, indirect effects can at least be noted. The durability of the coalition and its public presence, as evidenced by news coverage, must be considered significant to the course of political development in and around Bridgeport. Second, the education project seemed to generate at least a modicum of the kind of public communication hoped for at the outset of the coalition's operation.

To that extent, it is reasonable to see reforms in that area as exemplifying the original intention of the coalition's founders to facilitate democratic process. Finally, there is no doubt that the coalition played a role in the cooperative educational programs developed between the Bridgeport and suburban school systems, and little reason to doubt that the mere presence of the coalition clarified some official, institutional, and attitudinal obstacles to change which might otherwise have remained obscure.

One of the most interesting set of "findings" of my research had to do with the course of the coalition's development as a representational coalition. In this regard ultimately, divisions along color lines proved difficult to resolve, and in the end the black members voted against continuing operations because the coalition had failed to improve the overall situation of black people in Bridgeport. On the other hand, Hispanic members saw the coalition as having a

potential to enter a more interventive stage of politics. Needless to say, the discussion to terminate the coalition as a corporate body made the matter moot.

If it is the case that the Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport had the effects I have indicated, then it becomes necessary to reconsider the overemphasis in studies of social change on social movement-based efforts at reform and reforms dictated as matters of official policy. The duration of the coalition, its effects, and the intensification of local politics that seemed to follow from its projects suggest that it would be worthwhile to re-evaluate the general history of such middle-range reform efforts in order to understand the ways in which progressive social change is mediated in contexts in which no effort can unilaterally determine outcome. Research of this sort also suggests that the structure typically attributed to social movements themselves has been artificially delineated to the extent to which it does not include reference to the range of non-movement ensembles involved even in those public issues apparently dominated by social movements. Certainly, the women's movement of the 1970's-1980's was made up of more than organizations and defined by more dimensions than degree of militancy. Many efforts by church groups, community organizations, and self-help groups have to be taken into account to understand the new polity of gender, something of which scholars have become increasingly aware. The same must be true for the history of labor in the United States. I do not suggest that this is a novel point of view: only that it is necessary to do more research on reform groups of the middle range, and to make use of various field methodologies and interpretive procedures in order to uncover what is otherwise so easily hidden or lost to view.

APPENDIX ONE:
URBAN COALITION FOR GREATER
BRIDGEPORT—ORGANIZATION REPORT

URBAN COALITION FOR GREATER BRIDGEPORT
ORGANIZATION REPORT

File

URBAN COALITION FOR GREATER BRIDGEPORT

INTERNAL OPERATIONS GUIDE

RATIONALE, PROCEDURES & STAFFING

SECTION I - SERVICE GROUPS

SECTION II - MEETING PROCEDURE

**SECTION II - ORGANIZATION REPORT
BY-LAWS**

RATIONALE

As stated in the Organization Report for the Urban Coalition one of the key organizational necessities is efficiency in the utilization of resources:

"The Coalition is a collection of time-limited community leaders, volunteer manpower and manpower contributed by industry. Further, it has no specific method to generate an unlimited supply of funds. This necessitates the organized use of many hands with an allocation of work in proportion of the ability of persons to contribute their time. Further, the Coalition should recognize the repetitive and/or specialized nature of certain tasks. Separating these can lead to a more efficient use of specialized manpower, to the utilization of the most modern techniques, to the reduction of errors of commission, and to reduced re-invention of the wheel."

To solve the situation the suggestion for Service Groups has been implemented. The Service Group is a number of specialists who will act as a staff for the Executive Director and the Committees and whose specific job it is to concentrate on the efficient operation of the Coalition. It will accomplish this job by:

1. aiding the Committees in the determination of projects and the establishment of task forces,

2. aiding the task forces in the accomplishment of this project,

3. providing administrative systems to free the Committees and the Executive Director from unnecessary detail,

4. providing expertise in specific functions such as planning, research and financing.

The Service Groups, as their name implies, are not to be used as Task Forces or as an external action arm of the Coalition. They are to help plan and execute the orderly operation of the Coalition. There are four Service Groups: Planning, Information, Financial and Manpower.

The following is an explanation of each of the Service Groups - how they are organized, what they will do and who will be involved. (See next page)

SERVICE GROUP

PLANNING

PLANNING GROUP

CO-CHAIRMEN

JAMES TISDALE
DAVID JENNINGS

ORGANIZATION PLANNING

Larry Weisman
Donald Gamache
Barry Waxman

PROGRAM PLANNING

Keith Gilchrist
Hal Sutcliffe
John Gladney

ACTION PLANNING

EMPLOYMENT

Robert Wilson
Joel Kent
Em Thompson
Hal Sutcliffe

EDUCATION

Paul Hopkins
Harvey Bresler
James Curiale
Mrs. James Tisdale

HOUSING

Mrs. Ella Jackson
Arnold Rutkin
Hugh Lavery
Marc Thorne

RECREATION

Ernest Parker
Douglas Lawder
Rich Bradley
Lou Dunlap

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Nathaniel Plotkin
Gordon Davies
Thomas Todd
Donald Goodson
Mrs. Mildred Merchant

PUBLIC SUPPORT

Frank Donovan
Charlie Kenny
Mrs. Denise Davidoff
Miss Pat Egan
Aubyn Lewis

PLANNING GROUP OVERVIEW

Co-Chairmen

Task: Coordination
Liaison

Organization Planning

Task: Put Volunteers to work
Set up other Service
Groups
Committee Effectiveness
Communications System

Program Planning

Task: Overview of Programs
Program Plan - 3 years
Projects
Priority
Aid in Planning Guides
Strategy

Action Planner

Recreation Employment Housing Community Relations Public Support Education

Task: Work with Committees
Clarify problems
Suggest Task Force projects
Determine Task Force needs

Work with Task Forces
Clarify projects
Provide Planning guides
Consult on study problems

Work with Organization and Program

QUESTIONS FOR PLANNERS

How can we put volunteers to work?

How should the other Service Groups be set up?

What kind of people should be enlisted for other Service Groups?

What projects should the other Service Groups undertake; i.e., listing of private foundations - Financial?

How can the organization of the Coalition be more effective?

Should there be other subcommittees organized?

Should other power groups be represented on the Board of Directors? Who? Why?

What type of internal communications system is needed for Coalition?

How can the Coalition cooperate best with city government, model cities program, ABCD, etc?

Program Planning

What programs have been undertaken?

What programs are being considered?

What programs should be considered?

Are there overlaps/gaps in programs?

In each subcommittee area of concern, what are the high priority projects?

What should be done immediately?

What are the program objectives for the Coalition for the next three years?

What should the Local Coalition be doing in conjunction with the National Coalition?

How should the Coalition programs tie into other community agencies?

What strategy should be employed in specific problem programs?

Action Planning

What needs to be done in each area of concern?

How can the problems be broken down into doable pieces for Task Forces?

What types of work (planning guides) should be done by the Task Forces?

What kind of people are needed by the Task Forces?

What programs of one subcommittee should be communicated/integrated with other subcommittees?

What organizational problems are being encountered?

SERVICE GROUPS

INFORMATION

WHAT WILL THE INFORMATION SERVICE GROUPS DO?

Information Services will have two broad areas of responsibility:

1. Research

To help the Coalition plan, implement and evaluate projects.

Information Services will assist in the preparation and carrying out of research projects - at the request of the Executive Director and the Committees.

To help the Coalition keep in touch with the work of similar organization the Information Services Group will provide a central source of information on urban affairs, both national and local.

2. Communication within the Coalition

To keep all members of the Coalition familiar with the workings of its many parts Information Services will aid in creating a system for communications among the various Committees. Board of Directors, Executive Directors and other service groups.

**HOW WOULD INFORMATION SERVICES BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE NEEDS OF THE
BRIDGEPORT URBAN COALITION?**

One Information Service Group representative will be responsible to each Committee.

Will attend Committee and Task Force meetings.

Will work with Committee Co-Chairmen to help determine their information needs.

EMPLOYMENT-----Mrs. Shiller

HOUSING-----Mrs. Grossman

COMMUNITY RELATIONS-----Mrs. Jennings

EDUCATION-----Mrs. Davis

RECREATION-----Mrs. Quattrocchi

PUBLIC SUPPORT & COMMUNICATIONS-----Mr. C. Kenny

OPERATIONS-----Mrs. Boone

The Information Services Group will also work closely with the Executive Director, the Planning Group, and the Public Support and Communications Committee and the Operations Committee to determine information needs.

HOW INFORMATION SERVICES WILL WORK.

On Communications within the Coalition:

- develop formats for all minutes and progress reports to help provide consistency in reporting of activities,

- gathering information for monthly newsletter (to be published by Public Support & Communications) which will include reports on activities of information from other Coalitions and organizations with similar interests,

- compile a "Who's Who" in the Urban Coalition.

On Research

- conduct studies on request,

- set up a small Information Center in the Coalition office which contains pertinent government reports and other publications; cross references to relevant information at Bridgeport Library, University of Bridgeport and Fairfield University,

- provide a clipping service (through volunteers or purchased),

- disseminate digests of relevant reports from other Coalitions.

On Research

conduct studies on request,

set up a small Information Center in the Coalition office which contains pertinent government reports and other publications; cross references to relevant information at Bridgeport Library, University of Bridgeport and Fairfield University,

provide a clipping service (through volunteers or purchased),

disseminate digests of relevant reports from other Coalitions.

FINANCIAL PERSONNEL

CHAIRMAN

Donald Farrar

OPERATING CONTROL

Accounting - (to be selected by chairman)

Audit - Zolan, Bernstein, Dworken and Klein

BUDGET CONTROL

Nick Goodspeed

FINANCIAL INVESTIGATION

Louis Gladstone.

Recommended*

Professor A. Schmidt

FUND RAISING

Tyler Baldwin

*Recommended only - final list of personnel will be issued at a later date.

FINANCIAL SERVICE GROUP

CHAIRMAN: Treasurer

Function

Operating Control

1. Accounting, record keeping and reporting of the operations of the Coalition.

2. Audit of financial operations and conditions.

Budget Control

1. Establishment of a year Operating Budget for the Coalition.

2. Establishment of financial needs of program to be funded under the auspices of the Coalition.

3. Salary review and administration for employees of the Coalition.

Financial Investigation

1. Determination of the availability of funds for Coalition supported from:

- a. Governmental sources, local, state, federal,
- b. Private foundations and organizations and,
- c. National Urban Coalition.

2. Liaison with the above to understand the procedures necessary to receive funds

3. Aid the Treasurer and the Executive Director in the preparation of funding requests.

Fund Raising

1. Determine methods of raising funds from:
 - a. selective solicitation or
 - b. public solicitation.
2. Work with the Public Support Committee to establish complete fund raising programs.

FINANCIAL OPERATING REQUIREMENTS

1. Defined accounting procedures.
2. Close liaison between the Financial Service Group, the officers of the Coalition and the Executive Director on the use of Coalition operating funds.
3. Close liaison between the Budgeting Control function, the Planning Service Group and the Committees to anticipate the financial needs of the Coalition.
4. Close liaison between the Budget Control, Financial Investigation and Fund Raising functions to determine the best ways to secure needed financial backing.

SERVICE GROUPS

MANPOWER

MANPOWER

The Manpower Service Group has not been implemented. When the group is established and the procedures have been defined, the description will be issued as an addition to this booklet.

The task of the Manpower Service Group will be to establish procedures to:

1. Organize the use of volunteers already enlisted: i.e. select meeting staff to aid the Executive Director in preparing for Board of Directors Meetings,
2. Enlist volunteers and classify their ability to aid the Coalition (such as skills, time available, interests, etc.)
3. Establish a list of specific experts available for consultation by Sub-Committee or Task Forces.

MEETING PROCEDURE

The By-Laws call for Board of Directors meetings six times a year or once every two months. The following is a procedure for those meetings.

1. A meeting staff of 8 - 10 volunteers will be selected by the Executive Director and the Manpower Service Group.

2. Two weeks prior to the Board meeting date the meeting staff will assemble at the direction of the Executive Director to:

a. make arrangements for meeting place and collection of materials needed for the meeting,

b. contact Committees for inputs to the meeting which will require distribution,

c. package mailings to Board of Directors at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting; i.e. previous minutes, meeting agenda and task force reports.

3. The actual meeting will follow this format:

a. Roll call by vacant chair - seating for the Board will be prearranged by nameplate indicating members name and affiliation.. The Secretary will take roll by noting empty chairs.

b. The minutes of the previous meeting will not be read and will be moved for approval unless there are exceptions from the floor.

c. The Executive Director will give a report of Coalition activities since the last meeting. The Executive Director's report should not exceed ten (10) minutes.

d. The Treasurer will report on the financial condition of the Coalition. The report should not exceed three (3) minutes.

e. Each Committee will be called upon to make a brief progress report on their activities over the past two months. This report should not include requests for decisions from the Board nor formal Task Force reports. These should be included in the business portion of the meeting. Progress Reports should not exceed five (5) minutes.

f. The business session of the meeting should include discussion and decision on all specific action which requires Board of Directors approval. Requests for discussion on decisions to be taken up in the business session should be channeled to the Board Co-Chairmen through the Executive Director. The business session should follow this procedure:

- (1) Previous business
- (2) New business (scheduled by request)
- (3) New business from the floor.

4. With fewer and scheduled meetings and with increasing work by the Committees, attendance of the Board members will be critical. The following procedure will be followed:

a. if possible, a Board member who cannot attend the meeting should select an alternate and inform the Executive Director two days prior to the meeting.

b. if an alternate is selected at the last minute he should inform the Recording Secretary of his presence prior to the meeting,

c. two absences in a row of a Board member (regardless of alternate) call for a reminder letter from the Board Co-Chairman, and

d. three (3) absences in a row (regardless of alternate) will call for a request from the Co-Chairman to the organization which the Board member represents for new representation.

URBAN COALITION

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORGANIZATION

URBAN COALITION

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORGANIZATION

PURPOSE

There is a job to be done in Greater Bridgeport, there is a willingness in the community to undertake the task, and there are resources available to turn willingness into reality. The first undertaking is to organize manpower and resource into a cooperative and cohesive force for accomplishment. The job to be done is complex and many-faceted, affecting every aspect of life within the communities which make up the Greater Bridgeport area. Many past and present efforts have been mounted against many aspects of the urban problem by various parts of the community. To date, it is obvious, that for all the effort, much still remains to be done. From an organizational viewpoint, one of the major causes for the less-than-full accomplishment has been the failure to involve the total community, and, most particularly, the private sector, in an all-out and coordinated effort. The purpose of the Urban Coalition is to join together civil rights groups, the church, government, labor, and business to attack the urban problems and solve them. Certainly it is not enough to draw together a group of community leaders and to call for involvement of the private citizens, without providing the organizational mechanics and methods which will mold a collection of individuals into an efficient and effective force. The purpose of this document is to examine the organizational situation and to suggest specific methods to get the job done.

URBAN COALITION

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORGANIZATION

ORGANIZATIONAL REALITIES

First, it is necessary to understand what a coalition is and what it is not.

A coalition is a forum for the exchange of ideas, opinions and information between the ghetto community and the Greater Bridgeport power structure.

It is not a governmental body requiring complete representation of the community, nor approval by vote of the electorate. Neither is a coalition a political entity - tied to a particular party or ideology. A coalition works with elected officials and, as a body, takes no position in the election of individuals. This is not to say that persons who make up the coalition are apolitical nor that the coalition will not try to influence the passage of laws to support the objectives of the coalition.

A coalition is a force which mobilizes the resources of the community to study problems, recommend solutions and aid in implementing action programs. It is not an "overseer" group or "super" agency which will assume primary responsibility for operating various ghetto programs. A coalition cooperates with and aids on-going agencies. Coalition operating functions will be kept to a minimum and used only on an interim basis until primary responsibility can be assumed by governmental or private groups.

A coalition is a visible collection of community power which takes catalytic and supportive action to effect change. This is accomplished by exemplary

community, sacrifices are required. How, then, can Greater Bridgeport organize its talents and resources to act more effectively on those matters which merit our common concern? How can we make our existing institutions flexible and responsive to the needs of a rapidly changing community?

The Bridgeport community has demonstrated that it possesses the will and the resources to meet the urban crisis squarely. As a first step, it was decided to join together regularly leaders who best know the problems with leaders who can best solve them. On January 11, 1968, 150 Bridgeport area leaders representing business, labor, religion, government, education and the disadvantaged, unanimously voted to establish an Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport.

Inspired by the example of the National Urban Coalition, a primary function of the local coalition will be to muster the public support and involvement needed to bring about a major reordering of national, state and local priorities in the face of the unresolved urban emergency. As the name suggests, it is a temporary alliance, for as long as needed, of the various centers of power and influence in the Bridgeport region.

The coalition can be no better than the good will and resources voluntarily committed by its members. It is neither a super-agency nor a debating society. It cannot prevent riots, but, with perseverance, it can honorably help hasten remedies for their root causes.

The Urban Coalition fills the need for a catalyst -- providing leadership, stimulating public discussion, communicating the need for local, state and national action, and supporting appropriate ongoing efforts. It is unlikely that it will, itself, initiate and administer programs on a continuing basis as this would detract from the critical catalytic role. Given the multitude of existing national, state and local, public and private organizations capable of program implementation, that role is best left to them.

We are aware that rhetoric without results is not only useless but harmful -- that expectations are better left unaroused than unfulfilled. We are also mindful that, too often, good intentions have gone unmatched by good performance. As we set out together no one knows what lies ahead, but the responsibility of leaders is to lead! This the Urban Coalition For Greater Bridgeport pledges to do.

URBAN COALITION

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORGANIZATION

ORGANIZATIONAL REALITIES (Cont'd)

Individual or group commitment to an action, by the use of persuasion or influence to obtain action within the community, and by the use of group or individual power to lobby for changes in the law. It does not have any stated power to order the acceptance of any given program.

Finally, a local coalition is a focal point for the collection of information from, and dissemination of information to, the National Urban Coalition and other local coalitions. In this way it can aid in the formulation of national policy and it can cooperate with other coalitions, contributing to and taking from a nationwide experience.

ORGANIZATIONAL NECESSITIES

Having discussed the purpose of organization and the realities of a coalition, the next step is to examine the necessities which will guide the construction of a system which will enable the Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport to operate effectively. The Coalition must assure the following key factors:

- I. Confrontation: between those who know the problems and those who have the power to solve them. Further, there must be confrontation and interaction between those groups within the power structure and the community who have differing views of possible solutions and implementation methods.

ORGANIZATIONAL NECESSITIES (Cont'd)

2. Involvement of the community. Direct personal involvement can be accomplished by providing ways to utilize people who wish to join in the work, work that is real, useful and which engenders pride of participation. Further, the Coalition should involve the total community through adroit use of communications.

3. Action orientation of all aspects of the Coalition. No study should be undertaken that does not result in action. These actions should be catalytic, such as implementing new programs; or supportive, such as helping present agencies be more effective; or coordinating, such as helping to integrate several related programs into a more concentrated and efficient effort.

4. Flexibility of operation. There are no sacred nor traditional guidelines for the work or organization of the Coalition - mainly, because it primarily engages in changing what is to what it should be. The Coalition should maintain the ability to change its own internal structure and methods as experience demands or as the character of the problems change.

5. Perspective in decisions and work. The Coalition has to maintain two views. First, it must have an overview (telescopic) of its actions and the needs of the community in order to maintain a balanced relationship. Second, it must develop a focused view (microscopic) of specific problems in order to obtain the understanding necessary to a meaningful action decision.

URBAN COALITION

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORGANIZATION

ORGANIZATIONAL NECESSITIES (Cont'd)

6. Efficiency in its utilization of resources. The Coalition is a collection of time-limited community leaders, volunteer manpower and manpower contributed by industry. Further, it has no specific method to generate an unlimited supply of funds. This necessitates the organized use of many hands with an allocation of work in proportion to the ability of persons to contribute their time. Further, the Coalition should recognize the repetitive and/or specialized nature of certain tasks. Separating these can lead to a more efficient use of specialized manpower, to the utilization of the most modern techniques, to the reduction of errors of commission, and to reduced re-invention of the wheel.

7. Equality of the minority groups of the community. Perhaps the key to accomplishment within the ghetto and to the prevention of destructive outbreak will be the visible leadership and participation of the Black and Spanish-speaking minorities within the Coalition. It must be demonstrated to the total community that the effort mounted here is a cooperative movement, not another situation in which the white community makes a secular analysis and decision about what is best for the minority. Also important to consider here will be the pressures which will be placed upon the minority leadership to guide responsible action within the ghetto. To be effective, the minority leadership must be able to speak from a position of visible equality and authority.

URBAN COALITION

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORGANIZATION

ORGANIZATIONAL RESOLUTION

It is necessary to meet the above necessities and yet keep the organization as simple as possible. To accomplish this, the following four basic steps are suggested, and then detailed in later sections:

1. The work of the Coalition (and the Coalition itself) is divided into two separate groupings. The first segment is decisional in nature and is the responsibility of a Board of Directors (the Board). The Board, which is composed of the leadership of the community, will maintain the overview (telescopic) position; its discussions of problems and possible solutions will resolve differences and lead to action and to the implementation of what action through the application of its power, either by direct commitment or by influence. The second grouping is operational in nature and is the responsibility of Task Forces. The Task Forces will be made up of manpower, either volunteered by the community or contributed by the private sector. Each Task Force will be assigned within a particular problem area (such as Housing) and will establish action programs to handle various discrete tasks within the major problem areas. The work of all Task Forces will be to gather facts about the problem, analyze these facts to define the problem, offer recommendations for solution and alternative methods to implement the solutions. The Task Forces report to the Committees of the Board.

URBAN COALITION

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORGANIZATION

ORGANIZATIONAL RESOLUTION (Cont'd)

2. Because of the number and complexity of problems to be dealt with, it is impossible to visualize several Task Forces working and reporting to the total Board without confusion and considerable pressure on time-limited people. It is necessary to interject a mechanism between the total Board and the Task Forces, which will make the process more efficient. This is done through the use of Committees.

A Committee is made up of selected members of the Board and one is assigned to each major area of concern (such as housing). The task of the Committee is to establish and maintain liaison with the Task Force and to guide and review its efforts to assure preparation of the most meaningful report in a manner which will lead to decision. Thus, with overview and decisionally-based advice, the Task Force will not waste time due to errors of omission, nor will it waste the time of the total Board by presenting partial or incomplete recommendations for consideration. Thus, the Committees will maintain an overview of the total problem and integrate the work of the Task Forces who will maintain a focused view (microscopic) on a particular problem aspect.

3. The Organizational Necessities clearly point to the need for the ordered and efficient arrangement of work. Thus far, the work has been divided between the Board, the Committees and Task Forces. This should allow for involvement of many individuals participating in work they can and want to do. There are two other work arrangements that must be recognized, which are special in nature.

URBAN COALITION

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATION FOR ORGANIZATION

ORGANIZATIONAL RESOLUTION (Cont'd)

These are the operation of the Coalition and the provision of specialist talent for tasks that affect each and every Task Force. This is accomplished by one organizational entity - the Task Force on Operations. This Task Force has as its dual purpose the efficient operation of the total Coalition and the provision of specialized talent to aid the Coalition and the Task Forces.

4. In order to assure Confrontation and the Equality necessities, it is recommended that the leadership of the various Coalition components be cooperative - i.e. one (1) member of the white community and one (1) representing the minority groups. This would include co-chairmen of:

the Board

the Committees and

the Task Forces.

COALITION COMPONENTS _ (See Chart - following page)

The following is a detailed examination of each of the Coalition components, with specific reference to composition, responsibility and suggested (but not complete) procedures. It is anticipated that procedural rules for each component will need to be established over the next few months.

Urban Coalition for the Greater Bridgeport Area

Chairman: Mayor of Bridgeport
Hugh C. Curran

FALITION

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORGANIZATION

ACTION COMPONENTS (Cont'd)

Board of Directors

Composition

- 1) 50 to 75 persons of leadership position in the Greater Bridgeport Area
- 2) Co-Chairmen - Nominated by the Mayor
- Elected for 1 year terms

Responsibility

- 1) Overview
- 2) Decision on action programs
- 3) Commitment to action programs, direct or influential

Procedure

- 1) Board will meet as the situation requires, or at least once every two months.
- 2) Detailed minutes will be kept of each session and delivered to members one week subsequent to meetings.
- 3) Members may be added to the Board by request of Mayor or by nomination from the floor with two-thirds approval of the entire Board membership.
- 4) Membership should be held to those persons who represent groups of power and influence within the community. Outstanding individual contributors should be directed to Task Force participation.
- 5) Members who cannot attend meetings should, if possible, send an alternate who can represent the authority of the absent member.
- 6) The Co-Chairmen will rotate as chairman of individual meetings.

URBAN COALITION

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORGANIZATION

COALITION COMPONENTS (Cont'd)

7) Rules for conduct of the meetings will be established by the Operations Committee (See By-Laws).

8) The co-chairman may select subcommittees for special action with the approval of a majority of the Board in attendance.

9) No decision or any action program presented to the community under the auspices of the Urban Coalition may be made without discussion in a meeting attended by two-thirds of the membership of the Board.

Committees

Composition

1) Five (5) to ten (10) members of the Board. Co-chairmen nominated by the Mayor and Co-Chairmen of the Board.

2) Committees should include persons who have specific interest in or knowledge of the problem area.

Responsibility

1) Establishment of Task Forces.

2) Advisor to Task Force leadership.

3) Review of proposed study programs.

4) Review of proposed study program results or action programs, before presentation to total Board.

5) Assure proper consideration by Task Forces and proper presentation of programs for decision.

Procedure

- 1) Committee will meet at their discretion or at the request of Task Force leaders.
- 2) Committees are not empowered to make decisions or to take action in the community in the name of the Urban Coalition.
- 3) Membership on a specific Committee may be requested by any member of the Board.

Task Forces (TF)

Composition

- 1) Co-chairmen on a volunteer or contributed basis, as nominated and approved by the Board.
- 2) Task Forces will involve as many persons and utilize as many as it sees fit to accomplish the task - with the concurrence of the Committee.
- 3) A Task Force may be established by the Board to study any unsolved urban problem. In response to the recommendations of the Program Report and the National Urban Coalition, the following are suggested for approval:

Housing

Education

Employment

Community Enrichment

Operations

Public Support and Communications

Others (as needed)

BY-LAWS

URBAN COALITION FOR THE GREATER BRIDGEPORT AREA, INC.

ARTICLE I - PURPOSE AND LOCATION

Section 1. Purpose. This organization shall be known as the Urban Coalition for the Greater Bridgeport Area, Inc., and its purpose shall be to unite all citizens and groups in the area who are concerned with the elimination of poverty, discrimination and segregation because of race or ethnic background, racial animosity, and all the attendant ills of bad housing, crime, delinquency, inferior education, unemployment and under-employment and lack of equal opportunity. The Coalition shall endeavor to enlist or recommend the creation of forces of all private groups in the community in this effort to solve the problems of the inner city and the surrounding town, in cooperation with existing public and private agencies.

Section 2. Location. The principal office of the Corporation shall be located at such place within the City of Bridgeport as the Board of Directors shall from time to time determine.

ARTICLE II - MEMBERS

Section 1. Members. The Corporation shall have at least fifty and not more than seventy-five individual members with equal voting rights. Six of them, including the Co-Chairmen and four others selected by them, shall do all things necessary to create a non-profit corporation.

Section 2. Eligibility. Members of the Corporation shall be residents of the Bridgeport Metropolitan area and shall be selected from and shall be representatives of business, labor, education, church and civic organizations, public and private service agencies, municipal government, poverty areas and minority racial groups.

Section 3. Alternate Members. Each member shall have the right also to appoint individuals as alternate members from time to time and to change appointments of alternate members at any time, one such alternate member for each such member. Such alternate member shall represent the same community group as the member who appointed him. Alternate members shall have the right to attend all meetings of members and Board of Directors and, in the absence of the member for whom he is alternate, shall have the right to vote and voice in the place of the member.

Section 4. Disqualification and Removal. In cases of a member who shall change his residence out of the Bridgeport Metropolitan area or who shall terminate his association with the organization which he was selected to represent, his membership may be terminated by resolution of the members of the Board of Directors and shall be terminated upon written notice of the disqualifying condition from the organization which he represents.

Section 5. Resignation of Membership. Any member may resign his membership at any time by giving written notice to the Board of Directors, to the President, or to the Secretary. Such resignation shall take effect at the date of receipt of such notice or at any later time specified therein; and unless otherwise specified therein, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

section 6. Dues, Solicitations, Funds and Budgets. The funds of the corporation shall be raised by voluntary contributions from private persons, firms, groups, associations, or other sources. No dues or assessments shall be levied on, or imposed as a condition of membership in this Corporation as such, but this provision shall not prevent the Board of Directors from requesting or accepting voluntary contributions from members or groups of members. No part of the funds of the Corporation shall be used except for administrative expenses approved or within limits approved by the Board of Directors by a simple majority vote and for such other purpose or purposes as may be approved by vote of at least two-thirds of the members of the Corporation present at a meeting, provided there is a quorum. The Board of Directors shall establish a budget for all purposes prior to the beginning of each fiscal year.

Section 7. Policy Referendum. Any member may submit any resolution or other statement of policy or position to the membership for a vote. Any such resolution or other statement shall not be effective until approved by a majority vote of the members present. Such vote may be postponed once at the request of five (5) or more members to be voted upon at the next regular or requested meeting at which advance notice of the resolution or statement shall be given.

ARTICLE II - DIRECTORS

Section 1. Composition of Board. The members of the Corporation shall be directors of the Corporation and shall constitute its Board of Directors.

Section 2. Regular Meetings. The annual meeting of the Board of Directors shall be held in May of each year. Regular meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held on the third Tuesday of each alternate month, at places designated from time to time by the Board of Directors. Notice of annual or regular meetings of the Board of Directors shall be given by the Secretary at least five (5) days prior to the day named for the meeting.

Section 3. Quorum. One-third of the directors, or alternates, in office shall be necessary to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, and except as hereinafter provided, the acts of a majority of the directors or alternates present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the acts of the Board of Directors.

Section 4. Special Meeting. Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be called by the Co-chairmen or by ten (10) or more of the directors and held at such time and place as shall be designated in the call for the meeting. Written notice of each special meeting shall be given by the Secretary to each director at least three (3) but not more than ten (10) days prior to the day named for the meeting. Such notice shall specify the place, day, and time of the meeting and the nature of the business to be transacted.

Section 5. Presiding and Recording Officers. At every meeting of the Board of Directors, one of the Co-chairmen shall preside and the Secretary shall record the minutes. At the next meeting, the other Co-chairman will preside, if present. In the absence of both Co-chairmen the Secretary will preside. If the Secretary is absent, the Treasurer shall preside.

Section 6. Compensation of Directors. No director of the Corporation shall receive any compensation for acting as such.

ARTICLE IV - COMMITTEES

Section 1. Standing Committees. The Co-chairmen of the Board of Directors, with the approval of the Board of Directors, may designate members of the Board to serve on committees to carry out the purposes of the Corporation. Committees, prior to commencing programs or committing Corporation funds, shall receive the approval of the Board of Directors. It shall be the duty of the Committees, with the approval of the Board of Directors, to create task forces, which may include persons who are not members of the Board, to perform such duties as the Board of Directors shall determine. Committees and task forces shall determine their own organization and times and places of meetings, unless otherwise directed by resolution of the Board of Directors. The Co-chairmen of the Board of Directors shall be ex-officio members of all committees.

Section 2. Nominating Committee. The Co-chairman shall each year at the January meeting appoint a nominating committee which shall place in nomination at the annual meeting of the Board of Directors at least one qualified candidate for each officer to be elected by the Board of Directors. Additional nominations may be made by the members of the Board, if they so desire.

Section 3. Consultants and Specialists. The Co-chairmen of the Board of Directors, in counsel with the members of the various committees, shall have the power to name consultants and specialists to work with any committee. Consultants and specialists need not be members of the Corporation.

ARTICLE V - OFFICERS AND STAFF

Section 1. Titles, Qualifications. The officers of the Corporation shall be a President, a Secretary, a Treasurer and Co-chairmen of the Board of Directors, and such other officers as the Board of Directors may, from time to time, determine. The officers shall be natural persons of full age and if not already members of the Corporation shall become so for the term of their office.

Section 2. Election, Terms. The officers of the Corporation shall be chosen by the Board of Directors at its annual meeting, but the Board may fill any vacancies among the officers at any other meeting after notice that a vacancy exists. Subject to earlier termination of office, each officer shall hold office for one (1) year and until his successor shall have been duly elected and qualified.

Section 3. Resignations. Any officer may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Board of Directors or to the President or to the Secretary. Such resignation shall take effect at the date of the receipt of such notice or at any later time specified therein, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

Section 4. President. The President of the Corporation shall be an honorary officer, whose chief duty will be to chair the annual meeting of the Board of Directors.

Section 5. Co-Chairmen of the Board of Directors. The Co-chairmen of the Board of Directors shall have charge of the operations of the Board of Directors and of the staff of the Corporation. They shall sign, execute and acknowledge, in the name of the Corporation, instruments authorized by the Board, except in cases where the signing and execution thereof shall be

ly delegated by the Board to some other officer or agent of the Corporation; and they shall perform such other duties as, from time to time, may be assigned to them by the Board.

Section 6. Secretary. The Secretary shall record all the votes of the directors and the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors in books to be kept for the purpose and see that all records and reports are properly kept and filed by the Corporation as required by law. He shall give proper notice of meetings of the members of the Board of Directors, shall be the custodian of the seal of the Corporation, and shall see that it is affixed to all documents to be executed on behalf of the Corporation under its seal; and, in general, he shall perform all duties incident to the office of Secretary, and such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to him by the Board or Co-chairmen.

Section 7. Treasurer. The Treasurer shall have custody of all funds of the Coalition, which shall be deposited in a bank subject to withdrawal on the order of any two (2) of the officers. Normally, he shall countersign checks on these funds with either Co-chairman or the Secretary and shall report on the status of the Coalition's financial condition at each regular meeting. In his absence, the Secretary may countersign checks with either Co-chairman. All officers handling funds shall be bonded in an appropriate amount.

Section 8. Executive Director. The Executive Director shall be the chief executive of the Corporation, appointed by the Board of Directors.

Section 9. Removal. Any officer of the Corporation may be removed by the Board of Directors whenever in its judgment the best interest of the Corporation will be served thereby.

ARTICLE VI - BORROWING AND DEPOSITS

Section 1. Borrowing Money. No officer, agent or employee of the corporation shall have power or authority to borrow money on its behalf, to pledge its credit, or to mortgage or pledge its real or personal property, except within the scope and to the extent of the authority delegated by resolution of the Board of Directors. Authority may be given by the Board for any of the above purposes and may be general or limited to specific instances.

Section 2. Deposits. All funds of the Corporation shall be deposited from time to time to the credit of the Corporation in such banks, trust companies, or other depositories as the Board of Directors may approve or designate, and all such funds shall be withdrawn only upon checks signed by the officers specified in Section 7 of Article V above.

ARTICLE VII - INDEMNIFICATION OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

Each director and officer, whether or not then in office, shall be indemnified by the Corporation against all costs and expenses reasonably incurred by or imposed upon him in connection with or arising out of any action, suit or proceeding in which he may be involved by reason of his being or having been a director or officer of the Corporation, such expenses to include the cost of reasonable settlements (other than amounts paid to the Corporation itself) made with a view to curtailment of costs of litigation. The Corporation shall not, however, indemnify any director or officer with respect to matters as to which he shall be finally adjudged in any such action, suit or proceeding to have been derelict in the performance of his duty as such director or officer, nor in respect of any matter on which any settlement or compromise is effected, if the total expense,

cluding the cost of such settlement, shall substantially exceed the expense which might reasonably be incurred by such director or officer in conducting such litigation to a final conclusion. The foregoing right of indemnification shall not be exclusive of other rights to which any director or officer may be entitled as a matter of law.

ARTICLE VIII - FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the Corporation shall be from April 1 to March 31. The Board of Directors shall cause the books of the Corporation to be audited annually, and a report of such audit shall be submitted to the Board within 90 days.

ARTICLE IX - CORPORATE SEAL

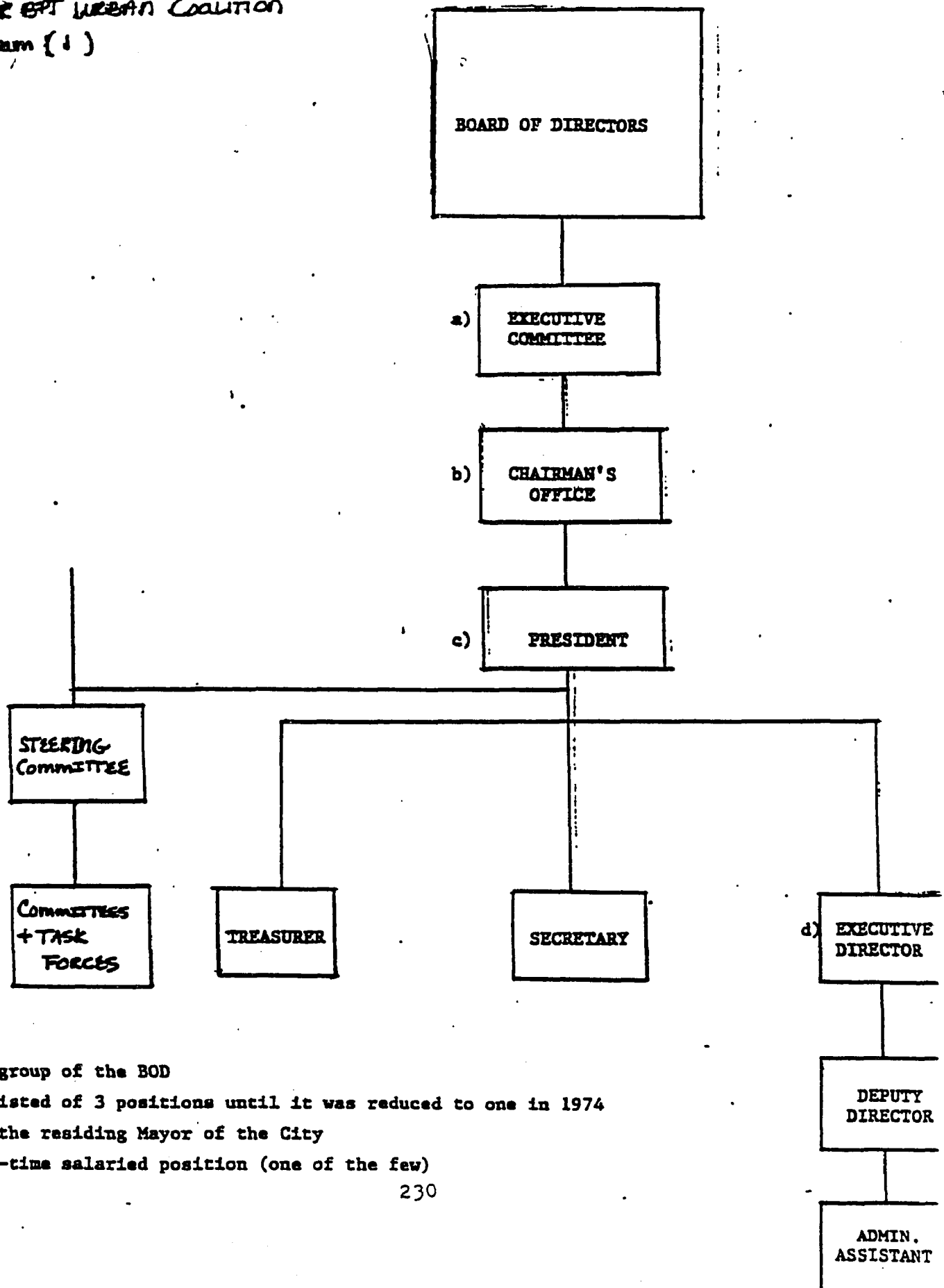
The Board of Directors shall adopt a corporate seal, which shall be a circular embossed seal having inscribed thereon the name of the Corporation and the words "Corporate Seal" and "Connecticut".

ARTICLE X - AMENDMENTS AND RULES

Section 1. Amendments. Any amendment, alteration or repeal of all or any of the provisions of the Articles of Incorporation or these By-Laws, whether contractual in nature or merely regulatory of the internal affairs of the Corporation, may be proposed by the officers or any member of the Board of Directors and adopted by vote of two-thirds of all the members at any regular or special meeting duly convened after notice to each member and to each officer and director at least ten (10), but not more than thirty (30) days prior to the meeting indicating the purpose of the meeting and proposed changes.

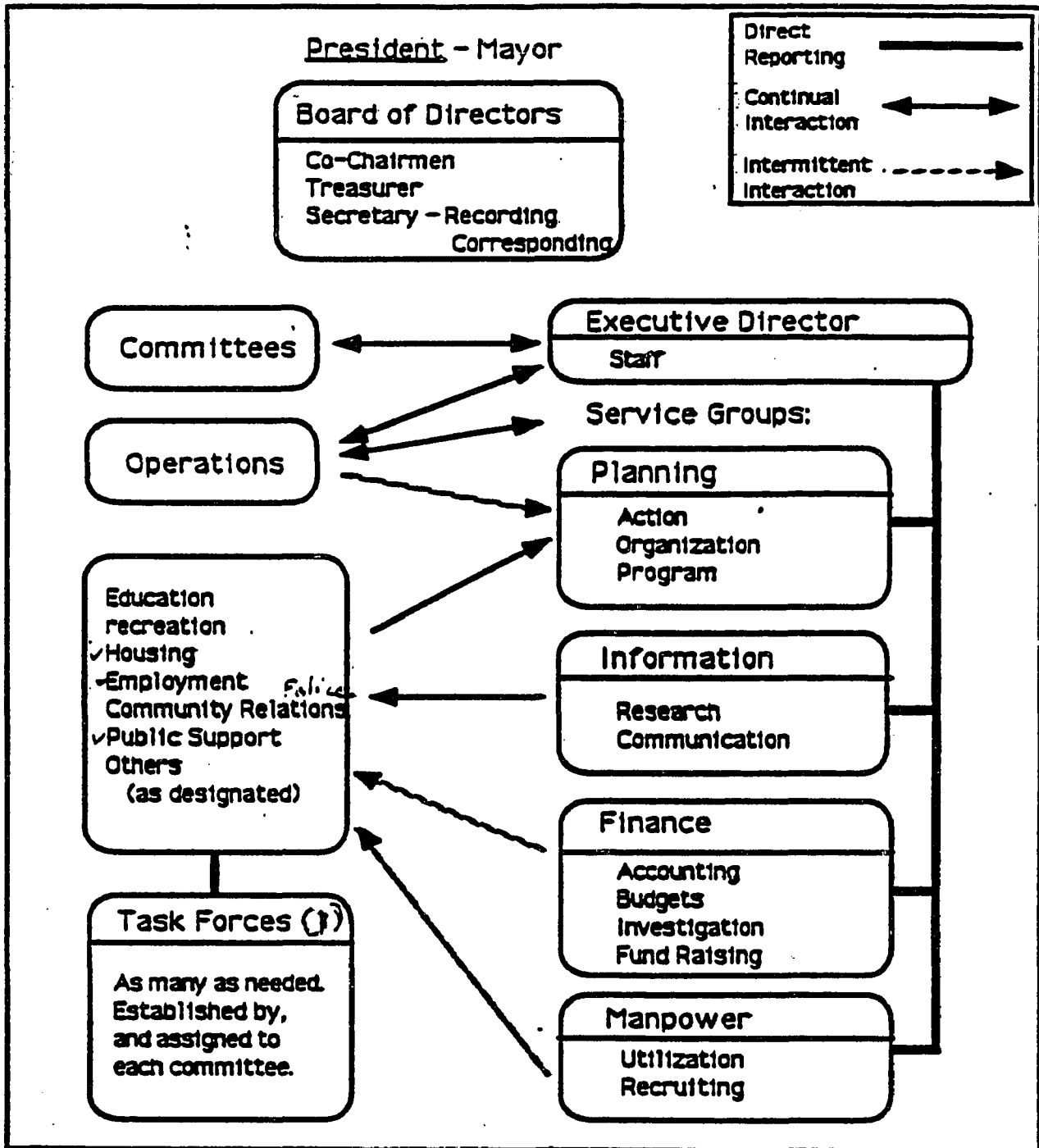
Section 2. Rules. In the absence of any specific language to the contrary contained in these By-Laws, meetings of the Board shall be conducted according to Roberts' Rules of Order; and the same Rules will govern the general conduct of the Coalition where not otherwise specifically provided.

GREATER BPT URBAN COALITION
Diagram (1)



- a) sub group of the BOD
- b) consisted of 3 positions until it was reduced to one in 1974
- c) was the residing Mayor of the City
- d) full-time salaried position (one of the few)

GREATER BRIDGEPORT AREA URBAN COALITION (diagram 2)



(1) Task Forces will use all services groups as consultants.

APPENDIX TWO:
PROPOSAL TO BOARDS OF EDUCATION FROM
THE URBAN COALITION FOR GREATER
BRIDGEPORT

PROPOSAL
TO THE
BOARDS OF EDUCATION
FROM THE
URBAN COALITION
FOR
GREATER BRIDGEPORT

A SELF-STUDY OF THE FEASIBILITY OF COOPERATIVE
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM USING THE RESOURCES OF THE
MEMBER BOARDS OF EDUCATION WITH THE ASSISTANCE
OF GENERAL LEARNING AND THE AREA UNIVERSITIES.

DECEMBER 5, 1968

The Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport
McLevy Hall, Room 205
202 State Street
Bridgeport, Conn. 06603

PREAMBLE

The General Learning Proposal submitted to the area Boards of Education by the Urban Coalition for the Greater Bridgeport Area is based upon the conviction that there is an urgent necessity for our community - the core city of Bridgeport and its neighboring towns - to evaluate primary educational objectives and to develop means of achieving them.

The Proposal is, above all, a response to the needs of our children.

Our youngsters in this second half of the twentieth century are growing up in a technologically advanced and demanding society which seems often to lose sight of the individual human being and his relationships with others.

Our school systems, therefore, have responsibilities more formidable than ever before. For wherever their residence, whatever their economic or ethnic or religious, or racial group, children must, along with acquiring the basic skills of reading and math, learn to live with one another - to understand and respect both themselves and their neighbors. And what happens to children in one neighborhood in Bridgeport or Southport deeply affects the lives of those throughout the total community.

The Proposal is a study that involves educators and ordinary citizens alike in the cooperative quest for developing the processes by which children learn academic skills and subject matter and experience meaningful human values. It is a search for new and exciting and relevant educational programs that will enable children from the suburbs and children from the city better to learn and better to live together as sharers in, and contributors to, a truly democratic society.

It is a search, therefore, for higher quality education for all and, at the same time, for the improvement of community relations through the creation of an educational environment responsive to its multi-cultural citizenry.

URBAN COALITION OF GREATER BRIDGEPORT

P R E A M B L E

In the State of Connecticut, two programs have been directed, on a State-supported basis, at developing communication in the education process between urban and suburban youth. Hartford and New Haven, both under Project Concern, attempted to arrive at a solution on a logistical basis, namely the transportation of students from the ghetto areas into the suburbs.

It is the conviction of the Urban Coalition of Greater Bridgeport and the superintendents of schools related to the seven districts, that such a project really does not deal with the primary educational objectives, and really achieves only a logistical solution. It is the proposal of the Coalition that jointly with the Boards of Education and the superintendents of schools a programmatic response be developed to the need for intercultural exposures, experimentation and participation in the educational process. No one is disturbed at the long history of interscholastic sports in the Bridgeport area between the urban and suburban schools which requires extensive transportation. Current available technology would provide closed circuit television and other communications between schools and among school districts. (We can rent a closed circuit television system that would keep two schools and their class rooms in communication at a monthly rental of \$224, for instance).

It is therefore our proposal to engage General Learning and the universities in the area in a six months Feasibility Study of Innovative Educational Programs. It is assumed that General Learning would withdraw from the project at the end of six months from the date of initiation, and that the universities and the cooperating school boards would join in an ongoing, continuing project of

It is proposed that the school boards invited to participate are as follows:

Bridgeport

Trumbull

Westport

Fairfield

Weston

Wilton

Stratford

It is probable that at least Bridgeport and one other suburban community are prepared to move on this project. It is unclear as to which other school boards will enter into this proposal, although each board has participated in a preliminary meeting through two representatives, and each board is now invited by the Coalition to participate.

The Coalition, through its Committee on Public Support and Communication, has agreed to develop the structure for broad base community support through lay committees, involving the broadest cross-section of community opinion on such a feasibility study. The function of the Coalition at this point will be to insure the broadest discussion in the community of the issues that are involved. Members of the planning committee are already at work developing this aspect of the responsibility.

The Coalition has been meeting with the superintendents of schools and General Learning since April of 1968 to develop this proposal. A meeting was held on July 1 in which representatives of all school boards (two) plus the superintendents were present. At that time the group invited the Coalition to prepare a proposal for work jointly with General Learning.

Subsequent meetings have been held through July, August and September.

BACKGROUND

The anticipation of the coming post-industrial society is being expressed in the increasing demands of all segments of the society for increased racial and cultural exchange through the medium of education. Educators are severely challenged to find new means of effectively utilizing community resources to promote such exchange.

Fundamental to change is the high rate of technological development and application. Higher speed transportation and expanding uses of automation testify to man's creative use of technology. Second-order effects are seen in the increasing trend toward urbanization, the re-orientation of the urban-suburban complex, and the spreading tentacles of the Eastern Seaboard Megalopolis. Added to these developments are the lengthening of the human life cycle and the increased attention to problems of poverty. Educators are, therefore, being asked not only to provide higher quality education for all, but, at the same time, to improve community relations by creating educational programs which are responsive to the needs of a multi-cultural environment.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Many communities around the country are attempting to deal with the emerging problem of determining what action needs to be taken in order to provide an acceptable environment for all the components of a metropolitan area. Such an area requires consideration of the needs of the inner-city and the urban and suburban communities. The problem in its total perspective represents one of national concern and is included on everyone's list of national objectives and needs.

When the racial integration problems are combined with the educational needs of youth in a metropolitan area, the focus then is placed on what kind of action the collective communities might take in the realm of formal education programs. A great deal of the effort up to now has resulted from a logistical view of the problem.

What about establishing a programmatic rather than logistic view? Why not then ask the question: What educational programs could be developed so that the youth involved does not become culturally isolated, whether he lives in suburbia or the inner-city?

Exploration of the above problem has been going on for some time in the Greater Bridgeport area through the informal meeting of Superintendents of Schools in the area as well as of some members of the recently formed Urban Coalition for the Greater Bridgeport Area. The last such meeting was one that was sponsored by the Urban Coalition and involved representative Superintendents, Board of Education members, and representatives from the Educational Services Division of General Learning Corporation.

The results of these explorations suggest that a comprehensive analysis of potential solutions should be made, with emphasis on the programmatic as opposed to the logistic approach, in order that all of the communities involved might be able to make reasonable decisions regarding the action they would like to take.

A partial listing of possible activities to be considered in such a programmatic approach might include:

1. Exchange of curriculum materials on minority history for various grade levels,
2. Sharing of instructional activities among urban and suburban school systems by closed circuit educational television,
3. Sharing among all students of the cultural heritage of minority groups by in-person contributions by representative artists, lecturers, and writers,
4. Development of children's performing art series under Black and white leadership,
5. Exchange of instrumental and choral groups, dramatic performances and assembly programs among urban and suburban school systems,
6. More extensive scheduling of inter-scholastic competition involving urban and suburban students,
7. Tutoring of disadvantaged children by groups of volunteer students,
8. Joint program development activities by staff and students of urban and suburban school systems,
9. Inviting a limited number of inner-city children to attend suburban schools on a non-resident basis,
10. Inviting a limited number of inner-city children to reside with suburban families on a full time basis (a regional "AFS" program).

The outcome of such an analysis would therefore.

1. Provide the participants with potential program choices that have been developed in terms of their feasibility in the Greater Bridgeport community.
2. Provide the basis for each community to determine which, if any, programs fulfill their particular needs within their capabilities.
3. Provide the participants with a mechanism for continuing to explore cooperative approaches to problems in the Greater Bridgeport area by involving local universities and other agencies, and
4. Provide the foundation, through greater community involvement and dialogue, for the identification of community-wide goals.

Finally, in order to conduct such an analysis, the Urban Coalition consistent with its goal statement indicating that the Coalition is an "action starter", would, therefore, become the sponsoring and coordinating agency.

As the coordinating agency, the Urban Coalition has requested General Learning Corporation to submit a proposal which would recommend a methodology; would consider the potential area of involvement to be Bridgeport and seven surrounding towns; would emphasize the programmatic approach; and finally, would suggest a process that would allow for as much community involvement as possible in terms of people and organizations.

NEED FOR A SELF-STUDY

Back of much of the unrest and conflict this country is facing today is increasing isolation of rich from poor, youth from adults, Blacks from whites. Communication among members of these groups is increasingly difficult. Misunderstanding and mistrust are increasingly evident.

Certainly some improvement in this situation might be achieved by the enlightened action of individuals and communities in the Greater Bridgeport

ties among the area's school systems could be determined by asking the "expert" opinion of an outside consulting organization such as General Learning Corporation. Yet neither of these approaches would be likely, in and of itself, to get to the root of the matter.

The heart of this proposal is its plan to involve urbanites and suburbanites, youth and adults, Blacks and whites in a shoulder-to-shoulder discussion of common problems and common aspirations. The General Learning Corporation will provide the technical help needed to make these discussions productive. In the end, each community will then decide which of the likely solutions it wishes to adopt and how far it wishes to go in implementing them.

What would Bridgeport gain from such a study? It would gain the help it needs to succeed in making self-respecting, self-supporting citizens of its young people. While the Bridgeport schools will need money and self-help for this task, money and self-help are not likely to accomplish it alone. What is needed, in addition, is the motivational incentive of suburban understanding and suburban help. In this way Bridgeport residents, Black and white, young and old, can be assured that American society is, indeed, an open society, that they are not trapped in a perpetual ghetto, that they can, indeed, share equally the traditional American rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

What would the suburban communities gain? They would gain an understanding of the problems and aspirations of inner-city residents in the only way such an understanding can be gained adequately -- through person-to-person contact. For suburban school children such contact is particularly important. We talk a good deal these days about the need to teach children more than the three R's -- the need to teach them to be good citizens, to observe the law, and to respect the rights and feelings of others. But such things cannot be learned from books and teachers alone. They can only be learned in schools where the problems of good citizenship can be solved in face-to-face contact with those whose feelings are different from theirs. The suburban communities, then, would gain the ability to teach citizenship far more effectively.

A SUGGESTED APPROACH

To address the problem outlined, the following nine-step procedure is suggested.

Step I:

Ascertain the chief characteristics of each participating community to determine their needs with respect to cultural isolation, and the strengths already inherent in their educational system which could be readily directed toward fulfillment of these needs.

This step is aimed essentially at identifying the needs for information, potential sources of data, and procedures for collecting the data.

Division of responsibilities:

Sponsors

1. Specify geographic area to be covered.
2. Indicate types of data believed critical.
3. Indicate available data sources in geographic area.
4. Assist in providing data.
5. Arrange meetings and assist in various surveys.

GLC

1. Devise data collection instruments, as needed.
2. Collect and analyze data.
3. Develop and provide appropriate information displays.
4. Conduct literature search.
5. Summarize and interpret findings.

Step 2:

Determine the objectives of each participating community with respect to eliminating cultural isolation by eliciting attitudes, interests, and suggestions from representative individuals, organizations, and educators in each community.

This step is designed to gather information regarding community attitudes and interests concerning educational expansion and change. History has provided sufficient testimony on the relationship between educational development and community attitudes and aspirations. History has also emphasized the importance of local control and the manner in which community aspirations have influenced the growth and spread of educational programs within that community. Such information is essential in order to understand the kind of direction and support given by the community to education, and how this support may be visualized for the future.

Division of responsibilities:

(essentially similar to those for Step 1.)

Step 3:

Specify a variety of possible educational programs which could potentially reduce cultural isolation in the various communities.

While Steps 1 and 2 consist mainly of data gathering and analysis, this step is designed to use the information generated earlier as a backdrop for synthesizing as many concrete, workable educational programs as possible which really reflect community needs and capabilities. For the most part, these programs will be designed so that they can be administered jointly by two or more of the participating communities. Furthermore, they will reflect anticipated needs of the next 3-5 years, as well as those now evident.

Division of responsibilities:

Sponsors

GLC

- 1. Discuss, review, and evaluate alternative programs and plans for possible implementation.**

- 1. Identify and propose alternative programs based on findings in Steps 1 and 2.**

Step 4:

Identify and specify in preliminary form a number of workable technological systems that might implement the various educational programs identified in Step 3.

The information explosion and the manner in which technology generally has been employed in processing and transmitting information has certainly speeded communication between and among communities. With potential programs identified, this step involves such questions as: Does this program lend itself to the use of television? Are there several technological systems that might serve the program equally well? In order to implement the programs, the intent is to organize and relate them to currently and potentially available systems.

A program, by itself, may seem both feasible and worthy. However, the effective implementation of the program may prove to be far too costly in manpower, financial resources, or equipments. Therefore, the programs considered must be studied in the light of the cost of the systems needed to implement them.

Division of responsibilities:

Sponsors

1. Evaluate alternative systems in terms of cost and effectiveness.

GLC

1. Identify feasible technical systems which would permit program implementation.
2. Advise on system requirements and costs.

Step 5:

Ascertain, insofar as possible, the relative utility of each program, i.e., the grade levels to which it may be directed, expected outcomes, direct and indirect consequences, and the possible feasibility of each.

Each program must be seen in relation to its suitability for a given audience.

For example, it may be useful for only one grade level or it may be able to serve all levels. Further, its potential must be anticipated to assure that the program does meet both the educational objectives for which it is designed and the social and economic objectives of the community. Similarly, thought must be given to consequences resulting from administration of the program: schedules, time requirements, and additional demands on the community. Consequences may be both direct and indirect, and require careful understanding and forethought.

Division of responsibilities:

Sponsors

1. Identify levels, expected outcomes, and possible effects.
2. Discuss and consider feasibility question.
3. Bring in own expert consultants for recommendations.
4. Decide on feasibility and recommend.

GLC

1. Develop data relative to feasibility.
2. Provide aid and support through information displays and coordination of sponsoring agencies.

Step 5:

Develop cost estimates in terms of manpower, equipments, materials, facilities, and funding requirements for each program suggested.

It is frequently easy to propose new activities and new techniques and mechanisms to be added to existing programs and practices. However, it is seldom easy to secure the needed funding for implementation. This step is designed to specify cost elements associated with each suggested program in order that the sponsors may be aware of needed funding, manpower, equipment, and facility requirements. In addition, it is proposed that an examination be made to ascertain whether suggested programs can partially or completely supplant existing programs, thus permitting reallocation of already available resources in lieu of adding resources. In some cases, of course, there may prove to be a need for additional resources.

Division of responsibilities:

Sponsors

1. Provide cost planning factors as required.
2. Assist in estimating potential program costs.
3. Decide on acceptable level of added costs.

GLC

1. Specify cost elements for each suggested program.
2. Estimate program costs, by element and in total.

test feasibility of preferred programs through pilot testing using small-

sample techniques or simulation.

Each participating community will have the opportunity to choose from among a number of programs those which it believes to be most desirable for its own use. The preferred choices should then be tested to assure that they are workable and will, in fact, provide the kinds of educational and social outcomes for which they were designed. Feasibility testing will be done through the use of small samples on a pilot basis, or, where opportunity is available, by simulation. During this step, it will be possible to discard unworkable ideas or applications, or ascertain unforeseen barriers.

Division of responsibilities:

Sponsors

1. Arrange for necessary feasibility tests on a pilot basis; secure facilities, preliminary plans, etc.
2. Assist in feasibility testing as required.
3. Review and comment on test outcomes, data, interpretations, etc.

GLC

1. Develop specific plans for carrying out feasibility or pilot test of preferred programs.
2. Record observations.
3. Summarize and aggregate test data.
4. Interpret data aggregations.

Step 8:-

Test feasibility of preferred programs through pilot testing using small sample techniques or simulation.

Each participating community will have the opportunity to choose from among a number of programs those which it believes to be most desirable for its own use. The preferred choices should then be tested to assure that they are workable and will, in fact, provide the kinds of educational and social outcomes for which they were designed. Feasibility testing will be done through the use of small samples on a pilot basis, or, where opportunity is available, by simulation. During this step, it will be possible to discard unworkable ideas or applications, or ascertain unforeseen barriers.

Division of responsibilities:

Sponsors

1. Arrange for necessary feasibility tests on a pilot basis; secure facilities, preliminary plans, etc.
2. Assist in feasibility testing as required.
3. Review and comment on test outcomes, data, interpretations, etc.

GLC

1. Develop specific plans for carrying out feasibility or pilot test of preferred programs.
2. Record observations.
3. Summarize and aggregate test data.
4. Interpret data aggregations.

Step 9:

Summarize findings and prepare report.

If the sponsoring and co-sponsoring agencies accept this proposal and contract with General Learning Corporation, it is anticipated that the study will be initiated November 1, 1968. A draft report of findings will be made available to the sponsoring agencies on April 15, 1969. One hundred bound copies of the final report will be available on May 15, 1969.

Division of responsibilities:

Sponsors

1. Contribute to and participate in preparation of report; assist by reviewing and suggesting revisions, as required.

GLC

1. Summarize findings and prepare draft report to client organizations.
2. Review and revise draft; prepare and issue final report.

OPERATIONAL PLAN

The study designed and discussed in this proposal will be operated by the General Learning Corporation under contract to the Urban Coalition of Bridgeport, Connecticut. The General Learning Corporation will designate Mr. Thomas Caton and Dr. Aaron Nadel as codirectors of the study.

The Urban Coalition, as contractor, will also function as coordinating agency for the several participating communities and their educational systems. It becomes the responsibility of the Urban Coalition, therefore, to assure a broad base of involvement by the entire community. In this capacity, the Urban Coalition will play the key role in providing the dimension of the whole Greater Bridgeport area to the study.

The Urban Coalition will arrange for the organization and availability of representative advisory committees. These advisory committees should reflect the views of the various participating communities, their organizations and institutions, which serve multiple communities, i. e., colleges and universities. Each advisory committee should be representative of the divergent views of its community at large, and will act as a sounding board in responding to various presentations as the study progresses. Committee reactions, attitudes, and comments will be recorded and related to each of the proposed programs. Their respective feasibility will be therefore a reflection of community desire and support. Actions and recommendations of advisory committees will be incorporated, together with appropriate findings, as part of the final report.

The Urban Coalition, in its capacity as coordinator, will secure commitments from each participating community for the services of one knowledgeable individual from the administrative staff of its educational agency. These individuals will be assigned as working members of the study team, each contributing up to 25% of his time between November 1, 1968 and April 30, 1969.

The General Learning Corporation personnel who will be assigned to this study are named in the following pages together with brief resumes of their education and experience.

The study, if accepted, will be initiated November 1, 1968 and will continue to operate until the final report is submitted to the Urban Coalition on May 15, 1969. To clarify the manner in which tasks will be carried out, the following chart has been constructed to indicate the time requirements allocated for each major task.

Tasks	Nov. 1	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	Apr.	May 15
Step I		Data Collection					
Step II			Etab. Commun. Objectives				
Step III			Specify Altern. Prog.				
Step IV				Identify Communication Links			
Step V				Deter. Utility Outcomes, Feas.			
Step VI				Dev. Cost Est.			
Step VII					Deter. Comm. Accent.		
Step VIII					Feasibility Tests		
Step IX						Prep. of Report	
						Draft Report	Final Report

APPENDIX THREE:
REPORTER—MAY 1973
REPORTER—AUGUST 1974
REPORTER—FEBRUARY 1975

**urban
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for greater bridgeport



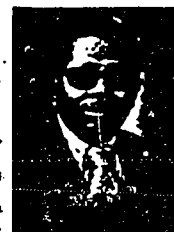
reporter

May, 1973

Statement of Purpose: The Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport is an independent organization providing communication, interaction, and advocacy between the citizens of the inner city, citizens of the entire region, the business community and local government.

* * *

New Director --Dr. Elliott Luis Strickland, director of evaluation and information of the Bridgeport Model Cities Agency, became the executive director of the Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, April 1, 1973. He succeeds Walter B. Hill, Jr. Dr. Strickland came to this area in February, 1971. Since then, he has been directly involved with evaluation and arrangements for funding with the local Model Cities Agency.



E.L. Strickland

A major volunteer effort by Dr. Strickland since coming into the Bridgeport area scene has been the recruitment of, and financial assistance for, more than 100 students to attend Wilberforce University, Wilberforce, Ohio. Some 70 young people from the Bridgeport area are attending Wilberforce as a result of Dr. Strickland's efforts in working with the industrial and business community to locate financial aid for these students.

Formerly clinical psychologist, Maryland Department of Juvenile Services, Dr. Strickland served as pastor of the African Methodist Episcopal Church of Waynesboro, Pennsylvania. He holds a B.A. from Florida A & M College; an M.A. from the University of Kansas; a bachelor of divinity degree from Crozer Theological Seminary, Chester, Pennsylvania; and an honorary doctor of divinity degree from Monrovia College, Monrovia, Liberia.

Dr. Strickland is a member of the Bridgeport Chapter N.A.A.C.P., and is affiliated with the Bethel AME Church, High Street. He resides at 129 Black Rock Avenue. He has pastored several AME congregations and is currently on a requested leave of absence from the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Coalition leaders note that Dr. Strickland brings to this area wide experience and skills in social program evaluation and funding. He has served as the executive director for the Migrant Voluntary Improvement Program, Pennsylvania; a consultant with VOLT Information Sciences, to GEO, HUD, HEW, and the U.S. Department of Labor; director of a day care center and nursery for migrant children; field director, summer programs, Human Development Corporation, St. Louis, Missouri; and program director, Project Outreach, YMCA, St. Louis, Missouri.

In his first major address to members of the Coalition's Board of Directors held in the new offices of the State National Bank on March 28, 1973, Dr. Strickland offered his thoughts on his new role:

"I bring no magic wand nor any pat formula on which we may rely to solve the problems with which we are faced; however, I do hope that together we shall be able to draw upon whatever experiences and skills which I may have to offer for the success of the work of the Coalition and for the greater good of our total community. I say "together" with humility, for I am not so brash as to think that I can do this job alone -- rather, it is going to call for a lot of hard work from each of us for the Coalition to realize the success for which we strive....Such, then, requires on the part of each of us and collectively a total commitment and dedication to the task of community development and to the proposition that the total Bridgeport area can and will be a community where its total citizenry will want to live and be able to stand up with pride.

"I shall be taking a very close look at the areas of education, law and justice, economic development in general, and housing, after which I shall be making specific recommendations."

* * *

Revitalizing American Cities will be the theme of the first national conference to be sponsored by The National Urban Coalition May 30-June 1, 1973, at the Sheraton Park Hotel in Washington, D.C. The purpose: To provide a public platform for examining some of the tough questions basic to the survival of our urban areas and for hammering out some practical answers; and to bring together all elements of the Urban Coalition network to achieve mutual reinforcement of their efforts to make cities more livable. The Coalition invites participation in this conference of those who have a serious stake in and concern for the future of American cities. The agenda: panels on urban education, jobs, housing, transportation, crime, justice, safety, drug abuse, health services, and finance. Nationally-known urban policy makers and leaders with insight and influence on critical public and private sector decisions have been invited to address the conference.

Members of the National and local coalitions will be charged a \$60 fee, others \$100, which will cover cost of two luncheons, two dinners, evening social, and miscellaneous events. Contact the Greater Bridgeport Coalition office for further pre-registration details.



A. J. Ballard

Named to serve on the National Advisory Planning committee of the Conference from this area is Alan J. Ballard, co-chairman of the local coalition and community relations supervisor of the Southern New England Telephone Company.

* * *

Minority Business -- The Economic Development Task Force is in the process of updating a minority business directory. The Coalition is interested in any referrals which could be included in the book.

* * *

A "How-to-Study" Program for eighth graders to better prepare for high school and for twelfth graders to better prepare for college will be offered soon through the cooperation of the Education Task Force and the Burroughs (Bridgeport Public) Library. Each week for six weeks a group of 14-16 students will be given special instruction in order to (1) develop good study habits; (2) learn to identify and define important parts of reading material; (3) take notes quickly and clearly; and

(4) become familiar with library resources.

* * *

Annual Meeting of the Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport will be held in June, date and place to be announced. New officers and board members will be named. The nominating committee consists of Edward M. Mulligan, vice president, Connecticut National Bank, chairman; Edward Fernandez, Bridgeport Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities; and Allen Preston, Chessman Foundation.

* * *

Business Workshop -- An all day workshop, to be sponsored by the Southwestern Equal Economic Council and the N.A.A.C.P., will be held in Bridgeport on May 26, 1973, according to George Twine, executive director of the Council, reporting to the Coalition Economic Development Task Force at a recent meeting. Minority business people should plan to take advantage of this informative session.

* * *

The Economic Development Task Force has agreed to cooperate and support the efforts of the Greater Bridgeport Business and Professional Association, now headed by newly-named executive director, William E. Stewart, on leave from the Connecticut Department of Labor, Employment Security Division. Mr. Stewart succeeds George West, whose services for the Association were provided during 1972 by the Southern New England Telephone Company. Mr. Stewart is a member of the Economic Development Task Force.



W.E. Stewart

* * *

"Man Of The Year" -- Dr. E. Luis Strickland, executive director of the Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, has been named "Man Of The Year" by the National Council of Negro Women, Inc., Greater Bridgeport division. He was honored at the organization's annual Spring Luncheon held last month at the Holiday Inn.

* * *



Educators speaking at recent Educational Forum

The First Educational Forum sponsored jointly by the Education Task Force and the Social Action Committee of the School Volunteer Association was held last month in the Common Council Chambers of Bridgeport City Hall. Representatives of all depart-

ments of the Bridgeport Schools were on hand to tell the public of the programs offered to the children in the classrooms — those with reading difficulties, language barriers, emotional and physical handicaps. The Reverend Nicholas Titus, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Bridgeport, served as moderator. Cooperating groups included the PTA Council of Bridgeport, the Taxpayers Association of Bridgeport, Bridgeport Parents Advisory Committee, Citizens Committee for Bridgeport Schools, Spanish Action Development Association, the Bridgeport Area League of Women Voters, and the Greater Bridgeport N.A.A.C.P.

* * *

Grantsmanship -- A comprehensive course in how to locate and obtain new funding, the Grantsmanship Center, held last month in West Newton, Massachusetts, was attended by Coalition Deputy Director Ethel White and Co-Chairman Alan J. Ballard. Developed with the assistance of the Greater Los Angeles Urban Coalition and first offered in April, 1972 in Los Angeles, the Center program opened in Atlanta, Georgia on October, 1972 and is planned for eight other cities throughout the United States.

* * *

Meet Our Staff -- Miss Madeline Mendez, clerk typist, is a freshman at Housatonic Community College, where she is majoring in business. She is with the Coalition in cooperation with the New England Spanish American Regional Institute of Springfield, Mass.

Miss Flora Young, clerk typist, and a resident of Bridgeport, is with the Coalition through the WIN (Work Incentive Program).

Mrs. Geraldine Donnell, a resident of Monroe, is administrative assistant. She studied at the University of Bridgeport.

Mrs. Ethel White, deputy director, is a resident of Bridgeport. She is on loan to the Coalition from Southern New England Telephone Company, where she is employed as staff assistant.

* * *

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**Urban
coalition**

for greater bridgeport



reporter

August, 1974

STATEMENT FROM THE EDUCATION TASK FORCE ON NEW SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT --
Because of the vital importance of citizen participation in all levels of government and because of the key role of the Superintendent of Schools in the life of the Bridgeport community, the Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, Inc., urges the Bridgeport Board of Education to open to the City's citizens the process that will eventually lead to the naming of the new Superintendent. Individuals and groups must be able to indicate their criteria -- above, and beyond the legal requirements of the State of Connecticut -- for the post, the qualifications most needed for the City's children.

* * *

THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE URBAN COALITION FOR GREATER BRIDGEPORT, INC., Elliott L. Strickland, has been appointed pastor of the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, temporarily conducting worship services in the Chapel of the Golden Hill United Methodist Church, 210 Elm Street, Bridgeport. He succeeds the Rev. S. T. Smith, who has been named pastor of the St. James AME Church in Danbury. Prior to coming to the Bridgeport area in 1971, Dr. Strickland had served as pastor of the AME Church of Waynesboro, Pa., among other duties. He has been on leave from the church since June, 1971.

* * *

LOOKING OVER THE ANNUAL REPORT For 1973-74 with Dr. Strickland, second from left, are, left to right, Ethel White, Southern New England Telephone Company, chairwoman; Dr. Strickland; Anne Pinnie, secretary; Juan Lozada, General Electric, vice chairman; and Harry Fishman, Fairfield University, vice chairman. These officers were elected at the Annual Meeting May 9, 1974, at People's Savings Bank. Named treasurer recently was Jerome Whalen of State National Bank. (See story, page 2.)



* * *

NAMED TREASURER -- Jerome Whalen, loan officer at State National Bank, was recently appointed treasurer of the Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, Inc., replacing Joseph Romano, formerly with State National Bank and now located in Providence, R.I. Mr. Whalen, a resident of Bethel, is a graduate of Notre Dame University, from which he holds a degree in Business Administration, and the School of Banking at Williams College. He has served as treasurer of the Notre Dame Club of Fairfield County for the past four years and has been a member of the Board of Directors of the United Fund of Norwalk and the Finance Committee of the YMCA of Norwalk. He was an assistant vice president at City National Bank prior to joining State National in March, 1973.



Mr. Whalen

* * *

THE REAFFIRMING OF A COMMITMENT -- The Education Task Force recently reaffirmed its commitment to an alternative high school program for Bridgeport, Fairfield, Trumbull, Wilton, and Westport on a regional basis, as an outgrowth of a 1968 Urban Coalition cooperative education study. Greater citizen participation, including SPRED (School Progress Reaches Each District) is needed, however, according to Mrs. Helen Wasserman, task force chairman.

* * *

HOUSING TASK FORCE CHAIRMAN Hector Nieves recently reported that the group is looking into what can be done in the City for Senior Citizens through state assistance. He noted that what is sorely needed is a central information bureau, to which citizens unfamiliar with housing procedures and availabilities can go for answers to their questions. Membership attendance at task force meetings is also limiting the group's effectiveness.

* * *

BI-LINGUAL PROGRAMS DISCUSSED -- Bi-lingual and bi-cultural education programs in Bridgeport schools aid students whose primary language is English as well as Spanish surnamed students, representatives of the Language Development Department recently noted at a meeting of the Education Task Force.

"Students in City schools are now 25 percent Spanish," Tomas Miranda, director of bi-lingual education of the primary grades said, "and to become effective, programs for the Spanish student must involve other students."

"We celebrate Puerto Rico Discovery Day as well as Martin Luther King Day and George Washington's Birthday," he said.

Anglo and black students learn Spanish as a second language and Hispanic culture, while Spanish surname students are exposed to North American culture and are eased into greater facility in the English language, at the same time keeping up their scholastic level.

Task force members asked for additional information on the English as a second language and bi-lingual programs, including more data on the teachers and students, which Mr. Miranda said would be available.

* * * 260

FORMER DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF the Coalition, Ethel White, second from left and new Chairwoman of the Coalition, is shown with newly-elected Board members Charles Hosking of the National Alliance of Businessmen, left; and Harold Schine, president of City Lumber, right. Dr. N.J. Spector, of the University of Bridgeport, also was named to the Board. (Mrs. White replaced a trio of three men who served as co-chairmen for the previous year. Until December 31, 1973, she was "on loan" to the Coalition from her post with the Southern New England Telephone Company.) Dr. Strickland is holding the Annual Report for 1973-74.



THIS GROUP WAS IN BRIDGEPORT AT THE MEETING

AMONG THE RECIPIENTS OF SPECIAL CITATIONS for service were, left to right, Raymond Colonari, general manager, WICC; Donald Farrar of Farrar, Germain and Griffin, CPA's; and Victor Cogswell, board chairman, Mechanics and Farmers Savings Bank. A special certificate of appreciation also was presented to John Dowley, former director of the National Alliance of Businessmen in this area. Corporate service awards were presented to People's Savings Bank, State National Bank, Connecticut National Bank, Mechanics and Farmers Bank, City National Bank, Southern New England Telephone Company, Remington Arms, General Electric, and Warnaco, Inc. People's hosted a social hour prior to the meeting.

THE COALITION IDENTIFIES PROBLEMS, according to Annual Meeting speaker Walter N. Rothschild, Jr., National Urban Coalition chairman, second from left. The former president of Abraham & Strauss Department Stores told the Board that the Coalition is in the position to bring members of the community together to exercise their energies and concerns. He is shown with Dr. Strickland and Cameron Clark, president, Warnaco, Inc., left; and John Limpitlaw, vice president, Warnaco, Inc., right. Warnaco hosted a dinner for Mr. Rothschild following the meeting.



ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT Geraldine Donnell has resigned her post to accept a position with the General Electric Company. She has been replaced temporarily by Nanette White.

* * *

THE BRIDGEPORT POLICE DEPARTMENT, in cooperation with the Bridgeport Area Chamber of Commerce, has launched a program entitled "Operation Identification," designed to cut down widespread housebreakings. Residents may borrow at the Central Police Headquarters an electric marking device which etches a particular set of numbers into the surface of such valuable items as TV sets, cameras, stereos, radios, etc. The individual may use the engraving tool for a 48-hour period and also is given two window decals stating that he or she has joined "Operation Identification". The Coalition's Police Community Relations Task Force had recommended a similar plan to City officials earlier last year.

* * *

A TOTAL OF 27 BOARD MEMBERS attended the July 31 Board meeting held at Mechanics and Farmers Bank, with Ethel White, chairwoman, presiding. Among the items discussed were: Finances -- The new treasurer, Jerome Whalen, will be working with John Wood, former treasurer and Fund Committee chairman, to determine the status of pledges prior to the September Board meeting; Goals -- Mr. Fishman, co-chairman of the Goals and Priorities Task Force, reported that a set of objectives is being prepared and should be ready in September; Executive Director's report -- Dr. Strickland reported on a proposed Neighborhood Improvement Project, to be presented to the National Urban Coalition for initial funding. "Where there is more pride in the community, there is more stability," Dr. Strickland noted. It is hoped that the cooperation of area businesses, local government, and local lending institutions will help make this project feasible. Dr. Strickland further reported that the Revenue Sharing project reports are complete and following analysis, the findings will be made public.

* * *

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Mrs. Helen Wasserman
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February, 1975

THE COALITION SPEAKS -- "The Education Task Force of the Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport commends the State Board of Education for its far-reaching proposals to strengthen Connecticut's system of school finance," begins a statement presented November 13, 1974, on behalf of the Coalition at a State Board of Education hearing. Mrs. Helen Wasserman, chairman of the Education Task Force, in offering the statement, said, "The concept of local property tax equalization grants is a vital one in the area of school finance reform....over the years the Urban Coalition's Education Task Force has been greatly concerned with the enormity of need and the inadequacy of funds in the areas of state aid for disadvantaged and state aid for special education.... In all these areas, the State Board of Education's new proposals represent important recognition of major unmet needs in public education in Connecticut." Mrs. Wasserman was one of 30 speakers testifying before the Board, with only one opposed to the Board's proposal for the state appropriation of \$99.1 million in equalization grants. In addition, the Board seeks increases of \$5 million for the education of disadvantaged children and \$20 million for special education. Mrs. Wasserman is shown below at the right with Coalition Acting Director Mrs. Anne S. Finnie, at the hearing.

* * *

A STATEMENT ON EMPLOYMENT -- An ad hoc committee of the Economic Development Task Force presented for approval at the January 28, 1975, Board of Directors meeting, a statement concerning Affirmative Action policies. Shown preparing the paper in the photo at the left below, are, left, Jose Ramirez, Contract Compliance Officer, City of Bridgeport, and Eugene Moore, President of Brink & Cotton Mfg. Mr. Moore chaired the committee. Portions of the statement follow: "The Economic Development Task Force of the Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, Inc., is greatly concerned that in this period of layoffs and increased unemployment, black and Spanish-speaking persons not suffer disproportionately in employment opportunities; (continued on the next page)"





INTERN PROGRAM LAUNCHED -- Dr. Jay Spector, left, professor of Political Science and Urban-Suburban Studies at the University of Bridgeport and a member of the Board of Directors of the Coalition, is serving as chairman of the newly-created Coalition intern program. Working with him are Alan J. Ballard, Joel Kent, William L. Hawkins, Hugh C. Curran, Dr. H. Parker Lansdale, and Dr. Maurice O'Sullivan. In the photo at the right is Donald Austin, a senior at Choate School, who served as a volunteer student intern during the month of December, 1974. Donald, who seeks a career in urban studies, is the son of Mr. and Mrs. David Austin of Fairfield. The fulltime program gets underway this month.

* * *

NEW DIRECTOR -- Mrs. Anne S. Finnie was named acting director of the Coalition in November, 1974, following the resignation of Dr. Elliott Strickland, who is serving as pastor of the Bethel AME church, Bridgeport, and director of job development for Wilberforce University. Mrs. Finnie, who has served as secretary of the Coalition for four years, will act as director until a permanent director is named. (A search committee is reviewing applications for the post.) A graduate of Vassar College, she is vice president of Hope Center, Inc., a member of the Center for Racial Justice at the Y.W.C.A., a trustee of the Museum of Art, Science and Industry, and chairwoman of the Voluntary Action Center.

* * *

A STATEMENT ON EMPLOYMENT (Continued from page one) --and that employers may expose themselves to charges of contravening the intent, letter and spirit of the 1964 Civil Rights Act by strict adherence to seniority considerations when implementing layoffs. Abandonment by employers of Affirmative Action employment practices during this time of increasing unemployment could be deemed to be in violation of Federal and State laws and regulations pertaining to Equal Employment Opportunities....It is feared that the unfavorable ratio of black and Spanish-speaking persons unemployed could increase in this time of economic crisis. Laws that require employers when hiring to give equal treatment to black and Spanish-speaking persons and to raise the ratio of such persons employed should also require that a balanced ratio of black and Spanish-speaking be maintained during layoffs. The Urban Coalition urges all employers to adhere to the policy of affirmative retention in a layoff situation; to consider the problem from the perspective of the effect of past discrimination; and to develop alternatives in order to avoid such impact."

CONTINUING THE COALITION'S series of program-speakers at Board Meetings, Lt. Clifford J. Willis of the New Britain Police Department spoke at the January 28 meeting, discussing "Effective Police Community Relations." Lt. Willis is president of the Connecticut Association of Police Community Relations Officers. Previously, at the November Board meeting, Howard Orenstein, chief counsel of the State Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, discussed the legal aspects of Affirmative Action policies in conjunction with present and anticipated layoffs.

* * *

BRINGING THE BOARD UP to full strength, 13 new members were seated at the January 28 meeting. They are Beryl Barletta, Remington Electric Shaver; John Bruzas, Bridgeport Brass; Albert Bogdan, executive director, Bridgeport Economic Development Corporation; Manuel Costas, ABCD Manpower Services Center; John Dowley, Sears Roebuck; Earl Faison, Ebony Real Estate & Mortgage Co., Inc., Realtors; Dr. John Siegler, dentist; Salestia Shipp, Comprehensive Health Plan; Michael Sorrentino, president, Greater Bridgeport Labor Council; Socrates E. Vargas, Central Real Estate Corp.; Frederick W. Walker, Lafayette Bank & Trust Company; Ernest Williams, United Illuminating; and Zane Yost, architect.

* * *

NEWLY-NAMED CO-CHAIRMEN of the Police Community Relations Task Force are Angel Diaz, Hall Neighborhood House, and Tony Simmons, Bridgeport policeman.

* * *

A LIMITED NUMBER OF COPIES of the report on a General Revenue Sharing Monitoring Project, co-sponsored by the Coalition in cooperation with the League of Women Voters, the National Urban Coalition, The Center for Community Change, and the National Center for Policy Review, published in October, 1974, are still available at the Coalition office. The report was issued with the hope that the findings would serve to increase public awareness of the revenue sharing concept.

* * *

FOCUSING ON EDUCATION in such matters as better communication between parents and the Bridgeport School system, discipline problems, racial balance, and reading deficiencies, the Education Task Force late last year launched a series of firsthand visits to observe Bridgeport students. Special reading classes designed to improve students' reading skills and learning motivation was viewed at the Roosevelt Elementary School. Among those touring were (see photo, lower left, left to right), Mrs. Nancy Geter, Mrs. Helen Wasserman, and Mrs. Gertrude Cooper.



The pleasant voice one hears when calling the Coalition Office is that of Mrs. Viola Wilder, secretary, shown above. Viola resides with her husband Darryl in Bridgeport.

THE HOUSING TASK FORCE, headed by Hector Nieves, shown at the far right with Bill Reagan, has been meeting to determine the Coalition's possible role in the future of Washington Park. Mr. Nieves, executive director of the Park City Development Corporation, and Mr. Reagan, development director, have been working out details with the Rev. John Olson, Victor Muniec, and Andrew Allen.



* * * * *

WITH AN EXPENSE BUDGET OF \$37,000 adopted for the year 1975, Chairman of Fund-raising Alan J. Ballard is seeking commitments to continue the support of the Coalition's activities.

In a letter being mailed this month, Mr. Ballard notes that the budget represents substantially less than \$1 per minority person, stating, "In light of a declining economy, your contribution becomes imperative in order that the Coalition can deal with the significant increase in related human problems."

* * *

FROM NATIONAL -- M. Carl Holman, president of the National Urban Coalition, disagrees with those who say "the hour of crisis is past for cities." He notes that the upcoming months "offer us perhaps the greatest challenge since 1967. I do not have to repeat specifics on the devastating effect of a combined bleak economic outlook and diminishing social programs on urban residents."

* * *

THE PURPOSE OF THE COALITION -- From the By-laws, adopted March, 1974: "It shall be the purpose of the Urban Coalition for Greater Bridgeport, Inc. to unite all citizens and groups who are concerned with the improvement of the quality of life in the Greater Bridgeport area. To accomplish this purpose it shall be the goal of the Coalition to work towards the improvement of the economic, social and environmental ills of the entire region."

* * *

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