

THE INFLUENCE OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY
IN OKLAHOMA CITY POLITICS

By

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Purpose and Justification	1
Relevant Terms.	3
Methodology and Procedure	5
II. THE SETTING OF THE STUDY	7
Composition of the Business Community	7
Business Organizations.	15
Structure and Composition of Oklahoma City Government.	21
Summary	30
III. THE REPUTATION FOR INFLUENCE	31
Theoretical Orientation	31
Methodology of the Chapter.	35
The Structure of Influence.	37
Influential Men	45
Influential Organizations	53
Motivation and Bases of Influence	57
The Process of Influence.	62
Patterns of Influence	66
Summary	69
IV. ACTUAL INFLUENCE	70
Theoretical Orientation	70
Methodology of the Chapter.	74
Urban Streets and Highways.	75
Trust Financing	85
Urban Renewal	98
Comparison of Issue-Areas	109
Summary	112
V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.	113
Business Influence in Oklahoma City	113
Business Influence in Other Cities.	117
Reputation Versus Reality	120
Implications of Business Influence.	122
Problems and Suggestions for Their Future Resolution.	126

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

Chapter	Page
BIBLIOGRAPHY	128
APPENDIXES	134
A. PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW SCHEDULE.	135
B. JUDGE'S INTERVIEW SCHEDULE.	137
C. INFLUENCE RATING SCALE.	138
D. ISSUE-AREA INTERVIEW SCHEDULE	139

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
I. Influence Ratings of 61 Leaders	43
II. Mean Acquaintance Scores by Influence Level	50
III. Influentials Chosen to Lead a Project	51
IV. Leadership Choices by Influence Level	52
V. Initiation of Proposals in Three Issue-Areas.	111

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure	Page
1. Major Categories of Commercial Employment in Metropolitan Oklahoma City, 1960	10
2. Organization of the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce, 1965.	17
3. Organization and Operation of the Association for Responsible Government, 1964.	29

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

American political scientists in the two decades following World War II have become increasingly concerned with the roles played by influential private groups in the formulation of municipal policy. This interest in studies of community "influence" or "power" seems to stem from two factors: first, the various social sciences are developing theoretical concepts which attempt to explain political behavior at all levels of society, and second, the municipality, because of its proximity and its similarity to larger systems of political organization, provides a "laboratory" for the testing of such concepts. In short, the current rash of community studies may be viewed as part of a wider attempt to explain how the phenomena of "influence" and "power" work generally to affect politics by describing their operation in specific cities.

Purpose and Justification

While existing studies utilize a variety of approaches and result in widely different conclusions regarding the overall pattern of community "influence" or "power", many points of similarity may be noted among them. Perhaps the most obvious of these similarities, and the one with which this writer is concerned, is the need to focus on the role of businessmen as a potentially influential group. Banfield and Wilson, for example, have suggested that businessmen often become active in community affairs because the decentralized character of American municipal politics allows

their entry.

Another reason for the [business] influential's presence in community affairs is that the community . . . often has more respect for his judgment and integrity than for those of the politician or bureaucrat.¹

Regardless of the reasons for their entry into the policy-making process, however, many studies have found businessmen more influential there than any other group, including public officials. Floyd Hunter's Community Power Structure found that an informal group of businessmen exercised a virtual stranglehold over community projects in "Regional City" (Atlanta, Georgia).² Similarly, Carol Thometz, in The Decision-Makers, discovered that policies in Dallas are implemented or vetoed primarily by a cohesive group of business leaders.³ While other studies of local communities illustrate considerable variation in the extent to which businessmen prevail over all other groups during the process of policy formulation . . .

No study of community power, at least among those based upon urban communities within the United States, has failed to show active political participation by businessmen disproportionate to their numbers in the whole population.⁴

The writer believes such findings justify a concern over the role of businessmen as community influentials. In addition, Oklahoma City, the setting for this study, exhibits certain characteristics which lend themselves to such an examination. Briefly, these include the existence within recent years of a highly decentralized political sphere, and the

¹Edward C. Banfield and James Q. Wilson, City Politics (Cambridge, 1963), p. 246.

²Floyd Hunter, Community Power Structure (New York, 1963).

³Carol E. Thometz, The Decision-Makers (Dallas, 1963).

⁴Roscoe C. Martin, et al., Decisions in Syracuse (Indiana, 1961), p. 10.

presence of a strong business organization which can act as a centralizing force for the exercise of influence by the business community. Oklahoma City also exhibits some "special conditions" described by Banfield and Wilson, who write:

. . . the absence of an immigrant lower class, the preponderance of a few large local industries, and the prevalence of 'good government' institutions may make the incidence of business dominance higher in the large cities of the South and Southwest.⁵

Relevant Terms

Before proceeding, it is necessary to clarify certain terms which will be used throughout this study; specifically, "businessmen", "influence", and "politics", in order to provide the reader with a frame of reference.

"Businessmen" as used herein refers primarily to owners or managers of large commercial enterprises.⁶ In common parlance this word embraces such a variety of persons that it would be impossible to account for all of them in a satisfactory manner.

"Influence" denotes a relational quality enabling an actor or actors to control others. In this context, "actor" refers either to individuals or groups.

"Politics" is used throughout this work to refer to those activities which affect the authoritative distribution of social values for the political unit under consideration.⁷ Thus "city politics" embraces all

⁵Banfield and Wilson, p. 276.

⁶Ibid., p. 261.

⁷See the reasoning of David Easton, The Political System (New York, 1964), pp. 90-148, Esp. 129 ff. Also see his use of "authoritative" on page 132, where he suggests that a policy is "authoritative" when the

actions and actors which in any way affect the formulation of public policy for Oklahoma City. While some may think this usage exceptionally broad, the writer believes that it coincides with the conceptions of other students of community influence.⁸ Further, it serves to distinguish this from other studies of "government", "administration" or "partisan politics" in the narrow sense, and places it in the broader area of social policy and its relation to public policy. This point becomes clear if one considers what is meant by "exercising political influence" in the context of the definitions given. Thus, political influence describes a relational quality enabling an actor or actors to control others in reference to policy-making activities. And "a businessman whose promises of support induce a mayor to take action exercises political influence",⁹ as does a person who most frequently initiates proposals which are later adopted as actual policy or successfully opposes proposals initiated by others.¹⁰

One further comment is desirable concerning the usage of the above terms. Many political scientists distinguish "influence" from "power" on the basis that the latter is associated with "commands" or "sanctions", while the former may operate independently of these factors. The writer believes such a distinction is irrelevant to the present study. First, it is difficult in any case to determine whether changes in behavior in

people to whom it is intended to apply consider that they must or should obey it; thus the term is used in a psychological rather than a moral sense.

⁸See, for example, Banfield and Wilson, Hunter, Thometz; Banfield, Political Influence (New York, 1961), and Robert A. Dahl, Who Governs? (New Haven, 1961).

⁹Banfield, Political Influence, p. 3.

¹⁰Dahl, Who Governs?, p. 53.

fact resulted from the threat or actual use of sanctions,¹¹ and second, it is felt that persons interviewed for the study used the terms "power" and "influence" interchangeably with little awareness of this distinction.¹²

Methodology and Procedure

With the above terminology in mind, the writer intends to illustrate that businessmen comprise the most influential of groups in Oklahoma City politics. Toward this end, chapter two is concerned with the setting of the study, describing the composition of Oklahoma City's business community, the role of formal business organizations, and the nature of municipal government. An attempt is made to isolate factors which illustrate the likelihood of strong business influence in Oklahoma City politics.

Chapter three utilizes a reputational approach to analyze the relative influence of businessmen as compared to other municipal groups. The theoretical assumptions of the reputational method are discussed, businessmen and business organizations are ranked according to their influence, and the process of influence is investigated. Other studies using a reputational approach have generally concluded that businessmen are dominant in community decision-making, while studies investigating actual behavior have found other groups to be more influential. Since few attempts have been made to combine the "reputational" and "actual behavior" approaches in a single city, however, researchers have no way of

¹¹See the discussion of this point by Robert A. Dahl, Modern Political Analysis (Englewood Cliffs, 1963), p. 44.

¹²Compare the similar observation by Thometz, p. 2.

knowing to what extent variations in "community influence structures" stem from different methods employed and to what extent such differences arise from actual differences in the cities studied.

With this debate over methodology in mind, chapter four views business influence in the light of actual behavior in a cross-section of contemporary municipal issues. The methodological orientation of those who favor a simulated "case study" approach to the problem of influence is discussed, and the effectiveness of business influence in several areas is investigated. The results are then compared with those of the reputational analysis in the preceding chapter, in order to present as reliable a picture of business influence as possible.

The fifth and final chapter of the study summarizes the overall findings and reaches conclusions on the influence of businessmen in Oklahoma City politics, and compares them with those of other studies on community influence. An attempt is made to contribute some insight into the methodological debate on community influence structures by relating differences in findings to actual differences between the cities studied.

CHAPTER II

THE SETTING OF THE STUDY

The brief sketch of Oklahoma City provided in this chapter is intended to illustrate the characteristics which seem to indicate the likelihood of business influence in city politics. The city's business complex is described and formal business organizations are analyzed. Finally, an overview of municipal government is given in an attempt to illustrate what effect its structure may have on the ability of businessmen to exercise influence.

Composition of the Business Community

Metropolitan Oklahoma City, embracing a three-county area near the geographic center of Oklahoma,¹ comprises an economy which is rapidly becoming diversified as new manufacturing and industrial concerns enlarge their operations. Currently, however, the largest single economic activity in the area is distribution,² upon which the city has depended since its birth in 1889. Its central location and its proximity to a large network of highways, railroads and airlines "has established the city as

¹As officially defined by the 1960 U.S. Census, the Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area includes Oklahoma, Canadian and Cleveland counties, with a combined population of 511,833. For the purposes of the present study, it is important to note that voters from McClain and Pottawatomie counties also cast ballots in Oklahoma City elections, as its boundaries extend into five counties.

²"Distribution" as used herein refers to the marketing and transport of products which are wholly or substantially manufactured elsewhere.

a regional trade center serving an eight state marketing region in excess of 26 million population".³ Retailers in Oklahoma County alone accounted for 27.4 per cent of the state's retail sales in 1964, while city wholesalers have an annual business volume approaching \$1.2 billion.⁴

With the central business district at the heart of the retail pattern, retail establishments range from small personalized shops to multi-story department stores and on to massive, modern shopping centers . . . In excess of fifty sizeable neighborhood retail areas are distributed among the residential developments of the community.⁵

The importance of retailing to Oklahoma City's economy is best reflected in the employment figures for firms engaged in distribution. Chauncey D. Harris classified cities into several types on the basis of the economic activity of greatest importance in each city.⁶ A "retail center" is defined as a city in which "employment in retailing is at least 50 per cent of the total employment in manufacturing, wholesaling, and retailing, and at least 2.2 times that in wholesaling alone."⁷ With a total in 1960 of 65,825 employed in these categories, including 33,175 in retailing and 10,131 in wholesaling, Oklahoma City may be classed as a "retail center."⁸ Harris also noted that many American cities which are centrally placed to serve a wide tributary region may be classified as "regional centers".

³Industrial Division, Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce, Observations of Oklahoma City (Oklahoma City, 1965), p. 5.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Chauncey D. Harris, "A Functional Classification of Cities in the United States," Geographical Review, XXXIII (1943), pp. 86-99.

⁷Ibid., p. 88.

⁸Figures from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1960 Census of Population, Vol. I, Part 38, pp. 448-449.

In general, these cities are important wholesale, financial and office centers. A high percentage of their gainful workers are engaged in professional and clerical occupations.⁹

Figure 1, on page 10, reflects the fact that Oklahoma City fits these general criteria, with employment in professional and related services roughly second to retailing, while financial and wholesaling activities together account for approximately 12 per cent of the total employment represented.¹⁰

The classification of Oklahoma City as a regional retailing center is not meant to imply the absence of industrial activity, which has increased greatly in importance in recent years as local businessmen have turned their efforts towards attracting large manufacturing concerns. Figure 1 shows that manufacturing alone employs nearly 14 per cent of the total number of workers represented. By far the largest locally based industry is petroleum, as illustrated by the fact that one-sixth of the metropolitan area's employed labor force is involved directly or indirectly with this facet of the economy.

While productive wells are still seen up and down the East and North sides of the city, the emphasis has changed from production to other aspects of the industry. Large blocks of offices in the central business district and individual large company-owned buildings scattered throughout the city are filled with technicians in the fields of geology and geophysics, petroleum engineering, refining, research and development, transportation and marketing, and legal aspects of the industry. Practically every major company is represented in the area through headquarters, regional or district offices.¹¹

⁹Harris, p. 97.

¹⁰It should be noted that Oklahoma City, as a centrally located state capitol, is a governmental center of importance. From a total of 196,828 employed in 1960, 26,614 persons were engaged in local, state or federal tasks.

¹¹Industrial Division, Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce, p. 10.

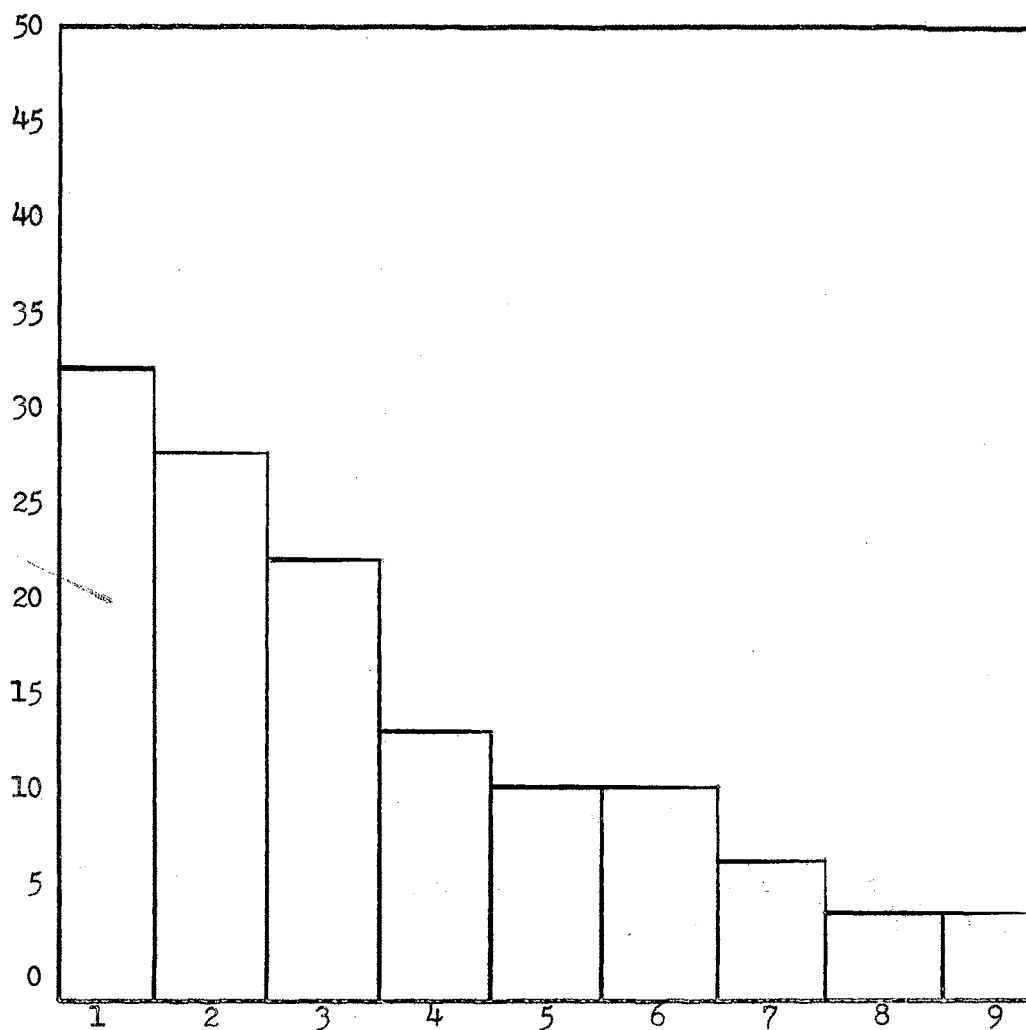


Figure 1. Major Categories of Commercial Employment in Metropolitan Oklahoma City, 1960 (By Thousands)*

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Retail Trade | 6. Finance, Insurance and Real Estate |
| 2. Professional Services | 7. Transportation |
| 3. Manufacturing | 8. Utilities |
| 4. Construction | 9. Communications |
| 5. Wholesale Trade | |

* Percentages shown refer to the total of 162,000 persons engaged in commercial employment in 1960, as opposed to the total employed labor force of 196,828, which also includes persons engaged in government service.

Source: Adapted from U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1960 Census of Population, Vol. I, Part 38, pp. 448-449.

As modern national manufacturing concerns continue to locate facilities in the area, Oklahoma City is becoming a recognized center for electronics and aero-space industries. Three prominent electronics firms dealing primarily with the nation's space program have located plants within the metropolitan area in the last decade, and the Federal Aviation Agency has enlarged its aeronautical research center to accommodate an annual enrollment of 12,000 students. Also of importance to the city's aviation complex and to the economy generally is Tinker Air Force Base, headquarters of the Oklahoma City Air Materiel Area. "With its 18,700 civilian employees and military compliment in excess of 3,800, Tinker is the largest single industrial operation in the state of Oklahoma."¹² Locally operated enterprises connected with aviation include a private firm employing some 2,000 persons and specializing in developing jet-powered executive aircraft, and Oklahoma City's two municipal airports, primarily concerned with freight and passenger service.

Considering the air cargo tonnage of Tinker combined with that of Will Rogers World Airport, Oklahoma City ranks third in the nation behind New York City and Chicago as an air freight center. Will Rogers . . . , the primary commercial air facility, handled 614,917 passengers distributed among the five major lines serving the city during 1964.¹³

Aside from the major industries mentioned, the city's economy includes a number of smaller manufacturing concerns producing transportation equipment, foods, meat and meat by-products, building materials, printed goods, communication devices, light and heavy metal fabrications, plastics, machine tools and accessories, household furnishings, heating and air conditioning equipment, and almost unlimited varieties of smaller consumer

¹²Ibid., p. 7.

¹³Ibid., p. 9.

goods.

Not reflected in the manufacturing data of Figure 1, but nevertheless operations of considerable magnitude in Oklahoma City are the livestock industry and related processing operations of two nationally known packing firms, Armour and Wilson. While the economic importance of such activities has decreased greatly since 1910, when the economy of the area depended largely upon cattle operations, Oklahoma City's stockyards accounted for livestock receipts totalling \$1,372,789 in 1964.¹⁴

Following manufacturing in importance as an employer of Oklahoma City workers is the construction industry which has enjoyed a remarkable growth since 1950, attaining a total value of \$135,528,628 in industrial, commercial, and residential structures in 1964. Since 1958 over 7,000 apartment complexes of varying size have been built in the city, and in 1964 in excess of 6,000 new residential units were raised, over 60 per cent of these being single family dwellings.¹⁵ Expanding with the growth of construction and manufacturing are finance, insurance and real estate operations, whose total of employed workers nearly equals that of the wholesale trade sector as shown in Figure 1. Oklahoma City's banking firms presented the following picture of operations in 1964: clearings, \$12,539,842,369; debits, \$12,748,256,689; deposits, \$940,286,208; and resources, \$1,109,522,082. Savings and loan associations in the metropolitan area showed assets of \$370,863,268 with mortgage loans totalling \$328,378,338, an increase of approximately six per cent in both categories over 1963.¹⁶

¹⁴Ibid., p. 85.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 72.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 85.

Oklahoma City's central location in the southwest makes it a terminal for business and industrial activities which depend upon rapid transportation of their products to outlying markets. A 175 mile series of urban bypasses and limited access thoroughfares, completed since 1945, guarantee quick entry to points of dispatch. More than 30 truck lines traveling scheduled routes operate from the metropolitan area, in addition to many irregular route carriers who specialize in hauling automobiles, heavy machinery, oil field equipment and supplies, lumber and petroleum products, and road materials.¹⁷ A locally owned motor express service operates between points in Oklahoma, Kansas and Texas, while the Railway Express agency provides service to all points in the country served by railroads and air lines. In 1964 Railway Express movements totalled 342,126, and were carried aboard five railroads with terminals in the metropolitan area. Air express shipments for the same period included 38,959 items received and 27,138 dispatched aboard the 55 daily flights scheduled by the city's five major air lines.¹⁸

Three large companies with home offices or service centers located in Oklahoma City account for the bulk of employment in utilities as illustrated in Figure 1. An electric utility company with a generating capacity of 1,408,060 kilowatts serves the central city and 260 other communities. The operation includes

. . . a fully integrated system which stretches from Western Oklahoma to Western Arkansas, representing an investment of \$381 million. In comparison with its local generating capacity, [the company] experienced a peak load of 1,326,000 kilowatts during the summer of 1964.¹⁹

¹⁷Ibid., p. 27.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 85.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 11.

A privately owned gas company also makes Oklahoma City the base of its operations for Central and Western Oklahoma.

The company obtains its gas - an abundant natural resource of the immediate area - from more than 500 separate connections, including 190 company-owned wells, and distributes to over 436,548 customers. The system includes 3,424 miles of transmission lines and 6,198 miles of distribution lines.²⁰

Telephone utilities are represented by the state headquarters of a regional telephone company and by virtue of the fact that Oklahoma City is the location for a primary transcontinental repeater station. In 1964 the number of phones in the Oklahoma City area was 268,099, an increase of six per cent over the preceding year.²¹

Roughly equalling employment in utilities is the communications complex of the city which has grown during the last decade with the addition of new newspaper, radio and television operations. Newspapers include three large dailies, one livestock daily, a Negro daily, a public record daily, and several weekly and semi-weekly church and area publications. A single publishing company accounts for the largest morning, evening and Sunday newspapers in the area and claims one of the largest paid circulations in the southwest. In addition to these locally owned operations, both the Associated Press and United Press International utilize Oklahoma City as headquarters for their state bureaus. Radio stations are represented by seven standard broadcast stations, five commercial F.M. stations, and two educational stations, the latter being operated by the Oklahoma City Public Schools and the University of Oklahoma. Three commercial television stations representing national networks, and an educational station serving the city's educational institutions with

²⁰Ibid., p. 14.

²¹Ibid., p. 85.

public programs, round out the metropolitan area's broadcasting operations. A national telegraph company with state headquarters in Oklahoma City provides every type of telegraphic and cable service, covering operations in Arkansas and the Texas panhandle as well as Oklahoma.

Thus this study is concerned with a centrally located regional trading and transportation center characterized by a high proportion of professional and white-collar workers, and a young city in which finance, utilities, construction and communications activities are expanding to cater to a growing manufacturing and industrial complex. If businessmen assume an important role in matters of public policy, then one might expect to find the foregoing concerns strongly represented among the ranks of the influential.

Business Organizations

Like most cities of its size, Oklahoma City boasts a number of different organizations claiming to speak for this or that specialized segment of business. For the purposes of this study it is not necessary to concentrate on all these, for while they may be effective in securing support for policies affecting their specific economic concerns, their impact upon public policy generally is limited. Moreover, most of these groups were either started by or received much of their initial impetus from the oldest formal business organization in the city, the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce.²²

The parent organization of the Chamber, the Board of Trade, was

²²It should be noted that as many as seven separate, smaller "Chambers of Commerce" can be found in the metropolitan area. These small groups are not dealt with here, for they represent only a small segment of retail merchants in various suburban areas, and are in no way "branches" of the larger Chamber.

formed on May 25, 1889, 34 days after the site which was to become Oklahoma City was opened for settlement.²³ This group went through several stages of development, during which time it was known successively as "The Commercial Club", "The Oklahoma Merchant's Club", and the "Oklahoma City Club", finally becoming the Chamber of Commerce in 1902 after a re-organization and broadening of its membership. Following the revelation in 1910 that the Chamber had pledged over \$1,600,000 for various projects, it was decided that the organization should be incorporated in order to limit the personal liability of its individual members.²⁴ Shortly after incorporation, the Chamber began to diversify its activities, becoming interested in a wide variety of civic and economic matters.

On February 20, 1919, an organization made up of the civic clubs in the city - the Civic Council - became the civic committee of the Chamber of Commerce. The first Oklahoma City Real Estate Association was a part of the Chamber of Commerce, then broke away - its relationship has always been close though. The present Oklahoma City Real Estate Board has always had a member on the Chamber's board of directors.

The history of the Better Business Bureau starts in the civic committee of the Chamber. The Oklahoma City Retailers Association was born and nurtured there through the years. There have been no less than three tax limitation groups, and at least 20 different 'industrial foundations' organized there - many of them still in operation.²⁵

With the incorporation of the "Junior Chamber of Commerce" into the parent body in 1927, and the ordering of Chamber activities into several divisions, the organization assumed substantially its present structure as shown in Figure 2 of page 17.²⁶ This chart illustrates the Chamber's

²³Gilbert Hill, "Boomtown Builders", The Oklahoma City Times, May 23, 1957, hereafter referred to as the Hill Series.

²⁴Ibid., June 21, 1957.

²⁵Ibid., July 13, 1957.

²⁶In December, 1965, the Chamber had a membership of 8,000, estimated to be approximately 5,000 either as individuals or small firms in which a

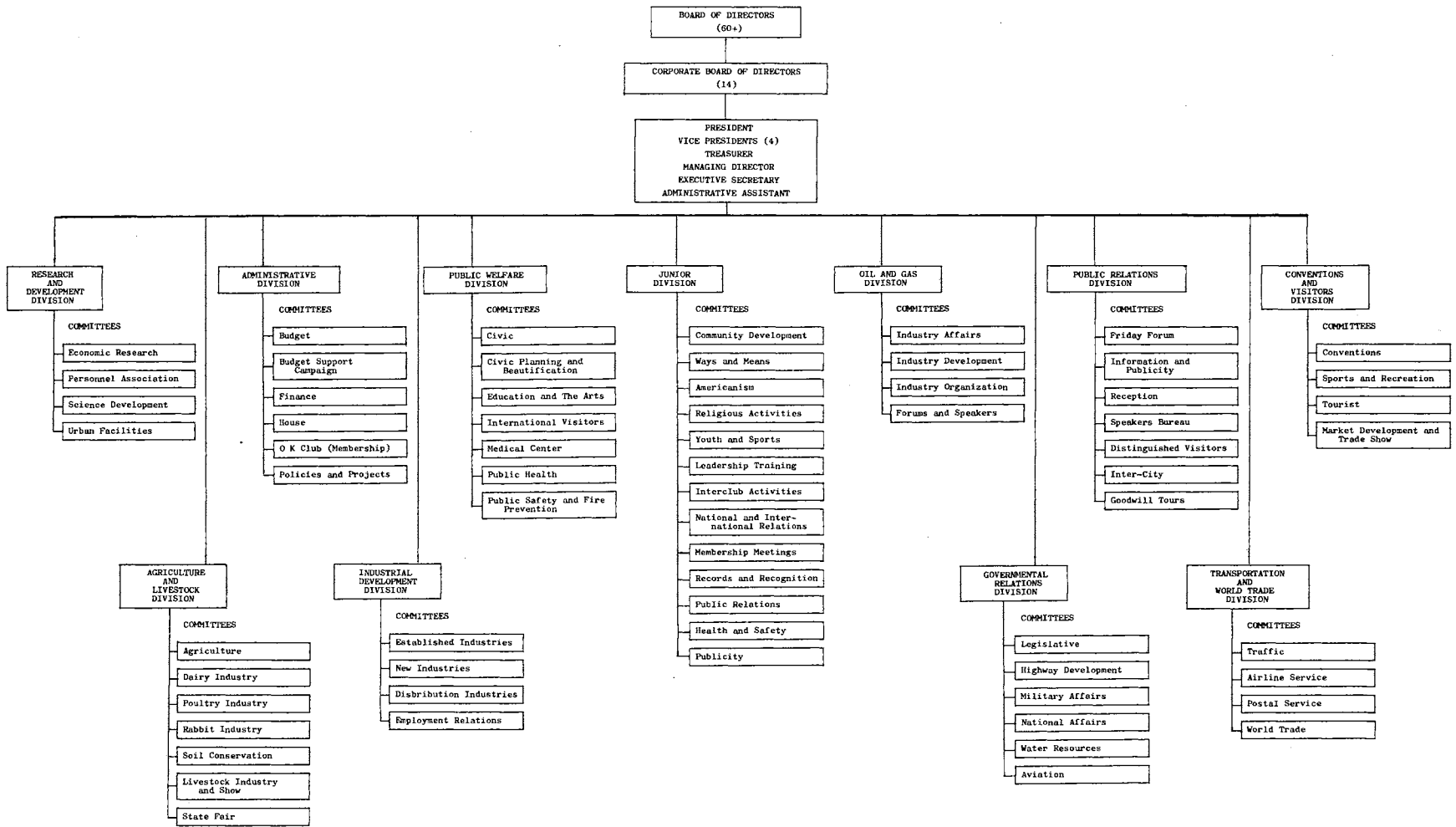


Figure 2. Organization of the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce - 1965*

*Source: Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce, Oklahoma, December 3, 1964. Not shown are 16 separate agencies which operate under the organization for specific purposes; the most well known is Oklahoma Industries, Inc., a corporation which buys and leases industrial sites to industries.

interest in a variety of activities which, while undertaken primarily with economic considerations in mind, border closely on areas affecting public policy. Of course the mere existence of an interest in such areas does not automatically provide evidence of the exercise of political influence; indeed, Chamber officials throughout the organization's history have been quick to point out that theirs is not a "political" organization. Representative of the Chamber's long-standing policy in this regard is an open letter written by the Chamber president in 1913, in answer to the charge that the organization wanted an "open town" because of its business conventions.

It having been called to our attention that a rumor is afloat in the city that the Chamber of Commerce has at some time in the past requested that the gambling and bootleg joints be allowed to run unmolested, we take this occasion to say in unmistakable terms that the Chamber of Commerce has never, either directly or indirectly, requested or advised any laxity in law enforcement; nor has the subject ever been under consideration.

But, on the contrary, the Chamber of Commerce has always stood and now stands unequivocally for good government. But as a strictly business and commercial organization it takes no part in political matters in any form.²⁷

On the other hand, consider the 1965 statement on policies and projects by the Chamber's Governmental Relations Division, quoted here in part:

person and a firm are the same. Many of the remaining 3,000 involve one corporation, but list several members. The organization, which is chartered non-profit, is financed by membership contributions, from a minimum of \$50.00 upward annually.

²⁷Quoted in Hill Series, June 25, 1957; emphasis supplied. An indication that the Chamber's official stand on this matter has changed very little since 1913 was provided in June, 1965, in a reply sent by a Chamber official to an Oklahoma State University graduate student investigating the 1964 Oklahoma senate election. Asked to comment on the percentage of its membership that supported the winning candidate, the Chamber replied that it was not a political organization in any way, and was therefore returning the questionnaire unanswered.

With the thrust of the Oklahoma City area into the status of a significant metropolitan area, the traditional activities surrounding relations with local, state, and federal government have magnified and become more complex. The ever-increasing demand for governmental services and the requirements for physical improvements brought about by the rapid growth of the metropolitan area, requires ever-increasing action by the Chamber of Commerce at the various levels of government.

The Governmental Relations Division of the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce probes all areas of government that have an impact on the development of the economy and the business and industrial climate of the area, the state, and the nation. High on the list of priority are projects and needs of Municipal and County government, including the general field of planning, adequate financing, streets, expressway-highway development, libraries, City-County health, and many, many others. The revitalization of the Central Business District and other areas of blight, through Urban Renewal, must move forward if Oklahoma City is to maintain its upward growth cycle.²⁸

While the two statements above seem at first glance to be highly contradictory, an objective appraisal indicates that the Chamber is quite sincere in its desire to remain out of "politics". Nevertheless, in seeking to create a climate in which "better business" and "industrial growth" will be insured, the organization treads a thin line between "civic", "economic" and "political" matters, and may easily move from one area to the other. That the organization does not intend to become involved in "politics" is irrelevant to the purposes of the present study, which on the contrary seeks to illustrate the ability of the Chamber to become the vehicle for the exercise of political influence by Oklahoma City's businessmen. This point may be further illustrated by briefly reviewing two significant instances of Chamber involvement in historical affairs which must be called "political" within the scope of this study. The first of these involved securing for Oklahoma City the location of

²⁸Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce, Oklahoma, December 3, 1964, p. 12; emphasis supplied.

the state capitol in 1910, while the second concerned bringing a large military base to the Oklahoma City area in 1941.

The enabling act by which Oklahoma entered the union in 1907 had the capitol at Guthrie, then one of the largest cities in the state, until 1913.²⁹ In 1910, Chamber of Commerce leaders, realizing the advantages for business in having the Capitol located nearby, circulated a petition over the state to force an election moving it to Oklahoma City. "The petition contained nearly 28,000 names /in/ every county in the state. On March 27, Governor Haskell called a special election for June 11, 1910, to settle the issue."³⁰ Following the Governor's decision, Chamber leaders formed a campaign committee which sponsored mass meetings and, on June 1, offered four definite locations in Oklahoma City to the voters at a minimum cost per acre. Shawnee and Guthrie, the two other cities competing for the capitol, were caught short by this maneuver, and Oklahoma City won the election by a wide margin.³¹

Violence was feared for a time on Dec. 30, 1910, when records were being removed from Guthrie and a mob threatened. But, on May 29, 1911, the U.S. Supreme Court held that Congress had a right to tell the people where their capitol should be - and that the election moving it to Oklahoma City had been legal.

But the capitol fight wasn't /sic/ yet over. Guthrie circulated its own petition to force an election on moving the capitol back there. The vote was held Nov. 5, 1911. The campaign was just as bitter, but not as spectacular as the one in 1910 - and enough citizens were getting tired of the issue that many failed to cast a ballot. But Oklahoma City,

²⁹Edwin C. McReynolds, Alice Marriot, and Estelle Faulconer, Oklahoma - The Story of its Past and Present (Norman, 1961), p. 247.

³⁰Hill Series, June 19, 1957.

³¹Actual total votes cast for each city were as follows: Oklahoma City, 96,261; Guthrie, 31,301; Shawnee, 8,382. Quoted in McReynolds, et. al., pp. 247-248. See also Albert McRill, And Satan Came Also (Oklahoma City, 1955), pp. 142-146, for additional material on the first election.

led by the Chamber of Commerce, put a lot of hard work and \$15,000 into the ballot - and won again by a 25,000 majority.³²

The subject of the military base was first aired publicly at a meeting of Chamber of Commerce directors and their guests on February 13, 1941, when a member just returned from Washington announced that an air depot was to be located somewhere in Oklahoma and urged that a committee be formed to secure its location in Oklahoma City. Actually, this announcement was a mere formality for

. . . the Chamber of Commerce already had options on seven possible locations - the land selected, and purchased, if needed. Air Force officers already had been here and had inspected it - and had virtually made a deal. The announcement had to be dramatic, of course, because promises had been made in the name of the voters of Oklahoma City which they would have to carry out. They were to pay, for instance, for purchase of the original site - and they did. In an election on April 29, 1941, they approved a \$982,000 bond issue for defense work, including \$225,000 to buy the site for the 'air depot', one of the biggest bargains for the town in history.³³

While no claim is made that the foregoing examples are conclusive, they certainly serve as a preliminary indication of the Chamber's ability to make itself felt on issues which fall within the sphere of politics as herein defined. Both issues show the Chamber in a leadership role concerning projects which ultimately involved action on the part of public officials as well as the city's voters. The writer believes that these examples at least point to the need for the more refined analysis of Chamber activities undertaken in Chapters III and IV.

Structure and Composition of Oklahoma City Government

Thus far the writer has been concerned with describing certain

³²Hill Series, June 22, 1957.

³³Ibid., August 7, 1957.

aspects of Oklahoma City's business community which point preliminarily to its potential for political influence on the part of businessmen. At this point, it is pertinent to outline the characteristics of the municipality's political institutions, for these can have a great effect upon the ability of private groups to exercise influence. Banfield and Wilson discuss this point, stating that the exercise of influence by private groups is functional in that it overcomes the formal decentralization of the municipal political sphere and creates an informal centralization to get things done.³⁴

Business influence . . . varies with the degree of centralization in the political and economic spheres and with the extent to which the economic interests control those resources (money, status, publicity and legitimacy) which politicians need to win and hold office.

Businessmen are most likely to control those resources in relatively homogenous, middle-class communities where the class basis for machine politics is absent, or in communities where changes in the formal structure of politics (. . . nonpartisanship, the short ballot, at large elections. . .) have made it difficult or impossible for politicians to win votes entirely with organizations of their own making.³⁵

The foregoing discussion of the business community points to a significant degree of centralization in Oklahoma City's economic sphere, and indicates possession of important political resources by businessmen. In order to illustrate the degree of decentralization which has characterized municipal government in Oklahoma City, at least until very recently, the writer will briefly trace the history of the various forms of government which the city has adopted during the period since 1907, or statehood.

The first legislature of Oklahoma-Indian Territory had provided for

³⁴See Banfield and Wilson, p. 245ff.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 275-276.

an aldermanic system of government in Oklahoma City, which was replaced after statehood by the mayor-council form.³⁶ During most of the period this system was in effect, municipal politics was characterized by intense partisanship, lawlessness, and electioneering frauds.³⁷ Following four unsuccessful attempts to pass a new city charter, the commission form of government was introduced in 1911 under the leadership of the Chamber of Commerce.³⁸ Those who had hoped to put municipal government on a sound and responsible basis were destined to be disappointed, however, for the commission system

. . . was intensely partisan, its administration of services was based on political considerations. The inevitable result was inefficient and expensive performance. But it was not until an administration had packed the police and other departments with political favorites and protected them by mounting machine guns at strategic downtown locations that people were awakened to the seriousness of the threat to municipal government.

At such times, people demand a change. The change came in 1927 with adoption of a council-manager charter.³⁹

While the council-manager system proved the most durable form for Oklahoma City, lasting from 1927 until the present, it was apparent from its inception that the sound theories of responsibility upon which it rests were subject to the realities of political life in the city. Its proponents had hoped to banish forever the ills of the commission form - to fix responsibility for matters of finance, personnel, and administration solely on one official. In addition, arguments against the commission form had reflected dissatisfaction with partisan elections. "City

³⁶Horace Thompson, "Municipal Government in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma" (Oklahoma City, 1959), p. 1.

³⁷See Albert McRill, pp. 140-152.

³⁸Hill Series, June 21, 1957; also see McRill, p. 141.

³⁹Thompson, pp. 1-2.

government had become top-heavy with politics at the expense of service performance. The job of mayor had become a springboard to the governorship.⁴⁰ While adoption of the council-manager system did result in a lessening of the Mayor's power by making at-large election a provision for that office, a similar provision for councilmen was rescinded in 1935. With strong partisan ward organizations re-awakened in at least two of the city's four wards, it soon became apparent that the old Republican-Democratic council division was to be replaced by pro and anti-City Manager factions.⁴¹

Much of the subsequent history of the Council-Manager plan, from 1935 to date, can be characterized by attempts of various city council factions to undermine the system. This point is illustrated by the fact that Oklahoma City had 13 different Managers from 1927 to 1959, each of whom served an average term of only two years and 86 days.⁴² More often than not during this same period of time, the eight-member city council, excluding the Mayor, found itself in a four-to-four stalemate between those who favored the policies of the Manager and those who opposed them. While it would be inaccurate to say that city government was able to accomplish little during those years, it is a fair inference to note that much of the initiative for long-range projects and planning originated with groups outside the formal organs of government. In the language of Banfield and Wilson, an informal centralization was needed to overcome the formal decentralization created by council members who often seemed more interested in political considerations than continuity of management

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 14.

⁴²Ibid., pp. 3-4.

policy and the efficient rendering of municipal services. While discussing the problem of putting city government on a sound financial basis, one former City Manager indicated the role of businessmen in providing direction to the elected officials:

The Chamber of Commerce, and the business leaders who support it, are used in resolving problems of this nature. They are often more active than the city council because it has been so split from time to time. You need some continuity of planning on these things, which this group provides. You can't have a good city government without the support of the citizens, however, under the council-manager form of government.⁴³

Another former city official, discussing the problems of poor financing and lack of citizen support, indicated that businessmen have played a vital role in initiating governmental reforms in Oklahoma City recently:

As far back as 20 years ago, _____ and _____ [two prominent businessmen] wanted to do something about city government from the standpoint of poor financing and administration. Each time the attack gained momentum, until a strong reform group arose. This group was instrumental in getting a trained, professional city manager and well-qualified councilmen willing to work with him. There are still some doubts as to how successful we'll be with a Pro. [sic], but this is the most definite change yet in the whole character of city government since the inception of the formal city manager form of government in 1927.⁴⁴

Since the changes mentioned above have taken place within the last five years, it is necessary to describe them briefly in order to give a current picture of municipal government.

The revolutionary trend started three years ago [1963] when business and professional leaders took a look at their city government and didn't [sic] like what they saw.

Jobs were being bartered at the polls and some city councilmen paid their workers with municipal appointments despite restrictions in the city charter.

⁴³Personal Interview, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, July 14, 1965.

⁴⁴Personal Interview, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 30, 1965.

An Association for Responsible Government was formed The ARG moved into the polling places, spent money and elected four councilmen, all respected businessmen and professional men.⁴⁵

Shortly after this election, the first academically trained City Manager in the city's history was hired. Immediately he implemented a merit system for municipal employees selection, a move which met with opposition from the four "hold-over" councilmen who depended upon patronage for much of their political strength. The resulting "stalemate" was aptly described by an editorial in one of the metropolitan area newspapers just prior to the election of March, 1965:

The Oklahoma City Council has been on dead center for 2 years. Anything proposed by the four ARG councilmen was certain to be opposed by the hold-over councilmen.

Previous to the election of the ARG councilmen, any councilman could write a note to the city manager and tell him to hire a certain person or fire another one. Instead of one city manager, there were eight city managers.

Councilman _____ has spent much of his time trying to fire the present city manager hoping that he could again dictate hiring and firing.⁴⁶

In the election of 1965, the ARG was successful in three out of four council races, as well as contributing to the election of a reform-minded Mayor. Issues in this campaign centered not only on the makeup of the council, but on such questions as metropolitan planning, urban renewal, and retention of the council-manager form of government:

. . . Voters gave the present four-member ARG group on the city council the vital 5th and 6th votes it needed to make major changes in city government, such as metropolitan planning.

. . . the vote in the mayor's race was, in effect, a thumping endorsement for the city-manager form of government. Mayor _____'s major opponent _____ had based his campaign on the theme that a change to a strong-mayor plan for city government was needed here.

⁴⁵The Oklahoma Journal, January 13, 1966.

⁴⁶(Ed.) The Daily Oklahoman, March 15, 1965.

. . .the vote in the mayor's race also resulted in a boost for the cause of urban renewal. The candidate _____ who based his campaign mostly on fighting urban renewal got only 2,105 votes against [the mayor's] 31,337.⁴⁷

As a result of the above reforms, Oklahoma City's municipal government has become much more centralized during the past year than at any time since 1927, and citizen support for public officials has increased markedly. One indication of this support is the recent "city" sales tax which was overwhelmingly passed by the voters, and which is expected to add \$10 million annually to Oklahoma City's budget.

While businessmen have been important in ushering in these reforms, they cannot take full credit for them or for the success of the ARG movement. Nor can it be said that business support for these reforms was completely unanimous. One informant discussed the movement as follows:

ARG was the result of a movement involving many types of people; there were a few fairly sizeable businessmen involved, but there were also many persons from the Young Democrats, Young Republicans, and the so-called intellectual community.

ARG was at first set up for an entirely different purpose: to attract good candidates for the state legislature. Then they decided to start at home, where they have been successful. They are still interested in the state legislature, but they really haven't made a dent there so far.

The ARG movement really caught on outside the top group of business leaders. The Chamber of Commerce was divided on the issue, partly because of a fear that new reform might make it harder to get things done.⁴⁸

While the Chamber, as a non-political organization, could not formally endorse the ARG movement, a good number of individual businessmen contributed financial support as the reforms gained momentum. This business support flowed naturally from agreement with the basic philosophy of the movement:

⁴⁷(Ed.) The Oklahoma City Times, March 18, 1965.

⁴⁸Personal Interview, Informant #3, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 29, 1965.

That the city government of Oklahoma City is big business and must be run on a business-like basis is a major thesis advanced by the slate of candidates chosen by the ARG.

. . . ARG candidate _____ said at a public meeting this week: 'I have lived here 30 years and didn't realize the city government was such big business. The city has \$200 millions of bonded indebtedness, 33 operating departments, and \$16 million in income each year.' . . .

'I say this is big business and should be run by dependable businessmen.'⁴⁹

Financial support by businessmen should not be viewed as leading to business domination of the ARG, however, for its structure and methods are designed to free it from the control of any one company, party or community group. Figure 3 on page 29 reflects the procedures by which the organization operates. In view of the rules regarding nomination of candidates by local voters, and the provisions dealing with non-disclosure of sources for campaign funds, it is clear that the ARG cannot be called a purely "business organization".

In spite of the above qualifications, however, few would argue that the recent reforms in city government could have been accomplished without the support of business leadership. This point is made clear in a study recently completed by a team of faculty and students at Oklahoma City University, in which ten "organizations" were ranked according to their influence over four broad policy areas related to public issues in Oklahoma City. The Chamber of Commerce, newspapers, television and radio were each classified as an "organization" and were ranked against various other "organizations" (political parties, civic clubs, churches, labor groups) to measure their relative influence in "government reform". The Chamber of Commerce ranked third, while newspapers, radio and television ranked second, on a scale from one (most influential) to ten (least

⁴⁹(Ed.) The Oklahoma City Times, March 2, 1963.

- What is ARG? It is an organization of voters interested in seeking qualified business and professional men to head the city's government. It was formed in 1962. At that time, ARG succeeded in electing four councilmen and a mayor. The association was disbanded immediately after election to remove any possible threat of pressuring or lobbying of candidates elected by the movement. According to the by-laws, the association cannot be reactivated until 6 months before a primary election, at which time steering committees are elected following public meetings in each of the city's four wards.
- How are candidates selected? . . . By a grass roots movement. The ARG now has over 8,000 members. Capable candidates may be suggested by the membership to the executive committee of the organization in each ward. Five members from each ward constitute nominating committees, with the choice of nominees left to each ward.
- How are candidates financed? . . . Each ARG-endorsed candidate must pledge not to accept individual campaign contributions. Expenses are defrayed through \$1 membership fees from citizens interested in obtaining competent, qualified men for office who might not run otherwise. ARG-supported candidates run as a group. ARG does not reveal the source of its funds to candidates.

Figure 3. Organization and Operation of the Association for Responsible Government, 1964*

* Source: Association for Responsible Government, Oklahoma City.

influential).⁵⁰ Since both of the "organizations" referred to are included within the category of "business groups", this study strengthens the contention that such groups yield considerable influence in city government.

SUMMARY

An attempt has been made in this chapter to indicate the background against which the present study unfolds. The characteristics of Oklahoma City's economic and political spheres have been reviewed, and points of interaction between the two briefly noted. It has been demonstrated that businessmen have the potential to exert influence, either as individuals or through business organizations, and that such influence is exerted to some degree in matters concerning the operation of municipal government.

⁵⁰Stanley P. Wagner, et al., "A Public Method for the Study of Community Power: An Examination of Power in Oklahoma City," (Oklahoma City, 1965), p. 6. The highest rank possible, one, was assigned to the "organization" composed of the Mayor and Council and City Manager for the area of "government reform". While the author is inclined to agree with this ranking as of 1965, following the ARG success described above, he questions whether this would necessarily hold true for the entire period from the advent of ARG to the eventual election successes of 1965.

CHAPTER III

THE REPUTATION FOR INFLUENCE

In this chapter the reputation for influence in community decisions enjoyed by businessmen is contrasted with that enjoyed by other community groups. The fundamentals of the reputational approach are reviewed, and individual businessmen are ranked according to their reputed influence among community leaders. An attempt is made to pinpoint as accurately as possible the location of businessmen in the total "influence structure" of Oklahoma City.

Theoretical Orientation

It would be a simple matter to demonstrate that businessmen are often influential in Oklahoma City politics, and one might conceivably show this by concentrating on their past activities affecting areas of public policy. This method, however, would be quite inadequate for assessing the relative influence of the business group as compared with other groups. In order to arrive at an accurate analysis of the level occupied by businessmen in the total "influence structure" of the community, an approach must be devised which is capable of investigating the roles of all groups which might conceivably be in a position to affect the formulation of public policy. The writer believes these requirements can best be met by concentrating on the decision-making process in Oklahoma City in order to discover which groups are most often involved therein. The general rationale behind a decision-making approach is

indicated by Richard C. Snyder:

There are two fundamental purposes of the decision-making approach: to help identify and isolate the 'crucial structures' in the political realm where change takes place - where action is initiated and carried out, where decisions must be made; and to help analyze systematically the decision-making behavior which leads to action and which sustains action.¹

Within the broad framework of decision-making analysis, however, one finds at least five methods for measuring the influence of various actors. Probably the oldest of these is the positional method, which assumes that influence in decisions will correspond to offices held by persons in official or semi-official hierarchies. This method, while useful in locating possible sources of influence, is insufficient for analyzing action by businessmen who hold no formal offices.² A second method which has been widely used is the case study approach, focusing on the actual behavior of actors in decisions as they unfold. The method is quite useful in assessing the relative influence of various actors on certain specified issues, but fails to reveal definitively the total structure of influence over the entire range of possible community decisions.³ Moreover, it is seldom possible for the observer to be present while community decisions are being made.⁴ Another approach is the organizational method pioneered by sociologists C. Wright Mills and Floyd Hunter. Those

¹Richard C. Snyder, "A Decision-Making Approach," Approaches to the Study of Politics, (ed.) Roland A. Young (Evanston, 1958), p. 15.

²Dahl, Modern Political Analysis, p. 52.

³Ibid., p. 53.

⁴A notable exception is the case study approach used by Edward C. Banfield in Chicago, in which a wide variety of developing issues were studied and used to create an elaborate model of political influence. This type of study, unfortunately, is possible only when given ample time and a large research staff. (See Edward C. Banfield, Political Influence.)

who favor this method rely upon a ranking of community organizations by persons familiar with local affairs to provide evidence of the relative influence of various groups.⁵ While the writer believes that this method is in some respects superior to approaches which rely on ranking individuals, it is not appropriate for the present study, for not all businessmen can be included within any one organization.

While most research designs for analyzing community influence incorporate elements of the three foregoing methods, the limitations mentioned render each incapable, by itself, of providing a framework of suitable scope for the present study. The need to examine the role of businessmen in as wide a range of community decisions as possible calls for an investigation of the utility of the two remaining methods.

Perhaps the most widely debated technique for measuring the relative influence of community actors is the reputational approach originated by Floyd Hunter⁶ and since refined by many others. Generally, this method assumes that well-placed informants familiar with community affairs can identify and rank persons on the basis of their reputation for influence. Carol E. Thometz, in one such study, secured a list of "power figures" from persons representative of major segments of community life in Dallas. A number of persons on this list were then asked to serve as "judges", ranking all others on the list in terms of their relative influence in community issues and providing information as to whether there existed any group with sufficient cohesiveness to make it dominant

⁵See C. Wright Mills, The Power Elite (New York, 1959), and White Collar: The American Middle Classes (New York, 1953). See also Floyd Hunter, Top Leadership, U.S.A. (Chapel Hill, 1959), and Hunter, Ruth C. Schaffer and Cecil G. Sheps, Community Organization: Action and Inaction (Chapel Hill, 1956).

⁶Hunter, Community Power Structure.

in such matters.⁷ Such an approach would appear to provide a comprehensive description of Oklahoma City's influence structure to satisfy the requirements of the present study.

It is pertinent to note, however, that the reputational approach has evoked much theoretical controversy during its short history. Perhaps its most vehement critic has been Robert A. Dahl, who points out that the reputation for influence may not be the same as its actual exercise.

The outstanding contribution of Dahl's analysis is . . . his interpretation of the relationship between potential and actual influence. The potential influence of a group or individual depends upon possession of resources that might be converted into political influence. The actual influence the group or individual wields is dependent, however, first upon willingness to employ these resources for political purposes - what Dahl describes as the rate at which the resources are used; and second, upon the efficiency with which these resources are employed. Potential influence, Dahl suggests, is 'a forecast about A's future influence, assuming certain conditions as to the magnitude and variety of his resources and the rate and efficiency with which they are used.'⁸

Thus Dahl and others believe that a reputational approach may unearth only a "common mythology" of influence among persons interviewed, which may not correlate with the exercise of influence in concrete cases. While this criticism diminishes the utility of the approach, it is important to note that the potential for influence itself may often have important effects upon decision-making whether or not it is employed:

The fact that a given group does not exercise its power-potential under existing social conditions does not mean ipso facto that it has not been potent in the decision-making process. The sheer fact of the possession of a power potential or resource may have been sufficient to determine the actions of others. . . . we do react to the potential power of another, and we do attempt to avoid the fearful showdown, the distasteful controversy, by

⁷Thometz, The Decision-Makers.

⁸Martin, et al., Decisions in Syracuse, pp. 5-6. (Emphasis supplied)

anticipating the reactions of those in possession of power and by acting accordingly. There is thus no reason for those who hold a power-potential to exercise their power unless, and only unless, their domains are directly challenged.⁹

The writer believes that this consideration justifies the use of the reputational approach for the present study inasmuch as this should at least result in an indication of the potential for influence possessed by businessmen as compared with other community groups. In order to determine whether such potential is actually used, or, whether the reputation of businessmen for influence is equivalent to its actual exercise, the method in this chapter will be followed by a reconstructed case approach in Chapter IV.

Methodology of the Chapter

For this analysis, information was gathered by a total of 29 interviews conducted in two stages. During the first stage, nine persons, whose past activities and present occupations suggested a wide knowledge of community affairs, were contacted.¹⁰ In structured interviews ranging from 30 minutes to one hour, these preliminary informants answered a series of questions designed to reveal the identity and activity of groups in Oklahoma City able to exert influence in public policy.¹¹ Moreover, these persons were asked to provide the writer with the names of

⁹Howard J. Ehrlich, "Power and Democracy in America: A Critical Discussion," Power and Democracy in America, (eds.) Howard J. Ehrlich and William V. D'Antonio (South Bend, 1961), p. 92.

¹⁰The nine informants were drawn from the following areas: communications, four; finance, one; business and professional services, one; city government, two; education, one. The attempt was to solicit information from persons representing a cross-section of the city.

¹¹See Appendix A, page 135, for questions posed to the preliminary informants.

individuals having a reputation for broad influence in community decisions. After eliminating duplications, a list of 61 "influence nominees" representative of several fields of endeavor was compiled.

In the second stage, the writer sought to arrive at a quantitative ranking of influence for each of the 61 persons listed, and to determine how influence is wielded by various groups and individuals to resolve community issues.¹² Due to limitations imposed by time and the lack of a research staff, it was impossible to interview each of the 61 individuals concerning their activities. The writer therefore decided to select 20 men from the list and ask them to serve as "judges", ranking others on the list by use of an "influence scale".¹³ Judges were selected from the list at random and interviews arranged until 20 persons had been contacted, so that each person listed had an equal chance of being chosen to judge. These interviews were completed over a 30-day period during the summer of 1965, and ranged from 20 minutes to two hours in length. As several of the judges could not spare the time needed to complete all of the inquiries, quantitative portions of the material had to be left behind, some of which was returned by mail. Unfortunately, this resulted in some of the forms being incomplete, and they were discarded. Thus the quantitative portion of this phase of the study is based on sixteen forms, while for the qualitative information the writer relied upon all twenty judges and the nine preliminary informants. Persons interviewed in each stage were assured that those whom they nominated as influentials would

¹²See Appendix B, page 137, for questions posed to the judges.

¹³See Appendix C, page 138, for the influence scale and material concerning the reputation for leadership of the 61 influence nominees. The writer acknowledges his debt to Delbert C. Miller and Carol E. Thometz for the method used in constructing this scale.

not be identified by name in the completed study.

The Structure of Influence

During the course of the preliminary interviews, a view of the role of various groups and persons in Oklahoma City public decision-making began to emerge. Without exception, the informants agreed that there was a recognizable group of leaders consistently involved in community decisions of all types, and that these persons were mainly from the business community.¹⁴ As one informant stated:

These are entrepreneur business leaders; big businessmen centered around the Chamber of Commerce. While there are a few older ones whose influence has faded, there is a continuing corps of leaders who have been the 'top group' since the 1920's.¹⁵

Every person interviewed tended to speak of this group of businessmen as "key leaders", "key men", or the "top group", and indicated that there were at least two other recognizable groups below this one in Oklahoma City's influence structure. One informant summed up the responses of all those interviewed by saying he believed there was a group "of ten or twelve leaders actively involved in virtually every major project", and that below this group "is a group of 40 cohorts active in more than one area". He concluded by stating that "there are 200 or 300 functionaries below these groups who become active in certain areas from time to time".¹⁶

Asked about the role of organized labor in Oklahoma City decisions, the informants generally agreed that no labor leaders could be considered

¹⁴See questions one and two of Appendix A, page 135.

¹⁵Personal Interview, Informant #3, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 29, 1965.

¹⁶Ibid.

to have community-wide influence on all issues, although some might play roles in a few specific instances. As one informant put it, "labor does provide some opposition to various projects, but they are definitely not strong enough to put proposals across on their own; they did help block the earnings tax [1962], and a few labor leaders may occupy the second fringe of leadership."¹⁷ Another informant expressed the opinion that labor had been insignificant until the very recent past:

It may have a nominal influence now, but it is questionable that they have any real power. This is not an organized community, although labor is emerging as an identifiable group. Oklahoma City needs more manufacturing type industry, so labor probably will be stronger in the future.¹⁸

Virtually the same opinion was advanced by the preliminary informants regarding the role of Negro influentials:

Negroes are still not a major, organized or cohesive force, as labor is not. Both labor and Negroes are emerging as recognizable groups, but both still lack solidarity. Negroes and labor both work fairly well with civic leaders on most issues, unless they involve direct clashes. Many key civic leaders have played a behind-the-scenes role in the smooth working out of the various civil rights laws.¹⁹

Negroes as such do not swing a major weight. Some few Negroes as individuals are on the fringes. They are neither conservative nor radical. They are not active participants in initiating policy but are a part of carrying it out, and can modify some few proposals. The minority is not trampled on by the top group, nor is labor.²⁰

Several persons interviewed during this stage of the study expressed the opinion that the influence of members of the educational and

¹⁷Personal Interview, Informant #2, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 30, 1965.

¹⁸Personal Interview, Informant #3, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 29, 1965.

¹⁹Personal Interview, Informant #2, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 30, 1965.

²⁰Personal Interview, Informant #4, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 29, 1965.

religious spheres had increased with the growth of Oklahoma City. Typical of these comments was the statement that there is:

. . . a growing element of intellectual leaders, who lack wealth, but write, speak and represent the 'conscience of the community'. Some few in education are becoming leaders, and with those from the religious area, helped greatly in the peaceful desegregation of public facilities . . . This new group represents a fluid crowd, which it is hard to know how to appeal to. They are a 'balancing element' which cannot be overlooked, as the city gets large enough so that many more educated persons are coming forth.²¹

Since Oklahoma City, as mentioned earlier, is the center for a number of state and federal operations, one might expect officials of county government or the national government to exert some influence in community issues. When questioned about this, the preliminary informants generally expressed the opinion that such influence was limited to rather specific areas.

County officers have ward-level, county influence on specifically partisan issues, as they can get out the vote. Their influence is restricted to political issues which are voted on, so that they have no generalized power, only influence over a few issues.²²

Many county officials could initiate proposals, but they don't do so often. The key group has to be sold on the idea before there is much chance; ideas may originate on a lower level, but they must have the approval of the key group.²³

One informant expressed the opinion that the most influential state official, as far as Oklahoma City was concerned, is the state highway director, because of the strong emphasis placed on a good highway system

²¹Personal Interview, Informant #5, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 29, 1965.

²²Personal Interview, Informant #3, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 29, 1965.

²³Personal Interview, Informant #2, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 30, 1965. (Emphasis Supplied)

by leaders in the community. "This is a 'two way street', especially now that we have a professional highway director, since projects can stem from his initiation or from that of business leaders."²⁴ The informants were generally agreed that, with the exception of the military personnel connected with Tinker Air Force Base, few federal officials play a role in Oklahoma City decisions:

The military people play their biggest role in charity affairs - United Fund, Community Chest, and Symphony drives. They are not key people, because they are in and out too much. Also, the 'top echelon' of leaders anticipates the needs of the military, as shown by land gifts and moves to extend the area of military facilities, so that military officials haven't needed to take an initiatory role.²⁵

Preliminary informants were also asked to comment on the role of another distinctive force in the community's influence structure, the metropolitan newspapers; unlike the groups mentioned previously, the newspapers often have a dual role in matters of municipal decision-making:

The metropolitan daily newspaper is one of the very few actors on the civic scene (the mayor or city manager is usually the only other) in a position both to take a comprehensive view of the public interest and to exercise a powerful influence upon all of the other actors. It is therefore a political institution of great importance. But it is also a business - a manufacturing company which must meet a payroll and return dividends to stockholders. To understand its civic role, one must keep these two functions in mind and be aware of the tension which exists between them.²⁶

As mentioned in Chapter II, Oklahoma City has three large metropolitan dailies, two of these published by a single company which has been in operation for over fifty years. The consensus among those questioned

²⁴Personal Interview, Informant #3, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 29, 1965.

²⁵Personal Interview, Informant #2, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 30, 1965.

²⁶Banfield and Wilson, p. 313.

indicated that the two dailies published by this company were capable of wielding substantial influence on virtually all community issues, while the third daily, partially because of its short tenure in the community, was much less influential. One informant summed up the role of the older papers as follows:

The primary function of the newspaper is to convey understanding. [The older papers'] informative function in this respect is probably far more influential than its editorial views per se. Of course there is close cooperation of the papers' management with the community and its leaders. Other papers have had a much more limited influence through the years. [The new daily] may become influential if it continues to have an increasing audience, but its influence is not apparent yet at this stage. It now influences labor and those opposed to what they consider 'single ownership' of mass media.²⁷

While some informants expressed doubt that the older papers could successfully initiate any proposal which they pursued, they were in agreement as to their ability to block adoption of proposals which were not favored. As one person said, "there are negative aspects to having such great influence, but the score through the years on local issues suggests that most of the community agrees with the papers."²⁸

Thus the preliminary round of interviews resulted in a characterization of an influence structure dominated by businessmen with wide influence over community policy, while other groups were pictured as fulfilling more limited roles. In order to verify the observations of the preliminary informants, and to provide a quantitative measure of the reputed influence of businessmen against that of other municipal leaders, a statistical analysis was undertaken during the second stage of interviews.

²⁷Personal Interview, Informant #3, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 29, 1965.

²⁸Ibid.

Persons serving as judges were asked to rank the 61 "influence nominees" provided by preliminary informants on a scale descending from four (most influential) to one (least influential).²⁹ Judges were instructed to rank a person as "four" only if he reputedly had influence over virtually all areas of community policy, and to rank those with commensurately less influence proportionately lower. In the event that a person had no community-wide influence in any area, judges were asked to supply a ranking of "N". Each judge was invited to add to the list of nominees the names of any persons whom he felt were influential, and to rank those names accordingly.³⁰ "Influence scores" were figured for each person on the list on the basis of these rankings. A person receiving a rating of four, or "most influential" from all 16 judges would have a raw score of 64, the highest possible. His mean score, computed by dividing the raw score by 16, would be 4.000. Each of the 61 leaders was assigned a rank order on the basis of his "influence score". The results of this analysis are summarized in Table I on pages 43-44.

This table reveals that the analysis divided the 61 influence nominees into three "levels of influence", corresponding roughly to the various "groups" previously mentioned by preliminary informants.³¹ The existence of these levels increases the likelihood that at least some

²⁹See Appendix C, page 138.

³⁰Although eight additional names were suggested by various judges, it was impossible to obtain ratings for these persons from all 16 judges, as seven interviews had already been held before the additions were made. The writer is convinced, however, that these additions would not alter the analysis significantly.

³¹These levels begin at points where there is a significant gap in the raw scores of nominees, e.g., the "lowest" nominee in the first level is separated by seven points from the "highest" person in the second level, while the gap between the second and third levels is four points.

TABLE I
INFLUENCE RATINGS OF 61 LEADERS

Influence Level	Rank Order	Leader*	Raw Score+	Mean Score	No Influence
Primary					
Influentials	1.0	Comm-1	64	4.000	0
	2.0	BS-1	62	3.875	0
	3.0	Pet-1	61	3.813	0
	4.5	Util-1	59	3.688	0
	4.5	Fin-1	59	3.688	0
Secondary					
Influentials	6.0	Comm-2	52	3.250	0
	7.0	Pet-2	51	3.188	0
	8.0	Man-1	49	3.063	0
	9.0	Ret-1	46	2.875	0
	10.5	Ret-2	45	2.813	0
	10.5	Fin-2	45	2.813	0
	12.0	CG-1	43	2.688	0
	14.0	Comm-2	42	2.625	0
	14.0	Pet-3	42	2.625	0
	14.0	Man-2	42	2.625	1
	16.0	CG-2	39	2.438	0
	17.5	Man-3	38	2.375	0
	17.5	Fin-3	38	2.375	0
	19.5	Pet-4	36	2.250	0
	19.5	Dist-1	36	2.250	0
	21.0	BS-2	34	2.125	1
	22.5	Dist-2	33	2.063	0
	22.5	Ins-1	33	2.063	1
	26.5	Ret-3	32	2.000	1
	26.5	Fin-4	32	2.000	1
26.5	Fin-5	32	2.000	1	
26.5	CG-3	32	2.000	0	
26.5	Cons-1	32	2.000	0	

*The occupational category of each leader is followed by a number which represents his rank within the category; abbreviations are used in most cases (e.g., Dist-ribution, Man-ufacturing, etc.) with the exception of public officials, designated as follows: CG=City Government, SG=State Government. The latter categories tend to be ambiguous, as many officials represented are also business or professional persons devoting part time to public duties. Petroleum has been separated from the category of manufacturing because it represents such a significant part of the economic activity in this city, and the designation BS subsumes such business services as the Retailer's Association, Better Business Bureau, and Chamber of Commerce. A few operations are designated as Cul (Cultural Services) or Ser (Personal Services).

+Judges' raw scores were computed by adding each judge's modal score to his total, as each received one less vote than those not serving as judges.

leaders in the community enjoy influence over virtually all areas of community policy, or that Oklahoma City is characterized by one solidary structure of influence. It is pertinent to note, however, that many critics of the reputational approach have charged that it falsely assumes an equal distribution of influence among decision-makers for all issues,³² thus implying a centralized structure of influence which may not exist in reality.

These critics believe that an individual's power will probably vary from issue to issue. They maintain that leaders possess specialized influence, applicable only in one or two areas, rather than generalized influence applicable in all major areas of community decision-making.³³

Because of these criticisms, the approach used in this chapter combined questions concerning specific issues with the information on community influence in general from which Table I was constructed.³⁴ Judges were thus asked to consider concrete areas of policy (such as highway projects and charity fund-raising), rather than abstract notions of influence as they ranked the 61 nominees.

Influential Men

Table I bears out the contention of the preliminary informants that there is a "top corps" of business leaders involved in Oklahoma City public decisions, as all five persons occupying the top level of influence are businessmen. In addition, businessmen account for 29 of the 36 positions as "secondary influentials", and hold eleven of the twenty

³²Cf. Nelson W. Polsby, Community Power and Political Theory (New Haven, 1963), pp. 63-66; Robert A. Dahl, "A Critique of the Ruling Elite Model," American Political Science Review, LII (1958), pp. 463-469.

³³Thometz, pp. 17-18.

³⁴See questions 1-4 of Appendix B, page 137.

places in the level of "lesser influentials".³⁵ Overall, 45 of the 61 positions on the list of nominees are occupied by businessmen.

The "no influence" ratings of Table I further testify to the relative influence of the top level of business leaders over that of the leaders in the other two levels. No "primary influential" received such a rating from any judge, while "secondary influentials" averaged .6 "N's", and "lesser influentials" averaged 4 "N's" per leader.

While the businessmen on the list are representative of the major types of commercial concerns in the city as surveyed in Chapter II, some categories are represented much more strongly than others. Finance, for example, accounts for fourteen of the 61 positions on the list, giving this area a greater number of influentials than any other activity. Eight of the persons represented are bankers, while the other six are engaged in mortgage, investment, or brokerage activities. Although banking represents a small sector of the economic activity in Oklahoma City,³⁶ its overrepresentation is partially explained by the fact that virtually all persons engaged in commerce find it necessary to deal with bankers as an integral part of their concerns. On this matter, Banfield and Wilson, conclude that . . .

Each of the big banks in a city is the center of a clique of business influence and it is part of the job of the head of the bank to act as leader of the clique and to represent it in its dealings with officialdom. Banks whose charters limit them to business within the city naturally play a greater role.³⁷

³⁵Two persons in the category of "lesser influentials" might better be classified as "professional" rather than "business," as they are engaged in a cultural service; since they are managers of a profit-making concern, they are here referred to as businessmen.

³⁶See Figure 1 on page 10.

³⁷Banfield and Wilson, p. 263.

The second largest category of business in terms of representation in Table I is retailing, which is also the major economic activity of the area. Surprisingly, no retailer occupies a position as a "primary influential", although two such persons are near the top of the "secondary influential" level. Petroleum, which accounts for a major portion of the city's manufacturing activity, is also strongly represented with four positions on the list, including one "primary influential." Other manufacturing accounts for a total of four persons, perhaps reflecting the growth of this sector of the economy in recent years. Communications and utilities, each claiming a rather small share of the "total market" in Oklahoma City, are represented by three persons apiece, and each claims a "primary influential". The writer senses that the disproportionate influence of the communications sector stems from the fact that the three persons are connected with a publishing company which has a tenure of over 50 years in the community, and is thus in an excellent position to assume leadership in community issues. The fact that the top-ranking individual on the list of influentials is from the communications sector bears out the contention that the metropolitan press is capable of exerting a major influence upon all important municipal decisions.³⁸ The predominant influence of utilities probably stems from their status as "publicly-regulated" private concerns:

Because of the fixed costs of putting down mains and constructing other facilities, they benefit from steady, predictable growth of the city. They go for city planning and land-use control, and for consolidation of local

³⁸In the writer's opinion, the company suggested above does not draw its influence from the fact that it enjoys a monopoly over news media in Oklahoma City, but primarily from long tenure and a record of past successes in contributing solutions to community problems. As illustrated in Chapter II, many other sources of information are available to citizens of the metropolitan area.

governmental units. Because they are peculiarly subject to regulation (usually by the state, not the city) they tend to be public-relations conscious and anxious to avoid controversy.³⁹

Perhaps the most unique category on the list is composed of the two persons representing "business services". That one of these persons is ranked the second most influential man in Oklahoma City is evidence of the high degree of support given these operations by the community's businessmen, a fact which will be further commented upon below. Concerns slightly underrepresented on the list, in terms of nominees, are construction, with two; distribution, with two; and transportation, insurance and advertising, with one each.

An examination of the sixteen positions of Table I not occupied by businessmen shows that half of these are held by public officials of state and local governments: five are part-time elected officers of city government who began their tenure during the ARG campaign mentioned above,⁴⁰ one is a full-time appointed city official, and the remaining two are officials of the state government. The fact that no public official occupies a position as a "primary influential" bears out the opinion of the preliminary informants that public officers have limited influence in matters of community-wide policy, and this is commensurate with the findings of Thometz in Dallas.⁴¹

³⁹Banfield and Wilson, p. 262.

⁴⁰Of these five, two are professionals by occupation and three are businessmen. The fact that they occupy a "dual role" led the writer to inquire, as noted in a later part of this chapter, whether their nominations resulted from the positions they now hold or were the result of their past civic activities.

⁴¹See Thometz, p. 34. It should be noted that while no public official ranked as a "primary influential," eight were nominated for influence, in contrast to Dallas, where only one official was nominated from a list of 67 influential leaders.

The "rising element" of religious and educational leaders, referred to by the initial informants, is represented on the list by four persons from the educational sphere and two ministers: two of the educators are classified as "secondary influentials", while the remaining educators and the clerics are ranked as "lesser influentials". The two remaining persons are classified as professional, thus making this category the smallest of those represented on the list of 61.⁴² No representative of organized labor was nominated as influential by those interviewed, although several informants indicated that labor might have been more influential in the past when it had sympathizers on the city council.⁴³ Negroes were represented on the list by one person classified as a "lesser influential", and apparently nominated for his activities in behalf of civil rights issues.

By further statistical analysis, the writer attempted to find out how well known the business group is among community leaders generally, and to provide an index of the group's ability to provide leadership in community projects. Judges were asked to rate each man on the list by means of an acquaintanceship scale.⁴⁴ This scale provided numerical ratings for each influential from "0" through "4", corresponding respectively to "never heard of", "know of", "know slightly", "know well", or

⁴²Many of the persons on the list could be called professionals as well as businessmen, as they hold law degrees or teaching credentials. The writer attempted, however, to classify each person according to the activity to which he devoted most of his energies.

⁴³It is probably a reasonable view that labor lacks influence in many areas of the South and Southwest which are not highly industrialized. Such a conclusion has been reached by Hunter in "Regional City", Thometz in Dallas, and Delbert Miller in "Pacific City".

⁴⁴See columns 5-9 of Appendix C, page 138. The Acquaintanceship Scale is explained in William H. Form and Delbert C. Miller, Industry, Labor and Community (New York, 1960), pp. 600-601.

"kin". The average acquaintance score of each leader indicates how well known he is to the judges collectively, and provides an index of his acquaintanceship among all community leaders. The results of this analysis, giving a composite average acquaintance score for leaders in each of the three influence levels, are shown in Table II. An examination of this table reveals that the business group making up the primary level of influence is somewhat better known than the groups composing the other levels. The fact that leaders in the second level are better known than those in the category of lesser influentials indicates that persons having wide influence are better known than those having less influence.

TABLE II
MEAN ACQUAINTANCE SCORES BY INFLUENCE LEVEL

Influence Level	Mean Acquaintance Score
Primary Influentials	3.000
Secondary Influentials	2.875
Lesser Influentials	2.313

In order to ascertain the reputation for leadership of the business group as compared to other groups, judges were asked to choose ten men from the list of influentials whom they would pick to lead a major community project for which they were responsible.⁴⁵ Table III gives the results, listing each person chosen for leadership and comparing his "leadership rank" with his "influence rank".

This table illustrates the fact that judges preferred members of the business group composing the level of primary influentials as project

⁴⁵See Appendix C, page 138.

TABLE III
INFLUENTIALS CHOSEN TO LEAD A PROJECT

Influence Level	Leader	Times Chosen*	Rank	
			By Times Chosen	By Influence Rank
Primary Influentials	Comm-1	16	1.5	1.0
	Pet-1	16	1.5	3.0
	BS-1	15	3.0	2.0
	Util-1	13	4.0	4.5
	Fin-1	12	5.0	4.5
Secondary Influentials	Ret-2	11	6.0	10.5
	Man-3	10	7.0	17.5
	Pet-2	9	8.0	7.5
	Fin-2	8	9.0	10.5
	CG-1	7	10.5	12.0
	Comm-2	7	10.5	6.0
	Man-2	5	12.0	14.0
	Pet-3	4	15.5	14.0
	Util-2	4	15.5	31.5
	Ret-1	4	15.5	9.0
	Man-1	4	15.5	8.0
	Fin-3	4	15.5	17.5
	Comm-3	3	18.0	14.0
	Ret-3	2	19.0	26.5
	Fin-4	1	23.5	26.5
	Ret-5	1	23.5	40.5
	Eng-1	1	23.5	36.0
	Ed-1	1	23.5	30.0
	CG-3	1	23.5	26.5
	Ret-4	1	23.5	31.5
Dist-1	1	23.5	19.5	
Pet-4	1	23.5	19.5	

* Judges' modal scores added to totals.

leaders more often than members of other groups. Possible scores ranged from 16 to 0, with only two persons being chosen by all 16 judges.⁴⁶ While there is a high correlation between "influence rank" and "leadership rank" among primary influentials, it is interesting to note that this relationship becomes less significant in the level of secondary influentials. This may indicate the judges' belief that the five occupants of the primary level of influence are indispensable to the success of major projects, while some degree of substitution may be allowed among other leaders.

TABLE IV
LEADERSHIP CHOICES BY INFLUENCE LEVEL

Influence Level	Number in Level	Number Chosen	Per Cent Chosen	Average Times Chosen
Primary	5	5	100.0	12.80
Secondary	36	22	61.1	3.86
Lesser	20	0	0.0	0.00

Table IV further verifies the contention that an influential's choice as a project leader is related to his influence rank; all of the primary influentials were chosen, while over half of the secondary influentials were selected by judges. The fact that no lesser influential was chosen as a project leader by any of the judges serves to validate the influence ratings assigned to this level of influentials in Table I. It is apparent that the business group composing the level of primary influentials enjoys a greater reputation for leadership than any other

⁴⁶It should be noted that three judges chose less than ten influentials, while one judge listed 14, somewhat decreasing the accuracy of this analysis.

group represented. Judges were also asked whether there was any one person whom they considered essential to the success of an important project.⁴⁷ While responses to this question varied, no person other than members of the level of "primary influentials" was named, and over half of the judges named the top influential on the list of 61.

The preceding analysis makes clear the fact that businessmen have a greater reputation for influence in Oklahoma City decision-making than any other group on the municipal scene. A "key group" of business leaders exists; is ranked higher than any other group of influential men; and is better known and given more credit for community leadership than any other group. In order to find out how the influence of this group is exercised, the writer investigated the role of business organizations. While the ability of these organizations to serve as a "centralizing force" for the exercise of business influence has been noted above,⁴⁸ a more refined analysis is necessary to measure the influence of such organizations over the entire range of community decision-making.

Influential Organizations

Both preliminary informants and judges were asked what civic, professional or service organizations in Oklahoma City most often initiated community projects.⁴⁹ As in the previous discussion of influential groups, the interviews were focused upon the decision-making process, rather than on particular types of organizations. Without exception,

⁴⁷See Question 7 of Appendix B, page 137.

⁴⁸See Chapter II.

⁴⁹See Question 4, Appendix A, page 135, and Question 8, Appendix B, page 137.

those interviewed named the Chamber of Commerce as the most active organization in the city:

In Oklahoma City, the Chamber of Commerce is the dominant organization; many chambers in other cities don't [sic] have the analytical capacity or motivating spirit which it exhibits. Its administrators have no more authority or place in the city than any large company executive, except that they have created a great deal of influence through past successes.⁵⁰

The Chamber of Commerce is the most important organization. The role of its full-time staff must be stressed, and some credit must also go to the early-day leaders who hired and supported a permanent managerial staff for the organization. Partially because of its long tenure in the city, the Chamber is involved in many community activities which would normally be handled by a city council.⁵¹

While the informants stressed the role of other organizations in specific areas, they voiced the opinion that the Chamber of Commerce was the forum for the most important decisions confronting Oklahoma City.⁵² "Civic clubs and other groups have fine programs, but they are not set up to act on projects of the same magnitude as those initiated by the Chamber."⁵³ Because Chamber members' group affiliations overlap extensively with other organizations, informants stressed the fact that the various civic clubs will go along with Chamber projects most of the time, and added that the Chamber will readily support many programs initiated by other organizations:

This pattern doesn't [sic] mean that the Chamber of Commerce stops others from initiating projects, as many other

⁵⁰ Personal Interview, Judge #6, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, July 15, 1965.

⁵¹ Personal Interview, Informant #4, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 29, 1965.

⁵² See Question 4, Appendix A, page 135, and Question 8, Appendix B, page 137.

⁵³ Personal interview, Judge #8, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, July 14, 1965.

programs go ahead. If they get big enough, the Chamber will come in and help out.⁵⁴

This preponderant influence attributed to the Chamber of Commerce by each person interviewed is markedly at variance with the findings of other studies by students of community influence. In Dallas, for example, Thometz found that the Chamber had little influence, a fact which was attributed to the "heterogeneity" of its membership, and its overriding concern with "selling Dallas commercially".⁵⁵ While it cannot be doubted that the main purpose of the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce is to "sell" Oklahoma City commercially, one should not proceed to the conclusion that this role limits the ability of the organization to exercise influence in areas not strictly "commercial" in nature. Rather, as the writer has suggested above,⁵⁶ it is precisely this preoccupation with its major role which leads the Chamber into other areas of community policy. As one informant stated the case, "The prevailing ethic seems to be that the better community inevitably produces better business".⁵⁷ Another person, discussing the problems of getting new manufacturing concerns to locate in the Oklahoma City area observed:

We get students down here all the time wanting to know about industrial development. Economists want answers in terms of supply and demand; sociologists want to know what persons or groups are instrumental in coaxing companies here - the process is more difficult than they will believe. The typical firm seeking a new location asks thousands of questions about everything from the quality of education and law enforcement in the area to the average relative humidity.

⁵⁴Personal Interview, Informant #4, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 29, 1965.

⁵⁵Thometz, pp. 38-39.

⁵⁶See page 19.

⁵⁷Personal Interview, Informant #4, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 29, 1965.

It's not enough to show them that a market exists for their products - in addition, they have to be convinced that the community is concerned with self-improvement in many areas.⁵⁸

As far as heterogeneity is concerned, the Oklahoma City Chamber certainly includes a wide diversity of members representing virtually every major firm in the community. In spite of this diversity, however, the Chamber is able to move in many areas of community policy because of the unanimity of its leaders as to what will best serve the interests of business. This unanimity stems partially from the fact that . . .

The Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce is unique, in that it is 'big-business' dominated instead of retail oriented as most are. It has been the 'prime mover' in the community for decades on anything you could mention which is civic or political, almost to the exclusion of the City Council.⁵⁹

While those interviewed agreed that the Chamber was the most influential organization on the local scene, they expressed the opinion that its influence stemmed mainly from the influence of its individual leaders, rather than from an inherent power to solve local issues.

The organization tends to have little influence in itself, but its members listen to their leadership: the organization functions to coordinate many types of programs and to secure the support of the broader community.⁶⁰

. . . it is the leaders of the Chamber of Commerce and not the organization or corporation itself. . . civic leaders are active in the Chamber and its corporate Board of Directors of 14 is vital to the forward progress of the city. The Chamber's overall Board of Directors, composed of more than 60 members, is the driving force behind the community on everyday activities for the betterment of Oklahoma City.⁶¹

⁵⁸Personal Interview, Informant #1, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, May 25, 1965.

⁵⁹Personal Interview, Informant #3, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 29, 1965.

⁶⁰Personal Interview, Judge #1, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, July 12, 1965.

⁶¹Personal Interview, Judge #12, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, July 23, 1965.

Thus the informants described a process in which a few influential business leaders initiate projects which are then coordinated and carried out with the help of influential organizations. The existence of such a group of influential men led the writer to inquire into the motivations and bases of influence of this group.

Motivation and Bases of Influence

It is an understatement that the problems of political motivation are among the most persistent in the field of political science, and what follows should be viewed only as an attempt to deal with these in a most abstract manner. To attempt any more than this would be futile, given the fact that motives are often mixed and in many cases are not even fully understood by those who seek to influence public policy. With the foregoing in mind, the writer asked each preliminary informant to characterize the type of leadership provided by the "key group" of business influentials, in an attempt to discover if such influence was prompted by self-interest or undertaken in the interest of the community.⁶² The following response was typical of the replies of all informants:

The leadership has been constructive with little direct self interest. Personal wishes have largely been subordinated; they have been as unselfish as you could expect this type of leadership to be. The public often feels that many of the top leaders have profited personally - and some on the fringe have profited because of insider's knowledge in the past. For the most part, however, a self-policing technique is practiced, somewhat like the medical profession, and profiteers are forced 'outside the pale'.⁶³

Informants stressed the fact that while profit motivation enters in, it

⁶²See Question 3, Appendix A, page 135.

⁶³Personal Interview, Informant #3, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 29, 1965. (Emphasis supplied)

is typically a long-term consideration as far as the "key group" is concerned. Members of this group were described as "far-sighted" and "willing to risk much of their own money on community projects" in order to share in the future common prosperity. "These men combine a healthy blend of both self-interest and community spirit; they will furnish money, serve on committees, and generally believe that 'what's good for the city is good for me'".⁶⁴ While there is a natural tendency to be skeptical of such statements, the writer believes that they accurately describe an ethic subscribed to by the businessmen interviewed during the course of this study. Whether this ethic affects behavior to any great extent in specific cases is difficult to determine, although the following chapter attempts to cast more light on this subject. Perhaps the most that can be said is that the community as well as individual interests will benefit from projects sponsored by business leadership. As one informant put it, "In the case of newspapers, department stores, and public utilities, you can't [sic] keep them from benefitting from projects which help Oklahoma City grow".⁶⁵ In this sense, the businessmen active in community decision-making might be said to follow their "enlightened" self-interest.

Nearly as complex as the problem of motivation is the question of bases of influence. Robert A. Dahl has indicated some of the difficulties in this area as follows:

A base of influence . . . is anything an individual or group might use to influence another person in that particular political system. The possible number of bases is thus very

⁶⁴Personal Interview, Informant #5, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 29, 1965.

⁶⁵Personal Interview, Informant #4, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 29, 1965.

large. . . . what we wish to classify as bases is determined by the research problem at hand and our theoretical interests: that is, what we believe is significant. Thus in American cities, one would not be interested in noble birth as a base, but he might well be interested in social status. Bases can not be narrowed too much, or magnified too far, for the first makes each case unique, and the second lumps different things together. A compromise list might include money and credit; control over jobs; control over other's information; social standing; knowledge and expertness; popularity, esteem, charisma; legality, constitutionality, officiality; ethnic solidarity; and the right to vote.⁶⁶

As Dahl points out, differences in influence may result from unequal access to various bases, but may also accrue from differences in the rate and efficiency with which bases are used. Thus many persons may have equal wealth, but not all of these persons elect to use their money to influence public policy.

With the above considerations in mind, the writer sought to determine the principal bases for community-wide influence in Oklahoma City. The persons interviewed were substantially agreed upon the following three bases as being of major importance: business executive status; wealth, both company and personal; and personal qualities of leadership and intellect. Evidently the first two bases provide an opportunity for some influence in themselves, but as one informant put it, "the third quality is the most important for the 'key leaders', as many leaders are relatively equal in terms of wealth and position; the top ten men emerge from the top 50 because of personal qualities."⁶⁷ Other persons interviewed saw money itself as less important than the desire to commit it for important community projects: "The influence of the 'key group'

⁶⁶Robert A. Dahl, "The Analysis of Influence in Local Communities," Social Science and Community Action, (ed.) Charles R. Adrian (East Lansing, 1960), pp. 31-32.

⁶⁷Personal Interview, Informant #3, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 29, 1965.

comes mainly from providing money and from the ability to commit their organizations to projects, such as securing more land for Tinker Air Force Base".⁶⁸ Apparently formal position, whether civic, political, or company-connected, is the least important of the three bases of influence mentioned, for while such positions may give a person the initial opportunity to exert influence, his total effect upon community decisions seems to hinge more upon other factors.⁶⁹ In this regard, informants stressed the fact that local office-holders are seldom initiators of policy, although their support is needed in some projects at a later stage. "The support of all office-holders is not always needed to put things across. Historical examples are the removal of the Rock Island tracks, and the creation of Lake Hefner - in spite of official blocking, the key group won."⁷⁰ Further evidence that political office does not in itself confer influence is provided by the fact that the two highest ranking city officials in Table I above are, respectively, a professional person and a business executive, both of whom have a long history of civic participation in Oklahoma City. The writer is certain these men were nominated because of their past activities, and not by virtue of their present offices; in contrast, those persons whose sole base of influence consists of a political office are rated much lower in Table I.

Informants agreed that persons occupying the status of executives of firms owned locally typically have a firmer base of influence than do

⁶⁸Personal Interview, Informant #2, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 29, 1965.

⁶⁹Personal Interview, Informant #5, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 30, 1965. (See Question 4 of Appendix A).

⁷⁰Personal Interview, Informant #2, June 30, 1965.

persons who are managers or executives of national concerns.⁷¹ This may be explained partially, as Banfield and Wilson suggest, by the fact that managers of absentee-owned firms often expect to be transferred frequently, and do not enjoy the freedom of action which local ownership provides.⁷² There are important exceptions to this generalization in Oklahoma City, however, for informants pointed out that "executives of national concerns . . . may be absorbed almost automatically into the key leadership. At least three managers have been influential in the recent past, but it depends a lot also on the personality of the executive."⁷³ Also, some national firms "encourage their people to participate in community projects; but for the most part the 'key group' has long-time roots here."⁷⁴ The observation of Banfield and Wilson that "if an absentee firm is a utility which serves only the local market it will be more likely to assume a strong role"⁷⁵ is borne out by the fact that three utility executives are on the list of influentials in Table I, while only one executive of a national firm serving a regional market is listed.

This preliminary survey of bases of influence indicates a few of many bases which could enter into a description of decision-making in Oklahoma City. It is clear that a most important base, and one which is most difficult to measure, is the personality attributes of various

⁷¹See Question 4, Appendix A, page 135.

⁷²Banfield and Wilson, p. 264.

⁷³Personal Interview, Informant #3, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 29, 1965.

⁷⁴Personal Interview, Informant #2, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 30, 1965.

⁷⁵Banfield and Wilson, p. 264.

leaders. While personality, like motivation, greatly influences decision-making, the author knows of few methods capable of precisely gauging its effect.⁷⁶

The Process of Influence

Thus far this study has dealt with the decision-making process in Oklahoma City in terms of the persons and groups who participate most effectively in it. Since the characteristics of these actors have been examined, it is germane to inquire as to precisely how they exercise influence over matters of municipal policy. This was accomplished by asking the 20 "judges" to comment upon the workings of influence, as they presumably play active roles in decision-making themselves.

Each judge was asked initially about his main civic interest, in order to orient the discussion toward community issues and to give the writer an indication of the degree of involvement of each judge in decision-making.⁷⁷ As might be expected, answers to this item indicated participation in a wide spectrum of civic projects, including hospital fund drives, educational matters, industrial and cultural development, and helping to put city government on a sound financial basis. Of particular interest to the writer were those judges who professed an active interest in all civic matters, declining to state that any one area constituted a "main" interest. As one judge put it ". . . I take an interest in practically every civic project for the growth or betterment

⁷⁶For an interesting study dealing with aspects of the effect of motivation, personality and environment as they relate to business involvement in politics, see Rufus P. Browning, "Businessmen in Politics: Motivation and Circumstance in the Rise to Power" (unpub. Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1961).

⁷⁷See Question 1, Appendix B, page 137.

of the city and its facilities. There is no one paramount interest".⁷⁸ Another judge stated that his main interest was in "building a bigger and better Oklahoma City",⁷⁹ while a third judge said he had no "main" civic interest as he was "interested in all civic matters".⁸⁰ While an interest in all areas of community policy is not synonymous with the exercise of generalized influence, the three judges quoted each received high ratings for influence in Table I above, suggesting that their potential to influence policy in virtually any area is recognized by those active in decision-making.

In order to obtain a description of the operation of influence, judges were asked to comment on important community decisions in which they had recently been involved. While the issues discussed varied, the process by which they were resolved proved to be similar, as each judge emphasized the importance of action by a group of business leaders.⁸¹ Several judges discussed the problem of raising funds for the improvement of hospital facilities, which "arose because of a community need for more beds and medical services. A fund drive was started and carried out by civic leaders, with cooperation among the business leadership".⁸²

This problem was settled by the business leaders who are on the lay advisory board of _____ Hospital, who originated the drive and secured cooperation for it. In many cases, the City Council may recognize problems like this and try to solve

⁷⁸Personal Interview, Judge #14, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, July 17, 1965.

⁷⁹Personal Interview, Judge #12, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, July 23, 1965.

⁸⁰Personal Interview, Judge #13, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, July 27, 1965.

⁸¹See Questions 2 and 3, Appendix B, page 137.

⁸²Personal Interview, Judge #3, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, July 14, 1965.

them, but when they don't [Sic] get anything done, they call in two or three business leaders. These leaders will propose something and then sell it to the rest of the community.⁸³

Other judges discussed the problem of bringing water to Oklahoma City from Atoka, a city approximately 100 miles from the capitol city. While this project differed from the hospital fund drive, in that it became one of the biggest civic fights in the city's history, the process by which it was resolved was very similar.

This issue was resolved by fighting it out with the selfish interests who did not want Oklahoma City to have additional water unless they controlled the finances and construction of the Sixty Million dollar project. It was finally taken care of mainly by influential civic leaders, backed by public opinion, and fought out in the courts as well as the city government. The issue was finally settled indirectly by the public and directly by the influence of certain far-sighted civic leaders.⁸⁴

Each judge pointed out that issues such as the above typically originate among a small group of business leaders who initiate projects by personal contact and secure the cooperation of technical specialists to insure their feasibility. After the potential of a project is analyzed and agreement is secured among the original group, the idea is typically expanded to include a larger group which will carry it into effect. As one judge put it:

Most civic issues are handled in this way: some one leader may get an idea and then call in two or three more to get a consensus. Of course there are two types of men needed for such projects, those who are influential in setting them up⁸⁵ and those who do the leg work needed to 'sell' the project.

⁸³Personal Interview, Judge #2, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, July 13, 1965.

⁸⁴Personal Interview, Judge #12, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, July 23, 1965.

⁸⁵Personal Interview, Judge #3, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, July 14, 1965.

While the judges maintained that the only effective decisions were made by small informal groups of business leaders, they emphasized that formal organizations often serve to coordinate projects and provide funds and workers to carry them into effect. One person summarized the role of such organizations as follows:

There are two types of issues or projects; if it is fund raising, then you must normally have the approval of the Appeals Review Board,* which determines the community need for such a drive. If the board approves the drive, then it will go - if not it may fail.

On the second type of issue, such as airport promotion, the Chamber of Commerce has to be behind it because of the nature of the program. Such projects require continuity of planning and are not just one-shot proposals. The same group of businessmen back both types of issues, however, with much overlapping between the membership of the formal organizations involved.⁸⁶

It is clear from the foregoing discussion that civic projects in Oklahoma City stem mainly from the influence of certain business leaders who interact as members of informal groups and formal organizations to secure support for their proposals. In every issue discussed by the 20

*This board is part of Oklahoma City's nationally recognized charity solicitations control program, and originated among business leaders in the civic committee of the Chamber of Commerce during World War II. It is a non-official body of top givers and representative groups which deals only with large capital campaigns according to the following criteria: (1) is there duplication of effort on a drive? Could it be merged with another drive? (2) Do they really need this much? (3) How much community need is there for this project? Once these items are checked out, the board attempts to schedule major fund drives so that they will not overlap with one another. Increasingly, the work of the board has included extensive surveys of the need for certain types of fund drives, as illustrated recently by the hospital needs and health survey study conducted in 1963.

It should be emphasized that this board has no formal power, but does have enough influence to hamper those who will not comply. Nationally-sponsored drives may succeed without its support, but local drives may well fail. At the time of this study, the key committee of the ARB had some 25 to 30 top givers on it, and attempts were being made to broaden its influence.

⁸⁶Personal Interview, Judge #1, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, July 12, 1965.

judges, action was begun by a limited number of businessmen and later expanded to a larger group. One judge commented upon the process as follows:

The crux of it is a centralized nucleus of leadership. Many of these men might act by themselves, but the effort necessary if one man were to act alone would be prohibitive. By getting a small group together, they are free from the excessive absorption of individual effort. Any one of a number in this group can become its leader and spearhead for a project. It is necessary to have a centralized group responsible for "screening new projects". If the others active in community decisions realize this, then they can act more effectively, knowing that two or three persons have taken the time and trouble to look ahead unselfishly and without fanfare.⁸⁷

The fact that each judge mentioned a "centralized nucleus of leadership" or a "key group" of business leaders in connection with various projects led the writer to inquire further into the role of these groups in order to determine whether they were fairly stable coalitions or were transitory in nature.

Patterns of Influence

Each judge was asked whether the same group of influential persons was active in all types of issues, or whether the group changed depending upon the issue.⁸⁸ While agreeing that the larger group concerned with community projects changed according to the nature of the issue, the judges maintained that there are a few influential men who are involved in resolving all types of issues.

The larger group changes depending upon the issue. The 'workers' and the public recognize the reasons for small groups in the formative stages of a project and they know and respect the few who act in this stage. There is a

⁸⁷Personal Interview, Judge #6, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, July 15, 1965.

⁸⁸See Question 5, Appendix B, page 137.

great misunderstanding on the part of people who think there are a few men who run Oklahoma City or other cities - it is not advisable that some projects be widely advertised. Some few are always jealous of the civic leaders, and partially because of this, the identity of those in on the 'initial screening' is seldom publicized. The idea can then be brought forth to the larger group and everyone steps forward on an equal footing. The things this handful of fellows who initiate projects have done benefit all. The strength in the system is that a broad group of people carry out these projects with the knowledge that a few appropriate persons have gotten together unofficially and analyzed them.⁸⁹

It should not be inferred from the foregoing that the 'key group' of leaders who initiate projects are always in perfect agreement as to the best methods for solving community issues. As one informant put it, "There is no necessary unanimity of opinion among the top group, as it is characterized by its dynamism. A consensus must be hammered out."⁹⁰ Typically, however, disagreement among this small circle of leaders seems to center around procedures rather than goals, as illustrated during the Atoka Water Trust project.

While the pattern of influence described above indicates a fairly stable "key group" of leaders, judges point out that new persons can enter this group if they show a willingness to assume responsibility.⁹¹

New persons can be absorbed quickly and may become real movers in Oklahoma City in a short time. Persons of demonstrated ability are absorbed quickly, and this is partly due to the nature of the community. Oklahoma City, and I suppose the Southwest generally, is open and straightforward in its reception of new men and new ideas. This is in some contrast to the eastern areas of the United States.⁹²

⁸⁹Personal Interview, Judge #6, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, July 15, 1965. (Emphasis supplied)

⁹⁰Personal Interview, Informant #4, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 29, 1965.

⁹¹See Question 6, Appendix B, page 137.

⁹²Personal Interview, Informant #3, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 29, 1965. (Emphasis supplied)

Other informants added, however, that there is usually an informal "training period" preceding entry into the "key group" of decision-makers. "The door is more wide open to men in top executive positions, while lesser men make it up through the Junior Chamber of Commerce."⁹³ Judges stated that many of the younger men now on the "fringe" of the "key group" are second-level executives who are prompted to play an active part in community affairs.

These statements make clear, as one judge noted, that there is a "continually changing and expanding number of people brought into the process of decision-making. Even the nucleus of those recognized as 'responsible' is slowly expanding as hard workers are drafted in".⁹⁴ These changes in the pattern of influence, while gradual, are important, for critics of the reputational method have charged that this approach assumes a static, entirely stable structure of influence.⁹⁵ Such an assumption would clearly be erroneous in regard to Oklahoma City in view of the fact that most of those interviewed frequently alluded to persons "on their way up" or to men who had been "read out" of the decision-making process. It is apparent that changes in the structure of influence are inevitable, for as one informant remarked, "the city is quite young, so that many of today's key leaders are almost the original group from here - someone is bound to replace them as they die out."⁹⁶ Perhaps

⁹³Personal Interview, Informant #4, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 29, 1965.

⁹⁴Personal Interview, Judge #6, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, July 15, 1965.

⁹⁵See Raymond E. Wolfinger, "Reputation and Reality in the Study of Community Power," American Sociological Review, XXV (1960), pp. 636-644.

⁹⁶Personal Interview, Informant #5, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 29, 1965.

the most that can be said in relation to changing patterns of influence is that such changes are long-term matters, and that Oklahoma City's structure of influence exhibits enough continuity to allow accurate description of it at any one point in time.

Summary

This chapter has been concerned with comparing the reputation of businessmen for community influence with that of other groups. Various methods for investigating community decision-making have been reviewed and the reputational approach has been utilized to provide a description of the structure of influence in Oklahoma City. Businessmen and business organizations have been ranked for influence by persons active in community decisions, and it has been demonstrated that there exists a group of businessmen who enjoy a greater reputation for influence and leadership than any other group. The motivation and bases of influence of this "key group" of business leaders have been investigated, as has the process by which influence is utilized to solve community issues. Finally, it has been shown that patterns of influence in Oklahoma City undergo a slow process of constant change, so that the structure of influence might be called dynamic. The following chapter attempts to find out whether there exists a correlation between the reputation for influence attributed to businessmen and the influence they actually exercise as exemplified in a cross-section of contemporary municipal issues.

CHAPTER IV

ACTUAL INFLUENCE

The influence of businessmen in Oklahoma City politics is evaluated in this chapter by examining the behavior of participants in a number of recent municipal decisions. The methodological reasons for such an approach are discussed below, followed by an explanation of the application of this method in the study. Three distinct "issue-areas" are investigated and compared for their relevance in illustrating business influence, and the conclusions reached are related to the reputational description of business influence obtained in Chapter III.

Theoretical Orientation

Implicit in most studies of community influence employing the reputational approach is the notion that some group dominates on matters of public policy in the American city, and that this group is dominant by virtue of its place in the socioeconomic "strata" of the community. For this reason, the reputational method has been called "stratification theory", and those who refute its implications style themselves "pluralists". The pluralist researcher begins with the implicit assumption that decision-making is much more likely to be highly fragmented due to the characteristics of American government and society. Because of this assumption, the "pluralists" favor a research design which allows the reconstruction of actual decisions, rather than leaving one at the mercy of seemingly well-placed "judges". In a leading study following the

"pluralist" approach, Robert A. Dahl attempted to "weigh" the activities of different actors in a variety of different types of decisions in one American community:

From the reconstruction . . . of various decisions in different issue-areas, the author sought to determine which of the participants had most frequently initiated proposals that were later adopted as actual policy, or had successfully opposed proposals initiated by others. It was assumed that the actors who not only participated in these decisions but were most frequently successful according to these criteria were the most influential.

The great advantage of the method is that it uses an operational test, however crude, for appraising the relative power of different participants in decisions, and thus it enables the observer to go behind mere office, reputation and activity.¹

In utilizing this approach, Dahl reached conclusions differing markedly from those of Hunter and other followers of the reputational approach. He found that community influence did not necessarily follow the economic structuring of the American city, and he maintained that influence was not generalized to all issues, but was specialized, in that the group concerned with its exercise differed, depending upon the issue observed. Perhaps his most startling conclusion, from the viewpoint of the reputational theorists, was that the most influential persons in a given "issue-area" were those officials formally charged with responsibility for that area, rather than the "behind-the-scenes" elite often uncovered by the reputational method. On the basis of these findings, Dahl and others called for a new approach to studies of community influence, claiming that the reputational method tended to prejudge findings because of inherent faults.²

¹Dahl, Modern Political Analysis, p. 52.

²The most careful exposition of these arguments is set forth in Polsby, Community Power and Political Theory.

In employing their method, "pluralist" researchers are careful to investigate decisions in a number of different areas, to demonstrate that the same pattern of decision-making is highly unlikely to reproduce itself in more than one area; yet at the same time, the conscientious study of actual behavior allows the unearthing of a single "power elite" if one exists. Nelson Polsby provides an explanation of the rationale behind the "pluralist" method:

Stratification theory holds that power elites fail to prevail only on trivial issues. By preselecting issues generally agreed to be significant, pluralist researchers can test stratification theory without searching endlessly in issue-area after issue-area in order to discover some semblance of a power elite. After all, we cannot reasonably require of researchers that they validate someone else's preconceived notion of community power distributions. If the researcher's design is such that any power distribution has an equal chance of appearing in his result, we may not properly criticize it on the ground that it did not conform to expectations. The burden of proof is clearly on the challenger in such a case to make good his assertion that power is actually distributed otherwise.³

Polsby adds that the "pluralist" assumption that power is tied to issues takes account of a time factor sometimes ignored by the "stratification" theorist: coalitions may vary in their permanence over time, and inertia may hinder action on some particular issues. Therefore, it is unwise to conclude prematurely that potential for influence will always be exercised, or that those with the most resources will always use them to affect public policy. Only the study of actual decisions, concludes Polsby, will allow an empirical determination of the community's influence structure:

There is no harm in starting with a list of people whose behavior the researcher wishes to study vis-a-vis an issue-area. The harm comes, rather, in attributing some mystic

³Ibid., pp. 114-115.

significance to the list, so that the examination of activity and of actual participation in decision-making becomes superfluous.⁴

Robert A. Dahl suggests several criteria for selecting issues for study and for determining the relative distribution of influence among actors in each issue-area: attention should be restricted to "comparable" respondents who directly participate in a "single" scope, and the number of direct participants in decisions should be roughly the same during the period under investigation. The following actions are considered by Dahl as responses of roughly the same significance: (1) When a proposal initiated by one or more of the participants is adopted over opposition; (2) when a proposal initiated by one or more of the participants is vetoed; (3) when a proposal initiated by one or more of the participants is adopted without opposition. By the use of these criteria, suggests Dahl, the relative influence of one participant may be considered higher than that of another "if the relative frequency of his successes out of all successes is higher, or the ratio of his successes to his total attempts is higher".⁵ This method also allowed Dahl to determine the pervasiveness of influence from one issue-area to another. "It was a simple matter to see from the rankings of influentials in each issue-area where individuals in one issue-area ranked in the others".⁶ Dahl adds that it is usually necessary to make extensive use of qualitative information when determining the pervasiveness of influence, as this is much too complex to be captured by numerical schemes.

⁴Ibid., p. 121.

⁵Dahl, Who Governs?, pp. 332-333.

⁶Ibid., p. 336.

Using the above criteria as a guide, it is possible to select certain issue-areas for examination in Oklahoma City, in order to employ a modified "pluralist" method in the study at hand.

Methodology of the Chapter

In selecting "issue-areas" for study, an attempt was made to choose areas which would be of importance to many cities at the present time, rather than isolating problems peculiar to Oklahoma City. It was thought that this approach would allow meaningful comparisons to be made with other cities based on the conclusions from this study. At least six separate issue-areas were considered initially, with the choice being narrowed to three during the course of the study. These three areas, chosen on the basis of the significance given them by those interviewed and the publicity they had received in the press, are as follows: (1) urban streets and highways; (2) trust financing; and (3) urban renewal.⁷ Upon isolating the issue-areas, the writer focused on several decisions within each area, choosing these mainly because of the significance attributed to them by those interviewed during the first stage of the study.

While it would have been preferable to reconstruct each of these decisions in every detail, it would obviously have required more time and a larger staff than available. For this reason, the writer relied mainly on a questionnaire designed to elicit information focusing on the initiation of decisions and alternatives, and the success or failure of their adherents in getting such decisions adopted.⁸ An attempt was made in

⁷Other issue-areas considered were industrial development, political nominations, and community fund-raising.

⁸See Appendix D, page 139, for the schedule followed for interviews.

each case to interview the main actors in each decision, and to corroborate their comments from newspapers, documents and records where these were available.⁹ Those interviewed were assured that no individuals would be named in the completed study, and actors mentioned by the informants are identified below by the designations used in Chapter III. Thus the most influential man in the occupational category of distribution is labeled "Dist-1", while the man occupying a similar position in petroleum is "Pet-1", and so on.¹⁰

While the present chapter borrows heavily from the methods used by Dahl in New Haven, no claim is made that the decisions discussed below are presented in like detail. In spite of this fact, the writer believes that this material is highly indicative of the operation of influence in Oklahoma City, and that the method used represents an accurate means of "balancing" the purely reputational analysis of the preceding chapter.

Urban Streets and Highways

Oklahoma City can hardly be called unique in that it suffers from a modern problem found in virtually every American metropolis: a swiftly increasing number of motor vehicles demanding more and better thoroughfares. Unlike many cities, however, it has been fortunate enough to have far-sighted leaders who began to deal with this problem very early in the history of the community. While this chapter is concerned primarily with

⁹Newspapers used in this respect include The Daily Oklahoman, The Oklahoma City Times, and The Tulsa World; records of the following agencies were used: The City of Oklahoma City, The State Highway Department, and the Oklahoma City Urban Renewal Authority. Also helpful were documents of the Urban Action Foundation and the Water Development Foundation. It should also be noted that some persons interviewed for this chapter were neither "judges" nor "informants", and these are identified as "actors".

¹⁰See Table I, pp. 44-45.

current developments in the metropolitan area, it will be useful to briefly survey the history of its street and highway development.

Possibly the first noteworthy achievement in this area included the suggestion made by directors of the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce in 1916 that a "rock road" be built outside of the city to demonstrate the advantages of hard surfaced roads. As a result, the same group organized a "good roads" division with an annual budget in 1921.¹¹ By 1944, the city began working with the state highway department and the federal government to improve city streets in view of the expected post-war traffic. While it is obvious that such projects require the effort and cooperation of a great many capable public officials, the initiative and the buying of right-of-way for road improvements seems to have rested mainly in the hands of private citizens.

On October 6, 1949, the directors of the Chamber of Commerce off-handedly authorized its officials to 'buy right-of-way for the urban highway system', and that's when the fun really began.

Actually, it was a case of legalizing something that had already been largely done - but it opened the door, too, to a vastly greater program. Rumors flew high and wide for the next two years. Farmers and city property owners took good prices for their land - then worried if they had collected enough.

Everyone knew that the Chamber was buying right-of-way for the urban expressway system. They knew that entire tracts were purchased, at times, to keep from cutting up a man's land to get a strip.¹²

By 1951 an agreement was made with a local bank to accept "deeds in trust" for the purchases made by the Chamber and hold them until the money could be returned from future bond issues. At the same time, the word was quietly passed that the Chamber was in debt \$1 million and

¹¹Hill Series, June 28, 1957 and July 4, 1957.

¹²Ibid., August 19, 1957.

"needed underwriters to sign up for whatever you think you can stand."¹³

Men came by and put down their names for \$1,000, for \$5,000, for any amount they could until that land was underwritten to the tune of \$1,500,000 by the personal promises of Oklahoma City businessmen.

Not until they read it in the papers, actually, did many of those signing know - or care, particularly - what they had purchased. They trusted [the chamber officials] . . . , who had negotiated all of the deals. They knew 'it was for the good of the city'.

How good was it? The Chamber had purchased right-of-way for a complete, around the city urban, limited-access roadway.¹⁴

In light of the above overview, interviews were conducted involving the specific projects which follow. While every attempt was made to limit discussion to each separate project, the writer found it necessary to deal with other decisions which were closely related to the project under scrutiny.

The Tinker Diagonal

The "Bartholomew" City Plan worked out for the metropolitan area in 1946-1947 included a diagonal line from near downtown Oklahoma City to Midwest City, and what was to become the Tinker Diagonal began to take shape in 1951.

Initially, BS-1 proposed that the current commander of Tinker Air Force Base write a letter suggesting a local diagonal to serve the base specifically. As planning developed, the Chamber of Commerce talked to the State Highway Department and the possibility of making the diagonal a part of Interstate 40 arose. Since Interstate roads are part of the system of defense highways, this gave it status as a public as opposed to a local road. While there was no opposition to the project, there was a lot of time and money involved getting it done.¹⁵

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Personal Interview, Actor #1, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, August 12, 1965.

According to informants, the time involved in completing the project stemmed mainly from difficulties in acquiring the needed right-of-way. Some of this land, from a point on Interstate 35 and farther east of the city had been requested by the municipal government, but "it could not pay for the land, and this became an issue between the city and state. The Chamber bailed the city out and was reimbursed later by bond issues."¹⁶ The remaining right-of-way, including the part which went through the base itself, was acquired by the county. This portion of land housed some rail facilities and a roundhouse, in addition to the base hospital and several barracks.

By 1955, Tinker faced two difficulties: a very serious traffic problem, and a lack of space for relocation of facilities which were in the proposed right-of-way. The Chamber offered to pay the cost of 638 acres west of the base if the federal government would file the needed condemnation for a title to the additional land. There was no real opposition to the move by the owners, but the State School Board Land Commission controlled the land, and was prohibited by law from trading more than fifty per-cent of the mineral rights thereon - thus the action by the government was called for.

The Chamber paid this bill and also bought 3600 acres of land south and west of the base to provide an area for future expansion. [The new base hospital and permanent barracks now occupy this land to the west, while Draper Lake is to the South.] This was an era of extensive conflicts caused by the irritation of people living close to bases at overflights; many such bases had been downgraded and then closed in the U.S. In this case, acquisition of highway right-of-way tied in with expansion of the base, guaranteeing that it would stay in operation.¹⁷

Actual construction of the 4-lane diagonal began in May, 1958, and the road was completed in June, 1961, allowing employees from communities as far away as 40 miles to travel rapidly to their jobs.¹⁸ Completion of

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Starting and completion dates for highway projects were furnished by the State Highway Department as the result of an interview on August 13, 1965.

the diagonal and the acquisition of land for expansion by the Chamber of Commerce also paid dividends in securing more personnel and equipment for Tinker as other bases in the country were closed out in 1964 and 1965.¹⁹ Each person interviewed attributed the successful completion of the project mainly to the efforts of the Chamber of Commerce and its leaders, and all agreed that it was completed as envisioned.

The Improvement of Lincoln Boulevard

Connecting with the Interstate Bypass north of the city, Lincoln Boulevard runs directly south to the State Capitol, where it connects with the main "business route" used by those doing business in the downtown area. In the early part of 1956, BS-1 became interested in improving the street after property owners in the area had tried to interest the state in doing something but had been unsuccessful.

A new industrial area was building up to the West, and the street presented a sorry approach to the State Capitol. Interested property owners turned to the Chamber for action, as the City had no money to finance the improvements. The project had to be firmed up by about June of 1956 to get federal funds appropriated. The Chamber then began to borrow money and acquire the needed right-of-way, using businessmen as credit underwriters. Much of the property in this case was donated, and the state paid half of the cost, since Lincoln connected with an Interstate highway.²⁰

Informants stated that the other half of the cost was carried from 1956 until 1962 by the Chamber of Commerce, at which time a bond issue was voted for the improvements. "The city was charged with only the actual cash outlay for the right-of-way - no Chamber officials were reimbursed

¹⁹See the article by Gilbert Hill in The Daily Oklahoman, November 20, 1964, for an analysis of the Chamber's role in securing needed facilities for Tinker Field.

²⁰Personal Interview, Actor #1, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, August 12, 1965.

in any way for their time."²¹ Those interviewed noted that city officials were aware of the project from the start, but were unable to pledge funds not available at the time; they did file condemnation proceedings as these were needed. The improvements began in August, 1956, and were completed in July, 1958, with no serious changes in the initial plans.

The North Broadway Extension

Improvements on North Broadway, running from N.W. 36th Street north, probably got their initial impetus when Comm-1 bought a strip of land 300 feet wide which extended north from 36th street. This land, purchased in 1946, was deeded to the city with the provision that it be used for streets and parkways.

This was the initial idea, which lay dormant for many years, until Comm-1 talked to BS-1 about getting the Chamber to pursue it. The Chamber picked it up and interested the state in extending Broadway as a part of U.S. 77 business route through the city - this would have been more direct than the highway 77 which existed.²²

It was finally decided that the extension, from the interstate bypass north of the city to "Four Corners" east of Edmond, Oklahoma, would become state highways 66-77. The entire project will involve about 8.8 miles stretching from the North bypass to Edmond when completed. At the time of this study, the improvements extended from the North bypass to Britton Road, a distance of about four miles. These improvements began in November, 1954, and were completed in July, 1962.²³

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

²³Figures furnished by the Oklahoma State Highway Department, August 13, 1965.

From the North bypass south to 36th street, right-of-way for further improvements has been purchased by the city and county with the Chamber managing the buying and getting donations. This right-of-way, including the land originally donated by Comm-1, will be utilized in extending improvements to N.W. 23rd street eventually. City and county bond issues have been passed with Chamber help to provide funds for actual road construction.²⁴

While actual construction of these improvements was still underway at the time of this study, those interviewed were agreed that this project would probably be completed as envisioned by its originators. Informants stated that while there were some minor problems in acquiring the needed right-of-way, Chamber of Commerce officials were able to secure most of this land through a well organized effort, so that few condemnation proceedings had to be filed.

Improving West Reno Street

Beginning in 1959, Reno street was improved in two separate projects, both prompted largely by the proposed location of new industries in Oklahoma City. The first project, from Pennsylvania Avenue to Council Road west of the city, was a requirement of Western Electric Company, now located at Reno and Council Road. This involved a distance of six miles and greatly improved access to the new plant upon its completion. During this same period of time, May Avenue was also widened and improved from Reno south to S.W. 15th street.

The Chamber, in the absence of local government funds for the purpose, borrowed \$500,000 underwritten by local businessmen for these projects. The Chamber got the needed right-of-way, with 45 per cent of this being donated by the owners. This right-of-way was 150 feet wide, in order to accommodate needed expansion of city sanitary and water

²⁴ Personal Interview, Actor #1, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, August 12, 1965.

lines. The right-of-way thus acquired was sold to the city in 1962 and paid for out of the 1961 bond issue.²⁵

The second project involved improving Reno from Council Road four miles west into Canadian County, and improving Morgan Road north to N.W. 10th street. This was called for by the location of General Electric's plant site between Reno and 10th and extending west of Morgan Road for two miles. The improvement involved five and one-half miles of right-of-way and paving. In order to tie down the proposed site as a plant location, the city and state agreed to build the road cooperatively and to extend water and sewage lines.

The Chamber was requested to assist in getting the right-of-way. The city paid for this with proceeds from the 1962 bond issue. In both West Reno projects, the Chamber handled right-of-way acquisition for something over 11 miles.²⁶

Both of the above projects were completed with very little difficulty, as evidenced by the amounts of land donated through Chamber efforts, and partially as a result of these improvements, two new industries located in Oklahoma City. Voters proved sympathetic to these improvements also, passing two bond issues to provide funds for such projects.

The 74th Street Expressway and West Bypass Extension

In 1960 a "Southwestern Turnpike" from Wichita Falls, Texas, to Oklahoma City was proposed by the state, to be financed by the sale of bonds. Before such bonds could be sold, however, buyers needed assurance that there would be a suitable connection between the northeastern [Oklahoma City] end of the pike and the city expressway system.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid.

"While the city's corporate limits did cover this area, the city had no funds available to finance such a connection."²⁷ It was considered best to finance the connection by federal and state construction of 74th Street between Interstate 35 and the West Bypass, and to extend the West Bypass to the proposed turnpike.

When the Governor asked the Chamber to help with right-of-way, they borrowed \$250,000 from banks, underwritten by businessmen. Much of the initial right-of-way had been bought by the city in a 1954 bond issue, but this now had to be widened to provide room for additional equipment. The Chamber got 100 per cent of the right-of-way for seven miles and a portion for four miles, with several acres going to condemnation proceedings. All of the right-of-way for 74th Street was acquired by the end of 1960.²⁸

While these improvements arose because of a state-sponsored project, the influence of the Chamber of Commerce and its leaders was essential in getting the proposal implemented. Several informants stressed the fact that the improvements as well as bond-letting on the projected turnpike might well have been delayed for a long period in the absence of Chamber action. "This [rapid acquisition of right-of-way] was important, as it allowed the Southwestern Turnpike to go ahead, without waiting until local government funds were available."²⁹ Oklahoma City paid the Chamber of Commerce for the right-of-way in February, 1962, with proceeds from a 1961 bond issue.

Summary of Issue-Area

Decisions in the area of urban streets and highways illustrate a significant amount of influence on the part of businessmen and business

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

organizations. Four of the five projects surveyed above received their initial impetus from businessmen and were carried to completion largely through the efforts of the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce. Persons interviewed stressed the fact that the decisions surveyed are typical rather than unique examples of projects in the area of streets and highways.

One thing which makes Oklahoma City outstanding is the continued success of this system. It is almost routine by now, as the new city highways and the buying of land options for them prove.³⁰

Other informants indicated that such methods meet with little opposition because they are known to be effective.

The best way for acquiring right-of-way for any expressway or highway is for a very few people to know about the issue and to have expert buyers to save the community or state as much as possible. In the main we have been able to do this in Oklahoma City on a very efficient and economical basis. The opposite of this has been true in Tulsa for many, many years. This is also true in the matter of options for land for new developments and the fewer the people involved in the transaction, the greater the benefits to the public.³¹

The contrast between Oklahoma City and Tulsa's highway programs mentioned above is further illustrated by an editorial from The Tulsa Tribune of April 15, 1965, which comments upon the reasons for the success of Oklahoma City's businessmen in developing streets and highways:

What can Tulsans learn from their rival? One thing. Organization Drive Oklahoma City's expressways. Contemplate the fact that after 15 years of plans, bond issues and contract lettings Tulsans cannot drive a foot on a city expressway. . . .

These comments indicate that businessmen exercise a great deal of

³⁰Personal Interview, Judge #6, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, July 15, 1965.

³¹Personal Interview, Judge #12, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, July 23, 1965.

direct influence upon urban street and highway development in Oklahoma City. This is not to say that they alone are responsible for the projects summarized above, for other groups, including public officials and voters certainly play a role in this issue-area also. It appears, however, that the influence of other groups is indirect, and comes into play only after the projects have been initiated and organized by businessmen and the Chamber of Commerce. The fact that voters have thus far approved all bond issues proposed for these projects suggests that the public recognizes the need for such projects and accepts the means used to carry them out. As far as city and county officials are concerned, "they have to depend upon the Chamber to promote and publicize bond issues, as they cannot legally appropriate funds for election publicity".³² The overall pattern of street and highway development in Oklahoma City is perhaps best summarized by the following excerpt from a local newspaper:

Oklahoma City had a number of 'real good breaks' in putting together some 80 miles of right-of-way, 60 for limited access, and another 20 for four-lane divided center primary roads. First, of course, was the vision of early-day civic leaders who fought for 'Grand Boulevard', a road which was way out in the country in those days, around the city.

Then, highway construction needs came just as the old street-car and interurban right-of-ways were being abandoned, and some of it has come in time so that it could go through undeveloped and therefore inexpensive land.

But one of the major reasons that Oklahoma City got its right-of-way for only about \$5 million was the way in which needed land was put together quietly, rapidly, and largely through negotiation by the Chamber of Commerce.³³

Trust Financing

Oklahoma City suffers, as do many municipalities across the United

³²Personal Interview, Actor #1, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, August 14, 1965.

³³Hill Series, August 19, 1957.

States, from a lack of sufficient local revenue to provide the services which most citizens deem essential. One of the methods of alleviating this situation has been the formation of "trust" ventures to underwrite the cost of providing additional services and facilities for public use. The first trusts were formed following World War II to provide for airport expansion and additional water for the city, with the trust idea later being adapted to finance locations for new industry in the Oklahoma City area.³⁴ While not all citizens are agreed upon the best method for financing needed services, it appears that the trust idea will continue to be used frequently as one means of accomplishing desired goals. As one person put it:

Trust financing is perhaps not the most sound way to finance, but at the moment, it is one way and perhaps the only way to move ahead and get things done. Many cities over the United States certainly face the same problem right now.³⁵

In order to provide sufficient background on the origin and development of trust financing in Oklahoma City, the writer begins with the first trust created, the Airport Trust and then concentrates on later trusts and trust projects. In each issue surveyed, an attempt is made to indicate the magnitude of the projects, and the composition of the trust authorities.

The Airport Trust

Formally created on April 26, 1956, the Airport Trust was initially concerned with improving facilities and quarters for the Civil Aviation Agency [now known as the Federal Aviation Agency] so that it would

³⁴Personal Interview, Actor #2, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, August 12, 1965.

³⁵Personal Interview, Judge #1, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, July 12, 1965.

continue its operation in the city. The C.A.A. had located here following the Second World War, and was housed in inadequate World War II barracks at Will Roger's Field. "There was a danger that the C.A.A. was considering moving its operation, in spite of the great efforts made by Senator Monroney and city leaders in getting them to stay on here."³⁶ In order to guarantee needed facilities for the agency, local leaders began to work out financing for improvements.

 [a local businessman] was city manager at the time, and spearheaded the drive for a trust. Along with Chamber of Commerce leaders and especially [then vice-president of a local bank], he got details worked out so that the agency would stay. In order to do this, they had to get the plans far enough along so that estimates on the cost of construction could be made. Financing was arranged through New York City firms, with a local architectural firm advancing the money for plans and specifications.

The proposal called for revenue-bearing bonds to be sold, with the federal government paying rent and insurance costs on the completed facilities. Since the state is the only unit under the Oklahoma Constitution which can sell revenue-bearing bonds as such, permissive legislation was needed for the trust. State Senator George Miskovsky took the lead in getting this through the Oklahoma Legislature, thus paving the way for future trusts.³⁷

Formal organization of the trust called for two trustees, and the two businessmen who coordinated the drive for the project were initially named. The interest of the city in the venture has since been represented by the inclusion of the City Manager as one of the trustees.³⁸ Following its formation, the Airport Trust sold bonds for nearly \$10 million between 1956 and 1958 in order to provide facilities for the

³⁶Personal Interview, Actor #2, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, August 12, 12, 1965.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Information on the composition of trusts and the costs of projects was procured from the Office of the City Clerk of Oklahoma City on August 12, 1965.

C.A.A. and related airport expansion. A second project to further improve facilities was undertaken by the trust in 1961 at a cost of \$11.5 million, and this improvement met with extensive opposition from persons hostile to the methods of finance and construction.

Every time you created a trust, the bond debentures had to go through the State Supreme Court and this gave everyone concerned a chance to say what they wanted to. This made the bonds saleable. No matter how you set up a project to improve the city, there are always people who want to change the plan in order to serve their own interests. In this case, there were persons fighting the project because they wanted to get in on the construction. Also involved were some 'professional intervenors' who fight nearly every trust proposal that comes along. In the end, these groups are usually not successful, largely because they don't have the support of the community.³⁹

After months of litigation, the 1961 improvements were completed as planned, and the F.A.A. was able to expand its operation as a result.⁴⁰ By 1965 the Federal Aviation Agency Aeronautical Center had a staff of over 4,000 persons with an annual payroll of \$32 million, and was training civilian air controllers for assignment all over the world.⁴¹ Persons interviewed concerning these projects agreed that business leaders and the Chamber of Commerce were responsible for their success, as they took care of the initial planning and arranged for the financing needed.

The Water Trust

The present Water Trust, known formally as the Oklahoma City Municipal Improvements Authority, came into existence on August 16, 1960, replacing an earlier trust which had existed since the early 1950's.

³⁹Personal Interview, Actor #2, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, August 12, 1965.

⁴⁰For a complete description of the improvements made by the Airport Trust in 1961 see the story in The Daily Oklahoman of April 19, 1964.

⁴¹Industrial Division, Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce, p. 6.

The original water trust was based on a 1952-1954 study of Britts, a consulting engineer paid by the city. Prior to formation of the 1960 trust, this early report was reviewed by an engineer's committee headed by _____ [a local businessman] and others who donated their services. As a result of this review by private citizens, the Water Development Foundation also entered the picture.⁴²

The businessman who as city manager had been influential in getting the Airport Trust in operation played a key role in developing the new water trust, and was aided in this effort by the Chamber of Commerce. Informants stressed the role of the Water Development Foundation in providing funds for feasibility studies of water projects and in helping to implement the water trust:

The Water Development Foundation is a non-profit educational foundation supported by civic leaders in Oklahoma City. Four or five hundred businessmen contribute to the Foundation, which is funded by subscription. Its primary aim is to improve water development in central Oklahoma, as well as improving navigation and distribution on existing waterways. Its aims are broader than just Oklahoma City, and it helps all of Oklahoma by not perpetuating the 'dust bowl' image - this was part of the value of sending water from Oklahoma to the World's Fair in July, 1965.

The Water Development Foundation and its predecessor, The Water Development Association, go back as far as the flood of 1923. All of the major water projects have had their groundwork laid here.⁴³

When asked if the Water Development Foundation was a branch of the Chamber of Commerce, one informant said "almost everything in Oklahoma City is a branch of the Chamber of Commerce in a sense".⁴⁴ Another person added that the extensive overlapping of leaders in both organizations serve to make their policies for water projects nearly identical.

⁴²Personal Interview, Actor #2, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, August 12, 1965.

⁴³Personal Interview, Actor #3, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, August 14, 1965.

⁴⁴Ibid.

Officers of the Water Development Foundation include some of the most influential businessmen in Oklahoma City and several of these persons are also directors of the Chamber of Commerce.

Formal composition of the Water Trust calls for four trustees, two of these being the City Manager and the Municipal Counselor, with the remaining two being businessmen appointed by the City Council from a list compiled by the presidents of Oklahoma City's clearing house banks. Inclusion of the businessmen on the trust apparently guarantees business and financial support for bond proposals in the area of water development. As one informant stated, "such projects can be financed by increases in water charges or by general obligation and trust bonds, but you would have to have the support of local business leaders for the bonds".⁴⁵

The Atoka Project

Beginning in 1954, planning was undertaken to pipe water from Atoka, a city in Southeastern Oklahoma, to Oklahoma City, a distance of some 100 miles. This project involved an expenditure totalling \$60 million, including the buying of right-of-way and the construction of pipelines and a reservoir facility at each end of the operation. The Chamber of Commerce did much of the initial planning for the project, and bought right-of-way for the pipeline in 1955.

The land was bought before the reservoir was announced, and practically all that the Chamber couldn't buy had to be condemned. Some of this is still being appealed. The Chamber financed this through the American First Title and Trust, and guaranteed the loan by notes. About \$4.5 million was involved in these purchases.⁴⁶

⁴⁵Personal Interview, Actor #3, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, August 12, 1965.

⁴⁶Ibid.

Informants stated that the Chamber was reimbursed for these expenses by proceeds from a 1955 bond issue, covering the cost of pipeline right-of-way and providing funds for the creation of Lake Draper, on the Oklahoma City end of the project. Planning for the project slowed down somewhat after this initial expenditure, as feasibility studies caused doubt as to the practicality of the project. The Water Development Foundation and the Chamber of Commerce continued to coordinate plans for the project from 1956 to 1960:

Man-2, President of the Foundation, had been on several Governor's committees for water planning and was chairman of one for moving water from Southeastern to Central Oklahoma in 1957. By 1959 or 1960, they were told such planning was useless, but they funded further studies which helped prove its feasibility and aided in getting the Atoka project going.⁴⁷

By 1960, planning had progressed to the stage where bids could be let for construction of the needed facilities, and at this point a heated controversy began over control of the financing and construction of the project.⁴⁸ This commercial rivalry caused the project to be slowed down considerably, as legal action was taken to block the initial plans for completion of the pipeline. The controversy generated by these actions caused a split in the ranks of businessmen promoting the project, and hampered the efforts of the formal organizations on behalf of its completion.

In the Atoka Project, the Water Development Foundation certainly helped initiate the project, but stayed out of the bitter fight after it started. They felt that

⁴⁷ Personal Interview, Actor #3, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, August 14, 1965.

⁴⁸ See the comments on page 64 concerning the Atoka Project and the civic controversy generated by this issue.

Foundations lose their effectiveness when they get too partisan, so they didn't take sides on just how it was to be done.⁴⁹

Eventually, the legal action taken resulted in the project's being completed as it had originally been planned. However, several informants indicated that the fight which started probably caused a split among the key group of leaders sponsoring it, which resulted in continued friction for some time to come.⁵⁰ The project was completed in 1964, and revenue provided by the sale of trust bonds was augmented by a 50 per cent increase in municipal water rates to help defray the costs. Informants attributed the success of the project to businessmen, including the "primary influentials" noted earlier and the leadership of the Chamber of Commerce.

The Oklahoma City Industrial and Cultural Facilities Trust

Created in 1962, the Industrial and Cultural Facilities Trust differs from the foregoing trust ventures in that the city government is not formally liable for commitments made in its name. The trust was initiated by Oklahoma Industries, Incorporated, the industrial development branch of the Chamber of Commerce, in order to meet competition from other states in providing sites for new industry.

This was a special type of trust, which required enabling legislation from the state. This legislation permitted municipalities to authorize another agency apart from city

⁴⁹Personal Interview, Actor #3, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, August 14, 1965.

⁵⁰These observations were certainly borne out during the course of interviewing persons for this study: the writer noticed a reluctance on the part of many men to discuss the Atoka Project at all, while others needed extra assurance that they and those they named would remain anonymous.

government to set up a trust. The city accepted a beneficial interest in the trust, so that the city will get the property involved when the bonds are paid off.⁵¹

Also involved in creation of the trust was a plan to provide additional financing for completion of the National Cowboy Hall of Fame and Western Heritage Center, upon which construction had been halted in 1959 due to lack of funds.

Directors of the Cowboy Hall of Fame, which owned 12 acres of the land and a portion of the buildings involved, deeded the property to the trust. It had to be an emergency to get the directors to do this. The Ling-Temco-Vaught plant was thrown into the trust to strengthen the bonds. The community had borrowed funds to finance this plant, and Oklahoma Industries, Incorporated, owned the L.T.V. plant. Actually, the city authorized Oklahoma Industries to create the trust.⁵²

Opponents of the trust, including some members of the City Council, attempted to block the project both in the council and through the courts, so that formal organization of the trust and the sale of bonds was not realized until October, 1963. Officials of Oklahoma Industries asked the state Supreme Court to assume original jurisdiction and rule on the validity of the trust almost as soon as it became apparent that there would be opposition. The manager of the Industrial Division of the Chamber of Commerce explained the trust proposal as follows:

It is merely an expansion of the community's ability to provide industrial facilities to industries that want to come in and to those that are here now. . . . Acceptance of the beneficial interest [by the city] gives an added advantage to the development of industry . . . The advantage lies in the fact that bonds issued for buying, constructing, and expanding industrial or cultural facilities will be non-taxable, like municipal revenue bonds, and thus more saleable.

Another advantage, in meeting competition of other states which have similar set-ups is that the real property

⁵¹Personal Interview, Actor #4, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, August 11, 1965.

⁵²Ibid.

acquired by the trust and leased to industry is not subject to ad valorem taxes; thus better leases could be made to attract industry. The equipment, furnishings, and inventories of industrial plants would, however, be taxable.

The city's principal source of revenue . . . is sale of services - sewer and water - not ad valorem taxes.

The city thus would benefit by sale of these services to the industries as well as to the employees the industry brings in. It also would benefit from ad valorem taxes on the homes the employees build.⁵³

Much of the opposition to the trust centered on the fact that the industries involved would be exempted from ad valorem taxes, as indicated above. While a writ of injunction was being sought against the trust, by opponents who claimed that it could not be formed without a vote of the people, a city councilman attempted to have the city ordinance authorizing the trust revoked. The City Council requested an opinion from its legal department as to whether the ordinance could legally be withdrawn, and subsequently was advised that once such an ordinance is passed and becomes effective, it is a binding contract and must stand.⁵⁴ On September 17, 1963, the case was argued before the state Supreme Court:

Oklahoma County schools and government would lose tax revenue under the Oklahoma City Industrial and Cultural Facilities Trust, the state Supreme Court was told . . .

Merton M. Bulla, opposing the trust, told the court that land acquired by it is exempt from ad valorem taxes.

'I yield to no man the right to forgive taxes and levy upon me to make up the tax forgiven', Bulla said.

He was followed by William C. Kessler, Oklahoma City councilman, who said he had no objection to the Cowboy Hall of Fame tax exemption, but did oppose tax exemption for plant sites of industries.

Barth P. Walker, attorney for George E. Fort, contended the trust was created under a law requiring voter approval before bonds could be issued.

Edward H. Moler, former municipal counselor, defending the trust, said it was imperative the court rule soon.

'Four Oklahoma City banks have put up \$3.5 million to acquire facilities which landed new industries, and the loans

⁵³The Oklahoma City Times, December 19, 1962.

⁵⁴See The Oklahoma City Times, March 12, 1963, and March 26, 1963.

mature Dec. 15⁶, he said. 'It is absolutely necessary that some permanent type of finance be obtained', he stated.

He also opposed a public vote on bonds to acquire plant sites, saying secrecy is necessary in angling for new industry, and publicity could cause loss to another city or state.

'It is our belief that we cannot effectively operate if we are required to hold elections', he said.

Moler said the tax foregone would more than be made up by general acceleration of property values as a result of industrial expansion.

George Fagin, also defending the trust, told the court every state in the union is fighting for industry. 'We've got to have industry to save our people', he said.⁵⁵

The court held that the trust was legal as proposed, stating its unanimous decision as follows:

We have held previously under the public trust act . . . that approval of the electors is not required for issuance of revenue bonds.⁵⁶

Following the legal action and the installation of five prominent Oklahoma City businessmen as trustees, the trust sold \$2½ million in bonds, with the Ling-Temco-Vaught facilities receiving \$1½ million and the remainder enabling completion of the Cowboy Hall of Fame, which was formally dedicated on June 26, 1965. One informant described the current operation of the trust as follows:

As it stands now, the trust leases the properties to L.T.V. and the Cowboy Hall of Fame. Monthly payments from these enterprises are sufficient to cover the interest and retire the bonds in 30 years. The Cowboy Hall of Fame has a 50 year lease with guaranteed renewal - a lease in perpetuity, in effect.⁵⁷

All informants agreed that this project was initiated by business leaders

⁵⁵The Daily Oklahoman, September 19, 1963. The Oklahoma City Times of July 21, 1963, quotes U.S. News & World Report as stating that 30 states had industrial trusts similar to this one at the end of 1962.

⁵⁶The Oklahoma City Times, October 1, 1963. For one case which serves as precedent, see Morris v. City of Oklahoma City: Okl., 299P 2d 131, 1956.

⁵⁷Personal Interview, Actor #4, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, August 11, 1965.

and the Chamber of Commerce, and carried out in spite of opposition.

The Oklahoma City Development Trust

This trust was set up on January 7, 1958, to provide funds for buying new municipal equipment which the city was not able to finance from general revenues. Formal composition of the trust calls for two trustees, the City Manager and the banker mentioned above who is also trustee of the Airport Trust. Informants stated that business support was important in initiating the trust, but added that most transactions under it since 1960 have been handled by the City Manager and the City Council.

They [the City Manager and Council] have called in a few banks and submitted ideas to the Chamber for suggestions, but projects have been mainly on their own initiative with the approval of the principal leaders of the community. The public did not enter this trust at all.⁵⁸

By 1965, municipal bonds had been sold by the Development Trust in the amount of \$1 million, with business leaders and the Chamber of Commerce helping on publicity for the bond sales.

Summary of Issue-Area

The area of trust financing is illustrative of a high degree of business influence. Four out of five of the projects surveyed above received their initial start as the result of action by businessmen, while these same businessmen played a supporting role in the fifth project. This area is also interesting because of the variety of different types of issues involved, and because it illustrates the ability of business leaders to overcome strong opposition to proposals they favor. While such opposition has sometimes come from within the business group itself,

⁵⁸Personal Interview, Actor #2, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, August 12, 1965.

as in the Atoka Project, this type of disagreement usually concerns the means of implementing projects rather than the desirability of the projects in themselves. Far more serious has been the type of opposition stemming from those who oppose a project in its entirety, as illustrated in the case of the Cultural and Industrial Facilities Trust. Much of the opposition of this type stemmed from former members of the Oklahoma City Council, who sensed that some of their prerogatives as makers of policy were being usurped by those who favored trust proposals. On two occasions in the past ten years, incumbent City Council majorities have tried to eliminate the various trusts by setting up one large all-encompassing trust to be controlled solely by the City Council.

The first all-purpose trust was proposed in 1957-58. It was never worked out in detail, and the individual trusts continued in operation. It would be hard to create such a trust now and come out as cheaply. While the several individual trusts run for 40 years, they can be refinanced after ten years if a better deal comes along at lower interest rates.⁵⁹

The second attempt to set up an "all-purpose" trust occurred during the fight over the Industrial and Cultural Facilities Trust, and was characterized as follows:

One action served the public interest. The other didn't. The public-serving action was the council's acceptance of a 'beneficial interest' in a new Oklahoma City Industrial and Cultural Facilities Trust being set up by Oklahoma Industries, Inc. The public disservice was the council's action setting up a monster 'all-purpose trust' having a manifest potential for great mischief.

. . . the declaration creating it puts no practical limitations on the conceivable scope of its operations.

The trustees would be the eight members of the city council and the mayor, a highly questionable arrangement affording all manner of occasions for conceivable conflicts of interest. In their dual official capacities the councilmen would be sitting in judgment on their own action as trustees.

The trust declaration specifically exempts the

⁵⁹Ibid.

trustees from being bonded, unless they so consent. It contains no provisions for outside audits. Its provisions for terminating the trust are vaguely stated and leave the responsibility largely with the trustees.

The trust declaration's obvious aim is to centralize all powers in the hands of the incumbent council majority. To perceive the aim is to conclude that the proposed instrument is definitely contrary to the public interest. The present council majority doesn't merit blank check public confidence.⁶⁰

This proposal apparently died from lack of support following the 1963 city elections which swept four "reform" councilmen into office, as described in Chapter II.⁶¹ Informants interviewed on this matter stated that it was unlikely that such proposals would be suggested in the future, due to the community's understanding of the benefits stemming from the present type of trusts. Those interviewed stressed organization and knowledge of finance as the main reasons for success of the business group in implementing their trust proposals.

Urban Renewal

Unlike the foregoing issue-areas, Urban Renewal has a comparatively short history in Oklahoma City, as serious plans for reshaping the community have been in existence only since 1960. In spite of the short duration of the program, however, businessmen have been active in securing the support of official agencies, citizens, and the federal government for projected urban renewal goals. Perhaps of all the issue-areas in which businessmen play a role, urban renewal bears the most obvious relationship to business prosperity, since it includes many significant changes in ownership, layout, and usage of property in the city's business

⁶⁰(Ed.) The Daily Oklahoman, December 21, 1962.

⁶¹See pages 25-29.

districts. Partially for this reason, the Chamber of Commerce and influential individual businessmen have been anxious to implement planning for eventual urban renewal projects and to organize support for such projects from the community at large.

Creation of the Urban Renewal Authority

The establishment of this authority was the first step in creating the formal structure of urban renewal in Oklahoma City, as this board would be in charge of buying land and buildings, removing existing structures, and selling the land to be developed.

After it [the Authority] designates the areas, the city council must give final approval. Then the project goes back to the Authority for purchase of the land, by negotiation or condemnation, and the clearing of existing structures.

It must then handle the deals for sale of land for re-development with apartments, industries, commercial buildings or homes, according to a previously set plan.⁶²

Establishment of the Authority was the responsibility of the Mayor, as he makes appointments to boards and commissions with council approval under the City Charter.⁶³ Efforts of the Mayor to name a five-member Urban Renewal Authority in October, 1961, met with immediate opposition from some members of the City Council:

William E. Ware, Ward Two, criticized the names submitted by the mayor as 'non-political and imply that the council is not capable of making good selections'.

Ware demanded a week's delay - he wanted each councilman to name one member and the mayor to name one.

'It is completely customary for city councilmen to be asked to agree on members from each ward', Ware said. He claimed councilmen were 'in general agreement' on whom they would name.⁶⁴

⁶²The Oklahoma City Times, November 2, 1961.

⁶³Article IV, Section 6, Charter of the City of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 1957.

⁶⁴The Oklahoma City Times, October 24, 1961, and October 25, 1961.

The Mayor's suggested appointees were also criticized by leaders from the city's East side Negro community, who charged that the Mayor had ignored three petitions by not naming a Negro member to the Authority.⁶⁵ At the council meeting held on October 31, 1961, the five men suggested by the Mayor as Authority members were dropped from consideration after a representative of the Oklahoma City Board of Realtors told the council:

We do not believe these are the people who should serve on the Authority. They are fine people, but we need people who understand Urban Renewal, high finance, real estate problems and condemnation proceedings. . .

But do not name them on a political basis. It's a working job and we need high type businessmen.⁶⁶

The Realtor's Board denied having a specific list of men for the job, but stated that it had a list of "typical men" who are prominent citizens and "who own and run their own firms and can afford the time".⁶⁷ These comments are indicative of statements made to the writer by informants concerning the role of businessmen and the Chamber of Commerce in implementing urban renewal. Most of these persons said that while the Chamber leaders were favorably disposed towards creation of the Authority, and were impatient for the city to "get it done", they did not try to dictate the actual selection of its members. Nor is it likely that they would have been successful had they tried to influence the City Council in this matter, for several councilmen were determined to make their own selections, which they eventually did on November 2, 1961, while the Mayor was out of the city.

⁶⁵ Ibid., October 24, 1961.

⁶⁶ Ibid., October 31, 1961.

⁶⁷ Ibid., November 1, 1961.

A five-man city council majority Thursday took advantage of the absence of Mayor Norick and steamrolled the appointment of an Oklahoma City Urban Renewal Authority. Named were C. Kenneth Woodring and Granville Tomerlin, attorneys, three-year terms; Reubin Martin, retired labor leader and Joe C. Scott, insurance executive, two-year terms; and F.D. Moon, Negro leader, to a one-year term. With two councilmen gone, only one 'minority' member was present.⁶⁸

Business leaders apparently had mixed feelings concerning the composition of the Authority, while councilmen appeared to think it satisfied the political forces in the community who demanded representation on urban renewal projects. The reaction of the business group is perhaps best indicated by the following remarks made by one businessman:

While there may have been some initial disappointment in the council's action, this did not last long, as it was obvious that short terms of the members and the possibility of changes in the council itself would open up the Authority to later change. As it turned out, the Chamber and the Urban Action Foundation were able to work quite effectively with the Authority, both in its original form and after its composition changed almost completely in the last two years.⁶⁹

Creation of the Urban Action Foundation

This Foundation was created in October, 1962, by a group of prominent businessmen to aid in getting federal funds appropriated for Oklahoma City's redevelopment. While it is a private foundation, rather than being part of the formal governmental structure concerned with urban renewal, the organization is included in this chapter because it has played a key role in initiating and coordinating urban renewal plans and projects. The idea of the Foundation began with a trip to Little Rock, Arkansas, by a committee of the Chamber of Commerce headed by Pet-l.

⁶⁸Ibid., November 2, 1961.

⁶⁹Personal Interview, Actor #3, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, August 14, 1965.

It became obvious [after observing Little Rock's redevelopment projects] that one of the first needs was a good organization to study the problems involved, to work with official groups for solutions, then to organize public support of citizens through education and promotion.⁷⁰

The Foundation was chartered by the Secretary of State of Oklahoma on October 11, 1962, and set up operations in the Chamber of Commerce headquarters. When asked what persons initiated the Foundation, one informant stated that "No group ever has an idea - only individuals have ideas; where the ideas go from there is hard to say. I would say that the Foundation originated with [four 'primary influentials']".⁷¹ Another informant described the Foundation as "a catalyst for urban renewal". He added that "Federal funds won't be sent until certain preliminary plans are made; thus this is a non-profit corporation formed to speed up urban renewal".⁷² Another person described the project as follows:

The impetus was to aid in causing the rebirth of downtown Oklahoma City by providing funds. Informal personal contact was the method used in setting up the foundation - a few business leaders got together and then drew more in. In projects of this type, the support is always there before any formal announcement is made. This is the only way to get things done effectively - if they are true leaders, they don't want to read about it in the papers. The project was carried through without significant modification. It has become the citizen arm of governmental urban renewal activity.⁷³

The above comments are especially interesting for the contrast they provide to the process of urban renewal which Dahl describes in New Haven,

⁷⁰The Oklahoma City Times, April 16, 1962.

⁷¹Personal Interview, Actor #3, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, August 12, 1965.

⁷²Personal Interview, Informant #9, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 30, 1965.

⁷³Personal Interview, Actor #3, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, August 12, 1965.

where the political leaders of the community set up a "Citizen's Action Commission" for urban renewal:

The elaborate structure of citizen participation, it must be remembered, did not grow up spontaneously; it was deliberately created by Mayor Lee. Its functions in urban redevelopment seem to have been roughly equivalent to those performed by the democratic rituals of the political parties in making nominations for public office; citizen participation gave legitimacy and acceptability to the decisions of the leaders, created a corps of loyal auxiliaries, and helped to engender public support for the program and to forestall disputes.⁷⁴

In Oklahoma City, the initiative for the formation of a citizen's group for urban renewal came from the business leaders of the community rather than from the politicians. In discussing this, one informant stated that "it is possible for city officials to ask the prominent citizens to form such a group. However, in this case the initiative came from civic leaders."⁷⁵ Other informants indicated that city government has not always been centralized enough to carry out such projects, and added that even when it is strongly organized, it is often limited by statutory prohibitions from entering some areas.

Regardless of the caliber of past city governments, there has always been some degree of communication on projects. In a great many areas, the ways of government are limited by law. For instance, they couldn't purchase 638 acres to expand Tinker Field. Further, in 1923, the flooding called for a floodway; the civic groups outside of government set up the plans, and then the city took the initiative to pass bonds and carry it out.⁷⁶

While the above comments do not deal with urban renewal projects, the tendency indicated for private groups to do much of the initial planning

⁷⁴Dahl, Who Governs?, p. 133.

⁷⁵Personal Interview, Actor #3, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, August 12, 1965

⁷⁶Ibid.

on public projects before they are formalized by city officials is borne out in this area. Again, the contrast with New Haven is striking, for Dahl states that the redevelopment program there:

. . . moved slowly until an ambitious politician came along. It was not produced by desire of the economic notables, even though they knew physical changes in the city were vital to their well-being.

The possibility cannot be ruled out that if the economic notables were much more unified, influential, skillful, and dedicated to redevelopment than they are in New Haven, they could provide the dominant leadership and coordination. But in New Haven their support was only a necessary, not a sufficient condition for the aggressive action by city officials required for comprehensive reshaping of the face of the city.⁷⁷

Certainly, almost the exact opposite of the above situation prevailed in Oklahoma City, with business leaders becoming actively involved in the area of urban renewal from the beginning, and actually helping to elect a Mayor and Council in 1965 sympathetic to redevelopment.⁷⁸ Moreover, the Urban Action Foundation has been active in initiating several urban renewal proposals, unlike the Citizen's Action Commission of Dahl.

The CAC represented much potential influence, but never acted to initiate, oppose, veto or alter proposals presented by the politicians.⁷⁹

It is probably not too much to say, as one informant did, that "whatever progress Oklahoma City has made in implementing urban renewal can be traced almost directly to the efforts of the businessmen who support the Urban Action Foundation and the Chamber."⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Dahl, Who Governs?, p. 115.

⁷⁸ See pages 25-29.

⁷⁹ Dahl, Who Governs?, p. 131.

⁸⁰ Personal Interview, Informant #9, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 30, 1965.

The Tivoli Gardens Project

In August, 1962, six Oklahoma City businessmen, including Comm-2, Pet-1, BS-1, and Fin-1, visited Copenhagen, Denmark, in order to get some ideas for a cultural and recreational area in downtown Oklahoma City. The initial idea was to model the project upon the Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen, with appropriate changes as suggested during planning for urban renewal in the city's central business district.⁸¹ The Urban Action Foundation later sponsored a nation-wide architectural contest to design a downtown recreational and cultural area in Oklahoma City. The winning design was then incorporated into the Pei Plan for downtown, to be discussed below. The Urban Action Foundation, which is funded entirely by subscriptions and contributions, provided substantial prizes for winning designs, including a cash prize or a trip to Copenhagen for the winner.

Getting an Urban Renewal Director

While Oklahoma City's Urban Renewal Authority, as noted above, had been set up officially in 1961, the city had been unable to secure a director for the Authority mainly due to lack of funds. By 1963, it had become imperative for such a director to be obtained, in order to allow the filing of an application for a federal grant for project planning. The Urban Action Foundation, which had assisted in the search for one to fill the position, loaned the city enough funds to pay the director's salary for the first part of his term.

⁸¹ See The Oklahoma City Times, August 31, 1962.

The foundation aided in getting an urban renewal director on the job by funding his salary for a period. The city couldn't afford to do so, and this got him on the job at least six months sooner.⁸²

Due to this action by the Foundation, James T. Yielding, Urban Renewal Commissioner of Cleveland, Ohio, was appointed executive director of the Oklahoma City Urban Renewal Authority and assumed his new duties on February 15, 1963.

The Pei Plan

One of the initial aims of the Urban Action Foundation was to provide funds for planning of redevelopment projects in Oklahoma City. Under Title I of the Federal Housing Act of 1949, as amended, cities could acquire funds for planning redevelopment projects and acquiring property to be cleared, but Oklahoma City could not allocate such funds and then wait to be reimbursed under this Act. Due the inability of the city to finance initial urban renewal planning, the Urban Action Foundation provided the funds for this project.

Negotiations are virtually complete on a contract with I.M. Pei and Associates, New York, for development of a plan for rebuilding downtown Oklahoma City.

_____, President of Urban Action, Inc., confirmed the existence of the contract Monday, but said it will not be signed until the city council has an opportunity to study it and make suggestions.

Robert M. Tinstman, City Manager, and James Yielding, Director of Urban Renewal, have been kept informed on the progress of negotiations although neither the city nor the Urban Renewal Authority has any financial responsibility with Pei.⁸³

The Urban Action Foundation underwrote the Pei Plan study in the amount

⁸²Personal Interview, Actor #3, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, August 12, 1965.

⁸³The Oklahoma City Times, August 26, 1963.

of \$200,000 borrowed on the credit of businessmen, who were later reimbursed under the 1949 Act referred to above. A study was undertaken in late 1963, and completed in 1965, to provide the necessary first step for getting federal urban renewal funds. Financial estimates on implementing the plan included "\$60 million in federal funds, \$30 million in city funds, and \$2 million from private investment".⁸⁴ One of the first steps in getting the plan implemented on the local level was to secure the approval of the City Planning Commission, as this body was responsible for coordinating the Pei Plan with the city's Master Plan. The Planning Commission scheduled public hearings on the Pei Plan in August, 1965, and notified property owners in the area, who would be affected, of their right to attend and present their views.⁸⁵ Leading businessmen and members of the Urban Action Foundation were present at each meeting. They showed a promotional film and defended the project, whereas the objections were raised by small business owners and others who opposed the changes "for aesthetic reasons". The only significant opposition was that of a large downtown retailer (owner of a department store), represented at the meetings by counsel who threatened a lawsuit if his client was forced to relocate or rebuild. It was the writer's impression that much of the concern over the proposed addition to the city plan was the result of a lack of understanding over what was involved, rather than animosity to urban renewal in general.⁸⁶ Supporters of the Pei Plan

⁸⁴Personal Interview, Informant #9, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 30, 1965.

⁸⁵The observations which follow are based upon notes taken by the writer while attending two of these hearings.

⁸⁶It should be noted that there were persons present who opposed the entire principal of urban renewal, even going so far as to suggest that the Urban Renewal Director was a Communist and that the entire program

were successful, however, as the Planning Commission eventually included the proposal in the city's Master Plan, which recommendation was later adopted by the City Council.

Summary of Issue-Area

Businessmen and business organizations have been highly influential in Oklahoma City's young urban renewal program, implementing a strong organization which provides funds for redevelopment planning and helping to coordinate action on projects among the many agencies involved. Three of the issues surveyed were initiated and carried out by businessmen, including the "primary influentials," while business support was essential in implementing a fourth project. The only issue in this area which does not indicate high business influence is creation of the Urban Renewal Authority, a project which the businessmen favored, but one in which they did not attempt to exert much influence. As suggested above, they seem to have been more concerned with getting it done than with how it was to be done.

Thus far, then, it would appear that businessmen have been the most influential group in this issue-area, with public officials and the general public having an indirect impact. Of course this analysis is subject to change as the urban renewal program progresses to the stage of bond-letting and public approval of various renewal projects. At the time of this study, however, one must conclude that businessmen have been highly successful in initiating projects for the redevelopment of Oklahoma City.⁸⁷ As urban renewal continues, there have been indications

was designed to destroy the sanctity of private property. These views were those of a minority, however.

⁸⁷Of course nothing stated concerning these projects should be construed as indicating approval or disapproval of them.

that other cities will take notice of Oklahoma City's program. The Tulsa World commented favorably on what it called Oklahoma City's "pipe dream" for a renewed city to be completed by 1978, and gave the Chamber of Commerce credit for its ability to organize and carry through large projects.⁸⁸ And The Oklahoma City Times commented upon another city which apparently has taken notice of the local program:

If imitation is the most sincere form of flattery, then Dallas must really have its eye on Oklahoma City.

Within recent days Dallas has taken the following steps:

1. Hired a firm to make a master plan for downtown Dallas.
 2. Set up a tour of Scandinavia by key Dallas business and professional men to gather ideas for the Dallas of tomorrow.
- Does this sound familiar? It should for Oklahoma Cityans.

We did the same things - but a year ago.

Dallas has been looked to as a leader among cities of the Southwest. So it should be highly gratifying to Oklahoma Cityans to know that in these two important efforts for the future Dallas followed us, rather than led.⁸⁹

Comparison of Issue-Areas

The three issue-areas surveyed in this chapter, while dissimilar in content, are quite alike in that they illustrate nearly the same process of influence at work to solve problems. In each of the areas, a small group of businessmen has been active in implementing and carrying out projects which have ultimately become public policy for the community. A majority of these projects have been coordinated largely through the planning of formal business organizations prior to action by the city's official governmental agencies. The influence of other groups on most of these issues has been largely indirect, occurring only after projects have

⁸⁸(Ed.) The Tulsa Tribune, April 15, 1965.

⁸⁹(Ed.) The Oklahoma City Times, May 5, 1964.

been initiated and planned in detail by business groups.

In view of the observation of Dahl and other "pluralist" researchers, namely that influence tends to be specialized rather than generalized, the above findings take on added significance.⁹⁰

Probably the most striking characteristic of influence in New Haven is the extent to which it is specialized; that is, individuals who are influential in one sector of public activity tend not to be influential in another sector; and, what is probably more significant, the social strata from which individuals in one sector tend to come are different from the social strata from which individuals in other sectors are drawn.⁹¹

While this statement may accurately describe the process of influence in New Haven, one would not be justified in extending the principal involved to Oklahoma City on the basis of the issue-areas discussed above. Rather, it would seem that some individuals do exercise generalized influence in Oklahoma City, inasmuch as they are active in several areas of public activity. Moreover, leaders in the three areas surveyed represent members of the same social and economic strata, i.e., the "upper-middle" and "upper" class business level of the community. These findings are summarized in Table V on page 111, which focuses on the initiation of projects by community influentials in Oklahoma City.

This table illustrates the fact that businessmen initiated 12 of the 15 projects surveyed in this chapter, a higher proportion than any other group involved. Also of significance is the fact that four of these projects were initiated over significant opposition from other groups in the community. As illustrated in column five of the table, formal business organizations were more active in these areas than any other formal bodies, accounting for planning and coordination of 13 of the 15 projects.

⁹⁰See pages 45, 71-73.

⁹¹Dahl, Who Governs?, p. 169.

TABLE V
INITIATION OF PROPOSALS IN THREE ISSUE-AREAS

	Project	Initiator	Group	Organization	Opposition
Area 1	1. Tinker Diagonal	BS-1	Bus	Chamber	N
	2. Lincoln Boulevard	BS-1	Bus	Chamber	N
	3. Broadway Extension	Comm-1	Bus	Chamber	N
	4. West Reno	BS-1	Bus	Chamber	N
	5. 74th Street	SG	SG	Chamber	N
Area 2	1. Airport Trust	Cons-1	Bus	Chamber	X
	2. Water Trust	Cons-1	Bus	Chamber	N
	3. Atoka Project	BS-1	Bus	Chamber	X
	4. Industrial Trust	BS-2	Bus	Chamber	X
	5. Development Trust	CG	CG	Mayor-Council	N
Area 3	1. Urban Au- thority	CG	CG	Council	X
	2. Urban Action	Pet-1,BS-1	Bus	Chamber	N
	3. Tivoli Project	BS-1,Comm-1	Bus	Urban Action	N
	4. Renewal Director	Pet-1	Bus	Urban Action	N
	5. Pei Plan	Pet-1	Bus	Urban Action	X

The table also makes it possible to view the activities of individual community leaders in each area, and to compare their successes in one area with successes in the other two areas. Most noteworthy in this respect is the observation that one influential, BS-1, was credited by informants as having initiated half of the 12 projects started by the business group; moreover, the same person was active in all three of the issue-areas surveyed. A second man, Comm-1, was active in initiating projects in two different issue-areas, and a third, Pet-1, played a key role in three projects in the area of urban renewal. Since these persons were ranked as "primary influentials" by means of the reputational approach in Chapter II, their appearance in Table V indicates a significant correlation between the reputational and actual behavior approaches as used in this study. More will be said concerning this correlation and the possible explanations for it in the concluding chapter.

Summary

An attempt has been made to utilize a modified "pluralist" approach in this chapter to compare the influence of businessmen in Oklahoma City with that of other groups. The "pluralist" method has been explained, and projects in the areas of urban streets and highways, trust financing, and urban renewal have been investigated and compared to provide an analysis of the structure of influence in the community. It has been demonstrated that businessmen form the most influential group in Oklahoma City politics in the sense of initiating important projects which ultimately become public policy. The following chapter will entail a summary and a comparison with other studies of community influence.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

An examination of existing studies of community influence reveals a need to focus on the role of businessmen as a highly influential group in determining the direction and shape of municipal policy. It is also apparent that there is a need to combine the reputational and reconstructed case approaches in order to present as reliable a description as possible of the structure of influence. Moreover, this combination of approaches contributes insight into the theoretical debate between proponents of each method by relating differences in findings to variations in the characteristics of cities studied by each approach, rather than concluding that disparate findings are generated solely by the particular method employed.

In the following pages, conclusions relative to the influence of businessmen in Oklahoma City politics are submitted and compared with the results of studies in other cities, and the correlation between the two methods used in this study is discussed. Finally, the implications of business influence are examined, followed by an identification of problems encountered in such research. Thereafter, suggestions are offered for pertinent research in the future.

Business Influence in Oklahoma City

The survey of characteristics of Oklahoma City made it apparent that the preconditions for the exercise of influence by businessmen exist in

this community to a greater extent than in many other cities in the United States. The fact that Oklahoma City is a regional trading and transportation center with a high proportion of white-collar workers and a comparatively low ratio of manufacturing and industrial concerns decreases the likelihood of business influence being threatened by organized labor. Moreover, the existence of a few large locally-based concerns whose operations hinge almost entirely on the economic condition of the immediate marketing area increases the likelihood of businessmen becoming concerned with matters of municipal policy. Business interests in Oklahoma City are centralized to a high degree, with projects being planned and coordinated through the Chamber of Commerce, a well-organized institution with a history as old as the city itself. From past examples of the Chamber's influence in public affairs, it has been shown that the organization is capable of initiating projects which ultimately become public policy. Finally, an overview of the history of the municipal government indicates the existence of a decentralized and highly non-professional municipal bureaucracy during much of the period reviewed. This lack of centralization in the political sphere, related in part to the absence of partisan elections and the lack of a class basis for machine politics, indicates that politicians find it difficult to achieve office with organizations of their own making. Conversely, the high degree of organization exhibited by businessmen, coupled with their support of good government movements, increases their potential for political influence. This potential was most dramatically demonstrated by the role of businessmen in initiating changes in the character and personnel of municipal government.

Given the potential opportunity for influence described above, the writer used the reputational approach to ascertain the location of

businessmen in Oklahoma City's influence structure. It is clear from this approach that businessmen generally are credited with being more influential in community affairs than are members of any other group. This method also evidenced that certain community leaders are reputed to be more influential, better known, and more often preferred as project leaders than other leaders. Persons familiar with community affairs credit one small group of businessmen with having influence over virtually all areas of policy, while other leaders exercise limited influence. The influence of all other groups, including public officials and voters, is reputed to be indirect, occurring only after projects have been initiated and planned by businessmen. One formal organization, the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce, is reputedly more influential in regard to decisions affecting municipal policy than is any other institution, public or private.

Influential businessmen are said to follow their "enlightened self-interest" in taking part in community decision-making, in that they are willing to risk their own time and capital in order to share in the future prosperity of the city. Certain prerequisites for community leadership in Oklahoma City are described, including business executive status, wealth, and personal leadership and intellect; while this list is by no means exhaustive, these criteria appear to be some of the principal bases of influence in the community. In addition, the process of influence in Oklahoma City is said to follow a pattern in which projects are initiated by a small group of business leaders through personal contact, and then carried forward to a larger group for implementation in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce. Thus while the larger group concerned with community decision-making constantly changes, it appears that a few influential businessmen remain active in all important

decisions. These findings clearly indicate that businessmen have the reputation of being the most influential of groups in Oklahoma City politics.

In order to determine whether or not businessmen deserve the reputation for influence they enjoy, the writer applied a reconstructed case approach to Oklahoma City. The behavior of participants in actual projects in the areas of urban streets and highways, trust financing, and urban renewal was investigated to discover what types of community leaders are most active in initiating public projects. From this examination, it is apparent that businessmen exercise more influence over municipal decisions than any other group. Moreover, business organizations account for action on more projects than do other types of formal organizations, including the agencies of municipal government. A comparison of influence over the three issue-areas investigated depicts a process in which a few businessmen start projects and then carry them through with the aid of business organizations and other community leaders. It appears that other leaders and organizations enter into these areas only after projects have been initiated and planned by businessmen and business organizations. It further appears that in this process some businessmen are more active than others, accounting for a larger number of successes in initiating projects, and upholding to some extent the reputation for influence accorded them.

On the basis of the methods used in this study, and the results they produced, one must conclude that businessmen comprise the most influential of groups in Oklahoma City politics. This conclusion seems apparent regardless of the approach used to discern the community's influence structure. While the correlation between results of the reputational method and reconstructed case approach is not exact, it is significant

enough to justify further discussion. At this point, however, it is pertinent to compare the influence of businessmen in Oklahoma City with the influence reportedly exerted by businessmen in other communities.

Business Influence in Other Cities

Oklahoma City is hardly unique in being characterized by a high degree of business influence. As noted earlier in this study,¹ many students of community influence have commented upon the active role played by businessmen as initiators of public policy. In his study of Atlanta, Georgia, Floyd Hunter compiled a list of 40 community influentials, over half of whom were businessmen:

Most of the leaders hold positions as presidents of companies, chairmen of boards, or professional positions of some prestige. Generally speaking, the companies represented in the listing are of major enterprise proportions. More than half the men may be said to be businessmen, if the term is used broadly. The major economic interests of the community are overwhelmingly represented in the listing. The pattern of business dominance of civic affairs in Regional City is a fact.²

Hunter further pointed out that decisions in Atlanta were most often made as the result of a consensus on the part of a few "key" business leaders as to what was best for the community, with formal governmental bodies exerting considerably less influence than these informal business "cliques". Probably the most striking variation between business influence in Atlanta and Oklahoma City is the extent to which businessmen in Oklahoma City rely upon formal organizations, such as the Chamber of Commerce, to aid in implementing proposals. Hunter held that formal

¹See pp. 1-2.

²Hunter, Community Power Structure, p. 76.

associations and institutions are much less important in Atlanta decision-making.³

Also of interest for its illustration of business influence is Delbert C. Miller's study of Seattle, Washington, in which he discovered 12 "key leaders" who were businessmen:

Key influentials are a significant feature of any community power structure, for they are the sociometric leaders. The initiation and sanction of policy tends to be centered about them so that they may greatly influence the values which dominate in decision-making.⁴

Like Hunter, Miller finds that the most effective decisions are made by informal "cliques" of businessmen, and concludes that public officials have a limited influence when compared to the "key influentials".

Another interesting study of community influence, and moreso for its refinement of the reputational approach and its parallels to Oklahoma City, is Carol E. Thometz' study of Dallas. From a list of 67 influential persons, judges ranked individual leaders for their influence in community affairs, arriving at three distinct levels of power in the community. The writer noted:

Every person interviewed stated without hesitation that Dallas leadership comes primarily from the business and financial sectors of the community. The respondents were of the opinion that the leadership structure reflects the nature of the city's economic structure. One informant pointed out that if the city became more industrial, leadership complexion would be more industrial.⁵

Like the preceding studies, Thometz reports that public officials were reputed to be much less influential in Dallas than were businessmen,

³Ibid., pp. 81-90.

⁴See Delbert C. Miller, "Industry and Community Power Structure," American Sociological Review, XXIII (1958), pp. 9-15.

⁵Thometz, p. 31.

while official governmental bodies had less to do with the implementation of public policy than did informal groups of businessmen. While these findings are similar to the observations made herein, a few important distinctions should be noted. First, during the reputational portion of this study, several public officials were nominated as influential leaders, while only two such persons were reputed to be influential in Dallas. Further, the reconstructed case approach applied by this student substantiated the fact that some public officials are influential in decisions in Oklahoma City, and pointed to the ability of the City Council to wield influence on some issues. Thus whereas the influence of public officials in Oklahoma City is minimal compared to that of businessmen, it would appear that such officials enjoy more influence than their Dallas counterparts.

Also of interest in a comparison of the two cities is the fact that Thometz considers the Dallas Chamber of Commerce to be of little consequence when it comes to implementing important municipal projects. Almost the exact opposite is true of the Oklahoma City Chamber. Finally, it appears that members of the educational and religious spheres may have the opportunity to influence decisions in Oklahoma City to a greater extent than is true in Dallas. Only one educator was nominated for influence in Dallas, compared to four in Oklahoma City, while two ministers were named in this study and none were reputed to be influential in Dallas. It is probably true, however, that the influence exerted by such persons, both in Dallas and Oklahoma City, is confined to a few specific areas, and is not generalized to the extent of business influence.

Two additional features should be noted concerning the latter studies. Each has evidenced extensive business influence over municipal policy, and each was accomplished by means of the reputational approach.

Critics of this approach, as mentioned earlier,⁶ tend to criticize it on grounds that it prejudices results by insinuating that some group always controls a community and that this group is dominant because of its socioeconomic position in the area. These critics tend to approach the issue of community influence through an examination of behavior in actual decisions, rather than rely on seemingly well-informed judges' opinions. Since most of the opposition to the reputational approach stems from the work of Robert A. Dahl in New Haven, Connecticut, it is informative to review his conclusions concerning community influence.

Reputation Versus Reality

Unlike most studies mentioned, Dahl credits public officials with being the most influential group involved in initiating community policy, and states that businessmen and "social notables" wield less influence comparatively in New Haven. Moreover, he finds that influence tends to be specialized, in that persons who are influential in one area of public activity are less influential in other areas. While these findings may accurately describe the structure of influence in New Haven, one has doubts about extending them to other cities which are not similar to New Haven. Yet Dahl and other followers of the "pluralist" approach to community influence tend to see the differences in findings between New Haven and other cities as stemming from the use of the reputational approach. This study does not bear out these conclusions, as both the reputational and actual behavior approaches show a comparable structure of influence dominated by businessmen and business organizations. The fact that conclusions generated by the reputational approach are not

⁶See pages 34-35, 70-73.

verified in every detail by the reconstructed case method makes it seem likely that the reputational approach results in some invalid findings. However, the fact that a significant correlation exists between the findings of both approaches also suggests that variations in community influence structures may stem from factors other than the methodology employed.

While the writer can do little more at present than hint at these factors and their relationship to community influence structures, it should be noted that most of the reputational studies have been done in Southern and Western cities of the United States, while the reconstructed case approach has been used in the East. Thus the various cities studied vary greatly in age, population and ethnic characteristics, geography, economy, and social and political structure. Dallas, for example, is a "frontier" community when compared to New Haven, a city with a history of 300 years. It would appear that the time element involved might have a relationship to changing patterns of influence in the older city. Moreover, Dallas and Atlanta each consist of a population which is ethnically homogenous, while New Haven has been subjected to successive waves of foreign immigration. And it would seem likely that there is more of a class basis for politics in New Haven with more of an opportunity for politicians to win office without the support of business interests.

Perhaps the most vital difference between New Haven and Dallas, however, is the existence of a strong and active two-party political system in the Eastern city, compared with non-partisanship in Dallas. Surely these differences in the formal institutions of politics have an effect upon the influence structure of a community and upon the ability of private groups to wield influence over policy. Finally, New Haven is unlike the other cities mentioned in that it is more highly industrialized

and therefore more apt to produce an organized labor group strong enough to offset potential business influence. This observation may also indicate that a higher proportion of industrial and manufacturing concerns in New Haven are national in scope than is the case in the other cities mentioned, thereby resulting in a lack of concern by some New Haven businessmen over matters of local policy.

The foregoing observations suggest that it may well be impossible to develop a method for studying community influence that will be applicable to all cities with which one wishes to deal. The fact that many cities differ so greatly in their basic characteristics seems to indicate that some cities are more amenable to certain methodological approaches than others, while a few cities tend to exhibit nearly the same structure of influence regardless of the approach used. Thus Oklahoma City is characterized by a high degree of business influence, as are Dallas, Atlanta, and Seattle, yet its structure of influence is not identical to that found in these cities. On the other hand, this study makes clear that Oklahoma City's influence structure is radically different from that of New Haven.

Implications of Business Influence

Given the existence of extensive business influence in municipal affairs, it becomes imperative for the citizen of Oklahoma City, or any other community, to inquire into the effect that such influence has in relation to the nominally democratic processes of government. These processes call for decision-making by public officials, responsible to their constituents, and acting without the direction of non-public persons and groups. In practice, however, it would appear that this democratic ideal is difficult to achieve in the American municipality, for

not all voters have equal access to public officials, and gaining such access may be very difficult without the aid of organized and competing interest groups. As Thometz has noted:

When . . . there are informal and unofficial bodies which tend to organize effort and power to influence the outcome of matters before the city council, we must question the effectiveness of the democratic ritual in insuring that the individual citizen will actually be heard. Although the individual citizen is equally free to recruit and organize the proponents for his point of view, it is frequently difficult for him to do so. It is a time-consuming task which will be rewarding only if he can muster in sufficient numbers people of sufficient skill, and with sufficient resources, to compete with other organized bodies of citizens. Therefore, the individual citizen often has to rely on existing groups with resources he does not have, perhaps even with different objectives than his, to compete with organized interests which are alien to his own.⁷

Thus the individual voter may be represented not only by his elected officials, but also by the action of organized and competing interest groups which exert influence in public policy on his behalf. Such competition may be viewed as providing protection for the rights of the individual, inasmuch as they guarantee that alternatives in policy will be presented to the councils of government. Viewed in this light, it becomes clear that the individual's wishes can be protected to the extent that there are various groups in active competition with each other to influence the course of public policy. In cities where one such group becomes more effective in securing its wishes over a number of years, as have the businessmen of Oklahoma City, it becomes necessary to consider what safeguards exist in the system for the protection of the individual's rights.

First, it should be noted that business influence in Oklahoma City is not carried forward primarily with the idea of assuring quick profits

⁷Thometz, pp. 99-100.

for the members of the business group. Rather, businessmen have often risked considerable amounts of time, energy and capital on projects which were marginally if at all related to financial gain. Business support of such projects has often been the principal reason for their success, guaranteeing benefits to all citizens of the community. Moreover, it is clear that many of these projects have been realized more cheaply and completed more quickly through business support than might be the case if they had been left solely to the action of public officials.

Second, while businessmen exercise a great deal of influence in public policy, this influence is not sufficient to insure absolute control of all phases of public affairs in the city. It is clear from an examination of various decisions that other groups, such as public officials and voters, are successful from time to time in offsetting business influence. Probably more important in this respect than the action of other groups, however, is the internal competition within the business group itself as to how various projects should be implemented. While Oklahoma City's businessmen subscribe to a common creed of doing "what is best for the community", there is no unanimity as to how this creed is to be implemented. Also, it should be noted that business leaders enforce an informal "policing" technique among themselves to insure that influence will not be exerted unduly on behalf of policies which are solely designed to insure a profit to some particular firm or individual.

Third, there is for the most part no "secret" about business projects and plans; individual businessmen and business organizations make extensive use both of the printed and spoken word in putting their goals before the community. Thus any interested citizen may be informed as to impending actions, and act either to support or oppose them as he sees fit. In this vein, it need be noted that extensive business support and

publicity for changes in Oklahoma City's governmental structure probably resulted in a greater awareness on the part of citizens of problems which existed than would have been possible in the absence of business influence. Since this awareness led to changes in city government, which strengthened it and gave its agencies greater control over the direction of public policy, it can hardly be concluded that such business support was prompted by the desires of a sinister "power elite".

Finally, it is important to note that businessmen do not by any means enjoy complete control over the political and social environment in which they must operate. This environment increasingly becomes more complex as the city changes and grows, thereby making it likely that other groups will gain in influence and increase the level of competition in the community. Moreover, many aspects of public policy which affect Oklahoma City currently are fashioned at higher levels of government, where business influence may not be as effective. Since this trend is likely to continue as states and the national government become increasingly concerned with the problems of cities, the character and direction of business influence over municipal policy is bound to undergo changes.

In the last analysis, however, it is clear that at the present time, businessmen comprise the most influential of groups in Oklahoma City politics, and it seems likely that this trend will continue in the immediate future. This fact should not cause the individual citizen to relegate decision-making entirely to others, however. Rather, one should remain informed as to the suggestions made by various groups on public policy and act to enforce his viewpoint. Only if he is willing to accept these basic civic responsibilities will the democratic system guarantee protection of his rights.

Problems and Suggestions for Their Future Resolution

Several problems arose during the course of this study which seem inherent in attempting to deal with the influence of private individuals in public policy. While informants, with only one exception, discussed freely the roles played by individual businessmen, it was apparent that many of them needed assurance of anonymity. The discussion of businessmen as a group tended to be much more frank and open, apparently indicating that interviewees found it easier to discuss issues in terms not involving the personality and motives of other men. This problem might have been serious if the writer had relied solely upon individual reputational rankings to provide an estimate of business influence, but it was compensated by the use of other methods. A second problem arose in the classification of individual businessmen. As pointed out earlier in this study, many of these men occupied several occupational niches simultaneously. The writer attempted to overcome this difficulty by classifying them according to the economic category to which they devoted the majority of their time, but there are indications that this was not entirely satisfactory. A basic ambiguity which arose, partially because of this difficulty, involved classifying those businessmen who also serve as part-time officials in municipal government. This was resolved by classifying such persons as city government personnel who were currently serving in office.

Another problem arose in selecting decisions for reconstruction in that portion of the study dealing with actual behavior. While the issues selected were generally agreed upon by informants as being important, it is obvious that they can be considered either narrow or broad. Thus it would appear that a method of choosing salient issues for study is

essential if this approach is to gain widespread acceptance. Without some degree of valid scope and comparability among issues, it is difficult to assess accurately the total effect of the influence of various groups in community policy.

For future research, the writer believes that the combination of approaches used in this study can be fruitfully applied in other studies of community influence. There is a distinct need to gather more information on the precise effect of each of these approaches upon the results of like studies, as well as to learn more about the exact relationship between the characteristics of different cities and the exercise of influence in them. Finally, the influential businessmen described in this study may well be able to make their influence felt beyond the confines of this community. Because the present study focused upon municipal policy, it did not consider the external extent of the influence structure. And a means of meeting this need might be a study of the influence of metropolitan businessmen over matters of public policy generated at higher levels of government or in satellite communities.

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A P P E N D I X E S

APPENDIX A

PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

This is part of a master's thesis in Political Science at Oklahoma State University; the purpose of the study is to identify those individuals in Oklahoma City who have influence regarding community-wide political issues, in the sense that they have the ability to get important proposals adopted or keep others from getting their proposals adopted.

Because of your knowledge of civic affairs in Oklahoma City, you are being asked to help identify these influential persons by answering several questions; the persons you name will then be interviewed concerning their leadership activities in the city. The study is focused on patterns of leadership and decision-making rather than on the characteristics of individual community leaders. Anonymity is guaranteed to all persons involved during the interviews. Thank you for your cooperation.

1. Many residents of Oklahoma City believe that there is a group of civic leaders here who decide important community-wide issues. Would you agree that such a group exists and that they have the most influence in public affairs?
2. If you agree with the first assumption, will you tell me who these persons are? Would you say they are primarily businessmen, public officials, or professional men?
3. What sort of leadership do these persons provide us with, in your opinion? Would you say that they perform for the most part in the interest of the community, rather than in their own self-interest? Do the metropolitan area newspapers exert a great influence in settling community issues?
Is organized labor able to play an important role in Oklahoma City?
Do Negroes play a vital role?
Would you include members of the military establishment or officials of other governmental units (i.e., state, county, or federal officers) among the influential in Oklahoma City decisions?
4. What professional, civic, or service organizations in the city are most often involved in initiating community projects?
Is there an organization or organizations in which the most important decisions affecting Oklahoma City are consistently made?
What formal positions (political, civic, or company-connected) in the city give the person holding them a great deal of influence in civic affairs?
Would you attribute much influence to the executives of our large national corporations or publically-regulated enterprises?

Do you know of many instances in which members of the educational or clerical community have exerted a strong influence on community issues?

5. Would you name 10 people in Oklahoma City whose opinions on important issues are respected and accepted with continued regularity?

APPENDIX B

JUDGE'S INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. What is your main civic interest?
2. Can you name an important community-wide issue in which you have played an active part recently?
3. How was this issue resolved? Would you say that it was taken care of mainly by the city's influential civic leaders, or was it presented to the public for action?
Who settled this issue and how did they go about doing so?
4. Are most important civic issues that you are familiar with handled in this manner?
5. Is the same group of influential persons active in resolving all types of issues, or would you say that the group changes depending upon the nature of the issue?
6. What is the size of the group involved in either case above (large or small)? Once such groups are activated do they remain relatively stable over a period of time (i.e., can new persons enter such groups with ease)?
7. If you were responsible for action on an important issue is there any one person whose backing you would consider essential?
8. What professional, civic, or service organizations in the city are most often involved in initiating community projects?
Is there an organization or organizations in which the most important decisions affecting Oklahoma City are consistently made?
9. Do these organizations have a great deal of influence in themselves or does their ability to deal with civic issues stem from the influence of their individual members?

APPENDIX C

INFLUENCE RATING SCALE

Column 1: If you were responsible for a major project which was before the community that required decision by a group of leaders - leaders that nearly everyone would accept - which 10 on this list would you choose, regardless of whether they are known to you personally or not? Add other names if you wish.

Column 2: Please give your opinion as to how influential these men are by rating them from 4 (most influential) to 1 (least influential). If you feel a person has no community-wide influence in any area, put an "N" by his name.

Check 10	Rate For Influence 4 to 1	Names Of Influentials	Never Heard Of	Know Of	Know Slightly	Know Well	Kin

APPENDIX D

ISSUE-AREA INTERVIEW SCHEDULE*

This is part of a master's thesis at Oklahoma State University involving civic leadership in Oklahoma City. This stage of the study focuses upon leadership in specific projects which have been undertaken in the city in recent years.

This student is attempting to determine the influence of various persons and groups upon these projects in terms of their ability to introduce and successfully carry such proposals through.

No individuals will be identified by name in the completed study, nor will those persons interviewed be identified. Your cooperation is genuinely appreciated.

1. What person or group first suggested this project?
2. How did they put it into action? What did they do?
3. Were there alternative ideas from other groups on getting this done?
4. If so, were these ideas adopted? Did they modify the original idea to any great degree?
5. How were changes adopted or rejected?
6. If action by public officials was required, how were they brought into the project? Did they play a large role in first setting it up?
7. Did this project require action by the voters at some stage? If so, did they accept the project as originally conceived?
8. Would you say that this project as it was originally planned was successfully implemented without serious opposition? Without major changes?
9. How would you account for the success (or failure) of the group concerned to get this proposal adopted?

* Each person interviewed was given a list of the decisions under consideration for reference during the interview.

VITA

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Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Thesis: THE INFLUENCE OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY IN OKLAHOMA CITY
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