A study of the relationship of block leadership to citizen participation in Harlem Park

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A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP OF BLOCK LEADERSHIP TO CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN HARLEM PARK

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

BY
JOSEPH SMITH

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
ATLANTA, GEORGIA
JUNE, 1961
DEDICATION

To my Guardian, Mrs Ruby Lundy, who gave me faith and courage during the past six years.

To Mickey Evans, my goddaughter, with love.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer is deeply indebted to Miss Frankie V. Adams, Mr. Carl S. Harm and the members of the Baltimore Urban Renewal Housing Agency Community Organization staff for their assistance in the development and completion of this thesis.

J.S.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Significance of the Study

There is increasing concern throughout the United States over the decline of our cities, the spread of blight, the decay of urban neighborhoods, and the flight of middle-class white residents to the suburbs. "The rapid in-migration to industrial cities of lower income peoples — Negros, Puerto Ricans, American Italians, poor Southern Whites — all attracted by higher wages and better opportunities" is also alarming. On a variety of fronts public and private agencies have been trying to face these problems. City neighbors, an increasing number of them, have come together in neighborhood movements that are beginning to spread throughout the nation.¹

The major program, currently, available is an attempt to relieve the declining condition of our cities through the urban renewal program. Urban renewal programs are materializing in many sections of the United States. Land is being obtained and prepared for housing, schools, parks, highways, public buildings, parking space, and industrial and commercial expansion to make our cities cleaner, more attractive and more efficient communities in which to live.²

¹Julia Abrahamson, A Neighborhood Finds Itself (New York, 1959), p. IX.
All of the plans that are being made for improvement will be worthless if people are not taken into account while the planning is being done. Urban renewal involves people of all races, classes, and religions. The government officials, social welfare workers and organizations, civic leaders and others who helped give birth to the urban renewal idea hoped that it would provide better living conditions for the citizens of America. For some individuals, such has been the case; however, others have suffered hardship because of the program. The greatest hardship falls on the family which is displaced. The program affects all the members of a community or neighborhood where the program is in operation and the need for citizen participation is advantageous to all the people in that area.

The federal concern to secure citizen participation was so great that it was included in the Workable Program. It is, therefore, one of the requirements a locality must fulfill if it is to receive federal assistance for its urban renewal program. Many state and local officials agree that citizen participation is necessary if the local renewal program and its projects are to have adequate understanding and support to succeed.¹

The lack of citizen participation and the lack of understanding on the part of citizens have caused the already difficult problem of relocation to be a more difficult problem in urban renewal efforts according to Earl Metzger, Jr. He states, "relocation problems are the most difficult, intricate and arduous problems that are faced in urban renewal."²


The families which leave an urban renewal area often move into other areas causing over-crowding, and other problems for the neighborhood into which they have moved. Eventually a major portion of a city's population may be directly or indirectly affected by the urban renewal program. Social welfare officials and sociologists hope that the urban renewal program which is focused upon slum clearance, prevention and rehabilitation will be effective. These have believed that slums are the major cause of many social problems. Zorbaugh stated early in our history that the slum environment was the major contributor to the following social problems:

1. Economic failure
2. Illness and consequent unemployability
3. Emotional instability and consequent unemployability
4. Divorce and consequent loss of support
5. Alcoholism
6. Drug addiction
7. Gambling
8. Crime, delinquency and prostitution
9. Ostracization from a specific occupational group to which the individual's earning capacity is limited
10. Irregular sex life, perversion and consequent ostracization.

It was believed that citizen participation in urban renewal as one of the major factors in making it successful may indirectly help a locality move closer to solutions for some of its other social problems. Young stated this idea from a social worker's point of view by saying that:

Citizen participation is crucial and essential to urban renewal not only for the purpose of protection and solving problems, but also for enhancing and promoting the kind of environment in which human beings might experience happier and more satisfying lives.

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Many civic authorities, government officials, and social welfare workers agree that people for whom an urban renewal program is developed should identify with it. According to Poston, "to ensure full acceptance of a planning project and to guarantee its survival in the long run, the plan must stem from the people and the people should feel that they are participants in the planning process."\(^1\)

To achieve citizen participation, however, is easily expressed in words but difficult to obtain in action. According to Poston many public officials, community organizers, civic leaders and governmental officials stress the importance and necessity for leadership in community projects if citizen participation is to be effective.\(^2\) Other authors express similar ideas, among them Morgan stated:

> If a few people in communities will qualify themselves to be chairmen of meetings and leaders in community affairs, they can raise leadership and habits of cooperation in their community to new levels.\(^3\)

Johns and Demarche agreed, "leadership cannot be limited to the professional staff of Chest and Councils or other coordinating bodies. It must be found also among professional and lay workers.\(^4\)

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\(^2\)Ibid., pp. 102-103.


Many cities throughout the country are experimenting with plans to secure citizen participation in their urban renewal programs. One of these cities is Baltimore, Maryland. This city realized the importance of the citizens to the success of the urban renewal program. This idea was stated in 1956 in a report to the Mayor, as follows:

The role of the citizen in urban areas today takes on new stature, new values, and new emphasis. He and his neighbors must be the ones who ultimately decide the proportions of the urban renewal program and the goals to be achieved. He cannot act alone. He must act with his neighbors to be effective.\(^1\)

The report also urged that community organization for citizen participation must be recognized as an essential program element in a comprehensive approach to urban renewal.\(^2\)

The city has included in the Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency a Community Organization Division which has the responsibility of working with the citizens and helping them to organize their neighborhoods for effective citizen participation. This division of the agency has been functioning since 1957 and has made notable achievements in certain urban renewal areas.

The writer, while performing his field work, worked with block groups at the "grass roots" level, in the Harlem Park Urban Renewal Area of Baltimore City, Maryland. This position gave the writer an opportunity to study and to observe community organization activities in Harlem Park.

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\(^1\)Report of the Urban Renewal Study Board to Mayor Thomas D'Alesandro, Jr., Baltimore, Maryland. September, 1956. P. 64.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 65.
Through personal contact with the fifteen staff members of the Community Organization Division of the Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency, the Harlem Park Neighborhood Council and members of the community, the writer saw evidence which indicated that block leadership in Harlem Park was a major factor in citizen participation.

Admittedly, block leadership is not the only factor that must function adequately for effective citizen participation in the area but many residents and city officials assume that it is one of the major factors. This assumption was strengthened by the writer's readings in community organization literature and the material in the agency records concerning community organization in Baltimore City and Harlem Park.

The writer had a great deal of interest in the subject and undertook to pursue it further in this study. The writer believed that the study will give some indication of the importance of block leadership to citizen participation in Harlem Park. The problem in approaching the study was how to describe the role of block leaders in block organizations, and to ascertain how their roles in block organizations and the neighborhood council related to citizen participation in Harlem Park.

The writer hoped that the information presented in this study would be valuable to the Community Organization Division of BURHA which was directly concerned with the organization of Harlem Park and other renewal areas in Baltimore for citizen participation in the renewal program. The study may also be of value to social workers, educators, civic groups, business groups, governmental officials, members of communities and other persons who may be

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1 Hereinafter referred to as BURHA.
interested in citizen participation in other urban renewal areas.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the roles block leaders played in block organizations and in the Neighborhood Council. In studying the roles it was hoped that some indication of citizen participation in the urban renewal program would be revealed.

Method of Procedure

Studies written by former student field workers with BURHA were used to analyze background data concerning the early development of community organization and urban renewal in Harlem Park.

Using the random sampling procedure, the writer selected seven of twenty-four block clubs for inclusion in the study. Visits were made to leaders and/or meetings of block groups. Eighteen leaders, representing the seven block groups were interviewed with the use of a schedule containing structured and unstructured questions.

Literature related to urban renewal and community organizations in Harlem Park was consulted. All data were interpreted with emphasis on those factors that indicated a leader's role in the block organization and Neighborhood Council.

Scope and Limitations

The study was limited to the Harlem Park Urban Renewal Area in Baltimore City, Maryland. In terms of time, it was limited to the period from September 1, 1960 to February 25, 1961. There were limitations placed
on the concepts "block leadership" and "participation" in the study.

Block leadership referred to any member of a block club who was serving or had served as chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, or Representative to the Neighborhood Council from the club. Only those block clubs recognized by the Neighborhood Council and BURHA were eligible for inclusion in the study.

The concept "Participation" in the study referred to the functioning of block leaders who met the following criteria:


2. Actively participated in at least two of the "special projects" presented by the Council since September, 1959.

3. Worked to maintain the moral and physical standards of property through personal and community resources.

CHAPTER II
BACKGROUND ON AGENCY AND HARLEM PARK

During the twenty-one years before 1954 Baltimore brought to focus and efficiency many of the tools necessary to combat slums and blight. The three tools used prior to 1954 were Public Housing, Redevelopment and Law Enforcement. Baltimore used these three tools until 1954 without making any apparent effort to expand, change or revise its housing program. Baltimore's city officials quickly responded to the 1954 Housing Act passed by Congress. This act included broad stipulations concerning housing and living conditions in urban areas.

Establishing the Agency

After studying the 1954 Housing Act and discussing it with other city officials, Mayor Thomas D'Alesandro, Jr. decided that the Housing situation in Baltimore needed careful study before badly needed new measures were passed. He turned to a group of national experts in housing, later called The Urban Renewal Study Board. After months of study this Board made its report to the Mayor on September 12, 1956. The first of


fifteen recommendations was to "establish a new Renewal and Housing Agency, vesting in it responsibility for planning and executing the central functions of Urban Renewal."¹ On the basis of this Board's recommendations, Baltimore enacted a City Ordinance which gave authority for creation of the Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency.² This agency adopted a policy that encompassed the seven point "workable program" as required by the Housing Act of 1954.³ After becoming organized and functioning the agency designated a precisely defined area of the city as the first urban renewal area. This area was known as Harlem Park.

Present Status of the Program

The agency had grown rapidly during the three years of its existence. The plans for one renewal area (Harlem Park) had been passed by the Baltimore City Council and the Federal Government. Another was, presently, before the City Council and plans for several other areas were also being studied. At the time of this study, some field offices were operating and were almost completely staffed.

In Harlem Park, the inspection of properties was in progress. In addition renewal estimators, financial advisors and community organization workers were providing various kinds of services to the people in the area.

¹Op. Cit.
²Ibid.
Two significant aspects of the program were the following: (1) The growing interest in the community and (2) The rapid rate by which the agency was putting the program into action. The last issue of the Informer indicated that at least ten new blocks had either been organized or reactivated since June, 1960. Each of these blocks had a permanent or temporary chairman and other officers. Approximately ninety per cent of these blocks were cooperating with the Council and BURHA to some degree at the time of this study. All of these blocks had some contact with the agency and were being made aware of the renewal activities in the area and in their blocks. Interpretation of renewal activities were being made by persons from several divisions of BURHA; however, the bulk of this was being done by the Inspection and Community Organization Division. This was true because the stage at which the program was initiated, these two divisions had been closer to the residents than any other. Renewal Estimators and Financial Advisors had been assigned to the Harlem Park staff and had begun to work directly with residents needing and desiring their services.

Approximately eight hundred trees were planted in the area during the Autumn of 1960 and one hundred more were to be planted during the spring of 1961 as part of the beautification program. Several agencies and organizations had agreed to coordinate their efforts for a Beautification and Clean-up Campaign in the spring of 1961. BURHA worked with

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1Informer (Harlem Park Neighborhood Council, Baltimore), December, 1960, p. 2 (Mimeographed).
such programs even though it did not directly sponsor them.

The agency had five professional and two student Community Organisation Advisors working with the block clubs. Through the efforts of these workers some contacts had been made in every block in the Harlem Park area. The renewal program was rapidly reaching more and more residents in the area.

Another feature of the renewal program which indicated progress was the "31$ Demonstration Block."

Approximately seventy-five percent of the structures in this block had been brought up to standard. Many of them had been painted attractive colors and the residents of the block were making every effort to maintain the esthetic condition of this block. The first inner park to be completed in the Harlem Park area was located inside the 31$ Demonstration Block.

The "31$ Demonstration Block" had trees, shrubbery, paved play areas, adequate lighting and other features that tended to make it very clean and attractive. Many residents of Harlem Park had visited this park and expressed their approval. This was the first of thirty-two inner block areas scheduled to be developed in Harlem Park as part of the urban renewal program.

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In keeping with the recommendations of the Urban Renewal Study Board report, the Mayor in 1955 made an effort to insure citizen participation in the Harlem Park Area. He appointed two residents of the area and gave them the responsibility for creating a Neighborhood Council composed of prominent citizens. Under the leadership of one of these persons an interested group of residents came together to discuss problems related to the Harlem Park area. Members of this small group were the fore-runners of the present Council. The city officials included a Community Organization Division in BURHA in 1957 and community organization workers were assigned to Harlem Park. These community organization advisors began working with the Neighborhood Council and other organizations in the area immediately.

The Purpose of the Council

The Harlem Park Neighborhood Council was for the purpose of promoting the general welfare and betterment of the community through active citizen participation in planning for and maintaining the best possible neighborhood living conditions; and marshalling all of its forces into a combined and cooperative effort to the end of coping with and

1 Interview with Grace Gates, Assistant Director of Community Organization (Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency, Baltimore, Maryland, September, 1960).
solving area problems positively and effectively.1

In keeping with the overall purpose the Council carried on many related purposes. The major subsidiary purposes were the following:

1. To develop programs that were of interest to the people in the area.

2. Handle certain legal problems related to the area.

3. Channel information to all residents.

4. Make the Urban Renewal Agency aware of the needs and desires of citizens.

The Council had realized that it represented a large geographical area and that it engaged in a wide range of activities; therefore, it had created a structure for functional reasons.

By looking at the structural design appearing on page fifteen, the reader can see that the Council was structured so that it could involve many persons and at the same time coordinate several different community groups and governmental agencies for the purpose of achieving certain goals.

The Council incorporated the suggestions and ideas of many prominent civic and community leaders in planning for its structure. Many of the suggestions were made at the Council Workshop on October 30 and 31, 1959. Among the most outstanding ones utilized by the Council were the following:

1. The Council must be fully representative by having an elected representative from every group or organization in the area actively participating in some capacity on the Council.

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1*Constitution For the Harlem Park Neighborhood Council, Harlem Park Neighborhood Council, Baltimore, Maryland, 1950, Article II.*
COUNCIL STRUCTURE

Harlem Park Neighborhood Council
Harlem Park Residents, Clubs, Organizations, Businesses, etc.

Delegate Body
(Composed of Organization representatives and Neighborhood Council Members)

Executive Committee
(Officers, Comm. Chairman & Four Delegates-at-Large)


Community Organization Staff

City Wide Agencies via Health and Welfare Council
2. The Council structure should have built into it the assurance that there will be a constant back and forth communication between the council and residents of the community by way of the groups to which they belong and their representatives who are active in the Council.

This built in assurance is the key to communication with the 20,000 people in the Harlem Park area so that the Council can know the real problems and concerns of the people in Harlem Park and develop the means for improving the neighborhood.

The Council structure provides for much committee work. The Council has defined precisely the function of each committee. The general committee functions are the following:

1. Gather all the facts possible from every available resource in the course of studying a problem.

2. Share its findings with as many people as possible and interpret the plan of action to the community.

3. Develop a plan of action.

4. Interpret the plan of action.

5. Put the plan of action into effect.

The Council assigned much of its responsibility to committees as the number of problems increased. During the past two years the following committees have been organized by the Council: Health and Welfare, Membership, Recreation, Home and Neighborhood Conservation, Public Relations,

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2 Ibid., pp. 2-3.
Article VII of the Council Constitution provided for the Executive Committee. According to this provision the Executive Committee should consist of the elective officers of the Council, the chairmen of standing committees, and four members-at-large elected by the Delegate Assembly as representing geographical sections of the area to be determined by the Executive Committee. This committee had the power to formulate policy for the Council.1

Article VIII, Section I, of the Constitution provided for the following standing committees: Membership, Finance, Public Relations, Home and Neighborhood Conservation and Legislative. Section II gave the President of the Council power to appoint other committees.2

Council Responsibility for the Emergence of Block Groups

The writer noted that several organizations existed in Harlem Park before the Neighborhood Council began functioning. The writer was not able to find evidence which indicated that any of these organizations attempted to represent all of the people in Harlem Park. One of the speakers at the 1959 Council Workshop, Mr. Hackshaw, included in his suggestions to the Council one which stated:

The Council must assist every block in the area to establish a formal organization through affiliation with the Neighborhood Council, and work together with other Harlem Park residents in facing the problems in the area.3

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1Constitution For the Harlem Park Neighborhood Council. Harlem Park Neighborhood Council, Baltimore, Maryland.

2Ibid.

3James O. F. Hackshaw, op. cit.
This suggestion was reinforced by three factors which actually lead to the emergence of block clubs on a large scale: (1) Article IV of the Council Constitution and (2) the definition of a block by BURHA and the Neighborhood Council and (3) The assigning of Community Organization Advisor by BURHA to work with block organizations and assist the residents of blocks desiring organizations in developing organizations in their blocks.

As early as October, 1958 the Council was making a serious effort to form block organizations in the area as the following excerpt from a Council Newsletter indicated:

Is your block organized? It is most urgent that each square block in our neighborhood—have representatives who are known to all the residents of the block. President block representatives should do their part in getting together a truly block wide - people from four sides of your block—Block organization help can be gotten in organizing this kind of club from the Community Organization unit at the BURHA Planning Office...1

At the time of this study at least twenty blocks in the area had functioning block organizations and others were in the process of developing organizations.

The Council had divided the Harlem Park Community into four areas and appointed a representative for each area to serve as liaison between the Council and the block clubs in the designated area. (See area chart).

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1"Block Organization," Newsletter (Harlem Park Neighborhood Council, Baltimore, Maryland), October 9, 1958.
CHAPTER IV

ROLES OF BLOCK LEADERS

There were many definable duties connected with an office in one of the block clubs in Harlem Park. In this chapter, the writer described the roles on the block leaders and by using agency records concerning block clubs and a portion of the data gathered through interview with block club leaders; observing block club leaders in meetings. While the roles described will include many of the major roles, the leaders may play some roles not included in this study.

Involvement in Block Club Program

The writer reviewed the agency records concerning six block clubs in the Harlem Park Area as a first step toward defining the roles of a block leader. Statistical record, records of block club meetings and other related material were reviewed. Following this the writer interviewed leaders of six block clubs. Actually seven clubs were represented but one club includes two geographical blocks in its organization. This was also the case in at least three other block clubs in the Harlem Park Area.

The Agency records revealed that at least twenty block clubs existed in the Harlem Park area where there are a total of thirty-two blocks. The Agency Community Organization advisors worked with each of the block organizations in professional capacities in order to help develop leadership.
Several factors seem important to block leadership. Through the use of the interview the writer gathered data from a random sampling of block leaders concerning certain factors. See Appendix. Among the factors related to involvement, the author considered that length of connection with an area and its organization was a major factor; also the activities as well as the depth of the relationship.

The majority of the twenty-one interviewees showed a willingness to answer questions concerning their connection both in the block organization and the Council.

Most of the analysis showed that the block leaders have lived in their block at least five years. See Table 1, page 37. There was a willingness on the part of the respondents to discuss the community as it was physically and morally "a few years ago." The return of the community to its previous decent state was the desire and ambition of many block leaders.

Feeling that the length of residence was related to the respondent's familiarity with residents of his block, the writer included in the interview a question designed to show whether or not the leader knew most of the people in his block. The response was varied to this question. Only four of the eighteen persons answering this question indicated that they knew most of the residents in the square block; however, eight others knew most of the people on their side of the block (street). Ten residents did not know anyone on at least one side of the block. See Table 2, page 38.

No standard answer could be found as a reason for the lack of familiarity. The writer discussed this question with other EURHA Community Organization workers and discovered that many of the block residents they encountered "just didn't take time to do much visiting due to their
duties at home." This may also hold true for some block leaders. This question led to the study of a third role of a block leader, namely, communicating with block residents for the purpose of giving to and receiving information from the residents concerning the block, Council, renewal agency and any other problem or complaint of community interest. During the past three years an increasingly large number of questions have developed in the minds of citizens in the Harlem Park Community due to the increased activities of the Urban Renewal Program in the area. Agency records showed that many residents had called each day asking questions about the program.1

The Neighborhood Council constantly asked that the block residents take their problems to their block club presidents. The writer included a question in the schedule which was designed to obtain some idea as to approximately how many block residents consulted the chairman or some other officer concerning problems and what kind of problems they took to the leaders.

The response to this question indicated that a majority of the block leaders were consulted daily by one or more residents of their respective blocks concerning the Urban Renewal program and other urban renewal problems. The leaders in blocks where the agency had started inspecting homes at the time of this interview were consulted more

frequently and by more people than those in other blocks.¹

The reason for this was the stimulation of personal interest by people whose homes were already being inspected. The respondents indicated that the kind of questions they were asked were as follows in the frequency as listed below:

1. What are "they" going to do to my house?
2. Will I have to sell?
3. Where will I get enough money to make repairs?
4. When are they going to clean up the area?

The three most frequently asked questions are all related to a personal concern on the part of many residents. In these cases the block leaders had the responsibility of "interpreting" the renewal program to the person or referring the person to the agency. Many of the block leaders had worked closely with an agency community organization worker and had some understanding of the program so that they could play the role of educator or interpreter without too much difficulty.

When asked what they did when approached by block residents with questions, complaints or other problems, their replies varied although 10 of the 12 persons answering this question stated that they tried to answer the questions. In some cases the leader consulted some member of the agency for the purpose of seeking additional information or to refer the case and due to its seriousness or emergency nature.² When

¹ This statement is based on a review of the Agency Records as well as a comparison with Findings through interviews.

² The Block leader usually consults the Community Organization Worker assigned to his block as an advisor.
this situation was viewed carefully it seemed that the leaders did not have answers to many of the questions they were asked by the residents due to the rapidly changing position of the Council and the agency unless they constantly consult with the Community Organization Worker assigned to their block.

In addition to the roles of educator, interpreter, consultant, and liaison persons between the Agency and block club the leaders also had other specific duties related to their particular office in the block club. Most of the block clubs in Harlem Park had based their rules on those set up by the Council. These regulations were delineated in a Block Club Model Constitution. This Constitution explicitly stated the formal duties of all officers. Through the use of non participant observation the writer was able to note that four block clubs followed the set of rules closely although a certain amount of variation was involved. The writer noted that this was also the case in the clubs with which the writer worked in the capacity of Community Organization Advisor representing BURHA.

The chairman was generally responsible for calling meetings and presiding at them, appointing committees, preparing agendas for meetings and doing any other duties related to the growth and welfare of the block club. This chairman also had the power to appoint other members to assist in the carrying out of certain functions.

The Vice Chairman had the responsibility for carrying out the chairman's duties in the absence or inability of the chairman.

[Block Club By Laws] Block Club Model Constitution (Harlem Park Neighborhood Council), Baltimore, Maryland (Mimeographed).
The secretary was a third key person in the block club. Generally this office required that the person holding it should keep an accurate record of all club meetings, handle correspondence, send out notices of meetings, receive membership registrations and maintain a current listing of names and addresses of members. Many of the clubs in Harlem Park did not have an operating treasury although they did officially elect a treasurer who was responsible for receiving and banking money and keeping a record of all receipts and disbursements.

The combination of formal duties based on the block club Constitution and the moral duties based on the needs and expectations of the people they represent set the criteria by which block club leaders' roles are defined in terms of their involvement in the block club.

Involvement In the Harlem Park Neighborhood Council

In Chapter III it was stated that the Neighborhood Council was the key to citizen participation in Harlem Park. In this chapter the essential role that the block clubs played in the success and functioning of the Council through their representatives and leaders will be discussed.

The Neighborhood Council has been characterized as "an organization of organizations" but it is not a super planning or controlling body which "masterminds" the neighborhood . . . . . The council is the essence of democracy dependent for success upon the responsible practice of its member groups through their representatives. The real test of the Council is how well the delegates from the groups bring to the Council the problems their organizations are aware of; how well the delegates take back to their groups the plans developed within the Council; and how well the delegates can help their groups to discuss this plan and mobilize for action with the Council toward solution of the problem as defined.
This "from and to" between the Council and its member groups has been referred to as the "bloodstream" of a Neighborhood Council. And so it is; for without it, a Council loses its effectiveness and becomes just another organization without influence to speak for the Community.

Since most of the block club's affect on the Council was felt through the representatives they sent to the Council and the leaders from their groups who worked in certain capacities in the Council, the writer concentrated on these leaders for the purpose of this study.

Four factors affecting the block leaders relationship to the Council were studied, namely, their work on Council Committees; Participation on Council Community Projects; their focusing of problems in the Council and their attendance at Council meetings.

Work on Council Committees

For the writer's random sampling names of twelve persons who were active on at least one of seven Neighborhood Council Committees were selected and also their active member was verified for a block club. Nine of the twelve persons were active and held office in the block club.

Then the writer noted, checked the list of block leaders chosen by random sampling for the total study to see how many of those worked on committees according to the Council and BURHA records for 1959 and 1960.

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1"Foreword" Orientation Material used by the Community Organization Division of BURHA (mimeographed).

2Ibid.

3The Council year starts in June so the reference to 1959 and 1960 refers to the Council proceeding the present one.
page 39 shows that out of eighteen block leaders interviewed ten worked on at least one or two committees, the Executive Committee being considered as just another committee.

The leaders responding to the question represented only seven block clubs. When it is remembered that there are twenty or more block clubs included in the Council membership the number of block club leaders working on Council Committees probably was much greater than indicated in this study. This factor was very important because there were only seven active Council Committees at the present time with a total membership of approximately thirty-five different persons. In addition seventeen served on the Executive Committee.

The general role of a committee has already been discussed. See Chapter III. A description of the duties of the Council Standing Committees was given here to show what part the block leaders who work on these committees play in the Council. The committees included are the Home and Neighborhood Conservation, Health and Welfare, Public Relations, Executive, and Membership.

The Home and Neighborhood Conservation Committee concerned itself with Block and Neighborhood Beautification, Zoning, Sanitation, Law Enforcement, Education and Resources, and Financing. This committee’s major emphasis was upon seeking information, methods by which the community may best function in all of the above named areas and relaying its findings to the total community through the Council.

The Health and Welfare Committee concerned itself with study of the physical and mental health needs of the residents. It worked toward
securing necessary social and welfare services in the area to insure adequate facilities to meet the needs of area residents. This committee also engaged in educating the community concerning certain health problems and health needs.

The Public Relations Committee worked diligently to keep all the residents of the area informed concerning Council, Renewal and any other activities going on in the community. An effort to alert and educate the community was made by this committee through its publication of newsletters and other media of communication.

The Membership Committee had the responsibility for securing individual and group memberships for the Council. It encouraged block club participation in the Council while at the same time attempted to affiliate churches, agencies, civic groups, social groups, businesses and other organizations with the Council.

The Executive Committee included in its membership the chairmen of all standing committees. In this way it kept track of the progress made on projects being performed by the committees. All matters not delegated to a committee were handled by this committee. It also planned the agenda for full Council meetings.

Table 3, page 39 showed that the block leader's roles were multifold when they worked on one or more of these committees. Six of the persons included in the sample worked on at least two committees.¹

¹The ideas expressed on this page are based on two documents: The Constitution of the Harlem Park Neighborhood Council and the written Purposes and Functions that each of these committees had set for itself.
Participation In Council Projects

The Harlem Park Neighborhood Council attempted to create interest and stimulate participation in the Council by members of the community. It also tried, in keeping with its purpose, to work for the welfare of the residents in the community. A part of the Council Program involved participation by members in certain activities that were initiated by the Urban Renewal Program and sponsored certain programs that served to enhance the welfare of persons living in the area. Two of the most outstanding activities that transpired in 1960 in connection with Harlem Park involved the Council. The first one was the June 9 Hearing by the City Council of Baltimore on the Harlem Park Project II Plan which was the legal foundation for the urban renewal program in the area. The second was the Polio Clinic held during the summer of 1960 under the sponsorship of The Council with the Health Committee taking responsibility for most of the ground work.

After studying Council, Agency records, and consulting other agency community organization advisor, the writer decided that these two projects had been of major importance to the Harlem Park Community. The writer included two questions on the interview schedule designed to find out if the block club leaders actively participated in these activities. See Schedule, question 8 and 9, page 36. The writer learned that approximately eighty-five per cent of the persons interviewed attended the June 9 hearing and sixty-six per cent of those interviewed participated

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1Harlem Park Project II Plan, Mayor and City Council (Baltimore, Maryland, 1960).
in the polio clinic. The type of participation in the June 9 hearing on the part of the leaders interviewed involved two major roles: (1) encouraging the people in their blocks to attend and (2) attending themselves. Participation in the polio clinic involved encouraging parents to send their children for inoculations and explaining the importance of this clinic. Only six of those interviewed participated more directly in the clinic.

The evidence indicated that the block leaders played a major role in stimulating attendance and creating community awareness and interest in both of these projects.

Referring of Block Club Problems to the Council

"The Council cannot thoroughly reflect the ideas of its member groups unless the member organizations include in their responsibilities the instructing of delegates on matters which they want brought to the attention of the Council."  

The Council records of committee and General Assembly meetings were reviewed to see what type of problems the block leaders bring to the Council. In addition the chairmen of seven blocks, the Council representative of two and three other persons designated as leaders gave specific answers to questions 11 and 12 on the Schedule which indicated the kind of matters they take to the Council. The results showed that

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1 See Table 4.

five basic matters were taken to the Council. They were the following:

1. Beautification and sanitation including such items as; outlining responsibility for care of newly planted trees in the area.

2. Inspections. The leaders relay to the Council their member's feelings about the inspection of their homes and seek information concerning this aspect of the renewal program to be taken back to their respective groups.

3. Agency Services. The specific problems under the heading are of a variety. The most frequently occurring problems are the problems that follow:

   A. Relocation: What will happen to the people who are forced to move because of the renewal program?

   B. Finance: How will people pay for the needed repairs?

   C. What is the agency planning to do with the inner block area?

4. Questions about the purpose and responsibilities of the Council and its progress.

5. Question related to the personal status and welfare of the individual in a specific block.

It should be clearly stated here that these were not the only questions brought before the Council because many questions arose around certain agency, Council or block club action but may not be of an ongoing nature.

It also was noted from a study of Council and agency records indicated that all of the problems facing the Council were not brought through the leaders of a given block. In some cases the block member communicated directly with the agency or some Council Officer.¹

¹The material used in this Chapter came from the following sources: Minutes of Council Meetings; Minutes of Committee Meetings and BURHA Community Organization Records for 1959-1961. No specific.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Various factors throughout the United States have led to the decline of our cities and the decay of many urban neighborhoods. Consequently, by an act of the Federal Government in 1954, an urban renewal program was instigated. A chief stipulation in this program was for citizen participation. In attempting to meet this requirement, Baltimore through its urban renewal program has utilized citizen participation. In one of Baltimore's renewal areas, Harlem Park, the Neighborhood Council and Block Organizations were the keys to citizen participation.

In this study on the roles of block leaders and their relationship to the Harlem Park Neighborhood Council, an attempt has been made to describe some of the roles block leaders played in block organizations and in the Neighborhood Council. In making this study, data concerning the early development of community organization in Harlem Park was analyzed. Leaders representing seven block clubs and the Neighborhood Council were selected by random sampling and interviewed with the use of a schedule. Literature related to the urban renewal and community organization in Harlem Park was also consulted. The study was limited to the Harlem Park Urban Renewal Area in Baltimore, Maryland. Block leadership applied only to those persons serving as chairmen, vice-chairmen, secretary or representative of block clubs that were represented in the Neighborhood Council. The concept
"participation" referred to the active functioning of block leaders in certain block clubs and Council activities.

From this study the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Baltimore, Maryland realized the importance of citizen participation to the success of the urban renewal program. A Study Board of Housing Experts conveyed this to the Mayor in 1956, moreover, community organization activities were recommended as essential program elements. Consequently, BURHA included a Community Organization Division which was comprised of fifteen staff members at the time of this study.

2. Implementation of federal government requirements for citizen participation was made through the establishment of block organizations in Harlem Park. These block organizations were coordinated through a Neighborhood Council.

3. This study concentrated on interviews with eighteen people representing seven blocks and found citizen participation on several levels.

4. Constant effort by the officials and citizens of Baltimore enabled the renewal program to develop rapidly in Harlem Park and other areas of the city. The Neighborhood Council was recognized as a major source for gaining of citizen participation in Harlem Park.
5. The Council was composed of representatives from block clubs, businesses, churches, schools and other organizations in the community but relied heavily on the participation of block leaders who also performed many of the responsibilities for the development and functioning of block clubs.

6. The block leaders participated on committees, held offices, and cooperated with the Council in educating, interpreting and stimulating the community concerning the council program.

7. The Council depended upon the representatives and leaders of the block clubs for some of the information it needed to develop its policies and program.
APPENDIXES
AREA CHART

AREA A
- Clubs and Organizations throughout Area
- **Agency C.O. worker

AREA B
- Clubs and Organizations throughout Area
- **Agency C.O. worker

AREA C
- Clubs and Organizations throughout Area

AREA D
- Clubs and Organizations throughout Area

DUTIES OF AREA REPRESENTATIVE:
1. Area Representative is responsible to and for his specific geographical area
2. Act in advisory capacity to the blocks, stimulate block organization and participation in Council programs
3. Block leaders should know Area Representative and vice versa in order to communicate and deal with problems, interests and concerns of the area
4. Area Representatives are responsible to the Neighborhood Council and specifically the Executive Committee for attendance at Council meetings, and
5. Are responsible for reporting to Council and Area matters of concern to the best interests of Area Residents
INTERVIEW GUIDE OR SCHEDULE

1. Name of Interviewee

2. Address

3. Length of residence in area?

4. Length of membership in block club? months years.

5. Length of time in present office?

6. Are you an active member of the Neighborhood Council? YES NO

7. Do you work on any Committee in this organization? YES NO

8. Do you or some member of organization attend Zoning or other public hearings that deal with problems in your block or in Harlem Park? YES NO

9. Did you participate in the 1960 Polio Clinic? YES NO

10. How does your organization handle the distribution of notices and other written literature to all members of the block?

11. Do you know most of the people in your block? YES NO On how many sides? ALL 3 2 1.


13. How does your organization go about solving a complaint concerning the block in which your organization is located?

14. How often does your group meet?

15. When was the last meeting?

16. Do you enjoy working in this organization?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BLOCK LEADERS</th>
<th>BLOCK NUMBERS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HP**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
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<td>Q</td>
<td>26</td>
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<td>R</td>
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*Indicates approximate number of years.

**H.P. denotes Harlem Park.
TABLE 2
FAMILIARITY WITH BLOCK RESIDENTS

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*All responses were based on a four sided block.
### TABLE 3

**EIGHTEEN BLOCK LEADERS' PARTICIPATION ON COUNCIL COMMITTEES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMMITTEES</th>
<th>PARTICIPANTS*</th>
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<tr>
<td>Executive</td>
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<td>Public Relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health and Welfare</td>
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</table>

*Some of the leaders were on two committees.*
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