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CHAPTER I

REGIONAL COUNCILS: THE ORGANIZATIONAL SETTING

COGs: A Voluntary Approach to Metropolitan Coordination

Great urban aggregations have always interested Americans. The
United States began its experiment in democracy as a nation of farms
and small settlements, but for most of its tumultuous existence its peo-
ple have been preoccupied with the impulse to found, build and experience
great cities. More recently, in the light of the new reality of metro-
politan America, there came a disturbing realization that a spirit of
design and form--of civilized order--was missing from our urban life.
The cities contained stunning wealth together with shameful poverty.
They featured expressions of monumental artistic grandeur, but these were
submerged by vast stretches of graceless architecture. Americans had
brought to the cities their aspirations for success, yet millions of city
dwellers spent lives of fear, deprivation and despair. We found our
great cities were gripped in an "urban crisis."

The federal government's responses to our urban ills have been
as varied as the explanations of their causes. One reason that has been
advanced is political fragmentation, or the division of the metropolis

into a host of independent, overlapping, presumably uncoordinated and inefficient governmental units. There are central cities and suburbs, counties and special districts, townships and school districts, boards, authorities, trusts and commissions. The very title of a study of the New York metropolitan area, 1400 Governments, suggests the problem.[1] Such balkanization of authority is thought to account for much of the perceived confusion and waste in public services as well as for disorderly urban growth. If there were a single central authority, it is thought, the quality of public services would rise; the cost, fall. Inequities in the financial burdens of separate jurisdictions would be removed through the aggregation of resources. The voters, presently confused by a plethora of elected officials of indeterminate responsibility, could intelligently decide whether policy makers for the area deserve approbation or dismissal.

On the other hand, the fragmented metropolitan community has its defenders. It is argued the existence of many relatively small governments instills in citizens a sense of community and provides them ready forums in which to air their grievances. The multiplication of public offices provides more access points to groups seeking a degree of influence over political affairs. And, the pragmatic observation is made, partitioning the metropolis with the fences of political boundary lines helps insulate the citizen from peoples who might violate his sense of cultural homogeneity.[2]

Furthermore, say the critics of metropolitan unification, the chief argument offered for political consolidation—efficiency in the delivery of public services—may be exaggerated.[3] With respect to the

need for cooperation between jurisdictions, H. Paul Friesma says we have not recognized the substantial amount of intergovernmental cooperation already present in the metropolis.[4] Other observers believe that for many purposes a multi-jurisdictional pattern wherein services can be "marketed" according to their economic externalities or internalities, is actually advantageous compared to a regional political "Gargantua."[5] Joan Aron finds the difficulties of establishing regional-based policy-making, together with the uncertainty of meaningful payoff from such areawide decision processes, have caused some to reconsider its value.[6]

Despite these critics of regional conformity to central guidance, there persists a firm opinion that if left to itself the balkanized metropolitan political system will not serve well its citizens. Such opinion is behind the many efforts made to recast the metropolitan potpourri into a more-or-less monolithic structure. For several decades the primary effort was to establish formal central governments, in such forms as the urban county or the consolidated city and county. Occasionally, as in Miami or Nashville, such drives succeeded. But far more often voters and politicians declined to accept the neat and symmetric organizational edifice the reformers had offered them.

Gradually, a different and more politically palatable solution came to be advocated. This solution would, it was hoped, be acceptable to local officials and their constituents because it lacked real power to jeopardize local independence of action. Instead of centralized authority to impose areawide direction there would be a focal point for communication and education in metropolitan problems. The predicted result was voluntary intergovernmental cooperation and coordination for

the ends of rational, planned urban growth. This solution was the
voluntary regional council, or as it is more commonly called, the
council of governments (COG).[7]

Councils of governments are "multi-functional voluntary regional
associations of elected local officials or of local governments repre-
sented by their elected officials. The governing board of a COG is com-
posed predominately of the chief elected officials of the member politi-
cal jurisdictions, and at least part of its funds come from local public
sources."[8] COGs are

> designed to provide an areawide mechanism for key officials to
> study, discuss, and determine how best to deal with common problems.
> This mechanism is not a government, as it has no mandatory financing
> and enforcement authority. Instead it is a continuing agency to
> furnish research, plans, advice, recommendations, and coordination.
> The legal basis for its organization is either a specific state
> enabling law, a general state interlocal agreement act, or non-
> profit corporation legislation.[9]

In most cases the COG is structured so as to give all members (or at
least all general purpose member governments) equal representation and
voting weight, regardless of member population.[10] Councils of govern-
ments typically have an all-inclusive general assembly for all govern-
ment units which have elected to join the organization and an executive
board which meets more often to discuss and make policies. There is also
a professional and clerical staff headed by an appointed officer typi-
cally called the executive director.

The council of governments concept is not new. The idea can be
traced back to the 1920's,[11] although the number of COGs grew extremely
slowly through the next half-century.[12] The 1960's, however, were
exciting and influential years for urban regionalism, as the federal
government began providing inducements for the formation and maintenance

of regional councils and their planning functions. Substantial federal financial assistance for areawide planning arrived with Section 701 of the Housing Act of 1954, which established a program of grants-in-aid for urban planning. In the Housing Acts of 1959 and 1961 the 701 program was expanded with respect to eligible recipient agencies and the area-wide nature of planning was given more emphasis. The Housing Act of 1959 called for "comprehensive" rather than "urban" planning--a direction reinforced by the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962 which made comprehensive planning a prerequisite for interstate highway construction funds in metropolitan areas.

A major impetus to COG formation was provided by the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1965. The new Section 701(g) made COGs directly eligible to receive 701 planning assistance grants, while Section 702(c) required areawide planning as a prerequisite to federal aid for construction of basic water and sewer facilities. Also in that year, additional boosts for regionalism were given by the Public Works and Economic Development Act and the Appalachian Regional Development Act which respectively authorized establishment of Economic Development Districts and Local Development Districts. EDDs and LDDs are forms of regional councils which possess many characteristics of COGs.

The final milestone in federal assistance to regional councils was Section 204 of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966. This established a review and comment process whereby local councils would study applications by area jurisdictions for a variety of federal grants-in-aid and advise the appropriate federal agency as to the application's conformity to regional plans. With this

new tool councils, which previously could only attempt to persuade jurisdictions to comply with regional plans, now hoped to exercise at least some degree of actual power to influence federally-aided urban growth.

In 1968 Title IV of the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act built upon the review and comment process. Office of Management and Budget Circular A-95, issued under authority of Title IV, is the basis for the "clearinghouse" role which many COGs have come to exercise with regard to screening of grant-in-aid requests. The theory behind this review procedure is that the council can and will determine if the project or program for which federal funds are requested conforms to areawide comprehensive or functional plans. If the application is in non-conformance, the council will attempt to persuade the requesting jurisdiction to amend its application. Failing voluntary compliance, the regional council will express disapproval of the application whereupon an attentive federal agency will presumably look with disfavor on handing over the sought-for funds.[13] By one means or the other the council will thus supposedly achieve regional coordination in physical development. It was also expected under this procedure that local governments would be strongly encouraged to join and participate in the regional organization so that they might have an effective voice in regional affairs.

The cumulative impact of this body of federal legislation is that there has been a strong "carrot and stick" approach to regionalism, with financial incentives for regional plans and agencies to devise them, and fund witholding if grant requests are not preceded by favorable areawide comment. The effect on COGs and other similar regional bodies

(such as Regional Planning Commissions, Economic Development Districts
and Local Development Districts) has been marked. The National Associa-
tion of Regional Councils counted only 35 COG-type organizations in
1965 but their census for 1967 showed 103; by 1971 there were 322 councils
listed in the NARC directory.[14] Clearly, they have become the dominant
organizational mechanism for bringing rationality to development of the
metropolis.

The regional council approach has its enthusiastic admirers,
some of which go so far as to see the choice to be "COGs vs. Chaos."[15]
More than a decade ago the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental
Relations advanced the then relatively unfamiliar COG concept and ex-
pressed its belief the formation of councils should be encouraged.[16]
By 1966, Royce Hanson could see some serious problems in the eight COGs
he had examined but still felt "they have proved their worth, and offer
much knowledge from which other areas may benefit. The future . . .
seems bright. The councils of governments offer one of the most produc-
tive means of translating plans into action for many of America's metro-
politan areas."[17] A Detroit-area COG official expressed the theme of
local autonomy which has often been used to sell regional organizations
to jurisdictions suspicious of metropolitan Supergovernment: "Councils
of governments, as a matter of fact, will restore local autonomy which
has already been lost and will prevent the further erosion of this
invaluable characteristic of American government."[18]

Walter Scheiber, perhaps the most prominent spokesman for COGs,
asserts they are viable responses to the urban crisis. If metropolitan
problems can just be perceived as regional in nature and soluble through

regional cooperation, he believes COGs can then "furnish an opportunity for development of a long-range context against which alternative courses of action can be measured in terms of anticipated costs and benefits."[19] Scheiber is optimistic about the organizations' future potential: "There is little doubt that in the years ahead COGs will achieve more general acceptability; that they will become stronger and more effective; that they will become broader in scope; and that they will increasingly be willing to tackle the tougher problems which some now avoid."[20] To Scheiber and those who share his viewpoint, then, the voluntary regional council is precisely the organizational device with which we may face and effectively cope with our urban ills.

But the findings of many empirical studies of regional councils, in contrast to the optimistic views recited above, is that they are in fact not effectively meeting the goals they were designed to pursue. As we shall see in detail below, most COGs are actually rather weak institutions, buffeted about by the conflicting expectations and demands of federal agencies, planners, and both member and non-member local governments. In general, they have not been able to build firm public support or even public familiarity; nor have they accomplished very much toward implementing the ever-growing mass of plans they generate. Although they were supposed to be instruments for building regional harmony, many councils have been split by persistent controversy over organizational purposes, means and procedures. They have been charged with the task of tackling some of the gravest and most stubborn problems of urban life, yet their tools are weak and few. As will be discussed later, there seems to be ample cause for great caution in predicting much success for

councils of governments, for the organizations by their very design and situation are handicapped in attaining the grand goals their supporters have set out for them.

Apparent Problems in the COG Device

The basic rationale for a council of governments is that it provides a formal mechanism for regularly bringing together elected officials from the various jurisdictions in the area. As they meet, it is hoped, they will compatibly discuss their common problems, communicate to one another their opinions as to what should be done, and then join in coordinated action. The process is therefore supposed to be one of cooperation through shared understanding and information. But there is no inherent reason differences of opinion will be lessened through this face-to-face encounter. Instead the opposite result may occur if council meetings fan the flames of disagreement by raising and aggravating points of controversy. If the COG is confronting issues which have serious implications for divisions already present in the metropolitan area, say, issues pitting central cities against suburbs, just to raise the issue may increase intergovernmental conflict. For example, the city of Cleveland tried to use a regional council as a forum in which to present the problems of residents of the inner city. Suburban members of the COG, however, refused to share Cleveland's concern for the urban poor. "The Cleveland case," says Frances Friskin, "suggests that greater understanding does not necessarily lead to greater desire to cooperate. In fact, the reverse can and did happen."[21]

Thus the council may be faced with a Hobson's choice: it may squarely face controversial issues which may then split the organization,

or it may choose to avoid conflict by engaging in only bland activities
on which consensus can be reached. But if the latter alternative is
chosen the council may find itself in the position occupied by the
Washington, D. C. area COG during its early years. According to Royce
Hanson,

> So long as cooperation itself was the basic goal of the Council,
> every decision tried that basis. Every failure could be taken as
> a basic failure of the organization itself. . . . The most reluctant
> thus could almost always prevent a decision, or at least control
> its content in return for assent. [As a result,] for six years, the
> Council has gone through the agony of becoming without ever
> arriving.[22]

Although many regional council directors report there has been
little conflict over specific issues between central city and suburban
interests,[23] the fact that most councils use a one-unit, one-vote system
together with population-based financial assessments reveals a struc-
tural source of general irritation for core cities already less content
with their representation.[24] In reciprocity, observers have noted a
widespread suburban distrust, even fear, of the central city.[25]
Especially in COGs serving the larger SMSAs, matters such as assessment
of dues, fear of dominance by a single jurisdiction or a coalition of
jurisdictions, and voting arrangements have been controversial issues.[26]
Even non-membership in the council can be troublesome, since "to the
extent that the COG does not include the cities and towns and/or counties
of the metropolitan region, it may serve as a barrier to the normal
cooperation which might exist among the various jurisdictions of the
region."[27] Such problems as these probably do much to explain why in
1973 more than a third of reporting councils were considering some form
of structural reorganization.[28]

Controversy within councils of governments stems at least in part from the nature of the circumstances under which they were formed. It is clear that without federal bankrolling of regional planning and federal comment-and-review requirements that coerce local governments into joining areawide organizations, there would be far fewer COG-like institutions.[29] Two-thirds of regional councils responding to an ACIR survey reported that for each of three recent years over half of their revenues came from federal grants.[30] The Commission concluded such massive assistance from Washington "has transformed areawide confederalism from a wholly independent undertaking to a largely federally financed surrogate for metropolitan government."[31] This federal surrogate role for the COG is readily recognized by local politicians, who cite facilitating the flow of federal funds as a major reason for forming and joining regional agencies.[32] The funding role was even cited by cities which did not join COGs, feeling the council might slow or interrupt delivery of grants-in-aid to them.[33]

Probably because relatively few grant applications are in fact condemned by councils, generally local officials are satisfied to let them continue to carry out A-95 clearinghouse responsibilities.[34] But since local representatives often tend to want clearinghouses to do nothing more than rubber-stamp their applications for grants, while in contrast the federal agencies expect requests to be vigorously screened, there is created an unavoidable tension: "COGs are kept busy, on the one hand, trying to demonstrate to federal authorities that they are worthwhile investments and, on the other, reassuring local units that they constitute no threat to them."[35] Many city and county figures

would agree that regional councils "should be tools of--and responsive to--local governments. They should assist local governments . . . with the consent of local officials. . . . [they] should deal with areawide problems . . . (with the consent and support of local governments.)"[36] There is no apparent way, however, to reconcile the opposing perspectives of federal agencies and local jurisdictions. Thus regional organizations will continue to exist under considerable strain as they are caught in the middle between their two "publics."

Another potential source of conflict may exist with regard to the councils' professional staffs, which frequently express their wish that COGs have veto powers to enforce their coordinating and monitoring responsibilities, and even perform some line functions as well as the familiar staff duties.[37] In addition, the professional staff will probably not always share the opinions of member elective officials as the council is faced with policy-making decisions. It is apparent, however, that council directors feel they should have a major part in determining council objectives and achieving agreement upon them.[38] Of course, political representatives to the council will not necessarily agree that directors should have such influence over regional policy.

Executive directors, like most of their colleagues on the professional staffs of councils, are more likely to have a planning background rather than one in politics or administration.[39] Training in planning can be viewed as more appropriate for the day-to-day operation of a regional agency although many problems COGs deal with are clearly political. In addition one may observe that planning, like politics, is a value-laden activity.[40] Both activities may be expected to become

embroiled in controversial issues. But comprehensive planning for the entire metropolitan area should be even more controversy-prone than usual. First, the area contains jurisdictions which may differ greatly in tastes, needs and resources. Planning for many jurisdictions will certainly be more difficult than planning for the single community, and even the latter task is demanding in its complexity.[41] The pattern of political fragmentation and overlapping authority, when added to such other factors as the narrow perspectives of planners, the uncertainties planners could not control, and the inadequacies of means for plan implementation, are seen as compelling almost certain failure of the comprehensive planning process.[42]

Second, in the metropolis there is greater differentiation in the attitudinal dimension of planning. Orientations toward planning as a concept or process will differ between communities that reflect the "public-regarding ethos" and those communities where the "private-regarding" ethic prevails.[43] Similarly, Oliver Williams' typology for local government has implications for attitudes toward planning. The official who sees local government as "an instrument of community growth" is likely to differ sharply from the officeholder who prefers government to be a "caretaker" or "provider of amenities" when the regional council attempts to direct metropolitan development.[44] It will be difficult if not impossible for the council to peacefully resolve such differences merely by invoking the cause of rational urban coordination.

COG professionals thus may become discouraged by the difficulties inherent in the metropolitan planning process. In addition, however, the regional planner may undergo the frustrations often experienced by

the specialist who finds his values differ from, and his suggestions are rejected by, his organizational superiors.[45] The planner may be led by his education and training to believe he best understands the nature of regional issues. He would therefore expect to exercise some power in dealing with them. But formal control over council decision-making is vested in a body of political officials who may and do overrule professional recommendations. Thus technical judgments may be subrogated to political ones. Such political influences are seen as somehow "unprofessional,"[46] but the planner is not cued as to how to respond to them. There is no normative theory for the planning discipline which instructs him whether he should be a political agnostic, an advisor to political decision-makers, or a political activist.[47] If the planner attempts to cope with council controversy by taking the latter course of action, the lack of professional norms sanctioning his activities may make him an issue along with the original item of business.

How, then, do executive directors resolve disagreements within the council, or between the members and federal agencies? Directors report they usually try to persuade opponents to resolve their differences for the sake of the council; slightly less often they simply bring disagreeing parties together (thus take no active part on their own in settling the dispute) or support the council chairman and executive board.[48] Directors generally do not believe they should perform the role of conflict resolver.[49] Nor can one reasonably expect directors to accomplish much as agents for regional harmony. First, disputes are usually between officials who are their organizational superiors. Second, no director can establish effective regional policy-making and at

the same moment encourage local autonomy. We have seen that federal

agencies (and some other parties) favor the first role; local officials

the second. And it is this basic contradiction in purpose which is the

inescapable cause of recurring organizational strain and strife for

councils of governments.

Empirical Evidence of COG Inadequacies

In addition to the more general observations made in the pre-

vious section, there are a number of case studies and comparative examina-

tions of councils to provide a realistic assessment of councils of govern-

ments' performance to date and their potential for future regional

policymaking. Over the years, the tone of these empirical studies has

been rather consistently pessimistic. The limitations imposed by COGs'

voluntaristic, consensual nature were recognized in several early studies

of councils in existence before heavy federal support of regionalism

began.[50] These works found the pioneer councils were weak, suffered

from uncertainty as to their regional role, lacked broad member and pub-

lic support, and were ineffective in meeting the goals set for them.

More recent findings continue the general themes sounded earlier.

For example, the Association of Bay Area Governments is said to have

determined that true regional government powers are essential for it to

become effective in its planning capacity: "ABAG recognized in 1966

that a voluntary association of cities and counties was unable to make

and implement comprehensive regional plans."[51] The Atlanta Regional

Commission, however, was created in 1971 and given more legal power than

the typical COG. But it cannot yet be determined if such authority will

enable it to achieve its general objectives and whether ARC will begin

evolving toward the status of a regional government.[52] COGs in Tennessee have met federal requirements for metropolitan planning but activity beyond that is minimal. An inability to obtain consensus among council members has prevented meaningful implementation of plans.[53] The Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency suffered from suspicions of big-city domination, dislike of planners, fear of "super-government" and aloofness to inner city social problems. The controversy became so bitter Cleveland was led to withdraw from the organization.[54]

Several extensive studies of regional councils also contain rather negative evaluations of COG effectiveness. Charles W. Harris studied 74 councils of governments, giving particular attention to their relations to central cities. The organizational features which made them essentially confederations for debating, rather than acting upon controversial issues were seen as keeping COGs from disturbing the status quo supported by established interests.[55] Two years later Harris was still unable to determine what the potential for COGs might be.[56]

A survey of 93 regional councils was made in 1969 by the International City Management Association.[57] Conclusions from this study stressed the great dependence of regional councils on federal support and guidance. The federal government, as noted above, is largely responsible for the creation of most COGs and contributes much of their operating funds. This study indicated federal influence in another manner. Federal programs influence the councils to involve themselves with physical development and functional planning to the detriment of an interest in dealing with controversial social issues. This suggestion that COGs are creatures of federal policy is reinforced by Bielec's study of expenditure

preferences in councils of governments.[58] He found councils tend
strongly to pattern expenditures around maximization of federal financial
support rather than according to program preferences of executive direc-
tors. Less than 5 percent of the COGs he surveyed had undertaken any
action without federal funding support.[59] Regional agencies are appar-
ently not able to stimulate local initiative for resolving common urban
problems without the assistance of the federal "carrot."

One of the most prominent students of regionalism, Melvin B.
Mogulof, is friendly to the concept of councils of governments. But in
a study of councils in seven metropolitan areas around the country, he
reluctantly concluded that none of them were effectively redistributing
resources.[60] The councils he studied were beset by a myriad of problems:
"The image of the COG we mean to convey is one of a beleagured organiza-
tion, surrounded by unsure federal partners, unwilling local members and
a barely awakening state government."[61]

A primary function assigned many COGs is that of areawide func-
tional and comprehensive planning. But William Timmins, who is still
optimistic regarding the future potential of regional councils, concluded
after a study of 48 agencies that their planning process and product was
generally of poor quality: "Our central findings are that their growth
has far outstripped the quality of their planning; that available manage-
ment tools, especially systems analysis, have not been adequately em-
ployed; that their full potential is still far ahead. . . ."[62]

Even if sound plans are drawn up, of course, there remains the
task of putting them in effect. But the difficulty of plan implementa-
tion was noted by the ACIR in its survey of member officials: " . . .

local governments considered implementation of comprehensive and functional plans to be the most serious problem facing regional councils."[63] This however was only one of several challenging areas. Federal program participation, relationships with other areawide bodies, and citizen involvement in regional matters were also emphasized.[64] On the other hand, in some areas councils were perceived as helpful,[65] but officials' evaluations of COG performance were generally lukewarm at best.[66] Council directors rate COG performance more favorably than do member officials.[67]

In view of the foregoing discussion, it would appear there is little reason to recommend the council of governments device as an agency for ameliorating urban ills. Yet such recommendations are still heard. COGs, after all, represent a major resource for urban decision-making. Advocates of regionalism do not wish to write off their great investment in councils of governments merely because the payoff has to date been disappointing. Rather, COG proponents are now suggesting expansion of the basic organizational structure and grants to councils of more power to rule on regional matters. The underlying idea is that, to be effective, COGs "should increase their operational scope and have enforcement powers. . . . With true governmental organizational powers, local government units would respond to the regional organization."[68]

The importance of councils of governments as mechanisms for advancing urban regionalism in itself invites critical examination of their behavior. But, because the regional council is being promoted as the basis for another and broader attack on the perceived problems of Metropolis, it is especially worthwhile that we learn more about its organizational characteristics. As we have seen, there are strong pressures

on COGs which push them in conflicting directions. They are caught between the drive for metropolitan coordination, from one side, and the persistent desire for local autonomy from another. In many cases councils were created under conditions which failed to legitimate them as a unit of the metropolitan political system. Their continued existence is troubled by lack of success in gaining popular acquaintance, let alone public backing. Most observers conclude COGs have not significantly achieved the goals set for them; neither have they proven effective in bringing about a sense of urban community.

The typical council of governments is thus an organization which is placed in an environment of unusual turbulence and stress. It might well be suggested that an organization which is called upon to perform essentially noncompatible functions, and to exist within a context of continuing--sometimes extreme--controversy, is being asked to do more than can be reasonably expected. Can and will it succeed? In the pages above we have reviewed the practical experience. In the next chapter we turn to a theoretical explanation of how the organization will behave under stress, and what we may expect it to become.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Robert Wood, 1400 Governments (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961).

[2]The case for metropolitan consolidation may be found in Thomas R. Dye, Politics in States and Communities, 2d ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973) at pp. 328-32. Arguments for political fragmentation are presented at pp. 332-34.

[3]Brett W. Hawkins and Thomas R. Dye, "Metropolitan 'Fragmentation': A Research Note," Midwest Review of Public Administration 4 (February 1970), pp. 17-24.

[4]H. Paul Friesma, "Interjurisdictional Agreements in Metropolitan Areas," Administrative Science Quarterly 14 (June 1970), pp. 242-52, and "Some Organizational Implications of Intergovernmental Activity Within Metropolitan Areas," Midwest Review of Public Administration 1 (February 1967), pp. 11-16.

[5]Vincent Ostrom, Charles Tiebout, and Robert Warren, "The Organization of Government in Metropolitan Areas: A Theoretical Inquiry," American Political Science Review 55 (December 1961), pp. 831-42. Their views are treated in Charles W. Harris, "Regional Responses to Metro-Urban Problems: Councils of Governments" (a paper prepared for presentation at the 1972 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association).

[6]Joan B. Aron, "Regional Governance for the New York Metropolitan Region: A Reappraisal," Public Administration Review 34 (May/June 1974), pp. 260-64.

[7]Not all regional councils are councils of governments; particularly outside metropolitan areas regional agencies will carry such titles as Economic Development District, or Area Planning and Development District. In this work the term "council of governments" will be used generally but not exclusively to refer to regional bodies serving large urban areas. "Regional council" and "council of governments" is often used interchangeably in the literature.

[8]U.S., Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, Substate Regionalism and the Federal System, 6 vols. (Washington, D. C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973), vol. 1: Regional Decision Making: New Strategies for Substate Districts, p. 50. This is the most extensive and penetrating study of regional councils. Further references to the first volume will henceforth appear as ACIR, vol. 1, p.__.

[9]John C. Bollens and Henry J. Schmandt, The Metropolis, 2d ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 365.

[10]ACIR, vol. 1, pp. 80; 82.

[11]Ibid., p. 54.

[12]Ibid., p. 74.

[13]Actual rejection of applications by COGs is not common. In the first six months under Section 204 councils returned with critical comments only 38 of more than 1,000 applications reviewed. Executive Office of the President, Bureau of the Budget, Section 204--the First Six Months (Washington: April 1968), p. 5, cited by Bollens and Schmandt, The Metropolis, p. 367.

[14]ACIR, vol. 1, p. 74.

[15]R. Alan Bibler, "COGs vs. Chaos," American City 85 (September 1970), pp. 94-98.

[16]U.S., Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, Alternative Approaches to Governmental Reorganization in Metropolitan Areas (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, June 1962).

[17]Royce Hanson, Metropolitan Councils of Governments (Washington, D. C.: Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, August, 1966).

[18]Kent Mathewson, "Councils of Governments: The Potential and the Problems," in Emerging Patterns in Urban Administration, eds: F. Gerald Brown and Thomas P. Murphy (Lexington Mass.: D. C. Heath & Company, 1970).

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CHAPTER II

PARSONIAN THEORY AND COUNCILS OF GOVERNMENTS

In the first chapter it was shown that, in general, councils of governments have not borne out the expectations originally held for them. As regional planning institutions, COGs have been undistinguished with respect to both quality and implementation of plans. As participants in the A-95 review and comment process, they have rarely provided a real check on regional development. The councils' internal operations have been plagued by dissension over ends as well as means. Only when near or full unanimity is assured have COGs been able to establish regional policy; thus agreement is reached only on issues on which council direction seems superfluous. In their external relations, COGs have met with apathy at best and outright hostility at worst. Support from state agencies has been weak; from federal agencies, ambivalent. Councils of governments have not enjoyed a receptive climate in which to take root and thrive.[1]

The problems discussed above can be seen and described, however, in a more general way that is based upon COGs' status as public bodies which are attempting to maintain some sort of stable and profitable existence. In reviewing the situation of regional councils of governments, one is impressed by the revealed internal tensions as these organizations work to achieve a state of viability and struggle to define their roles.

COGs are organizations composed of interrelated and interdependent but not necessarily like-minded persons and groups. The difficulties of harmonious collective action are made plain, as are the problems of role definition for members of such bodies. One is also impressed by the external objects and phenomena which COGs must recognize, deal with and attempt to master. As distinguished from the persons and bodies which make up the COG, we perceive an environment from which come certain stimuli. These stimuli—various issues or problems—call for some sort of mediation by the organization and appropriate responses based upon some kind of behavioral code. If the response serves the interests of and tends to alleviate the problem, the organization, having passed this test of its capacities for collective action, can turn to the next one.

What has just been described is, of course, a **systemic** relationship—the familiar concept so often borrowed from the life sciences to guide our thinking in the social sciences. Here the council is seen as an "organism," composed of interdependent and interrelated units which are distinguishable from objects outside the organization's boundaries. The social organism, like biological ones, behaves in certain regularized ways so that it may near a state of homeostasis and continue its existence.

We choose to think in such terms because if we are to organize our examination of data it is not sufficient to merely note that COGs have experienced various difficulties. Instead, we want to order our findings; to put some kind of discipline upon facts and ideas so a meaningful codification may emerge. In other words, we prefer to use a conceptual framework—such as the systems approach—within which data and propositions can be sorted out and arranged for more rigorous examination and testing.

The most elaborate of the various system approaches to describing political institutions, and the one used to guide this dissertation, is the body of theory identified with the American sociologist, Talcott Parsons. This theory is "structural-functionalism" (or rather his particular version of structural-functionalism). Parsonian theory, as it is commonly referred to here as well as elsewhere, is essentially concerned with a social system's patterns of behavior and the roles which reflect such behavior (i.e., structures), the needs for maintenance of the system as a viable and distinct entity, and the processes (i.e., functions) by which the systems meet such needs. If the needs or requisites are satisfied then the system's structure should survive over time without basic change. One can conclude from the fact of survival that the system's structures were, indeed, functional. On the other hand, structural change is prima facie evidence the "functional imperatives" were not satisfied. Complete extinction of the system as a boundary-maintaining entity is, of course, conclusive proof that some essential aspects--functional performances--were insufficiently rendered.

The reader should be warned the preceding paragraph is but the sparsest of descriptions of Parsonian theory. Only the barest essentials of structural-functionalism were given and much of its richness of thought is thereby omitted. Yet it is no easy task to sum up the whole of his "theory of action" in so few words. Parsons' thinking, developed over more than four decades, is laid out in scores of publications.[2] To its author, at least, it is all tied together, a coherent body of theory. In actuality this prolific outburst of theoretical creativity has been substantially refined and revised over the years, especially

as Parsons has been influenced by his colleagues and collaborators.[3]

Thus, Parsonian structural-functionalism is no simple set of theories easily reduced to brief summation. Compounding the difficulties of condensing his thought is the nature of Parsonian explication. As almost any reader will attest, the "incurable theorist" has an apparently incurable habit of expounding his theories in remarkably obfuscatory language. Nor is he generous in providing concrete examples or illustrations which might clarify the rigorous abstractions which mark his writing. Even able students may well join with one eminent scholar to wonder if Parsonian theory is worth the effort required to penetrate it. A guidebook or interpreter to Parsons thought, if not actually indispensable to the student's needs, is certainly useful for the beginner.[4]

Although one has to wrestle with these deficiencies in Parsons' work one may well forgive him in view of the immense task he has set out for himself. For Parsonian functionalism purports to be a true general theory of action. It attempts to encompass the entirety of human behavior--from an infant's learning processes to the economics of whole nations. The behavior of political institutions or agencies thus represent only subdivisions of his general scheme for analyzing human action, and a research project which attends to such particular phenomena may draw upon only part of his theoretical edifice.

One may even argue that Parsons has attempted to be too inclusive with his theory. The necessity in a general theory to use analytical terms and constructs of sufficient flexibility to subsume all empirical phenomena inevitably results in some sacrifice of precision for breadth. This factor surely contributes to much of the lack of clarity

that marks his papers. In addition, it seems evident that the need in a true general theory of action to account for such a tremendous range of material helps explain the tendency in his writing of this theory to be tiringly expansive. The reader is led ever further on and on, assured by the author that all fits together like a seamless garment, as Parsons tries to relate everything to everything else. In practice, however, one must be somewhat selective in adopting the theory if only for the sake of economy of time and effort. It is simply too vast to be applied in its entirety.

Parsonian theory can also be criticized on a more fundamental basis. It does not actually fulfill the requisites of a true theory; that is, it is lacking in predictive capacity. A future event cannot be foretold on the basis of observation of past or present events. In this sense, then, some may argue the work is not so much a theory as it is a mere heuristic or mnemonic device.[5] Henry Landsberger, who has criticized Parsons for the ambiguity of his concepts and empirical referents, also scores his failure to develop predictive hypotheses.[6] The same argument is made in a wide-ranging attack on Parsonian theory by William Foote Whyte.[7]

Clearly there is no universal satisfaction with Parsons' work. But imperfections in this great body of thought are not necessarily fatal flaws. William Mitchell argues in defense and explanation of Parsons that

> although the search for logical relationships is prominent in the work, the inquiry is not apt to end in a mathematical statement; rather a certain richness of imagination is encouraged . . . Part of the reason . . . is the sheer intractability of the materials he wishes to consider. His scheme includes the entire social

system . . . In addition, the variables included are often non-linear and discontinuous and do not lend themselves to simple relationships and mathematical statements such as are found in laws of supply and demand.[8]

It should also be noted that Parsons himself does not claim his theory is at the same level as those found in the natural sciences. The state of the art in the social sciences simply is not yet that far advanced, although Parsons hopes to help move it toward this goal. He also agrees with his critics that empirical testing is the real criterion of his or any other theoretical scheme.[9] Still, if Parsonian theory can be criticized for lacking predictive abilities, much the same is true of virtually all theory in the social sciences.

But despite whatever validity is contained in these criticisms, it is still clear that Parsonian theory can be useful to us. It is not essential, particularly in view of the state of development of the study of society and politics, that our theories stand or fall on the basis of identity with theories of physical science. Social theory may be utilized in other ways besides empirical prediction. As we observed earlier, for purposes of much social research theories like Parsons' are most useful as "windows" by which we view human social behavior. They permit us to organize, discipline, and enlighten our data-gathering and observation activities. In this sense, theory is not so much an explanatory formulation as it is a kind of conceptual framework to understand organizations such as councils of governments. We may set aside for the future stages of theoretical development the task of proposing "if . . . then" statements. The immediate task is that of understanding what we have happening before us.

It is in this latter fashion that Parsons' work has usually been used, rather than as a universal equation to explain the mechanics of social behavior. Many times his structural-functionalism has proven to be an aid to our imagination, a rich source of conceptual assistance in framing our images of the political world. The well-known work of Gabriel Almond and James Coleman, for example, takes the idea of functional imperatives of social systems and translates them into terms now familiar to political scientists: political socialization, interest aggregation, and so forth.[10] Recently another imaginative use of Parsons' concepts appeared in a study of the functions American mayors serve for their urban political systems.[11] In some manner, Parsons' work has found application in numerous other articles and books on aspects of political behavior and institutions.[12] This is not to say, however, the whole of the theory has been put to work in any of these applications. Perhaps it never can be comprehensively adopted. Still, many scholars of diverse specific interests have found something of value in Parsons' ideas and have been able to selectively adopt and adapt it to their purposes.

This study will also be rather selective in its approach to Parsonian theory. For example, at the greatest level of generality, one could simply conceive of councils of governments as social systems. But inasmuch as the term social system for Parsons comprehends the range of human interaction from ego and alter, all the way to the People's Republic of China, this conception brings into play the entire potential scope of functionalism. In order to somewhat narrow the frame of reference, COGs could be considered simply as political systems. But political

systems include much more than COGs—they encompass metropolitan areas and whole nation states. Although councils are linked in many ways to the political systems of metropolitan regions, they are neither identical nor necessarily representative of them. There is a major difference between studying a particular council of governments and studying a metropolitan political system.

Accordingly, for purposes of this study COGs will be conceived as more particular forms of social systems. COGs are, first, collectivities—social systems "having the three properties of collective goals, shared goals, and of being a single system of interaction with boundaries defined by incumbency in the roles constituting the system. . . . ."[13] Secondly and more precisely, they are forms of collectivities called organizations. To Parsons organizations are those collectivities which have a purpose beyond that inherent in the interaction of members. A group of people who gather together solely for participation in and enjoyment of folk dancing comprise a collectivity. The group's goal is achieved in the mere interaction of members as they dance. But if their goal becomes that of winning a prize awarded to the best folk dancing group, they are likely to become what we would recognize as an organization. Winning the prize requires formal practice sessions, procedures for choosing particular dances and dancers, and so forth. Or as Parsons puts it, the new organization is distinguished now by "primacy of orientation to the attainment of a specific goal" which "gives priority to those processes most directly involved with the success or failure of goal-oriented endeavors."[14]

Admittedly COGs do not perfectly fit Parsons' definition of organizations. Councils commonly experience great difficulty in giving "primacy of orientation to a specific goal." Some prefer that mere interaction of members constitute the goal. For these people COGs are and/or should be mere forums for discussion of regional matters, the governmental equivalent of a casual folk-dance. But it is also clear that COGs were intended to be much more than forums and that many people still see a larger dimension to their existence. The implicit or explicit acceptance by many people of just such a purposive and active role for regional councils of governments, and movement toward it, is made evident by the very fact that opposition to it has been aroused. Therefore COGs will primarily be considered here as a particular kind of social system, political organizations. Those aspects of Parsonian theory which bear directly on this institution will be emphasized. Less relevant parts can be safely put aside from immediate consideration. On the other hand, because Parsonian structural-functionalism is a general theory, concepts that are not specifically concerned with organizational or political behavior can be freely used whenever appropriate.

Some Aspects of Parsonian Theory

It seems useful at this point to insert a brief explanation of Parsonian theory before going on to present councils of governments in structural-functional terms. At a basic level one may say that Parsons' search for the universalities of social action has resulted in two related sets of ideas. The first set has to do with five pairs of alternative orientations or categorizations which the actor may adopt to make sense of objects in the environment. These are called the pattern variables.

The second set of ideas has come to occupy Parsons' attention in his more recent work. This involves four unavoidable tasks, or "functional imperatives," which any social system must perform if it is to persist over time. The idea of the pattern variables has been integrated with the idea of the problems systems face in satisfying the four functional imperatives: according to Parsons, the solution of each imperative calls for a certain appropriate combination of patterns of behavior. Furthermore, an actor has no choices other than those identified by the pattern variables. Thus the pattern variables and the system tasks represent a complete description of the various possibilities for social action.

The Pattern Variables

Of the five pattern variables, three have to do with alternative orientations the actor may bring to the object-situation; that is, how he may relate to other objects, individuals, or systems. The remaining two describe the different ways in which an actor may categorize objects in the situation—how significant characteristics ("modalities") of objects may be characterized in accordance with certain standards for evaluation. The following paragraphs briefly explain the pattern variables. Throughout this section on the pattern variables the quoted material is taken from Parsons' account of the particular social system aspects for each variable.[15]

Affectivity versus Affective Neutrality, or "the dilemma of impulse versus discipline." In some relationships, such as marriage, the actor is expected to exhibit affectivity, the "role-expectation that the incumbent of the role may freely express certain affective reactions . . . and need not attempt to control them in the interests of discipline."

In other relationships, such as between teacher and students, the appropriate status is that of neutrality, where one "should restrain any impulses to certain affective expressions and subordinate them to considerations of discipline." Parsons realizes, however, that in reality it is the particular setting of the relationship that temporarily governs selection of the appropriate pattern. In marriage, for example, the wedding ceremony and the wedding night obviously call for varying degrees of restraint of impulse. Similarly, in the organizational setting of, say, the business firm there are times when affectivity is somewhat more appropriate (e.g., the office Christmas party) than at other times (the daily schedule of commercial routine.) It is clear that if the business firm's goals are to be met there must be a predominance of "discipline of impulse." Yet one can also see that absence of affective expression from all business situations would be dysfunctional.

Self-orientation versus Collectivity-orientation, or "the dilemma of private versus collective interests." Collectivity-orientation, as Parsons uses the term in this sense, is not restricted to relationships within what we ordinarily think of as collectivities. Instead, it describes for any social situation (e.g., the doctor-patient relationship) the degree of self-interestedness appropriate on the part of the subject. In settings allowing self-orientation, there is

> . . . the role-expectation by the relevant actors that it is permissible for the incumbent of the role in question to give priority in the given situation to his own private interests, whatever their motivational content or quality, independently of their bearing on the interests or values of a given collectivity of which he is a member, or the interests of other actors.

On the other hand, in some social situations the actor is expected to demonstrate an orientation in favor of the collectivity (i.e.,

individuals or groups with which he is interacting) and thus "is <u>obliged</u>
. . . to take directly into account the values and interests of the
collectivity of which, in this role, he is a member." In this latter
case, then, the actor must sublimate his personal interests in favor of
the social system of which he is a part, just as the well-disciplined
soldier must disregard personal safety to carry out a dangerous mission
on behalf of his "outfit."

In more ordinary organizational settings the extent of demon-
strated collectivity-orientation is often vital to the collectivity's
success in meeting its goals—producing a profit, surpassing a quota,
instilling in members a sense of accomplishment and reward. Collectivity-
orientation is a way of saying the organization has a "team spirit."
But we can also see that adherence to this pattern has the potential for
dysfunctional consequences. In complex organizations, orientation to
the immediate system (e.g., sales department; Department of Agriculture)
can hinder the progress of the larger system toward achievement of its
higher-order goals.

<u>Universalism</u> versus <u>Particularism</u>, or "the dilemma of trans-
cendence versus immanence." This pattern variable describes the actor's
choice of the manner in which objects may be categorized. Where bu-
reaucratic organization follows Weberian principles it is based on
universalism,

> . . . the role-expectation that, in qualifications for
> memberships and decisions for differential treatment, priority
> will be given to standards defined in completely generalized
> terms, independent of the particular relationship of the actor's
> own statuses (qualities or performances, classificatory or
> relational) to those of the object.

Thus, where universalistic criteria are important we concern ourselves with such considerations as training, competence, intelligence and the like.

In some social situations, however, particularistic criteria are more appropriate. In these settings we give priority to "values attached to objects by their particular relations to the actor's properties . . . as over against their general universally applicable class properties." It is the case of who one knows rather than what one knows. The dysfunctionality of particularism for Weberian bureaucracy is revealed by the inefficiencies plaguing government agencies in lands where nepotism is an institutionalized value. This is not to say, of course, that particularism is unknown in our public or private organizations. It is not very unusual for us to be dismayed--if not very surprised--to learn of some sort of favoritism shown an official's cousin, school chum or fellow Democrat. The point, however, is that we are dismayed. Particularism usually runs against the grain of our role-expectations.

Quality versus Achievement* or "the dilemma of object modalities." This choice involves categorizing objects either by their attributes or characteristics, on the one hand, or in accordance with their capacities for performance, on the other hand. In the example given earlier of the folk-dancing group, ascriptive modalities (i.e., the quality of being a dancer) were important as long as dancing in itself was the goal of interaction. In this setting a member of the group was expected in evaluating fellow dancers to "accord priority to the object's given attributes (whether universalistically or particularistically defined) over their

*Parsons also uses the terms Ascription and Performance, respectively, to describe this pattern variable.

actual or potential performance." But when the group organized to compete for a prize, the question of how _well_ a person danced (i.e., his potential for superiority in competition) became quite important and achievement criteria had to be used.

As with particularism, bureaucratic organizations usually will find ascriptive criteria dysfunctional. Personnel managers do not—at least should not—take a job applicant's financial need or physical handsomeness into consideration in deciding whether to offer a position. At the same time, we must remember that achievement is not always the most relevant criteria. Essentially honorific posts are often awarded on the basis of personal qualities rather than personal performances.

Diffuseness versus _Specificity_, or "the dilemma of the scope of significance of the object," concerns the breadth of aspects of objects with which the actor is concerned. In a diffuse relationship, Parsons explains, there is

> . . . the role-expectation that the role-incumbent (e.g., husband) . . . will accept any potential significance of a social object (e.g., wife), including obligations to it, which is compatible with his other interests and obligations, and that he will give priority to this expectation over any disposition to confine the role-orientation to a specific range of significance of the object.

In contrast, where specificity of orientation is appropriate, the role-incumbent

> will be oriented to a social object only within a specific range of its relevance as a cathetic object or as an instrumental means or condition and that he will give priority to this expectation over any disposition to include potential aspects of significance of the object not specifically defined in the expectation pattern.

Thus, ideally at least, within a bureaucratic organization one ordinarily should be concerned only with those aspects that bear directly on the formal organizational relationship with another person and not

with his personal problems, reading habits, or night life. This is what
we often mean by being "professional" or "businesslike." To act other-
wise would, like excessive gossip, be dysfunctional to efficient perfor-
mance of organizational tasks.

Yet it is also easy to think of examples which contradict the
general rule. Business firms will occasionally take pains to help a
financially-embarassed employee. History suggests the FBI will discharge
a fingerprint clerk whose reputation has been tarnished by stories of a
night spent with a girlfriend. One can only conclude that here, as with
all the other pattern variables, no universal standard for appropriate
organizational conduct can be laid down. All the particulars of the
social situation at hand must be taken into consideration. Only then
can one determine which combination of variables must govern.

The foregoing discussion of the pattern variables reflects Par-
sons' long-standing conception of them, as an exhaustive catalog of choices
open to the individual in placing himself with respect to other individuals
and social objects. But in recent years, especially as a result of Par-
sons' collaboration with Robert F. Bales, the pattern variables have taken
on a greater dimension.[16] The pattern variables are now also seen as
characteristics of social system behavior. To be more exact, they have
been given prescriptive status, in that they are seen as descriptions of
how social systems should act if they are to maintain their existance.
In this manner Parsons thereby builds a bridge between his earlier theo-
rizing and introduces us to his new concerns for the functional requisites
of social systems such as organizations.

The System Problems. Parsons' system imperatives, like his pattern vari-
ables, concern certain choices or dilemmas common to social interaction.

But unlike the pattern variables, which relate essentially to individual action, the system problems involve areas for choice in group behavior in collective settings. One such area of choice has to do with whether the system will primarily--not exclusively--emphasize harmony within the units comprising the system, or choose to stress the system's relation to objects of the external environment. The other area of choice stems from the question whether the system shall primarily seek immediate satisfaction from present circumstances--enjoy things as they are, so to speak-- or shall tend to defer gratification in the interests of securing long-term stability. This latter dilemma is called the "consummatory" versus "instrumental" goals choice.

When the internal/external and instrumental/consummatory dilemmas are cross-classified in contingency table form, one derives the four functional imperatives, or system problems. These are Adaptation, Goal-Attainment, Integration, and Pattern-Maintenance or Latency.* They are called imperatives because, according to Parsons, all social systems must to some sufficient degree perform each of the four tasks. They represent problems in that the functions are not necessarily compatible at any one point in time, and emphasis on one function tends to erode the system's position with regard to other functions. The problem, in other words, is satisfying the imperative without excessive neglect toward the other system tasks. Figure 1 below, adapted from one in R. Jean Hills' book on Parsonian theory,[17] illustrates the relationships.

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*Latency, Parsons' original name for this function, was soon replaced by the more descriptive term of pattern-maintenance. The earlier label persists chiefly as the last letter in the familiar "AGIL" acronym.

Continuity and Stability Immediate Gratification
over time

INSTRUMENTAL	CONSUMMATORY
Adaptation Continuity and stability over time in relation to environment.	**Goal-Attainment** Gratification in relation to environment.
Pattern-Maintenance Continuity and stability over time in relations among units.	**Integration** Gratification in relations among units.

Relation to Environment EXTERNAL (left row labels for first data row)

Co-existence of Units INTERNAL (left row labels for second data row)

Fig. 1: Imperative Functions of Social Systems

Adaptation concerns those adjustments made by a system as it

pursues its goals and maintains its existance. Successful adaptation

requires sufficient production and mobilization of "generalized facilities,"

i.e., system resources of all kinds, to meet these needs. The function

thus has an external referent--securing resources from the environment--

and an internal referent--proper employment of these resources once ob-

tained.

Parsons lists four kinds of resources utilized by organizations;

"land," labor, capital, and "organization."[18] "Land" (by which he means

resources closely committed to the organization on a long-term basis) in-

cludes not only real estate but such things as custom-designed machinery

with long service lives, patents, and public good will. A government

agency which has legislative authorization to exercise exclusive juris-

diction over certain areas of responsibility may be said to have a "land"-

type resource. Labor is easily recognized as an organizational resource.

Capital is, of course, essential in a money economy. Each of these three

common kinds of assets also obviously requires management on behalf of the system. "Land" must be cared for and used properly, employees must be recruited, supervised and given incentives to remain productive members of the organization, and capital must be invested, protected, and accounted for. These are all facets of adaptation processes.

"Organization," as used in this context, is somewhat different from the other resources. It refers to the arrangement of the other three factors of production. Organization is an intangible asset, paradoxically most recognized when it is absent. Students and practitioners of the arts of management find it difficult to explain, if not understand. But we can all agree that proper organization is essential to the adaptation function. It is especially important at certain crucial times.

> [Organization] is involved in processes of structural change in the organization. . . . It necessarily plays a central part in the "founding" stages of any organization. From time to time it is important in these later stages, since the kinds of adjustments to changing situations which are possible through the routine mechanisms of recruitment of labor services, and through the various devices for securing adequate financial resources, prove to be inadequate; hence a more fundamental structural change in the organization becomes necessary or desirable.[19]

We may infer, then, that basic structural change in the system is symptomatic of serious deficiencies in the performance of at least the adaptation function. It seems reasonable to assume that such remedial measures would not have been undertaken unless the prior arrangements had proven to be unsatisfactory.

As has been noted above, adaptation, like the other functions, calls for certain kinds of pattern variable responses if the system problem is to be most efficiently resolved. Effective "mastery of the external situation" thus requires that universalistic orientations toward

objects be adopted. Profit-minded business firms, for example, should

be interested in the skills and professional experience of potential em-

ployees. Furthermore, such enterprises should look for employee attri-

butes; the value of skills in bookkeeping or blacksmithing depends en-

tirely upon the character of the job assignment—keeping financial records

or shoeing horses. Thus, specificity of interest is called for, and the

firm is primarily interested in performance of the employee-object.

Finally, the relationship is—that is, should be—characterized by affec-

tive neutrality. In the business firm emotionality is usually dysfunc-

tional to efficiency and effectiveness; in Parsonian terms there should

be postponement of gratification. It is not the daily commercial routine

that should yield the greatest gratification (speaking from the stand-

point of the organization's interests), but the auditor's report upon the

overall results of the year's efforts. An effective public agency should

show the same pattern. In the arrangement of its resources, too, the

final results—forms processed, convicts rehabilitated—should furnish

the true test of adaptation processes. In other words, organizations

should not let their means become ends to be valued in themselves.

Goal-attainment involves the achievement by a system of a desired

state of affairs, or goal-state. This state is by definition somehow

different from that presently existing, and thus the problem of goal-

attainment is that of reaching the desired status. Furthermore, since

external conditions are always changing, and since internal conditions

must always change in response to these externalities, the problem is

never finally resolved. Goal-attainment is the pursuit of a moving tar-

get. It is transitory.

Earlier we saw that Parsons defines organizations as those collectivities distinguished by primacy of orientation to attainment of specific goals. All social systems, of course, must perform goal-attainment functions. Organizations are simply those specialized systems which are most effective for meeting the goals of a society. On the societal level, such goals relate to satisfaction of the functional imperatives for the society. Parsons accordingly differentiates between kinds of organizations in terms of the interests primarily served for society. Business firms, for example, are placed in the adaptive subsystem of the society-system, because they primarily accomplish adaptive functions for the society. Political units are seen as primarily involved in society's goal-attainment function.[20]

This does not mean, however, that councils of governments are necessarily goal-attainment devices for society. Within any one sector, such as the economy or the polity, some subsystems may emphasize one function, and other units will emphasize other functions. It is thus no easy matter to categorize organizations, public or private, in terms of their functional orientation for the larger system. The task of defining the levels of subsystems is in itself complex and arduous. Is the Tennessee Valley Authority within the economic or political sector? If within the polity, is it primarily related to the United States political subsystem, or that of the Southern region? The point, however, is not that we have difficulty in categorizing discrete organizational units. The point is that Parsons' conception of the goal-attainment function and other system imperatives has a "wheels within wheels" aspect that must be recognized.

What from the point of view of the organization in question
is its specified goal is, from the point of view of the larger
system of which it is a differentiated part or subsystem, a spe-
cialized or differentiated function. This relationship is the
primary link between an organization and the larger system of
which it is a part, and provides a basis for the classification
of types of organizations.[21]

If—as is often the case with councils of governments—there is

a problem of defining the larger system we can see there will also be

difficulties in determining its corresponding functional claims upon the

agency. This is the problem of the external aspect of goal-attainment—

defining just what those goals should be with reference to the larger

system. Put another way, there may arise a "disposal" problem. The goal

of manufacturing firms is attained by the disposition—sale—of goods

they have produced. If the larger system (consuming units) rejects one

firm's goods on some grounds, disposition is at least made more difficult

for the firm. The relationship between the firm and the larger system

has been put under stress, and evidence—declining sales—is readily

apparent for the problem.

Public organizations such as armies or schools likewise have

"products" which must be exchanged for resources from the larger system.

But the absence of a marketplace makes identification of disposal problems

more difficult. The product—national defense or racially-integrated

education—is, after all, still consumed, and only peripheral signs of

consumer dissatisfaction—draft evasion or white flight—are evident.

Democratic theory therefore postulates strong and direct linkages between

the system and its organizational subsystem in the case of political

institutions. Elected representatives, from the perspective of the lar-

ger system, serve to insure that public agencies' products conform to

citizen-consumers wishes. In other words, integration of subsystem goal-attainment functions with system needs is performed by elected officials. This is the same principle underlying the requirement that the governing board of a council of governments be composed of elected local officials: the product of the COG, e.g., a regional plan, should meet the needs and demands of the region. Such officials make known satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the regional councils' "product." Whether expressions by local officials represent the same larger system as that which originally pushed for creation of COGs is, however, a different matter.

Goal-attainment is closely related to the decision-making processes of an organization. This is because only if sound decision-making processes are employed can the resulting mobilization of resources (adaptation) yield the desired goal-state. Several kinds of decisions are involved. High level policy decisions are closely related to primary functions. They substantially commit the system in fundamental ways. Allocative decisions, which bear especially on the adaptive function, distribute specific system resources and determine their employment. Coordinative decisions, related to the integrative function, attempt to secure the motivation of members of the system. This last class of decisions involves such measures as coercion, inducement (rewards), and "therapy" (more subtle processes for securing enthusiasm and dedication from members of the system).[22]

Pattern variables associated with the goal-attainment phase of system activity are in part the same as those appropriate to the adaptation problem. Goal-attainment still requires specific interest in objects and orientation to their performance characteristics. The relationship

is suggested by the question, "How do these objects relate to the desired goal-state, and how may they help accomplish it?" As we recall, the goal-attainment function is closely related to the adaptation problem, and achievement is basically the primary motive in both.

But because goal-attainment involves, by definition, the consummatory state,

> the inhibition on gratification is suspended and affectivity suffuses the goal consummative activity. Similarly, the relation to the object no longer tends to be universalistic, concerned with realistic prediction of later effects or relation to other objects. It gives way to a relation of particularism where the object is a goal object, to be possessed, consumed, enjoyed or appreciated, and its particular relation to ego is the important thing.[23]

One may conclude from this that during states where objects are being "enjoyed or appreciated" the organization is indeed in the goal-attainment phase. This may accordingly reveal the real, as opposed to nominal, goals of the system. For example, a council of governments that appears to derive its greatest gratification from friendly intercourse at council meetings rather than from making forceful decisions regarding regional matters is probably pursuing different goals than federal planners expected.

Integration identifies internal processes by which the system's components are established and kept in a state of unity. Without this function the system's inherent centrifugal tendencies would destroy its boundaries and thereby dissolve it. The test of successful integration, then, is the existance of sufficient supportive commitment to permit system survival, and the "problem" of integration is that of creating and maintaining such a spirit of solidarity. The process demands that to some extent units of the system accept some subjugation of self in

the interests of the larger collectivity. Members must be willing to accept a role which is supportive of the system's requisite functions. And since in most fairly complex social systems, and certainly in councils of governments, there are other role demands and obligations which compete with the needs of the system, integrative processes must be constantly performed. If they are not, the system cannot attend to other functional imperatives. Chandler Morse notes the importance of integration:

> The identity (or integrity) of a system of action is embodied in the sense of solidarity that binds its members together, that gives them a sense of collective belonging, of mutual independence, so that they do not require an explicit quid for every quo but are prepared to accept a diffuse assurance of the general benefits of membership and to make their contributions accordingly. . . .
> Willingness to make specific contributions in exchange for somewhat diffuse benefits (or even none except "glory" or "reputation") is only one major aspect of solidarity. Another is a willingness to contribute to maintaining the integrity of the system, in fact, an acceptance of responsibility for doing so. Thus it is that much of what goes on in a system of action is concerned with integration. Integration, it should be re-emphasized, is a necessary aspect of both task-performance and system-maintenance processes.[24]

Pattern variables most properly accompanying the integrative phase or process are in part the same as those appropriate to the goal-attainment function. Since the purpose of integration is to strengthen bonds between units of the system, affectivity--demonstrated enjoyment of the relationship--characterizes the phase. Particularism marks integrative relations, too, because the particular status of a unit as a member of the system is the essential reason for such activity. The integration of units into a system also calls for diffuse orientations toward objects, where a larger set of attributes becomes important to the system. A business firm, for example, will become concerned with an

executive's health or family problems if they appear to hinder his on-the-job contributions to the company. Furthermore, to permit this member to attend to personal responsibilities of this kind, the firm may well tolerate a substantial temporary reduction of his performance (achievement) in business matters. Apart from the possible departure of the particular individual concerned, the firm may be thinking of the potential harmful impact on general employee morale if it did not briefly suspend the usual performance expectations. Integrative functions therefore also reflect a _quality_ orientation toward units of the system--members here are valued for what they are as well as what they can do.

Pattern-maintenance (also called latency and tension-management) is that state of affairs analagous to a biological organism's period of sleep. It follows periods of active interaction. Thus, the latency problem is that of restoring the qualities dissipated in the energy-and-resource-consuming phases of adaptation and goal-attainment. Potential disruptive tensions must be diverted or quelled, and motivational and cultural patterns must be renewed, if the system is to subsequently again devote itself to its primary tasks.

The pattern-maintenance phase is not actually one of complete dormancy. There may be marked activity on the parts of units of the system. But such activity is self-oriented rather than directed toward the interests of the system as a whole. In other words, this phase is characterized by general absence of unified action for the purposes of system adaptation, goal-attainment or integration. The system--as a whole--does not undergo change during the phase and is therefore said to be "latent."

Pattern-maintenance is primarily an internally-directed function. The object of the latency phase is maintaining motivational and cultural value patterns of the system. There must be a certain amount of uniformity in such values held by members of the system, and pattern-maintenance serves to constrain value differentiation. "Indeed, one of the most important functional imperatives of the maintenance of social systems is that the value-orientations of the different actors in the same social system must be integrated in a common system."[25] Pattern-maintenance restores this essential common set of beliefs.

But the latency phase has an external aspect, too. It is necessary that the system's goal and value patterns be complementary to those of the larger universe of systems. This is true because

> . . . the organization is always defined as a subsystem of a more comprehensive social system. Two conclusions follow: First, the value system of the organization must imply basic acceptance of the more generalized values of the superordinate system--unless it is a deviant organization not integrated into the superordinate system. Secondly, on the requisite level of generality, the most essential feature of the value system of an organization is the legitimation of its place or "role" in the superordinate system.[26]

In organizations this external aspect of the pattern-maintenance function is the special province of the "institutional" or "community" level of the system. This segment--which might be represented by a board of trustees--is positioned in the interface between the system and its environment. The institutional level's

> . . . primary "disposal" function . . . is to contribute to the integration of the higher-order system within which the function at the managerial level is placed . . . [to] mediate between the claims of this function on community resources and legitimation, and the exigencies of effective performance of the functions on the "lower" levels.[27]

Pattern variables associated with the latency state are similar
to those of the integrative and adaptive phases. Since cathetic interests
predominate, categorization of objects is primarily in terms of _quality_:
" . . . the important thing about the object is not what it _can_ do if
properly manipulated, but rather what it already _does_ to the emotional
state of the actor, through the associations it carries."[28] Following
from this, many _diffuse_ aspects of the object may be of interest as well.

One label Parsons has used to describe the latency phase--tension
management--cues us to understanding the association of _neutrality_ rather
than affectivity with this function. The need of the system is to restore
motivation, and this requires general inhibition of emotional expression
that might strain organizational bonds. When such expression does take
place, however, it may still serve the pattern-maintenance interests of
the system. Soldiers on leave from the front lines, for example, may
"blow off steam" in quite undisciplined ways. But it is clear that such
behavior is in response to individual psychological stresses and that it
helps to dissipate tensions built up during combat duty. The net result
for the military organization is restoration of combat fitness over the
long term. In addition, we may observe that the otherwise-impermissible
behavior on leave is excused because the men involved are identified as
soldiers--a common class of objects--rather than as ordinary _individuals_
who have committed certain excesses. In other words, we find a _universa-_
listic orientation to objects.

Parsons' determination that all systems must satisfy all four
of the functional imperatives in no way implies consistency in the order
in which problems are given primary emphasis. The idealized model

describes phase movement sequence as A to G to I to L. But other se-
quences are certainly possible. In fact, given the complexity of organ-
izational and environmental factors, we should ordinarily expect great
variation in phase sequence.

> The empirical order of phases, we assume, is dependent on the
> balance and fluctuation of inputs from outside the system as
> well as internal dynamic interdependencies, and so regular phase
> movements are in a way a limiting case, dependent upon unusual
> stability of inputs, a relatively closed system, and a number of
> other factors. In all likelihood phase patterns will also tend to
> differ according to the place of the system on the microscopic-
> macroscopic time range, and according to a number of unknown
> factors, such as "ease of communication" between units in the
> system, number of units, etc.[29]

One proposed sequence for new public agencies has recently been offered
by Fremont Lyden. He suggests that where the collectivity faces a great
deal of controversy or competition for resources, phase orientation will
begin with adaptation and proceed then to integration, goal-attainment
and pattern-maintenance.[30]

It should be remembered, however, that attention is never focused
entirely upon a single imperative. The phases are identified only by
primacy rather than exclusivity of problem orientation. Since some ob-
servation is always being made of each functional requisite, precise
identification of the particular phase the system is occupying may be
very difficult. We can expect, on the other hand, that systems should
in this balancing of problem-orientation reflect the most pressing func-
tional problem at the given period. Experiments with small groups by
Bales and Strodtbeck support this hypothesis.[31]

System Equilibrium. Just as the respiratory and circulatory functions
serve to maintain the life of the biological organism, the AGIL functions
serve to maintain the viability of the social system. If the system

manages to satisfy the four functional imperatives it will retain its

identity over time. It will keep its integrity as a system without fund-

amental change or dissolution. This is what Parsons means in the idea of

system equilibrium.

> A system then is stable or (relatively) in equilibrium when
> the relation between its structure and the processes which go on
> within it, and between it and its environment, are such as to
> maintain these properties and relations, which for purposes in
> hand have been called its structure, relatively unchanged.[32]

One should be careful to note that Parsons speaks of relative

stability. Social systems are composed of animate objects and they, like

other factors important to systems, are not static. The conditions sup-

porting any particular point of equilibrium are therefore transitory.

As a result, systems experience "moving equilibrium" which evolves in

response to changing conditions. One source of such change is the steady

evolution of environmental factors. Another is the delicacy of inter-

relationships between units of the system. These units are in their own

processes of equilibrium, and this is itself dependent on unstable meshing

of the subsystems.[33] Even so, we may still treat some reasonable period

of time in equilibrium as a "dependent variable" for other aspects of

system functions. Persistance of a system over time "without essential

change in its own structure" is prima facie evidence that the unit has,

indeed, coped with the functional imperatives. Conversely, the instability

of a system is a token of functional failures.

Parsonian Theory in Relation to Councils of Governments

In reviewing the essentials of Parsons' theory of action, one

is struck by certain elements which intuitively seem to be useful for

understanding and explaining councils of governments. His concepts and

ideas, although expressed in unfamiliar terms, are salient to the problems
which COGs have commonly experienced. Councils have experienced problems
of internal integration, of reconciling the wishes (values) of community
leaders with those of planning specialists, of establishing the legitimacy
of regional action. And of course, the turbulent history and clouded
future of councils of governments makes Parsons' concern with the processes
of system survival a very relevant matter.

To establish the validity of conceiving regional COGs' problems
and operations in structural-functional terms, it may be useful at this
point to recast some of Parsons' concepts into more familiar language.
We can begin by observing that the adaptation problem for COGs involves,
among other things, the task of securing and deploying financial and
human resources. These will come from federal, state and local sources.
Funding might be the most serious issue with respect to federal agencies;
procurement of personnel and establishment of administrative liaison with
appropriate offices would have highest priority on the local level. The
proper allocation of authority and responsibility—drawing up the organi-
zation chart—is clearly an adaptation matter: it involves the resource
Parsons calls "organization." Staff training is another specific activity
which is readily placed within the adaptation function. Primary system
emphasis upon these sorts of activities therefore indicates the organi-
zation is in the adaptive phase.

Goal-attainment, it will be remembered, is especially related to
decision-making processes. Councils are peculiarly decision-making or-
ganizations: in a real sense decisions are the "products" they supply
to the urban environment. When these decisions find acceptance the goal

has been attained, and we should expect indications of a state of con-
summative gratification, i.e., the organization will exhibit satisfaction
from producing an expression of regional planning. Of course, not all
organizational decisions are statements of high-level policy with regional
impact. We should also find decisions being made that primarily have
internal referents. COGs must delegate operating responsibilities to the
executive director, allocate voting weight within the governing board,
and carry out the daily routines of organizational life. These are the
same kinds of decisions we met previously in the discussion of coordina-
tive, allocative and integrative decisions for the system. All relate
to the goal-attainment function.

Integration processes are seen in COGs in the form of activities
which enhance the spirit of solidarity and cooperation. A key element is
stress upon the whole organization's interests rather than on those of an
individual member or sub-group of members. For example, the staff pro-
fessional who voluntarily works overtime without compensation, identifies
himself with the broader aims of regionalism, or freely contributes be-
yond the narrow specifications of the job assignment is serving the inte-
grative needs of the organization. For the member of a COG governing
board, a spirit of solidarity is evidenced in his or her willingness to
subordinate self-interest (defined so as to include the members orienta-
tion to the home jurisdiction) in favor of the regional collectivity.
This might take the form of the member's support of increases in dues
assessments to further council programs or perhaps the acceptance without
protest of a decision that promotes regional interests at some detriment
to the member's local community.

Pattern-maintenance, in COGs as well as other social systems, is not a phase where things are "done." That is, there is no change in the state of the system with respect to its goals. But by subtle means the continuity of the organization is being advanced, and the stability of the system is being strengthened. Pattern-maintenance is manifested when council members assume "peacemaker" roles to soothe waters roiled during interjurisdictional disputes. Latency is likewise the object of attempts made to resolve controversies involving the council without basic disturbance to the organizational structure. It is also seen in connection with activities which have the effect of strengthening the relation of the COG to its superordinate system. An example might be some sort of statement by a COG official which asserts that regionalism poses no threat to traditional local government values—i.e., argues that it is "legitimate."

This discussion has treated the four functional imperatives with respect to councils of governments, demonstrating that Parsons' analysis of system problems does bear directly on the phenomena of COG existence. One should recall, however, the _framework_ in which the functional requisites are placed. The imperatives comprise a set of choices—a set of alternative emphases in organizational behavior—that face any social system. Figure 1, presented earlier, showed graphically the imperatives in connection with the external/internal and instrumental/consummatory bases. Figure 2 below recasts this chart to explicitly cover councils of governments. Examination of it reveals the importance of the balancing process in meeting the various functional needs. A successful COG (that is, an enduring one) in Parsonian terms is one which has proved able to reconcile the competing patterns to form a stable whole.

Continuity and Stability   Immediate Gratification
over time

	INSTRUMENTAL	CONSUMMATORY
Relation to Environment EXTERNAL	**Adaptation** Manipulation of COG resources to attain goals in accord with dominant value system.	**Goal-Attainment** Sense of accomplishment and reward from identification with units of urban region.
Co-existence of Units INTERNAL	**Pattern Maintenance** Manipulation of COG resources in interests of more cohesive and stable organization.	**Integration** Sense of accomplishment and award from solidary and mutually supportive relations among members.

Fig. 2: Imperative Functions of Councils of Governments

But Figure 2 presents only one of the two sets of dilemmas Parsons defines for social systems. There is another set of choices, and these involve the actual carrying out of the function once the system has moved to emphasize that phase. This group of dilemmas thus concerns the pattern variables. If a COG is to best accomplish resolution of the system problem it should observe those pattern variables deemed to be most appropriate to performing the function. Precise and complete definition of specific behavior which fits pattern variables requirements is difficult if not impossible. In Table 1 below, however, some examples are given based on a conception of the COG as a purposeful agency for metropolitan planning; in practice most COGs have not been very close to this model. But this departure from the theoretical ideal only underscores the significance of the pattern-variables. In the adaptation function, for example, a true regional planning agency should exhibit universalistic orientations in evaluating grants. If instead particularistic criteria were actually employed, favorable comments on funding applications would be based on the status of the community as a neighbor jurisdiction: be friendly

TABLE 1

EXAMPLES OF EXPRESSIVE BEHAVIOR APPROPRIATE FOR RESOLUTION
OF FUNCTIONAL IMPERATIVES OF COUNCILS OF GOVERNMENTS

Functional Imperative (System Problem) and Associated Pattern Variables	Examples of Expressive Acts Conforming to Prescribed Pattern Variables
Adaptation	
Universalism:	"Grant applications should be judged solely on whether they reflect sound regional planning principles."
Specificity:	"If the COG is to be a good planning agency it will have to employ people of great competency in the profession."
Performance:	"The COG must devise an acceptable regional plan if it is to rationally guide future metropolitan development."
Neutrality:	"Members of the COG will have to put aside suspicion and ill-will if the COG is to unify regional efforts."
Goal-Attainment	
Specificity:	"The COG has succeeded in implementing the regional plan for transportation."
Performance:	"The COG has been an effective tool for directing metropolitan development."
Affectivity:	"A COG is worthwhile because it allows local officials to air grievances."
Particularism:	"Local officials have come to see the COG as having real value to them."
Integration	
Affectivity:	"The social hour before meetings is a relaxing occasion for small talk."
Particularism:	"Our past President of the Board should be commended for his fine work."
Diffuseness:	"Metropolitan problems affect all cities and the COG should be prepared to help a member with any of them."
Quality:	"Even small cities should be given some input into COG programs."
Pattern-Maintenance	
Neutrality:	"Arguing won't advance the COG's goals."
Universalism:	"Differences of opinion on one issue shouldn't interfere with things all cities can agree upon as COG members."
Quality:	"We all appreciate the way the COG has helped members over the years."
Diffuseness:	"No COG can plan effectively unless it fully understands all aspects of the problems member communities face."

toward them, and they'll reciprocate by not inquiring too closely into your own applications. The pattern variables thus describe the contrasting ways in which COGs may approach their role. Seeing the benign A-95 review practiced by many COGs in this way helps to explain their disappointing performance with respect to rationalizing metropolitan expansion.

To proceed with the demonstration, we may also observe that Parsons' conception of organizations as composed of institutional, managerial, and technical levels or subsystems is also readily applied to councils of governments. The institutional level is found in the governing board. This board is the chief policy-making authority. It determines the broad questions of allocation and coordination; of prescribing the general dimensions of organizational responsibility. An important task of the governing board is to serve as a link between the organization and the wider community. Just below the board is the agency's managerial level, represented usually by an executive director (or similar title) and his supervisory aides. This subsystem performs the more regular duties of directing the organization's work; of transcribing policy set by the board into detailed procedure. And finally, there is the COG's technical subsystem. This includes the planning specialists; the staff employees variously employed in providing expert assistance to the managerial and institutional subsystems.

Of course, as we have observed from the findings presented in the first chapter, the development and execution of policy in the typical COG does not run as smoothly as the previous paragraph implies. The theory does, however, anticipate frictions in the policy process, such as conflicts between governing boards and planning staff professionals. Parsons

explicitly recognizes the tensions which may arise from the employment of professionally-trained people in organizations. The professional's expertise requires he be consulted on decisions relevant to his area of competence, and his possession of greater technical understanding of such problems gives him more leverage with which to press his views. At the same time, because he is a member of and identifies with an external group (the professional community) his allegiance to the organization is less than complete.[34] The usual institutions of integration—contracts, authority, and universalistically defined rules or norms—can only partially alleviate this erosion of loyalty. And if COG governing boards do sense this, it should explain some of the suspicion exhibited by board members toward planning experts who are nominally their subordinates.

Another aspect of Parsons' theory which readily is applied to COGs bears upon the issue of their effectiveness, or rather, lack of it. All organizations are judged in accordance with whether they accomplish their goals—even the folk-dancing association must pass muster as a source of recreational activity. And COGs were intended at the start to be especially purposive institutions for regionalism. Yet, as we have observed, most councils have not been able to make anything but quite modest progress toward metropolitan-wide planning and coordination. In Parsonian terms, this deficiency is seen as a failure of implementation; an inability to generate power, the "symbolic media" for communication of authority.

But the generation of power depends upon several factors, including command and regulation of adequate resources, development of sound internal management and decision-making processes, and the

"institutionalization of a value system which legitimates both the goal of the organization and the principal patterns by which it functions in the attainment of that goal."[35] Parsons reminds us again of the inescapable importance of the superordinate value system and of seeing organizations as systems which "nest" within larger systems. Where the values of the superordinate system conflict with those expressed (or to be expressed) by the subordinate system—as they do in the case of local autonomy and areawide planning—an impasse may result. A COG, with its limited powers, probably will have to retreat in the face of the more generally held values. Parsons makes just such a point in discussing educational institutions:

> A few words about the parallel [to community support for education] in the political field may extend the picture a little. Here the technical process is the administrative implementation of "decisions" reached at higher levels. "Compliance" or the necessary "co-operation" is perhaps the relevant input category. This compliance must, however, be "motivated" by some sort of "demands" in the community that the measures in question be carried out; if this is in deficit, the administrative process runs into all sorts of difficulties (such as, shall we say, tax evasion) which coercive powers alone are not adequate to cope with.[36]

Of course, COGs do not even have coercive powers, apart from any question as to whether such powers would prove sufficient. Voluntarism is their underlying principle. In fact, substantial coercive power rests in the environment ready to be imposed on the council if needed. This was not only expected; it was planned. COGs were conceived to be agencies that would reflect and respond fully to the dynamics of the urban setting. To insure this, representatives of local jurisdictions constitute COGs' governing boards; there is no intermediary institution to deflect or soften the impact of environmental forces. (Although the agency may be sheltered to a certain extent if board members

develop a sense of identity with the collectivity.) In Morley Segal's

terms they are "adaptively structured, comprehensively responsive" organ-

izations which respond fully to environmental turbulence. "The greatest

danger for an adaptively structured public agency," Segal says, "occurs

when the clients it comprehensively serves are alien to its source of

support."[37]

The thesis of the foregoing is that Parsons' structural-func-

tional theory has merit as an approach to understanding councils of

governments.[38] As evidence for this position we have a work of empirical

research that employs the Parsonian model. This is Harold Kaplan's study

of the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto.[39] After examining that

government's history he determined that failure in one key function—

integration—had limited the potential for its success. Metro is an

"executive-centered" system, and members of the Metro Council (analagous

to a COGs' governing board) generally tend to see themselves as delegates

representing their communities. On the other hand, through extensive

analysis of voting on significant policy decisions Kaplan was able to

identify some differentiation of function on the part of subsystems with-

in Metro. These included "integration-oriented leaders" and "adaptive-

oriented leaders." On the whole, Kaplan concluded the Parsonian model

had proved useful for analyzing the development of Metro. The points of

similarity between the Canadian entity and COGs suggest that approach

would also be useful for studying regional agencies in the United States.

But Metropolitan Toronto is not metropolitan America. The sin-

gle most important distinguishing characteristic between Metro and coun-

cils of governments is the fact that the former is a true government,

while the latter is hardly more than an association of local elected officials. As a government Metro possessed advantages as a subject of functional research, too. For example, Kaplan was able to utilize data on Council actions to detect voting bloc alignments. This furnished evidence of integrative and adaptive phase movement. In COGs, however, non-unanimous decisions are rare (they are simply deferred), and the roll call votes are not usually very descriptive.

Metro is also a large, well institutionalized organ of government. This should make the task of detecting functional differentiation easier as compared to the relatively small and rather unformed COG. And finally, of course, Metro is not a subsystem of the American political, social and economic environment with which COGs must contend.[40] Although we may infer that Metro was suspected to be a threat to local governments much in the same fashion COGs are, there may be substantial qualitative differences between the two cases. So, despite the obvious value of comparative research, to the extent that environmental conditions help determine the functional operations of social systems (and Parsons certainly thinks they do), Kaplan's findings are not automatically transferable to the American urban situation.

Some Problems in Applying Parsonian Theory to Councils of Governments

Parsonian theory, as we have seen, is a formidable and complex body of thought. Although rich in concept, it is difficult to penetrate. Apart from these technical problems many critics also take exception to the theory on a more fundamental basis. Their criticism has to do with a perceived theoretical bias toward system stability and order. In indeological terms, Parsons is charged with being essentially conservative

in orientation. And it is true that the thrust of structural-functional-
ism is to account for the persistence of social systems--their tendency
for cohesiveness, self-preservation, equilibrium. This has led to charges
that Parsons takes little cognizance of the all-too-apparent instability
and disorder commonly experienced by many concrete organizations.

In actuality he fully recognizes the possibilities for and exis-
tence of organizational discord. Parsons, who was trained as an econo-
mist in the science of scarcity, points to the unavoidable "problem of
who is to get what, who is to do what, and the manners and conditions
under which it is to be done." The dilemma of allocation of such scarce
objects is thus to him "the fundamental problem which arises from the
interaction of two or more actors."[41] And such problems are clearly no
less characteristic of the power-oriented political organization than they
are of the market-oriented economic concern.

So Parsons does not conceive of the social system and its environ-
ment as necessarily characterized by harmony. "Interdependencies are
marked, especially in his essays," observes Mitchell, "by conflict, fric-
tion, time lags, explosions, indirectness, ambiguities, and all the other
characteristics of a most disorderly world."[42] Conflict is not ruled out
by Parsons' schema; it simply is assumed social systems will attempt to
evolve in the direction of cooperation and equilibrium. He contemplates
a sequence of adjustments between the components of the system, a series
of reciprocal accomodations that move the system into a state of order.
This then is the inherent equilibrium process; relationships of "comple-
mentary interaction" between actors "in which each conforms to the expec-
tations of the other."[43] It is a mutually-reinforcing, incrementally
but nevertheless progressively stabilizing system of action.

Parsons can be criticized for underestimating the possibilities

for conflict inherent in many organizational settings, and this has great

implications for controversy-ridden COGs. He does not seem to sufficiently

consider the existence of some institutionalized roles in which expecta-

tions of behavior are not complementary and in which there are no vested

interests in continuity and stability of interaction. In such cases

there may be no real reactive force that automatically works to help

bring the system back into equilibrium. In political settings actors

are commonly allowed, even expected, to be competitive, to strive for

benefits to "ego" even at the expense of "alter." On this point, Mitchell

writes

> . . . Parsons has not devoted much space to an elaboration of the
> more rational and more institutionalized or regularized attempts at
> political demanding. . . . He has yet to explore in detail the more
> legitimate forms of conflict, their sources, mechanisms of pro-
> cessing, and resolution. . . .[44]

So a functional analysis of COGs—where conflict is legitimate and pro-

cessed—should serve to enlighten this gray area in Parsonian theory.

Parsons also tends to assume a common set of goals for the organ-

ization. In practice, goals often are not particularly stable nor are

they widely shared. As Karl Weick points out, "Ambivalence is a major

feature of organized life, and to say that organized life is controlled

by shared goals is to present an overly simplified picture."[45] Kaplan

says much the same thing in his structural-functional study of Metro

Toronto:

> . . . Parsons can be criticized for focusing almost exclusively
> on the productive aspects of power. He treats the goals of a system
> as given—since a system is by definition a collection of individuals
> agreed on certain values—and emphasizes how behavior is mobilized
> and coordinated to attain these goals. There is little recognition

of the processes by which political systems consciously set goals
or the likelihood that some of these goals will reflect the wishes
of some members more than others.[46]

It is especially important that the goal-setting process be
accounted for in functional analysis, because Parsons postulates a "cyber-
netic hierarchy of control" within the AGIL framework.[47] That is, the
resolution of one system problem cannot take place in isolation. It has
an effect on the solution of others. Adaptation, for instance, involves
making adjustments so that goals can be attained. But the adaptive pro-
cess cannot proceed fully until the actual selection of goals is made—
and this is dependent on the goal-attainment decisions. Integration of
the system also depends on sufficient agreement on an operative code.
Pattern-maintenance activities are crippled if there is no broad consen-
sus regarding which patterns are to be stabilized. But if shared goals
is not a universal feature of organized life—and it certainly is not in
COGs—Parsons appears to have contradicted his assumption of equilibrium
tendencies with his very recognition of the crucial importance of goal
consensus.

We should be fair to Parsons. If he has not dealt really ade-
quately with organizational conflict, he shares that fault with most
theorists. Eugene Litwak has reminded us of the general lack of theo-
retical attention to models of organizations in conflict.[48] Still there
remains the question of the functional aspects of institutionalized con-
flict, and the question is of direct relevance to councils of governments.
Where COGs have been successful in pressing regionalism, we cannot say
on a theoretical basis whether such progress is because of controversy
or despite it. If dissension is indeed harmful, to what extent may it

be permitted without destroying the organization? Or, as Vincent

Marando puts the question, "A central issue concerning COGs, once they

are formed, centers around the degree of conflict a consensual voluntary

organization can contain and continue to exist."[49]

Some believe conflict has positive rather than negative implica-

tions. Matthew Holden thinks metropolitan systems are strengthened by

conflict; therefore, COGs should focus on conflict-provoking issues. He

believes that by reaching binding decisions on important, non-consensual

issues, a self-escalating process will begin to keep the system from

atrophying.[50] There appears to be some empirical evidence to support

this view. The ACIR-ICMA survey of COGs and other regional councils

indicated that these organizations have developed some sort of mechanisms

to handle the conflict they experience.[51] In a study of the Municipality

of Metropolitan Toronto by Francis McGilly just such a phenomenon was

reported. McGilly concluded conflict was beneficial to that urban system

in that it communicated values, helped strike stable alliances, and

improved and made valued outcomes of disputes.[52] As we have noted, how-

ever, Metro Toronto is not a council of governments.

Francis Francois believes COGs are already establishing patterns

of cooperation in some fields, and as difficult problems are met and re-

solved their governing boards will reach a state of "maturity" that rec-

ognizes compromises are necessary. The mature regional council, then,

"will not pick up their marbles and go home, but instead will stay to

fight for their jurisdiction on other issues and to make tradeoffs that

will compensate for what may have been lost on a particular vote."[53]

Similarly, Victor Jones, who admits COGs are very dependent on their

member jurisdictions, thinks despite this fact they are "capable of an independent life as catalyzer, organizer, innovator and implementer."[54] "COGs, once they are viable," Jones has predicted, "will become less hesitant to face up to regional problems or if forced to do so, they will be able to survive the shock."[55] At this point, however, all we can say is that further empirical research is needed to resolve this debate.

Another element of the theory we would expect to find rather difficult to use with respect to COGs is the idea of functional differentiation on the part of subsystems of the system. There are two reasons for this. First, specialization of function is largely associated with the system's size. Parsons, as we have noted, has managed to recognize in such immense institutions as a society's economic establishment the subsystem that primarily is devoted to adaptive problems. But within the economy, detection of functional specialization becomes more difficult. In the same manner, since we are treating here relatively small organizations, we would find a very high degree of overlapping of functional orientation, i.e., less specialization. The COG governing board, for example, would certainly have to regularly perform each functional imperative at one time or another (or even simultaneously!).

The second reason we are limited in applying the principle of functional differentiation to COGs is that in these, as in many other public bodies, various kinds of tasks are "done for them" by other structures which are external to the organization. Definition of the scope of organizational authority is one such task; at least, certain limits on the scope of that responsibility are set down for the COG. Some types of decision-making authority may be severely constrained; for example,

personnel relations are governed by laws and regulations handed down from a higher authority. The A-95 review process must follow federal guidelines. Resources may be simply provided for the COG by other government agencies, as in the example of financial resources. Likewise, these resources must be used and accounted for in certain ways—thus both the "mobilization" or "manipulation" of these resources may to a substantial degree be removed from effective control by the council.

It was with this in mind that Kaplan saw Metro Toronto as not quite a full-grown political system. COGs, too, are in this sense "partial" social systems; some tasks are partially handled outside the system. But despite this fact, the basic usefullness of the model should not be impaired. Although little clear-cut specialization may be expected in COGs, there would be functional differentiation if the process is seen as temporal in nature rather than latitudinal. One must remember that Parsons has proposed a conceptual device; concrete differentiation is not an inherent element of the theory. We will find, however—if the theory is sound—adaptive, integrative, etc. phases, time periods in which certain functional needs take predominance over other possible emphases.

One other problem with Parsons' theory needs to be considered here. We have observed that, according to his thesis, the survival of an organization in itself leads us to conclude the system has managed to find the "correct" answers to the four functional problems. We are forced to such a conclusion because Parsons' concept of system success is essentially a dichotomous proposition—success or failure. This lack of middle ground between the poles limits us in considering the degree

of attainment of success, which as Chandler Morse explains is a much
more appealing way of conceiving the status of social systems vis a vis
the functional imperatives.

> The proposition that solution of the functional problems is neces-
> sary for survival is stronger than necessary, however. It may be
> replaced by the weaker empirical hypothesis that all social action
> consists of the pursuit of concrete ends which, on analysis, will
> be found to involve attempts to solve all the postulated functional
> problems, with wide variability in the quality of the actual out-
> come. Survival would thus be consistent with social action that
> yielded exceedingly poor results by any standard of evaluation we
> might choose. The quality of the consequences of action, relative
> to some realistically postulated standard, would therefore be a
> possible alternative to survival as a criterion for determining
> whether or not a value system and social structure were functional;
> and a decline from any achieved level of quality, rather than re-
> duced chances of survival, would be evidence of malfunctioning.[56]

If we accept Morse's point of view, we would be relieved of the
necessity of seeing all the deficiencies of COGs--all the conflict and
shortfalls in regional planning--as functionally successful just because
the agencies did, after all, survive over this period of time. Persistance
of public organizations simply does not mean, as a matter of common sense,
that they have completely solved the system problems and attained (near)
equilibrium. It only means, from this perspective, that they have not
done so badly that superior authorities have gone to the trouble of
abolishing the errant agencies. The quality of regional service thus
remains a question for independent examination.

Design of the Research

It is on just such issues--and questions as we have just consid-
ered--that an analysis of councils of governments within the context of
Parsonian structural-functional theory can be useful. Through this ap-
proach COGs may serve as organizational laboratories in which the theory

can be tested in empirical application. If we examined the progress of
a council over a period of time, we should be able to observe activity
in each of the four functional areas. There should be signs of processes
for pattern-maintenance, i.e., tension management activities. There also
should be evident some connections between this functional behavior
and the establishment of more regular relations between subsystems as
they move the system toward a state of equilibrium. In this period of
time, we would not necessarily expect achievement of a well-developed
degree of stability. But in terms of the theory we would expect demon-
strable movement in that direction. The theory also leads us to expect
some regularity in the sequence in which emphasis is put on the resolution
(or attempted resolution) of the functional imperatives. And finally,
there should be some relation between such functions and the structures
by which they are performed; otherwise, structures will be under stress
and may be expected to change.

Now it is appropriate to recast the more general discussion
above into the form of a number of related hypotheses or statements
about councils of governments. These hypotheses, which explicitly re-
flect the Parsonian conception of social system behavior, follow.

1. A council of governments, as an organization and a social
system generally, will demonstrate behavior which has the effect of
meeting adaptive, goal-attainment, integrative, and pattern-mainte-
nance functional needs of the system.

2. System behavior that serves to satisfy functional needs
will be characterized by certain appropriate pattern variables.
Conversely, deficiencies in functional performance will be marked
by usage of pattern variables that are not among those prescribed
by the theory as appropriate for the particular system problem.

3. Within a council of governments, there will be some level
of differentiation in functional orientation. Such differentiation
may take the form of structural specialization in meeting particular

system imperatives (sub-system specialization), and/or differences in the relative emphasis placed on the various system problems during discrete periods of time.

4. Organizational conflict within a council of governments is related to the system's performance of functional imperatives. Such stress on the system stems from (a) insufficient attention to one or more requisites, such as inadequate integrative effort; and (b) competition among units within the system for the power to define the organization's dominant function; e.g., attempts to make the COG primarily an integrative body as opposed to competing efforts to orient the system primarily in the direction of adaptation or goal-attainment.

5. Structural patterns of a council of governments will also relate to the performance of functional imperatives. Where structural conditions impede (or are perceived by the system's members to impede) progress in solving system problems, attempts will be made to restructure the organization. Such restructuring will accord with the dominant value-pattern held within and for the system at that time.

6. If such restructuring is successful, the council of governments will then proceed to move toward a state of equilibrium. On the level of the council as a whole, this progress will be made evident by a reduction in organizational conflict. On the part of the members themselves, this revived interest in the viability and functional needs of the system will be made known by their reciprocal actions which serve to advance regionalism as opposed to localism; i.e., behavior which fits the definition of the pattern variable, "collectivity-orientation."

It is to test these hypotheses and to further our understanding of how Parsons' functional theory may guide analysis of concrete social institutions that the instant study is undertaken. The form of this research is that of a case study of a particular council of governments. Since this is essentially an exploratory work, the case study format is appropriate. Furthermore, although restriction of scope is necessitated by the single case study approach, it does afford an opportunity to study the research questions in the great depth necessary in functional analysis.

The subject of this research is the regional planning body for the metropolitan Oklahoma City, Oklahoma area--the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments, or ACOG. There are several reasons for its selection. First, ACOG appears from all the evidence to be representative of the bulk of regional councils of governments in the United States. It was created, as were most COGs, during the middle 1960s in response to federal pressures and incentives for establishment of regional urban planning agencies. It is charged with the familiar responsibilities of regional councils--metropolitan planning and the A-95 review and comment procedure for federal grants. ACOG has had to weather substantial amounts of controversy and local resistance to regional direction, as have most COGs. And finally, in the opinion of its professional planning staff ACOG is, indeed, an "average" council of governments.

Certain research materials available for studying ACOG also argued for its selection. A few items of academic literature, reference to which will be made in subsequent chapters, furnish information on the council's formation and operation. Three metropolitan newspapers have covered the council since its inception, and a comprehensive collection of their accounts, as well as some articles from other area newspapers, is maintained by ACOG. This file saved great amounts of time and effort, and it was generously made available for review.

ACOG's geographic location--within convenient commuting distance at the time of the field research--was another advantage. This facilitated interviews as well as review of the official and other records of the organization. In the course of several weeks of examining council minutes, etc., in ACOG's offices, this writer was able to have extensive contact,

both formal and informal, with the organization's staff. This permitted
observation of the subtleties of organizational life that would other-
wise have been missed. And, it should be noted, throughout this period
of on-the-scene observation of ACOG's daily activities the assistance of
the council's employees was always freely and cheerfully given.

But there is another aspect to the selection of ACOG which is
virtually unique to it. This has to do with the role of conflict in
councils of governments, and its effect on and relation to organizational
structure. On this matter, Parsons wrote in The Social System:

> A particularly important aspect of our system of categories is
> the "structural" aspect. We simply are not in a position to "catch"
> the uniformities of dynamic process in the social system except here
> and there. But in order to give those we can catch a setting and to
> be in the most advantageous position to extend our dynamic knowledge
> we must have a "picture" of the system within which they fit, of the
> given relationships of its parts in a given state of the system, and,
> where changes take place, of what changes into what through what or-
> der of intermediate stages.[57]

ACOG offers not just one, but two such "pictures" of structural
conditions. In the fall of 1972, ACOG was faced with its greatest chal-
lenge and controversy when Oklahoma City, citing long standing grievances
involving voting representation and the powers exercised by ACOG, with-
drew its membership. Since Oklahoma City was by far the largest city in
the organization, this action reduced the council's representation of the
metropolitan area to a level below that required for federal certification
as an eligible regional agency. ACOG had, in effect, automatically lost
its legal, if not its organizational, legitimacy. Although ACOG was
saved from impending demise by the core city's return to the organiza-
tion, this was effected only after substantial changes in the council
agreement (charter) were reluctantly accepted by other members. This

dramatic incident thus involved a progression of organizational conflict,
stress that resulted in temporary breakup of the organization, and finally
a fundamental structural change. Admittedly, dissolution (at least,
imminent dissolution) of a council of governments is not without prece-
dent.[58] But ACOG's reorganization provides an unusually fine opportunity
for comparative research on the relationship of structure to functional
processes in public organizations. Also, William F. Whyte has criticized
Parsons on the ground he slights the effects of organization structure.[59]
A study of ACOG in the context of Parsonian theory therefore seems espe-
cially timely and appropriate.

There are basically two parts to the study. The first, pre-
sented in Chapter 3, deals primarily with the first four of the hypotheses
listed above. It is essentially a historical analysis of ACOG's develop-
ment over its first six years. Accordingly, the main research materials
were the council minutes, other records and documents of the council,
and the file of newspaper clippings. Most of the data contained in
these records is not well suited to quantitative analysis. Where quanti-
tative data does occur—as in the relatively rare nonunanimous vote by
the governing board—it is noted and discussed in connection with other
findings bearing on functional problems and processes.

The review of ACOG minutes is more productive than might ordi-
narily be the case with public agencies. The meetings of the governing
board are tape recorded; later secretaries prepare from this source a
fairly closely paraphrased transcription of the discussion. The minutes
should as a result be unusually complete and accurate. To shed further
light on ACOG's history, however, several figures who were closely

associated with the organization at its inception and during its early years were interviewed. The subjects of these interviews, as well as those elected officials interviewed in conjunction with the second part of the research, were offered anonymity for remarks they did not want attributed to a named source. Perhaps for this reason, the conversation at these meetings was frank, wide-ranging, and provided much insight into ACOG's development and current status.

The second part of the study, which occupies Chapter 4, represents tests of the fifth and sixth hypotheses. It concerns the temporary breakup of the council in 1972-73 and the subsequent restructuring of the organization charter. Although documentary materials are employed in this phase--for example, the old and new ACOG agreements are compared and analyzed--the primary emphasis is upon interviews with members of the council's governing board. An effort was made to secure comments from all members of the board who served in the year of Oklahoma City's withdrawal and/or the subsequent year. This effort was largely successful. Fifteen of the 22 individuals who served on the board during this two-year period were interviewed, and one person later returned a mail questionnaire. In another case, personal considerations precluded an interview. None of the remaining five members had been particularly active in ACOG affairs. All of the more important jurisdictions in ACOG are represented in the interviews by at least one participant.

The interviews with board members were relatively unstructured. By the very nature of functional analysis, it is virtually impossible to anticipate and include in a questionnaire all items that have or might have functional significance. Accordingly, open-ended questions were

used for the most part. The questions were, however, designed to bear upon specific functional problems. (See Appendix A for a copy of the interview form.) For example, some questions were designed to elicit attitudes which bear primarily upon the system problem of goal-attainment; others dealt with integration, etc. Respondents' opinions on ACOG's reorganization were also obtained, along with their evaluation of its current usefulness and future prospects. They also commented upon their personal--as opposed to official--attachment to the council. The interviews, therefore, served to disclose a variety of matters relevant to the predicted "dependent variables" of Parsons' functional imperatives; i.e., system equilibrium, and the development of collectivity-orientation on the part of council members. This part of the study thus considers the success (or lack of success) of ACOG from a functional perspective and relates this factor to the structures existing before and after the organizational crisis.

Finally, Chapter 5 concludes the paper. It considers the findings presented in the earlier chapters and reaches some conclusions as to ACOG, councils of governments generally, and the usefulness of functional analysis. In addition, some predictions are advanced as to the future of metropolitan planning through the regional council device.

FOOTNOTES

¹Metropolitan councils of governments are not the only regional organizations that have experienced a hostile reception. See Melvin B. Mogulof's report on a variety of regional agencies dealing with such areas as health, transportation, economic development and air pollution, "Federally Encouraged Multi-Jurisdictional Agencies in Three Metropolitan Areas," included as Chapter 5 in U.S., Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, Substate Regionalism and the Federal System, vol. 2: Regional Governance: Promise and Performance (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, May 1973), pp. 139-197. Multi-state regional authorities are discussed in Martha Derthick, Between State and Nation: Regional Organizations of the United States (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1974). An international comparative look at regionalism is offered in the readings collected in Paul A. Tharp, Jr., ed., Regional International Organizations: Structures and Functions (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1971). The failures of regional agencies in a South American country are examined in Jeffrey Curtis Rinehart, "Regional Planning in Chile: A Study of the Institutionalization of an Administrative System" (Ph.D. dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, 1972).

²Among the more prominent works of Talcott Parsons are The Structure of Social Action (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1937; reprint ed., The Free Press of Glencoe, New York, 1949); The Social System (New York: The Free Press, 1951. Reprinted in paperback by The Free Press, New York, 1964); as editor and contributor with Edward A. Shils and others, Toward a General Theory of Action (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951. Reprinted in paperback by Harper Torchbooks, New York, 1962); in collaboration with Robert F. Bales and Edward A. Shils, Working Papers in the Theory of Action (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1953; as co-author with Neil J. Smelser, Economy and Society (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; and New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1956); Structure and Process in Modern Societies (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1960); Sociological Theory and Modern Society (New York: The Free Press, 1967). Articles which explicitly deal with organizations are "A Sociological Approach to the Theory of Organizations," Administrative Science Quarterly, 1 (June 1956), pp. 63-85; 2 (September 1956), pp. 225-239; and "Some Ingredients of a General Theory in Education (Chicago: Midwest Administration Center, University of Chicago, 1958). These two articles were reprinted in Structure and Process in Modern Societies. Parsons' attention is focused on a particular kind of formal organization in "The Mental Hospital as a Type of Organization," in Milton Greenblatt, Daniel J. Levinson, and Richard H. Williams, eds., The Patient and the Mental Hospital (New York: The Free Press, 1957). A full bibliography through 1967 of Talcott Parsons appears at pp. 539-552 of Sociological Theory and Modern Society.

[3]In particular, it should be noted that the idea of the four functional problems of social systems is especially attributable to the collaboration with Robert F. Bales.

[4]Three works which this writer has found especially useful and has drawn upon in this dissertation are Max Black, ed., The Social Theories of Talcott Parsons (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1961); William C. Mitchell, Sociological Analysis and Politics: The Theories of Talcott Parsons (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967); and R. Jean Hills, Toward a Science of Organization (Eugene, Ore.: Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration, 1968). For introductions to functional theory as it bears upon political science, see H. V. Wiseman, Political Systems: Some Sociological Approaches (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966); Oran R. Young, Systems of Political Science (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), pp. 28-37; and William Flanigan and Edwin Fogelman, "Functional Analysis," pp. 72-85, and Robert T. Holt, "A Proposed Structural-Functional Framework," pp. 87-107 in James C. Charlesworth, ed., Contemporary Political Analysis (New York: The Free Press, 1967).

[5]See A. James Gregor, "Political Science and the Uses of Functional Analysis," American Political Science Review 62 (June 1968), pp. 425-439.

[6]Henry A. Landsberger, "Parsons' Theory of Organizations," in Black, ed., The Social Theories of Talcott Parsons, pp. 231, 233.

[7]William Foote Whyte, "Parsons' Theory Applied to Organizations," in Black, ed., The Social Theories of Talcott Parsons, pp. 250-267.

[8]Mitchell, Sociological Analysis and Politics, p. 13.

[9]Parsons et al., Toward A General Theory of Action, (Harper Torchbooks edition), p. 105.

[10]Gabriel Almond and James Coleman, eds., The Politics of the Developing Areas (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1960).

[11]John P. Kotter and Paul R. Lawrence, Mayors in Action: Five Approaches to Urban Governance (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1974).

[12]Mitchell in Sociological Analysis and Politics at pp. 205-208 lists 55 books and articles that have applied Parsonian theory.

[13]Parsons et al., Toward a General Theory of Action, p. 192.

[14]Parsons, Structure and Process in Modern Societies, p. 17, 18.

[15]Parsons et al., Toward A General Theory of Action, pp. 80-84 passim.

[16]The development of the new concept is especially visible in Parsons et al., Working Papers.

[17]Hills, Toward a Science of Organization, p. 21.

[18]Parsons, Structure and Process in Modern Societies, pp. 22-23.

[19]Ibid., p. 27.

[20]The allocation of social institutions along functional lines is presented in Parsons and Smelser, Economy and Society.

[21]Parsons, Structure and Process in Modern Societies, p. 19.

[22]Ibid., pp. 33-35.

[23]Parsons et al., Working Papers, p. 184.

[24]Chandler Morse, "The Functional Imperatives," in Black, ed., Social Theories, p. 118.

[25]Parsons et al., Toward A General Theory of Action, p. 24.

[26]Parsons, Structure and Process in Modern Societies, p. 20.

[27]Ibid., p. 89.

[28]Parsons et al., Working Papers, pp. 186-187.

[29]Ibid., p. 188.

[30]Fremont James Lyden, "Using Parsons' Functional Analysis in the Study of Public Organizations," Administrative Science Quarterly 20 (March 1975), pp. 59-70.

[31]R. F. Bales and F. L. Strodtbeck, "Phases in Group Problem-Solving," The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology 46 (1951), pp. 485-495.

[32]Talcott Parsons, "Some Considerations on the Theory of Social Change," Rural Sociology 26 (September 1961), p. 221, as cited in Mitchell, Sociological Analysis and Politics, p. 129.

[33]Parsons et al., Toward A General Theory of Action, pp. 107, 226.

[34]Parsons, Structure and Process in Modern Societies, pp. 66-67.

[35]Ibid., p. 42.

[36]Ibid., p. 77.

[37]Morley Segal, "Organization and Environment: A Typology of Adaptability and Structure," Public Administration Review 34 (May/June 1974), p. 217.

[38]It should be noted that another functional approach, that of Alfred North Whitehead, has been used with respect to a council of governments. See Doyal Dawson O'Dell, "A Structural-Functional Analysis of Metropolitan Political Systems: The Denver Regional Council of Governments" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Colorado, 1969). O'Dell's study differs from this dissertation in two fundamental ways, however. First, of course, he did not use a Parsonian theoretical formulation; secondly, the earlier work examines the Denver council from the perspective of its implications for the metropolitan area's political functions. Thus Dawson's attention is focused on interest articulation and interest aggregation as they are performed for the region by DRCOG. In the immediate work, in contrast, the council of government is seen primarily as a political organization and the functional problems are examined in the light of their implications for the council as a social system.

[39]Harold Kaplan, Urban Political Systems: A Functional Analysis of Metro Toronto (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967).

[40]A concise overview and history of Metro Toronto is given in Thomas J. Plunkett, Urban Canada and its Government: A Study of Municipal Organization (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1968), pp. 83-104.

[41]Parsons et al., Toward a General Theory of Action, p. 197.

[42]Mitchell, Sociological Analysis and Politics, p. 55.

[43]Parsons, Social System (Free Press paperback edition), p. 204-205.

[44]Mitchell, Sociological Analysis and Politics, p. 43.

[45]Karl E. Weick, The Social Psychology of Organizing (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1969), p. 38. Also see James G. March and Herbert A. Simon, Organizations (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1958), pp. 124-127.

[46]Kaplan, Urban Political Systems, p. 15.

[47]See Talcott Parsons, "Pattern Variables Revisited: A Response to Robert Dubin," American Sociological Review 25 (August 1960) No. 4. The article is reprinted in Parsons, Sociological Theory and Modern Society, pp. 192-219.

[48]Eugene Litwak, "Models of Organizations Which Permit Conflict," American Journal of Sociology 67 (September, 1961), pp. 177-185. Also see Eugene Litwak and Lydia F. Hylton, "Interorganizational Analysis: A Hypothesis on Co-ordinating Agencies," Administrative Science Quarterly 6 (March, 1962), pp. 395-420.

[49]Vincent L. Marando, "Metropolitan Research and Councils of Governments," Midwest Review of Public Administration 5 (February 1971), p. 8.

[50]Matthew Holden, Jr., "The Governance of the Metropolis as a Problem in Diplomacy," Journal of Politics 26 (August 1964), pp. 627-47.

[51]U. S., Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, Substate Regionalism and the Federal System, 6 vols. '(Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1973), vol. 1: Regional Decision Making: New Strategies for Substate Districts, p. 98. Further references to the first volume will henceforth appear as ACIR, vol. 1, p. ___.

[52]Francis James McGilly, "The Functions of Conflict in the Council of the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1972).

[53]Francis B. Francois, "The Dilemma of Regionalism for Local Elected Officials," Public Management 56 (January 1974), p. 10.

[54]Victor Jones, "Future of COGs: The Jury is Still Out," Public Management 51 (January 1969), p. 13.

[55]Ibid., p. 15.

[56]Morse in Black, ed., Social Theories, p. 144. Also see Kaplan, Urban Political Systems, p. 247 for a similar observation and the suggestion that organizational survival be defined as basic continuity of the system through periods of orderly and gradual change.

[57]Parsons, Social System (Free Press paperback edition), pp. 20-21.

[58]See ACIR, vol. 1. pp. 83-88.

[59]Whyte in Black, ed., Social Theories, p. 262.

CHAPTER III

THE ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GOVERNMENTS

The establishment of the Association of Central Oklahoma Govern-
ments can be described as the organizational equivalent of the breech
birth of an unwanted child. Local government officials in central Okla-
homa, as elsewhere, looked forward without enthusiasm to the arrival of
a regional authority. Local resistance there as elsewhere, however, had
to fall inevitably before the irresistable force of federal mandate. But
ACOG's organization was only accomplished after no small amount of manipu-
lation, maneuvering and accomodation to political reality. And in that
respect, as we have seen, ACOG shares the common experience of regional
councils of governments across the nation.

The Origins of ACOG

The real impetus for creation of an areawide planning and review
body in central Oklahoma occurred in November 1965. At that time Robert
Tinstman, city manager of Oklahoma City, received a notice from the U. S.
Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announcing no approvals
of federal grant applications from governments within the area would be
forthcoming until some means of metropolitan-wide cooperation and coor-
dination was instituted. Tinstman first consulted Oklahoma City's mayor,
George Shirk, about this federal ultimatum. Later, the two called upon
Dr. George Mauer of the Political Science Department at Oklahoma City

University for advice in the matter.[1] After giving the problem some thought, they decided a voluntary council of governments was the best response to the federal requirement for metropolitan coordination.

A council of governments, as such, was not the only possible answer to the region's dilemma. An independent master planning agency with coercive powers of enforcement could have been established. Even more extreme answers to the problem of regional integration also lay within the theoretical realm of possibilities. But a COG offered the great advantage of being the smallest institutional increment toward metropolitan unification. Mauer obtained copies of charters of COGs for the Dallas and San Francisco metropolitan areas and studied them as examples of existing councils. Eventually the document which created the Association of Bay Area Governments served as the basic outline for Mauer's draft agreement for a COG for central Oklahoma.

One troublesome point that was to immediately confront the organizers of ACOG and prove to be a harbinger of later controversy concerned the long-standing suspicion and even dislike felt by some suburban communities toward the central city. Oklahoma City had not, it seems, always been a good neighbor to adjacent jurisdictions. During the annexation waves of the early 1960s, in particular, it had aroused fears among smaller cities that Oklahoma City had designs on land they saw as more properly belonging within their own peripheries. Now the mayor of Oklahoma City was proposing a new areawide agency with power to examine their projects for local development and growth. Thus the new COG was initially seen by at least some suburban officials as little more than a child of the central city, and therefore potentially another mechanism for the aggrandizement of their big neighbor.[2]

There is no doubt Mayor Shirk's role was a vital factor in the establishment of ACOG. His contribution to the organization went well beyond his commitment of the city's professional and physical resources on behalf of ACOG, although the latter contribution was obviously important. Shirk was personally committed to a regional council of governments, and in this regard he brought to the effort important personal and political attributes.

Although Shirk was, obviously, the chief elective official for Oklahoma City he was not generally perceived to be part of its traditional "power structure," which aided his personal relations with suburban politicians. And while his forceful personality served to promote the concept of a regional council of governments, he gracefully bowed to suburban insistence that Oklahoma City must not be able to dominate the organization. He made it clear at the first he did not want to be ACOG's first president. More crucially, perhaps, he agreed to a voting system which equalized power among jurisdictions. William S. Morgan, then-Mayor of Norman and the man who was to become ACOG's first president, says Shirk "leaned over backwards" to set up ACOG so as to make it impossible for Oklahoma City to dominate the association.[3] Shirk also prudently designed ACOG as a "bare bones" operation to overcome fears of a large and costly bureaucratic enterprise. He took care that all concerned elected and administrative officials were kept well informed, too. And finally, of course, there was the ultimate, irrefutable argument for ACOG—some kind of regional review agency was essential if the metropolitan area was to conform to federal grant-in-aid requirements.

And so on the 20th of June 1966, the Association of Central

Oklahoma Governments formally came into existence. The "Agreement" by

which it was established was entered into by thirteen municipalities

(Bethany, Edmond, El Reno, Forrest Park, Midwest City, Moore, Mustang,

Nichols Hills, Nicoma Park, Norman, Oklahoma City, Spencer and The Vil-

lage) and three counties (Canadian, Cleveland and Oklahoma). The pro-

logue of the Agreement indicated that the rationale for ACOG lies in the

member jurisdictions' recognition

> . . . that the complexities of modern urban living preclude the
> efficient, economical, and desirable performance severally of a
> number of said common function (sic), when by reason [of] the ad-
> vent of modern communication, transportation, electronics and
> other services, such function may in many instances be discharged
> or performed by a common entity to the mutual advantage of all
> . . .[4]

Although this paragraph seems to suggest the signatory parties

had ambitious visions of ACOG as a multijurisdictional service-rendering

agency, the real constraints on its development are plainly set forth in

the next paragraph of the Agreement:

> WHEREAS, notwithstanding any language herein, it is not the inten-
> tion of parties to form a new layer of government nor to form a
> super-government, but to organize a voluntary association of local
> governments, in effect of (sic) being a horizontal projection of
> the existing powers, functions, duties and responsibilities of the
> said cooperating parties hereto, and to thereby seek by mutual
> agreement solutions to mutual problems for the benefit of all
> citizens.[5]

The association was explicitly and emphatically voluntary. The

Agreement, in which the word "voluntary" repeatedly appeared, provided

that any party to it might withdraw simply by resolution of its governing

body. ACOG's "By-Laws" also stressed the theme of voluntarism and member

independence. "Nothing herein," the preamble stated, "shall be construed

to abridge the rights or jurisdictional integrity of the members of
the Association."[6]

The bylaws also defined the functions of the new organization
to include review of government proposals (thus permitting participation
in the federal A-95 grant review procedure), study of area problems,
administration of programs of action bearing upon area problems, and
such other regional functions as were deemed appropriate.

All cities, towns and counties in the three-county region were
eligible for membership, to be represented by a person who held a seat
on the member's governing board. Alternate delegates or representatives
were permitted but, like regular delegates, had to be elected members of
governing bodies. The effect of this provision was to restrict official
ACOG representation to elected officials and to prevent appointed admin-
istrators such as city managers from participating in ACOG as voting
representatives. Associate Membership status, which required payment of
dues assessments but disallowed voting privileges, was extended to
school boards, state government agencies, and other special-purpose pub-
lic authorities.

As the organization's "general governing and superintending
body" the Agreement set up an "Assembly." The Assembly was to meet at
least twice a year; when the group convened the occasion was a "General
Assembly." General policy-making authority was given to the Assembly.
It was to review budgets and assessment schedules and exercise general
oversight powers. The Assembly also chose the association's president
and vice-president. In the case of both offices the procedure was the
same. After receiving nominations from a nominating committee or from

the floor, a majority of representatives present elected the officers to their two-year terms. The bylaws provided for appointment by the president of other officers, including secretary and treasurer, but in practice this power was usually not exercised and elections for secondary offices were held.

Since the Assembly met infrequently, real control over ACOG rested in an "Executive Committee" composed of up to thirteen member representatives, presided over by the president. The division of powers in ACOG thus somewhat resembled that in a corporation, with the Assembly acting like an annual shareholder's meeting and the Executive Committee resembling a Board of Directors. One could also liken the Executive Committee to the United Nations Security Council: some members held their seats on a permanent basis while some seats rotated among the other, less-prominent members. The mayor (or his designate) of the most populous city in each of the three counties (Oklahoma City, Norman, and El Reno) and the chairman (or his designate) of each of the three boards of county commissioners enjoyed permanent membership. Seven other Executive Committee members were elected by the Assembly to two-year terms. These latter officials were permitted to succeed themselves in office on the Executive Committee.

Although the Executive Committee exercised frequent and close supervision over ACOG's affairs, day-to-day administrative authority and responsibility was vested in the office of Executive Director. This official thus occupied a position with regard to the Executive Committee much like that of a city manager vis-a-vis his city council. The Director, like a city manager, was employed, paid and dismissed at the will of his

governing board. And like a manager ACOG's Director created and discontinued staff positions, fixed salary schedules, supervised employees, prepared proposed budgets, and provided information to his superiors.

Because the question of voting power had presented difficulty during the formation of ACOG, the organization's bylaws carefully set forth voting procedures. A majority of Assembly delegates was required for a quorum and a majority of a quorum was necessary to decide policy. Voice voting was permitted, but upon demand by any member or at the president's discretion a roll call vote was to be conducted. In the Executive Committee, the same standards for quorums and majority voting applied. But budget recommendations by the Committee to the Assembly required a vote of a majority of the full committee, or seven members, as did decisions to appoint or remove the Director.

Funds to support ACOG were derived through two devices: a General Fund, raised through per-capita assessments on all members, which was to pay for general operating expenses, and such special funds as the Executive Committee might establish. Mauer had estimated it would take a five cent per capita assessment to get ACOG underway and the regular assessment was set at that figure at the organization's inception. A special fund was created when ACOG became involved in transportation planning and monies were needed to pay expenses associated with the Oklahoma City Area Regional Transportation Study (OCARTS). The Agreement also provided that special projects or other functions which were not of common interest to all member parties were to be financed by contributions from the affected jurisdictions.

Virtually the only instrument of coercion the organization possessed was financial in nature. Bylaws provided that member governments' privileges were to be forfeited if the annual assessments were not paid. Even then, a grace period of six months was allowed and the bylaws stated only that payments were "intended" to be paid within ninety days of approval of the budget at the June General Assembly.

ACOG's Development: 1966-1972

Having approved the Agreement and Bylaws, the member governments of ACOG held their first official meeting on June 27, 1966. The minutes of this first meeting are sparse; the chief event recorded in them is the election—by acclamation—of association officers. Mayor William S. Morgan of Norman became ACOG's first president and Midwest City's Marion C. Reed took office as its vice-president. Ross Duckett of Mustang was named by the Assembly the organization's Secretary-Treasurer. As has been noted above, Mayor Shirk had from the first said that Oklahoma City would not seek elective office in ACOG. In view of suburban-central city tensions, there seems little possibility Shirk could have attained office had he sought it. And despite suburban control of association officers, Oklahoma City, as the largest municipality in Oklahoma County, was still entitled to a permanent seat on the Executive Committee.

The routine mechanics of getting a new organization underway seem to have occupied ACOG's members in its first several months. The most pressing need was of course to institute procedures for regional review and clearance of federal grant applications, and thereby satisfy the need that prompted the association's formation in the first place. There was

little delay in attending to this priority. Indeed, before two months

had passed since its organizational meeting on August 1, the Executive

Committee exercised for the first time its review-and-comment powers.

The auspicious event concerned an Open Space grant sought by the City of

Bethany. Approval was quick and unanimous; it was to be a long time be-

fore ACOG's directors were to split their votes on an A-95 matter.

In one sense the task of placing the Association of Central

Oklahoma Governments in motion was made easier than it might otherwise

have been. ACOG had substantial assistance in its formative period. One

important source of such aid was Oklahoma City, which helped provide per-

sonnel and various services needed by the fledgling council of governments.

Quarters for the organization were provided by the capital city in spare

space in a city-owned downtown office building. And in a more general

sense ACOG was indebted to the federal authority which forced its creation.

In at least one role--reviewing requests for federal assistance--important

elements of structure and procedure were "given" the organization.

ACOG's immediate problem, then, was not so much finding its place

with regard to higher authority as it was in relating to the metropolitan

environment. Certainly, those officials who were favorably disposed to

the concept of a regional agency realized there was a need to "sell" the

association to the people of central Oklahoma. In July Shirk addressed

the Warr Acres City Council on ACOG's behalf.[7] The association's new

Secretary-Treasurer also spread the message of federal assistance and

regional cooperation. "The formation of this organization," Mayor Duckett

said, "is in sharp contrast to the days of suspicion and jealousy between

the communities and particularly of Oklahoma City."[8] President Morgan

spoke in September to the Chamber of Commerce of Capitol Hill (a neighborhood in Oklahoma City's south side). ACOG was a "bridge between local government and Washington," Morgan argued to an evidently skeptical audience. "It doesn't take away from the powers of the local government nor of the elected officials."[9] The new association's first executive director, Keith Smith, spoke to the Moore City Council. "We can not make you do anything," he stressed. But when asked if ACOG passed judgment on federal grant applications he hedged, replying "We have not turned down anything as yet."[10] Thus from the outset, one can see, ACOG was to be portrayed by its defenders as a benevolent, even harmless, instrument to promote interjurisdictional dialog and accelerate the return of federal tax dollars.

This sort of description was presumably designed to help counter the negative reaction ACOG's formation had stimulated as well as to educate people in the functions of a council of governments. Opposition already had developed. A grass-roots organization, the Home Owners and Voters Emergency Network (HAVEN), originally formed to fight Oklahoma City's urban renewal program, extended its attack to ACOG and distributed literature denouncing the association.[11] These opponents apparently also had at least some encouragement in their efforts from elected officials as well. When the mayor of Yukon was asked about a pamphlet charging ACOG could "control what projects are done in your county and your town" and "will force you to help pay for the huge and costly projects planned for Oklahoma City," he denied responsibility for the literature but admitted he approved of it.[12]

Those who spoke up on behalf of ACOG may have been somewhat successful in overcoming the skepticism or opposition of their audiences of local office-holders. In a survey taken in 1967 by David R. Morgan more than two-thirds of the suburban council members interviewed indicated they were very or reasonably well satisfied with ACOG's structure and operations. A significant albeit minority proportion even envisioned it developing into a true metro-wide government encompassing municipalities within the region.[13] Clearly not all elected officials in central Oklahoma were ideologically committed against the new council of governments. But ACOG's defenders may have somewhat misjudged their target. It appears the more fundamental problem was overcoming the hostility in an urban environment that spawned organizations like HAVEN. Arguments that ACOG would enhance government performance and revenues probably were impotent to change attitudes among the general citizenry, and such attitudes were not supportive of regionalism. In Morgan's survey suburban residents were also interviewed. Their responses reflected happiness with their way of life and a strong attachment to a grass-roots political ideology based on the principle of local autonomy. In addition, they expressed general satisfaction with their respective governments' efficiency and services. In view of this, Dr. Morgan concluded "preconditions for generating suburban support for greater metropolitan political integration are largely absent," and " . . . both suburban council members and citizens could be expected to support and reinforce each other in resisting any proposals which might be perceived as jeopardizing suburban political independence."[14]

Despite these pessimistic signs, by the spring of 1967 ACOG had achieved a good deal of progress toward organizational maturity. A milestone was reached when Keith Smith relinquished the executive director's position—as had been intended once a permanent chief could be selected—and L. Douglas Halley assumed the administrative reins of the association. Hiring Halley was not accomplished, however, without some dissension. The new executive did not have a professional background in planning, and some members thought ACOG needed a trained planner. A newspaper account reported the Executive Committee had at one time been split 7 to 4 during its closed session before approving Halley.[15] But if there was indeed any serious conflict no outward sign of it was apparent. To all appearances ACOG was moving ahead with equanimity.

Perhaps encouraged at this apparent progress, Shirk revealed a bold proposal for ACOG's expansion as a service agency to the region. Unlike most other local politicians, Shirk had not conceived of the association as a mere forum for vocalizing grievances and rubber-stamping grant applications. At the last Executive Committee meeting he would attend as a member—his term of office as mayor was drawing to a close— he outlined an ambitious plan which would grant ACOG a variety of new functions. Seven new areas of activity were suggested:

1. Disposal of solid waste.
2. Instantaneous identification services for police departments.
3. Collection of municipal sales taxes.
4. Operation of a crime laboratory.
5. Operation of various municipal employee training programs.
6. Performance of centralized utility billing service.
7. Assumption of transportation planning work for the Oklahoma City Area Regional Transportation Study.

The minutes for April 10, 1967 contain the memorandum which sets forth the above proposals, and quotes Shirk as saying, in part,

> All of the foregoing have nothing to do with the parallel
> function to be performed by ACOG of Regional Planning. Continual
> emphasis should be placed upon this in like manner as before. I
> am fearful, however, that if the _sole_ interest of ACOG is toward
> planning it will never become a healthy, well-rounded, purpose-
> serving organization, truly rendering a service to its members
> worthy of its existence.[16]

Shirk's suggestions were received politely but with coolness.

Certainly, there was at least some support for the idea of placing ACOG

into other areas of activity. A few days earlier the organization's

president had publicly commented favorably on the Shirk proposal (which

had already been reported in the press). Morgan thought the hiring of

Halley--an administrator rather than a planner--coincided with the broad-

er concept of ACOG. This would give the association another "reason

for being," Morgan reasoned, predicting that "ultimately the heavily

populated metropolitan areas will in some respects do the same as states

have done--give way to federal structures for certain benefits of the

federal government."[17] Falling in the same vein was Vice-President

Reed's suggestion a few months later that the Midwest City Council inves-

tigate through ACOG a multi-city electronic bookkeeping and billing system.[18]

A resolution to take the plan to the representatives' respective

governing bodies for their evaluation over the next ninety days carried

with no dissent. But there was little other action, at this or any sub-

sequent meeting, on Shirk's plan and the proposals sank into obscurity.

The only tangible evidence Shirk was able to take away from ACOG of his

efforts on behalf of the regional council was a copy of the Executive

Committee's commendation of the "Out-going Mayor and Founder of ACOG."

If Shirk thought a propituous time had arrived for expanding

ACOG's scope, he was certainly proved wrong by events in the following

weeks and months. His proposal seemingly triggered a fresh outburst of opposition. The newly-elected mayor of Moore, Clint Gold, declared he was "definitely against increasing [ACOG's] responsibility where it does infringe in local responsibilities," and that "their activities in the area of planning and zoning really concerns (sic) me."[19] Reed said the addition of any functions other than planning and grant review "would create a lot of excitement" in Midwest City.[20] A Bethany councilman questioned the "intent" of ACOG, called for an investigation of it, and attacked its "power politics," "creeping control," and "ineffectiveness."[21] Nichols Hills, an affluent community on Oklahoma City's north side, was a hotbed of discontent. Halley, perhaps wishing he had some of the explanatory brochures the Executive Committee had recently authorized, was obliged to debate ACOG's critics.

> ACOG director Douglas Halley faced a fiery group of citizens Tuesday night as Nichols Hills residents stormed the tiny chambers of their city hall demanding answers about the organization.
> Questions like, "Who is behind the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments?" "Where is your authority?," and "Are we going to have federal strings tied to us and be a socialistic and bureaucratic government?" were hurled at the organization's chief.[22]

Halley had to give a repeat performance of his justification for ACOG a few days later before a suspicious city council in Moore.[23]

The arrival of two pieces of news in June must have seemed especially welcome to the harassed regional council. First, notification was received that ACOG had officially been designated the review agency for federal grant applications from the Oklahoma City metropolitan area. Shortly thereafter, it was learned federal money for ACOG's planning program was finally on the way. Although its $498,274 request had been cut to $149,378, at last ACOG would no longer be in a state of suspension;

a real start could be made on regional planning. In July, the Executive

Committee, envisioning a heavier burden of work, decided to hold two

rather than one meeting per month.[24] An additional step was Morgan's

appointment of a five-man committee to draft a list of ACOG objectives.

His selections were diplomatically chosen: included on the panel were

Reed, Oklahoma City's new Mayor James Norick, Gold of Moore, Mayor Bud

Belisle of Yukon, and Oklahoma County Commissioner J. P. "Dick" Richard-

son. Since none of these could previously have been identified as pro-

ponents of ACOG, Morgan's appointments were probably a judicious attempt

to "educate" these persons in the spirit of regionalism.

In fact, precisely because ACOG now had money to spend and for-

mal A-95 authority to exercise, the need for building regional commitment

was even greater. Just after the news had arrived about the association's

designation as the areawide clearinghouse an Oklahoma City _Times_ editorial

resurrected the old fear that a functioning ACOG might not serve fairly

the central city:

> A question that will continue to hang over ACOG is whether it
> should be constituted as now with each city, regardless of size,
> having an equal vote. Shouldn't representation be geared to size
> of population in conformity with the one man-one vote principle?
> Certainly Oklahoma City as the most populous city in the area
> cannot rest easy with the present imbalanced setup.[25]

Once publicly raised, the issue of voting representation renewed

debate regarding ACOG. Again it found defenders. But their attitudes

toward the regional council revolved more around Shirk's delicate compro-

mise of central city-suburban interests than abstract agreement with the

principle of metropolitan integration. Mayor Dennis Adams of El Reno,

seeing the threat of Oklahoma City domination in a proportional voting

arrangement, declared his city would quit the association if the one-city, one-vote system was changed.[26] In Nichols Hills, where more than 100 residents met for the purpose of removing their city from ACOG, Mayor Dan Stewart stated he would never vote to bring federal funds to his community and diplomatically argued that "the point (of belonging) is being a good neighbor."[27] Ross Duckett of Mustang wrote a letter to the editor in which he stressed the communicative, voluntaristic, non-binding review and recommendation, and local autonomy aspects of the organization.[28] When Norick criticized ACOG as a "federal subsidiary" at an Executive Committee meeting he was quickly met with rebuttals not only from Morgan, as would be expected, but also from Reed and Ed Barrett of Warr Acres.[29] Even the Oklahoma City Times admitted one virtue to ACOG in that it might be "the last hope of staving off the establishment of federal agencies" to perform ACOG's duties. "In ACOG," the newspaper said, ". . . locally elected mayors and councilmen make the decision. Knock that out and we might be dismayed at the alternative Washington, D. C. would come up with."[30]

Meanwhile the association continued to move ahead. It was considering (and routinely approving) requests for federal aid at an increasingly faster pace. Work preparatory to engaging in the regional planning effort was underway. As its operations became more routine, procedures were developed, learned and followed more smoothly. Staff and Executive Committee members sorted out their roles. Already the committee structure had proliferated to the extent confusion sometimes occurred as to the proper assignment of responsibilities. Halley was directed to draw up an organizational chart—a sure sign of a more mature public agency.

Committee structures were refined. In September 1967, Halley's managerial authority was broadened and his salary raised. Elliott Chamberlain was hired as the new planning director at a salary of $16,500, which was $250 less than Halley's. New guidelines for reviewing federal aid applications were instituted. And in October, ACOG's kinship to other regional councils was recognized when three Executive Committee members accompanied Halley and Chamberlain to a National Service to Regional Councils workshop.

Still, ACOG had not escaped from its central dilemma. If it refrained from active pursuit of regional direction, it atrophied as a planning agency. But if it attempted to employ the resources it had acquired in the service of metropolitan guidance, it fanned the flames of suspicion and resistance. The issue was squarely presented when Oklahoma City offered in November to perform planning work for the agency in its own Planning Department. Under the proposed arrangement, ACOG could not do planning in-house with its own staff, but merely subcontract the work and act as a conduit for federal 701 funds. Halley rejected the idea--now that ACOG had the ability to undertake its own planning, he did not wish to relinquish this opportunity.

The Executive Committee supported Halley in rejecting the Oklahoma City offer. After listening to Oklahoma City Assistant City Manager Joe Whorton outline some grievances about its participation in ACOG, the committee resolved to have "problems such as were represented (sic) today be aired before the proper committee before coming to the Executive Committee." Reed offered a successful motion for a "vote of confidence and commendation" to be given ACOG's Director of Planning "for the work he has done so far." Federal Authorities provided additional motivation

for ACOG to assume the planning role Halley favored. A Fort Worth HUD
official intimated in December that ACOG might not meet federal planning
requirements. He referred to the controversy over the agency's role and
to its procrastination in coming up with specific plans for using its
previously-approved federal money. "I must tell you candidly that we
can't live with the existing situation much longer," he warned. "I urge
you strongly to resolve your difficulties as soon as possible."[31]

Perhaps this nudge from HUD was all that was needed to get ACOG
into action. At an Executive Committee meeting shortly before Christmas
Morgan reported approval of a planning program which was expected to
meet federal requirements. Barrett, after commenting on the difficulties
the association faced in gaining a regional image, commended Halley and
Chamberlain. He also praised the work of the Technical Committee for
planning and expressed the hope the Executive Committee would "continue
to set standards of excellence for cooperative regional planning."

This decision on a planning program also gave Halley something
to point to as "tangible evidence" of the association's progress in his
semi-annaul report in January. He particularly stressed its achievement of

> . . . greater understanding on the part of members and others.
> This has been one of our prime concerns. Since the concept of a
> council of governments has been so new, there has been an under-
> standing gap. . . . We must not let up in this effort.[32]

He may also have had some other "tangible evidence" in mind at the time
of those remarks. At the next meeting of the Executive Committee, after
thanking Oklahoma City for the provision of office space since 1966, the
directors approved ACOG's move to new quarters of its own in the Plaza
Court Building. The exchange of a one-room office for an 1,800 square
feet suite must have seemed a blessing to ACOG's three-member permanent

staff and its three intern assistants. Another progressive step taken
simultaneously was approval of the association's own group health in-
surance program for its employees.

Through the spring and summer of 1968 ACOG appeared to further
solidify its position in the metropolitan area. In March the Executive
Committee adopted a schedule of fees for reviewing grant applications
from non-member cities. It is unlikely the board imposed the fee re-
quirement in anticipation of significantly increased revenues since,
even on a half-million dollar project, the levy would have been only
$3,250. The reason instead was to use some financial leverage on non-
members to come into the ACOG fold. It is debatable whether the fee was
a telling point for the advantages of council membership. The significant
point, however, is that the association's directors felt secure enough to
set a charge for their services--to assert that the organization should
receive some reimbursement of its expenses. More importantly, the impli-
cation of their action is that ACOG was performing a valuable service
for which the fee is a symbol of worth.

Another encouraging note was sounded when ACOG proved the victor
in local elections on the question of membership in the association. In
March the Moore City Council, at Mayor Clint Gold's urging, resolved to
let the citizens decide on ACOG membership. A short campaign between
the organization's critics and defenders (the latter led by the Chamber
of Commerce) was climaxed by a 541 to 305 vote in the association's favor.[33]
Opposition groups in Bethany, The Village, and Nichols Hills had peti-
tioned for an election on the issue, but apparently only in Nichols Hills
were they eventually successful in getting ACOG on a local ballot. The

election finally took place in December, with ACOG membership winning by 809 to 625 and in five of the city's six precincts.[34]

This sort of success in the establishment of ACOG as a metropolitan entity must have been in President Morgan's mind when he presented his semi-annual report to the Assembly in June. He recited a chronological list of significant events in ACOG's first two years and sounded the familiar themes of local autonomy and voluntary, rational cooperation.

> . . . While there is much to do we can look back over the past two years and point to very definite areas of progress in bringing area communities together in a spirit of cooperation. We have established lines of communication. . . .
> The Association of Central Oklahoma Governments enables local governments to retain their sovereignty and responsibilities in local affairs while providing the opportunity to sit at the table with other local governments to solve problems which must be approached on an area-wide basis.[35]

There was only one contradictory item at the meeting. Elliott Chamberlain announced his resignation, citing "mostly personal" reasons. But for some time, however, his ambitious ideas of regional planning and information-gathering had conflicted with the much more cautious Executive Committee; his departure caused no apparent disturbance. In October the board found a replacement, Phillip Clark, who represented a more complementary point of view. He and Halley were questioned by a newspaper reporter as to their objectives. The new planning director answered,

> "We're here, hopefully, to save as much money through efficiency, as we can. If we just get a viable transportation system for the next 10 or 20 years, we can save untold millions of dollars," Clark said.
> Halley, on that [point] agreed. "Efficiency is the key word."[36]

Despite all this evidence that ACOG was consolidating its position, its future as 1969 arrived remained clouded. For with almost each move forward, each step taken, it simultaneously aroused dissension and

opposition. Resistance to regional integration generally and ACOG as its instrument had clearly never been conquered; it had only periodically subsided. Each step seen as an advance by those favoring metropolitan unification was also (potentially, at least) perceived as a retreat by those dedicated to minimal interference with traditional political alignments and privileges. It is difficult to achieve a net increase in participant satisfaction in a contest that amounts to a zero-sum game. And ACOG, as the chief symbol of all regionalism and federal intervention implied, was inevitably caught up in controversy.

Several examples of this tension between two irreconcilable viewpoints occurred in 1969. In January, Pat Painter, Oklahoma City's chief planner and occasional ACOG representative, raised objections to the cost and scope of the association's proposed water-sewer study. His government's position was that, in the first place, ACOG should not get involved in such a sizable project and, secondly, it was simply more logical for some other entity--say the area's largest city--to undertake the work. Two months later, the capital city's discontent was reflected during a vote on a contract for engineering services in connection with the study. The minutes of the March 5 meeting accordingly contain the first official public report of a non-unanimous action by the Executive Committee. (If there had been divided votes earlier, the minutes do not disclose it.) The minutes dryly note: "Motion carried. . . . Mr. Alan Harvey [an administrative representative speaking in the absence of a voting representative] stated that the City of Oklahoma City was opposed to the execution of the contract."

Although this decision seems to have at least temporarily set-
tled the water-sewer issue, Oklahoma City's dissatisfaction with ACOG's
activities was revealed again in August. It announced then it would seek
its own, separate, criminal justice planning funds. The Executive Com-
mittee, however, overruled the city and resolved to continue distributing
police training funds solely through ACOG. On another item, however,
Oklahoma City prevailed. It persuaded the Executive Committee that ACOG
should not help pay for a court test of a state law excluding nonproperty
owners from voting in municipal bond elections.

The best example, however, of the differing views on ACOG's uses
is provided by the debate in July over the city of Mustang's request that
ACOG perform land-use planning for it. Mustang, a small community, lacked
its own planning staff but it did have $5,000 in federal funds with which
it proposed to temporarily retain ACOG's planners. The association's pro-
fessional staff seems to have welcomed the opportunity to move into a new
area of service, but a majority of the Executive Committee reacted nega-
tively and strongly. The discussion reported in the minutes is worthy of
extensive direct quotation as an excellent illustration of attitudes held
by those who preferred the organization keep a low profile.

> Mayor Reed: Well, as I stated a few minutes ago, I think it is up
> to ACOG to stay as a coordinating and a whole planning program, not
> a one city planning program. I don't think we should get into the
> one city planning program. Because the day we do we defeat the
> whole thing we're guarding against.

> Mayor Vaughan (Bethany): Mayor, are we staffed to take on the
> extra burden of technical planning?

> Mayor Reed: . . . What I'm afraid of, if we get into it we will
> be expected to do a lot more than what this money will buy. And
> I will say this, if we are staffed to do city planning for indi-
> vidual cities then we're overstaffed.

Executive Director: . . . Now, there are some very distinct advantages to having ACOG or the Council of Governments do this. We're faced every day with the need or requirements of coordination. Since there isn't any profit motive in this, it is very probably (sic) that more could be done for less money. There is an automatic continuity built into it. As I said before, it's a basic policy decision, there are other considerations as Mayor Reed has mentioned, but I see real advantages of being involved upon request in this. But, I would like your guidance and your direction as how we're to go on this.

Councilman Cook (Oklahoma City): I've been concerned since I've had to attend some of these meetings and this kind of points up a part of my concern--we are rapidly permitting ACOG to develop into that which we've all said it would never do. And that is a super-duper government. . . . But, to me, this is just getting to be one of those things that just keeps on growing because as each individual item comes up we would probably justify in our own minds of making that exception. But, it isn't long until all of those exceptions become our rule. And sooner or later the time is going to come when someone takes a startled look at it and says, "Well, that's all." And we, by our actions, by not holding tight to what the whole purpose should be, whether it is or not, maintaining a repository of information and a place where coordination can be had, not by a super-duper organization but by the representatives of the various organizations getting together. We're going to create a monster that we're going to have to kill or it will be killed for us. . . .

Mayor Reed: . . . Do we have any other questions or discussion on this policy? What is the pleasure of the Executive Committee?

Mayor Webb (Moore): I would move that this request be refused.

Mayor Reed: May I rephrase your motion? And suggest that you move that we adopt a policy that we will not do individual city planning?

Mayor Webb: Yes.

Councilman Cook: Second the motion.

Mayor Reed: Any questions? All in favor of the motion, please vote by the usual sign. Motion carried.

Nevertheless, 1969 also continued to mark signs of further progress for ACOG. In January Del City, the last major holdout among communities in the central urbanized area, voted to join the association. The

margin in the city council was 3 to 2.[37] News was received in May that federal approval had been granted for $87,317 in second-phase regional planning. A pleased Halley thought the timing was "just right" to permit ACOG to smoothly enter the second phase of its planning program.[38] Halley also got some personal good news. After raising his salary to $18,600, the governing board resolved "that he be commended for his efforts and financial management abilities." The association in 1969 also defined more precisely its organizational boundaries. It had early in the year decided chambers of commerce were ineligible for membership. At the June General Assembly the issue of allowing administrative personnel (as opposed to elected officials) to participate as members of the Executive Committee was resolved. It had for several years been the occasional practice of some cities--Oklahoma City, for example, had frequently sent its planning department head to speak for it--to designate administrative officials as their ACOG delegates. An opinion by ACOG's legal counsel reinforced Reed's interpretation of the charter that "if a governing body was to have a vote it must send a designated elected official to ACOG meetings." In effect ACOG was defining its structure more precisely within the definition of a council of governments--another sign of organizational maturity.

ACOG's structure and purpose had often caused dissension. Individual personalities had not, however, been such a focus of controversy. But as 1970 dawned, it became apparent that the friction accompanying the original selection of Halley as director had not died out. One of the original representatives to ACOG believes relations between Oklahoma City and Halley were never good; that personal feelings between the Director

and the city caused as much tension as did the association's direction
under Halley's leadership. From the time Halley arrived, this repre-
sentative believes, the director "got himself mixed up" with Oklahoma
City as well as some other ACOG delegates who often shared the central
city's views. And as a result, as he saw it, an "impasse" came to exist
between Halley's ideas for aggrandizing ACOG and the much more restrained
concept held for the organization by his opponents.

The dispute broke into the open with a newspaper report on Janu-
ary 1, 1970. Oklahoma City's manager, Robert Oldland, accused Halley
of "empire building," and Mayor Norick and Councilman Rowe Cook asserted
the director should be fired. Oklahoma County Commission Chairman J. P.
"Dick" Richardson agreed with Norick and Cook. "They (the ACOG staff)
kind a want to be a super government," Richardson was quoted.[39]

A special meeting of the Executive Committee was called to hear
Oklahoma City's "statement of grievances." In a long letter Norick
charged "ACOG today has become a self-serving agency of its administrative
staff . . . exclusively involved in promoting a program of self-justi-
fication, regional grantsmanship and empire building." More specifically,
Norick said Halley's deficiencies included

> . . . covered up failure to adhere to authorized channels of
> communication, short notice of committee meetings, administrative
> harassment of committee representatives, lack of evident coor-
> dination, inability to maintain professional staff, specific
> instances of indiscretion and ineptitude, hostile attitude and
> proposal of solid waste study."[40]

Responses to the accusations varied. Mayor Masters of Norman
interpreted the bill of indictment as an indication of differences of
opinion regarding ACOG's functions. Halley defended the organization--and
indirectly, himself--saying the charges were based on "gross inaccuracy;"

that Oklahoma City's grant applications had not been treated with hostility. El Reno's Dennis Adams said the capital city had "brought some of this on themselves." But representatives from Edmond, Bethany, and Del City expressed sympathy with Oklahoma City's fears that ACOG was becoming a new level of government. The committee went into a one and one-half hour executive session. A temporary peace of sorts was finally reached when members approved a resolution which directed Halley and the staff "to make every effort to cooperate with each of the member cities toward growth and continued progress of the areas served by ACOG."[41]

Something of a further rebuttal to the charges was made a week later, when Halley presented to the Assembly a staff memorandum showing ACOG had reviewed 85 applications totaling $61.4 million. About half of this amount was federally funded; because the projects had been reviewed consistently with regional planning and coordination activities 5 percent federal bonuses of $448,800 had also been awarded. Oklahoma City had filed 19 of the applications.[42] Such evidence was a fitting complement to President Reed's own report on ACOG's past three-and-one-half years. He recited a list of accomplishments in providing service to the region and pointed to the organization's growth in representation to the point where it now included virtually all of the three-county population. And in comments directed toward the recent dispute over Halley, Reed spoke up for the staff:

> . . . Metropolitan problems are diverse and everchanging. ACOG functions are and will remain those the membership deems necessary. Careful provisions have been made to guard the integrity and the voice of all ACOG communities. ACOG effectiveness depends upon impartial services to all members. This impartial staff service has been carried out in the past and will be continued into future endeavors. While the staff is intended to provide assistance to any and all members, it is the responsibility of all to offer a

cooperative spirit if this association is to be successful in
its efforts. I once again invite and urge you to join me in
accepting this responsibility.[43]

Reed seemed to be attempting simultaneously to defend ACOG and

its staff—since becoming president he had become the association's pri-

mary spokesman—and soothe the troubled waters roiled by disagreements

over the organization's mission and its activities. He had an ally, too,

in the media. The Times, always fearful a failing ACOG might be replaced

by stronger federal measures, that same day chastised Oklahoma City.

If municipalities don't want a "super government," if they don't
want "the other side" to run away with the ball, then they should
be right in there helping decide what shape ACOG will take.
ACOG may not be the best answer, but it is the presently es-
tablished mechanism for seeking solutions to common problems.
. . . We'd better try to make it work lest our problems pile up to
the point where in desperation we must turn to something much more
stringent and overriding.[44]

The controversy over Halley's alleged partisanship receded from

public attention. But the fundamental disagreement with ACOG's place in

the metropolitan region continued, with only occasional shifts to new

grounds for conflict. In the early part of 1970 the point of controversy

concerned federal funding of law enforcement planning. Oklahoma City,

with two-thirds of the region's population and three-fourths of the crime,

again persuaded the Oklahoma Crime Commission to separate funding of ACOG

and Oklahoma City planning. This action stimulated the Executive Com-

mittee in February to reject the pared-down planning grant as insufficient

for ACOG's needs. At the March meeting, argument within the board re-

solved along suburban-central city lines. "My people indicate to me

that if we continue to turn programs over to Oklahoma City, we're going

to get out of [ACOG]," Bethany Mayor Vaughan told central city alternate

delegate Rowe Cook. Cook admitted Bethany's citizens would be correct to feel that way if it turned out Oklahoma City took unfair advantage as area planner. "Our people won't let us take that calculated risk," Reed replied.[45] Cook's motion to approve his city's offer to do all areawide crime planning died for lack of a second. At the April meeting, however, the Committee relented from its earlier opposition and approved—over Cook's objection—a resolution to accept a slightly larger allocation for ACOG's own criminal justice planning.

Summer brought two more controversies. There had been some thought by representatives to ACOG that not enough provision was made for incorporating the opinions of professional city administrators in considering regional matters. These elected officials were accustomed to relying on the interpretations and opinions of their city managers and department heads at city council meetings; why should not ACOG allow these local administrators to evaluate programs and make recommendations before the Executive Committee had to decide? The association already had several technical advisory committees comprised of professionals working in the particular area of responsibility. It must have seemed quite logical that a panel of managers should screen material passed on to the Executive Committee by ACOG's technical committees.

The idea was presented at the June meeting by Mayor Masters of Norman. His proposed restructuring would place a "technical steering committee," comprised of managers of cities represented on the Executive Committee, between the various functional committees and the Executive Committee. It would report directly to the Committee; it was thus co-equal to the Executive Director in organizational rank. Perhaps to

Masters the latter fact was the most persuasive advantage of the new committee. Gradually the Norman mayor had apparently come to feel Halley was playing off small communities against the larger ones in ACOG. A panel of managers could undercut Halley's influence.

Masters' plan was tabled to give the Executive Committee time to study the proposal and didn't return to the agenda until August. By this time Oklahoma City had come up with a similar idea. Norick presented a plan calling for not only the "technical steering committee" but also an applications review committee and four permanent functional committees on a new level of the ACOG hierarchy. Masters expressed agreement with Norick and said the Oklahoma City plan was in harmony with Norman's. But Reed disagreed with the reorganization proposals and argued they would just "add additional levels of bureaucracy." Norick replied the new arrangement would get ACOG back into the business of regional problem-solving, "rather than being predominately responsive to federal requirements and administrative policy direction."[46] After inconclusive discussion, Norick's proposal, along with a counter-measure offered by Reed for a city manager committee restricted to reviewing only regional-wide problems, was deferred until the next meeting.

On September 9 the Executive Committee took up Oklahoma City's plan first. George Sturm, the capital's alternate representative, moved for acceptance of his city's proposal, and Richardson of Oklahoma County seconded the motion. The motion failed narrowly. Siding with Oklahoma City were Norman, Bethany, and Oklahoma County. The opposition included Midwest City, Moore, Mustang, Yukon, and Canadian County. Four members were absent.

The Norman proposal had been tabled in September to the next month--perhaps to give proponents a chance for more lobbying. If there was more politicking, however, it was unsuccessful. With all but Oklahoma County's representative present, the plan was able only to garner the votes of Norman, Bethany, and Oklahoma City.

One should not read too much into this division within the council. Some of those who voted against the proposed reorganizations may have simply felt the result would be organizationally cumbersome. That view was expressed by Earle Penwright of El Reno, who said, "I am strongly opposed to the change because I feel that additional committees would only complicate the structure of ACOG."[47] On the other hand the incident reveals a significant, if still minority, discontent with ACOG's direction and staff. A vote to place city managers in positions of influence is at the same moment a vote to reduce the power--potential or realized, imagined or real--of the Executive Director. And while presumably there were those who opposed restructuring ACOG because efficiency would suffer, there were surely also those who voted against reorganization because they perceived the current state of the association as being in their better interest. If Halley had indeed lobbied with smaller cities and counties--as some representatives believed--his efforts had paid off.

The other bit of evidence of this emerging pattern of dissension within ACOG also occurred in June. At the mid-year General Assembly the biennial election of officers was scheduled. Ordinarily the suggestions of the nominating committee were approved without exception. Such had been the case when Reed had been nominated and elected two years previously.

Thus it was a surprise when the representative from Oklahoma County offered a nomination from the floor for the office of President. In prefatory remarks Richardson expressed concern over the fact no one from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma County, Edmond, or Bethany was on the nominating committee. (The committee included delegates from El Reno, Cleveland County, The Village, Norman, and Del City.) This, to him, suggested that "the tail was wagging the dog." He proposed Masters of Norman for President, and Keller of Oklahoma City seconded the motion.

Despite the unexpected contest (even Masters expressed surprise at Richardson's action) Reed still won decisively with a ten-to-five margin. Details of the vote were not recorded; presumably secret ballots were employed. One can guess that Norman and the central city and county cast three of the five opposition votes, but the exact identity of the other two dissenters is not really important. The implications of the vote are more intriguing. First, the office of ACOG President was being perceived as more important—otherwise, why should anyone contest the election? Second, the vote is suggestive of a coalition of interest groups within the Executive Committee. Richardson's "tail wagging the dog" comment implies a suburban-core city differential, yet Norman is a bedroom suburb and was allied with Oklahoma City on this issue as it had been on others. More accurately, the demarcation line fell between the communities basically content with ACOG and those basically dissatisfied. And finally, the incident reveals, again, the emergence of a "them versus us" attitude toward the regional council. Increasingly, it was becoming apparent that some members of ACOG felt estranged toward an institution in which they were theoretically in command.

One should avoid forming the impression that ACOG's history was simply one of uninterrupted controversy. In the background, behind the sporadic outbursts of dissension, the organization proceeded to attend to regional matters. Most of the minutes are filled with dry details of claims approved, grants reviewed, reports received and the like. And ACOG was still growing. Its grant-review workload doubled in the spring of 1971 when revised A-95 regulations brought under the regional clear-inghouse umbrella a greatly expanded range of federal grant-in-aid programs. The staff had grown; resources had expanded; the association was involved in more areas of planning and urban development. There were signs even ACOG's erstwhile critics were finding the regional forum useful for expressions of urban views. Oklahoma City took such an approach in April when the Times reported:

> The city council went on record today as favoring action by Congress to share federal tax dollars with municipalities throughout the country.
> The council voted unanimously to request that the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) direct a resolution requesting such help to congressional leadership and Oklahoma congressmen.[48]

Much the same principle is evidenced in such actions as the resolutions increasingly common at ACOG meetings; e.g., a June action in the Assembly approving sending a letter of sympathy to the widow of an Oklahoma City police officer killed in the line of duty. It must be admitted, however, that none of the resolutions could be construed as objectionable to any one member.

The organization also continued to grow in other ways. In June 1971, Logan County was admitted to membership and ACOG became a four-county organization. The Executive Committee swelled to 15 with the

seating of representatives of the new county member and Guthrie, its

principal city. Total membership in the association was 29 governments

and associate members. The Annual Report for fiscal 1971 seemed aptly

titled "Region on the Grow." A theme of inclusiveness and voluntariness

was sounded:

> . . . The Association of Central Oklahoma Governments is you,
> me, he, she, we and ours--all of us in Central Oklahoma. . . .
> Central Oklahoma control of ACOG is assured . . . [by] locally
> elected officials, representing their cities and counties [who]
> comprise the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments. ACOG
> is not another layer of government. Decisions are made locally
> by Mayors and County Commissioners elected by you. This spells
> out local--Central Oklahoma--control of our region. . . .
> ACOG has no taxing or legislative authority. Functions of
> our Council of Governments are detailed in Bylaws formulated by
> those same locally elected officials which you helped to elect.
> . . .
> We communicate through ACOG. . . .[49]

To the independent observer, however, such comments must appear

to gloss over the real and serious differences within the association.

The periodic episodes of dissension, rather than "clearing the air,"

seemed to leave the organization no better off and the opposing parties

even further apart. Controversy within the council seemed only to await

specific issues. One issue that recurrently touched off argument was

the allocation of funds for criminal justice planning between ACOG and

Oklahoma City.

The once-dormant issue was raised again in January 1971, when

Oklahoma City representative George Sturm presented a "position paper"

on funding of criminal justice planning. In this paper Sturm recited

the background concerning the city's earlier attempts to secure federal

funds through the Oklahoma Crime Commission independently of monies al-

located to ACOG. Sturm argued the Crime Commission had determined in

1968 that Oklahoma City and Tulsa, as the state's largest cities, should

be funded and administered separately. He also claimed studies by the

Law Enforcement Assistance Administration showed large central cities

had, in effect, been underfunded in the past and that the LEAA felt spe-

cial Criminal Justice Planning Councils, separately funded, should be

created for cities over 200,000 population. The latter idea was, he said,

the basis for just what Oklahoma City proposed to do. He declared the

city intended to pursue that objective despite Reed's and ACOG's opposi-

tion. Sturm's conclusion was that ACOG

> . . . has no valid ground for objection to [Oklahoma City's] appli-
> cation due to the national "special funding" provision. It would
> appear that ACOG opposition was a hasty action, directed toward
> Oklahoma City without proper knowledge that ACOG was ineligible for
> the funds in question.[50]

For several months thereafter, the issue receded from public

view as the Crime Commission deliberated on Oklahoma City's request. But

the irritation felt by Oklahoma City's officials over its perceived biased

treatment at the hands of ACOG--at least, at the hands of ACOG's staff--

did not subside. By summer there were faint suggestions the capital city

might even withdraw from the organization if matters did not become more

tolerable. The degree of overt dissatisfaction at City Hall even pro-

voked the _Times_ to caution Oklahoma City against taking "hasty action"

and urged it to work with the association for greater cooperation.[51]

But whatever effect newspaper editorials might have had was

lost when it was learned in September that the Crime Commission had de-

cided to split the $96,000 of federal funds available so that ACOG would

receive $66,000 and Oklahoma City only $30,000. Oklahoma City officials,

who had asked for $53,091, were angry. "I don't think we can take this

sitting down," Sturm said.[52] The city manager, Nate Ross, hinted--

strongly, this time--Oklahoma City might leave the association. Ross

also suggested ACOG had broken its word:

> Ross said today an informal agreement had been reached prior
> to the [OCC] meeting that Oklahoma City and ACOG would split the
> metropolitan area grant on about a 53-to-47 ratio. [The 53% fig-
> ure closely corresponds to Oklahoma City's proportion of the plan-
> ning area's population.]
> Instead, he said, ACOG did not live up to this but asked for
> and was upheld in its request for $66,000 of the $96,000 federal
> grant. . . "We don't feel we were treated fairly at all" [Ross
> said].[53]

By the next day tempers had cooled. An ACOG delegate from

Canadian County spoke up for reconciliation. Predicting an attempt would

surely soon be made to resolve the dispute, Gideon Tinsley said, "I know

it would definitely hurt ACOG and I think it would hurt Oklahoma City,

too."[54] Oklahoma City Mayor Patience Latting, always cautious with her

words, declined to give support to Ross' intimation that Oklahoma City

was considering withdrawal from ACOG. Her reluctance to speak on the

issue may have been based in part on Reed's observation that an appeal

to the Crime Commission was possible and that ACOG was the review agency

through which all local grant applications must be reviewed.[55]

But if Oklahoma City's anger had subsided, its determination to

take fundamental measures to correct what it saw as an intolerable situa-

tion had grown. Attention shifted from problems as such to their perceived

causes. Ross released a written statement saying the association's vot-

ing system needed review; Sturm concurred. Mrs. Latting again declined

comment, saying only ACOG's one-city, one-vote arrangement was "certainly

not proportional representation." The Assistant City Manager, Steve

Garman, asserted the basic question was whether "you really do justice to Oklahoma City and live with this one-city, one-vote thing."[56]

Within a week, Oklahoma City's appeal for reconsideration by the Crime Commission was rejected. Apart from an improbable reversal of the Commission's action by federal authorities, there now seemed to be no further opportunity to secure the capital's requested funds. Increasingly, the idea of proportional representation in the regional council was considered. There was, after all, a functioning example of population-based voting close at hand in Tulsa's Indian Nations Council of Governments (INCOG) where a board of directors cast votes weighted in proportion to the population of the jurisdictions they represented. In an editorial the Daily Oklahoman pointed to INCOG as a model of the way power should be allocated in regional councils. Of ACOG's one-vote, one-city plan, the newspaper thought, "In the long run, it's questionable whether Oklahoma City would continue to belong on that basis."[57]

But the question was again postponed; the cycle of conflict and compromise was again observed. In October, after Sturm's appeal to its sense of fairness, the ACOG Executive Committee overrode the recommendation of its staff and voted to pass on to Oklahoma City 53 percent of the criminal justice planning grant. The vote was 9 to 5. Siding with Oklahoma City were Bethany, Del City, Guthrie, Moore, Norman, The Village, Yukon, and Oklahoma County. In the minority were El Reno, Midwest City, and Canadian, Cleveland, and Logan Counties. Mustang was absent from the vote.[58]

And so the issue was resolved—for the moment. But there was lingering resentment on the part of Oklahoma City officials over their

city's perceived biased treatment at the hands of Executive Director
Halley and his supporters. The incident reinforced opinion in the central
city that ACOG had gotten out of control; that it had become a rival for
functions naturally the province of the dominant city in the region. They
must have agreed with the observation made in an editorial on the recent
controversy, that ACOG "was not intended by the very municipalities which
created it to compete with them for federal, state, or private financing.
Nor was it ever intended to take over [municipal] functions . . ."[59]
And of course, Oklahoma City was not alone in this view. Several other
communities' representatives had come to feel ACOG was no longer—if it
had ever been—"their" organization; that Halley and his staff were not
serving impartially all governments in the region; that the council had
become something more than it was designed to be.

The pattern was more clearly revealed as ACOG continued into
1972. At the January Assembly meeting the differences concerned the
staff's proposal to develop water and sewer and open-space plans for the
purpose of qualifying Logan County for federal assistance. Mayor Stuart
of Nichols Hills was quick to criticize the idea, arguing it involved
ACOG in local land use regulation and that the implementing resolution
surrendered too much local authority. Reed had to assure the membership
the resolution wasn't really binding and that the planning did not vio-
late ACOG's charter.

Later in January, Oklahoma City and Oklahoma County moved to
further separate their criminal justice planning from that carried on by
ACOG. Assistant City Manager Garman presented a resolution to the Okla-
homa County Commissioners providing for a separate city-county criminal

justice council. Commissioner Richardson agreed with the proposal and said the county would act after the city council had approved it, which the latter quickly did. City Manager Ross was quoted as saying in regard to the new agency, "We do not feel ACOG can address itself to the problems of Oklahoma City and Oklahoma County. We can't logically expect ACOG to become more involved in our problems."[60]

The theme was expressed again by the capital city in April, when dissatisfaction arose on transportation planning. Oklahoma City felt its downtown traffic design was largely irrelevant to street and highway planning issues in the four-county region. In contrast, however, an ACOG technical advisory committee recommended the city's updated central core traffic study be tabled for a year of study by the state highway department. Sturm, seeing the council of governments as the reason, attacked ACOG as a "super government" that had assumed a commanding position over local governments. "This is a coordinating agency, not a dictating agency," Sturm protested.[61]

A feeling ACOG was going too far beyond a simple coordinating role may have even been responsible for the almost unanimous rejection of a new project for the association on June 14. The Executive Committee denied a HUD request for ACOG to perform a survey of apartment vacancies. Although HUD and the Association of Mortgage Bankers would have paid for the survey, and despite the apparent relevance of possible apartment overbuilding to land use controls, Sturm's motion to reject the proposal carried with only one dissenting note by Del City's Mayor Currie. On the other hand, Sturm was found in the minority—with Currie—later that day when approval was given a comprehensive drug control, education and

treatment program. The program called for ACOG to set up a new advisory

committee, the Central Oklahoma Narcotics and Drug Abuse Council (CONDAC).

Sturm argued the association should not become a "social service agency,"

and that there was already plenty to occupy ACOG. But Reed expressed

strong agreement with the idea, and the motion to institute the new ad-

visory board carried twelve to two.[62]

Thus as ACOG reached the end of fiscal 1972, the divisions within

the membership over its role seemed to be widening. On the one hand, the

organization had managed to form some sort of alliance with community

leaders who felt ACOG had a worthwhile place in the metropolis. Their

support of the association seemed to be based not so much on the concept

of regionalism as such, as it did with the pragmatic idea that a central

agency could economically and responsively perform various services for

local governments. On the other hand, there were some officials who had

come to feel that ACOG had proven itself to be a burgeoning bureaucracy,

an enemy to local autonomy which wielded the "federal fund club" when

officials sought to maintain local independence of action, and a rival

to their jurisdictions in seeking money for projects or services they

saw as essentially local. Over time, this group's beliefs had been devel-

oped and strengthened by the recurrent organizational conflict. Among

some members commitment to the association was virtually absent; rejec-

tion of the organization itself seemed increasingly likely. Ironically,

the theme and subtitle of the 1972 annual report of ACOG was "Fitting

the Pieces Together."

The First Six Years in Parsonian Terms

As the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments reached the
conclusion of six years of existence, one could be sure of only one thing:
it had survived; survived over doubt, distrust, and dissension. By this
test, it will be recalled, ACOG may be considered in Parsonian terms as
a successful, viable social system. By definition, it must have managed
to satisfy to a minimal extent all four of the functional requisites
essential to the persistence of any social system. Yet ACOG was, even
to the observer in the summer of 1972, an organization with a question-
able future. And now we can see in retrospect that it did indeed fail
the "survival" test, as it was torn apart, then reconstructed, within
the following year. This fact suggests a closer look at ACOG's func-
tional performance would be fruitful by disclosing the organization's
particular problems and shortcomings in maintaining its viability amidst
an unfriendly metropolitan environment.

Adaptation The adaptive function, it will be recalled, dealt
with the procurement and employment of organizational resources--"land,"
labor, capital and "organization." ACOG, like any council of govern-
ments, experienced no difficulty in obtaining the first factor of pro-
duction. The kind of "land" Parsons had in mind is exemplified by the
formal authority possessed by a governmental institution. Just such
an asset had been granted and guaranteed ACOG by federal authorities.
Until something occurred to disturb its status as the areawide planning
and review agency ACOG would continue to enjoy this asset.

Labor and capital had also been obtained and employed. At
June 30, 1972, there were 18 persons employed by the organization.

During the year then ended ACOG had received $33,131 in local assessments and $279,254 in federal and state contributions.[63] If ACOG was not already a truly large operation, it had grown to be a substantial one.

In fact, ACOG within its first few years had lived up to the reputation often attached to government bureaus. Its organizational structure--the fourth factor of production--was complex enough to require a manual of staff personnel regulations. Its committee system had also become complicated enough to confuse Executive Committee members over their committees' purposes and boundaries. Occasionally the committee structure was reshuffled.

But ACOG's adaptive capacity was hindered by other factors. George Shirk's overriding objective had been getting a regional agency formed to satisfy federal requirements, and he knew that resistance to such an institution would be heightened if it appeared to be a sizeable operation. Mauer accordingly computed the 5 cents per capita assessment figure on the basis of what it would take to get ACOG underway. Once set, the original amount became a virtual ceiling on locally-derived general revenues. Illustrative of the problem was the reaction of Moore Mayor Clint Gold to the association's early budgetary growth. According to newspaper reports, ACOG

> . . . was blasted by the mayor for "straying from its original intensions." Gold said ACOG started out with a $14,000 budget, which grew to $65,000 for salaries alone in a two-year period. Its total budget today is around $105,000, Gold added. He attacked miscellaneous expenses, such as $7,000 a year allocated for travel, $9,000 for office space for four persons and an executive director's salary of $16,750.[64]

This attitude had three primary results. First, when federal revenues turned out to be less than expected, the Association in response

simply trimmed its planning program rather than finding additional monies. This was the approach taken, for example, in 1967 when the Executive Committee accepted a federal grant with the understanding the money would be used only for projects that could be completed within the amount received. Another effect was that when a new program of activity was added, it tended to be a relatively cost-less function. The October 1971 expansion into drug abuse and control activities through the creation of another advisory council rather than by adding a professionally staffed section is an example of this response. And finally, attitudes such as those held by Gold meant that when ACOG received and spent greater sums there were some left even more dissatisfied with the "bureaucratic monster." Thus because its local financial support was restricted in this manner, ACOG would largely remain dependent on federal largess.

Parson's theory, we recall, holds that certain pattern variables are consonant with progress toward meeting each functional requisite. For adaptation, the scheme calls for universalistic orientations to and specificity of interest in objects, emphasis on performance, and relationships characterized by affective neutrality. How did ACOG perform with regard to these patterns in its first six years? The answer depends upon whether one is primarily discussing the Executive Committee (i.e., the council for practical purposes) or the organization's director and staff.

Universalistic orientations, it seems clear, are inherently related to the concept of rationalistic urban planning. A plan for land use, water supply, or highways must be based on data furnished by objective measurement and expert judgment. This is, of course, exactly the

province of the professional planner, whose calling requires a high de-
gree of commitment to the idea that dispassionate science can point the
way to wiser decisions. On the other hand, the elected officials who
govern councils of government must necessarily be most responsive to poli-
tical influences--to the constituencies and institutions to whom they
owe their office. These orientations indeed seem to be the ones preva-
lent in ACOG. Planning, to the Executive Committee, was an activity
carried on mostly by people hired to do it. The objective was not some
realizable idea of urban design. It was instead to secure federal money
for specific projects or programs desired by their community. They pre-
ferred to leave up to others the task of conforming such things to a mas-
ter plan.

In much the same sense, specificity had a different meaning for
the typical elected delegate to ACOG than it did for the planners. To
the latter, for example, the interest was in those attributes required
to fulfill the whole dimension of a regional council of governments'
role. An executive director, therefore, would logically be a planner.
To the Executive Committee, in contrast, planning training or experience
was not the highest priority. Halley was selected in part because he
wasn't a professional planner. This is not to say that Halley's talents
and energies were not recognized; the Committee was capable of commending
his efforts on behalf of the planning program, as we have seen. But the
true indication of mayors' and commissioners' attitudes in this regard
is furnished by the short and frustrating tenure of Planning Director
Chamberlain. When this man of considerable reputation and ambition left
ACOG, his departure received brief attention from the board. For most

fundamentally, it was not performance--in the Parsonian sense of the word--on which the directors placed importance. To them planning delays and deficiencies were disturbing primarily because they threatened ACOG's A-95 status and thus the flow of federal funds. To the extent there was pressure to secure and utilize resources to "get on with the job," that motivation largely belonged to the professional staff.

Finally, affective neutrality is supposedly the criterion of the adaptive phase. But as we have seen, ACOG meetings provided a steady diet of controversy for newspaper reporters. The governing board had little success in containing dissent even when there appeared to be a real and general areawide benefit as the payoff. This may have been due to the fact that immediate penalties seemed so much more tangible than long-term benefits. Whatever the reason, however, it is clear that conflict was at least occasionally dysfunctional to ACOG's need to stabilize and move forward on regional programs and plans.

Goal Attainment The reader should understand that the preceding comments are not meant to suggest that ACOG did not achieve any goals in its first six years. Indeed, one can say ACOG experienced goal attainment with respect to many things. The substantial organizational output, despite the bickering and divisions which distracted attention from it, is shown by President Reed's report to the Assembly on ACOG's first three-and-one-half years. In addition to progress on planning program work, he proudly cited:

--Preparation of 4 documents: Computer Procedures Manual; Initial Planning Document; Goals and Policies Document; Regional Development Guide
--Publication of Directory of Governmental Officials in Central Oklahoma Area

--Aerial Mapping
--Coordination of Census
--Report on Law Enforcement Training[65]

In addition, the organization reviewed a considerable number of applications for federal assistance. In its first six years 416 grant-in-aid requests were reviewed.

Conduct of the above-mentioned programs and achievement of various planning and service objectives must have gratified Douglas Halley and his assistants. The significant question, however, is the degree to which such achievements were meaningful to the Executive Committee at large. Many members must have agreed with Mayor Stuart who, after noting he was one of very few still on the board of those who initiated ACOG, complained his "understanding originally was that ACOG was to be a coordinating organization and that we had lost track of that."[66] Certainly similar remarks were often made by representatives to the association. There is accordingly good reason to doubt that the council of governments achieved much particularistic attachment on the part of the typical member.

What must be understood is that many of the goals achieved by ACOG had not really been sought, therefore were not valued, by its general membership. The accomplishments Reed cited above are primarily those valued by persons who would wish to aggrandize ACOG and expand the scope of its activities. But to many of the representatives, ACOG served best when it served least. There would accordingly not be much "release of gratification" among the board at such progress. Instead there would be discontent or irritation that once again self-serving bureaucrats or power-grabbing federal agencies had dominated local authorities. So if the affectivity release Parsons predicts during goal attainment occurred,

it would actually have a negative affect on the organization. Halley

once said he believed some bickering is "common and inevitable."[67] But

it seems clear that he mistook the serious grumbling of a discontented

component for the normal airing of practical differences of opinion. The

same error may have been made by Reed, who once said in any organization

there would be a group of people that could not be pleased but that as

long as the majority was pleased he would work to move the organization

forward.[68]

The basic problem regarding goal attainment was like that found

in the adaptive function. The perspectives of the average local official

and the association partisan were different. It is noteworthy that Reed,

in discussing ACOG's progress, said nothing about plan **implementation**.

As has been noted above, ACOG's members were not really interested in

plan implementation. Their concern was rather with maintaining a pass-

able review and planning agency. Specificity of interest regarding the

goal attainment function therefore related to minor or subsidiary goals

rather than substantive regional ones. In the same fashion, ACOG's

performance--in the Parsonian sense--was judged by the Executive Com-

mittee by much more modest standards than those used by regionalism

advocates. As a result, true progress toward areawide coordination was

neglected and only relatively insignificant "goal objects" were things

to be "possessed, consumed, enjoyed or appreciated."

Integration This function involves the establishment and main-

tenance of a spirit of unity within the system. For a spirit of soli-

darity to exist, it is necessary that members of the system feel an ob-

ligation to it; a subjugation of self for the purposes of the collectivity.

Members do not demand a <u>quid</u> <u>pro</u> <u>quo</u> relationship, for they are interested in the system's welfare as well as their own.

Affectivity supposedly characterizes the integrative function. We have little evidence with which to evaluate the enjoyment taken by ACOG employees in their work. On the other hand, the evidence certainly suggests that for many elected representatives participation in association affairs was regarded with little enthusiasm. Absenteeism was not uncommon and representatives appear to have sometimes been eager for the meetings to conclude. As one former ACOG planner complains, "You can't get them to sit down for three hours!" The better attendance records, as would be expected, were compiled by members who took a more active part in ACOG affairs. Still there is no way to differentiate attendance due to genuine interest and gratification, from that due to a simple sense of official duty.

Also falling in this category was the proposal to give a committee of city managers review authority. One of the implications of that proposal is such a body would relieve elected officials of some of the onerous chores in A-95 review work.

Affectivity is, however, indicated here in other ways. It was displayed because members of the system were valued for characteristics apart from their performance on behalf of the association. An index of such quality-based orientations in ACOG is found in the numerous expressions of appreciation, recognition, and sympathy passed by the Executive Committee. During the first six years there were seventeen such measures adopted. Commendations were given to its executive directors, committee advisors, and planning assistants. Resolutions recognized Shirk, Morgan,

seven other council members, and even the city of Oklahoma City. Not only were services to ACOG noted but services on behalf of community and region as well. Sympathy was extended widows of municipal officials and an Oklahoma City police officer killed in the line of duty. The 1970 annual report included an "In Memoriam" page dedicated to Ben Belisle, ACOG's treasurer and mayor of Yukon, and Huey Long, long-time city manager of Del City. Expressions such as these combine affectivity, particularism, and quality orientation.

But in other and perhaps more significant ways behavior within ACOG does not fit the Parsonian model. The pattern variable of diffuseness called for here suggests, as does the idea of regionalism, that an overriding concern should exist for the general or common aspects of areawide problems. Although lip service was often paid to this concept, Executive Committee sessions were at their liveliest when self-interest rather than areawide objectives were concerned. The many routine and noncontroversial decisions were treated in just such a casual manner, it seems clear, because they posed no potential threat to individual jurisdiction priorities. In other words, the mass of decisions were "coordinated" because there was little areawide effect and therefore no substantial amount of coordination was needed. Moreover, as we have seen, there were even efforts to remove from ACOG's authority programs that allegedly should, or could, be performed by individual municipalities and counties.

Integrative processes in organizations call for even, unbiased treatment of the members if they are to develop an attachment to the system. But ACOG was plagued by dissension stemming from the idea held by

some members--especially Oklahoma City--that they were not getting such even-handed treatment. The association's leaders on several occasions had to deal with this issue. For example, in a message to the January 1970 Assembly, Reed stressed that impartiality had and would remain the principle for ACOG functions.

> . . . ACOG effectiveness depends upon impartial services to all members. This impartial staff service has been carried out in the past and will be continued into future endeavors. While the staff is intended to provide assistance to any and all members, it is the responsibility of all to offer a cooperative spirit if this association is to be successful in its efforts.[69]

Unfortunately for the organization, however, comments such as these probably served to promote system integration only with regard to the elements-- the staff and a few members--which already had a strong bond to the association. And because perceived partiality had already caused divisiveness within the Executive Committee, Reed's chiding may have only served to exacerbate the problem.

One can list several other factors which operated to hinder the association's integrative function. For one thing, the voluntaristic nature of a council of governments means there are fundamental structural restrictions on the organization's "inward pull." To obtain compliance with unpopular measures a COG is virtually forced to use the weapon of federal funding. Once used, the organization may be perceived as a competitor for grants-in-aid, an enemy to individual jurisdictions' interests, and therefore not a natural element of the metropolitan system.

Another problem was the preexisting difficulty so often faced by COGs--the central city/suburban split. In the central Oklahoma area this was an issue which first delayed ACOG's formation until the core

city agreed to a voting arrangement that would eventually prove to be intolerable. This problem then continued to frustrate ACOG's efforts to pull the region together into a cooperative partnership. From a Parsonian perspective the controversy over voting evidences an inability to instill in system members a sufficient degree of self-subordination to the interests of the collectivity.

And finally, the nature of the system's representative board frustrated integrative efforts. Because it was composed of local elected officials, retirements, resignations, and defeats at the polls often took from ACOG members who already had or might have developed an attachment to the association. Of the 13 Executive Committee members on the board in 1970, for example, only five remained to serve in 1972.

Thus we have seen ACOG was not able, for various reasons, to develop the integrative function in regard to the Executive Committee. But ACOG's integration problem goes beyond these difficulties. In the attempt to get members to work cooperatively together, stress was often put upon the fact of the association's benignness. Regional advocates hoped members, once they saw ACOG was a toothless monster, would lessen their suspicion and fear of the institution. Whatever positive effect this may have had on integration—and there seems to be no reason to think there was significant effect—impotence did handicap the adaptive and goal-attainment dimensions. A feeble institution is not a respected institution. Nor it is likely to be considered a viable answer to substantive regional problems.

Halley hoped that fuller public and elective official "understanding" would produce more support and trust of ACOG. Actually, the

reverse was sometimes true. Those who opposed ACOG had quite good reasons, from their point of view, for their opposition. The aims of regional planning advocates and devotees of the metropolitan status quo are fundamentally irreconcilable. It was quite unlikely the message of regionalism would convert opponents to partisans of centralized direction and areawide decision-making. It was very probable on the other hand that fuller knowledge of the centralizing and conforming purposes of regional planners would serve to stimulate their distrust of an institution established to further those ends. So while Halley asked for "understanding," what ACOG really needed was trust.

Pattern Maintenance This function involves the restoration of organizational energies and renewal of system value patterns. This internally-directed function is integrative in the sense it is devoted to rebuilding common acceptance of the system's values and structure.

Again the main effort was carried on by ACOG's staff and a few officials. Officers, whether from personal attachment or the feeling they were obliged to do so by their position, stood up for the association. Staff employees worked to disseminate the regionalism message. Publications were approved and distributed, including a layman-oriented pamphlet, the "Regional Development Guide;" an informative handbook called "ACOG: A Descriptive Outline;" and the association's newsletter, Regional Perspective. Three pages of the 1970 annual report, for example, were devoted to answering the question, "What is regional planning?"

The difficulty in this regard is, however, much the same as was noted for the integrative phase. ACOG had to be sold as an essentially harmless institution, an approach which could not be expected to generate

much excitement or respect. The pitch was that ACOG did nothing to injure the present state of local autonomy. "ACOG is here," Keith Smith once said, "to do things for its members only if they desire ACOG to do it for them. Even if a majority . . . voted for something, a member-community does not have to make use of, or participate in, whatever the offer or plan might be."[70] Morgan put it more colorfully: "Some people are trying to say ACOG wants to dictate local politics. There is as much chance of this as a snowball in Hades."[71] Many people must have wondered why the association should exist at all.

Their justifications for ACOG were of course politically realistic. Morgan realized most representatives to ACOG shared the views of Norick who had nothing against it as a sounding board, but when municipal powers were infringed declared, "then I'm going to be against it."[72] The unfortunate result was that efforts to defend or advance ACOG could generally only be compensatory in effect. Centrifugal tendencies were contained--barely. One can also wonder if the motivation to maintain the association had much to do with true identification with the association as a system of value patterns. In the dispute over criminal justice planning, for example, although ACOG was the beneficiary of attempts to retain this aspect of areawide planning, the actual rationale for it seems to have been suburban communities' conviction Oklahoma City wanted to dominate the region. ACOG was thus a shield, a barrier--not an instrument of positive action.

In this pattern-maintenance context, then, we see that ACOG was again handicapped. Parsons holds affective neutrality is characteristic of the function. But the association suffered from repeated conflict

over basic elements of its structure and operation, which surely hindered progress toward stabilizing and building value patterns with respect to the council of governments. This latter aspect meant universalistic orientations about ACOG's potential were retarded.

And finally, we may note that ACOG scored low on the pattern variable of diffuseness of orientation. With regard to the organization itself, the membership desired it to remain limited in scope (i.e., have specificity in purpose) as a minimal-level review organization to barely satisfy federal requirements. It is true that in six years the council of governments had grown to be a sizeable organization involved in a variety of projects and planning programs. But such growth usually was grudgingly approved by the Executive Committee. Most substantive expansion came as a result of federal pressure and/or incentive. One of the few instances revealing a sense of ACOG's potential (or theoretical) place in the region resulted from Oklahoma City's proposed "Metropolitan Criminal Justice Coordinating Council." Reed objected to the proposed agency's name, which he perceived as intruding upon ACOG's territory. "My objection is in naming it 'metropolitan.' That brings it into ACOG," Reed contended.[73]

In sum, then, it seems that the most fundamental problem ACOG had with the pattern-maintenance function is that most (if not all) of its elected representatives were already strongly attached to other systems— their community political system and the metropolitan environment as it existed. Pattern-maintenance of these systems had first priority. They had little if any desire to contribute to building a new institution devoted to disturbing and changing the world they knew. And as Parsons had predicted, the superordinate value patterns of the larger, social system of the metropolis prevailed.

FOOTNOTES

[1]George Mauer, interview by David R. Morgan, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, April 1967.

[2]See Robert M. Tinstman, "'ACOG'—An Experiment in Intergovernmental Relations," Midwest Review of Public Administration 1 (February 1967), pp. 6-10, and David R. Morgan, "Attitudes Among Local Officials Toward a Council of Governments: The Oklahoma City Situation," Midwest Review of Public Administration 5 (February 1971), pp. 36-39,

[3]William S. Morgan, interview at Norman, Oklahoma, August 7, 1974.

[4]Agreement of the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 20, 1966, p. 1.

[5]Ibid., pp. 1-2.

[6]ByLaws of the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, [June 20, 1966], p. 1.

[7]Oklahoma City Daily Oklahoman, July 6, 1966.

[8]Mustang (Oklahoma) Chronicle, July 11, 1966.

[9]Oklahoma City Journal, September 21, 1966.

[10]Moore (Oklahoma) Tribune, February 9, 1967.

[11]Oklahoman, August 14, 1966.

[12]Oklahoman, August 23, 1966.

[13]David R. Morgan, "Suburban Differentiation and Metropolitan Political Integration," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1969), pp. 278-80.

[14]Ibid., p. 296.

[15]Oklahoma City Times, March 13, 1967.

[16]This quotation is taken from Executive Committee meeting minutes kept and filed in chronological order by an association secretary. Subsequent direct quotations in this chapter, where not attributed to another source, have been taken from official minutes of the meeting indicated by the accompanying text.

[17]Norman (Oklahoma) Transcript, April 7, 1967.

[18]Oklahoman, August 23, 1967.

[19]Times, May 8, 1967.

[20]Times, June 5, 1967.

[21]Oklahoman, June 7, 1967.

[22]Oklahoman, June 14, 1967.

[23]Oklahoman, June 20, 1967.

[24]In May 1968 the Executive Committee resumed once-a-month meetings, it having found there was not sufficient work to justify more frequent meetings.

[25]Times, June 24, 1967.

[26]Oklahoman, July 6, 1967.

[27]Oklahoman, July 11, 1967.

[28]Times, July 12, 1967.

[29]Times, July 19, 1967.

[30]Times, July 10, 1967.

[31]Oklahoman, December 7, 1967.

[32]"Semi-Annual Report" presented by Executive Director L. Douglas Halley to the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments General Assembly, January 17, 1968, p. 2.

[33]Transcript, March 20, 1968. In this connection, the Times reported April 11, 1968, that according to the National Service to Regional Councils ACOG may be the only regional council to date to have been put to a test with voters. The NSRC comment was based on the April 1967 election in Yukon on the question of joining ACOG and the Moore election on continuing membership.

[34]Oklahoman, December 11, 1968.

[35]"President's Report" presented at the ACOG General Assembly, June 6, 1968, p. 4.

[36]Journal, November 14, 1968.

[37]Oklahoman, January 20, 1969.

[38]Oklahoman, May 1, 1969.

[39]Journal, January 1, 1970.

[40]Journal, January 8, 1970.

[41]Ibid.

[42]ACOG Staff Memorandum from James Marr, Planning Assistant, to L. Douglas Halley titled "Summary of the Applications Status Report," January 14, 1970.

[43]"President's Report" presented at the ACOG General Assembly, p. 4.

[44]Times, January 14, 1970.

[45]Oklahoman, March 12, 1970.

[46]Transcript, August 13, 1970.

[47]Transcript, October 15, 1970.

[48]Times, April 20, 1971.

[49]1971 Annual Report of ACOG, p. 6.

[50]George Sturm, "A Position Paper: Oklahoma City Criminal Justice Planning Council Application," January 13, 1971.

[51]Times, July 17, 1971.

[52]Oklahoman, September 16, 1971.

[53]Times, September 16, 1971.

[54]Oklahoman, September 17, 1971.

[55]Journal, September 17, 1971.

[56]Oklahoman, September 18, 1971.

[57]Oklahoman, September 26, 1971.

[58]Journal, October 14, 1971.

[59]Oklahoman, October 15, 1971.

[60]Journal, January 25, 1972.

[61]Oklahoman, April 20, 1972.

[62]Journal, June 15, 1972.

[63]1972 Annual Report of ACOG.

[64]Oklahoman, March 5, 1968.

[65]"President's Report" presented at the ACOG General Assembly, January 14, 1970, p. 1-2.

[66]The remark is recorded in minutes of the August 12, 1970 Executive Committee meeting.

[67]Journal, June 30, 1970.

[68]The comment followed Reed's re-election as ACOG President at the June 24, 1970 General Assembly.

[69]"President's Report," January 14, 1970, p. 4.

[70]Moore (Oklahoma) Monitor, January 12, 1967.

[71]Transcript, July 6, 1967.

[72]Times, July 18, 1967.

[73]Journal, December 18, 1970.

CHAPTER IV

THE REORGANIZATION OF ACOG

A Rupture of the Association

By the latter half of 1972 the issues which divided the Associa-
tion of Central Oklahoma Governments had been plainly revealed. The pre-
vious chapter has shown the recurring sequence of disputes of authority,
challenges to fund allocations, allegations. of staff impartiality and
complaints over the growing size and influence of ACOG. On a more funda-
mental level, however, ACOG's real problem was that it was still not seen
by its members as one of their own, a legitimate part of the metropolitan
political system. Its nominal governors perceived ACOG as an independent—
even uncontrollable—entity which intruded upon the loose system of deci-
sion-making that had characterized urban central Oklahoma. Despite all
efforts to portray the association as a natural and proper agency for
serving the interests of the metropolitan community, it was still seen as
a federal instrument for abrogating local prerogatives. One board member
reflected this attitude when he described the organization as a "necessary
evil" that operates to "take local government out of local government."[1]

As the dominant municipality of the region, Oklahoma City felt
most acutely the threat ACOG posed to its long-term hegemony. Since George
Shirk's departure from its mayor's office, the central city's administration

had been the most vocal critic of ACOG's expanding size and scope of activity. Many of the association's controversies had particularly involved the capital city. But events in the late summer of 1972 were to bring its years of dissatisfaction to a climax.

The summer began with a dispute which involved the Central Oklahoma Narcotics and Drug Abuse Council, an ACOG adjunct. It was defended, on the one hand, by ACOG's staff and criticized, on the other hand, by those who felt it was an unwarranted extension of the council of governments. In July there was an argument over the Logan County Rural Water District's application for a grant-in-aid, which finally ended with the board sending the request on without recommendation.

The most serious incident involved the familiar issue of federal funding of criminal justice planning and training. The Oklahoma Crime Commission announced in August that it would allocate ACOG 18 percent of such planning funds but none of the training funds. Oklahoma City thus received all training monies and the lion's share of planning funds. Not unexpectedly, Oklahoma City declared this was a proper division. But President Reed immediately objected on behalf of the association. "The Crime Commission's funding schedule doesn't by-pass us," he complained, "it shuts us out. ACOG is losing absolute control of the training program."[2] The Executive Committee, with Oklahoma City's George Sturm abstaining, proceeded to vote to appeal the allocation decision to the Commission.

ACOG's governing committee seems to have seen this action as an entirely proper attempt to retain an inherent and natural part of regional planning. The action's apparent effect, however, was to trigger

the great disruption that followed shortly. Oklahoma City's patience
had been stretched to the breaking point. Within a fortnight following
the criminal justice funds incident, Oklahoma City declared it would
leave the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments.

The Complaint Against ACOG

The occasion for the announcement was a meeting of the City Coun-
cil. George Sturm, as the city's representative to ACOG, read aloud a
six-page "policy statement" detailing Oklahoma City's grievances. He
charged the association had given highest priority to getting funds for
itself, rather than for its members. ACOG had not fostered inter-juris-
dictional cooperation, he continued, but rather had inhibited it by the
staff's attempts to control the organization. The staff had pitted small
cities against big ones; had not given sufficient prior notice of matters
coming before the council. The result was that Halley and his assistants
had dominated Executive Committee decision making. Sturm attacked the
one-city, one-vote voting procedure as unfair. And finally, adding a new
grievance, he charged the city would lose federal grants for developing
Myriad Gardens, a downtown urban renewal park project, "because the ACOG
staff failed to file necessary planning documents in Washington to make
the city eligible."[3]

The City Council heard Sturm's list of grievances and promptly
voted unanimously to withdraw Oklahoma City's membership for ACOG. Mayor
Latting then declared the city's action automatically left ACOG defunct:
with the removal of a majority of the region's population, the associa-
tion no longer represented the requisite 75 percent of area population.

But the region would not go without a regional review and planning organization. Oklahoma City would lead the way, she promised, in forming a new council of governments out of ACOG's ashes.

Sturm's six-page statement was a formidable indictment of ACOG. Still it did not present the whole of Oklahoma City's perception of the issue. An article written not long after the city's withdrawal by then-assistant manager Stephen Garman gives a fuller description of the city's logic.[4] In this piece he began by arguing that councils of governments have become unmanageable. He complained local officials in a council of governments often believe "the member governments do not operate the COG: the feds operate the COG, and once a month the member governments meet to find out what their COG is doing."[5]

This autonomous state, however, was not the intended role for councils of governments, Garman argued. They had been devised as planning bodies—discussion forums for voluntary intergovernmental coordination. Since COGs originally were only to be coordinating agencies, Garman continued, the question of member representation was unimportant. A one-city, one-vote policy sufficed for a metropolitan discussion group. But COGs outgrew their boundaries and, in the case of ACOG, the relationship between the COG and the central city became that of a "competitive sport." The long battle over allocation of criminal justice planning and training funds revealed the question was "a matter of how to divvy up the pie." Moreover, ACOG became in effect another level of government:

> . . . The city, we realized, stood to suffer, not to the benefit of any other member government, but to the benefit of the COG itself. Somehow, the COG had ceased to be the cumulative voice of area governments, and had come into its own as a planning, organizing, and implementing organization. It had become a voice unto itself.

. . . The problem, in part, was that the smaller jurisdictions had neither the staff nor, in some cases, the inclination to get into the issue and come to their own opinions. When we, as the central city, confronted the issue we were accused not by other cities but by the COG itself, of trying to "take over" the area.[6]

Garman alleges that resistance to Oklahoma City's action was due to the staff's effort to discredit the central city by portraying it as power hungry. Actually, some members hardly needed any such persuasion on this point. But clearly there was, as Garman implies, considerable sentiment in ACOG which was essentially sympathetic to the capital, or at the least shared a common understanding of the nature of ACOG's problems. Oklahoma City's grievances revolved primarily around two issues--representation and the performance of the Executive Director-- and most other delegates shared the view that these were the real problems in the organization. Most often mentioned by members in discussions with this writer were the voting and director issues. A related issue, allocation of federal funds, was also mentioned. In a distinct minority, therefore, were the three officials who blamed Executive Committee dissension of Oklahoma City's alleged wish for metropolitan dominance.

The question of Doug Halley's part in ACOG's problems is not easily answered. The executive director, to his friends and supporters, was an energetic, fair-minded administrator who simply believed in his organization's mission. They say he was faced with two insurmountable obstacles: a marked lack of enthusiasm for and understanding of regional coordination and the factionalism of Oklahoma City politics. It is suggested that some mayors and managers might have found ACOG to be a handy and useful villain which could be blamed for things officials privately approved. And when Halley was placed in this unfortunate situation, they

say, he refused to be "subservient." It was not a matter of lobbying one group of communities against another, but rather one of avoiding being too strongly identified with either. Halley did the best he could, the best that can be expected, and unfortunately lost out. "Anyone sitting in the directors' seat," one ACOG planner argued," is going to be controversial."

Most observers took a more critical view. One official felt Halley was an "excellent administrator but had a personality problem." Another suggested a state of personal ill-will existed between the director and Oklahoma City administrators. Halley had a "chip on his shoulder," he said, and from the beginning "got himself mixed up" with Oklahoma City. "Doug was not a good public relations man," he added, and said that by "talking down" to local officials Halley became "his own worst enemy."

Even more critical was yet another suburban politician who believed Halley, much more than the representation issue, was the real cause of Oklahoma City's dissatisfaction. He charged Halley cultivated small cities with the aim of aggrandizing ACOG and refused to allow advisory technical committees to take a proper role in regional decisions. He said Halley insisted that only elected officials should be on the Executive Committee because, as he thinks, they "can be snowed." He concluded by saying, "it got to the point where I didn't trust him." Nor did, apparently, several other representatives. The tenuousness of his position is indicated by a secret March 1972 vote by which he was retained as director by only an 8 to 7 margin.[7]

Finally, in any discussion of the causes of ACOG's fragmentation one must include the conservative instincts of many southwestern

politicians. These are officials who are uncomfortable with the federal role in urban political affairs. They find the process of seeking, qualifying for, and utilizing federal grants distasteful but unavoidable. Typically, they would prefer the national government to "get out of aid money altogether" but due to their communities' financial exigencies will begrudgingly accept devices such as councils of governments to route federal funds through to them. An ACOG planner called this a "frontier philosophy" which combines elements of parochialism, competitiveness, conservatism and anti-federalism. Thus, initial resentment of ACOG was only exacerbated by the perception commonly held among local officials that it functions as a "federal weapon."

Reaction to Oklahoma City's Withdrawal

But whatever the reasons or causes behind Oklahoma City's break with the association, actions in response to it were now necessary. Reed and Halley, as ACOG's primary officers, quickly replied to Oklahoma City's list of grievances. The director refuted the charges made by Sturm the previous day and asserted the association had never kept the city from receiving federal funds. ACOG had neither withheld information, Halley added, nor had its staff been partial in its relations with member governments. He agreed that Oklahoma City was correct on one point: a defunct ACOG would indeed stop the flow of federal aid. On his part, Reed was more bellicose. He claimed the matter was due to Oklahoma City trying to dominate the region.[8]

Once made, the capital's decision seemed to become infectious. Oklahoma County's J. P. Richardson said his government would follow the capital city's lead, and Village Mayor Stan Alexander announced his city

would quit the association as well. "If ACOG is not getting the job done for [Oklahoma City]," Alexander explained, "then it isn't for any of us."[9]

In the meantime work was underway to establish the new areawide planning organization Latting had promised. A newspaper story on the 24th of August reported Oklahoma City would soon begin soliciting support for a new regional body. The article noted the capital was in an advantageous position in this regard since Oklahoma City alone contained more than 55 percent of the four-county population. In addition, seven governments— Norman, Edmond, The Village, Del City, Yukon, Bethany, and Oklahoma County— were reported as appearing to have "some sympathy" for the central city's views. These jurisdictions recognized the paramount issue was a more equitable—at least from Oklahoma City's standpoint—basis for allocating representation. "I'd have to agree with Oklahoma City's basic premise— that one vote per member is not what I'd consider fair," Bethany Mayor Eldon Lyon was quoted. But his long-held fear of central city dominance wasn't completely curbed. "If they want 35 percent of the vote, I'd say forget it," Lyon added.[10] Still, if some compromise could be reached on the voting issue there seemed to be an excellent chance a new organization would soon replace ACOG as central Oklahoma's regional council of governments.

President Reed continued to speak out in criticism of Oklahoma City at the same time he worked to marshal support for ACOG. His principal ally in this effort was the mayor of Moore, Odell Morgan, who seemed to have mostly pragmatic reasons for saving the association. In late August Morgan "blasted" the city withdrawal on the grounds the action would endanger federal grants-in-aid for area communities, and released

to the press a letter he had sent to other ACOG members in which he stated Moore planned to remain in the organization.[11] Reed and Morgan apparently were speaking for a substantial bloc of ACOG members. Shortly thereafter at a hastily-called meeting attended by 19 ACOG delegates, 15 voted to stay "united" behind the existing regional council.

The four delegates who abstained from this vote of confidence represented Bethany, Del City, Noble and Yukon. They explained that they supported retention of ACOG, but only with certain qualifications. The chief condition was that Halley be replaced as director. They hoped that by removing the controversial administrator Oklahoma City could be persuaded to rejoin ACOG, perhaps even without a change in the formula for voting representation. Yukon's Mayor Bob Ward stated the case:

> Several of you have said you've had good relations with ACOG and I agree, but everyone has not. It's not just Oklahoma City, but others. There has not been harmony; we've been fighting each other. Some of this, in blunt frankness, has been instigated by our director. . . . Let's face the fact if we change directors there's a possibility Oklahoma City will come back. They've indicated they won't, but its our only chance.[12]

The division within ACOG's remaining members forced Reed to accept the idea that at least some restructuring of the organization was necessary. He presented at a September meeting called by Mayor Latting a new voting formula which would give Oklahoma City 21 out of 120 total votes (17½ percent) in a revised council. But the capital's mayor was unyielding. "Oklahoma City is interested in forming a new council of governments. We are not interested in trying to pick up any pieces from ACOG. We have withdrawn from ACOG, and this action will not be reversed," she insisted.[13]

Mayor Latting was adamant on this point because she had in mind a comprehensive plan for a new and substantially different council of governments. Earlier in that meeting she had presented ten points comprising Oklahoma City's concept of a proper COG. Most of the points dealt with restrictions on its size and influence, such as the specification that when possible federal funds should be used directly by members in the conduct of planning activity on behalf of the council, rather than by the COG itself to do in-house projects. She proposed an administrative review by city and county professionals before council action and provisions "protecting all members from ACOG influence or involvement in members' internal affairs." Recourse to cities' staffs should be made before expanding the COG's payroll. There should be provisions to insure all members serve on policy-making boards and as COG officers. Another point was suggestive of complaints made by other cities as well as by Oklahoma City that ACOG meetings were too complicated. It proposed "an informal, open atmosphere."[14]

The most significant of the ten conditions, however, was one to apportion voting representation on the new COG's governing board (and dues assessments) in accordance with member governments' relative population. And it was this condition--if strictly applied--that was still unacceptable to most ACOG members. Since Oklahoma City contained over half the area's population, a voting system based purely on census figures would give the central city an automatic majority vote. As long as Mrs. Latting insisted on a majority or near-majority portion of a COG's voting power, Reed would have a much easier task in staving off formation of a replacement organization.

There was also still time for some sort of compromise between the two factions. Although Oklahoma City by its withdrawal had instantly reduced ACOG's representation of the metropolitan area below the requisite 75 percent, the organization's legal qualification as the official area-wide planning organization was not immediately terminated. The Department of Housing and Urban Development announced in early September that the deadline for preserving the area's eligibility for federal funds was October 7, 1972. There were three options: a temporary Areawide Planning Organization with provisional status as a certifying agency could be created; Oklahoma City could rejoin ACOG and preserve that body's certification; or a new permanent council of governments could be formed.[15] Oklahoma City Manager Nate Ross expressed confidence, however, that a new APO would be ready by October 7. His optimism was reinforced by a statement from the chairman of the Oklahoma County Commissioners that the county was prepared to enter a new council of governments. And once a new organization was initiated, there seemed to be plenty of time to satisfy certification requirements. HUD had said the new APO would be permitted six months to enlist governments representing at least three-fourths of the planning region population.[16]

All through September pressure mounted on ACOG's partisans to accept restructuring of the association along the lines set down by Oklahoma City for an acceptable APO. Mayor Ward of Yukon urged changing ACOG in order to salvage it, saying he hoped "other small city mayors will realize Oklahoma City is not all wrong."[17] On the other hand, The Village's city council voted "to agree to work with Oklahoma City in any organization which may be formed to succeed the present Association

of Central Oklahoma Governments."[18] Councilman Grimwood of Norman said

he would ask for his city council's resolution to support formation of a

new APO. Although Norman had not been strongly identified with either

side of the dispute—it did share many of Oklahoma City's views—Grimwood

explained he "felt it was imperative something be done. The time element

is severe."[19]

The Appearance of CACOG

Most ominous to ACOG's future, however, was the report on Septem-

ber 26 that three cities—Edmond, The Village, and Del City—had decided

to join the new areawide planning organization Oklahoma City had just un-

veiled, the "Capitol Area Council of Governments" (CACOG).[20] The next

day the Oklahoma City Council voted 7 to 2 to join CACOG. The minority

side was composed of John Smith, a doctrinaire conservative who opposed

any such federal meddling in local affairs, and Ken Boyer, who demanded

the city have a majority vote in the regional council.[21] For despite

Boyer's objections Oklahoma City indeed would not have a majority of the

voting power in CACOG. The city's administration had made a concession

to suburban governments. Under the new arrangement Oklahoma City would

exercise 26 out of the 62 ballots (42 percent) to be cast by the new

organization's governing board. Dues as well would be apportioned in

accordance with voting weight, with the exception that county governments

would pay assessments for cities under 3,000 population.[22] In view of

previous events, it seemed the core city's concession might now bring

into CACOG a sufficient number of communities to qualify it as the new

areawide planning organization.

Virtually the only apparent bright spot in this gloomy period for ACOG partisans was an event that proved to be a harbinger of future developments. This was the unexpected action by Oklahoma County on September 18 to rejoin ACOG. The decision, in fact, may have even been a surprise to the county's representative to ACOG, Commissioner Richardson, who was overruled in the vote by his two fellow commissioners. The two explained their action on the grounds their earlier decision to withdraw was too hasty, and that it now appeared a new regional organization couldn't be formed in time. In addition, they said, they "did not want their county's federal funds in limbo for more than a year."[23] Perhaps the fear of jeopardizing federal highway assistance was the primary reason for Oklahoma County's reversal. On the other hand, the reason might have been, as Mrs. Latting believes, that Commission Chairman Ralph Adair—long a political adversary—was engaging in "politics" with the aim of discrediting the mayor. Adair coupled his vote to rejoin ACOG with an outburst of criticism of Mayor Latting for, as he put it, taking her city out of ACOG without being sufficiently informed about the task of forming a new regional organization.

Attempts continued to bring about a solution to the ACOG problem through compromise. Probably by late September virtually all participants in the confrontation had come to feel they would have to yield something from their previous positions. ACOG, of course, simply could not survive without the central city. Oklahoma City's administration appeared to have the upper hand, yet it knew a regional council which would be little more than a surrogate for the city's metropolitan ambitions was unacceptable even to jurisdictions which sympathized with the core city and,

of course, looming over all the disputants was the prospect of an inter-
ruption in the flow of federal grants-in-aid.

Thus it was that in a series of conversations, formal meetings
and even by exchanges of press releases the principals in the dispute
communicated and edged toward common ground. Already, it was widely
agreed that Halley would have to be jettisoned. He was too much a symbol
of the old conflict. His admirers might grumble about Halley being a
"sacrificial lamb", but realists were willing to dispense with the issue
of the director in order to come to grips with the fundamental structural
problem of voting power.

The Effort to Revive ACOG

A special meeting of the Executive Committee was held on Septem-
ber 17 to discuss means for reconciliation between ACOG and its critics.
Reed initiated the dialogue by stating he would be agreeable to some form
of weighted vote arrangement. He noted that Tulsa held 25 percent of the
voting power in its Indian Nations Council of Governments. A ratio like
INCOG's would be acceptable, Reed said, but the 42 percent share which
Oklahoma City would have in CACOG was excessive. Grimwood of Norman--
who seemed able to speak for Oklahoma City almost as well as for his
own government--urged some positive step be taken because the meeting
"seemed to be the last opportunity for this organization to make a sub-
stantial move toward settlement of this problem."[24] He moved the com-
mittee hold another special session for the purpose of integrating the
CACOG agreement with ACOG's bylaws. Odell Morgan, who had until now
steadfastly held out for ACOG, seconded Grimwood's motion. It was given
unanimous approval.

Having succeeded with his motion to consider amending the ACOG charter, Grimwood brought up a specific proposal. He suggested Oklahoma City receive 39 percent of the vote in a reorganized ACOG. But Reed, Morgan, and Ward were still concerned. They were not prepared to include that specific figure in the next meeting's agenda. Morgan obtained Grimwood's admission, moreover, that the 39 percent was not "hard and fast."[25]

Nor was it hard and fast at the special meeting on the 29th. Unwilling to accept even Grimwood's proposal, delegates from 20 cities and counties quickly rejected Oklahoma City's 42 percent share under CACOG's agreement and approved a plan whereby the capital would have 20 of 56 votes (36 percent) in a restructured ACOG. Even this reduction did not satisfy some representatives. Ralph Adair, who called Mayor Latting "ruthless," had argued for only a 30 percent share for the city. He claimed the mayor did not have the backing of her city council in demanding more influence for Oklahoma City.[26]

And as events a few days later proved, Mrs. Latting indeed did not have the full support of her councilors. In a long, acrimonious session on October 3 the city council, dominated by the so-called "Bishop bloc" of political opponents of Latting, rescinded its decision to join CACOG and approved a motion to rejoin ACOG with no conditions attached. It also voted, 5 to 4, to dump the mayor as regional council representative and deny her the privilege of appointing her replacement.[27] It was a sudden, stunning setback for the mayor and her outnumbered allies on the council.

By attaching no conditions to rejoining ACOG the Oklahoma City Council had, as the old saw goes, snatched defeat from the jaws of victory.

On that same day the morning newspaper had reported ACOG's other members' agreement to accept a weighted vote system along the lines the capital favored. Latting reportedly found the 36 percent the members had decided upon to be "substantially acceptable." In addition, it was reported, Halley and other principal staff employees would be either dismissed or asked to resign.[28] In effect, the suburban membership of ACOG had thrown in the towel. Oklahoma City would gain essentially all it had demanded at the time it left the association. Yet, in one stormy session of the city council, the capital had now yielded on every point.

It was no surprise the _Times_ reported the next day that ". . . officials in several suburban communities said they were stunned after the Oklahoma City Council's turnabout and are in a dilemma."[29] The newspaper later editorialized that the council's action was ". . . a seemingly petty effort to embarrass the mayor of Oklahoma City, who had led the fight for a better city role in the inter-government council . . ."[30]

But ACOG, like a large ship, had been launched on a new course and it proceeded by force of momentum in the same direction. Oklahoma City politics were volatile, anyway: suburban members felt an attempt to take back the capital's gains would certainly eventually resurrect the old conflict. Accordingly, at the October Executive Committee meeting it was resolved to lay before the January 1973 General Assembly several amendments to the ACOG agreement. Most important of these was the proportional voting mechanism with Oklahoma City allocated 36 percent. Another significant amendment would allow the 33 governments in the General Assembly, operating on the one-city, one-vote rule, to "ratify, amend or reject any official action of the Board of Directors." It thus would

increase the power of the small-city dominated assembly. More specifically, the measure would take away from the Executive Committee its sole authority to hire and fire the Executive Director, transfer funds and review all planning activities, grants and contracts. As for the hapless Doug Halley, he diplomatically offered his resignation to be effective January 15, 1973. Ralph Adair gave a lengthy testimonial to the director's abilities and said he was intelligent "as the devil."

The proposal to give the Assembly a comprehensive veto power over Executive Committee decisions was not uniformly well-received. But Oklahoma City delegate Nelson Keller (one of Mrs. Latting's opponents in the city council) said he felt the Assembly would refrain from using such powers.[31] The Times was nevertheless sufficiently exercised over the amendment that it grumbled about the change in an editorial, but admitted that it was apparently necessary if there was to be a working regional organization.[31] As it turned out, however, there was no need to be concerned. When the General Assembly considered the issue on January 25, 1973, it showed little sympathy for Odell Morgan's earlier plea that restricting the Assembly's veto power

> would be the quickest way to create a unit of super government
> that could very surely strangle your local government to death.
> We smaller units of government would be much better off to let
> Oklahoma City to go her own way than to agree to reduce our voice
> in the General Assembly of ACOG. Let them pull out again if they
> wish. . . .[32]

It overrode Morgan, 15 to 1, to strike the unlimited veto for the new ACOG agreement. There was apparently a widely-shared opinion that larger cities in the regional council could not and would not tolerate a provision whereby minor jurisdictions could nullify any decisions the

governing board had made. Perhaps most important, however, was that they had no desire to renew battles already fought. It was time to move forward.

Once ACOG's members had decided on the fundamentals of reorgani- zation, attention could be given back to the customary order of things and the routine matters falling to a regional council of governments. A personnel item was foremost, however, since Halley would leave the asso- ciation in January. The president asked for volunteers to serve on a search committee. When none stepped forward, Reed announced he would make appointments to the committee. In the meantime, Jerry Wade, one of Halley's lieutenants, was named acting director until the office could be permanently filled.

The usual number of applications for federal assistance had to be reviewed also. Most were passed upon quickly and without question. It seems worthwhile, however, to mention here two items which occupied more than the usual amount of time, since they are revealing of the board's sensitivities. In December there was an application by the Southwestern Center for Human Relations for federal funds to "prepare teachers and educational materials to affect, in a positive way, the attitudes of school age students toward the rule of law. ... ." Mayor Lyon of Bethany wondered whether the federal government might be a source of such "edu- cational materials." If such was the case, he suggested perhaps the pro- gram would include discussion of such issues as forced busing for school integration. After giving the question a good deal of consideration the board finally decided to attach neither favorable nor unfavorable comment to the application. Instead, the Superintendents of Schools would give individual rulings on the program.

The other item livened discussion at the January 25, 1973 General Assembly. Oklahoma City and Oklahoma County had announced their intention to create an "Oklahoma City-County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council" which would receive federal funds and perform various planning activities pertaining to law enforcement. ACOG's suburban members were accustomed to the capital's demands that it get a large share of federal criminal justice planning funds, but the creation of a new agency outside ACOG's periphery was another matter. President Reed thought it smacked of a "metropolitan police department." The like-minded Mayor Zink of Warr Acres moved that "ACOG and ACOG members go on record stating that they are opposed to any kind of metropolitan area police, fire, or governmental unit." The motion carried with only Odell Morgan voting in opposition.

One matter was easily resolved in January. The search committee presented to the Executive Committee the name of Larry E. Goodman, an urban planner by profession. With no apparent dissension Goodman was approved as executive director.

January also saw great progress on the problem of revising the ACOG agreement. The October decision to accept the idea of restructuring ACOG along Oklahoma City's wishes had not resolved the many details accompanying a major redrawing of the organization. Since then members had labored over the numerous amendments, finally concluding that it was better to set about drawing up a whole new agreement rather than revising the old one. The apparent slowness of the drafting work tested Oklahoma City's patience. George Sturm came to the Assembly meeting to complain about the delay in getting consensus on a new agreement and bylaws. Oklahoma City would withdraw again from ACOG, he threatened, if there was

much further postponement.[34] Reed's message as outgoing president,

however, was conciliatory and optimistic:

> The past six months of ACOG operation have been somewhat over-
> shadowed by internal problems. . . . Intergovernmental cooperation
> is not easily accomplished. Considering the 33 local governmental
> entities which comprise our council of governments and the inherent
> vying interests within such a system, our problems are understand-
> able and often unavoidable. Events over the past months have caused
> each of us to re-examine our individual participation in ACOG, as
> well as the intergovernmental role of ACOG as a council of govern-
> ments. I am confident that this re-examination can prove to be
> beneficial to intergovernmental cooperation in Central Oklahoma.[35]

And three weeks later, Reed's optimism was borne out. The Executive Com-

mittee determined that the required 17 of 33 ACOG members had ratified

the new articles of agreement. As of February 14, 1973, the new charter

would go into effect.[36] A revitalized ACOG was in business.

The New ACOG Agreement

As noted above, so many changes in the original ACOG agreement

and bylaws were accepted in the many public and private meetings devoted

to considering the issue, a whole new charter was drawn up.[37] The new

Agreement was carefully prepared; it exhibits finer drafting than the

old one. Even its physical appearance has the air of permanency and

prosperity. Although the old charter was reproduced by photocopying

machines, the new one is published as a handsome booklet. Still, the

new document, like the old, begins on a tenuous note. The first section

provides that five years is to be the duration of the agreement. More-

over, the "Board of Directors" (the new name of the Executive Committee)

is to annually review the agreement and organization and propose recom-

mendations for desirable changes. A later paragraph provides that dis-

solution of the organization may take place upon majority vote of a quo-

rum (51 percent) of the Board of Directors.

The all-inclusive part of ACOG had previously been formally styled the "Central Oklahoma Assembly." Now it is referred to by its popular name, the General Assembly. Specific procedures for joining ACOG are now defined, as well as details for appointing voting representatives and alternates to the assembly. The Associate Member class is more fully described, and now the entities in this category are allowed a single aggregate vote on the Board of Directors. Associate members are to decide their positions on matters coming before the Board, and then their representative is to cast his vote in accordance with the majority view within his constituency.

Meetings of the assembly had been held twice a year. Under the new agreement four meetings are specified—in May, August, November and February. Special meetings can be called by the Chairman.

Powers and duties of the Assembly under the new document are much the same as before. It is to review budgets, assessment schedules, and plans and policies after they have been favorably acted upon by the Board. It may propose and enact amendments to the bylaws. Upon request by any member, the Assembly can review actions taken by the Board subsequent to the preceding quarterly meeting. It can ratify, amend, or reject such actions, as long as it acts within the quarterly deadline for its consideration. There are exceptions, however, to the Assembly's review power. It cannot intervene in the Board's authority to employ the Executive Director, rent office space and purchase equipment and supplies.

Powers and duties of the Board of Directors are also carried over from the old agreement with little change. It has policy, budgetary, executive and organizational powers much like the Executive Committee.

It elects a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer who serve one-year terms and may not succeed themselves in office. These officials also act as officers of the Assembly. It appoints, removes and decides the salary of the Executive Director. It initiates, reviews, and considers prior to Assembly action planning activities, grants and contracts. The Board meets monthly but special meetings may also be called by the Chairman. A quorum is defined as 51 percent or more of the weighted vote of the Board, but at least nine entities must be present.

Financing of the Association is given much more attention by the new Agreement. The Board determines a yearly budget of which the locally-assessed portion is to be borne by the membership in proportion to the various governments' voting power on the Board of Directors. Since such weighted vote depends on population, a yearly estimate of the population in Sub-State Planning Region 8 (the ACOG area) from the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission is used to allocate voting power.

The voting arrangement within the Board of Directors is, of course, the major change from the original ACOG agreement. Each government receives a weighted vote on the basis of population. A Director representing a total population of less than 60,000 casts one vote for each 10,000 population or fraction thereof. Directors representing larger populations cast six votes plus one additional vote for each additional 22,000 population in excess of 60,000, with fractions not considered. The result at the effective date of the new agreement was that Oklahoma City, with 368,856 of the 661,695 population in the region, received 20 of 56 votes, or 35.7 percent. Norman received six votes (10.7 percent); Midwest City, five (8.9 percent). The three communities thus wielded a

majority (55.3 percent) vote bloc. Oklahoma and Logan Counties received two votes (3.6 percent) each; Canadian and Cleveland Counties, one (1.8 percent) each.

The Board of Directors are selected through a three-part process. Each county in ACOG chooses one person from its Board of County Commissioners as its representative. Directors from counties also speak for residents of incorporated areas with less than 3,000 population. Each city of 10,000 or more population is entitled to its own seat on the Board. Finally, Assembly members representing municipalities with populations from 3,000 to 9,999 are to select, on a county by county basis, one of their number to be a Director. This delegate is to cast his vote in accordance with the wishes of the majority of the members he represents.

Only one significant change was made in the provisions regarding the office of Executive Director. Previously, the Director was "to be responsible for the operation of a clearinghouse on all information of concern . . . and . . . conduct such conferences or studies or disseminate such reports as deemed appropriate. . . ." In the new agreement this provision is absent. The reason may be that it appeared to be superfluous since such duties are implicit responsibilities of the chief administrator. Or perhaps it was too reminiscent of Oklahoma City's charges that Halley had manipulated information so as to organize groups of communities against others.

Section II, "Functions and Purposes of ACOG," gives one the most revealing indication of how the organization's restructuring was in accordance with the grievances felt by its members. The purpose of the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments is explicitly stated to be,

among other things, that of an arena for discussion, a "forum for full and open discussion" which is to "promote and enhance the cooperative identification of common issues, differences and problems." ACOG is to assist the "development and implementation of area wide goals, policies and programs," and enable local governments to "cooperate with other localities on a basis of mutual advantage." The organization will also "function as an Area Wide Coordinating Organization and as a regional clearinghouse." Thus, it may "prepare and develop an overall area wide comprehensive development program," "coordinate a program for planning and development," "carry out . . . research, planning and advisory functions," and "facilitate cooperation and coordination of activities with Federal and State Agencies."

But there are restrictive measures, too. One provision seems intended to satisfy one of Mayor Latting's ten conditions for an areawide planning organization:

> . . . To the maximum extent feasible . . . utilization of member staff resources is encouraged in order to minimize the duplication of effort, minimize costs and draw upon the experience and expertise of members in order to promote and strengthen local capability to develop area wide cooperation and continuity.

Similarly, the organization is permitted to "assist member entities with direct professional and technical services," but only "when requested and authorized" and "when such activities are compatible with . . . the adopted work program and adequate resources are available." Clearly, a major purpose of this new Agreement, just as it was of the one drawn in 1966, is to circumscribe as well as define the organization.

Aftermath of the Reorganization

In the first few months following adoption of the new agreement, ACOG's members seemed to be feeling their way along new organizational paths. The new weighted vote system was introduced in March with no apparent problems, or at least no immediate dissension. A transition in leadership was also occurring along with the implementation of new procedures. With Larry Goodman settling into the Executive Director's job, interim chief Jerry Wade left in March to take a position with Midwest City. The next month brought another significant personnel change, one which involved the Board rather than the staff. The redoubtable Mrs. Latting, having led an almost totally successful campaign to purge her councilmanic opposition, resumed the post of ACOG delegate for Oklahoma City.

For his part, Marion Reed was marking time until the next General Assembly. It seems to have been commonly understood that he would not seek another term as president. He had been a principal figure in many Association disputes, and members wanted a fresh and less controversial person to lead them. Affable Mayor Roy P. Carmack of The Village turned out to be Reed's successor in the chair. He won against Moore's Mayor Morgan with 71.9 percent to 24.3 percent of the vote. Chairman Carmack gave a short speech following his election which reviewed the tumultuous past six months and, the minutes recorded, "concluded by asking everyone to work together to make ACOG a viable entity."

One aspect that had not changed, however, was the old problem of federally-funded criminal justice planning and training programs. No other specific issue has generated as much controversy in ACOG. In

fact the great majority of its unfavorable reviews concern applications in this area. There appear to be several reasons why this is so. One which applies generally to governmental institutions is that the issue of crime and how it may be prevented is a sensitive and socially important issue. All communities have a vital interest in better criminal justice, but there is a marked absence of consensus regarding precisely how the system may be improved. Some suggested programs come under fire because they are thought to be counter-productive; others, because they are wasteful.

Such attitudes probably explain why ACOG's Board of Directors failed to act affirmatively on 18 separate applications in this area during the period from March 1973 to June 1974. In ten of these cases the Board voted unfavorable comment, an action which is appropriate for a regional review body. But in the remaining eight cases the Board was simply unable to come to a definite conclusion. This category involved requests for funds for police internships, a traffic safety program, District Attorney assistance, training and assistance for the state Supreme Court, an inmate alcohol and drug abuse study, and an architectural planning unit for the state Department of Corrections. In the absence of substantial agreement on the part of experts in the area, the Board's uncertainty is understandable.

Another reason has much more to do with ACOG and its position within the metropolitan area. The argument over which entity will perform planning and training activities in the criminal justice area has never been laid to rest. Some feel ACOG is the appropriate agency for such activities; Oklahoma City, in particular, dissents from this view.

An excellent example of the conflict is furnished by the argument over

the Oklahoma City-County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC)

which is a surrogate for the central city and county. "This is part of

the biggest duplication I've ever seen about," Reed once complained.[38]

On the other hand, Oklahoma City's officials and their supporters

believe ACOG to be an illegitimate competitor for funds that logically

should be administered by the jurisdiction in which most urban crime hap-

pens. The Oklahoma City manager seems to have been quite correct when he

voiced suspicions that ACOG was trying to do away with competing agencies.[39]

At the May 1973 General Assembly meeting Mayor Latting had to defend OCJJ

from an item in Goodman's proposed ACOG budget which would have meant

transferring to the association $54,000 in criminal justice planning

funds. The incident, however, is best described as an inconclusive skir-

mish rather than the final battle.

Another prime example of the old, continuing debate over ACOG's

proper size and scope of authority in the region can be offered. This

involves water resource planning; specifically, responsibility for waste-

water studies. Either ACOG could do the work in-house with its own staff,

it could employ consultants directed by ACOG, or the studies could be

performed wholly or in part by the Corps of Engineers. Mrs. Latting and

some others favored allowing the Corps to prepare the plan. It had ex-

pertise, she argued; it was already involved in other aspects of water

resource planning for central Oklahoma, and--perhaps most importantly in

her mind--having the Corps do the planning would not necessitate expand-

ing ACOG's staff. For others, however, the prospect of having the Corps

perform the study raised the spectre of undue federal influence. To

Odell Morgan, this would be "another example of the federal government telling local governments what to do . . . It's blackmail." Marion Reed suspected it would eventually lead to a comprehensive regional plan which might require communities to join in building common water treatment plants. He asserted, "It's time for us to get ahold of our congressional delegation and tell them to put a stop to this Mickey Mouse stuff. . . . Regional government--that's their intent for the future."[40]

It was not surprising, then, that with feelings so aroused for several months the Board was unable to resolve the issue. Its eventual disposition, however, is not as important as the way the incident reveals attitudes regarding the Association's position. Several months after the issue had first come before the Board there was an exchange of comments which demonstrates the contrasting view points. Director Goodman had suggested allowing the Corps of Engineers to do the waste water study might result in local communities being "subject to or subordinate to state or federal intervention on local projects." Mrs. Latting replied:

> I think many here feel that ACOG has grown far beyond what the original, perhaps, intent was. And we do not want to see ACOG, with a huge staff and ever-growing budget, attempting to do everything in all areas of activity. We want the data base, we want to be able to use it in a cooperative way but when other government agencies already in existence have already been staffed with the capability of doing it and can do it, then we don't see the purpose of ACOG receiving additional money on a year to year basis and permanent staff to do these things.

Two other examples can be offered. In June 1973, the Board considered a $34,866 item in the next year's budget to pay for ACOG's mass transit planning. Latting objected to the item on the grounds that Oklahoma City's Central Oklahoma Transportation and Parking Authority should conduct such work. COTPA, she argued, was already involved in mass

transit and served the part of the metropolitan region in which mass transportation facilities were feasible. For several months the Board failed to decide the question. Finally, in September a compromise was worked out. COTPA would do the work—as agent for ACOG, who would pass through the federal funds.

A year later a similar dispute developed over a proposal to set up an ACOG agency called Central Oklahoma Disaster Effort (CODE). Mrs. Latting "wondered if the staff couldn't give the same kind of help without setting up another committee." Mayor Green of Edmond wondered, too. Goodman reluctantly admitted a new committee was not essential. The Board then endorsed the idea of providing assistance within the existing framework.

Such controversies as those just described indicate ACOG has not been particularly successful in getting local officials to see it as a natural component of the urban system—a proper agency for cooperative effort. This may be partially due to a lack of interest in participating in the association. Absenteeism problems became serious in the post-reorganization period. Between the effective date of the new charter and the close of the 1974 fiscal year, the organization experienced quorum difficulties on eight different occasions. The first was the Board of Directors meeting on July 11, 1973, which was forced to adjourn prematurely when a quorum (51 percent of the weighted vote and nine members) was lost. This happened again at the November meeting and at a special meeting scheduled a week later to conclude the unfinished business. In 1974, quorums were lost at February, March, and April meetings. The situation was even worse at the February and May 1974 General Assemblies: so few members were present the meetings could not even begin.

Much of the quorum problem is associated with Oklahoma City's large share of the weighted vote. One reason is the absence or early departure of the central city's representative by itself can often force the loss of a quorum. When Mrs. Latting left the April 1974 meeting 30 minutes after arriving, "Several staff members of the 12 other cities attending the monthly meeting complained that this was the fifth time meetings have had to end because of Mayor Latting's departure."[41] Of course, other cities' representatives must be absent as well for Oklahoma City's absence to force adjournment. And small cities have compiled the worst attendance records. "Despite the instance when Oklahoma City's absence caused the weighted vote to be too small," the Journal observed, "most problems with quorums have come when less than 9 members have appeared. Midwest City and Oklahoma City attended all 12 meetings from May 1973 to April 1974."[42] The quorum deficiency at the May 1974 Assembly, for example, occurred because only 15 (17 were required) of 32 members were present.

A second probable reason the quorum problem exists is that some members representing small jurisdictions may feel it is hardly worthwhile to bring their relatively insignificant weighted vote to Board meetings, when the capital city and two or three other cities can outvote a dozen other governments. To a Director who holds, say, 1.754 percent of the Board's voting power, participating in Board meetings must sometimes appear as an exercise in futility—especially after sitting for a couple of hours listening to the technical, obtuse debates often characteristic of such sessions. It is not surprising, then, that some members do not

exhibit a keen interest in the association and instead declare that ACOG

meetings are "a chore" or "a waste of time."

Certainly officials of the smallest of governments in ACOG, at

least, must feel frustrated at the minor role they must play in making

regional policy. Under the revised agreement, one will recall, cities

and towns with less than 3,000 population are represented on the Board

by their county's Director. The cities and towns with more than 3,000

but less than 10,000 population within a given county must select one

of their number to act as Director for the group. Thus, smaller juris-

dictions complain that their regional voice is muffled as a newspaper

article indicates:

> The "small fry" of the Association of Central Oklahoma Govern-
> ments asked ACOG Board of Directors Wednesday to give each city a
> vote, no matter how small.
> "We feel that no matter how small the squeak in the mouse, it
> should have a chance to be heard," Nicoma Park Mayor O. J. Toland
> said.
> Toland, Choctaw trustee L. G. Johnston and Nichols Hills Mayor
> Dan Stuart complained they have to combine their opinions with
> other cities just to have a single vote.
> Toland said the Oklahoma County representative, who is rarely
> at ACOG meetings, carries any vote that Nicoma Park has.
> "Sometimes we feel as useful as the mammary system on a boar
> hog," Toland complained.[43]

An even-handed examination of ACOG's functioning in the post-

reorganization period must include along with the negative evidence those

things which support a positive interpretation of its performance. It

should be noted, for one thing, that the very existence of controversy

and division within the Board can be seen as evidence that ACOG is in-

deed facing up to, rather than avoiding, regional issues. Certainly,

the organization is experiencing more divided votes on issues before it.

Where once it was rare to have objections raised in connection with

review of grant applications under the A-95 procedure, it is now fairly routine. Furthermore, under the weighted vote procedure such differences may be fairly reflective of regional opinion. At the least, one can say that most of ACOG's Directors are taking an interest in issues, are placing importance on the association's part in reviewing urban development projects, and are willing to speak up for or against that which comes before them.

Some of those who are closest to ACOG also are optimistic about its future. Goodman told the Board in May 1974, "ACOG has been able to accomplish over the last year . . . significant progress in the planning program and the service program to the region." The Executive Director added that it performs these accomplishments "with a smaller staff, and smaller budget than the majority of COGs serving the same population in the country." The theme of the association's 1973 annual report, "Living Together, Working Together, Growing Together" seems to describe his interpretation of ACOG's status. In that report Chairman Carmack expounded on the "togetherness" theme and said it

> . . . may sound like plans for a new utopia, but these ideas are not new or utopian. They aptly describe the function and role of ACOG. . . .
> The ratification of the new Agreement for ACOG in the Spring of 1973 created a new spirit of cooperation in the organization and made meaningful the words, "ACOG shall promote and enhance the cooperative solutions of problems and implementation of these solutions for the mutual interest of all."
> The new ACOG will face problems within the organization and criticism from without; however, the record will reflect the ability of ACOG to meet these challenges and continue to grow.[44]

The Association of Central Oklahoma Governments **has** continued to grow. Its fiscal 1975 budget was over a half-million dollars. Its staff includes about two dozen employees altogether. There is an

extensive program of work. Among its accomplishments during fiscal

1974 were:

    Criminal Justice Plan
    Update of Regional Open Space Plan
    Five area land use workshops
    Development of Regional Water Development Plan
    Adaption of Regional Affirmative Action Plan
    Revised A-95 procedures
    Commencement of Trades Licensing Study
    Areawide transportation planning
    Development of Transit Work Programs
    Revenue sharing coordination and information
    Completion of National Transportation Needs Study
    Provision of direct technical assistance
    Publication of monthly newsletter

Admittedly, some of the matters ACOG accomplishes are modest,

such as the Board's agreement in October 1973 that Halloween would be

celebrated in the four county area on October 31--it seems different

cities' Halloween nights had confused the "trick-or-treat" activities.

But others contain much potential significance. Under the aegis of one

of its committees, for example, ACOG is working to standardize areawide

building trade craftsmen examinations. Developing a uniform exam holds

potential for making such skilled trades a more liquid labor market and

a more efficient labor pool for consumers.

Not all important decisions made by ACOG arouse controversy.

Roy Carmack had been elected in the summer of 1973 to the unexpired por-

tion of Marion Reed's term. In January 1974, he was re-elected without

opposition to a full term as Board Chairman. Also elected by unanimous

vote were Emil Fox of Cleveland County as Vice-Chairman and Odell Morgan

as Secretary-Treasurer. There is no indication the nominating committee--

composed of Directors from Edmond, Bethany, and Oklahoma City--functioned

in any thing other than an amicable manner. Similarly, there was no

apparent conflict in June 1974 when population increases meant five

governments--Logan County, Yukon, Edmond, Midwest City and Moore--gained

an extra Board vote, bringing the total to 62. As in the previous year,

when total votes had gone from 56 to 57, the slight dilution of other

governments' influence stirred no dissent.

And finally, there may be a new spirit of cooperation and coor-

dination. One newspaper story reported that Carmack "would sum up [ACOG]

this way: 'It works," Things are going smoothly under the new voting

system. There seems to be more of a spirit of cooperation among the

governmental units now."[45] Eugene Bumpass, on the occasion of his retire-

ment as city manager of The Village, remembered the past hostility be-

tween Oklahoma City and his community. "The Association of Central Okla-

homa Governments helped a lot in dissolving this animosity," he observed.

"This is one of the greatest achievements I have ever seen during my

tenure."[46]

Opinions of ACOG Directors

But does the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments really

"work"; has it been a "great achievement" in regional cooperation? Cer-

tain reservations may be appropriate regarding comments such as the ones

quoted above. Newspaper reports may not furnish a complete and accurate

picture of regional council delegates' perceptions of COG performance.

For one thing, the more prominent members such as mayors of large cities

and COG office-holders are more likely to be interviewed by reporters,

but may be less representative of the council than back-bench delegates.

A person who holds an ACOG office is perhaps likely to be unusually

favorably disposed toward the organization and/or may feel it incumbent upon him to refrain from criticism of the association.

Second, the public nature of such remarks probably makes their authors cautious of comments that may prove to be controversial--either because the remarks are critical of ACOG, or because they may appear to show a subordination of their own governments' interests to regional ones. When a broad sampling of the Board of Directors is taken, a more comprehensive picture of their attitudes should emerge. When they are furnished the protection of non-attribution for their remarks, they should speak more freely.

The balance of this chapter is therefore based upon the results of information gathered directly from 16 ACOG Directors who served during the 1973 and 1974 fiscal years (and in many cases, during other years as well). The details of this step of the study were set out, the reader will recall, in Chapter One. No claim of statistical precision can be made for the data in this section. Some officials' answers, for example, reflect the time-honored practice of political ambiguity. Interpretation has sometimes been necessary. But the general drift of opinion can be reliably detected.

At the outset, it should be observed that socialization in regionalism is largely a function of a member's personal experience on the Board of Directors. Delegates are not "pre-sold" on the theory of a council of governments. Rarely do members seek to be representatives to ACOG. Only one councilman of those interviewed admitted he asked to be appointed ACOG delegate--so he could help "abolish the damn thing!" (Interestingly, this man eventually became one of ACOG's most vocal

advocates.) It is much more common to find the job was inherited along with the other duties of a member's public elective office. It is usually assumed that mayors, as part of their municipal responsibilities, will represent their communities in regional organizations. Some newly-elected councilmen find they are expected to take not only their predecessor's seat on the municipal governing body but on the regional one as well. Thus it seems clear that association duties are perceived by most delegates as incidental, rather than primary responsibilities of their public office.

Not only do members assume their positions on the Board of Directors more-or-less involuntarily, there is little in the jobs to give them satisfaction with their service. Those members who say working with ACOG gives them personal satisfaction--that they "rather enjoy it," see it as "a challenge"--are likely to be association officers. Such gratification thus is probably due more to their particular leadership roles than to the usual work of a Director. It is more common to hear delegates describe ACOG duties as a "necessary evil" or "chore."

Members do not usually seek a leadership role. When delegates were asked if there had "been competition among the Board members for ACOG offices and for influence within the organization," negative responses outnumbered positive answers by a two-to-one margin. Virtually the only example of competition for office was the occasion when Gordon Masters of Norman was nominated (apparently to his own surprise) for President. Most members are quite content to let others lead. As one delegate said of the difficulty in filling ACOG's offices, "we kind of have to con guys into it."

It is no surprise in view of the foregoing to find members do not see themselves pulled between conflicting local and regional obligations. Only two of the 16 representatives agreed that there are "times when [they] are torn between ACOG responsibilities and . . . city (county) responsibilities." One of these two said the conflict involved the pressure of time demands by regional and local functions, and the other said the conflict was "not too direct." But another delegate in contrast said the two sets of responsibilities "marry together," which suggests he saw ACOG duties as an opportunity to speak for and defend his community (as opposed to communities generally) within the metropolitan area. This attitude may well explain many of the negative responses to the question. It is conceivable, of course, that an official may see no conflict in local and areawide interests because ACOG has first priority on his loyalty. Or it may be that few metropolitan issues are thought to conflict with local interests. In view of almost a full decade's experience, however, it is much more reasonable to conclude that city and county officials simply subordinate regional needs to local ones, and/or that they have a very low degree of identification with the concept of regionalism.

Such conclusions are reinforced by findings that local officials on ACOG's Board of Directors strongly resist aggrandizement of the organization. Much the exception is the sole member who said his personal goal for ACOG was to give it "more teeth." Another's answer, expressing a desire for more technical assistance for member governments and a bigger professional staff, was just as singular. The rest of those interviewed preferred the association remain the same as presently constituted and primarily function as a discussion forum. Characteristic of this

attitude are wishes to "confine it" or "keep it small." One wanted ACOG to be "a skeleton." And members generally believe--correctly--other Directors share their conservative views regarding ACOG's destiny. The only exception is the member who despite much evidence to the contrary still suspects Oklahoma City wants to turn ACOG into a metropolitan government.

Nor do most members think their colleagues "really care about pulling together to help ACOG succeed." Only five out of twelve responding to the question replied affirmatively, such as the delegate who saw "a lot of cooperation out there." Most believed that members generally "don't care about it" and "don't want its growth." One member observed that his colleagues on the Board do "not naturally" wish ACOG to prosper. The reader should remember, here, that most of the persons he was talking about have had two or more years of ACOG experience during which they could have formed positive attitudes toward the council of governments.

A distinction should be made between members' interest in ACOG and their interest in the issues which come before it. In the latter case their own communities' interests are sometimes directly at stake and, as has been shown, spirited debate is a result. Members were asked if Board decisions are "sometimes the result of bargaining or compromise among the members." Only three of fourteen replying thought there was little or no such bargaining. The rest agreed that there were at least occasional compromises. Typically members in the majority group said there was "a little" or "some" compromising but one delegate said it occurred "lots of times." Most frequently named as examples of such decisions were the issues of criminal justice funds, highway planning and wastewater planning.

On the other hand, although they say dickering over regional issues is not unusual, most members think the amount of real conflict within the Board is rather small. Three members said there was "much," "quite a bit," or "definitely some" conflict, and another recalled considerable controversy in several areas. But the opinion of most of those interviewed was that the press exaggerates ACOG's disputes. These Directors felt there was "little," "slight" or "minor" conflict. One official said that "for a thing that big it runs real smooth." And undeniably, he is at least partially correct. The great bulk of the association's business is handled with a dull, mechanical routine. But members who thought there was little conflict may have had in mind merely the amount of time spent on controversial items compared to the time ACOG spends on all matters. It is true that for every hour spent debating, say, whether ACOG or another agency shall perform wastewater planning, many more hours are spent approving minutes, presenting guests, and hearing the financial report. The character of controversial items, however, is more important than the percentage they bear to all items on the monthly agendas. They thus have more significance to the association's stability and status than appears from the comments just quoted.

It was hoped that by asking members to name ACOG's greatest accomplishments and disappointments one could better see the sort of role delegates have in mind for the association. For example, if a member named "regional coordination" as an accomplishment, one could conclude he shared with its professional staff the planner's ambitious concept of a council of governments. As it turned out, however, no such pattern emerged from the answers. Accomplishments such as "kept money

coming" or "fulfilled requirements" and "got grants" exemplify the positive impressions ACOG made on its Directors. Some delegates saw an accomplishment in its mere function as a meeting-place for discussion. Only one person thought ACOG had achievements in "a lot of areas."

Disappointments mentioned by representatives most often concerned alleged inefficiency or bureaucratic empire-building. Organizational conflict or friction was mentioned three times as a major disappointment. Five members couldn't think of any particular disappointment. This last category, however, may be explained by one director's comment that his city hadn't been disappointed because it hadn't filed any grant applications which could have been disapproved. To draw a mechanical analogy to attitudes like these, one might say that ACOG is seen by Directors as a valve through which federal funds flow. The organization's planners, in contrast, think of it as a pump; they are concerned with its capacity and forcefullness in rendering services. But Directors are content as long as the grant-in-aid valve remains wide open.

The key area of questions in the interviews, however, deals with the impact of ACOG's restructuring. Has the reorganization made a real difference? Have the effects of reorganization been beneficial--a stronger, more unified, more capable council of governments? The opinions of board members about these questions should have both organizational and theoretical significance.

During the interviews members were asked, "Do you think the changes in the organization have been good from the standpoint of your city?" Thirteen directors gave comments in direct response to the question. Surprisingly, most of them indicated there was little substantive

difference between the old and new ACOG. Two members said the changes
had benefitted their governments, but three others said there was little
or no change. Three more said only the new charter "hasn't hurt" their
cities. There were, however, three other directors unhappy about the
changes. The only specific complaint within this latter group concerned
the weighted voting arrangement. And again, there was one member who
felt it was too early to be sure about the effect of the new ACOG Agree-
ment--he "thought" the changes were good, but "haven't asked for anything,
so hard to tell."

Members were next asked if they thought the reorganization would
"benefit ACOG itself, apart from any effect on your own city." Only nine
replied directly to the question rather than pleading ignorance, but with-
in this small group a clear pattern was evident. Six felt the changes
would benefit ACOG; three felt otherwise. In the latter group, one said
because of reorganization the "small cities lost interest" (and quorum
problems seem to support his claim). Another charged ACOG had "become
a do-nothing organization". Interestingly, however, even those who felt
the changes were beneficial were lukewarm in their opinion. Answers such
as (the reorganization) "hasn't hurt" and "think it has" (helped) charac-
terize this group. The three "don't know" responses may not be much
different from the positive ones.

A key question asked the Directors if there seemed "to be a
better spirit of cooperation among Board members now that ACOG has been
reorganized." In this case, 13 usable answers were given, of which only
two indicated there was less cooperation after reorganization. One
delegate pointed to ACOG's attendance problems while another flatly said

there was less cooperation. Among the majority viewpoint, there were those who said they "sure do" see more cooperation, and even "a lot greater cooperation." But others were more cautious: cooperation was "perhaps better," or improved "in some ways," or improved "as much as can be expected." Overall, it appears that the Board of Directors as a whole does perceive a better working relationship than existed under the 1966 compact.

And in addition to a more harmonious atmosphere, a substantial portion of those interviewed think reorganization made a significant difference in ACOG's performance. When asked, "Do you think the ACOG reorganization really makes any difference in how well the organization functions," six members replied that it has improved conditions while only three thought it had a negative impact. Among the majority view, answers explained the association had "smoothed out more" and functioned "100 percent better." Another member pointed to the change in Executive Directors as an important advance. (This change of course was not structural.) Yet another felt ACOG was providing "better and more information now."

Within the minority group of Directors critical of the new charter, one official argued that the only difference it had made was in creating a problem in keeping quorums at meetings. Another critic could find nothing good to say about the organization throughout a half-hour discussion with this writer. It may be that ACOG's partisans should be more worried about the five members who indicated reorganization made little or no difference--they may have been thinking of Directors' attitudes toward ACOG rather than the improved working relationship at Board

meetings. But nevertheless, with respect to Director's perceptions of the effects of reorganization on ACOG's performance as a regional council, the overall opinion is other than negative.

Whatever the improvement in ACOG's organizational tranquility or productivity may be, however, its ultimate fate depends on another factor. This concerns the degree of identification--of attachment--felt by central Oklahoma public officials toward their council of governments. Those who have worked for the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments-- and some of those who have worked with it--have labored steadily over the years to build a sense of identity with the organization, and with re- gionalism generally. The COG was not formed in a truly spontaneous or voluntary response to felt local needs; it was the child of federal con- cern for urban disintegration. As a result it was an uphill battle to persuade local politicians that ACOG was not only a proper component of the metropolitan political system, but that it belonged to--it was--them. In the long run, only the wide acceptance of such an idea would enable the association to succeed.

Members were accordingly asked another question: "If the fed- eral government did not require an organization like ACOG to handle grants and planning for the area, would you feel it worthwhile to remain a mem- ber?" Somewhat surprisingly in view of the minimal role for ACOG often expressed by members, 11 of 15 delegates answering replied affirmatively, although a couple of officials qualified their answer by saying they would stay only in a "review" or "loose-knit" organization. And perhaps more significantly, when members were asked if they thought other cities would remain if ACOG was truly voluntary (the assumption being that wide

membership functions as peer pressure on local officials), six of the
eleven thought other communities would remain in the organization. There
was one uncertain member who thought other governments "might not" stay
in ACOG. Another thought "greed" for federal funds would keep governments
in ACOG. Overall, then, there may be a developing consensus that local
governments should be represented in some sort of regional body. If that
is so, ACOG's future may be secure, if not particularly bright. Of
course, in view of the stormy events of 1972-1973, sheer survival can be
interpreted as a distinct accomplishment.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Throughout this chapter quotations unattributed to sources such as this one have been taken from interviews with ACOG Board of Directors, members, past members and professional staff employees.

[2](Oklahoma City) Daily Oklahoman, August 10, 1972.

[3]Oklahoma City Times, August 22, 1972.

[4]Stephen L. Garman, "A Central City View: Coordination Instead of Competition," Nation's Cities 10 (November 1972), pp. 28-32.

[5]Ibid., p. 30.

[6]Ibid., p. 32.

[7]Oklahoman, August 23, 1972. An article in the October 3, 1972 issue of this newspaper reports there was an earlier attempt to fire Halley which failed, 7 to 6.

[8]Oklahoman, August 23, 1972.

[9]Times, August 23, 1972.

[10]Oklahoman, August 24, 1972.

[11]Times, August 30, 1972.

[12]Norman (Oklahoma) Transcript, September 1, 1972.

[13]Oklahoman, September 7, 1972.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Oklahoman, September 8, 1972.

[16]Times, September 8, 1972.

[17]Oklahoma City Journal, September 11, 1972.

[18]Journal, September 14, 1972.

[19]*Transcript*, September 20, 1972.

[20]*Times*, September 26, 1972.

[21]*Times*, September 27, 1972.

[22]*Journal*, September 27, 1972.

[23]*Oklahoman*, September 19, 1972.

[24]This chapter follows the practice established in Chapter III of not footnoting quotations taken from the official ACOG minutes of the meeting referred to in the text.

[25]*Journal*, September 28, 1972.

[26]*Times*, September 29, 1972.

[27]*Times*, October 3, 1972.

[28]*Oklahoman*, October 3, 1972.

[29]*Times*, October 4, 1972.

[30]*Times*, October 5, 1972.

[31]*Journal*, October 19, 1972.

[32]*Times*, October 20, 1972.

[33]*Oklahoman*, November 16, 1972.

[34]*Oklahoman*, January 26, 1973.

[35]"President's Summary" presented at the ACOG General Assembly January 25, 1973, p. 1.

[36]*Oklahoman*, February 14, 1973.

[37]Formally titled "Agreement Creating the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments." The original compact is headed "Agreement for the Organization of Association of Central Oklahoma Governments."

[38]*Journal*, April 17, 1973.

[39]*Times*, May 18, 1973.

[40]*Oklahoman*, March 21, 1974.

[41]*Journal*, May 23, 1974.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Journal, April 25, 1974.

[44] 1973 Annual Report of ACOG, p. 3.

[45] Times, January 21, 1974.

[46] Oklahoman, March 27, 1974.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND PREDICTIONS

Parsonian Theory and ACOG

The reader will recall that this study had several purposes.
One was to demonstrate the usefulness of Parsonian structural-function-
alism in examining the history of a particular public agency, the Asso-
ciation of Central Oklahoma Governments. Also, by combining theory and
empirical example, it was hoped that some points in Parsons' conception
of social system behavior could be clarified. The development of an or-
ganization's processes for satisfaction of functional imperatives could
be studied. The origins and effects of organizational conflict in the
instant setting could hopefully be better revealed. The question of how
organizational structure relates to system stress could be explored.
And not least, this study represents an attempt to draw some more general
observations about the situation and future--the potential and problems--
of councils of governments.

It should be understood, however, that this paper was neither
intended nor expected to demonstrate Parsonian theory to be some grand
blueprint for organizational evolution. It has been the intention to
show how his conceptual framework can illuminate a study of organizational
behavior. With this in mind the preceding chapters have reported the
work of other scholars on councils of governments, as well as the author's

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own research on ACOG. Now, with this evidence at hand, it is appropriate
to draw some conclusions as to the validity of Talcott Parsons' proposi-
tions and the findings gathered in this study.

In Chapter III six hypotheses were set forth. The first of these
concerned the general applicability of the Parsonian paradigm to the sub-
ject of study. It predicted that a council of governments would demon-
strate behavior which could be characterized in terms of the four func-
tional imperatives: adaptation, goal-attainment, integration, and pattern-
maintenance. Much of the third chapter, one will recall, was devoted to
describing ACOG's development and activities in just such terms. Various
aspects of the association's behavior were categorized into the four
functional categories. In itself, this classification admittedly means
little. Parsons' theory provided us with a taxonomic scheme and one would
be surprised if organizational behavior could not be so described.

What we are more concerned with, however} is the pattern such
functional-based activity takes. Every organization, by Parson's defini-
tion, must satisfy four functional needs. But systems vary in the rela-
tive emphasis they give to meeting the requisites of survival, and they
differ in the success with which they meet those needs. With respect to
ACOG, it was noted that varying degrees of success marked its fulfillment
of functional requirements. Adaptation, for example, was advanced by
the relative ease with which some resources—capital, personnel, legal
authority—were obtained, but was hindered overall by resistance to organ-
izational growth and resource employment. Goal-attainment was similarly
inhibited. ACOG's pursuit of regionally-oriented objectives was checked
because the dominant policy-making subsystem within the association was

more keenly interested in integrative and pattern-maintenance functions.
Again and again ACOG experienced situations when programs and procedures
which would have aggrandized its power and role in regional decision-
making were deferred in the interests of maintaining its utility as an
integrative and pattern-maintenance mechanism for the localistically-
oriented metropolitan political system. As a result, ACOG was an organi-
zation which emphasized stability and continuity over innovation and pro-
ductivity.

Other portions of Chapter III analyzed ACOG's performance of
functional imperatives in terms of Parsons' pattern variables. This
bears upon the second hypothesis, which predicted that behavior which
advances the satisfaction of functional needs would be characterized by
certain appropriate pattern variables. Dysfunctional behavior, however,
would be associated with pattern variables other than those prescribed
in the theory.

Again a measure of correspondence with the hypothesis can be
claimed. Although the pattern variables are quite difficult concepts to
operationalize, as detailed in Chapter III many of ACOG's problems can
be described and understood in terms of deviations from appropriate pat-
tern variables. For example, it was shown how the adaptive function,
which is supposedly characterized by affective neutrality, was handicapped
in ACOG's case because the governing board did not subordinate affectivity
release in the interests of securing interjurisdictional cooperation.
In an area where affectivity release would have been appropriate, system
integration, the members instead exercised restraint. It was also ob-
served that advancement of ACOG as a comprehensive, multi-purpose regional

institution would necessitate diffuse orientations toward such an organizational posture. Instead, its members rather consistently exhibited specificity in orientation toward expansionary goals. Had ACOG's members' behavior been more consonant with the prescribed pattern variables, one may assume, the association's development would have been differently shaped.

The third hypothesis stated in the second chapter indicated that one would find functional performance in a given system to be differentiated in some manner. Such differentiation could occur by structural specialization or along temporal dimensions. In the first case, one would find subunits of the system assuming various degrees of functional specialization. The latter case would involve different degrees of emphasis by the system on the various functional requisites in different time periods.

First it should be observed that the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments is not a very large organization. In a relatively small system one should expect to have more difficulty recognizing functionally specialized subsystems. And to be sure, ACOG does not have a highly developed division of labor. Only a rough characterization of subsystem specialization can therefore be offered here. There are two fairly distinct units within the association: the Board of Directors, and the salaried (especially the professional) staff. One can say generally that the governing board is more closely involved with integrative and pattern-maintenance functions--as witnessed by its interest in maintaining the regional status quo--and the staff is more oriented to system adaptation and goal-attainment.

Actually, however, it is not possible to neatly compartmentalize the two subsystems. Virtually everything of significance the association does has to be passed upon by political representatives, and conversely there is substantial input from the planners on ACOG programs and grant review questions. Each unit has great influence on the other, and one's work can advance as well as frustrate the endeavors of another. Indeed, ACOG's difficulties often have stemmed from the fact that the functional orientations of staff and directors have not been consistent with a single over-arching concept for the regional council.

It should also be recalled that the idea of functional differentiation by subsystem is a conceptual device. Parsons has emphasized that within any social system an individual or group will give primary attention to one functional area at one time, and to another area in a subsequent period. All components of a system are primarily involved with each function at one time or another. Therefore, absent laboratory-type conditions for studying group behavior, the above approximate description of subsystem specialization is all that can be offered here.

The concept of temporal differentiation is perhaps more useful than that of structural specialization. In "macro" terms, a rather clear sequence of periods of primary functional orientation characterizes ACOG's development. During the organization's earliest period there was a preoccupation with matters bearing upon adaptive needs--resources had to be acquired, means of employing them had to be devised. After association procedures had become more routinized ACOG turned more toward fulfilling its regional obligations as the areawide planning and review body. This second phase can be described as the (perhaps incipient) goal-attainment

stage. But as has been shown, progress along this dimension was quickly retarded by recurring and worsening episodes of dissension over ACOG's scope of services and role in the planning process. The question of how ACOG was to proceed as a coordinative institution became the paramount issue.

ACOG then entered a third and prolonged phase which involved essentially integrative issues (the members' commitment to the collectivity) and pattern-maintenance questions (whether restructuring was necessary and what form it might take). And even after the crisis of 1972-73 the association experienced persistent and deep divisions that retarded system integration. Except insofar as ACOG discharged the more routine and noncontroversial duties incumbent upon it, the goal-attainment function as well was to remain subordinated to the more pressing matters attendant to organizational survival. Based upon later evidence presented below, it appears the association is still in this third phase.

It should be emphasized that no claim is made that the evidence here means any particular order or sequence of functional differentiation will characterize any given council of governments. The data do suggest, however, that regional councils cannot confidently expect to advance rapidly toward institution of effective regional planning unless the essential functions of system integration and pattern-maintenance are substantially well developed. Achieving secure placement within the metropolitan scheme of things is the apparent prerequisite to local acceptance of active advocacy of interjurisdictional coordination under a COG's leadership.

The fourth hypothesis dealt with the correlation one should expect between the conflict experienced by a council of governments and its performance of functional imperatives. As with the third hypothesis, two alternative patterns were offered. Conflict could stem, first, from inadequate fulfillment of specific functions, and/or second, from competition between subunits for the power of determining the system's primary area of emphasis. In the case of the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments, it was observed that some areas of dissension could be associated with deficiencies in functional performance. The failure on the part of the Executive Committee to inhibit affectivity in the interests of adaptive functions can be cited as an example of such a shortcoming.

A more relevant way to perceive ACOG's organizational conflict, however, is in terms of intrasystem competition. The association's history has repeatedly been marked by controversies revolving around the questions of ACOG's scope of activity and future planning role. On one side there were pressures to limit the organization to a sort of urban fellowship--an institution in accord with prevailing localistic sentiments. On the other side there were efforts to make ACOG assume a greater role in regional resource allocation. Each side had its adherents, with the former school of thought in a distinct majority. Not that the opposing parties differed all that much over the regional status ACOG should have; both central city and suburban interests were in substantial agreement that the association should never assume powers which could undermine the established order. Rather, the combatants were involved in competition for the formal right to exercise dominion over ACOG. The irony lay in Marion Reed's perception that Patience Latting wanted to turn ACOG into

a central-city ruled "supergovernment," while Mrs. Latting suspected the

suburban politicians of willingness to aggrandize a boundless regional

bureaucracy. In fact, neither party wanted ACOG to become anything resem-

bling a layer of government, although Reed was the more willing of the

two to allow it an independent capability to perform some well-defined

and benign sorts of services to member communities.

Nevertheless, the tensions aggravated for almost half a decade

proceeded to build to a climax. Oklahoma City, feeling that the one-city,

one-vote rule was intolerably unfair for the capital, took itself out of

the association. Later, of course, it did rejoin the council. But the

significance of this return lay in the fact that this was accomplished

only after substantial restructuring of ACOG was agreed to by those mem-

ber governments which had previously steadfastly opposed any fundamental

alteration in the organization's charter. Oklahoma City had insisted

that basic change was necessary in ACOG, and reluctantly other members

came to agree that this was so.

Thus, the events leading up to and following the 1973 reorgani-

zation affirm the fifth hypothesis: that structural conditions of a COG

relate to the sufficiency of performance of functional imperatives, and

that restructuring--in accordance with the dominant value-pattern--will

occur in response to perceived shortcomings in resolving system problems.

For that is precisely what happened. From the central city's perspective,

one issue was non-negotiable. There had to be a change in the way voting

power was exercised so that population would be an important, if not the

exclusive, consideration in allocating voting weight. Substantial oppo-

sition obviously existed to such a change. Even so, a weighted voting

plan was a prominent feature of the revised ACOG agreement because most members recognized that no progress could be made toward resolving regional issues unless recognition was given to actual variations in political influence and community size. Most members also understood the fundamental importance of the issue to the capital. In addition, of course, it was clear that by virtue of its size Oklahoma City had the advantage in that it could by itself block formation of any alternative areawide planning organization.

And so a new voting arrangement was instituted. Significantly, however, it did not strictly follow a population formula, and provisions were inserted in the new ACOG agreement that would prevent domination of the association by one or a few large jurisdictions. Suburban members were just as committed in their attachment to local independence as the central city was to observance of its traditional preeminence within the region. In addition, one should note as well that the new agreement carried over from the original charter many provisions designed to unmistakably confine the association within boundaries conforming to members' ideas of local privilege. ACOG might suggest the way, but it must not command. Here, too, the organization was structured in accordance with the dominant value-system of the metropolitan community.

Finally, the sixth hypothesis must be considered. This proposition indicated that upon successful restructuring the council of governments would proceed to move toward a state of equilibrium. There would be a reduction in the level of conflict, and there should be observable an increase in collectivity-orientation, that spirit which leads members to advance the interests of the organization even at the expense of the

individual. The ethic of regionalism will supplant localism. Unfortu-
nately, of all the hypotheses this final one is the most problematic.
Its verification involves not only the period of time in which the study
was conducted but the future as well. It is open-ended, in the sense
that developments in the future may contradict as well as affirm those
which have already happened.

Using only the evidence provided by the year subsequent to ACOG's
reorganization, one might conclude that the hypothesis has passed its
test. The reader will recall that most of those interviewed in connection
with the study believed that conflict had indeed diminished after the re-
organization. Directors who were interviewed in connection with this
study generally seemed to feel that the reorganization had resulted in a
better working atmosphere. By a significant margin, they felt that ACOG
was performing better, too, even as much as "100 percent better." Few
directors felt there had not been an improvement in the level of coopera-
tion among members after the adoption of the new agreement. Most members,
in addition, thought the press had exaggerated the amount of conflict
within the association. Their comments suggest ACOG had indeed made
progress in system integration.

But other signs were less encouraging. As before, members
generally shunned leadership positions within the association, and rarely
did service with ACOG give members personal pleasure or satisfaction.
More serious were other representative attitudes. Local officials strongly
opposed the idea that ACOG should be more than what it now is, and they
commonly believed (and correctly) that conservative conceptions of the
organization's role are shared around the Board of Directors. Members

interviewed thought that their colleagues didn't "care about pulling together to help ACOG succeed," but did want to limit its growth. Asked about the positive things they saw regarding the association they mentioned such things as how it "kept money coming." Conversely, they perceived in negative terms the sort of goals which advocates of regionalism hold for COGs. There is surely some significance in the manner by which three interviewees answered the question as to what effect the reorganization had had on their communities--that it "hadn't hurt." The implication seems to be that they were more concerned with ACOG's potential for harm than for good.

Lastly, the question of identification with the association must be considered. The hypothesis predicted that a heightened sense of collectivity-orientation would follow successful restructuring. Although there is no specific evidence regarding such attitudes in the period preceding the reorganization, there appeared from the interview results to be some cause for optimism. Eleven of the 15 members, expressing themselves on the question whether they felt it desirable for their governments to retain membership in a completely voluntary COG (i.e., one not backed by any federal coercion for membership), agreed that continued membership was preferable. Six out of this group believed that other communities in central Oklahoma would also remain in a non-compulsory regional council. It is tempting to say on the basis of this data that ACOG's efforts to secure the support of local officials may be paying off; that the concept of regionalism may be on the way to widespread acceptance. If such officials can be converted from localism, ACOG might eventually be able to securely implant itself as part of the metropolitan political system.

But, it should be remembered that most of those interviewed had spent a substantial period of time working with the association. They, if any, should have had the most opportunity to be socialized into the regionalistic perspective. One practical difficulty all COGs experience in enlisting local political support has to do with the relatively high rate of turnover in municipal elections. ACOG is no exception. Even if its Board of Directors at any time would become a partisan of councils of governments, it would take only a few local elections to drastically reshape the board.

Strong empirical evidence also suggests that the impressions gained from interviews in the summer of 1974 may be illusory or transitory. For ACOG had, in the succeeding year, continued to experience more incidents that are reminiscent of its familiar, turbulent history before the reorganization. One such instance, for example, has overtones of the 1972 crisis precipitated by Oklahoma City's dissatisfaction. In April of 1975 the three commissioners of Oklahoma County sent a letter of resignation to the association, announcing they were leaving ACOG due to alleged discrimination against the county. The weighted voting plan, they said, made them feel like "third class citizens." When Oklahoma City's alternate delegate, Councilman Eric Grove, learned of the county's action he expressed regret but, he added, "I agree with them to this extent--there appears to be more political infighting in [the Board of Directors] than there is teamwork and cooperation."[1]

Nor were some of the small cities much happier about the situation. It will be recalled that under the ACOG agreement municipalities with less than 2,500 population were to be represented on the Board of

Directors by the delegates for their respective county governments. Al-
though the Oklahoma County representative had frequently been absent from
council meetings anyway, the official suspension of that county's member-
ship meant several small communities were now left completely without
representation. Mayor O. J. Toland of Nicoma Park had this in mind when
he complained that his city and five other towns in Oklahoma County could
be considered "steerage wetbacks" or "children who can be seen but not
heard."[2]

Dissension within the organization included much more than one
county and a few small towns, however. The question of officer selection,
which had infrequently troubled the association in past years, became a
high-rank issue in 1975. Delegates from medium-sized cities boycotted
two meetings, thereby preventing presence of a quorum, so as to block
officer elections. It was not until May that new officers could be
chosen.[3] When elections were finally held they starkly revealed the un-
healed divisions within the Board. The bloc of governments led by Marion
Reed, apparently determined to hold such sources of power left to them
after adoption of the weighted voting plan, forcefully ratified a slate
including Reed as Chairman and Odell Morgan of Moore as Vice-Chairman.
Mayor Latting was rebuffed in a series of attempts to postpone the elec-
tion and open the meeting to additional nominations. She declared the
nominating committee's slate violated an "understanding" reached earlier.
"They were chosen at meetings to which some members were not invited or
informed," she complained.[4] Even apart from the immediate personalities
and politics involved, it does appear from this incident that ACOG has a
long way to go in instilling in its principal members that heightened
sense of common identity called collectivity-orientation.

Of more than incidental interest in this connection is another, external, source of stress. It was observed in the first chapter that COGs commonly are plagued by ambivalence on the part of superior government authorities such as state and federal agencies. In the Spring of 1975 ACOG went beyond mere ambivalence to outright hostility from the state's chief executive. Newly-elected Governor David Boren planned to place a new correctional facility near Norman. Not surprisingly, ACOG's members turned down the controversial proposal.

Boren was angered at the association's impertinence. In a letter to ACOG he complained of "obstruction by those not elected by the people to prevent the building of a model correctional system." He hinted that a modification of the executive order setting up sub-state planning districts might be in order--ACOG, it seemed, took too much time with its project reviews anyway. One significant passage implied a philosophical objection to ACOG's position:

> We have a state legislature created by the Constitution.
> Municipalities we allow to exist through city charters and we have
> counties. These are the units of governments I recognize. They
> are elected by the people.
> But the sub-state planning districts are not recognized in the
> Constitution and should not have a say in the location of state
> institutions.[5]

Obviously the concept of regional planning through councils of governments had far to go in winning acceptance at the Oklahoma state house.

Far more conclusive evidence, however, that ACOG's reorganization did not finally resolve the fundamental divisions within the system is afforded by the actions taken at the June 1975 General Assembly. There delegates again substantially revised the structure of the organization in attempts to repair mistakes made in the 1973 charter. The

Assembly adopted amendments which would:

> --give all member cities and counties at least one vote on the Board of Directors;
>
> --abolish the General Assembly (a redundancy since all governments would now be included in the Board);
>
> --require the attendance of 12 members rather than 9 for a quorum; and
>
> --require votes of at least 6 members with more than 50 percent of the total vote to constitute a majority.[6]

Under the new arrangement, cities and counties exercise one vote for each 2,500 population, or fraction thereof, up to 75,000, and an additional vote for each 7,000 over 75,000. The plan does not substantially reallocate power from large jurisdictions to medium-sized ones. Oklahoma City receives through the new formula 74 out of 222 votes, a share virtually unchanged from that provided by the previous arrangement. Suburban delegates were apparently content to let the sleeping dog of population-based voting lie. But here is a gain in the voice of the smallest governments. All four counties (including the absent Oklahoma County) possess two votes each, and communities which previously were represented collectively now have their own delegate. Clearly, the thrust of the new voting scheme was to make ACOG a more collegial body similar to the United Nations. Any increase in the association's capacity to deal with metropolitan issues in a way reflective of the real distribution of political power and resources is, however, still open to question.

It might be argued by some that the restructuring of ACOG in 1973 was a step forward, that it did result in greater cooperation than would have otherwise existed. At a minimum one can say that without the reorganization there would have been no ACOG today. Survival, under the circumstances, was something of an accomplishment apart from the question

of the association's ability to solve regional problems. Even so it cannot be said that the restructuring was "successful" as the sixth hypothesis predicted. ACOG did not, and has not, reached a state of organizational equilibrium. It rather appears that conflict was only cosmetically disguised for a brief period. Thus the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments remains not far from where it started, a troubled institution precariously sited within an unreceptive metropolitan political system. It seems apparent that ACOG's problems are not structural in origin and thus cannot be overcome by redrafting interjurisdictional compacts. The association's difficulties stem instead from the fragmented character of the superordinate system which surrounds it and its failure to give the members of that system a sense of common identity. ACOG's potential for leadership still awaits the development of a true spirit of regionalism in the central Oklahoma urban community.

Theoretical Perspectives on Some Inherent Problems

A central concern of Parsonian and kindred theories has to do with system persistence--the need for stability and maintenance. "It is a postulate of the structural-functional approach," Philip Selznick has written, "that the basic need of all empirical systems is the maintenance of the integrity and continuity of the system itself."[7] Oran Young elaborates on the point:

> The greatest strength of the structural-functional approach lies in the area of pattern maintenance and systemic regulation. . . . The approach focuses . . . on such matters as the conditions of "survival" of any given system; the structures and institutional mechanisms through which basic requirements for systemic maintenance are fulfilled; the balances of functional and dysfunctional consequences of various patterns of action calculated in terms of impetus to change structural arrangements; and the methods

by which certain specific conditions leading to systemic termination can be avoided.[6]

And social systems--organizations--_do_ seek to maintain themselves and persist over time in relatively stable form. This fact relates to the underlying logic of Parsonian theory as applied to regional councils of governments. In general, COGs are relatively new and vulnerable public institutions. Their first priority is to define their boundaries and develop secure sources of sustenance. It is admittedly risky to draw generalizations about the status of regional councils from the experience of one of them. But the history of ACOG--and for that matter, the evidence of the literature on regional councils--points up the overarching theme of the need for stability and permanence. It is a starting point from which so much of COG development can be better understood.

This Parsonian emphasis on system persistence also illuminates COGs' processes of goal-setting and goal-attainment. Goals, it will be recalled, are desired states which are somehow different from the extant state. But in ACOG local officials typically felt that the existing status of the organization as a regional forum and grant-clearance committee was quite satisfactory and certainly preferable to a situation wherein the council could change the established pattern of interjurisdictional relations. In most regional councils of governments, as in ACOG, government representatives prefer that the agency essentially promote the _status quo_ of metropolitan political structure and resource allocation. The significance of this is that it constitutes a superordinate value system which shapes the councils' goal processes. The environment furnishes the premises undergirding goal decisions. Parsons explains:

> A formal organization . . . is a mechanism by which goals
> somehow important to the society, or to various subsystems of
> it, are implemented and to some degree defined. But not only
> does such an organization have to operate in a social environ-
> ment which imposes the conditions governing the processes of
> disposal and procurement, it is also part of a wider social sys-
> tem which is the source of the "meaning," legitimation, or higher-
> level support which makes the implementation of the organization's
> goals possible.[9]

Thus we should not expect an organization to do things which contravene

the values of its dominant superordinate system. R. Jean Hills illustrates

the point with the case of Indian society. That society's goals would in-

clude, as do all societies, the objectives of reduction of starvation and

raising the standard of living. But the societal values derived from a

transcendental religious order mean implementation of such goals through

slaughter of cattle is impossible.[10]

One aspect of the theory may deserve amplification here. It was

noted in Chapter II that Parsons believes organizations are those social

systems which specialize in the goal-attainment function for a society.

Indeed, society does ordinarily resort to complex organizations when con-

fronted by some need or problem, viz. business corporations and welfare

departments. COGs too were originally designed to be goal-attainment

mechanisms for metropolitan rationalization. That idea, however, is

irreconcilable in the usual case with the concept of incorporating local

politicians--and localistic values--within the system. As a result, COGs'

de facto goals do not necessarily relate to regional planning principles.

And as Parsons has explained, within any sector, here the "G" sector,

one will find organizations which primarily serve adaptive, pattern-main-

tenance, and integrative needs rather than goal-attainment.

Harold Kaplan has criticized Parsons for treating the goals of social systems as given--things to be implemented rather than decided.[11] This writer would agree that we need to know more about the processes of goal-setting in public institutions. But insofar as it bears on COGs, Parsons' formulation is not off the mark. If a mistake has been made, it occurred when planners and legislators assumed that COGs could proceed to follow given goals, the goals of rationally planned urban development. A better understanding of the importance of environmental conditions would have permitted COGs' creators to allow for natural evolutionary goal-setting processes. As it is, much of the stress experienced in development of regional councils stems from this unrecognized conflict between contradictory preferences in the primary functional emphasis COGs will exhibit.

It is much easier for COGs that experience such cross-pressures to simply avoid the issue by displacing goals related to regionalistic conceptions of urban planning for ones dealing with noncontroversial questions. COGs are--by design--so dependent on local good will for their success they must of necessity scale down their ambitions to become significant factors in urban development.[12] If they were to adhere narrowly to a comprehensive planning role, they would jeopardize their funding, their support from key members, and eventually their survival. One should not be surprised, then, that councils of governments have usually turned in disappointing results in terms of plan implementation and resource redistribution. COGs, no less than other social systems, are not normally suicidal. In Edward Banfield's trenchant words, "organizations . . . are not like salmon; they much prefer sterility to death."[13]

Such problems are worse in councils of governments than in most
public agencies because they are what Parsons terms "partial" social
systems. Partial social systems are those in which some functions are
largely performed for them by other structures external to the system.
No system, of course, is completely independent of other systems for the
satisfaction of its functional requisites, but councils of governments
seem unusually dependent. Kaplan deals with the point in his study of
Metro Toronto:

> . . . The partial or segmental system controls only a small
> part of the behavior of its members, may lead the members only in
> areas deemed appropriate to that system, must compete for the
> members' attention and loyalty with a number of other systems,
> and cannot make extensive use of social control mechanisms with-
> out provoking a reduction in the members' commitment to the system.[14]

ACOG's history clearly demonstrates this dilemma of the partial
social system. Furthermore, the theory suggests very far-reaching changes
in organizational strucutre would be necessary for COGs to escape this
quandry. More independence in procuring and employing resources would
be needed, as by granting the council its own and sheltered revenue
sources. Elevation of the COG to a status of preeminence in the region
would be necessary, too, so that it could forcefully lead members along
new pathways and compete successfully for public officials' attention
and loyalty. Finally, it would have to possess efficacious tools with
which to enforce its objectives upon jurisdictions with contrary prefer-
ences. But of course, if we are talking about COGs with these charac-
teristics, we are not really talking about traditional councils of
governments but something rather different. The question whether COGs
can be re-formed into effective instruments of control is considered in
the next and concluding section.

Some Comments on the Future of Councils of Governments

Except perhaps in some isolated cases, regional councils of governments have not fulfilled the promises held out for them in the mid-1960's. Their performance from a regionalism advocate's viewpoint has instead been disappointing. Some signs of progress toward rationalization of urban growth can be detected, but only faintly. To paraphrase Hanson, COGs are still "becoming" rather than "arriving." Judging purely from history one would conclude that their potential for future dynamic action is problematic. But a tremendous investment in these public organizations has been made. What can be done to obtain a suitable return on this investment?

Parsons holds that four conditions must be satisfied in order for there to be generation of power by an organization.[15] First, there must occur the institutionalization of a value system which legitimates organizational goals and the principal goal-attainment patterns. We have already seen that this is the essential problem facing most COGs. Where councils have been successful in regional planning terms, one suspects there were pre-existing conditions favorable for such institutions. Local officials in those areas probably already were committed to area-wide planning concepts. If COGs can overcome apathy or hostility to regionalization of urban planning, it will likely take quite considerable periods of time for such success.

The second condition for power concerns regulation of the organization's procurement and decision-making processes through universalistic rules. Through such means the system establishes claims to loyalty and cooperation. Unfortunately there are no universally accepted rules

in certain situations. Much of the conflict within ACOG dealt with its procedures for decision-making: there was no "universal rule" concerning the division of voting power between large and small jurisdictions. Furthermore, both the one-city, one-vote principle and the proportional voting rule can be defended on philosophical and practical grounds. Thus consensus on the question is not likely to arrive soon.

Parsons' third condition provides that there must be command of more detailed and regular support from persons whose cooperation is needed. An organization which comes into close contact with an individual only periodically, however, has less probability of securing loyalty from that person. Members of governing boards of COGs have primary and internalized obligations to other institutions whose interests may well be in conflict with areawide designs. And given the procedure by which those members come to the council, i.e., local elections, there seems to be no reason for them to develop primary loyalties to the regional organization.

Fourth, Parsons postulates a requirement for command of necessary facilities—especially financial resources—by the organization. COGs presently draw their operating funds from a variety of sources including assessments upon member jurisdictions. But locally-derived revenue is dependent on the good will of local governments since there is no effective mechanism to enforce collection. The largest source of funds is the federal government, and in recent years, the amounts and timing of such monies has been unsure. ACOG Executive Director Larry Goodman complains that budget uncertainties stemming from federal fiscal practices constitute his biggest problem in running his organization. Here too, existing COGs fail to meet the theoretical requirements for organizational power.

Americans are a people, however, who are attached to the notion that institutional forms can be devised to overcome such problems. If a public agency doesn't appear to perform as intended, we reorganize and restructure in the belief that eventually the correct organizationl arrangement will be discovered and the revitalized agency will then proceed to discharge its responsibilities.

In an apparent reflection of this attitude, the International City Management Association has adopted a "Statement of Multijurisdictional Principles" which calls for the creation of stronger and more expansive COGs called Umbrella Multi-Jurisdictional Organizations (UMJOs).[16] UMJOs would differ from their organizational antecedents in that the proposed agencies

> would be composed of state and local government representatives
> with the latter having at least three-fourths of the membership.
> Local governments would be required to become members. But,
> deliberations would be governed by a dual voting system including
> population-weighted voting on certain issues, with the specific
> procedure to be spelled out in the state legislation or left to
> individual councils. . . . This reformed regional council then
> would be a comprehensive and functional planning, coordinating,
> programming, servicing, and limited implementing body.[17]

Melvin Mogulof proposes a similar institution. He calls for COGs to acquire and exercise powers intermediate between the ones they now enjoy and the ones full-fledged UMJOs might possess.[18]

The most significant endorsement of the UMJO concept, however, has come from the prestigious Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations. The ACIR calls for these more muscular COGs to be the basis of a new "Substate Districting Strategy."[19] Under this plan programs would be "piggybacked" onto the new organization. The UMJO would be "prime contractor" for all substate regional activities, would receive

grants-in-aid and revenue sharing funds, and would review applications
for federal assistance that presently are treated under the A-95 process
as well as reviewing all major capital facility projects. It would con-
trol or govern special districts. Upon an affirmative vote of members
and area population it would assume operational and revenue-raising func-
tions. Under the ACIR plan either existing COGs could be the nucleus of
UMJOs or new organizations might be formed.

The UMJO would be a remarkable institution. Especially as con-
ceived by the ACIR, this new kind of regional council goes far beyond pre-
vious concepts of areawide planning agencies. One wonders how those mayors
who grumbled about the enfeebled ACOG being a "new layer of government"
would react to a central Oklahoma UMJO. Most certainly, local governments
which reluctantly formed and joined COGs only after it appeared federal
financial assistance would otherwise be denied will certainly have to be
mandated into UMJOs. The ACIR seems to fully understand that truly power-
ful, general-purpose superordinate agencies such as it proposes will have
to be imposed upon metropolitan areas. But assuming sufficient political
impetus exists to bring about the creation of UMJOs, the question remains
whether they will perform in the manner their partisans intend.

An examination of the UMJO concept with Parsons' four conditions
for generation of organizational power indicates that in certain respects
the new institutions could be more effective. By assuming its own revenue-
raising functions, the UMJOs would achieve greater command over necessary
financial facilities. As "prime contractor" for all substate regional
activities and as the operational agency for certain public services, it
could conceivably attract the detailed and steady support from persons

within and without the organization. A public agency exercising as much power as the ACIR envisions UMJOs exercising will surely attract the loyalty (or at least constant interest) of political personages. As far as the condition requiring regulation of organizational processes through universalistic rules is concerned, however, it is difficult to see any inherent advantages in either format.

Another factor which could enhance the chances of UMJOs achieving regional coordination has to do with the fact that COGs are organizations of some, but not all, governments within a metropolitan area. Some significant public authorities almost always remain outside the council. The principal example in the case of ACOG is the Oklahoma City Independent School District. This is obviously a sizeable and influential special-purpose government which has great impact on metropolitan development. In recent years this fact has been underscored by the institution of busing of children for the purpose of racial integration of the schools, after this practice had been ordered by a federal court (itself an authority outside ACOG's boundaries of membership). Resulting "white flight" has been a factor in changing the character of central-city neighborhoods and spurring the growth of suburban communities lying outside the school district's boundaries. If ACOG was to establish truly comprehensive and effective regional planning, it would have had to take into consideration the district's plans and situation, as well as the determination of federal judges to wipe out all vestiges of racial segregation in schools. The task was obviously beyond the capacity of ACOG, which lacked institutional means to receive and act upon such information. Perhaps a truly comprehensive and potent agency, such as UMJOs are conceived to be, would come closer to meeting the planning responsibility.

UMJO (that is, improved COG) partisans would give regional planning bodies an extra capacity for ensuring their success in seeing that plans once adopted are observed. Governments would be required to become members of UMJOs, and they could be coerced by regional authority into following regional prescriptions. Thus regional councils would lose their present voluntaristic character. But even if COGs or UMJOs did possess real coercive powers there is reason to doubt that substantive reform in the present decentralized and fragmented political process could be had. American government is replete with examples of agencies which could not effectively exercise powers formally permitted them. Lyle Yorks, writing perceptively of the situation in which the federal independent regulatory commissions find themselves, observes that

> command has generally played a limited role in the maintenance of social order. It is most effective when employed only against deviants rather than when used as the principal instrument of control. This suggests that general compliance is best motivated by something other than fear of sanctions. It must be obtained through general consensus that the regulation is correct or through positive incentives utilized in a fashion that motivates compliance.[20]

No one would say that officials of local governments think of themselves as "deviants" from the customary American political order. It is highly probable, on the other hand, that many mayors and other local politicians see regional councils--especially of the UMJO variety--as deviants from American political tradition and culture. With this in mind we can consider Parsons' other condition for organizational power, the requirement that the organization's goals and patterns of functioning be legitimized by the appropriate value system. Unfortunately for partisans of regionalism, the UMJO device would offend the localistically-oriented values of the typical city or county politician even more than

does the voluntaristic COG. It can be ventured that if UMJOs ever did come into existence, their first directives would be met with local resistance and followed quickly by (most likely successful) demands for state and national representatives to strip such regional councils of coercive power. Americans are generally unreceptive to centralized power; the scarcity of metropolitan governments in this country after decades of efforts on their behalf is testimony to that fact.

It should be mentioned in passing that a philosophical argument can also be lodged against Umbrella Multi-Jurisdictional Organizations. The idea that effective attention to public needs requires monolithic, centralized authority may be deceptive. There are efficiency costs with large organizations. Centralized systems may well be less accountable to citizens than pluralistic ones. All-inclusive bodies can generate majorities that unfairly override worthy minorities. Variations in governmental services and capacities may be preferable in some valuable respects to enforced commonness. Each of the preceding statements are of course arguable, and it may be that comprehensive and effective area-wide planning is sufficiently desirable to discount all such objections. But it should be remembered that the contentment of most Americans with existing decentralized and fragmented metropolitan political systems has been expressed often enough that no preponderate preference for centralized administration is apparent.[21]

This writer does not wish to assert anything here with absolute certainty. Councils of governments may be making more progress than was evident from the literature reviewed in connection with this study. The Association of Central Oklahoma Governments may yet overcome its

problems. UMJOs may be the wave of the future. And the advocates of

regionalism may eventually prevail in their efforts, although the findings

of this study and theoretical insights from organizational behavior sug-

gest that they might better wait until their propaganda takes hold in

metropolitan political cultures. It may even be that Matthew Holden's

prediction that confrontation with controversial issues by COGs results

in stronger regional capabilities will be verified by empirical evidence,

although the example of ACOG suggests otherwise and that patient efforts

at securing member commitment should precede aggressiveness in urban

planning.

Within a few years the question whether councils of governments

will prove themselves will be conclusively answered. There is a danger,

however, that the allowance of time for organizational development may

be harmful in itself. There is a tendency in organizations to increasingly

routinize their behavior over time. Maturity is usually accompanied by

less dynamism, not more. In the process of "becoming" there is the very

real possibility that COGs will become bureaucratized. And although

bureaucracies are well suited for some purposes, they seem the anti-

thesis of what regional councils should be to cope with complex and

fast-changing urban conditions.

Signs of bureaucratization are already present in the Associa-

tion of Central Oklahoma Governments. Increasingly, it seems the mem-

bers' attention is devoted to internal organizational affairs. A sig-

nificant portion of several meetings in the past year or so, for example,

has concerned the establishment and terms of a staff employee retire-

ment plan. Debates over vesting periods for pension benefits necessarily

take attention away from areawide issues. A bureaucratized organization occupies itself with devising procedural manuals, distributing newsletters, and publishing reports (ACOG is proud of the awards its annual reports have received in national competition with other COGs). It does not, in contrast, confront controversial issues with equanimity or resolve them with dispatch. And even the critics of "another layer of government" would probably prefer that the destiny of regional councils of governments prove to be something more than another layer of impotent bureaucracy.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Oklahoma City Times, April 24, 1975.

[2]Ibid.

[3](Oklahoma City) Daily Oklahoman, May 15, 1975.

[4]Times, May 15, 1975.

[5]Times, April 17, 1975.

[6]Oklahoman, June 12, 1975.

[7]Philip Selznick, "Foundations of the Theory of Organization," American Sociological Review 13 (1948), pp. 25-35, found in Amitai Etizioni, ed., A Sociological Reader on Complex Organizations, 2d ed., (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1969), p. 26.

[8]Oran R. Young, Systems of Political Science (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), p. 34.

[9]Talcott Parsons, Structure and Process in Modern Societies (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1960), pp. 63-64.

[10]See R. Jean Hills, Toward a Science of Organization (Eugene, Ore.: Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration, 1968), p. 105.

[11]Harold Kaplan, Urban Political Systems: A Functional Analysis of Metro Toronto (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), p. 15.

[12]For an illustration of this phenomenon, see Harold Wolman, "Organizational Theory and Community Action Agencies," Public Administration Review 32 (January/February, 1972), p. 41.

[13]Edward C. Banfield, "Ends and Means in Planning," in Sidney Mailick and Edward H. Van Ness, eds., Concepts and Issues in Administrative Behavior (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962), p. 77.

[14]Kaplan, Urban Political Systems, pp. 18-19.

[15]Parsons, Structure and Process in Modern Societies, pp. 42-43.

[16]"Regionalism and Municipal Management: Report of the ICMA Committee on the Problems of Regionalism," Public Management 55 (September 1973), pp. 24-29.

[17]David B. Walker, "Substate Districting and a Reformed Regional Council Strategy," Public Management 56 (January 1974), p. 7.

[18]His proposals were presented for discussion at the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions. They are explained in "Reconstituting Urban Area Governing Capacity," Search: A Report from the Urban Institute 3 (July/August 1973), pp. 3-5.

[19]U. S., Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, Substate Regionalism and the Federal System, 6 vols. (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1973), vol. 1: Regional Decision Making: New Strategies for Substate Districts, chap. 9. Their recommendations are also presented in briefer form in David B. Walker and Carl W. Stenberg, "A Substate Districting Strategy," National Civic Review 63 (January 1974), pp. 5-9; 15; and in the ACIR Information Bulletin No. 74-2, (February 1974).

[20]Lyle Yorks, "Nader's Raiders and the Regulatory Process: Some Observations and Comments," Atlanta Economic Review (November/December, 1974), pp. 32-33.

[21]For further readings on the ideas expressed in this paragraph, see Robert L. Bish, The Public Economy of Metropolitan Areas (Chicago: Markham, 1971); Robert L. Bish and Vincent Ostrom, Understanding Urban Government: Metropolitan Reform Reconsidered (Washington, D. C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1973); Steven P. Erie, John J. Kirlin, and Francine Rabinovitz, "Can Something Be Done? Propositions on the Performance of Metropolitan Institutions," in Lowden Wingo, ed., Reform of Metropolitan Governments (Baltimore: Resources for the Future, 1972), pp. 7-41; and Elinor Ostrom, "Metropolitan Reform: Propositions Derived from Two Traditions," Social Science Quarterly 53 (December 1972), pp. 474-493. A general criticism of centralized administrative systems is found in Vincent Ostrom, The Intellectual Crisis in American Public Administration, rev. ed., (University, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1974).

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Interviews

Interviews and discussions during the period July 2, 1974--August 11, 1974 with the following members of the ACOG professional staff:

Larry Goodman, Executive Director
Philip Waring, Director of Regional Planning
Jeffery Spelman, Director of Criminal Justice Programs
John T. Hall, Intergovernmental Programs Coordinator
Ron Capshaw, Special Programs Officer
James L. Marr, Associate Planner
Ronald Karns, Criminal Justice Research Assistant
Darrel Tiller, Criminal Justice Planner
Mike Waller, Transportation Intern
L. Douglas Halley (former Executive Director)
Zach D. Taylor (former Assistant to the Director)

Interviews during the period July 22, 1974--August 12, 1974 with the following individuals who served on ACOG's governing Board during fiscal 1973 and/or 1974:

Roy Carmack (Mayor, The Village)
Harry Currie (Mayor, Del City)
Emil Fox (Commissioner, Cleveland County)
Johnny Green (Mayor, Edmond)
Wayne Grimwood (Councilman, Norman)
Jon Gumerson* (Mayor, Guthrie)
Patience Latting (Mayor, Oklahoma City)
Eldon Lyon (Mayor, Bethany)
Odell Morgan (Mayor, Moore)
Earle Penwright (Mayor, El Reno)
Marty Pierce (Councilman, Warr Acres)
Alfred Reece (Commissioner, Logan County)
Marion C. Reed (Mayor, Midwest City)
J. P. Richardson (Commissioner, Oklahoma County)
Dan Stuart (Mayor, Nichols Hills)
Bob Ward (Mayor, Yukon)

*Responded to mail questionnaire, returned September 13, 1974.

Masters, Gordon. Norman, Oklahoma. (Former Mayor of Norman and member of ACOG Executive Committee.) Interview, July 30, 1974.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE USED FOR INTERVIEWING MEMBERS OF THE
GOVERNING BOARD OF THE ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GOVERNMENTS

Interview Questionnaire

(I)*   1. How did you become involved in ACOG, rather than another person from your city?

(I)   2. Are there times when you are torn between your ACOG responsibilities and your city responsibilities?
(IF YES: In what ways?)

(I)   3. Does working with ACOG give you personal satisfaction?

(G)   4. What are your personal goals for ACOG in the future?

(G)   5. What do you think other members want ACOG's future goals to be?

(A)   6. In your opinion, what have been the biggest accomplishments of ACOG?

(A)   7. What have been the biggest disappointments with ACOG?

(L)   8. If the federal government did not require an organization like ACOG to handle grants and planning for the area, would you feel it worthwhile to remain a member?

(L)   9. Do you think under those circumstances other members of ACOG would stay in it?

(L)   10. Do you think the members of the Board really care about pulling together to help ACOG succeed?

(I)   11. When the ACOG Board makes a decision, is it sometimes the result of bargaining or compromises among the members?
(IF YES: When has that happened?)

(I)   12. Apart from all the newspaper stories, how much conflict or differences of opinion really is there in the Board?

(I)   13. Looking back now at the time when Oklahoma City left ACOG, how did you feel about the City's withdrawal from ACOG at the time?

(A)   14. Why did you / did you not participate in activities to change or save ACOG?

(L)   15. What do you think are the real reasons Oklahoma City pulled out of ACOG and then rejoined?

(A)   16. ACOG has been reorganized and the voting rules changed. Do you think the changes in the organization have been good from the standpoint of your city (county)?
(IF YES: How has it been better?
(IF NO: In what situations or cases have the changes been detrimental?)

(L)   17. Do you think the reorganization will benefit ACOG itself, apart from any effect on your own city?

(A)   18. Does there seem to be a better spirit of cooperation among Board members now that ACOG has been reorganized?

(L)   19. In the time you have been in ACOG, has there been competition among Board members now that ACOG has been reorganized?
(IF YES: In what ways?)

(A)   20. Do you think the ACOG reorganization really makes any difference in how well the organization functions?
(IF YES: In what ways?)

*Functional imperative of the Association to which question primarily refers:
     A: adaptation
     G: goal-attainment
     I: integration
     L: latency, or pattern-maintenance.

APPENDIX B

MEMBER CITIES AND COUNTIES OF THE ASSOCIATION OF
CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GOVERNMENTS, JUNE 30, 1973

*Bethany
Calumet
Choctaw
Crescent
*Del City
*Edmond
*El Reno
Forest Park
**Guthrie
Jones
Langston
Luther
Lexington
*Midwest City
*Moore
Mustang
**Nichols Hills

Nicoma Park
Noble
*Norman
Okarche
*Oklahoma City
Piedmont
Spencer
Union City
Valley Brook
*The Village
*Warr Acres
**Yukon
*Canadian County
*Cleveland County
*Logan County
*Oklahoma County

*Permanent representation on Board of Directors under terms
of ACOG Agreement effective February 14, 1973.

**Held membership on Board of Directors during 1973 as repre-
sentative of cities with 3,001-9,999 population within their
respective counties.