

THE STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS OF  
HOUSING, POLITICS AND THEORY:  
THE HOUSING ACTION COALITION EXPERIENCE

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of  
the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
of the degree of

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## ABSTRACT

Housing Action Coalition is a voluntary group of individuals who live in Winnipeg's inner city or work for social agencies in the inner city. The Coalition was formed in the spring of 1977 in reaction to deteriorating housing conditions in terms of poor quality housing stock, an inadequate supply of low income housing, and affordability problems of residents within the inner city. The Coalition has presented briefs and met with officials of the local, provincial, and federal levels of the state with the objective of lobbying them to move towards policy positions which would alleviate the housing crisis. HAC has directed its prime lobbying effort at the local level in the belief that housing conditions and policy solutions may most sensitively be monitored and implemented at the local planning level. Restraint minded governments have been unsympathetic to the Coalition's demands for increased involvement in social housing policy and programs. HAC's efforts have been unsuccessful to the point where the group is in danger of dissolving in the face of failure and frustration.

The methodological thread that runs throughout this thesis is the linking of practice and theory. This linkage or 'praxis' creates the clarity necessary to suggest future action. The first part of this thesis links HAC's daily actions with the recent theory

of housing crisis, the theory of the role of the state, and the theory concerning urban political action. The clarity achieved through this exploration demonstrates that the Coalition's analysis of housing and the role of the state, as well as its organizational and strategic thrust render it incapable of attaining social change. HAC's current action and analysis enable it to achieve only reform or changes within the existing urban system.

The latter part of this thesis examines HAC's strategic actions within the framework of a theoretical model of political responsiveness. This study demonstrates that the Coalition's lobby orientation will likely be unsuccessful against the Winnipeg City Council. The results of a survey of councillors indicate that the majority have firmly entrenched housing positions opposite to those of the Coalition.

The findings of this thesis gained from an examination of strategic options drawn from theory, have indicated that the Coalition should abandon its lobbying efforts in favour of 'reform electoral' activity. This strategic option most closely suits HAC's analytical and organizational state. In addition, it has a greater chance of achieving the reform objective of improved housing conditions through policy changes.

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I am especially indebted to all the people who participated in the Housing Action Coalition for their co-operation with this project, and their energy and commitment when dealing with a difficult problem and an unsympathetic adversary.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION AND LOGIC

#### A Statement Of The Problem

Housing conditions in Winnipeg's inner city are deteriorating and continue to decline. Recent planning and government reports note that Winnipeg's inner city is second only to Montreal in its percentage of poor quality older inner city housing. This fact coupled with a decline in low cost housing starts compared to an acceleration of demolition, closure, and conversion of low cost older units, and severe affordability problems for low income inner city residents, indicates a housing crisis of some magnitude. These conditions have not escaped the attention of the media and social critics. Over the past two years (1977 to 1979) headlines such as, "Victim of Past Indifference; Rot Eating Away City's Core Area?"<sup>1</sup> have been frequently appearing in Winnipeg's two daily newspapers.

These conditions combined with ever increasing social agency case loads of individuals experiencing housing related difficulties

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<sup>1</sup>Allan Wilson, "Victim of Past Indifference; Rot Eating Away City's Core Area?" Winnipeg Free Press, 30 October 1978, p. 1.

precipitated the formation of the Housing Action Coalition (HAC). HAC is a volunteer organization of persons who live and/or work in the inner city of Winnipeg. Very early in the group's existence it became clear that government appeared unable, or more probably was unwilling to ameliorate the decline in housing conditions. The civic or local level was most noticeable in this regard. Since the spring of 1977 HAC has been active in an effort to promote housing policies for Winnipeg's inner city, with the bulk of the pressure being applied on the local government level.

The efforts of the Coalition have been unsuccessful in pressuring the city government into instituting remedial housing policy initiatives. In the meantime housing conditions continue to decline and inner city residents continue to experience housing related difficulties.

#### Purpose Of The Study

Housing Action Coalition has failed to produce positive changes in city housing policy while pursuing its strategic role as a policy lobby group. Since HAC is a volunteer organization, all available energy has been directed to action leaving little room for reflection or self analysis. This thesis intends to explore and understand HAC's action and analysis in light of recent bodies of theory concerning housing, the role of the state or all levels of government, and urban political action. The purpose of this exploration is to examine HAC's current strategic orientation within the context of theory in order to develop strategic alternatives more equipped to

reach HAC's goal of improved inner city housing conditions.

An underlying assumption of this approach is that practice or action must be linked with theory before consistent positive steps may be achieved. Most literature concerning group or individual action in the urban milieu takes the form of a chronology of events leading to a specific result; an historical overview. While adding to our knowledge of history it does little to illuminate generalizable concepts which could provide guidance to other political groups who will be engaged in future conflicts. The grounding of practice in theory allows one to bring reality to an intellectual framework and conversely, provides a context with which to understand incremental daily action and reaction. A major implicit theme of this thesis is that events must be understood within the context of theory before effective strategy may be selected and pursued. Such an understanding leads to a "praxis, a process whereby theory and practice both contributed [contribute] to improving our understanding of society and our efforts to change it."<sup>2</sup>

#### Limitations And Boundaries

The major limitation of this thesis is a temporal one. Housing conditions described, governmental action taken, and Housing Action Coalition activities noted in the thesis cover the time span from January 1977, immediately prior to HAC's formation, to 20 December

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<sup>2</sup> Stephen Schechter, The Politics of Urban Liberation, (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1978), p. 9.

1978, the date of the City Council meeting where housing non-involvement guidelines were adopted. This date is chosen as the temporal boundary for the study because it represents a decisive failure of Housing Action Coalition's lobbying efforts. It is at this point that strategic re-evaluation is imperative if the goal of improved housing conditions is to be achieved.

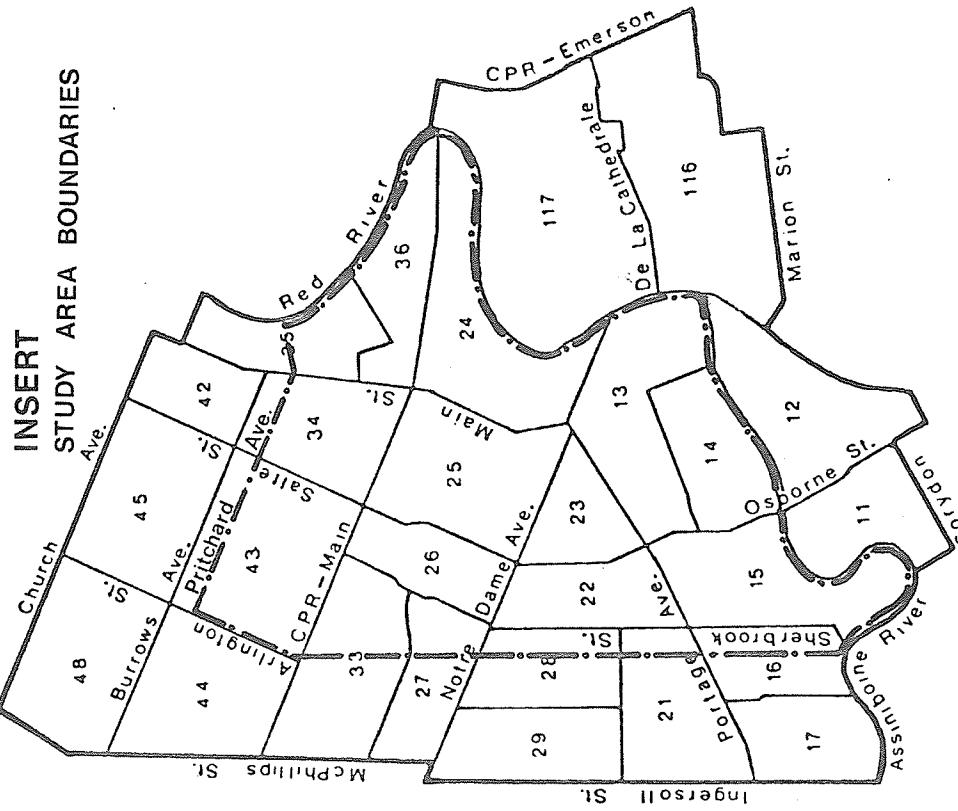
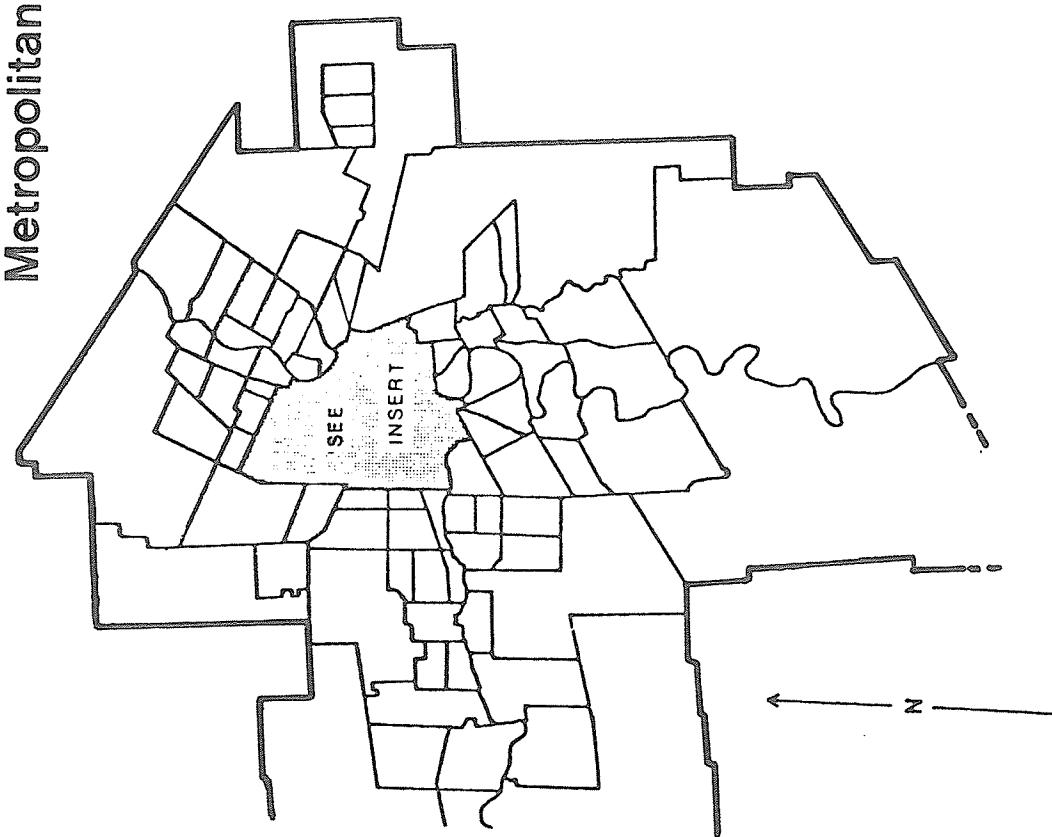
The spatial definition of the inner city utilized for this thesis matches the one developed by the Institute of Urban Studies for their inner city housing report to the Winnipeg Development Plan Review (see Figure 1). The predominant characteristics used in producing the boundaries include: deteriorated housing stock, encroachment of commercial and non-residential uses upon residential areas, and demographic shifts such as increase in elderly and decline of family populations. Many reports and documents cited in this thesis may have used slightly different boundaries to define the inner city or core area. The Institute's boundary is used because it encompasses all other study boundaries and is based on distinct identifiable variables. Housing Action Coalition's original definition of the inner city or target area was later expanded to coincide with the Institute's boundary to facilitate data utilization and strengthen arguments (see Figure 1).<sup>3</sup>

The final limitation concerns itself with the object of this inquiry. The thesis does not intend to prove that changes in policy,

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<sup>3</sup> The Coalition's original definition of the inner city included the area bounded on the North by Pritchard Avenue, on the South by the Assiniboine River, on the East by the Red River, and on the West by Arlington Street.

## Location of Inner City Study Area in Relation to Winnipeg Census Metropolitan Area



Numbers Refer to Census Tract Identifiers  
Housing Action Coalition's Original Boundaries

**Figure 1**

Prepared by H. D. Maerz, 1979  
Produced for the Inner City Housing Report by the  
Institute of Urban Studies

society, etc., are necessary to correct the housing situation. It is assumed that change is needed to resolve the housing crisis. Rather, this thesis asks the basic question; is HAC an effective tool to achieve such change?

### Thesis Logic And Methodology

It is the stated intent of this thesis to reach a clear understanding of Housing Action Coalition's past actions and in doing so gain some insight regarding more effective future action. In order to achieve clarity and gain insight, analysis based on a description of the Coalition's actions will not be sufficient. It is necessary that the Coalition's actions and the analysis which led to the actions be examined within the context or in light of recent theory concerning housing, the role of the state, and urban political action. Once HAC's current actions and analysis have been measured in relation to theory it is necessary to determine if HAC's strategic orientation has the potential of achieving its own stated goals. If HAC's orientation is unable to produce change, options suggesting alternative strategy will be drawn from theory and evaluated in terms of HAC's ability to adopt them and their capability to produce changes in the existing housing situation.

First, HAC's analysis must be understood in relation to the theory of housing crisis. This body of theory posits that the description of housing issues such as deterioration, abandonment, and affordability, although explaining the symptoms of housing crisis does not strike at the heart of the problem. This theory proposes

that housing crisis is an unresolvable consequence of the contradiction between the labour market and the housing market within the capitalist mode of production. Housing may not be properly understood by only examining the physical manifestations of a problem with political and economic roots. Rather, it may be grasped through the examination of capital flows between competing markets and the political supports for those markets.

Second, HAC's understanding of the role of government or state intervention in the housing situation is examined in light of recent theory on the role of the state. This theory suggests that the role of the state may best be discerned through the study of its activity in the accumulation of capital and legitimization of the current political and economic system. Since the state's power and ability to tax depends to a great extent upon a thriving economy, it must continue to fuel that economy to ensure increasing growth and private accumulation of capital. The state must also intervene to correct the social disruption inherent in capitalist growth. The state must supply social welfare supports such as unemployment insurance, welfare, social housing, old age security pensions, etc., to maintain system stability and social order. Legitimacy of the current political and economic system is also furthered through such institutions as democratic elections and the legal system. However, the state's ability to supply the goods needed to legitimate the system is hampered by fiscal crisis or an inability to increase revenues in the face of a stagnant or slow economy and record

government debt levels.<sup>4</sup>

Third, HAC's strategic actions are explained in relation to theory of urban political action. This theory claims that all political action must be measured in terms of its effectiveness. To a great extent the clarity of analysis and to a lesser extent the type of organization determines the effectiveness of urban political groups. If actions and analysis lead to no change then the 'urban effect' of control is realized. If changes within individual elements of the urban system (production of space, management of space, exchange, and reproduction or conditions necessary to sustain the work force) are produced then reform is achieved. However, if systemic change or a shift in the power relations between classes occurs then the urban effect of social change is gained.

This theoretical examination of the three subject areas of housing, the role of the state, and urban political action is conducted by means of a review of the existing literature. Both primary and secondary sources are used. The housing section draws from the recent critical writings of authors such as Harvey, Stone, and Castells. Statistics to illuminate and substantiate the Winnipeg case are taken from various background housing reports prepared for the Winnipeg Development Plan Review, provincial housing reports, and

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<sup>4</sup>The assertion that the fiscal crisis is caused by increasing state deficits has been called into question. Recent analysis suggests that a decline in revenue caused by the indexing of taxes is the primary cause of the fiscal dilemma of the state. Although expenditure has increased, much has been attributed to the pass through or transfer (income redistribution) of revenue rather than increases in real spending. See Richard M. Bird, Myer W. Bucovetsky, and David K. Foot. Growth of Public Employment in Canada, (Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1979); and Richard M. Bird. Financing Canadian Government; A Quantitative Overview, (Toronto: Canada Tax Foundation, 1979).

HAC research and documentation. The section on the role of state utilizes the writings of O'Connor, Habermas, and Schecter to outline the state's activity in the process of the accumulation of capital and the legitimization of the political-economic system. Examples from all three levels of the state emanate from such sources as, Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) pronouncements, articles analyzing the activity of the current provincial government, and statistics from Winnipeg Development Plan Review documents outlining the city's role in the process of accumulation.

The urban political action section relies heavily upon the analytical framework developed by Manuel Castells in The Urban Question. Using this framework, a continuum of urban political action is developed; beginning with groups whose analysis and organization achieve only control, through reform, and ending with urban social movements who realize social change. Examples of common political formations are drawn from the writings of a wide range of authors such as Higgins, Sewell, Coit, and Roussopoulos to name a few. These typical groups are placed on the appropriate points on the continuum and are examined to determine their capability of achieving change in the urban system.

Evidence of HAC's actions and analysis are extracted from HAC minutes for the past two years, HAC briefs and presentations to various levels of government, HAC strategy sessions, and newspaper articles, concerning HAC's actions. In addition, this writer has participated in the Coalition for the last year and one-half observing, recording, and analyzing the group's strategy and actions. The knowledge gained from the documentation and participant

observation is meshed with the three preceding bodies of theory in order that HAC may be examined within a theoretical context; practice linked with theory.

Fourth, having gained a greater understanding of HAC's current orientation through a theoretical exploration of its analysis of housing crisis, the role of the state, and its place within the theory of urban political action, an evaluation of its strategy must be conducted. HAC's will to act is examined to pinpoint the precise limits of the group's goals, actions, and ability to shift strategic direction. Most importantly, the Coalition's strategy of the lobby is measured for potential effectiveness. If it can be demonstrated that HAC's primary target, Winnipeg City Council, is unmoveable or non-lobbyable with regard to housing then the group should adopt alternative strategy to realize its goals.

The examination of HAC's will to act was facilitated through the use of an open-ended questionnaire survey of all key Coalition members. The effectiveness of HAC's lobby strategy was determined through the use of a questionnaire survey, containing both closed and open-ended questions, of all members of Winnipeg City Council. The questionnaire was designed to meet the requirements of a model of political responsiveness developed by political scientist M. J. Goldsmith. His model was modified somewhat to allow for the specific testing of councillors' responsiveness to the housing issue and pressure groups like HAC. Questions were framed to ascertain each individual councillor's stance on housing issues, level of information regarding housing and related matters, and openness

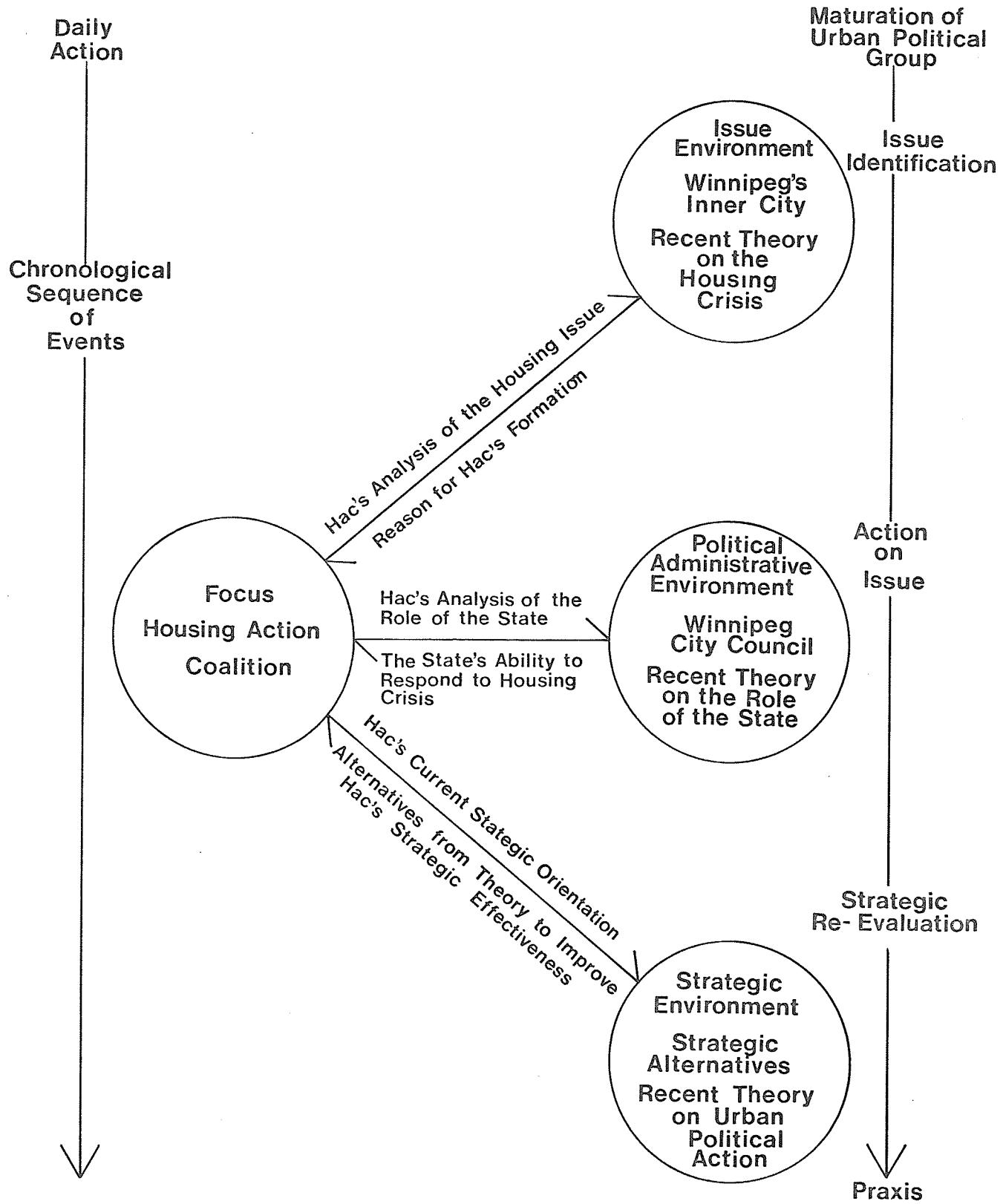
towards outside lobbies such as Housing Action Coalition. If the majority on Council is hostile towards lobby groups, highly informed, yet possessing a housing stance in opposition to HAC's, then the Coalition should explore other, potentially more effective strategies. This method was chosen over the examination of voting records because it gives some indication of the councillors' responsiveness to citizens and operating level of information in addition to housing stance.

Last, after gauging the effectiveness of HAC's current strategy, alternatives from theory are examined to assess their potential effectiveness. Each strategy must be measured in terms of its ability to further HAC's goals. In addition, changes in HAC's analysis and organization are taken into consideration when evaluating the options. From this point conclusions are drawn concerning the most effective strategic posture for HAC. As well, conclusions regarding the utility of combining theory and practice are made.

The thread which holds the argument together is the constant linkage of theory and practice. This linkage or praxis is attempted to achieve the clarity necessary to explain the strategic implications of the housing issue and urban political action, and to suggest alternate future action. Housing Action Coalition serves as a practical focus with which to link the theory of housing, the role of the state, and urban political action.

Figure 2 is a visual representation of the logic of this thesis. It illustrates the relationship of the three bodies of theory to the

## THESIS LOGIC



**Figure 2**

Coalition. As HAC successfully completes the linkages between theory and daily action it moves closer to achieving a praxis. The two-way arrows connecting the theory and the Coalition demonstrate the interactive mechanism between theory and practice. Both of the downward arrows indicate movement in time. The left-hand arrow indicates the chronological sequence of actions HAC has taken. The downward arrow on the right-hand side indicates the maturation of the urban political group as it moves from issue identification, to action, to re-evaluation of action or strategy in light of theory, towards a praxis.

#### Thesis Format

The chapters in the thesis have been ordered to reflect the logic presented earlier. The sequence moves from HAC's daily actions through theory to strategic alternatives.

Chapter Two presents Housing Action Coalition's biography. Major actions by HAC and external events which affected HAC are noted in chronological order from the beginning of the organization to the present day. Newspaper articles, briefs, and government reports are cited to give substance to this biographical description.

Chapter Three examines the housing crisis within Winnipeg's inner city. The housing question is first analyzed in terms of capital flows between competing markets. The symptoms of poor housing quality, inadequate supplies of low income units, and affordability problems are examined. Housing Action Coalition's analysis of the housing crisis is then presented. HAC sees the

housing crisis as a result of government inaction.

Chapter Four discusses the role of the state in housing. Using the analytical concepts of accumulation, legitimization, and fiscal crisis it is demonstrated that all levels of the state are retreating from their existing positions concerning social housing. In contrast, Housing Action Coalition's analysis suggests that the state should step up expenditures for social housing in order to maintain social order.

Chapter Five looks at the theory of urban political action. To facilitate this examination a continuum of urban political action is developed which explores the potential effectiveness of political action. The actions of political abstinence, voting, institutionalized citizen participation, single-issue citizen action, special interest policy lobbying, electoral politics, and socialist urban politics are placed along the continuum. HAC's political action is then placed along the continuum among the theoretical examples. Arguments are forwarded to substantiate the placement of the Coalition near the special interest policy lobby.

Chapter Six tests Housing Action Coalition's current strategic orientation of the lobby. Results of interviews with HAC members demonstrates that the majority desires to remain as a lobby, albeit a more effective one. Interviews with councillors indicate that a majority is opposed to HAC's housing position and is not susceptible to external pressure on the matter. In short, evidence is provided to show that HAC's current strategic orientation is likely to be ineffective.

Chapter Seven examines strategic options available to the Coalition. The options of political abstinence, institutionalized citizen participation including community development, an improved lobby function, reform electoral politics, and urban socialist politics are drawn from theory, analyzed to ascertain potential effectiveness, and measured in terms of their impact on the Coalition. This discussion concludes that electoral politics would be the most effective option within the analytical and organizational limitations of HAC's own reform position.

Chapter Eight presents a summary of the thesis logic, major conclusions concerning strategy and the usefulness of linking theory and practice, and suggestions for future research. In addition a brief epilogue is included to bring the reader up to date on housing conditions, action by government, and action on the part of the Housing Action Coalition.

## CHAPTER II

### HOUSING ACTION COALITION: A BIOGRAPHY

The intent of this chapter is to briefly describe the organizational development of Housing Action Coalition and present a chronology of events from the inception of the group to 20 December 1978. Included in the organizational section will be a discussion of the housing conditions and personal motives of the members which precipitated the formation of the Coalition. This motivational information was gained through interviews with sixteen of the most active or influential members of the group (see Appendix A). The chronology of events includes HAC's actions and reactions as well as major events affecting housing in Winnipeg. The chronology of events ends at 20 December 1978; the temporal limitation of the study. This date is significant in that Council clearly articulated its role regarding responsibility in the Winnipeg housing scene. This decision has left HAC at a strategic crisis point. The question raised at this juncture about future action or strategy for HAC is the main concern of this thesis.

#### HAC's Origin And Organization

Housing Action Coalition is a group of volunteers from various social service professions, who have pressed government for changes

in housing policy since April 1977. The group is composed of inner city area workers including such occupations as, social worker, lawyer, community minister, administrator, city councillor, urban researcher, and social planner. The housing problems which led to the formation of the group have for the most part been experienced by clients of the workers and volunteers involved. The individual members have interpreted these client needs, framed them in terms of possible policy solutions, and articulated these solutions to various levels of government. The Coalition does not represent citizens of the inner city or any particular neighbourhood, rather it advocates professional prescriptions to perceived client housing needs.

The Coalition was formed through a series of informal meetings between workers from several social agencies operating in Winnipeg's inner city. Incidents such as the Preston Street fire<sup>1</sup> and the subsequent relocation difficulties of the surviving tenants clearly indicated the low quality and inadequate supply of low income housing within the inner city. Several outreach workers dealing with housing relocation problems of the elderly soon discovered the difficulty in finding accommodation of reasonable quality and rent in inner city neighbourhoods. Workers began to share information concerning client housing need and possible solutions. The conclusions that client

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<sup>1</sup>On 31 January 1977 a fire at the Town and Country Lodge (low income tenancy) on Preston Street killed eight persons and left surviving tenants with severe relocation difficulties.

housing problems were not isolated and were due in part to an inadequate policy response from government, were reached as a result of these initial mutual support meetings.

Most Coalition members surveyed for the purposes of this thesis, cited work related concerns, the need for better housing information, and a need for action as prime motivations for joining. The main reason for continued participation in the Coalition comes from the perceived need for concrete action on the part of social agency workers to push for policy changes to ameliorate the existing housing problems. Work related concerns and information requirements have become secondary to the perceived need for policy change.

Participation in the Coalition is on an individual volunteer basis and in no way constrains the actions of the social agencies from which members are drawn. From time to time the agencies have been called on to lend certain supports to the Coalition. Administrative services such as typing, duplicating, mailing, and provision of meeting rooms are supplied by the various agencies. Political aids such as endorsement of HAC policy positions, increased information networks, and supporters when briefs are presented have also been supplied by the organizations involved.

In short, Housing Action Coalition is a group of professionals from various social agencies which advocates policy solutions to government based on the perceived needs of clients in the inner city of Winnipeg.

### A Biography

The following is a chronology of major events affecting Housing Action Coalition from the initial support meetings in April 1977 to the city's delineation of housing responsibility on 20 December 1978.

April 1977 - Core area workers realizing that client problems in housing related matters were increasing in intensity and in number, met to share information, client experiences, and possible answers to the various concerns. A pervasive inner city housing problem was perceived by the participants.

April-June 1977 - Information regarding government housing policy was gathered. This search was prompted by the intuitive feeling that existing policy was inadequate. A sub-committee was struck to deal with emergency housing policy and relocation needs in more depth.

A brief was compiled detailing HAC's interpretation of the housing problem and possible policy solutions which could be adopted by the different levels of government to attack the problem. Because of the timing of the provincial and municipal elections (11 October 1977 and 26 October 1977 respectively) it was decided that the brief would be presented at a public meeting where inner city candidates from the two levels of government would be in attendance. HAC attempted to get the brief endorsed by inner city agencies with limited success.

3 October 1977 - "A Housing Action Plan for Winnipeg's Inner City" was presented to the media and candidates, including MLA Lloyd

Axworthy (Lib) and then provincial Urban Affairs Minister Saul Miller (NDP). No Progressive Conservative or Independent Citizens Election Committee (ICEC) candidates were present. The problems identified in the brief were: the poor quality of low income housing, the inadequate supply of low income housing, absentee landlords and speculation on property, income and racial discrimination, fragmented urban planning procedures, an excessive rent to income ratio for inner city residents, an anti-residential bias in inner city zoning, assessment and servicing practices, lack of a comprehensive housing data bank, a failure on the part of government to develop experimental housing projects, and a lack of emergency housing and relocation services.<sup>2</sup>

Some of the desired solutions to the identified issues included: a comprehensive housing policy involving all levels of government as well as area residents, to promote strong inner city neighbourhoods, the institution of a city housing department and committee to integrate government policy, the more aggressive use of zoning and the institution of an anti-demolition by-law to check deterioration and promote the residential character of the inner city, changes in tax assessment to allow incentives for rehabilitation, a joint city-province infill strategy, an improved relocation policy, the continuation of rent controls, and a rent subsidy program.<sup>3</sup> About

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<sup>2</sup>Housing Action Coalition, "A Housing Action Plan for Winnipeg's Inner City: A Working Paper", Winnipeg, 425 Elgin Avenue, September 1977, (Mimeographed) pp. 1-9.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 19-28.

forty people attended the meeting.

11 October 1977 - A Progressive Conservative provincial government was elected with a majority.

26 October 1977 - A majority ICEC government was elected at the civic level. Mayoralty candidate Robert Steen was elected Mayor.

10 November 1977 - A sub-committee of HAC met with Mr. D. G. Henderson, Commissioner of Environment for the City of Winnipeg.<sup>4</sup> Mr. Henderson outlined current city administered housing programs such as the Neighbourhood Improvement Program (NIP), the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP), inspections programs, and the proposed Winnipeg non-profit housing corporation. The Committee on Environment was identified as the standing committee of Council which has the jurisdiction to deal with housing issues.

HAC raised a concern about the enormous workload of the Committee on Environment and its inability to properly discuss housing issues and policy.<sup>5</sup> Mr. Henderson suggested that this problem could be alleviated in one of three ways. HAC could request that: the Committee on Environment hold special meetings to discuss housing and social policy; an appointed commission be established to hear zoning

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<sup>4</sup> Planning and housing related matters are within Commissioner Henderson's jurisdiction.

<sup>5</sup> Prior to 20 December 1978, no housing policy existed for the City of Winnipeg; only an administrative grab-bag of city, provincial and federal programs.

appeals; an additional standing committee be struck with responsibility for housing and social issues. Mr. Henderson further recommended that the Coalition would be wise to support the Winnipeg non-profit housing corporation and the concept of an expanded housing data bank in any further discussions with city politicians and officials.

16 November 1977 - Councillor Jim Ernst (ICEC-Grant's Mill) replaced former Councillor Ken Wong on the board of directors of the Winnipeg non-profit housing corporation.

4 January 1978 - A sub-committee of HAC met with Mayor Robert Steen and Executive Policy Committee (EPC) Chairman Bob Bockstael (ICEC-Tache). The Mayor indicated that HAC's proposal for a special Council meeting on housing would not be successful since most councillors would not attend. He also stated that he is on record as supporting a standing committee on housing and community development. Councillor Bockstael invited HAC to appear at EPC on 19 January 1978 to present its case for a separate committee.

5-18 January 1978 - HAC gave a written and oral presentation to the EPC calling for the immediate establishment of a separate standing committee on housing and community development.<sup>6</sup> The function of such a committee would be to formulate a housing policy and oversee the

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<sup>6</sup>Housing Action Coalition, "Presentation to Mayor Robert Steen, The Executive Policy Committee, Winnipeg City Council," Winnipeg: 425 Elgin Avenue, 19 January 1978, (Mimeographed).

operations of the Winnipeg Housing Rehabilitation Corporation. The brief was not favourably received by some councillors. Councillor McGonigal (ICEC-Stevenson) defended the city's current role and cited involvement in NIP as a positive action. Councillors Ernst and Filmon (ICEC-Crescent Heights) stated that the city's tax base is inadequate to support the subsidies that would be necessary for low income housing.<sup>7</sup>

20 January 1978-14 May 1978 - Individual members of HAC wrote letters to their councillors in support of a housing committee. As well, letters under HAC's signature were sent to the EPC and Committee on Environment reaffirming this position.

HAC publicly endorsed the position forwarded by the Coalition for the Retention of Rent Controls. It was felt that rent de-control would aggravate the problems caused by an under supply of low rental housing. In addition, a meeting was held to build up HAC's support network. New contacts were made with the League for the Handicapped, the Centennial Residents Neighbourhood Improvement Committee, and students from both the University of Manitoba and the University of Winnipeg.

A letter under HAC's signature was sent to J. Frank Johnston, Minister responsible for MHRC, urging the new provincial Conservative government to retain the public housing program for the inner city.

Housing Action Coalition was incorporated as an initial step

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<sup>7</sup> John Sullivan, "City Defends Stance on Housing Policy," Winnipeg Free Press, 20 January 1978.

in its investigation into the acquisition and renovation of units on a non-profit basis, primarily for emergency housing.

Questions to the Committee on Environment were prepared to clarify the city's role in housing. The questions were phrased in such a way as to promote dialogue and debate. It was determined that by asking the proper questions councillors and the public would become more aware of the magnitude of the housing problem in Winnipeg. By asking questions and requiring technical responses HAC hoped to keep returning to the committee with additional questions raised by the answers. This would increase the housing workload of the committee and prove in a tangible manner the need for a separate committee and department dealing with housing.

15 May 1978 - A delegation from HAC presented several questions to the Committee on Environment concerning housing issues. The questions included requests for recent information on demolitions and closure of units due in part to the strict city by-law enforcement, the progress of the city's non-profit housing corporation, the progress of the establishment of new NIP areas in north/central Winnipeg, the status of the city's proposed data bank, and the action taken if any, on the recommendations of a provincial inquiry into land prices in and around the City of Winnipeg. In addition, questions concerning the status of a housing committee, rent de-control, and tax incentives for residential renovation similar to those for commercial renovation were posed.

During the presentation Committee Chairman Ernst was absent but returned after the delegation's time had concluded. Most councillors with the exception of Cyril Keeper (NDP-Redboine) were not supportive of the brief. Many councillors stated that housing is not a municipal responsibility. They suggested that HAC should properly be lobbying the provincial government. Commissioner Henderson was instructed to prepare a report in response to HAC's questions.<sup>8</sup>

May 1978-June 1978 - It was decided that HAC should meet with representatives of the provincial government to gain information on the fate of a provincial start-up revolving fund for the city's non-profit housing corporation promised by the previous administration. From a strategic point of view, once provincial direction had been sought the city could no longer delay pressure by shuffling HAC off onto the provincial level.

A communications committee was struck to investigate how HAC could improve its effectiveness with the media. As well HAC continued its search for suitable properties to acquire and renovate.

Commissioner Henderson's reply to HAC's questions was received in early June.

14 June 1978 - Winnipeg's City Council rejected an appeal by Joe Zukan (LEC-Norquay) to strike a housing committee.

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<sup>8</sup> Housing Action Coalition, "Minutes," Winnipeg: 425 Elgin Avenue, 19 May 1978, (Typewritten), p. 1.

22 June 1978 - A small delegation from HAC met with J. Frank Johnston and MHRC Chairman Fil Filecia. Few specifics were gained from this meeting. The province agreed that there are special housing problems in the inner city but that no action can be taken until matters of detail are forthcoming from CMHC. The Minister stated that provincial revolving funds to the city's non-profit housing corporation would be quickly depleted by acquiring less than best-buy housing. This would defeat the fund's purpose as seed money. He stated that renovation costs on deteriorated housing would be so substantial that the target population of the program would not be helped. The money would be held by the province until such time as the city demonstrated that the program will meet the needs of the target population and that the fund will indeed revolve through the sale of renovated housing.

June 1978-July 1978 - Commissioner Henderson's reply was analyzed and found to be lacking in several respects. It was decided that further study of the documents would be undertaken and alternate data secured to more strongly present a rebuttal to the Committee on Environment. The reply was also delayed until fall to take advantage of better councillor and media interest.

13 July 1978 - The Tri-Level Committee on Urban Affairs presented Plan Winnipeg to the EPC. This preliminary report outlines slow economic and population growth forecasts, rapidly rising energy costs, and an increasingly deteriorating inner city housing stock. The report notes such things as low vacancy rates, poor inner city

housing conditions, a surplus of suburban building lots, and inadequate housing direction on the part of the city (a lack of city housing policy).

14 July 1978 - Many councillors discounted Plan Winnipeg as overly pessimistic.<sup>9</sup>

July 1978-August 1978 - HAC decided that some response to the data presented in Plan Winnipeg should be made. It was determined that a brief be produced in support of the conclusion that the city needs a comprehensive housing policy. The brief, "A Response to Plan Winnipeg by the Housing Action Coalition", was sent to the manager of the Winnipeg Development Plan Review, all Tri-Level officials, all councillors, Stanley Knowles (MP for Winnipeg North), the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, the Institute of Urban Studies (IUS), and the press.

25 August 1978 - In response to growing feelings within the group that tactics other than lobbying City Council may be useful, a strategy meeting was held where goals, objectives, and future action were discussed. It was agreed that HAC is a forum for individual volunteers and not representatives of particular organizations. It was accepted that the general goal of the organization is "to bring about a housing policy adequate to the preservation of the inner

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<sup>9</sup>"Filmon Raps City Report," Winnipeg Tribune, 15 July 1978, p. 1.

city as a residential area, with . . . emphasis on the maintenance and construction of quality housing stock, particularly for low income people."<sup>10</sup> It was also resolved that HAC broaden its housing interest to include homeowners as well as tenants. From these discussions the following objectives evolved: to analyze and share available data concerning the housing problem; to educate the public about housing issues; to initiate talks with the city, provincial and federal governments about housing; to react to housing policy emanating from all three levels of government; and to react to any initiative taken on the emergency housing issue.<sup>11</sup>

13 September 1978 - Individual members of HAC participated at the Winnipeg Development Plan Review meeting concerning housing held in the City Centre/Fort Rouge Community Committee. The major concerns expressed by the public included the inefficiency of a policy of urban sprawl, a lack of city housing policy, and the lack of incentives to rehabilitate inner city residential properties.

2 October 1978 - A delegation from HAC presented a brief to the Committee on Environment noting inaccuracies and non-answers in the administration's reply to HAC's initial questions. The use of misleading housing dynamics data such as inflated housing permit figures and understated demolition figures was cited. The administration

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<sup>10</sup> Housing Action Coalition, "Minutes," Winnipeg: 185 Smith Street, 25 August 1978, (Typewritten), p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 2-3.

claimed that in 1977 there was a net gain of 675 units in the inner city. After the data had been corrected, a net gain of only 119 units could be demonstrated. Additional research by HAC uncovered that the administration had used a particularly active year in terms of starts in the inner city (1977). If figures for 1975 and 1976 are added to the revised 1977 figures, a net loss of thirty-six units is evident. In addition to the revised data the unanswered questions were again posed. Council's decision not to strike a housing committee was noted with regret especially in light of the criticisms contained in Plan Winnipeg.

Most councillors reacted unfavourably to the presentation. Chairman Ernst again raised the question of the ability of the city to subsidize rental units in the inner city and suggested that the province and developers also have no desire to build in the inner city.<sup>12</sup> Discussion concluded with no assurance that the unanswered questions would be answered. Therefore no opportunity to continue the debate strategy with the Committee on Environment was possible.

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<sup>12</sup> Rick Blanchard, "City Last of Pioneering Villages: Housing Action Coalition Slams Lack of Housing," Winnipeg Free Press, 3 October 1978.

This trend now (since the temporal boundary of this thesis) appears to be shifting; at least in the case of the private developer. At least one major Winnipeg development company, Qualico, has decided to shift some of its energy away from the suburbs to the edge of the inner city. Qualico has an option to buy 15 acres of land in St. Boniface for the purpose of developing a condominium project to meet the demand for this high income shelter option.

4-5 October 1978 - Newspaper articles highlighted the housing and social problems in the inner city. The articles entitled, "Inner City Dying As People Leave" and "Core Area Owners Paint Bad Picture," corroborated the demographic and housing statistics presented in Plan Winnipeg. Both articles pointed to a lack of city action as part of the reason for the deteriorating conditions.<sup>13</sup>

6 October 1978 - Jim Cassidy, Project Manager for the Housing and Public Review sections of the Winnipeg Development Plan Review, made a presentation to HAC regarding the progress of the plan. Optimism was expressed that the housing report, including policy, programs, and cost projections would appear before Council during the summer of 1979. Mr. Cassidy cautioned that Council opposition to increased bureaucracy would likely preclude a separate housing administration. Rather, existing personnel from related departments would be shifted to a housing division within the Department of Environmental Planning.

The Public Review team invited HAC to sit on a housing advisory committee along with the Housing and Urban Development Association of Manitoba (HUDAM), the Landlords' Association, the Co-operative Housing Association of Manitoba (CHAM), and the Associated Tenants Action Committee (ATAC). The purpose of the committee was to solicit viewpoints from many sources concerning the data and conclusions

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<sup>13</sup> Tim Harper and John Drabble, "Core Area Owners Paint Bad Picture," Winnipeg Tribune, 5 October 1978, p. 1; Susan Ruttan, "Inner City Dying As People Leave," Winnipeg Tribune, 4 October 1978, p. 1.

contained in the consultant reports. HAC agreed to send representatives.

20 October 1978 - City Council announced that there would be a special meeting to discuss matters of policy, including housing. HAC began to prepare a presentation for the meeting.

21 October 1978 - City-wide Public Review meetings for the Winnipeg Development Plan Review were cancelled due to poor attendance. Instead Resident Advisory Groups (RAGs) and special interest groups were to be consulted.

October 1978-November 1978 - HAC set its strategic lobbying targets. It was determined that HAC should, in order of priority: lobby the city in a direct and vigorous manner (initiate action), monitor and play a reactive role vis-à-vis the province, only monitor the program shifts within the federal level.<sup>14</sup>

HAC presented a written critique of a housing consultant's report to the Winnipeg Development Plan Review Advisory Committee on Housing.

30 October 1978-1 November 1978 - A series of articles appeared in the Winnipeg Free Press indicating the serious nature of physical, commercial, and social deterioration in Winnipeg's inner city.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> See Housing Action Coalition, "Minutes," Winnipeg: 425 Elgin Avenue, 3 November 1978, (Typewritten), p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> See Allan Wilson, "Rot Eating Away City's Core Area: Victim of Past Indifference," Winnipeg Free Press, 30 October 1978, p. 1; \_\_\_\_\_, "Downtown Development Moves From North Portage," Winnipeg Free Press, 31 October 1978, p. 3; \_\_\_\_\_, "Core Crying Out For Action," Winnipeg Free Press, 1 November 1978, p. 8.

2 November 1978 - The provincial government announced that it would provide \$230,000 for the first year and up to one million dollars by the end of five years as start-up funding for the city's non-profit housing corporation. The city would be required to provide \$20,000 per year to cover administration costs. The project would be operated on an experimental basis, renovating only four to six houses in the first year. The experiment would be reviewed after the first year.

3 November 1978 - The Apartment Loss Study prepared jointly by city personnel and IUS staff is released to the public. This study documents the accelerating loss of low cost housing units in the inner city. The report cites demolition and closure due to fires and stringent enforcement of city codes (fire and health) as primary reasons for the loss. Recommendations such as the institution of a demolition control by-law, low interest loans to landlords to defray the cost of meeting the orders, and a tenant relocation policy were made. The empirically proven premise of the study is that renovation of existing structures is a more cost-effective method of supplying low cost housing than building new structures.

4 November 1978 - Commissioner Henderson released a public rebuttal to the newspaper articles claiming deterioration in the core. His letter stated that there are still some pockets needing rehabilitation but that these would be reached. The commissioner remarked that physical deterioration had been successfully checked, primarily by the efforts of all levels of government. Examples of public and

private inner city revitalization over the past decade were cited such as, NIP, public housing, infill housing, Market Square, street resurfacing, the Trizec project, the new Osborne Street bridge, Lakeview Square, and so on.

6 November 1978 - The Committee on Environment heard a presentation by EPC Chairman Bob Bockstael supporting the recommendations of the Apartment Loss Study. Councillor Keeper also supported the report while other councillors, notably Committee Chairman Ernst had reservations. Action on the report was delayed until more information could be made available.

8 November 1978 - HAC made a presentation on housing prior to debate at City Council's special policy meeting. The spokesperson stated that HAC had made representation to the Commissioner of Environment, various councillors, the Mayor, the Executive Policy Committee, the Environment Committee, the provincial Minister responsible for MHRC, the Advisory Committee on Housing for the Winnipeg Development Plan Review, and now to Council. HAC called on the city to meet housing problems through the development of a comprehensive housing policy, the establishment of a separate housing committee, the institution of a demolition control by-law, a tax break for housing renovation, the immediate start-up of Winnipeg's non-profit housing corporation, and land use policy designed to preserve residential environments in the inner city. Councillors were again unenthusiastic about the recommendations. Councillor Don Gerrie (IND-Riverview) criticized the Coalition for making recommendations without supplying

programmatic details on how the city is to deal with them.<sup>16</sup> Council soon lost its quorum, but not before instructing the City Treasurer to approve the city's share of start-up funds for the non-profit corporation.

20 November 1978 - The Committee on Environment received and supported Commissioner Henderson's letter regarding inner city conditions. Committee Chairman Ernst stated that, "Some people are making this into a major issue when it is really only a minor matter."<sup>17</sup>

27 November 1978 - An article appeared in MacLean's<sup>18</sup> dealing with the problems experienced by Canadian natives in Canada's urban core areas, specifically Winnipeg and Regina. The author, Peter Carlyle-Gordge, quoting from consultant reports on housing prepared for the City of Winnipeg blamed part of the problem on the lack of a proper city housing policy. He also noted the casual official attitude at City Hall to the problem in a reference to Commissioner Henderson's letter claiming that deterioration had been arrested by public and private action.

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<sup>16</sup> Ingeborg Boyens, "Council Has Better Things To Do," Winnipeg Free Press, 9 November 1978, p. 1.

<sup>17</sup> "Civic Committee Backs Henderson On Core Area," Winnipeg Free Press, 21 November 1978, p. 11.

<sup>18</sup> Peter Carlyle-Gordge, "Wasteland . . . Canada: Our Own Urban Ghetto," MacLean's, Toronto: 27 November 1978, pp. 54-57.

29 November 1978 - On the invitation of the Tri-Level Committee reviewing the Winnipeg Development Plan, HAC presented a brief containing its housing concerns. In concert with the preliminary review data in Plan Winnipeg HAC contended that continued suburban expansion during a period of slow growth is unwise. Instead, the city should focus on an infill and rehabilitation program in the inner city. Several recommendations such as a housing policy, committee and division were offered. As well, all three levels of government were urged to step-up their housing rehabilitation programs to meaningful levels.

4 December 1978 - Discussion on The Apartment Loss Study was again delayed at Environment Committee. Despite claims by Councillor Keeper and Planning Director Roy Darke that the city must deal with the report quickly, Chairman Ernst delayed discussion an additional week to allow for more complete study on the part of the committee.

11 December 1978 - In a surprise move, Committee Chairman Ernst introduced guidelines (see Appendix B) for the city's involvement in housing to the Committee on Environment for discussion. The guidelines propose that the city assume a support role and take no action regarding the construction and rehabilitation of dwelling units. The reason for the support role is based on the city's limited tax base and current policies of fiscal restraint. The housing guidelines offer tax incentives, zoning bonuses, or seed money to private developers for the building of innovative projects, general support to fraternal non-profit projects, reaffirmation of

existing planning control, building standards, and occupancy standards, maximum city utilization of federal programs such as NIP and RRAP, encouragement of senior governments to amend their legislation to allow for increased private activity in rehabilitation programs, a request for demolition control powers, and the encouragement of public housing activity on the part of senior levels of government. The most contentious recommendations were the elimination of the city's non-profit rehabilitation corporation on the premise that it would provide only a nominal addition to the housing stock, and the continuation of the upgrading by-laws which have been responsible for the demolition and closure of 584 of the 1700 lost apartment units during 1972-1978.

The recommendations of the Apartment Loss Study were never separately discussed. Chairman Ernst stated that since the city's role is to only provide services, then only a support role in housing is a proper posture, especially in times of restraint. Mayor Robert Steen attended the meeting and voted along with Councillors Moore and O'Shaughnessy to adopt the guidelines and pass them on to Executive Policy Committee.

12 December 1978 - Councillor Bob Bockstael, prime supporter of the non-profit corporation appeared on a television interview program. The councillor stated that the ICEC and some Independents, some of whom represent real estate interests, denied the non-profit corporation because they view it as the thin edge of the wedge. The councillor claimed that not only is Council worried about further government involvement in housing, it envisages an attendant growing

housing bureaucracy.

13 December 1978 - Social agencies and groups reacted critically to the guidelines and the elimination of the non-profit rehabilitation corporation. The Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, Housing Action Coalition, the Indian Metis Friendship Centre, inner city community workers, and St. Matthews-Maryland Christian Centre all joined in condemnation of the non-policy, non-involvement approach. Representatives from individual development companies and HUDAM stated that the city's approach was positive, especially if incentives could be guaranteed in the long term.<sup>19</sup>

14 December 1978 - The Executive Policy Committee endorsed Councillor Ernst's guidelines after considerable debate. Several councillors cited examples such as spending on arenas, Grey Cup floats, as much less worthy expenditures than housing. However, the restraint argument of the majority prevailed and the guidelines were forwarded to Council with the positive recommendation of both the Executive Policy Committee and the Committee on Environment.

14-19 December 1978 - Housing Action Coalition planned its official reaction to the non-involvement guidelines. It was decided that a presentation would be made to Council. The presentation would

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<sup>19</sup> Ingeborg Boyens, "Critics Fear Housing Crisis If Civic Guidelines Adopted," Winnipeg Free Press, 13 December 1978, p. 3.

culminate in the recommendation to delay adoption of the guidelines until such time as background information and recommendations on housing from the Winnipeg Development Plan Review are forthcoming. Sympathetic councillors were contacted to ensure the motion reached the floor. In case the motion failed and the guidelines were adopted, a press release severely criticizing the city's malevolence towards the citizens of the inner city was prepared for distribution immediately following a decision.

20 December 1978 - Four delegations appeared before Council in opposition to the guidelines. Former Councillor Ken Wong appealed to Council to retain the non-profit corporation on the grounds that it would be a cost-effective method of aiding the troubled inner city. The Director of the Indian Metis Friendship Centre cited the housing question as the most serious problem facing native people in the inner city. He stated that the elimination of the non-profit housing corporation would only aggravate the problems of the core. The North Point Douglas Neighbourhood Improvement Committee appeared in support of the non-profit corporation and noted that restraint is not something that can be "extracted from rich and poor equally."<sup>20</sup> Housing Action Coalition stated that it was unintelligible to produce guidelines in the absence of a housing policy. As well, it was stated that any decision made without vital information was an act of

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<sup>20</sup> Dudley Thompson on behalf of the North Point Douglas NIP Committee, "Re: The Elimination Of The Winnipeg Non-Profit Housing Corporation," 20 December 1978, (Mimeographed), p. 2.

bad faith on the part of Council to the citizens of Winnipeg and a rebuff to all those who have participated in the Winnipeg Development Plan Review process. HAC recommended that any decision be delayed subject to further information from the Development Plan Review (the text of the brief is presented below). All delegations were silently received and no questions from councillors were forthcoming.

PRESENTATION TO  
WINNIPEG CITY COUNCIL  
BY  
HOUSING ACTION COALITION  
DECEMBER 20, 1978

IT IS WITH SHOCK AND AMAZEMENT THAT HOUSING ACTION COALITION FINDS ITSELF ADDRESSING YOU THIS EVENING.

WE HAVE ADDRESSED THIS COUNCIL AND THE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND THE EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE OVER A PERIOD OF MORE THAN EIGHTEEN MONTHS. WE HAVE DONE SO WITH THE HOPE THAT A COMPREHENSIVE HOUSING POLICY COULD, AND WOULD, BE ADOPTED BY THE CITY OF WINNIPEG. WE HAVE URGED, PRODDED, AND BEGGED, FOR THAT HOUSING POLICY.

HOUSING ACTION COALITION IS A CITIZEN'S GROUP THAT HAS ATTEMPTED TO ADDRESS THE CITY OF WINNIPEG AND REQUEST A POLICY ON HOUSING. WE ARE NOT OWNERS OF DEVELOPMENT PROPERTY, NOR DO WE BUY OR SELL SUCH PROPERTY, NOR DO WE HAVE ANY FINANCIAL INTEREST IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY. OUR CONCERN IS WITH THE VIABILITY OF THE CITY OF WINNIPEG AND THE REAL COSTS, BOTH ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMICAL, TO ALL OF ITS CITIZENS, IF DECISIONS ARE MADE WITHOUT A COMPREHENSIVE HOUSING POLICY BEING ESTABLISHED. WE ARE CERTAIN THAT THE CITIZENS' OF WINNIPEG EXPECT POLICY TO BE FORMULATED BY ALL MEMBERS OF COUNCIL AND THAT THE CITIZENS' OF WINNIPEG EXPECT POLICY TO BE FORMULATED WITH THE NECESSARY STUDY AND EFFORT THAT WILL PRODUCE A BALANCED POLICY.

IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT SUCH INFORMATION WILL SOON BE MADE AVAILABLE. BOTH THE SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL AND THE INSTITUTE OF URBAN STUDIES HAVE COMPILED STATISTICS AND DEMOGRAPHIC DATA WHICH COULD AND SHOULD AFFECT DECISION MAKING. ALONG WITH THESE STUDIES, THERE IS YOUR OWN "PLAN WINNIPEG".

THE HOUSING ACTION COALITION STATED THAT THERE WAS A CLEAR NEED FOR POLICY STATEMENTS ON HOUSING AS A RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CITY AND THAT THIS POLICY SHOULD LEAD TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMITTEE ON HOUSING WHICH WOULD ADDRESS THE ISSUE IN A WHOLISTIC

HOUSING ACTION COALITION

DECEMBER 20, 1978

MANNER. THE STAND TAKEN BY HOUSING ACTION COALITION INDICATED OUR RECOGNITION OF THE NEED FOR SPECIAL ACTION IN RELATION TO THE CORE OF THE CITY, BUT ALSO OUR RECOGNITION OF THE NEED FOR HOUSING POLICIES WHICH WOULD TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION ALL OF THE CITY. OUR VIEWS ADDRESS BOTH OWNERS AND TENANTS, AND AFFECTED LANDLORDS, PROPERTY TAX CONCESSIONS, AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATION, THE VIABILITY OF NEIGHBORHOODS AND THE ECONOMIC BASE OF THE COMMUNITY. ALL OF OUR STATEMENTS WERE PRECEDED BY A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF A NEED FOR A DATA BASE, FOR INFORMATION ABOUT PEOPLE AND THEIR LIVING STYLES AND FOR THE PARTICULAR NEEDS OF LOW-INCOME RESIDENTS.

AND YET!, LAST WEEK ALL OF US WERE SURPRISED WHEN THE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT PUT FORTH, AND I QUOTE; "GUIDELINES FOR HOUSING INVOLVEMENT BY THE CITY OF WINNIPEG". HOUSING ACTION COALITION HAS BEEN TOLD TIME AND AGAIN BY MEMBERS OF COUNCIL THAT THERE IS NO INTEREST ON THE PART OF COUNCIL TO ESTABLISH A HOUSING POLICY. THE VERY RECENT COUNCIL MEETING SET ASIDE FOR POLICY DISCUSSION HAD INSUFFICIENT MEMBERS PRESENT TO ENABLE DISCUSSION ON HOUSING WHEN IT CAME UP ON THE AGENDA.

WE NOW LEARN THAT A MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, WHICH HAD AS AN AGENDA ITEM; "THE TENANT RELOCATION STUDY AND APARTMENT LOSS STUDY", WAS RADICALLY ALTERED BY COUNCILOR ERNST, ITS CHAIRMAN. COUNCILOR ERNST INTERRUPTED THIS AGENDA IN ORDER TO RECOMMEND TO THE EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE, AND TO CITY COUNCIL, A SET OF HOUSING GUIDELINES. YOUR WORSHIP, YOU ALSO THOUGHT IT WAS IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE.

WE FIND IT AN UNINTELLIGIBLE PROCEDURE FOR THE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND THE EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE TO PRODUCE GUIDELINES ON HOUSING WHERE THERE IS NO COMPREHENSIVE HOUSING POLICY ESTABLISHED. WE FIND IT AN UNINTELLIGIBLE PROCEDURE TO PRODUCE GUIDELINES JUST TEN SHORT WEEKS PRIOR TO THE FULL REPORT ON HOUSING BEING READY FROM "PLAN WINNIPEG". WE SEE NO RATIONALE FOR GUIDELINES BEING DEVELOPED BY SOME MEMBERS OF COUNCIL AT THIS TIME, WHEN COUNCIL

HOUSING ACTION COALITION

DECEMBER 20, 1978

HAS NO CLEAR HOUSING POLICY, WHEN COUNCIL HAS REQUESTED, BUT NOT YET RECEIVED THE NECESSARY DATA TO FORMULATE A POLICY, AND WHEN THAT DATA WILL BE PRESENTED WITHIN ONLY TEN WEEKS. THESE HURRIDLY PRODUCED GUIDELINES, HAVE TO BE CONSIDERED SUSPECT BY ALL CITIZENS OF WINNIPEG. WE ARE SURE THAT MANY COUNCILORS ARE WONDERING WHERE THESE GUIDELINES ARE COMING FROM AND ALSO MANY COUNCILORS ARE WONDERING WHY THEY ARE PRESENTED NOW. ONCE "PLAN WINNIPEG" IS PRESENTED WE ARE CONVINCED THAT EVEN THE COUNCILORS THAT ARE CURRENTLY SUPPORTING ALL OF THE GUIDELINES WILL CHANGE THEIR OPINION ON ONE OR MORE OF THESE GUIDELINES, SINCE THEY WILL RECEIVE THE RECOMMENDATION WITH SUPPORTING DATA FROM "PLAN WINNIPEG".

YOUR WORSHIP, THE CITIZEN'S OF WINNIPEG HAVE BEEN ASKED BY COUNCIL TO PARTICIPATE IN A LOOK TOWARDS THE FUTURE. THEY HAVE BEEN ASKED TO PLAN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS OF POLICY FOR THEIR CITY. THE CITIZEN'S HAVE PARTICIPATED. COUNCIL OWES THE CITIZENS A WILLINGNESS TO LISTEN. IF COUNCIL ADOPTS THESE GUIDELINES NOW, IT IS AS IF COUNCIL INVITED THE CITIZEN'S OF WINNIPEG TO A MEETING, BUT DID NOT COME ITSELF.

COUNCIL MUST RESPECT ITS OWN PROCESSES, AND THEREFORE TABLE THESE GUIDELINES UNTIL THE REPORTS FROM "PLAN WINNIPEG" AND SUPPORTING DATA CAN GIVE YOU THE INPUT OF ADMINISTRATION, THE INPUT OF CONSULTANTS, AND THE INPUT OF CITIZEN'S OF WINNIPEG. THE ADOPTION OF THESE GUIDELINES AT THIS TIME WOULD THWART THIS PROCESS. IT WOULD BE LIKE BUILDING A HOUSE ON THE ICE OF LAKE WINNIPEG IN DECEMBER ONLY TO FIND IN MARCH OR APRIL YOU WOULD LIKE TO CHANGE THE LOCATION.

YOUR WORSHIP, HOUSING ACTION COALITION FINDS ITSELF IN AN AMAZING POSITION. WE URGED THE COUNCIL TO FORM A RESPONSIBLE HOUSING POLICY AND FEEL THAT THE ONLY WAY TO ACCOMPLISH THIS IS TO REQUEST THAT YOU DELAY ADOPTION OF THESE GUIDELINES, WHICH ARE NOT BASED ON A COMPREHENSIVE HOUSING POLICY. WE REQUEST THIS DELAY FULLY CONFIDENT THAT THE COUNCILORS, UPON RECEIPT AND CONSIDERATION OF ADEQUATE INFORMATION, WILL COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT A COMPREHENSIVE HOUSING



HOUSING ACTION COALITION

DECEMBER 20, 1978

POLICY THAT IS BASED ON RELEVANT DATA SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED BEFORE THESE EXTREMELY WEAK AND IRRESPONSIBLE GUIDELINES ARE CONSIDERED.

HOUSING ACTION COALITION EXPECTS THAT ONE COUNCILOR WILL MORE, AND ANOTHER WILL SECOND, A MOTION TO TABLE THIS RECOMMENDATION AND ITS GUIDELINES FROM THE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, AND THE EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE UNTIL SUCH TIME AS "PLAN WINNIPEG" IS BEFORE YOU.

Councillor Ernst began the debate in support of the recommendations contained in the guidelines. He presented a set of figures which indicated that families earning less than \$10,000 would have to pay more than twenty-five percent of their income for shelter under the non-profit program.<sup>21</sup> Councillor Ernst concluded that since the program would not meet the needs of the target population it should be eliminated. In addition he stated that if the program included a rental component, which it did not, that the costs to government would be higher due to maintenance expenditure and the monthly cost to the renter would be still greater than twenty-five percent of income. No rental examples were produced. He did not mention CMHC's interest rate write-down for non-profit rental units which would bring the cost to renters in line with twenty-five percent of income at no extra cost to city government.

The debate focused on the non-profit elimination clause with most councillors lining up on the side of restraint and the dissenting group arguing on the basis of housing needs. Councillor Frank Johnson (Ind-Memorial) and Councillor Keeper moved that the guidelines be referred back to the Committee on Environment pending further information from the Development Plan Review (HAC's clause). The

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<sup>21</sup>J. A. Ernst, "Non-Profit Housing Corporation," Tabled at City Council, 20 December 1978, (Mimeographed), p. 1.

motion was lost in a voice vote.<sup>22</sup> It was determined that clause six of the guidelines (non-profit elimination clause) be dealt with separately. Voting in favour of elimination of the non-profit were Mayor Robert Steen, Councillors Angus, Ernst, Filmon, Gerrie, Hudson, Leech, McGarva, McGonigal, Moore, Nordman, O'Shaughnessy, Piercy, Provost, Ragsdill, Rizzuto, Ross, and Yanofsky (eighteen). Voting against the clause were Councillors Bockstael, Chornopyski, Ducharme, Johnson, Jorowski, Keeper, Norrie, Skowron, Smith, Wade, Westbury, and Zuken (twelve). Councillors Bockstael and Chornopyski moved that action on the balance of the guidelines be delayed until Plan Winnipeg is before Council. This motion was also lost in a voice vote. A motion for the adoption of the balance of the guidelines was put and carried by a vote of nineteen to eleven. Only Councillor Don Smith (ICEC Caucus Chairman-Pembina) changed his position from the previous vote.

Immediately following the vote, representatives of HAC released the following statement to the press:

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<sup>22</sup>The City of Winnipeg has no voting machine. A recorded vote is taken only when requested by a councillor. Therefore it is very difficult to determine accountability on many issues.

PRESS RELEASE OF HOUSING ACTION COALITION

Dec. 20th, 1978

Housing Action Coalition wishes to state its complete disapproval of the action by city council this evening in adopting the recommendations pertaining to housing guidelines.

**The Guidelines:**

1. constitute abdication of real responsibility for housing in Winnipeg.
  2. completely ignore the problems of the inner city.
  3. show contempt for the process of data gathering and community input that has been going on under the auspices of the 'Winnipeg Development Plan Review, the City's own agency.
    1. The City has abdicated responsibility just when it sorely needed to fill the gap created by retreating provincial and federal interest in housing. Its call on senior levels of government rings hollow when one considers that everyone knows these governments are not interested in the promotion of needed housing. This is nothing but "buck passing" of the most callous and useless kind. Housing Action has repeatedly called for the City to take a more active role in the provision of housing. With the adoption of these recommendations Council will kill what little involvement it did have by scrapping the city's non profit housing corporation. Furthermore, arguments from economic restraint are simply not convincing in light of revenue forfeited by the City on amusement tax exemptions in order to please the owners of the Winnipeg Jets, and the continuing lack of will to tax land speculation profits. Council has chosen, it has not been forced, to abandon housing concerns. It cannot hide behind necessity.
    2. The guidelines do not even mention the inner city, or any policy designed to address the special and increasing problems of Winnipeg's core area. Instead, they leave the future of the inner city up to the choices of private investment. This will not work. The private sector, by its own criteria, cannot be expected to invest significantly in high risk areas such as the inner city.
    3. Council is demonstrating unfortunate contempt for the Winnipeg Development Plan Review process and for community input in general. Members of the public and groups like Housing Action Coalition have presented their concerns to the Winnipeg Development Plan Review in good faith, believing that their view would be heard. This is not so. The adoption of these guidelines before the completion of the data gathering and the community input process, is not only a stupid mistake, but a slap in the face to a public grown weary of a council that continues to act only in the interests of the few, and ignores those who have nothing but the interests of the community at heart.
- Winnipeg city council, instead of showing moral and political leadership, has said "us too" to the present trend of government inactivity and irresponsibility. It is a sad day for our city.

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Summary

Housing Action Coalition is a volunteer group of individuals who have attempted to pressure all levels of government into adopting positive policy measures to alleviate the deterioration of housing conditions in Winnipeg's inner city. Concentrating on the City of Winnipeg, HAC has presented briefs and reports to the Commissioner of Environment, the City Council, the Executive Policy Committee, the Committee on Environment, the Winnipeg Development Plan Review and various individual city councillors. For all its activity and energy HAC has accomplished very little in the way of positive policy changes. The Council meeting of 20 December 1978 represented a defeat of HAC's lobbying attempts. Since that time HAC has made few major initiatives and is in danger of collapse in the face of a stubborn opposition bloc on City Council.

## CHAPTER III

### THE HOUSING CONTEXT AND HOUSING ACTION COALITION

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the housing context in order to more clearly understand HAC's own interpretation of the housing question. The housing context will first be discussed in general theoretical terms in an attempt to uncover the structural underpinnings of housing within the existing dominant mode of production. This will be followed by an examination of the more problematical manifestations of the inner city of Winnipeg specifically. The final section will examine Housing Action Coalition's analysis of the housing problem within the City of Winnipeg.

#### The Housing Question

The housing question cannot be adequately stated without reference to the existing dominant mode of production or capitalism in its late or advanced stages. The production of housing is part of the production of space through the process of urbanization under capitalism. The net effect of this production of space is concentration and organization of the labour force in specific sites in order to meet the imperative of economic growth or capital accumulation. The city or metropolis is the physical form of this concentration and the production of its spatial elements housing,

industry, commercial buildings is subject to the logic of the process of accumulation of capital.

Richard Child Hill states that, the accumulation process necessary to sustain the dominant economic system, requires four major conditions: 1) a specific investment of part of the surplus or profit in new means of production; 2) the production and distribution of commodities to sustain and replace or reproduce the work force; 3) the creation of a solvent or effective demand; 4) increasing economic growth, market penetration, and product innovation to stimulate additional capital formation. In the city these requirements manifest themselves as production sites, reproduction sites or neighbourhoods and communities, markets to facilitate the distribution of products and the realization of profit, and sites and systems of control to manage the interrelationships.<sup>1</sup>

The housing focus of this thesis demands that one small part of the accumulation process be examined more closely; namely the production and distribution of the commodity, housing. Housing is a crucial facet of the reproduction of the labour force. Adequate shelter is necessary for the replication and support of human life. In order to meet this basic human need housing must be produced. The production of housing like all other goods produced under capitalism is in the form of a marketable commodity.

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<sup>1</sup>Richard Child Hill, "Fiscal Crisis and Political Struggle in the Decaying U.S. Central City," Kapitalistate, no. 4-5 (1976), p. 31.

David Harvey, in Social Justice and the City uses the concepts of use value and exchange value to explain the peculiarities of housing as a commodity. Use value means the valuation of a good based on individual social needs, life-styles and habits, whereas exchange values refers to the valuation of an item through the process of the market exchange system. Harvey outlines six features of the unique commodity of housing:

- (i) land and fixtures such as housing are fixed in terms of location. Therefore, the owner possesses monopoly control over the use of the land through the institutionalized private property system;
- (ii) No individual can exist without occupying land and shelter. Demand for these commodities is always guaranteed;
- (iii) Housing and land take the form of a commodity and are exchanged very infrequently. This frequency of exchange is different for each sector of the housing market. For example, rental housing realizes exchange value more often than owner-occupied housing;
- (iv) Land and housing are durable goods and therefore provide the opportunity to store wealth in the form of assets. These goods have current and future use and exchange values;
- (v) Use values of both housing and land extend over a considerable time span whereas exchange value is realized quickly, hence the low frequency of exchange. This infrequency demands substantial capital expenditure. Consequently, finance capital plays a major role in the market;
- (vi) use values of housing are different for each individual.

depending on their position in the life-cycle and individual social need.<sup>2</sup>

Harvey points out that realization of use value and exchange value is different for each actor within the housing market. The owner/occupiers of housing gain use value through the expenditure of exchange value. Tenants may be less concerned about maintenance of the dwelling since exchange value is ultimately captured by the landlord. Hence, landlords enter the housing market with exchange value as their motive. Realtors gain exchange value through the volume of sales. This sales volume in turn constitutes the use value of housing to the realtor. Developers realize exchange values through the creation of new housing or use values. Consequently developers have promoted growth in terms of suburbanization and high-rise to ensure the continuance of this process. Finance capital procures exchange values by financing the means of creating use values. These financial decisions, based on profit and risk minimization greatly affect distribution of the housing commodity.<sup>3</sup>

The production of housing is subject to the demands for use value and the ability of the housing industry to convert them into exchange values. In the market situation only those use values which can be converted will be met. Since the system is powered by the

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<sup>2</sup>David Harvey, Social Justice and the City, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), pp. 157-160.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 163-165.

logic of profit, only effective or solvent demand will be taken into account. Consequently the perfect functioning of the housing market assumes the existence of solvent demand for all individuals. This would necessitate that the labour market provide all workers with sufficient income to enter the housing market. Since housing costs are reflected in the nature of housing as a commodity, a necessary durable good in a fixed location consumed over substantial periods of time, they tend to be fixed or inflexible. Therefore, if the labour market declines or cannot supply sufficient income, housing costs will eat up a larger share of disposable income of the worker.

The assumption of a labour market which supplies a sufficient level of income for all to enter the housing market is not based in reality. The labour market is predicated on the existence of a surplus reserve of workers which guarantees that wages remain moderately low and surplus value remains adequate for continued reinvestment and accumulation. Indeed, as Stone points out, this contradiction between the labour market and the housing market is unresolvable under capitalism.<sup>4</sup> The labour market attempts to maintain as low wages as possible while the housing market requires profit maximization through as high prices as possible. If everyone were guaranteed sufficient wages to enter the housing market the result would be no unemployment, loss of control over labour, decline

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<sup>4</sup> Michael Stone, "The Housing Crisis, Mortgage Lending, and Class Struggle," Radical Geography, ed. Richard Peet (Chicago: Maaroufa Press, 1977), p. 145.

in profits taken up by wages, lower investment, reduced production, and consequently the breakdown of the labour market. Similarly, if house prices were reduced to levels so that all could secure shelter, prices and land values would have to be drastically reduced, so much so that investment in housing would cease, leading to the breakdown of the housing market.

Not only is there a contradiction between the labour market and housing market concerning housing provision for all, there is a fundamental contradiction within the housing market itself. As indicated by Engels in The Housing Question and Harvey in Social Justice and the City, the housing shortage in terms of quality and quantity is no accident.<sup>5</sup> Rather, it is the powering force of the housing market in a capitalist economy. Scarcity and the continuance of scarcity must be supported or the housing market would crumble from lack of investment. As the productive capacity of capital becomes more powerful, new forms of scarcity creating mechanisms must be found. In the housing market the creation of needs, conscious deterioration of housing stock, and limiting of actual supply through the oligopolistic position of development corporations are perhaps the three most prevalent forms. As well, finance capital funds only those economic sectors which provide the least risk and the

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<sup>5</sup> See Frederick Engels, The Housing Question, (New York: International Publishers, 1935), p. 47; Harvey, Social Justice and the City, p. 139.

maximum return. Therefore, only certain solvent segments of the housing market receive financial support. Scarcity like the current ethic of restraint cannot be exacted equally across all income levels. Consequently, housing crises hit hardest at those with the greatest need - low income individuals and families.

Housing production in a market economy cannot by its own logic meet the needs of the low income or surplus strata of the work force. Housing production only meets solvent or effective demand. As housing prices and rents rise relative to income, housing consumption in terms of space and quality diminishes but never ceases. Over-crowding and substandard dwellings for the poor are a result of this phenomenon. As Engels noted, when bad housing conditions become widespread the seeds of discontent are sown presenting a threat to the existing social order.

On the other side of the coin, if consumption declines in reaction to price the ability to accumulate capital is not enhanced. Consumption must always continue apace for the healthy operation of the market. Increasing demand and consumption are needed to power the system. However a functional gap exists in the market in terms of meeting low income housing demands. As prices and profit have increased this gap has grown wider leaving an increasing population unable to enter the housing market which in turn lowers the rate of consumption.

Although capitalism has not been able to resolve the contradiction . . . , it has not been able to ignore the contradiction either, because it undermines the housing market and is a potential political threat to the orderly functioning of the system. Thus over the

past half century it has become increasingly necessary for the capitalist state . . . to intervene in the housing sector in order to try to manage the contradiction in the interests of the capitalist class.<sup>6</sup>

This intervention by government or the role of the state will be discussed at length in the next chapter. It is enough to say that this incursion into the market usually entails an intervention through subsidies to capital and the direct construction of low rental units on the supply side, and through the extension of credit to create and deepen the income penetration of solvent demand on the demand side. This action by the state serves the dual purpose of aiding capital accumulation through supports to the market (provision of infrastructure, subsidies, and credit for the work force) and social control by temporarily filling the functional gap with low income housing, thereby quieting dissent (public housing and increased worker debt load credit schemes).

Thus, housing as a commodity within advanced capitalism can be typified as a tension between the housing market, the labour market and the interventions of the state. These tensions gain spatial expression within the urban system as housing problems or housing issues. Therefore, housing issues are only symptoms of the underlying root cause or contradictions inherent in the production of housing within the capitalist mode of production.

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<sup>6</sup> Stone, "The Housing Crisis, Mortgage Lending, and Class Struggle," Radical Geography, p. 151.

Having presented the unique features of housing as a commodity, a brief examination of the spatial manifestation of this commodity resulting from the process of urbanization is necessary. Reacting to the housing shortage following World War II the Canadian state underwrote the risk of mortgages to both builders and consumers of housing. This attempt to stimulate the economy through the production of housing greatly boosted solvent demand and was one of the prime factors leading to suburbanization. The removal of risk from mortgages provided finance capital with a safe investment in times of high solvent demand. The state stimulated demand, coupled with the technology of pre-fabrication, led to the appearance of the highly integrated property development corporation.<sup>7</sup> These oligopolistic entities required huge tracts of developable land to realize their economies of scale. The greatest supply of vacant and also cheapest land existed on the periphery of cities. In addition, the wide general acceptance and use of the private automobile, coupled with state supported urban transportation expenditures in such areas as suburban arterial links and public transit extensions,

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<sup>7</sup> For two different approaches to this question see Ruben Bellan, Report and Recommendations of the Winnipeg Land Prices Commission, (Winnipeg: Department of Urban Affairs, Province of Manitoba, 1977); and John Sewell, "John Sewell on the Suburbs," City Magazine 2 (January 1977).

greatly bolstered suburban profitability for these development corporations.<sup>8</sup> This ability to accumulate capital in this market has caused suburban housing to become the dominant form within the spatial structure of cities. However, the success of capital in utilizing this dominant form of housing has not been without its social and economic costs to the consumers of suburban housing - the working class.

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<sup>8</sup> The energy crisis seems to be bringing the era of suburban hegemony to an end. The desire to lower fuel expenditures has re-opened the market for lands closer to the centres of cities. Higher density alternatives to the energy inefficient suburban-type bungalow are well suited to the infill building technique necessary in inner city situations. As well, as transportation costs increase, the desire and demand for inner city accommodation will also increase.

However, this trend is not without its social costs. In a competition for inner city lands, it will be the upper income market that will be served first. There is a real possibility of social dislocation as established neighbourhoods undergo substantial social and economic change. There will also be the inevitable displacement of lower income groups as higher income groups replace existing populations in order to capitalize on lower energy costs.

If Winnipeg gains access to the lands used by the railways (CPR railyards and CN east yards) the massive social disruption may be alleviated somewhat. However, if Winnipeg's growth and economy continue to slow and decline these projects are unlikely to commence in the foreseeable future. Instead, what is likely to occur is a development pattern of invasion-succession, where upper income groups occupy previously undesirable inner city areas.

At the most elementary level, this whole domestic world was built on borrowed money and the chronic indebtedness tied individuals into the job market and into society in general in a most repressive way. Any major deviation or failure of individuals to conform could immediately be countered by withdrawal of access to consumer credit. Mass consumption also meant mass dependency upon the economic and cultural rules of the financial institutions.<sup>9</sup>

This dominant form of production has also had grave consequences for the inner city or core areas of many North American cities. When the housing market became more profitable in the suburbs, with the state supports of risk-free financing and infrastructure such as roads and schools, capital flowed out of inner city markets to the suburban ring. According to the filtering down theory, as the more affluent members of society moved from inner city residences to houses in the suburbs, the vacated inner city houses were made available to the lower income strata. However, the theory fails due to the inaccurate assumption of universal upward mobility. Instead what is observed are segments of non-upwardly mobile lower to middle income groups unable to improve their housing conditions. For this segment of society, the operation of capital flows in and out of the inner city delivers a one-two punch. This strata suffers from the neglect

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<sup>9</sup> Manuel Castells, The Urban Question, (London: Edward Arnold Publishers, 1977), p. 388.

Castells is not only talking about the debt caused by financing the house, he is also referring to the debt caused by the purchase of all the individualized commodities that are thought necessary to supply and service the shelter, e.g., stove, fridge, lawnmower, etc. For further explanation of this point see Manuel Castells, "The Wild City," Kapitalistate no. 4-5, (1976), pp. 6-7.

of the inner city on the part of forces of capital, in terms of deteriorating physical conditions, especially older housing. On the other hand, this same population is most vulnerable to the presence and re-emergence of the forces of capital in pockets of the inner city, in terms of such projects as high-density redevelopment, condominium conversion, prestige renovation, and commercial/office expansion.

Financial institutions' refusal to fund certain 'high risk' inner city areas further aggravates the situation. Private mortgage money is often beyond the means of all but landlords and individual homeowners willing to accept the excessive interest rates. Contrary to popular belief many inner city landlords are not reaping huge profits despite high rents relative to income. In fact only a barely sufficient cash flow is maintained in certain cases.<sup>10</sup> Sternlieb and Castells note that some inner city units have to be devalued or deteriorated by overcrowding and undermaintenance to ensure that low income levels may be reached and cash flow maintained.

Not only housing capital, but commercial and industrial capital flows to the suburbs in the form of shopping centres and industrial

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<sup>10</sup> Financing and cash flow difficulties of the small landlord have been documented in the Winnipeg case in the Apartment Loss Study, prepared for the Committee on Environment in October 1978. For a more detailed explanation of profits from low income rental units, see George Sternlieb, The Tenement Landlord, (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1969).

parks. Many former inner city employment opportunities are relocated, as are the more upwardly mobile skilled workers. Invariably the inner city becomes the reception area for low skilled and surplus labour. As well, racial minorities such as natives and immigrants, are funneled to the low cost but often low quality housing of the inner city as a result of either inadequate income or discrimination. Racial discrimination or as Harvey terms it "race over price" denies quality housing to many members of minority groups, although they may have sufficient means to enter the housing market.

What was occasion for profit for capital in the suburbs was cause for impoverishment in the inner city . . . put another way, a high rate of investment in the suburbs was structurally related to a high rate of disinvestment in the inner cities. Both were produced by the domination of the capitalist interests which affected differentially the various segments of social classes.<sup>11</sup>

Consequently, the spatial form of housing as a commodity typically is experienced through the relative differences in housing quality and quantity between suburban and inner city areas. This is not due to any liberal notion of tastes or preferences. Rather, it is the inevitable consequence of state supported urbanization within monopoly capitalism.

#### The Housing Question In The Winnipeg Situation

This section will outline the housing situation within the City of Winnipeg, depicting the general city-wide conditions and then

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<sup>11</sup> Castells, The Urban Question, pp. 390-391.

focusing on conditions within the inner city.

The housing situation in Winnipeg, like the general case, cannot be adequately understood without examining its relationship with the capitalist mode of production. After World War II Winnipeg experienced a substantial growth rate in the suburban areas and an accelerating decline in the relative and actual growth and quality of life of the central city. This trend in urbanization is due to the flow of private and public capital from the inner city to the suburbs.

Between 1946 and 1976 the population of the city has increased 75 percent, from 320,500 to 560,000 persons. While the inner city area has remained stable, and in recent years lost population, the suburbs have more than tripled.<sup>12</sup> Recently, Winnipeg's population has grown less than one percent over the past five years. If the declining trend continues population loss may be experienced. With such a slow growth rate Winnipeg's recent housing demand seems to be attributable to a high rate of household formation (3.9 percent during 1971-1976) compared to the Canadian average (2.7 percent for the same period).<sup>13</sup> Most of this demand for housing is focused on the suburban areas.

Finance capital in the form of mortgage lenders are very active in the suburban area of the city. It is apparent that there is an

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<sup>12</sup> Winnipeg Tri-Level Committee on Urban Affairs, Urban Growth Management, (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Development Plan Review, 1977), p. 10.

<sup>13</sup> Housing, (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Development Plan Review, 1978), p. 20.

abundance of capital available for suburban residential construction.

All primary lenders such as banks, trusts, and credit unions have locations in Winnipeg and the financial market is very competitive, given the increase in mortgage investment due to current high interest rates. However, there are certain high risk areas in the inner city in which mortgage companies are hesitant to lend. This phenomenon will be dealt with in more detail later in this chapter.

The ability of financial institutions and development companies to make considerable gains in the suburbs is evidenced by the fact that the overwhelming majority of new construction occurs in the suburban areas.

Currently just over 7,000 dwelling units are being constructed annually in Winnipeg, the majority of which are being located in the suburbs. Of the 3,300 single-detached and single-attached units being constructed, approximately 97 per cent are located in the suburbs while of the 3,500 apartment units only about 1,100 units (or 31 per cent) are constructed in the inner city, the remaining 2,400 being built in the suburbs.<sup>14</sup>

The dominance of suburban construction is likely to continue in the short-term, given two other important factors; the willingness of the city government to support the suburban market and the predominance of corporate ownership of developable lands on the periphery. The city in its zeal for growth based on the premise of increased tax revenues, has approved 24,700 units, sufficient to meet demands until 1984.<sup>15</sup> In addition, there are more than enough

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<sup>14</sup> Committee on Urban Affairs, Urban Growth Management, p. 28.

<sup>15</sup> Peter Barnard Associates, City of Winnipeg Housing Study Phase I, (Winnipeg: October 1978), p. 7.

existing or planned services to meet demand to the year 2000. The city has 6,200 acres with services in ground and an additional 4,400 acres budgeted for regional servicing for a total of 10,600 acres. This represents an excess of 1,760 acres beyond the servicing requirements projected to 1999.<sup>16</sup>

As well, development corporations have a vested interest in continued suburban growth. Four large development corporations own 32 percent of the developable land, most of which is "close to the presently built-up area and . . . eligible for development within the next ten years or so."<sup>17</sup> In order for developers to realize the return on investment in these lands suburban construction must continue.<sup>18</sup>

The success of this government supported accumulation of finance and development capital can be witnessed by the healthy state of the

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>17</sup> Bellan, Report and Recommendations, p. 52.

<sup>18</sup> The energy crisis may soon change the trend of continued suburban expansion. While the large development companies will bear the cost of holding peripheral land and concentrate within the built-up area, smaller builders will fold under the weight of carrying costs of any land inventory and inadequate cash flow to purchase expensive redevelopment properties. This may lead to further vertical integration in the development industry as small builders and firms are squeezed out of the market.

suburban market relative to other housing markets<sup>19</sup> (see Table 1).

TABLE 1

HOUSING MARKET ACTIVITY IN WINNIPEG  
AVERAGE ANNUAL CHANGE 1973 - 1977

Area	Sales	Prices
Suburban Fringe	18%	19%
Mature Ring	14%	12%
Inner City	4%	14%

SOURCE: Peter Barnard and Associates, Winnipeg Housing Study: Policy Recommendations, (9 January 1979), p. 4.

The success of capital accumulation in the suburbs has been matched by decline in the inner city in terms of population, employment and housing conditions. The inner city of Winnipeg has lost population from 1941 to 1971 (2.3 percent). This population loss has mushroomed from 1971 to 1976 (15 percent). The total loss of population in the inner city for the period 1941 to 1976 was 29 percent.<sup>20</sup> The incidence of families in the inner city has decreased

<sup>19</sup> Since 1977, house prices throughout the City of Winnipeg have stabilized and are now beginning to decline along with the growth rate.

<sup>20</sup> Stewart Clatworthy, Sybil Frenette, and Christine McKee, "Inner City Housing Study," (Winnipeg: Draft report prepared by the Institute of Urban Studies, January, 1979), p. 12.

16.5 percent from 1971 to 1976.<sup>21</sup> While the total population of the inner city is declining a variety of sub-groups are experiencing increases in population. Of the total number of inner city families in 1976 (4,190 families) 18 percent were single parent families.

This represents a 3 percent increase from 1971 to 1976.<sup>22</sup> The elderly in the inner city have also increased in population relative to the rest of the city. Perhaps the fastest growing population group in the inner city are native people. The numbers of native people represent 22 percent of the total inner city population and are estimated to be growing at 3 to 4 percent per year. Single parent families, the elderly, and native people are also more likely to suffer from income problems and housing problems for reasons of place in the life-cycle, health, and discrimination.<sup>23</sup>

Not only has the inner city experienced population decline, it has also experienced a decline in employment opportunities.

Whereas the majority of employment was once located in the central area, many jobs are now located in suburban industrial parks. The proportion of jobs in the

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>23</sup>Since the 1976 Census much upper income high-rise apartment construction has occurred within certain pockets of the inner city. This new construction geared toward the singles market may result in an increase in the population of different sub-groups than those reported above.

inner city is 47 per cent of the total employment, down from 71.4 per cent in 1946.<sup>24</sup>

This fact coupled with the increase in the numbers of those groups who face employment difficulties due to discrimination (single parent families, the elderly, and native people) indicates the potential for increasing income problems for many inner city residents. In fact, Winnipeg's inner city population is currently experiencing significant income difficulties. In 1976 Winnipeg's inner city had the second highest proportion of unemployed compared to all other major Canadian inner cities (see Table 2).

TABLE 2

## UNEMPLOYMENT IN MAJOR CANADIAN CITIES 1976

City	Inner City	CMA
Edmonton	6%	4%
Halifax	8%	7%
Montreal	7%	6%
Ottawa-Hull	7%	6%
Quebec City	8%	7%
Regina	5%	3%
St. John's	13%	10%
Toronto	7%	6%
Vancouver	17%	8%
Winnipeg	15%	5%

SOURCE: Census Canada 1976, From "Inner City Housing Study," (IUS, January 1979), p. 24.

<sup>24</sup> Winnipeg Tri-Level Committee on Urban Affairs, Urban Growth Management, p. 16.

The shift in public and private investment, population, and employment opportunities from the inner city to suburban areas has had an increasing negative influence on housing in the inner city in terms of quality, supply and affordability.

### Housing Quality

While a 1974 CMHC survey of housing units estimated that 13 percent of Winnipeg's housing is in poor condition, more than any other major Canadian city except Montreal, a 1977 housing study indicates that 23 percent of the inner city stock is in poor condition<sup>25</sup> (see Figure 3). Even though 754 units have been rehabilitated through the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) it is estimated that "to improve 10% of poor quality units over 5 years, between 1,800 and 3,000 units require rehabilitation."<sup>26</sup> As well, the overwhelming majority of the housing stock in the inner city was built prior to 1920 (75 percent) while 85 percent was built before 1946.<sup>27</sup>

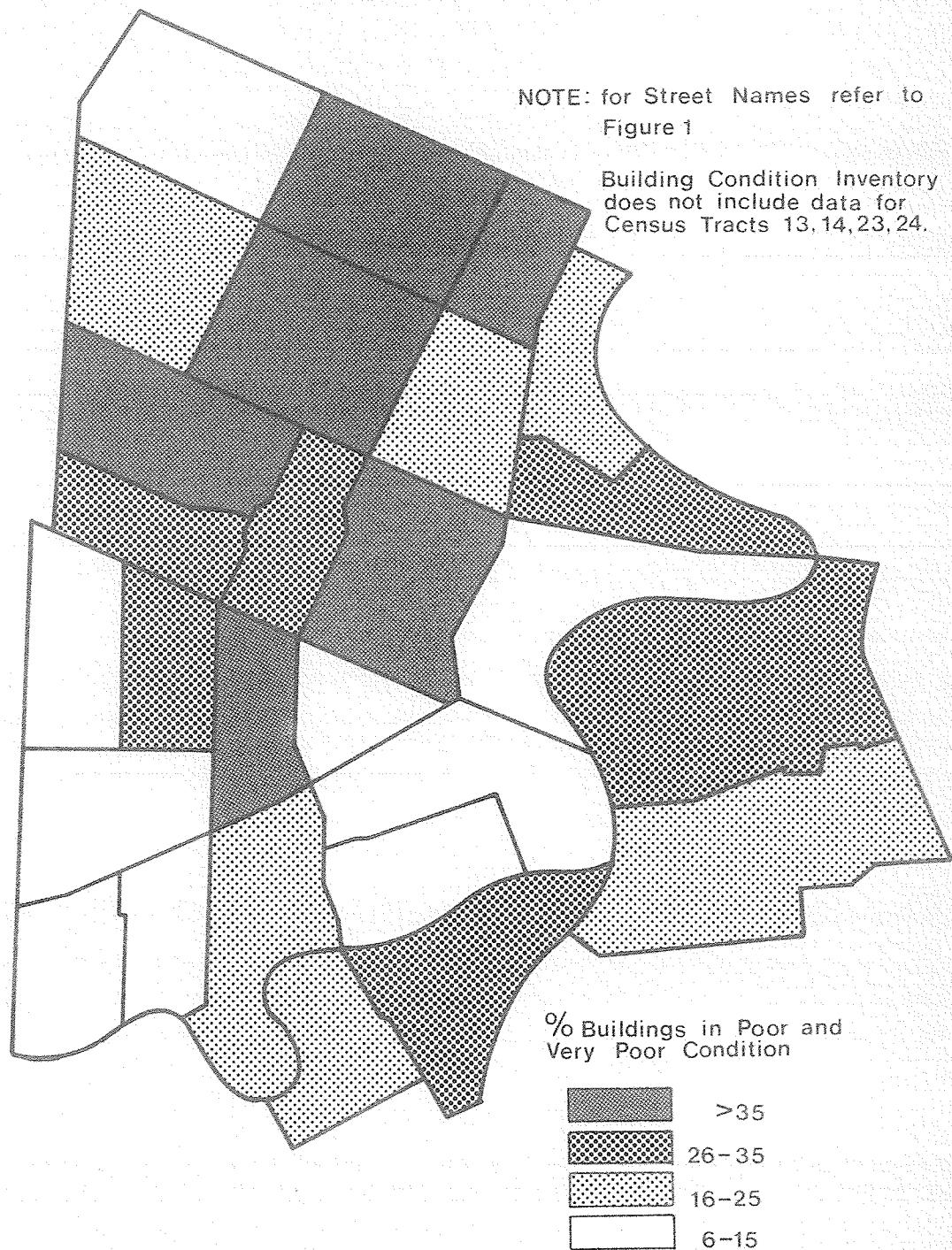
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<sup>25</sup> Stewart Clatworthy, Sybil Frenette, and Christine McKee, "Inner City Housing Study," p. 64.

<sup>26</sup> Peter Barnard Associates, Winnipeg Housing Study: Policy Recommendations, (Winnipeg: 9 January 1979), p. 19.

<sup>27</sup> Winnipeg Tri-Level Committee on Urban Affairs, Urban Growth Management, p. 24.

## Inner City Housing Condition by Census Tract



**Figure 3**

When Winnipeg is compared with other Canadian centres it becomes evident that with the exception of Montreal, Winnipeg has the highest percentage of poor quality older housing -- over twice that of any other city. It has the highest percentage of dwellings built prior to 1940 and again, with the exception of Montreal, it has twice the percentage of poor quality rental housing than does any other Canadian city. And, almost all of this poor quality housing is located in Winnipeg's inner city, while after the American experience, the populace has fled to the suburban areas where there has been sufficient land to justify the non-redevelopment of the inner city areas.<sup>28</sup>

Two factors besides the obvious flow of capital and population to the suburbs help explain the decline of the quality of inner city housing stock. These factors are a high incidence of absentee ownership and the precarious financial position of the small private landlord.

Absentee ownership and undermaintenance are often synonymous especially in predominantly low income areas where repair expenses cannot be recaptured in further rent increases. In order to gain a profitable return on investment the owner devalues the commodity through undermaintenance if the value of the rental income cannot be substantially increased. In Winnipeg's inner city there are 2.5 tenant-occupied units for every owner-occupied unit.<sup>29</sup> The question

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<sup>28</sup>Winnipeg Tri-Level Committee on Urban Affairs, Housing, pp. 4-5.

<sup>29</sup>Stewart Clatworthy, Sybil Frenette, and Christine McKee, "Inner City Housing Study," p. 67.

here is not the relative virtues of ownership versus tenancy, rather the matter revolves around the behaviour of the small private landlord facing a declining revenue stream.

The Apartment Loss Study conducted by the City of Winnipeg and the Institute of Urban Studies closely examines the financial squeeze faced by the small private landlord. Although most older apartment buildings (which comprise 54 percent of the city's rental stock) are well maintained, in some pockets of the inner city undermaintenance is being experienced in those blocks where the owner is attempting to gain a profit in the short-term. Many of these blocks have been over-financed with low owner equity. However, even the reputable landlord is now facing considerable problems in the maintenance of older blocks. The incentive for owning and the actual value of older blocks appears to be declining for two major reasons. The Income Tax Act no longer allows a tax shelter in the form of capital cost allowances on existing structures. Since the 1974 changes in the Act, only new construction is eligible for this subsidy. As well, financing for older blocks is difficult to obtain given an increased lenders risk.

In fact, the only cases in which it has been easy to obtain financing have been those where the building itself was so badly deteriorated that it was virtually worthless, and the land would be adequate security for the lender's risk. . . . Financing for the acquisition of apartments capable of being rehabilitated and continuing to provide low-cost housing is extremely difficult to obtain.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>City of Winnipeg, Ad Hoc Committee on Housing, Committee of Environment, Apartment Loss Study, (Winnipeg: October 1978), p. 35.

Once the block is acquired, financing for improvements is more difficult still. Financial institutions will only lend for improvements if the loan can be recovered through rent or resale of the block. The low income tenancy of the inner city coupled with declining resale values of older blocks precludes this. It is not so much malevolent behaviour on the part of the small landlord class which causes decline in quality it is the investment behaviour of finance capitalists. As Harvey notes;

The banks, naturally, have good rational business reasons for not financing mortgages in inner city areas. There is a greater uncertainty in the inner city and the land is, in any case, frequently regarded as "ripe" for redevelopment. The fact that failure to finance mortgages makes it even riper is undoubtedly understood by the banking institutions, since there are good profits to be reaped by redevelopment under commercial uses.<sup>31</sup>

The behaviour of finance capitalists in the inner city has not only led to a decline in the quality of housing, but coupled with stringent city maintenance and upgrading by-laws it has led to a decline in the actual amount of low income housing in the inner city.

#### Housing Supply

Winnipeg's inner city has experienced a loss of low income units through demolition, closure, or conversion and a non-replacement of these units with shelter of similar affordability. The majority of demolitions in Winnipeg occur in the inner city. The most serious type of demolition is the older apartment block because many lower

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<sup>31</sup>Harvey, Social Justice and the City, p. 140.

rental units are lost at one time. Of a total of 1,025 multiple-family dwelling units demolished in the city between January 1972 and June 1978 the inner city accounted for 952 units (93 percent).<sup>32</sup> However, many buildings lost through closure are not picked up in demolition statistics. As well the Apartment Loss Study indicates that many closed buildings are demolished at a later date rather than reopened.<sup>33</sup> When the figures for the loss of units due to closure are added in, the numbers become more significant (see Table 3).

TABLE 3

## MULTIPLE FAMILY RENTAL UNITS LOST BY DEMOLITION AND CLOSURE

CITY OF WINNIPEG - JANUARY 1, 1972 - JUNE 1, 1978

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Primary Cause of Loss	Estimated No. of Units
Apartment Up-Grading By-Law	283
Health By-Law	88
Maintenance and Occupancy By-Law	291
Fires	380
Primary Cause Undetermined	<u>645</u>
Total	<u>1,687</u>

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SOURCE: City of Winnipeg, Research Branch, Department of Environmental Planning, June 1978.

<sup>32</sup>City of Winnipeg, Ad Hoc Committee on Housing, Apartment Loss Study, p. 25.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

These figures do not include loss of older hotel units and rooming house units. In 1977 alone MHRC has estimated that 178 rooming house units were demolished.<sup>34</sup> The figures also do not include conversion of low rent housing stock to commercial or other uses. At least three low rent blocks (River and Osborne, Osborne and Corydon, and the Bettes Block on Portage Ave.) have been converted to commercial use within the last three years. Consequently, the magnitude of the problem is greatly understated in the figures presented in Table 3.

It can be demonstrated that a great many demolitions and closures are due to the enforcement of various city by-laws. While on the surface it appears to be that city by-laws are the cause of many losses the root cause is invariably economic. Owners facing the cost of city orders will either close or demolish the buildings if the economies are unfavourable. Many owners, already over-financed with little ability to pass the cost of upgrading to low income tenants and facing the difficulty of obtaining rehabilitation loans from financiers, have decided to remove buildings from the market through closure or demolition to capitalize on the value of the land.

On the supply side the "construction of new rental housing affordable to low income people in the core area is not keeping pace with closures and demolitions."<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

TABLE 4

LOW RENT UNITS LOST AND UNITS REPLACED IN FORMER MIDLAND AND  
CENTENNIAL COMMUNITY COMMITTEES (INNER CITY COMMUNITIES)

JANUARY 1, 1976 - JUNE 30, 1978

Dynamics	Number of Low Rent Units
Demolitions and Closures	1,064
Opening of Newly Constructed Units	<u>688</u>
Net Low Rent Units Lost	<u><u>376</u></u>

SOURCE: Ad Hoc Committee on Housing, Apartment Loss Study (Winnipeg: October 1978), p. 30.

This shortfall of units causes critically low vacancy rates in low rental units. Such a tight market coupled with the very low incomes of many inner city residents is a prime cause of affordability problems.

#### Affordability

Although the activities of financial institutions aggravate the situation, (redlining or demanding higher equity and interest rates in certain areas)<sup>36</sup> affordability problems stem more from the low incomes of inner city residents than exorbitant housing costs.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup>"Inner City Housing Study" prepared by Clatworthy et al., indicates that redlining or refusal to lend occurs in certain census tracts in the inner city considered high risk by financial institutions (see p. 93).

<sup>37</sup>See Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, Housing Conditions in Winnipeg, (Winnipeg: March 1979); Clatworthy et al., "Inner City Housing Study," (Institute of Urban Studies, January 1979).

Recent studies indicate that single parent families and the elderly face the most acute affordability problems and that "affordability problems for all household types are most severe in the inner city."<sup>38</sup> As well, it appears that renters face more serious affordability problems than do owners. Winnipeg is second only to Vancouver in terms of renters paying excessive proportions of income for shelter (see Table 5).

TABLE 5  
PROPORTION OF INCOME TO HOUSING COST

	Proportion of Household Income For Shelter		Percentage of Renting Households Paying:	
	Owners	Renters	More Than 25% Of Income To Rent	More Than 40% Of Income To Rent
Montreal	14%	14%	21%	9%
Toronto	13%	18%	31%	11%
Ottawa/Hull	12%	18%	30%	11%
Winnipeg	13%	18%	37%	17%
Edmonton	11%	17%	32%	13%
Calgary	14%	18%	34%	15%
Vancouver	12%	20%	43%	18%

SOURCE: 1971 Census. Table from Winnipeg Tri-Level Committee on Urban Affairs, Housing, p. 24.

The magnitude of this problem in the inner city is demonstrated by the fact that 70.3 percent of the housing is tenant occupied compared

<sup>38</sup> Clatworthy et al., "Inner City Housing Study," p. 45.

to 32.8 percent in the outer city.<sup>39</sup> The severity of the situation is further compounded by the current (1978) low vacancy rates in lower rental units in the city.<sup>40</sup>

Vacancies in apartment buildings in the inner city are critically low for those buildings constructed before 1970. The inner city vacancy rate is a low 0.7% compared to our overall vacancy rate for the city of 1.8% (which in itself is very low). The only inner city housing for which substantial vacancy rates exist are in recently constructed units. . . . These newer . . . units are not affordable to persons of a low or moderate income.<sup>41</sup>

This tight market in the inner city coupled with higher maintenance costs for the older inner city blocks has resulted in higher rent increases in inner city blocks than elsewhere thereby further aggravating affordability problems for the tenant (see Table 6).

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>40</sup> Since 1978 overall vacancy rates have climbed to the point where vacancy rates in October 1979 for privately initiated blocks of six suites or more were at 5 percent (CMHC statistics). However, when publicly and privately initiated units are combined this total drops to 4.5 percent, indicating a higher demand for low rent accommodation. In fact, the vacancy loss or time with unoccupied public housing suites has only risen from 1.4 percent to 2.1 percent from 1978 to 1979. Although waiting lists have declined for public housing, MHRC officials still indicate that a wait of from six months to some indefinite time period is not uncommon to gain access to inner city public housing. Suburban public housing is not as popular due to the transportation difficulties of low income and elderly residents. For further details see Frances Russell, "Housing For The Poor," Winnipeg Tribune, 21 November 1979, p. 9; and Val Werier, "Face Up To Core Housing," Winnipeg Tribune, 10 November 1979, p. 8.

<sup>41</sup> Clatworthy et al., "Inner City Housing Study," p. 22.

TABLE 6

AVERAGE YEARLY PERCENT INCREASES OF INNER CITY LOW AND MEDIUM-RISE  
BLOCKS COMPARED WITH INCREASES IN ALL OTHER APARTMENT BUILDINGS

1972 - 1976

Type	Average Yearly Rent Increase	
	One Bedroom Apts.	Two Bedroom Apts.
Inner City Low and Medium-Rise Blocks	9.7%	8.8%
Other Winnipeg Blocks	6.6%	5.7%

SOURCE: Les Mundwiler, Housing Need in Winnipeg, (Winnipeg: Planning Secretariat of Cabinet, Province of Manitoba, 14 January 1977), p. 4.

Affordability problems occur as a consequence of conditions within either the labour market or the housing market or both. If the labour market is supplying insufficient amounts of income or jobs then the surplus and marginally productive labour force will suffer. If the housing market is supplying inadequate amounts of shelter, monopoly rent may be realized leading to excessive shelter costs for the lower income strata. Since Winnipeg has the cheapest housing prices in Canada with the exception of Montreal<sup>42</sup> and the second highest inner city unemployment rate in Canada as noted earlier (see Table 2), it is safe to attribute most affordability problems within the inner city to a failure within the labour market. The growth in population within the single parent family, elderly and native

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<sup>42</sup> Winnipeg Tri-Level Committee on Urban Affairs, Housing, p. 5.

people sub-groups combined with the general decline in the population of other sub-groups within the inner city leads to forecasts of increases in the incidence of affordability problems in the inner city.

Housing Action Coalition's Interpretation of the Housing Crisis in Winnipeg

HAC's description of the housing crisis in Winnipeg, specifically in the inner city, closely matches the one presented above. However, the analysis of why the crisis has occurred is much different from the reasons offered above. HAC has isolated the problems of low quality, inadequate supply, and affordability within the housing market of the inner city, but has not linked their origins to the conditions of scarcity necessary for the proper functioning of the housing and labour markets within the dominant mode of production. HAC has instead linked these problems to inadequate action on the part of the state (all levels of government). The dissociation of housing crisis from its economic antecedents and a focus on policy of the state has allowed HAC to make claims on behalf of tenants and owners, and advocate improved shelter conditions for the lowest income groups and neighbourhood stability measures at the same time - an extremely difficult if not impossible task if political economy and class analysis is utilized.

From its first major document to its final presentation to City Council on 20 December 1978, HAC has accurately defined and described the housing crisis in the City of Winnipeg. HAC's initial brief, "A Housing Action Plan for Winnipeg's Inner City", September

1977, documented and stressed the need to solve the problem of the poor quality and the inadequate supply of housing within the inner city. Additional documents and briefs presented to the various levels and committees within government refined the documentation and illustrated the problems in more detail. A HAC brief presented to the Winnipeg Development Plan Review outlined HAC's concerns regarding affordability problems.

The crisis in the inner city is that there has been a great loss of low-cost housing through demolition, closure, conversion, and fire, accompanied by a failure to replace this loss with units of similar affordability. Existing low vacancy rates, coupled with this continuing loss of low-cost housing, have heightened the affordability crisis for inner city residents.<sup>43</sup>

Although HAC recognizes the problems stemming the structural gap created by the contradictions between the housing market and the labour market it does not focus on the contradictions as the main cause of the problems. HAC lays the blame at the feet of government not capital, and in doing so has failed to discover the root cause of the housing symptoms they have so precisely described. If HAC had recognized the root cause it could have re-examined its present lobbying strategy and considered more aggressive political options, e.g., extra-parliamentary and urban socialist models. Instead, housing problems are related to the lack of a comprehensive housing policy on the part of all three levels of the state, a lack of

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<sup>43</sup> Housing Action Coalition, Presentation to the Winnipeg Development Plan Review Agency, (Winnipeg: 425 Elgin Avenue, 29 November 1978), p. 2.

planning, inflammatory actions by the state in terms of by-law enforcement causing closure and demolition of blocks, the lack of a comprehensive housing data bank, lack of emergency housing and relocation services, and the failure of the state in the development of housing alternatives such as co-ops and non-profit housing corporations.

This focus on policy has allowed HAC to support several positions which would appear to have the potential of creating divisions and tensions within other political groups which analyze the housing crisis as a predictable result of the capitalist mode of production in its advanced stages. HAC supports the desires of owners and tenants in the inner city with respect to improved housing conditions without examining the fundamental differences between the two groups. While both groups are interested in the use value of housing as a commodity, owners are also interested in its exchange value. Consequently the desire to protect and increase equity or savings through increased land values is incongruent with the tenant's desire to minimize rent or shelter cost. Similarly HAC's position of advocating increased shelter opportunities for low-income groups and neighbourhood stability would be a difficult position for groups using political economy as an analytical tool (recognizing the housing crisis as a result of capitalism). While neighbourhood stability connotes preservation of an existing turf usually by means of protecting property rights, enhancing land values, and increasing home ownership, the provision of housing for the disadvantaged usually means invading existing turfs, neighbourhood

change, and/or increased tenancy. It is Housing Action Coalition's concentration on the policy role of the state and lack of attention to the fundamental contradictions causing the housing crisis that have allowed these incongruent positions to be forwarded simultaneously.

In order to more fully comprehend HAC's position on housing an examination of the role of the state in housing and HAC's interpretation of that role must be undertaken.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE POLITICAL-ADMINISTRATIVE CONTEXT AND HOUSING ACTION COALITION

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the role of state; first in general terms then in more housing specific terms. Brief reference to the federal and provincial levels will be made followed by a more lengthy discussion of the local level's role. The role of the local level in the Winnipeg case will be presented using recent actions by City Council as examples. Finally HAC's interpretation of state actions and the role that the state should assume in housing will be outlined.

#### The Role Of The State In Theory

Structuralists like Habermas, Roweis, and Castells have noted a shift in the role of all levels of government or the state, with the shift from the early (mercantile, free market) to late (monopoly) capitalist forms of societal organization. In early capitalist societies the role of the state was limited to supporting the economic order or competitive capitalism with a minimum of intervention, assuring the stability of the system through legal means, and providing minimum levels of public services through the taxation system.

As capitalism transformed from laissez faire to monopoly formations the role of state was forced to change with it. Roweis points out that increased state intervention was necessary to: correct social inequalities caused by the logic of the capitalist market mechanism, to correct the market mechanism itself in order to ameliorate the irrationalities of overproduction - boom and bust situations and monopolistic price fixing, and to socialize the costs of producing the unprofitable yet necessary elements which support private production such as roads, schools, research, etc.<sup>1</sup> He notes that although the expansion of the state's power has been checked by the legal expressions of the institution of private property rights and the current mode of commodity production for exchange, the state is now characterized as the main actor in three areas. The state protects economic stability in order to aid capital accumulation by mediating the commodity exchange process. It attempts to deal with the problems created by the multinational corporation through trade practices and foreign policy. Lastly, the state must ensure that the populous remains loyal to the economic and administrative system so that social order is maintained. These actions of the state have been grouped by writers into the functional roles of accumulation and legitimization.

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<sup>1</sup> Shoukry Roweis, Urban Planning in Early and Late Capitalist Societies, (Toronto: Papers on Planning and Design, 1973), pp. 11-12.

The fiscal role of the capitalist state has traditionally been two fold: on the one hand it makes investments to help directly the process of accumulation. On the other it spends money to help palliate the social consequences of capitalist growth, soak up discontent and thereby legitimate and reproduce the wider social order.<sup>2</sup>

Habermas indicates such state actions as improving the competitive position of the nation, unproductive consumption of surplus product in ventures such as armaments, providing policy incentives for previously capital neglected markets, upgrading hard and soft infrastructure such as roads, health centres, housing, research, science policy promotion, etc., improving labour productivity through socialized education, and meeting the socio-economic costs resulting from private commodity production through social welfare schemes. All serve to improve and create a conducive environment for the accumulation of capital.<sup>3</sup>

The legitimate function of the state is not so clear. Roweis states that the economic system, due to its pervasiveness (all objects including labour are now commodities), no longer begs for legitimacy but requires mass loyalty to it.<sup>4</sup> In order to maintain such loyalty the role of the state in the accumulation process must be legitimated. Habermas demonstrates that the state in advanced capitalism achieves this through depoliticizing the public realm and

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<sup>2</sup> Schecter, The Politics of Urban Liberation, p. 36.

<sup>3</sup> Jurgen Habermas, Legitimation Crisis, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), p. 35.

<sup>4</sup> Roweis, Urban Planning in Early and Late Capitalism, p. 17.

promoting values of privatism among individuals. If real participation existed in terms of the development of a political will then "the contradiction between administratively socialized production and the continued private appropriation and use of surplus value"<sup>5</sup> would become evident to the masses. The system of representative democracy interpreted through the philosophy of Schumpeter ensures that real participation is replaced by mass loyalty. According to Habermas in this depoliticized climate, legitimization is achieved allowing private investment to take place, "while the citizenry in the midst of an objectively political society, enjoy the status of passive citizens with only the right to withhold acclamation."<sup>6</sup> To maintain social stability the state must keep the basic contradictions of private appropriation of social production hidden from mass consciousness as well as ensure that market irrationalities are kept at tolerable levels within society. The state uses welfare and coercive policies in a depoliticized, individualized environment to meet this end. Welfare systems which teach that individuals must pull themselves up by their bootstraps and coercive elements such as police forces play a major role in the legitimization function of the state.

The functions of accumulation and legitimization result in three typical categories of state expenditure. O'Connor's theory of the state based on an interpretation of Marx notes the existence of

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<sup>5</sup> Habermas, Legitimation Crisis, p. 36.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

social investment capital, social consumption capital, and social expenses.<sup>7</sup> Social investment capital is necessary to aid private accumulation of capital through the provision of infrastructure. Social consumption expenditures attempt to lower the costs of maintaining and replicating the labour force through the provision of housing, schools, social insurance schemes, health plans, etc. Lastly, social expenses include all expenditures on welfare and social control activities necessary to legitimate and maintain system stability.

The demands placed on the state by capitalists for increased capital expansion and the need for increased social control places a great burden on the financial ability of the state to deliver the goods.

The state's increased involvement in the areas of capital accumulation and the reproduction of labour has produced a fiscal crisis as expenditures outstrip revenues. The net accumulative deficit for all levels of government in Canada in the period 1950-1970 was \$2.3 billion.. Only the federal government registered an increase in revenues over expenditures in this period, while municipal governments have experienced the greatest gap between income and expenses. All three levels of government, however, have had recourse to deficit financing. Though again the burden of the debt is greater at the provincial and municipal levels "between 1950 and 1968 the Federal government increased its debt (direct and indirect) by 360%, the Provincial and Municipal governments by 505% and 511% respectively."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> For a more complete discussion see James O'Connor, The Fiscal Crisis of the State, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973).

<sup>8</sup> Schecter, The Politics of Urban Liberation, p. 39.

The state's ability to accumulate revenue is dependent upon the success of state aided private accumulation. "A state that ignores the necessity of assisting the process of capital accumulation risks drying up the source of its own power, the economy's surplus production capacity and the taxes drawn from this surplus."<sup>9</sup> However, during the times of economic stagflation now being experienced, coupled with a high incidence of foreign domination in key economic sectors the Canadian state has increasingly limited room to increase its revenue position. Consequently, all levels of government have been attempting to relieve their deficit positions by cutbacks in expenditure. Government restraint has been experienced by partial withdrawal from activities such as health care, housing, and education to name a few. Lower expenditure levels, higher user fees, and the re-privatization of profitable segments of former government programs such as housing mortgages are common strategies utilized by the state to delay or defer fiscal crisis. According to O'Connor every expenditure of the state possesses the duality of serving both accumulative and legitimating functions.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, as the state attempts to reduce expenditures it may also be jeopardizing its own ability to accumulate revenue in the future thereby fanning the flames of fiscal crisis not extinguishing them.

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<sup>9</sup>O'Connor, The Fiscal Crisis of the State, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

The state's response to fiscal crisis has greatly affected its actions within the housing sector. At the federal level and provincial level in Manitoba housing expenditure commitments are being lessened through the re-privatization of such major capital intensive operations as mortgage lending, public housing, and land banking. At the civic level in Winnipeg, Council is refusing to take any responsibility in the housing field beyond planning and providing infrastructure for market housing. At the same time as Council is refusing to commit any funds for social housing, it is continuing an active support role in the private capital accumulation process through its many and varied social investment expenditures. In this way Council hopes to brighten its fiscal picture.

#### The Federal Level And Housing Policy

The federal government through its housing arm, the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), has consistently furthered the accumulation and legitimization role of the state through such measures as removing risk from mortgage lending and the direct provision of public housing.

The history of CMHC has been marked by four dominant guidelines.

- 1) the use of housing policy as a Keynesian tool to stabilize the economy
- 2) efforts to keep housing production in the private sector
- 3) the guarantee of private mortgage loans to encourage investment in housing
- 4) the provision of homeownership for the upper-middle income strata.

. . . CMHC acts directly in the interests of capital because it assists developers and finance capitalists to make profits on housing production. CMHC acts indirectly in the interests of capital because it rationalizes and mediates housing production to alleviate the most acute strains caused when people's housing needs are grossly unmet.<sup>11</sup>

The fiscal crisis faced by the federal level has caused changes in recent CMHC policy. Direct lending by CMHC will now be carried on by private lenders with CMHC only guaranteeing the loan and in some cases writing down the interest rate so that lower income individuals can take part in the program. In addition, public housing funding will now come from private sources with substantial interest reductions by CMHC. In other words, individuals and provincial housing corporations will have to secure mortgages in the private sector at the going interest rate. CMHC will then subsidize the lower income borrower and public housing corporations by paying the difference between a one and two percent interest rate and the going rate in some cases. Most programs have been altered to reduce the federal capital requirements for housing. Instead the actual financing of programs has been reprivatized with the aid of incentives by CMHC. This reprivatization of certain aspects of the housing program is a stated objective of the recent National Housing Act (NHA) amendments. It is hoped that "the fullest possible utilization of private sector capital for activity previously funded by the

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<sup>11</sup> Graham Barker et al., Highrise and Superprofits, (Kitchener: Dumont Press Graphix, 1973), pp. 105-106.

Federal Government"<sup>12</sup> is achieved. The stated reason for this move clearly indicates the fiscal crisis of the state.

The Bill currently before Parliament seeks the legislative changes required by the new policy directions and, by encouraging private investment in housing, gives effect to budgetary reductions recently announced by the President of the Treasury Board.<sup>13</sup>

#### The Provincial Level And Housing Policy

The Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation (MHRC) is acting much like its federal counterpart CMHC, in that it is attempting to financially disentangle itself from certain housing expenditures. This is due both to the current fiscal crisis and a recent change in provincial government from the left-liberal NDP to the right-wing Conservatives. The NDP committed funds in addition to those from CMHC to provide 11,144 public housing units between 1969 and 1976.<sup>14</sup> As costs began to escalate and provincial deficits began to rise the NDP decided to use a proposal call system to build public housing. This method requires reprivatization through the use of private sector development lands and schemes. What may have been gained by way of lowered costs may have been lost through problems in quality and poor location of buildings and projects.

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<sup>12</sup> Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, NHA Amendments, 1978 Background Information, (Ottawa: 12 December 1978), p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> Wilson Parasiuk, "The Future of Social Housing in Manitoba," Housing and People, (Spring 1978), p. 24.

The Conservative party assumed office in 1977 by using an issue which relates directly to the fiscal crisis. The Conservatives promised an administration which would reduce deficits using policies of restraint or cutback. This restraint policy has been especially evident in the housing sector.

The 1977 allocation to public housing was slashed in half at year-end from a target of \$55 million to less than \$25 million . . . furthermore, the . . . appointed chairman of MHRC launched a major review of waiting lists for elderly persons housing, claiming the elderly may be possible cheaters because they weren't necessarily living in blighted or substandard accommodation.<sup>15</sup>

In addition, the new board of MHRC, whose composition includes large land developers, delayed and cancelled some proposed 1978 public housing projects. The provincial government is now attempting to relieve itself of some of the costs of existing public housing by re-privatizing the management side of the operation.<sup>16</sup>

Other housing areas from which the Conservatives have withdrawn are rent control and land banking. In response to pressure from the private sector to 'free enterprise', and despite a study conducted by the government's own Rent Stabilization Review Board which indicated no immediate need to lift controls, a rent de-control program was instituted in October 1978. Also in October 1978 J. Frank

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>16</sup> Very recently the provincial government announced that it would not be building any more public housing in Winnipeg. For further information see, Robert Matas, "Government Halts Housing Construction," Winnipeg Tribune, 14 November 1979, p. 4.

Johnston, the Minister responsible for MHRC stated that the 4,500 acre land bank will be sold off on a long term gradual basis. The government's withdrawal from capital housing expenditure is intended to reduce the costs of legitimization at the same time as providing an environment conducive to the private accumulation of capital. In a speech to the Conservative Club on 25 October 1978 J. Frank Johnston stated that:

It is our government's policy to ensure that in future, taxpayers' dollars will only be utilized to assist those most in need, that is, those who clearly require some subsidy.

On the supply side our measures will be designed to help create the climate in which the legitimate housing industry can continue to serve us even more efficiently.<sup>17</sup>

The contradictory nature of the Minister's statement is immense. He assumes that the private sector is anxious to replace former government functions in the provision of social housing. This is just not so, unless the Conservatives are willing to provide heavy incentives for the private construction of such housing or direct rent subsidies to lower income people so that solvent or effective demand is increased. However, such expenditures run counter to their current restraint ethic.

Lastly, provincial cut-backs in the form of smaller grants to the municipalities have placed an increased strain on their limited tax bases. Restraint and fiscal crisis is filtering through to all levels of the state.

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<sup>17</sup>"Gradual Sales Planned for Land Bank," Winnipeg Tribune, 26 October 1978, p. 10.

### The Local Level And Housing Policy

The City of Winnipeg's housing policy response to the fiscal crisis of the state has been and is now officially one of non-involvement. On 20 December 1978 City Council voted in favour of a decision to abandon its non-profit housing corporation and instead adopted a policy of support for senior level low income housing programs. The stated reasons for this decision are clearly grounded in the current fiscal crisis.

The monies available to the City come from the limited property tax base. Taxes collected from property were originally intended for services to property, although that has altered somewhat in recent years. In any event the growth of taxation income is limited, and is projected to decrease over the next ten years.

We are involved in a period of restraint, with cut-backs in levels of service most certain if a no mill rate increase objective is to be attained . . .

Both Federal and Provincial governments have some assistance programs in the housing area that Municipalities may take advantage of, but current trends in those senior government policies indicate that cut-backs in those areas are contemplated and/or already implemented.<sup>18</sup>

Besides scrapping the social housing scheme or the main legitimization component of the city's housing program, many clauses were adopted which directly aid the private accumulation of capital as well as support the institution of private property through home ownership. The guidelines recommend the,

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<sup>18</sup> City of Winnipeg, City Council Minutes, (Adoption of Guidelines with Respect to the Involvement of the City of Winnipeg in the Provision of Housing, 20 December 1978), p. 430.

creation of incentives for involvement by the private sector which is presently winding down building activity, either by tax concessions, development bonus rights, or by seed money grants for the implementation of innovative programs. . . . Alteration of existing regulations and procedures where possible that are presently counter productive and discourage private development and investment.<sup>19</sup>

Although the need for social housing was noted, the provision of such housing is not seen as a city responsibility, despite the fact that senior levels are also withdrawing from this field through policies of re-privatization.

As the city is withdrawing from the legitimization function of which social housing is a part, it has not curbed its accumulation function in the field of market housing and other corporate ventures. As mentioned earlier in this chapter the city aids the private accumulation of capital through the provision of regional services such as roads, schools, waste disposal, etc. The magnitude of this state aid can be demonstrated by examining the share of recent capital budgets devoted to suburban market housing growth (see Table 7).

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 429.

TABLE 7  
PROPORTION OF CAPITAL BUDGET ALLOCATIONS DEVOTED  
TO SUBURBAN GROWTH

	Total (\$ Million)	Repair And Upgrading Of Existing Services	Hydraulic Relief Program	New Regional Services
1978 Capital Budget	30.6	8%	25%	67%
5 Year Capital Budget Estimate	168.6	5%	30%	65%

SOURCE: Peter Barnard and Associates, Winnipeg Housing Study Policy Recommendations, (9 January 1979), p. 19.

Not only does the local level of the state in Winnipeg support private capital accumulation in the housing sector, it also supports commercial and industrial capital. Recent expansion of the city owned Winnipeg arena was justified by the amount of capital that would be generated through the multiplier effect. The construction of the city owned, operated, and deficit ridden Convention Centre was undertaken based on its ability to increase private investment in the city. The city is renowned for its colossal giveaway in the Portage and Main, Trizec commercial project. Local government aid given to the Trizec Development Corporation included

expropriation by the city of his [this] development, provision by the city of the parking facilities necessary for this development project, a donation by the city of the land for the development for a

rent which is astonishingly low, and guarantees of no increases in this low rent over the first 40 years of the lease.<sup>20</sup>

The low growth rate of the city coupled with the fiscal crisis has accelerated Council's desire to promote growth through incentives for increased private capital investment.

To explain these actions of Council purely on the basis of fiscal crisis is perhaps too simplistic. Council's motives for these actions can be more fully understood through an analysis of political and class divisions within the city.

Historically Winnipeg politics have been split along labour/business lines since the 1919 general strike. Various anti-labour, pro-business, supposedly non-partisan parties, have ruled City Council since 1919. Starting with the Citizens' League and evolving into the Independent Citizens' Election Committee (ICEC) of today, the municipal party of business has attempted to use non-partisanship to blur allegiances and protect vested interests. J. E. Rea in his analysis of this ideological cleavage states that:

No credit whatsoever should be given to the citizens' denial that they are a political party. . . . The citizens have been enormously successful, never losing control of Winnipeg City Council in the past 57 years. But control also implies responsibility and it seems to have been evaded. The result has been not effective leadership, but as roll-call votes make clear, interest protection.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> David Walker, "Winnipeg and Trizec: Giving It All Away," City Magazine 2 (Toronto: Summer 1976), p. 28.

<sup>21</sup> J. E. Rea, Appendix IV The Rea Report, (For the Department of Urban Affairs, Province of Manitoba, 1976), p. 23.

Analysis by Lorimer and others indicates that it is the property industry which has been the dominant business interest represented on most Canadian city councils.<sup>22</sup> A recent examination of voting records of Winnipeg City Council from November 1974 to June 1976 indicates the ICEC's propensity to support development capital.<sup>23</sup> Based on 38 selected issues a 'batting average' or voting record was compiled. A record of 1.00 indicates pro-community leanings and a record of .000 indicates pro-developer leanings. Of the 27 ICEC members evaluated, 25 had 'batting averages' of .250 or lower demonstrating considerable property interest sympathies.

In addition to its business/free enterprise orientation Council is likely to share the restraint mentality of the Manitoba provincial government especially in terms of social services like low income housing. This predisposition towards restraint is based on the fact that both Council and the provincial government have Conservative majorities. A card-carrying Conservative councillor recently revealed that 17 of the 30 councillors are Conservatives. Six of the ten Executive Policy Committee are also Conservatives.<sup>24</sup> This key committee screens policy statements emanating from other standing

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<sup>22</sup> For a more detailed discussion see James Lorimer, A Citizen's Guide to City Politics, (Toronto: James Lewis and Samuel, 1972).

<sup>23</sup> Kent Gerecke, "A Brief to the Conflict of Interest Commission," (Winnipeg: 22 March 1977), pp. 19-20.

<sup>24</sup> Chris Smith, "Council Mostly Tory Blue: It Has Advantages," Winnipeg Tribune, 31 August 1978, p. 4.

committees as well as produces its own policy pronouncements. Evidence of Council's restraint platform can be witnessed in the reasoning behind the elimination of the city's non-profit housing corporation presented earlier. This closeness of ideology between the provincial and local level has caused Joe Zuken, the leading labour spokesperson on Council to state that, "City Hall is operating more and more as a branch office of the present Conservative government."<sup>25</sup>

Although most other major centres in Canada have endorsed social housing policies and have instituted non-profit housing corporations (Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Calgary, Ottawa), Winnipeg has not. This refusal manifests itself along attitudinal/ideological and geographic (suburban/inner city) lines within Winnipeg. In contrast to Winnipeg's official attitude towards social housing, George Rich, Professor of Housing at University of Waterloo claims that local government attitudes in Canada towards social housing are becoming more positive and more accepting.

When I first became interested in housing in Canada back in the middle fifties, creating community awareness of housing problems was an uphill battle. The first attitude that one encountered was, 'there are no slums in our city'. Once you had shown the city fathers and others that there were people who were living under conditions that were 'substandard' one ran into the prevalent attitude that those who were living under these conditions were doing this because they did not have the initiative to do anything about it. They were usually described as shiftless and lazy and it was implied, first stated, that they got what they deserved.

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

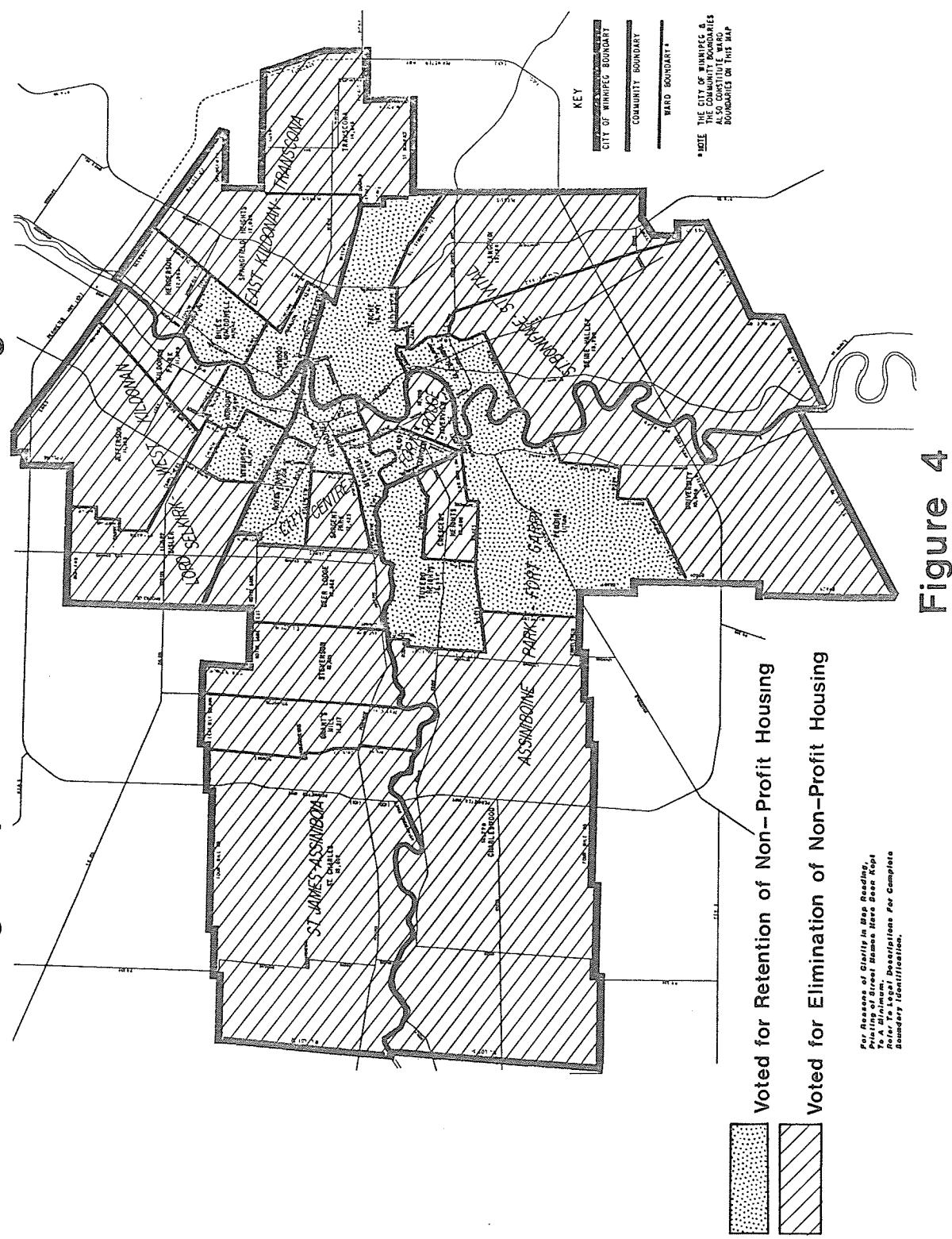
Now, twenty years later, I do not meet this attitude, but perhaps this change is no more than a reflection of the kinds of people with whom I associate during my work. I have an uncomfortable feeling that this 'monster-mutation' of the Protestant work ethic may still be lurking somewhere in the minds of some of the people who get involved in the government of our cities.<sup>26</sup>

According to Professor Rich's experiences Winnipeg must be twenty years behind the times because not even the liberal notion of 'housing as a right' is prevalent among most Winnipeg councillors. His 'monster-mutation' is alive, well and living within the majority group in Winnipeg's local government. The housing issue at City Council is class politics at its clearest and potentially most divisive level. Suburban councillors generally view housing as an inner city issue and are loathe to share tax revenue to support an essentially inner city program. A visual representation of the vote to eliminate the non-profit clearly demonstrates the negative social-housing suburban bias (see Figure 4). The class division was outlined by one suburban councillor who, during the non-profit elimination debate, argued that the inner city was receiving a disproportionate share of tax revenues to the detriment of the "middle-class poor", in the suburbs. This same councillor offered an analysis of the inner city housing situation that confirms Professor Rich's uncomfortable feelings about some local elected officials.

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<sup>26</sup> George Rich, "Is There a Canadian Housing Problem," Impact 1 (Fredericton: November 1978), p. 15.

## Non-Profit Housing Corporation Elimination Voting Results



**Figure 4**

Are you trying to tell me someone in the core can't save (enough money for a down payment on a house) if he works for it . . . .

Most of them are too damn lazy; they've been on the doles of society too long.<sup>27</sup>

Despite the unifying attempts of government reorganization, these class divisions are reflected in party representation on a geographically split basis.

One of the questions implicit in the Unicity experiment was the extent to which suburban-inner city rivalry would affect traditional political alignments.

. . . The NDP have had little success in the suburbs.

. . . The Citizens, on the other hand, have rapidly consolidated their strength in the former suburbs.<sup>28</sup>

These ideological, geographic, and political divisions coupled with the fiscal crisis further our understanding of the city's current position with regard to social housing.

#### Housing Action Coalition's Interpretation Of The Role Of The State In Housing

The intent of this section is to outline HAC's position regarding the role of the state in housing. Firstly, HAC's position will be stated in general terms. Secondly, HAC's rationale for strengthening the role of the local level will be examined. Lastly, the specific demands upon all levels of the state will be presented.

Housing Action Coalition believes it is the responsibility of the state to produce social housing in order to fill the structural

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<sup>27</sup> Chris Smith, "City's Housing Corporation Gets the Axe," Winnipeg Tribune, 21 December 1978, p. 4.

<sup>28</sup> J. E. Rea, Appendix IV The Rea Report, pp. 21-22.

gaps caused by the market mechanism. Although no clear line of thought has developed, the private sector's right to appropriate profits based on housing production and the unavoidable social ills that entails have never been seriously challenged. Despite an initial demand that government housing incentives flowing to the private sector for inner city housing should be diverted to inner city groups to provide their own adequate shelter,<sup>29</sup> no further direct challenges to capital have been made. In addition the demand was soon dropped and pressure was directed fully on the responsibility of the state to do more in the field of low income housing for inner city residents. Although the Coalition itself does not use the theoretical framework of legitimization and accumulation in its interpretation of state actions, its demands reveal that the basic objective is to pressure the state to increase its social housing programs in order to avoid crisis, and fulfill its legitimization function.

It is not enough to 'react' to a crisis. Governments must also take the initiative and plan to avoid crises.<sup>30</sup>

The Coalition focuses its attention towards the state despite the fact that its own analysis of the housing problem in the inner city has at times criticized the flow of finance and development capital from the inner city to the suburbs.

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<sup>29</sup> Housing Action Coalition, "A Housing Action Plan for Winnipeg's Inner City," p. 17.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

Current forecasts of the Winnipeg Development Plan Review indicate slow economic and demographic growth for the City of Winnipeg. However, while the city is not growing in an absolute sense, there have been internal shifts in the city, such as depopulation of the inner city coupled with suburban growth. This shift to the suburbs has been supported by past and existing government expenditure and policies.<sup>31</sup>

HAC blames the state for supporting suburban development (fulfilling its accumulation function) rather than attacking capital's investment decisions.

In the face of fiscal crisis and the replacement of a moderate provincial government with a right-wing regime, the Coalition has gone from making demands for increased state action to making pleas for the retention of existing social housing programs at all levels of the state. In the wake of a swing to the right the Coalition has therefore turned from the offensive to the defensive. In 1977 HAC's demands revolved around increased government social housing commitments and in late 1978 the demands included retention of the city's non-profit and retention of the provincial public housing program. As the state continued to restrain due to fiscal crisis the Coalition clearly retreated from its original demands and has lowered its expectations concerning the ability of the state to act.

Generally then, HAC's perception of the role of the state in housing is to fill the gaps created by capital to fulfill those needs

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<sup>31</sup> Housing Action Coalition, "Presentation to the Winnipeg Development Plan Review Agency," pp. 1-2.

which are not met by the market mechanism in order to avoid a housing crisis (social crisis). Demands for social housing have been directed solely at the state thereby tacitly absolving the private sector from all blame in the creation of the crisis. In other words according to HAC the crisis is due to inadequate state response rather than any structural flaw in the system. HAC's response to government housing cutbacks due to fiscal crisis and ideology has been a lowering of demands and expectations concerning the role of the state.<sup>32</sup>

Having stated HAC's general position on the role of the state an examination of HAC's perception of the specific roles of the various levels of the state is necessary. It is HAC's belief that the local level's current role of planning and providing services is inadequate to address the problems of the housing crisis. The Coalition would like to see increased local level housing initiative.

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<sup>32</sup> If HAC did realize that a capitalist political-economic system is the root cause of the housing crisis, this in itself would not alleviate the problems. It is at this point that HAC would have to choose a strategy to deal with the problem and its actual cause. It is also at this juncture that a major failing of neo-Marxist analysis becomes evident. Although critical analysis (political economy) reveals more than other forms of analysis (liberal and conservative thought) about the underlying flaws within the structure of society, it is as vague and unhelpful at prescribing short to medium run solutions and actions to immediate crises. For example, if HAC strictly adopts the critical analysis, ceases to pressure the state and shifts its attentions to exposing the contradictions of capitalism, consumers of low income housing would suffer from a reluctance on the part of both the public and private sector to arrest the deteriorating conditions, while HAC waits for revolutionary energies to build within the low income community. On the other hand, if for humanitarian reasons, HAC demands that the state correct housing problems through redistributive means, while at the same time educating the general public about the real cause of the problem, it runs the risk of supporting and perpetuating the system. The critical analysis gives few clues or supports to deal with the political dilemma posed above.

It is the HAC's contention that this level of the state can be most responsive on a policy basis, to the unique needs of its citizens. Not only is the local level the government closest to the people, it is the level which can most accurately determine the housing needs of its citizens based on its greater knowledge of the uniqueness of the population and the problems involved. Each city has individual social, economic, and political circumstances which may or may not be matched by federal housing program packages. Consequently, HAC feels that not only the assessment of needs but development of policy and programs should emanate from the local level. In addition, the administration of policy specifically designed for a given urban area may be handled in a more rational, less conflictual, and more sensitive manner at the local government level. The two senior levels of the state would continue their roles in the provision of housing and financing of programs but only in response to local level policy and determination of housing need.

In addition to the reasons stated above for increased local involvement in housing, HAC has its strategic reasons. Since local government is closest to the people it is theoretically the least insulated from public pressure and demands. Therefore, if HAC's demands are accepted by the majority of councillors, pressure on senior and more distant governments for better housing conditions would be forthcoming from the local level with support from HAC. HAC has therefore concentrated its lobbying efforts on the local level so that increased responsibility in housing will be assumed. The Coalition has initiated policy discussion with the city in order

to convince councillors of the advantages of an increased role. In contrast HAC has assumed a reactive role towards the province; reacting only to negative or positive initiatives, and a passive monitoring role vis-à-vis the federal government. The success of this strategic reasoning is dependent on HAC's ability to convince or pressure the local level of the state to take a more involved role in housing. This aspect will be more closely examined in Chapter Six of this thesis.

In order to clarify HAC's position on increased local level involvement, HAC's specific demands for city action are presented on pages 107 and 108.

In short, it is clear from HAC's demands and general analysis of the role of the state that HAC is pressuring for a restructuring of the social housing delivery system within the state itself and not a restructuring of the relationships between the state, capital, and working people. Further, by advocating a crisis avoidance posture on the part of the state HAC is only serving to blur the root cause of the housing crisis through the curing of symptoms rather than problems.

JANUARY 1978

PRESENTATION TO  
MAYOR ROBERT STEEN  
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE  
WINNIPEG CITY COUNCIL

by

THE HOUSING ACTION COALITION

Much has been written in recent years about the housing crisis in North Central Winnipeg. Given the quality and quantity of the existing housing stock in this part of the city\* and the high degree of individual and family deterioration resulting from these conditions; the Housing Action Coalition is demanding that the present, piece-meal, unco-ordinated efforts in housing, be drastically altered.

It is our contention that the following recommendations will assist the City to establish an adequate structure, comprehensive policies, and relevant programs to deal with the housing crisis in North Central Winnipeg.

RECOMMENDATION ON STRUCTURE

THAT THE CITY IMMEDIATELY IMPLEMENT ITS POLICY  
OF OCTOBER 1977 TO ESTABLISH A SEPARATE  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Given the enormity of the task, the overwhelming workload of the Committee on Environment, the lack of co-ordination of municipal housing and housing related programs, and the suffering and inconvenience felt by many residents in North Central Winnipeg, we feel that a separate Standing Committee on Housing and Community Development is required to deal in an adequate and just manner with the inner city housing crisis. By just, we mean that those people affected and hurt most, be assisted first and foremost.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON POLICY

The policies of the Housing and Community Development committee should be guided by the following principles:

- A) that there be an adequate supply of affordable, rental and/or ownership housing for low income people living in the North Central area of Winnipeg.
- B) that this supply be created within the context of an overall housing plan for the inner city (ie. including green spaces, parks, social amenities, local employment, adequate public transportation, etc...)
- C) that resident participation in the creation and implementation of housing programs is essential to a humane revitalization of the North Central area of Winnipeg.
- D) that various forms of renovation programs be given as much or more emphasis as affordable new construction.

These and other relevant principles should be drawn together, as soon as possible, into a comprehensive, realistic, and relevant over-all housing policy for Winnipeg's North Central area.

\* see Housing Action Plan, Housing Action Coalition, Section b P.1-4

RECOMMENDATIONS ON PROGRAM

In light of the above, the Housing Action Coalition recommends that City Council, through the concerted efforts of the proposed Committee on Housing and Community Development, implement and/or lobby for the following program proposals:

- 1) that the Winnipeg Housing Rehabilitation Corporation start functioning as soon as possible.
  - a) that the proposed number of housing units to be purchased by the Winnipeg Housing Rehabilitation Corporation, over the next five years, be increased from 475 to 1500 units.
  - b) that these homes be available on a rental, as opposed to an ownership basis, in order to ensure occupancy by those in the lowest income range.
  - c) that the Board of Directors of the Winnipeg Housing Rehabilitation Corporation include two members who are low income tenants.
- 2) that the City Council immediately implement the Neighbourhood Improvement Program in the new William Whyte and West Alexander areas.
  - a) that City Council immediately initiate the process to establish the residential pockets between Logan and Flora to be designated as a Neighbourhood Improvement Program area.
- 3) that City Council ensure that effective by-law enforcement be directed at maintaining the existing stock of housing rather than closing it down.
- 4) that the City implement a by-law regulating demolition.
- 5) that specific areas within North Central Winnipeg be zoned to increase the residential use of land.
- 6) that the City of Winnipeg lobby the Province of Manitoba for:
  - a) the retention of rent controls particularly for the North Central Area.
  - b) increased and speedier purchasing and renovation of apartment blocks by Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation in agreement with past arrangements.
  - c) resources (human and financial) to create emergency housing facilities.
- 7) that the City of Winnipeg lobby the Government of Canada for:
  - a) the extension of the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program beyond the Neighbourhood Improvement Program areas.
  - b) continuation of the Neighbourhood Improvement Program.
  - c) increased financial support for existing and proposed non-profit housing groups.
  - d) changes in criteria for financial support to co-operative housing groups (ie. lengthening the time required for self sufficiency and less rigid requirements for start up funds)
  - e) a grants program to assist sweat-equity groups.\*

\* Saturday Review, July 23, 1977: The New Urban Pioneers Homesteading in the slums.

## CHAPTER V

### THE URBAN POLITICAL ACTION CONTEXT AND HOUSING ACTION COALITION

In previous chapters HAC was examined in relation to the specifics of housing and the role of the state. This chapter presents an examination of HAC in relation to theory of urban political action (urban struggle) for the purposes of clarifying HAC's characteristics and strategic limitations. A continuum of urban political action based on the writings of many authors in general, and Manuel Castells in particular, was developed to evaluate HAC's place in theory. The continuum is designed to assess the characteristics of various political actors or groups of actors, one in relation to another. The continuum is also designed to measure the probable effectiveness (the urban effect) of several commonly used political strategies. First, the continuum will be explained and terms defined. Second, a range of possible political formations and actions will be set out and explained in terms of the

continuum. Finally, HAC will be placed on the continuum using information gained from the examination of the group from the three previous chapters.

The connection between this theoretical analysis and the housing question is apparent once the spatial unit is defined. The spatial unit 'urban' refers to the location of collective consumption necessary for the reproduction of labour power.<sup>1</sup> At the urban level, housing is consumed collectively as an element necessary for the reproduction of labour power. Since housing is also a commodity within the dominant mode of production, it is necessary for the state to ensure that even those who are surplus, in terms of the needs of production, are supplied housing in order to maintain social control and secure mass loyalty. However, the fiscal crisis of the state has constrained the state's ability to produce the goods.

The legitimisation programmes which have fueled the state's fiscal crisis have resulted in their own legitimisation crisis, as the state's ability to deliver on its promises diminishes. New struggles form around these contradictions, as people demand better housing, cheaper public transport, state-funded child care.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, as the state withdraws from its former fiscal position, dissent increases around those abandoned elements essential for the

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<sup>1</sup> Castells, The Urban Question, p. 445.

The term collective consumption refers to any commodity or good which must be consumed or used by all people. Therefore, there is an element of necessity attached to it which could form the basis of a mass movement if the good or commodity is not universally available. Housing is an example of such a good.

<sup>2</sup> Schecter, The Politics of Urban Liberation, p. 44.

replication of the labour force. If inadequate housing conditions prevail aggravated by the state's withdrawal due to fiscal crisis, the conditions for mass politicization are ripe as these requirements gain a political focus through the formation of urban social movements. Urban struggles then, revolve around the control of those goods such as housing, collectively consumed and required for the reproduction of the labour force.

Before proceeding to the continuum itself, it is useful to explain the terms 'urban political action' or 'urban struggle' and 'social change'. The study of urban struggle is basically an examination of power within a specific spatial unit. According to Castells the study of urban politics or power relations between various classes can be broken "into two analytical fields indissolubly linked in social reality: urban planning and policy in its various forms and urban social movements."<sup>3</sup> Castells defines planning as state intervention to regulate social relations and repress the societal contradictions in order to maintain the present system. On the other hand, urban social movements are groups of individuals whose actions in society cause a new structural formation of that society or a change in power relations (balance of forces) between classes (social change). In other words, the actions of an urban social movement are intended to achieve social change by altering the laws governing the capitalist mode of production or altering the current state of dominance the capitalist class enjoys over labour.

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<sup>3</sup>Castells, The Urban Question, p. 261.

If it is true that the state expresses . . . the overall interests of the dominant classes, then urban planning cannot be an instrument of social change, but only one of domination, integration and regulation of contradictions.

. . . A process of social change . . . occurs when . . . popular mobilization takes place. Social needs are given political expression and alternative forms of organization of collective consumption, in contradiction with the dominant social logic, are set up. Thus it is urban social movements and not planning institutions which are the true sources of change and innovation in the city.<sup>4</sup>

#### A Theoretical Continuum Of Urban Political Action

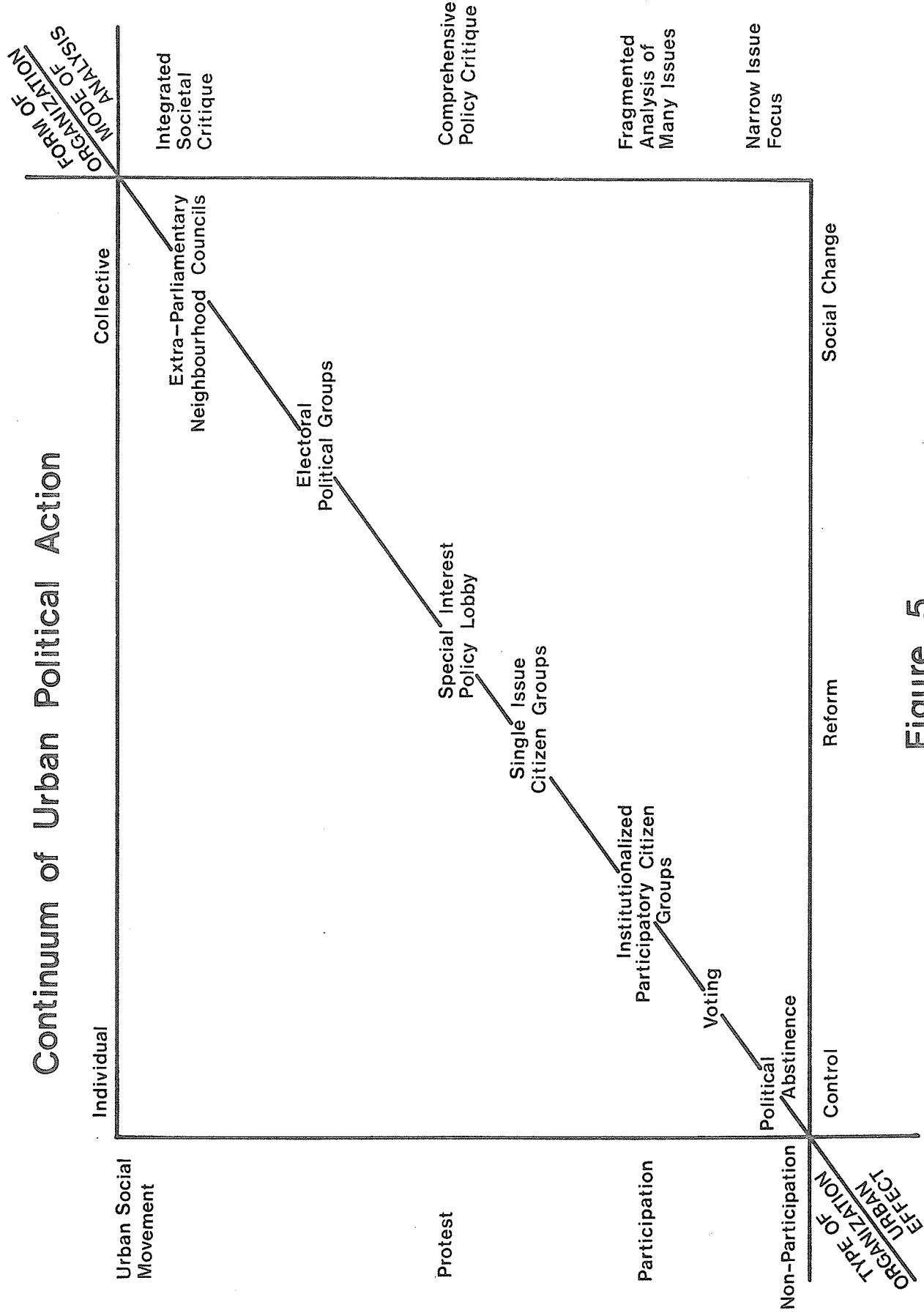
It is the intention of this chapter to gauge the effectiveness or the ability of various political actions and actors to produce social change through the use of the continuum. Therefore, this study or examination of urban political action limits itself to an analysis of urban social movements and its lower forms; protest and participation organizations.

The continuum has four linked sets of variables or classifications (see Figure 5). These are: type of organization, urban effect, mode of analysis, and form of organization. The 'type of organization' classification in this continuum is contingent upon the kinds of change urban political actors achieve. The actions any one political formation chooses and effectiveness achieved depends upon the group's level of analysis of the project as well as its ability and desire to mobilize active support. This approach emphasizes the effects that

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<sup>4</sup> Manuel Castells, Luttes Urbaine, cited by C. G. Pickvance, "On the Study of Urban Social Movements," Urban Sociology, ed. C. G. Pickvance, (London: Tavistock Publications, 1976), p. 203.

## Continuum of Urban Political Action



**Figure 5**

actions may produce and de-emphasizes the form of the organization.

The cross axis or diagonal line represents movement along the continuum from a low level to a high level of effectiveness. It is along this line that strategies and actors will be evaluated. A strategy moves upward from the left-hand side to the right-hand side as it demonstrates the effectiveness to achieve social change. As well, such an upward left-hand to right-hand movement indicates a higher level of analysis and a more collective approach to the action.

Castells uses 'urban effect' to measure the achievements of action as well as to classify groups.<sup>5</sup> The highest urban effect is social change (as defined above) which can only be achieved by urban social movements. Castells also outlines the lower level effects of reform and control, which produce protest and participation organizations respectively. The effect of reform is a change within an element of the urban structure without a change in its relations with any other elements.<sup>6</sup> For example, reform would include a change in the regulation

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<sup>5</sup> For a more detailed analysis see C. G. Pickvance, "On the Study of Urban Social Movements," Urban Sociology, ed. C. G. Pickvance, (London: Tavistock Publications, 1976), p. 200.

<sup>6</sup> Castells breaks the urban system into four distinct but related elements: production, exchange, consumption, and management. Production refers to the generation of goods to be consumed in an urban system. Exchange refers to the interchange of goods from the point of production to the point of consumption. Consumption refers to the needs of people to use goods in order to sustain productivity. Management refers to the rules and regulations necessary to ensure continued operation of the urban system. See Manuel Castells, The Urban Question.

of housing (better housing conditions as a result of by-law enforcement) without any changes in the production, exchange or consumption of housing. The urban effect of reform was achieved by protest groups and organizations such as those active in Toronto in the early 1970s.<sup>7</sup> The urban effect of control is no change or the reproduction of the system. Participation groups such as Winnipeg's Resident Advisory Groups achieve this effect.

Castells also indicates that the group's level of analysis will determine which kind of urban effect is achieved and within which organizational type the group is classified. The way in which a group or individual looks at any given problem patterns the action response to the problem. If the analysis of problems is separated from the societal, economic, and political contradictions, or the root cause of the problems, then symptoms tend to be treated and the cause left alone. The lack of a societal critique or framework fragments problems into component parts or issues. Actions then also become disjointed.

Thus, according to the effects achieved, an organization can be placed on the scale: 'participation' - 'protest' - 'urban social movement'. Castells argues that an organization where the contradictions involved are purely 'urban' (i.e. concerned with the spatial unit of the process of the reproduction of labour power - e.g., issues such as housing, education, and collective facilities) and not linked to the 'political' or 'economic'

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<sup>7</sup> These groups only pushed for changes in state regulation and policy (management element), to stop the busting of neighbourhoods by redevelopment projects and freeways. Although they resisted the developers, they did not challenge the system that encourages the developers' existence and mode of operation. See John Sewell, Up Against City Hall, (Toronto: James Lewis and Samuel, 1972).

aspects of class struggle, can at most be an 'instrument of reform'. It is only when an urban social movement unites economic or political contradictions with urban contradictions, that the term in its strict sense can be said to apply.<sup>8</sup>

Many other authors support Castells' view that a fragmented analysis will at best achieve the urban effect of reform. Coit points out that single-issue groups who direct their entire analysis and action toward one concern, such as poor quality housing, without linking the problem to its economic and political roots will not develop a political consciousness and will therefore not move in the direction of social change.<sup>9</sup> Loney criticizes analysis which matches problems with poor decisions on the part of society's institutions. Rather than being the fault of unwilling or short-sighted decision-makers, problems can and must be traced to the structures within capitalist society and the contradictions inherent therein.<sup>10</sup> Goldrick in his article on the reform movement in Toronto examines the difference between critical and liberal analysis.

We live in a society dominated by liberal values. One characteristic of this all pervasive mode of thought is to draw a sharp distinction between basic systems operating within society. . . . The distinction which liberal thought makes between the economic and the political is the important one. Deep-seated problems usually are attributed to human weakness or deficiencies in the institutions which society has developed to serve it, such as government. . . . It is [sic] not

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<sup>8</sup> Pickvance, "On the Study of Urban Social Movements," Urban Sociology, p. 200.

<sup>9</sup> Katherine Coit. "Local Action, Not Participation," Marxism and the Metropolis, ed. William K. Sawers and Larry Tabb, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 303.

<sup>10</sup> Martin Loney, "A Political Economy of Citizen Participation," The Canadian State: Political Economy and Political Power, ed. Leo Panitch, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), p. 453.

blamed on the drive for capital accumulation in the economic system. The two invariably are kept separate.<sup>11</sup>

In order to build a political movement whose ultimate effect will be social change or a shift in the structures of society, analysis of problems must relate to the political and the economic instance from where they originated. Groups which isolate problems from their economic and political base will direct their actions instead on all other societal elements except capital (government, working people). Changes will be sought only in the conditions surrounding the problem and not in the structures of the system which are the root causes of the problems.

In addition to underscoring the importance of an integrated societal critique, several writers have stressed the necessity of mobilizing at the base to achieve social change. Since urban struggles revolve around the control of those necessary goods and services required by all people in the community, collective responses are required to produce change. José Olives in his case study of urban struggle in Paris, concludes that the greater degree of mobilization the greater chance of achieving the urban effect of social change.<sup>12</sup> Not only is it stated that mobilization is necessary, but it is also stated that mobilized groups must join together in order for the struggle to be effective. The more critical writers

<sup>11</sup> Michael Goldrick, "The Anatomy of Urban Reform in Toronto," City Magazine 3, (May-June 1978), p. 29.

<sup>12</sup> José Olives, "The Struggle Against Urban Renewal in the 'Cité d'Aliarté' (Paris)," Urban Sociology, ed. C. G. Pickvance, (London: Tavistock Publications, 1976), pp. 186-187.

dwell on the need to link actions in the community with actions in the workplace. Under capitalism it is foolish to mobilize the working class on a basis where the worker is split into the worker as consumer separated from the worker as producer. Gains made in one arena of life may be recaptured by capital operating in the other arena. For example, if groups of workers win wage settlements or guarantees for pollution control and improved safety measures in the workplace, they will soon find they are faced with higher prices for goods and services distributed to the community as the increase in production cost is passed through the market system. It is a no-win situation if one facet of the struggle is ignored. The Montreal Citizens' Movement (MCM) points out the need to build organizations at the neighbourhood level so that workplace struggles (production) are linked with community struggles (reproduction), by having labour groups join with neighbourhood councils. After developing a collective political consciousness, change can be sought on both fronts simultaneously. Making a case for greater organization at the level of the community, Cynthia Cockburn in The Local State declares that:

To organise at the workplace alone leaves out half the worker's own experience of exploitation - speaking as it does of the cash wage but not of prices or of the social wage. More important, it excludes all wageless people from organisation. Pensioners, women doing unpaid domestic work, students at school and college, the unemployed and the invalid collecting state benefit - such people are a political resource, needed in struggle and needing it too. Reproduction, whether it be the practical reproduction of labour power or the ideological

reproduction of our class system, our relationship to capital, is something in which everyone is involved.<sup>13</sup>

Whether the struggles are linked or not most critical writers agree that organization is an important element in the development of a collective politicized consciousness. Once organizations are built, the bonding of various groupings through a common analysis which views the individual as both consumer and producer will ensure that the political action has the potential of effectiveness. Organization is a necessary but not a sufficient element required for social change as defined. Rather, the key component is an integrated analysis which not only attempts to explore the root causes of problems but attempts to propose actions and strategies which face the problems on more than one dimension. Anything less will achieve the lower levels of urban effect; reform and control. However, when coupled with an integrated radical analysis, organization is a valuable aid for achieving social change.

The continuum uses Castells' definition of urban social movement and social change as bench marks against which other groups or individual actions may be evaluated. Groups may only be defined as urban social movements if the effect they are trying to achieve is social change. The urban effect of social change is a structural change in the urban system, that is to say changes in the dominant mode of production as it affects the production of space, or changes

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<sup>13</sup> Cynthia Cockburn, The Local State, (London: Pluto Press, 1977), p. 166.

in the balance of power in the class struggle at the urban level. To the extent that groups are organized and using a critical and integrated (worker as producer and consumer) analysis of capital, the greater chance there is of achieving social change. For example, an urban social movement struggling around a housing concern would trace the problem to its origin within the capitalist system and organize around that analysis. If the problem is housing prices being too high, housing organizations may join with trade union groups to simultaneously press for lower house prices, fuller employment, and better wages for construction workers. In this way gains are made in the community and the workplace. Capital is challenged on both fronts, theory and practice are linked, and praxis is achieved. If analysis is weak, tending to focus on symptoms rather than causes of problems, reform or control will be the urban effect no matter how highly organized the group. Consequently, the continuum considers the goals or the potential urban effect of groups, the level of analysis used to examine the problem and the level of organization maintained to challenge the problem.

In order to demonstrate the usefulness of the continuum several typical urban political groups and individual actions will be assessed. These actions and groupings are located along the cross axis of the continuum (see Figure 5). They include: political abstinence, voting, legitimized or institutional citizen involvement, single-issue citizen pressure groups, special interest policy lobbies, electoral politics, and extra-parliamentary neighbourhood councils (socialist urban politics). This selection of actions does not purport to be

exhaustive of all political possibilities. Rather, it is a selection of the most common and often cited examples drawn from the literature of urban political action. In addition, this model or continuum concerns itself with examples from the North American political culture.

Starting at the lower left-hand side of the continuum the political responses of political abstinence and voting are found. Political abstinence and voting at the municipal level are both patterned to a great extent by two factors; the theory of democratic elitism and non-partisan elections. The current political system under which the western world operates is representative democracy or more accurately, democratic elitism. In contrast with the classical vision of democracy which calls for maximum input by all citizens, this newer form demands low levels of participation and politicization in order to maintain system stability. The current form is typified by elections, voting, an uninformed apathetic public, and a low level of political action. This system was until recently accepted as the only functional theory of democracy. The most influential individual in establishing this theory was Joseph Schumpeter. He stated that the election of representative leaders is the only realistic method of democracy, given the need to make political decisions in a complex institutional arrangement.<sup>14</sup> He rejected the participatory role of citizen in classical democracy.

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<sup>14</sup> Joseph Schumpeter, Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy, (New York: Harper, 1943), p. 269.

The only means of participation open to the citizens in Schumpeter's theory are voting for leaders and discussion. He rules out such usually acceptable activity as "bombarding" representatives with letters as against the spirit of the democratic method because, he argues, it is in effect an attempt by citizens to control their representatives and this is a negation of the whole concept of leadership. The electorate do not "normally" control their leaders except by replacing them at elections with alternative leaders. . . . In Schumpeter's theory of democracy, participation has no special or central role. All that is entailed is that enough citizens participate to keep the electoral machinery . . . working satisfactorily. The focus of the theory is on the minority of leaders. "The electoral mass," says Schumpeter, "is incapable of action other than stampede," so that it is leaders who must be active, initiate and decide, and it is competition between leaders for votes that is the characteristically democratic element in this political method.<sup>15</sup>

Consequently, voting for representatives at election time is viewed to be the only acceptable form of political action.

Although Schumpeter's theory explains the lack of extra-electoral activity which pervades western politics, it does not account for low voter turnouts especially in local elections. At the municipal level, the fact of non-partisan elections lowers the political response of many individuals from voting to political abstinence. A recent study on civic voter behaviour in Winnipeg concluded that political abstinence, as indicated by low turnout, and high candidate holdover rates, are due to the lack of alternatives generated by a non-partisan electoral approach in Winnipeg.

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<sup>15</sup> Carole Pateman, Participation and Democratic Theory, (Cambridge: University Press, 1970), p. 5.

From 1945 to 1969 there have been 25 civic elections. Turnouts have ranged from a high of 58.1% to a low of 22.7%. On only three occasions has there been a turnout greater than 50%, while at nine elections less than 30% of the voters bothered to respond. . . . The minimal turnover, that is, the high percentage of holdovers in Winnipeg City Council, tends to breed a clubby and conservative atmosphere. Since there are no issue-oriented elections or alternative platforms, the incumbent has a tremendous advantage. . . . Another obvious weakness of the non-partisan system is the difficulty of registering a protest vote. . . . If there is no collectively identifiable group to blame or praise, the voter is faced with only an indiscriminate list of names whose political responsibility can be identified only with patient and attentive study. . . . Voter apathy and high holdover rates may be well attributed to the lack of alternatives presented to the electorate. Responsibility avoided, in this case, is responsibility denied.<sup>16</sup>

Voting behaviour and political abstinence are placed at the low end or 'control' end of the continuum. The decision to take a minimal form of political action, either by voting or not voting is generally an individual decision. Very few groups vote or abstain from elections on a collective basis, especially in municipal elections. Secondly, voting in a non-partisan system generally indicates low issue identification and little change for political analysis on the part of the voter. Lastly, to rely on voting, in a system which at best exchanges one set of political leaders for another as the highest expression of political action, does little or nothing in the way of politicizing the individual. Both voting and abstaining from voting will do little to develop substantive change in the system since, as

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<sup>16</sup>J. E. Rea, Appendix IV The Rea Report, pp. 17-19.

stated earlier, one of the philosophical underpinnings of representative democracy is system maintenance or system legitimization.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, political abstinence and individual voting actions are placed at the lowest end of the continuum having the urban effect of control and the organizational type of participation.<sup>18</sup>

Moving along the continuum beyond the political actions of abstinence and voting, we find institutional citizen participation. Although this form of action involves higher issue awareness due to greater exposure to information and more collective methods of activity in the form of participation in committees, it is still well within the organizational type of participation, achieving the urban effect of control.

Institutionalized citizen participation includes elected, non-elected and appointed positions to boards, committees and commissions which serve as adjuncts to formal decision-making structures. Higgins, in his book on local government in Canada identifies two types of institutionalized citizen participation; the usual type: groups which are delegated specific and limited powers to perform defined tasks (library boards), and the Unicity experiment of Resident Advisory Groups (RAGs).<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Habermas, Legitimation Crisis, pp. 36-37.

<sup>18</sup> The variables 'urban effect' and 'organizational type' may be equated. Therefore, a group which achieves the urban effect of social change may be classified as the organizational type social movement, and so on (social change-urban social movement, reform-protest, control-participation).

<sup>19</sup> Donald J. Higgins, Urban Canada: Its Government and Politics, (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1977), pp. 200-206.

Although experiments like RAGs<sup>20</sup> have been introduced to increase citizen awareness of the workings of the present system they have by no means been introduced to challenge or change the urban system. Overburdened by myriads of technical data and handicapped by inadequate resource supports (no independent research budgets), this form of participation has become highly irrelevant. Few policy statements emanate from RAGs and few councillors take them seriously much less heed their advice. The levels of participation in RAGs have lowered and citizens concerned about more effective action and dissent have short-circuited the system through the vehicle of pressure groups.<sup>21</sup>

This participation classification used for the continuum expands Higgins' definition to include community development strategies. Non-politicized community development work practiced by most governments and quasi-government (social) agencies is intended to give more power to the people by encouraging maximum participation in the social system. It teaches individuals how to use the system more effectively while still playing by the system's rules. As well,

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<sup>20</sup> The innovation of Resident Advisory Groups was given statutory effect within the 'Unicity' legislation in 1971. The RAGs are intended to advise and assist local community councillors on an on-going basis at Community Committee meetings. Members of the RAG are selected by community residents at a Community Conference. The RAGs have been given no formal statutory power beyond that of advice. For a more detailed analysis of RAGs see, Philip H. Wichern, "Patterns of Public Participation in Canadian Urban Policy Making: The Case of Winnipeg's Resident Advisory Groups," (Antigonish: A Paper Prepared for the Atlantic Provinces Political Science Association's 1st Annual Meeting, 17-18 October 1975).

<sup>21</sup> "Protest Groups Often Short-cut Gov't Structure," Winnipeg Tribune, (21 October 1974), p. 21.

community development work tends to be government funded. These financial strings tied to the state tend to conservatize the social action strategies of community development.

Many writers who have focused on the phenomenon of citizen participation have come to the conclusion that such action ultimately reinforces the status quo. Edmund Burke views citizen participation as a useful strategy for the achievement of goals and objectives of the state and therefore, ultimately as a strategy of cooptation.

Citizen participation . . . , is a strategy. In one case, citizen participation is advocated as an administrative technique to protect the stability or even the existence of an organization; in another, it is viewed as an educational or therapeutic tool for changing attitudes; in still another case, it is proposed as a means for assisting an organization to define its goals and objectives.<sup>22</sup>

In Sherry Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation only one rung (citizen control) comes close to breaking away from participation as cooptation.

Sherry Arnstein . . . demonstrates how very often participation is manipulation or therapy, how occasionally it involves informing, consulting or placating (which she categorizes as tokenism), and how it only rarely reaches the stage where citizens can be said to have attained a degree of power. Arnstein and other liberal critics indicate clearly that participation does not work, but they stop short. . . . For even if the citizen participation of Arnstein worked and became what she calls "citizen control", without other fundamental changes in the political and economic system, the results would be the reintegration of marginal elements and the bolstering of the status quo.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Edmund Burke, "Citizen Participation Strategies," Journal of the American Institute of Planners 34 (September 1968), p. 288.

<sup>23</sup> Katherine Coit, "Local Action, Not Citizen Participation," Marxism and the Metropolis, p. 299.

Institutionalized citizen participation falls within the urban effect of control and only marginally further along the continuum than voting due to the potential for increased access to information and a more collective approach.

The next point on the urban political continuum is the single-issue citizens group. These are groups of citizens who spontaneously form loose organizations in reaction to a crisis in their immediate geographical region. Higgins divides this group of political actors into two types: ratepayers and neighbourhood associations. Ratepayers are generally a more reactive, defensive association of individuals committed to protecting their space from incompatible uses, higher taxes, and demographic changes. Ratepayers associations usually include only owners of property. Neighbourhood associations on the other hand include both property owners and tenants and have a tendency to employ a more demanding confrontative style of political relations. However due to their single-issue orientation, they both dissolve once the battle has been fought and the outcome decided. There is no overt desire to change the balance of power relations, only a desire to cure the problem of the day.

The organizational tightness of these groups is usually very weak with membership undergoing great changes and fluctuations. This organizational weakness causes difficulty in setting and reaching short and long term objectives. Although some groups achieve their goals. . .

Many succumb to discouragement, others cannot muster sufficient resources to hold together even a small group of dedicated supporters, and a few disappear because

they have achieved their goal. Of those that survive many remain as they were originally created, but others broaden their base, form coalitions with like minded groups, create selective inducements and become institutionalized.<sup>24</sup>

Although single-issue citizen groups rarely advocate significant change in class relations or the rearrangement of the relations between elements in the urban system, they often call for changes within the individual element themselves. For example, they may push for changes in the manner an urban phenomenon is produced, exchanged, consumed, or managed. However, the linkages between the elements are not made because of the narrow issue focus. When gains are made, they are specific to one element. Using housing as an example, single-issue groups may fight for changes in the way housing is produced (fighting developers), the way housing is managed (maintenance by-laws), the manner in which housing is consumed (better quality housing), and the manner in which housing is exchanged (fairer prices). They rarely make the linkage between elements nor do they develop a multi-faceted critique leading to social change. However, if they enjoy some success they may achieve changes within individual elements. Such positive changes achieve the urban effect of reform and the organizational type of protest. Because single-issue groups often have a narrow fragmented analysis and a fairly loose collectivity of individuals, the groups are placed at the beginning point of the protest category on the continuum, but well

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<sup>24</sup> Paul Pross, "Pressure Groups: Adaptive Instruments of Political Communication," Pressure Group Behaviour in Canada, (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1975), p. 11.

beyond the classification of participation.

The next category of urban political action on the continuum is the special interest policy lobby. This group differs from the single-issue group mainly in terms of scope. Policy lobbies tend to deal with concerns from a wider perspective than do single-issue groups. All policy ramifications of a particular concern are scrutinized as opposed to a small fragment of that concern. Although policy groups and single-issue groups may use similar tactics (delegations, briefs, discussions and public demonstrations), policy groups tend to take a longer-range perspective since policy changes take much longer to accomplish than the resolution of particular problems. In addition, policy lobbies generally adopt a city-wide focus rather than restrict themselves to a specific neighbourhood.

Policy lobbies are situated further along the continuum than the single-issue group but still within the urban effect designation of reform. Although the policy focus allows for a more integrated analysis of the problem than preceding categories, the focus on the state will at best allow for reform to occur. Since change is sought within existing policy frameworks social change will not be gained by such groups.

The next point on the continuum is the electoral political group. Electoral political groups include parties, coalitions and associations which develop platforms through the formulation of policy, build coherent electoral bases (workers and members), and compete in the electoral process. Electoral groups are capable of achieving all three levels of urban effect depending upon the

ideological stripe of the constituent members. Political groups which support the status quo will likely achieve the urban effect of control. Groups which advocate changes in the style, policy, and organization of governmental institutions will likely achieve reform. Groups which call for change from the existing capitalist system of production and attendant social relations have the possibility of achieving social change, if popularly elected.

Urban political critics like Stephen Schecter and Dimitri Roussopoulos caution that the rigours of electoral politics may divert energies from the project of achieving social change. Radical electoral groups face a dilemma when attempting to produce social change through the existing electoral system.

On the one hand, capturing municipal office provides them with a temporary buffer against other levels of the state and a platform from which to raise issues and mobilise support. On the other hand, the subordination of municipal governments to other levels of the state and to the power of corporate capital, coupled with the fiscal crisis of the state, allows little room for manouever. In such a situation strong pressures exist for municipal governments to carry out the dirty work of capital as, strapped for funds, they rationalise jobs and services and thereby undercut the radical thrust of the movement. These specific constraints only add to the more general risk that electoral participation entails, namely the channeling of revolutionary energies into the administration of capitalism's contradictions and the legitimisation of its institutions.<sup>25</sup>

This danger notwithstanding, electoral political groups are the first group listed on the continuum to have the potential of securing

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<sup>25</sup> Schecter, The Politics of Urban Liberation, pp. 159-160.

For further elaboration of the radical critique of electoralism see, Dimitri Roussopoulos, "Beyond Reformism: The Ambiguity of the Urban Question," Our Generation 11 (Winter 1976), pp. 46-58.

social change. For this potential to be realized the group must possess a critical analysis of capitalism as it affects urban space as well as a significant base of members from which to work.

Consequently, electoral political groups are positioned along the continuum at the threshold point where reform changes to social change.

The final point on the urban political continuum is extra-parliamentary neighbourhood movement (socialist urban politics).

The only example of this type of group in Canada are the neighbourhood councils advocated by the Montreal Citizens' Movement (MCM). The MCM is an urban political force which has been active in Montreal since 1974. It has attempted to further its socialist critique of the urban crisis by electoral methods and popular mobilization through the formation of neighbourhood councils.

The neighbourhood council concept of which the MCM speaks, is a recognition of the fact that socialist electoral ideals will meet considerable resistance from the supporters of capitalist ideology. Neighbourhood councils are a tool to allow workers an opportunity to resist the effects of capital within their community. Organized and run on democratic principles, neighbourhood councils push for complete neighbourhood control over development projects and community land. A socialist urban government would promote not legislate the council approach. The initiative and control would remain at the local level. As citizens become politicized through confrontations with capital the councils will strengthen in number and resolve. A socialist government would aid this journey toward

neighbourhood self-management, through the transfer of power from the centralized urban level to the local level. Ultimately the MCM hopes to link neighbourhood council community struggles with organized workplace struggles in order to oppose capital on both fronts.

This extra-parliamentary model by definition operates outside existing governmental institutions. Tactics such as supporting rent strikes, and self-reduction campaigns<sup>26</sup> are well within the mandate of these councils. The idea behind the councils is to radically alter existing institutions not merely reorganize them. The principles underlying this concept include:

- a socialist analysis of the urban crisis, implying an anti-capitalist strategy, and structural, rather than administrative solutions;
- emphasis on extra-parliamentary urban struggles and the creation of units of potential popular power;
- a second front approach to the overall social question, relating, not subordinating urban issues to workplace issues;
- a class analysis which takes into account the crucial role of the new workers: professionals like teachers, social workers, technocrats, and others;
- promotion of non-authoritarian collective and self-management solutions at every level.<sup>27</sup>

Due to its critical analysis of capital and collective nature, the MCM style neighbourhood council is placed within the social change urban effect category on the continuum. These councils not only reject the present system of social relations but have devised tactics which

<sup>26</sup>The tactic of self-reduction involves paying less or withholding partial payment for a given commodity. In European countries this tactic is used most commonly in opposition to rent and utility increases.

<sup>27</sup>Marc Raboy, "The Future of Montreal and the MCM," Our Generation 12 (Fall 1978), p. 14

remain outside the present rules imposed by the dominant system. This example of political grouping is the most well developed example of its kind in Canada. It is the only group presented in this theoretical discussion with the philosophical foundation necessary to achieve social change as defined at the outset of this chapter.

Therefore, along the cross axis of the continuum of urban political action moving from the urban effect of control through reform to social change, the following groups or individuals are found: non-participating individuals, voting individuals, legitimized participatory groups, single-issue citizen lobbies, special interest policy lobbies, electoral political groups and neighbourhood councils (socialist formations).

#### HAC And The Context Of Urban Political Theory: An Evaluation

The purpose of this section of the chapter is to place HAC in relation to the dominant political groupings/individuals described by the continuum. In order to accomplish this task, HAC's method of issue analysis, strategic/tactical posture, and organizational makeup must be examined in light of the theory presented.

HAC's analysis of the housing crisis in Winnipeg's inner city is clearly an analysis which would lead to the urban effect of reform. The Coalition's examination of the housing situation includes a detailed description of the many issues and problems related to inner city housing, a critique of state actions, or lack thereof, undertaken to manage the problems associated with the housing situation, and a set of recommended policy and program directions HAC would have the

different levels of the state adopt to address the problem. HAC's definition of the problem goes well beyond any single-issue and its geographical focus although not city-wide, includes a multiplicity of inner city neighbourhoods. HAC's solutions such as rehabilitation of inner city stock are policy oriented and stem from the conviction that the state has to intervene in areas where the private sector refuses to invest. In HAC's view, inaction by the state has been an inflammatory agent exacerbating existing problems such as, the low quality, the diminishing quantity, and the high cost in relation to income, of inner city housing. HAC's solutions are a reflection of the premise that housing problems may be cured through administrative and organizational changes within the state.

The arguments and logic contained in HAC's position are clear, logical, and fundamentally sound as far as they go. However, they do not address the actual cause of the housing crisis. Nowhere in HAC's printed statements is there an indication that the housing crisis is an inevitable consequence of the capitalist mode of production. Because of this essential omission in HAC's argument its solutions advocate change within the system (changes in the management of housing questions) rather than changing the system itself (social change). Therefore, HAC's analysis of the housing question places it in the 'protest' category achieving the urban effect of reform.

An examination of HAC's strategic position and organizational makeup further refines the group's placement on the theoretical continuum. HAC's strategy and tactics also lead to the urban effect of reform. HAC's strategic position most closely matches that of the

special interest lobby group. HAC's dominant strategy is to pressure all levels of the state to become actively involved in housing in the inner city. The tactics employed to exert the pressure include: presentations of briefs to various levels of the state, appearing as delegations, issuing press releases, information sharing, leaking documents to sympathetic politicians, letter writing, individual questioning of political representatives, sponsoring town halls/forums, and participation in governmental advisory committees. As well as reacting to policy pronouncements of the state, HAC has initiated debate on its own policy position with many levels of the state. This initiation posture sets HAC apart from single-issue groups which usually react to an individual crisis. Its policy orientation coupled with its lobby strategy place HAC very close to the special interest lobby group on the continuum.

HAC's organizational base is a coalition of representatives or workers from social agencies who live and/or work in the inner city. Although a collective, HAC's voice does not necessarily flow from the people directly affected. HAC consciously rejected a neighbourhood organizing strategy in favour of the advocacy approach. HAC does not act as a representative of the citizens directly affected; rather, it acts on behalf of the agencies who experience the housing crisis through the difficulties encountered by their clients. This approach, which operates at arm's length from the individual who is in direct contact with the problem, further separates HAC from the single-issue groups, which in most cases form to react to a situation which immediately affects them.

On the other hand, membership or participation in HAC is on a purely voluntary basis. Time is donated when it is available from agency work. This fragile voluntary network parallels the single-issue group more than the formalized lobby groups like Pollution Probe and others which operate on a non-profit basis in order to solicit funds and carry on a full-time organization.

In short, HAC's analysis of the problem, strategic posture, and organizational form indicate that the Coalition may best be categorized as a protest group which has the potential of achieving the urban effect of reform. With specific reference to the continuum HAC may be placed beyond the single-issue group but not on par with the special interest policy lobby. Although it matches this categorization in almost every other respect, HAC falls short of the policy lobby categorization because of its organizational fragility.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE IMPLICATIONS OF HOUSING ACTION COALITION'S CURRENT ORIENTATION

Having explored the Coalition in relation to the theory of housing, the theory of the role of the state, and the theory of urban political action, the task now turns to examining HAC's will and ability to act given its present contextual orientation. The previous chapter revealed that HAC has the potential of achieving the urban effect of reform. It is the intention of this chapter to discover if HAC's current orientation is capable of achieving reform. First, HAC's will to act must be studied to determine if the group wishes to continue its lobby strategy against City Council. Second, City Council must be analyzed to discern if the lobby strategy has any chance of success. Questionnaire surveys were administered to HAC members and city councillors within two months of the 20 December 1978 City Council meeting to gain the information necessary for this examination.

#### The Will Of Housing Action Coalition To Act

To determine HAC's will to act sixteen interviews were conducted with the most active or key participants throughout the Coalition's history. The open-ended interview consists of questions which seek to unearth any preferences for future action and strategy. As well, the

members were asked to evaluate the Coalition's success thus far and to list those councillors who might respond to HAC's pressure (see Appendix A). The questionnaires were administered shortly after the 20 December 1978 Council meeting and respondents were asked to base their answers from the time of their initial involvement in HAC to that event. The first part of this section will briefly present the findings of the survey and the second part will draw conclusions concerning HAC's desire for future political action.

Housing Action Coalition members indicated that the state, notably local government, is still the prime concern for the group. The group sees government retreat from legitimization activities, or in other words, state withdrawal from social housing programs as a result of fiscal crisis and its ideological conservative position, as the cause of the housing crisis.<sup>1</sup> The majority of the members interviewed stated that the local level is the most logical and vulnerable target for continued Coalition action.

Most Coalition members expressed the desire to continue the lobby strategy to push for policy change within local government. The need to become a more effective lobby vis-à-vis the media was mentioned often. In this regard almost all of the members chose public education as a beneficial course to follow. It was felt that HAC's

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<sup>1</sup>The concept of the state's withdrawal from programs of legitimization is supported by recent authors and examined in the Manitoba case. See George Janosik and Robert Voline, "Blood-Bath in the Red River Valley," This Magazine 12 (July-August 1978).

lobbying could become more effective if the general public are made more aware of the housing problems in the city. Some members indicated that suburban issues must be linked to inner city concerns in order to reach suburban populations. As well, HAC members expressed the desire to move away from the advocacy arm's length, client-worker position and build a more direct but broadly-based constituency. This is not to say that HAC wants to indulge in community organizing; rather, it wishes to carve out a defined base of support for its positions and actions. This desire is tempered somewhat by inadequate resources such as manpower, money and time.

Few Coalition members felt that electoral politics could be a possible future route. All respondents indicated that HAC could not enter the electoral arena on its own. Those who did support the idea suggested that HAC retain its strong housing focus and lobby function at the same time as pursuing electoral goals. A broadly based reform coalition of interested groups was mentioned as one electoral mechanism in which HAC could become involved.

Coalition members did not endorse extra-legal tactics such as rent strikes and self-reduction campaigns as useful vehicles to reach the goal of improved inner city housing conditions. Those who did sanction this form of dissent stated that a mass-based support must first exist or state reprisal would easily render the tactics ineffective.

Housing Action Coalition members admit that past lobbying activities have done little to change the situation of deteriorating housing conditions in the inner city. In fact, not only does the

Coalition suspect that few councillors support their efforts, they hypothesize that their successful media actions have served to polarize Council regarding the housing problem, with the majority being in opposition to an enlightened housing position. Although the majority of Council is opposed, the explicit drawing of battle-lines among councillors helps groups like HAC to more fully comprehend the political realities of the situation. The undecided councillor is forced into making a definite stand. This knowledge greatly assists pressure groups when plotting future strategy.

When asked which city councillors were in agreement with HAC's positions and would respond favourably to HAC lobbying, members cited only Councillors Zuchen and Keeper as close allies. Councillors regarded as sympathetic to housing issues but not in complete agreement with HAC's aspirations were Councillors Chornopyski, Skowron, Wade, Johnson, Westbury, Bockstael, Norrie and to a lesser degree Jorowski and Ducharme. Even so, this only represents 37 percent of the Council.

Clearly, Housing Action Coalition wishes to remain a lobby group, pressing for improved government housing policy. The object or target of its energies is still the state, specifically local government. There is a desire to build up a direct base of support to further strengthen its lobby function, but no apparent resources exist to do so. Consequently, it is likely that the Coalition will retain its client-worker, arm's length advocacy position. In other words, HAC will continue to lobby on behalf of the disadvantaged instead of building a constituency which may on occasion actively lobby on its own behalf. With regard to tactics, the Coalition feels that its

lobbying must become more sophisticated through better use of the media and through public education techniques. Members do not endorse and would not become involved in extra-legal activities to gain victories.

In short, the Coalition's will is to continue pressuring City Council, but in a more determined and more effective manner. To determine whether this is an appropriate strategy an analysis of the political stance of Council on the housing issue must be undertaken. If it is demonstrated that the majority of Council is unmoveable on the issue then the Coalition would be well advised to adopt other strategies.

#### The Ability Of HAC To Produce Policy Change Within City Council

To determine if HAC's reform strategy of lobbying City Council has any chance of success, interviews were conducted with individual members of Council to examine the 'lobbyability' of individual councillors and Council as a whole. The questions were developed to discover the councillors' stance regarding housing, levels of housing information, and attitudes towards citizens' groups and pressure groups. The first part of this section will explain the questionnaire model, the second will present the results, and the third will draw conclusions regarding HAC's possibilities for success given its current strategic orientation.

The model of 'lobbyability' utilized for this thesis is based on a model of public policy and decision-making developed by

M. J. Goldsmith.<sup>2</sup> Goldsmith examines the demands on, and the response capacity and outputs of a given political system of governmental organization. To determine demands, Goldsmith examines influences and pressures on the political actors both from within and without the immediate political system. In Goldsmith's model, the response capacity or lobbyability of the system becomes the product of the three interacting factors of communications, information, and political will.

Channels of communication must exist so that demands may reach those who are to respond. The effects on a system's response capacity will be enhanced to the extent that communication exists and demands reach decision-makers. Secondly, the quality and quantity of information in the possession of decision-makers concerning demands will affect both the response capacity and the output or the ultimate decision. Finally, the decision-makers must have the political will to respond to particular demands. By political will, Goldsmith means the ability to respond given constraints of the system and its external environment. In addition to the systemic impediments, Goldsmith notes internal, ideological barriers to action.

Nevertheless, there is an additional sense in which the authorities lack the political will to respond to demands, namely that they are unwilling to do anything about particular sets of demands. . . . In one sense, this unwillingness to respond represents an output in itself, and the failure of authorities to react to demands because of their unwillingness may have important consequences.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> M. J. Goldsmith, Housing Demands and Housing Policy - A Case Study, (Kingston: The Institute of Local Government, Queen's University, 1972).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

For the purposes of this thesis, Goldsmith's model has been altered to focus on the response capacity or lobbyability of a given system, namely Winnipeg City Council. The demands in the modified model are narrowed only to those of the Coalition. To determine Council's lobbyability in terms of Housing Action Coalition demands, three factors much like Goldsmith's are explored. The communication category is changed to accessibility since councillors must be accessible and open to interest group delegations and pressure before communication may take place. The information category remains unchanged but relates very specifically to Winnipeg housing information. Lastly, political will is transformed to housing stance or the councillor's position with regard to specific Housing Action Coalition demands.

The interview questions were framed such that the factors of housing stance, accessibility, and information level could be clearly ascertained from the replies (see Appendix C). Housing stance questions sought to discover councillors' positions on key HAC proposals (housing committee, housing division, etc.). Accessibility questions concerned themselves with councillors' attitudes toward interest groups in general and HAC in particular. In addition, questions regarding councillors' perceptions of their role and the role of the administration were included to determine accessibility. Questions demanding knowledge of housing policy and program techniques were posed to determine the councillors' operating level of housing information.

The questionnaire replies were scored to give more weight to

responses which are favourable to HAC's lobbying position (see Appendix C). Within the housing stance factor a total of thirty-nine points is available. If twenty or greater is achieved then the councillor is categorized as having a positive or sympathetic housing stance. This does not mean that the individual is in complete agreement with HAC's position, but that the person is in favour of greater city involvement and responsibility in the social housing field. A total of twenty-five points is possible for the accessibility factor. If thirteen or greater is reached then the councillor is categorized highly accessible. A total of twenty points is possible for the information variable. If more than fifteen points is gained the councillor is categorized highly informed. The higher 75 percent threshold rate was chosen because councillors' base level of information on the housing situation is already quite high. They regularly receive technical documentation from the civic administration in addition to the information gained from the local media. Another reason for setting a higher threshold is that housing information per se is a less value-laden factor than either of the other two (accessibility and housing stance); therefore the barriers to information acceptance are lower and more would be required for a councillor to be considered well-informed.

When grouped, the three factors form eight different categories of councillor, each with its own level of responsiveness to the lobbying strategy. Initially, councillors are divided into two groups: those who are in favour of HAC's housing stance (high housing) and those who are against HAC's housing stance (low housing).

The other two categories of accessibility and information, in their high and low forms, are added to fully define the eight categories (see Table 9).

Category one (high housing, high accessibility, and high information) represents councillors who are closely aligned to HAC's housing position, accessible to interest groups like HAC, and have high operating levels of housing information. This category needs little pressure since it would amount to preaching to the converted. Category two (high housing, low accessibility, and high information) represents councillors who are aligned with HAC's housing position, operating with high levels of housing information, but are not accessible to interest groups like HAC. This category also needs little pressure and would not be reachable in any case. Category three (high housing, high accessibility and low information) represents councillors who are in agreement with HAC's housing position, accessible to groups like HAC and operating at low levels of housing information. It is important for HAC to strongly lobby councillors in this category and supply them with relevant documentation to support its case. This category is highly accessible to external groups, including groups with positions opposite to those of HAC. Therefore, it is incumbent upon HAC to reach these councillors with a well researched case for increased city housing involvement. Category four (high housing, low accessibility, and low information) indicates councillors who are sympathetic to HAC's position, not accessible to external pressure, and operating at low levels of information. Since this category is not open to HAC

pressure, lobbying energies should be placed elsewhere despite the low levels of housing information.

Councillors who are in opposition to HAC's housing stance also fall into four separate categories. Category five (low housing, high accessibility, and low information) represents councillors who oppose HAC's housing position, are accessible to interest groups, and operate at low levels of housing information. These councillors are the prime target of HAC's lobby pressure. If HAC can supply information to support its demands to a councillor in this category there is a chance of altering the housing stance. Category six (low housing, high accessibility, and high information) suggests that the councillor is against HAC's housing position, highly accessible, and has a high level of housing information. Accessibility notwithstanding, these councillors are difficult to pressure because of their contrary position coupled with and supported by reasonable information levels. Categories seven and eight (low housing, low accessibility, and low information; and low housing, low accessibility, and high information), are classified as the unalterable opposition, impervious to HAC lobbying. This decision is based on the combination of the low housing and low accessibility factors. Category seven councillors may change their position subject to new information. However, it is doubtful that such information would be received from HAC. Category eight represents the unmoveable, entrenched opposition. Lobbying efforts would be wasted on this group.

Therefore, these eight categories (grouped factor categories) give clues to HAC's chances of success through the use of the lobby

strategy. If a majority of councillors fall within categories three (high housing, high accessibility, and low information) and five (low housing, high accessibility, and low information) HAC's strategy has positive possibilities. If the majority is supportive of HAC's position (categories one to four) lobbying may expedite positive action. On the other hand, if the majority is opposed to HAC's position and difficult to lobby (categories six to eight) alternative strategies should be explored.

The interviews to gain the information necessary for this model, were conducted between 4 January 1979 and 28 February 1979. A letter introducing the author and the project was sent to all twenty-nine councillors and the Mayor. Follow-up phone calls were placed and twenty-six (87 percent) of the thirty person Council granted interviews. Four councillors (13 percent) refused to take part in the exercise. These four (Councillors Hudson, Provost, Ragsdill, and Rizzuto) all voted for the elimination of the city's non-profit housing corporation and for the adoption of the non-involvement housing policy. All represent suburban wards.

After scoring the responses, councillors were ranked according to the three separate categories of housing stance, accessibility to interest groups, and operating levels of housing information. The cut-off points were imposed and the high/low classifications delineated (see Table 8).<sup>4</sup> According to the criteria in the model

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<sup>4</sup> It must be remembered that all ranking in this model is specific to one issue - housing - in relation to the demands of one specific policy lobby group - Housing Action Coalition.

TABLE 8  
COUNCILLOR CLASSIFICATION BY FACTOR

Councillor	Accessibility Score	Councillor	Housing Stance Score	Councillor	Information Score
Johnson	21	Keeper	38	Bockstael	20
Zuken	20	Zuken	37	Ernst	20
Keeper	16	Chornopyski	32	Keeper	20
McGonigal	16	Johnson	32	McGonigal	20
Norrie	16	Ducharme	30	Westbury	20
Wade	14	Wade	30	Zuken	20
Skowron	13	Skowron	28	Filmon	19
Bockstael	11	Bockstael	27	Gerrie	19
McGarva	11	Westbury	25	Johnson	19
Jorowski	9	Jorowski	23	O'Shaughnessy	19
Ernst	8	Filmon	17	Yanofsky	19
Smith	8	McGarva	17	Ross	18
Westbury	8	Norrie	16	Skowron	18
Ducharme	7	Moore	14	Wade	18
Filmon	7	Smith	12	Chornopyski	17
Ross	7	O'Shaughnessy	11	Ducharme	17
Steen	7	Yanofsky	10	Jorowski	17
Yanofsky	7	McGonigal	9	Leech	17
Moore	6	Angus	8	Norrie	17
Nordman	5	Ross	8	Steen	17
Chornopyski	4	Gerrie	6	McGarva	15
O'Shaughnessy	3	Nordman	6	Moore	15
Piercy	3	Steen	6	Piercy	15
Angus	2	Leech	3	Nordman	13
Gerrie	2	Piercy	3	Smith	12
Leech	0	Ernst	2	Angus	11

ten councillors of those interviewed (38 percent) may be categorized as sharing HAC's housing stance. Only seven councillors (27 percent) may be viewed as accessible to interest groups. Of these seven, one (Councillor McGonigal) stated that HAC had no persuasive influence on her Council decisions concerning housing. Most councillors (77 percent) have good operating level of housing information. According to this analysis of councillors, Council may be categorized as having a housing stance unsympathetic to HAC's position, inaccessible to interest group pressure, and possessing reasonable levels of housing information. Therefore, it would appear that a furtherance of HAC's lobby strategy would be fruitless in the face of a politically opposed, inaccessible, highly informed Council.

Furthermore, the model states that if a majority of councillors fall within grouped factor categories three and five then lobbying may prove to be a successful reform strategy (see Table 9). When these grouped factor categories are examined it is evident that no councillors fall within either of the categories - there are no councillors who could be classified as particularly susceptible to HAC lobby pressure. On the other hand, sixteen councillors (62 percent) fall in categories six to eight. These councillors represent the unmoveable opposition or those councillors who would not be receptive to HAC's position. The remaining ten councillors (38 percent) fall into categories one and two. Councillors in these categories are already sympathetic to HAC and need no further pressure to support positive housing measures. Clearly, the total absence of councillors vulnerable to HAC pressure and the existence

TABLE 9

## COUNCILLOR CLASSIFICATION BY GROUPED FACTOR CATEGORY

1 HH/HA/HI	2 HH/LA/HI	3 HH/HA/LI	4 HH/LA/LI	5 LH/HA/LI	6 LH/HA/HI	7 LH/LA/LI	8 LH/LA/HI
No Need To Lobby	Lobby	Difficult	To Lobby	Lobby		Non-Lobbyable	Opposition
Johnson	Bockstael			McGonigal	Angus	Ernst	
Keeper	Chornopyski			Norrie	Moore	Filmon	
Showron	Ducharme				McGarva	Gerrie	
Wade	Jorowski				Nordman	Leech	
Zuken	Westbury				Piercy	O'Shaugnessy	
					Smith	Ross	
						Steen	
						Yanofsky	

of a non-lobbyable majority opposition bloc calls into question the usefulness of HAC's lobby strategy.

With all models which attempt to categorize individuals, several incongruities exist between certain individual subject responses and their final characterization. Although Councillor Ducharme scored high in the housing stance factor he is at odds with the Coalition regarding the non-profit corporation issue. Councillor Ducharme supports the municipal non-profit only if it provides rehabilitated resale housing. He does not support a rental component. Councillor Smith who is categorized as low housing supported the non-profit corporation as presented to Council (resale only) on an experimental basis. Then-Deputy Mayor Norrie actively supports a municipal non-profit for resale and lease. However his stand concerning HAC demands such as the housing committee and housing division caused the low housing categorization. Lastly, although Councillor McGonigal has been categorized as having high accessibility to interest groups and interested citizens she did not mention HAC as having any persuasive influence with councillors or any success at raising housing as a public/political issue.

City Council is the ultimate elected body within the city but it is not the only target for a lobbying strategy. If councillors on the key committees of Council which deal with housing matters are predisposed to HAC's stance then pressure on these committees may promote some action. These committees or bodies include the Committee on Environment (which deals with planning matters), the Executive Policy Committee (which deals with matters of policy and screens

proposals from the four standing committees including the Committee on Environment), and the Official Delegation (which presents the city's demands including housing to the provincial government). In all the key bodies or committees the opposition is in the majority (see Table 10). As well most councillors on these committees are of low accessibility and are therefore not receptive to HAC lobbying. The only key committee which is even close to parity between allies and the opposition is the Committee on Environment. Not only is the reform strategy of lobbying destined to fail with Council, it is likely to fail with the three key bodies of Council which deal with housing matters.

Through the use of Goldsmith's modified model it becomes clear that HAC's lobby efforts will not likely produce any changes in the attitudes of councillors. This conclusion, derived from the model, is supported by a closer analysis of the replies to certain questions in the survey. Councillors were asked to rank the following issues in terms of priority: aqueduct, historic preservation, housing policy, Plan Winnipeg, problems of urban natives, restraint/fiscal problems, Sherbrook-McGregor Overpass, storm sewer assistance, tow truck contracts, and other. The replies were ranked by assigning ten points to the first priority, nine points to the second, and so on. The top priority in Council's mind is the fiscal restraint question followed by the storm sewer assistance and the Sherbrook-McGregor Overpass issues. Housing policy is ranked sixth as an issue by City Council. The City Centre-Fort Rouge Community Committee ranked housing policy as the top priority issue. The suburban community

TABLE 10

## KEY COMMITTEES - COUNCILLOR CLASSIFICATION BY GROUPED FACTOR CATEGORY

Key Committees of Council	Support Increased Housing Involvement				Opposed To Increased Housing Involvement			
	1 HH/HA/HI	2 HH/LA/HI	3 HH/HA/LI	4 HH/LA/LI	5 LH/HA/LI	6 LH/HA/LI	7 LH/LA/LI	8 LH/LA/HI
Committee on Environment	Keeper	Chornopyski Westbury					Moore	Ernst O'Shaughnessy Steen
Executive Policy Committee		Ducharme					McGonigal Norrie	McGarva Filmon Leech Steen Yanofsky
Official Delegation							McGonigal Norrie	Ernst Filmon Steen Yanofsky

NOTE: Of the non-respondent councillors, only Councillor Ragsdill sits on any of these key committees (EPC). He could not be classified because of his refusal to be interviewed. However, he did vote to eliminate the non-profit and adopt the non-involvement guidelines at the 20 December 1978 City Council meeting.

committees ranked housing as follows: St. Boniface-St. Vital second, Assiniboine Park-Fort Garry fourth, Lord Selkirk-West Kildonan third, East Kildonan-Transcona fifth, and St. James-Assiniboia ninth. Mayor Steen placed housing fifth. Housing appears to be largely an inner city concern.

Councillors were asked to list the three most pressing inner city housing issues. They cited the lack of low-cost housing as the major concern. Next came the abundance of low quality, deteriorating, and sub-standard housing in the area. The third concern focused around the income problem of many inner city residents. This concern is based on the premise that future and existing housing requires deeper subsidies than currently exist to meet the needs of much of the resident population of the inner city. In other words, people are paying too great a share of income for shelter. Other concerns, though not in the top three, included the desire to preserve existing neighbourhoods, the problem of tenant destruction, and the need for responsible home ownership.

The majority of councillors were not supportive of Housing Action Coalition's housing proposals. Fourteen councillors (54 percent) stated they saw the need for a comprehensive housing policy. However, three of the fourteen qualified their reply by stating that such a policy should be comprehensive within the constraints of a non-provision support role as enunciated on 20 December 1978 by Council. Therefore, only eleven councillors (42 percent) share HAC's understanding of what is meant by a comprehensive housing policy. Only eight councillors (31 percent) thought a housing division would

improve efficiency through a rationalization of existing bureaucracy (NIP, inspections, research). Ten councillors (38 percent) supported the idea of a municipal non-profit corporation which would provide rental and resale housing and the idea of low interest municipal loans to landlords to help meet city upgrading orders. On the other hand, nineteen out of the twenty-six councillors interviewed (73 percent) support the city's housing guidelines. The only Housing Action Coalition positions supported by a majority of the councillors were the need for a demolition control by-law (69 percent), tax incentives to resident homeowners for rehabilitation of dwellings (73 percent) and the need for an improved, more accessible city housing data bank (69 percent).

In response to the question regarding the role of the councillor, most replied that they view their role as acting as representative of the constituents using his or her best judgement. This view was followed closely by those councillors who see their role as representing constituents after having informed them of the issues. Only one councillor sees the role as a promoter of citizens' groups to facilitate involvement and consultation. No councillors regard their role as a delegate of the citizens of the community. The dominant councillor perception of the role of the civic administration is that it should provide technical expertise for citizens and councillors; however, almost the same number of councillors stated that the role of civic staff is to function as policy advisors. No councillors felt that the civic staff should advocate policy.

The great majority of councillors receive their most reliable

information concerning the public's opinion on housing issues from various interest group briefs and delegations. The interest group which has had the most persuasive influences on counillors' decisions concerning housing is the Institute of Urban Studies (a CMHC funded urban research institute associated with the University of Winnipeg). Housing Action Coalition placed a distant seventh as a group having any influence with Council members. Councillors view the Institute of Urban Studies as having been most successful at raising housing as a public/political issue within the city. Housing Action Coalition came in a very close second in this ranking.

When asked to delineate the roles of the private sector, civic government, provincial government, and federal government in an idealized situation where all housing needs would be met, the majority of councillors stated that the private sector should be providing market housing (profit housing). However, all levels of government should be providing incentives and subsidies to the private sector in order that the market may be widened and expanded. The civic level should play a support role through existing by-laws, planning legislation, and incentives to the private sector through the provision of infrastructure and amenities. The provincial government in addition to providing incentives should directly enter the housing field only where gaps exist in private sector housing provision (non-profitable housing). Lastly, the federal government should provide the funding to support the incentive and building programs of the junior levels of government as well as provide direct incentives to the private sector.

This general analysis of selected responses coupled with the evidence gained from the use of Goldsmith's modified model leads to the conclusion that HAC's current and future strategic position (the lobbying of City Council to produce positive effects in Winnipeg's housing situation) is likely to fail in the face of a highly polarized City Council where the majority is unsympathetic to HAC's position and inaccessible to HAC's pressure. The only positive effect continued lobbying would have would be in keeping the housing debate alive and visible. Using lobbying as a strategy for public education or politicization and not as a tool for housing reform is a realistic position for HAC. However, it is clear from the analysis of Council's response capacity to HAC that the Coalition should re-assess its use of lobbying as a strategy for change and explore other means of obtaining improved housing conditions. The next chapter will utilize the theoretical continuum, presented previously, to aid in the exploration of alternative strategies the Coalition may wish to pursue and the transformations in analysis and organization HAC would have to undergo to successfully adopt them.

## CHAPTER VII

### ALTERNATIVES FOR STRATEGIC INTERVENTION

In the last chapter it was determined that HAC's present lobby function will most likely not achieve the desired results of improved housing conditions in Winnipeg's inner city. The purpose of this chapter is to explore other strategic options available to HAC. The options will be examined in relation to the continuum of urban political action, to determine the level of analysis, organizational type, and the kind of urban effect they may achieve. The impact of the options on HAC will then be discussed in terms of organizational changes and analytical shifts necessary to achieve the urban effects associated with the options. The options to be explored include: retreat/dissolution of the Coalition, institutional participation, community development, an improved lobby function through public education, reform electoral politics, and socialist urban politics. The status quo was discussed in the previous chapter and will not be included. Conclusions will then be drawn regarding the preferred option suitable for Housing Action Coalition's own context of reform. In addition, the preferred option, from the point of view of achieving the maximum urban effect or having the greatest potential of addressing the housing crisis, will be discussed.

Options For Strategic Intervention

The option of retreat or giving up in the face of a more powerful opposition bloc is placed on the lower end of the continuum (see Figure 6). At this end of the continuum actions tend to be individual rather than collective in nature, analysis fragmented, and the urban effect achieved, control or reproduction of the system. In Housing Action Coalition's case this would be a right-hand to left-hand movement along the continuum and a definite step backwards in terms of possible effectiveness. The decision to dissolve the Coalition would mean that members see no chance of success in present lobbying actions as well as no redeeming qualities in other strategic options. The admission of failure and the demoralizing effect concomitant with such an admission may preclude future collective action on the part of existing members. Consequently, actions would likely become individualized (letters to the editor, voting) if actions are taken at all. Although individual members may possess a well developed policy analysis of housing, the isolation of the individual in the face of bureaucracy may mitigate any positive effects if any action is taken. Adoption of the retreat alternative would also likely lead to negative changes in inner city housing conditions. Without significant external or internal pressure existing, the City Council will retain its business as usual, non-involvement housing policy stance. The status quo will be maintained and the urban effect of control achieved. The existing inner city housing dynamics of deterioration, abandonment, closure, and non-replacement of affordable units will continue unabated and unchallenged.

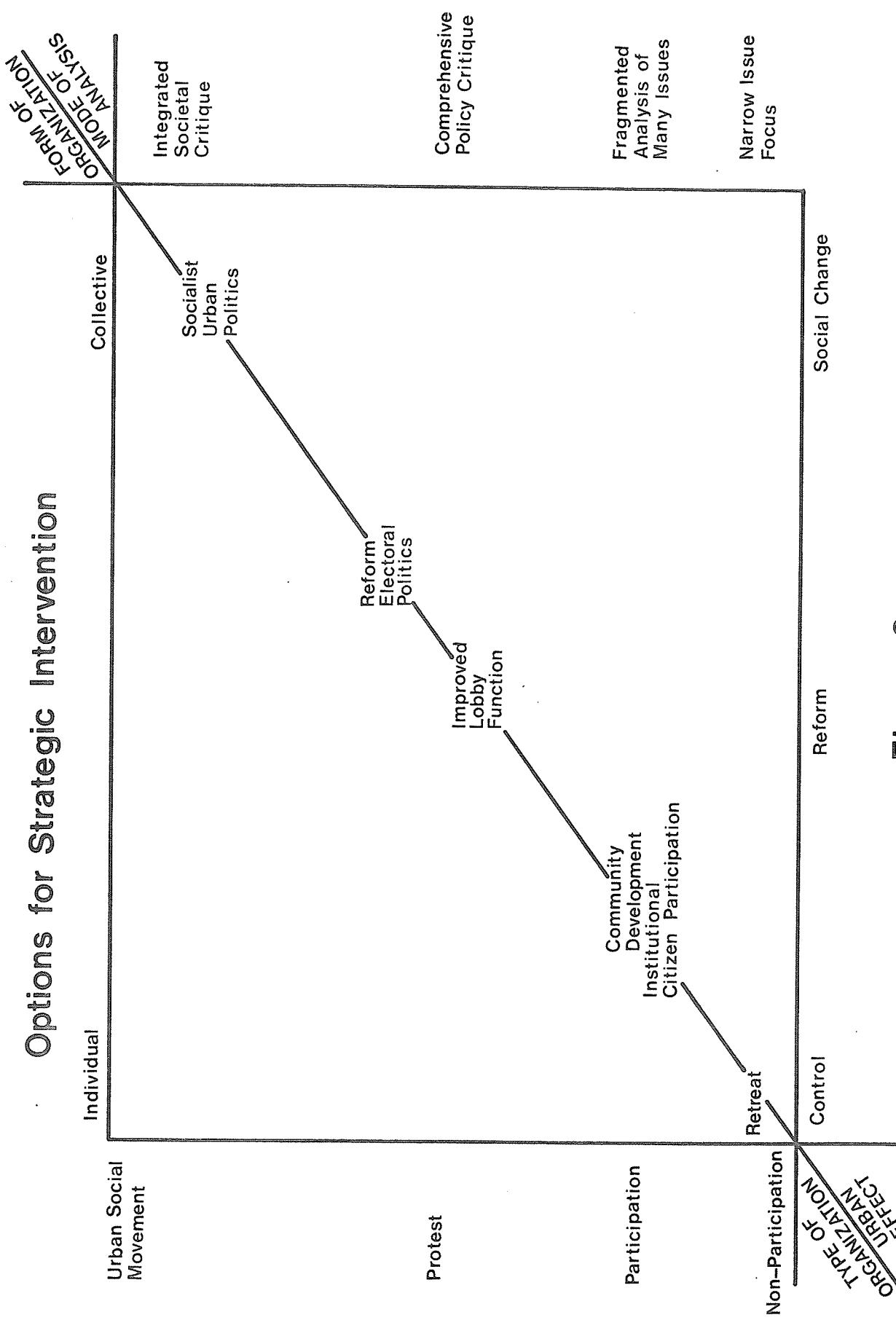


Figure 6

The institutional participation option is also on the lower end of the continuum but higher than the retreat option. Its placement is similar to the theoretical example used in Chapter Five. Actions again tend to be individual, analysis fragmented, and the urban effect achieved is control. A shift in strategy from HAC's current position of the lobby to institutional participation would result from analysis which concludes that changes may only be gained by working within the legitimate government structures. Two kinds of governmental structures are available to HAC within the City of Winnipeg; the Housing Advisory Committee of the Winnipeg Development Plan Review and Resident Advisory Groups. While participation in the former would allow HAC to retain its collective nature and city-wide policy analysis it would still lead to the urban effect of control. Implicit in the participation in such a committee is the recognition that both the bureaucracy and Council have the right to accept or reject the advice given. As well, the presence of other factions on the committee such as developer associations would mean that the impact of HAC's advice may be compromised by a bureaucratic synthesis of opinions at a higher level of decision-making. Participation in the latter would lead to a less collective, more fragmented analytical approach on the part of the Coalition, in addition to the achievement of the urban effect of control. Due to the spatially discrete nature of the six RAGs, Coalition members would be forced to divide according to the location of their principal residences. Policy issues would also be divided along these geographical lines. City-wide policy issues are seldom dealt with at this level in deference to site-specific neighbourhood

issues. Participation in RAGs promotes the legitimacy of the present structure and admits the supremacy of Council's ability to accept or reject any advice. In the final analysis, the present Council does not seem ready to accept advice which promotes significant changes in its current housing posture (see Chapter Six conclusions). Consequently, HAC's adoption of the institutional participation option would have no positive effect on the inner city housing conditions.

The community development option is a slightly different facet of the institutional participation option. Community development organizations encourage the affected resident population to more fully participate in decisions which may affect it. The focus shifts from participation by the worker to participation by the people. Although the action may be more collective (organization of tenants associations) the analytical focus tends to revolve around fragments of large issues (how to use the office of the rentalsman instead of tackling housing policy directly). However, the key concept remains that community development encourages participation within the existing system. It is essentially a non-politicized educational tool which teaches the disadvantaged to better utilize state supported welfare and arbitration mechanisms. Since almost all community development work is at least partially state funded, it tends not to bite the hand that feeds it. While fuller participation is encouraged within the system, changes to it are not. Therefore, this activity also leads to the urban effect of control.

If HAC were to adopt this option it must relinquish its advocacy position in order to work with the people, instead of at arm's length

from the people. The full-time work necessary for community development would require funding to allow workers to organize people around their common concerns. Therefore, HAC would have to expend significant energy procuring funds; funds which would ultimately tie the Coalition's organizing goals to the funder. In most cases it is some level of government (Canada Works grants). HAC's analytical orientation would also likely change from policy concerns to the resolution of particular problems. While HAC may succeed in small victories (teaching people how to apply for rent roll backs) the overall housing situation would remain unchanged. The conditions causing the deterioration of inner city housing would still exist.

The next alternative or the improved lobby option is basically an extension of HAC's current orientation. However, it is strengthened through far greater use of the media and a concentrated public education program. The placement of this option on the continuum would coincide with the special interest policy option. Actions would be on a collective basis, using a comprehensive policy critique as a focus for analysis. The urban effect achieved would be reform.

In addition to its current strategy of the direct lobbying of Council and its key committees, HAC would have to lobby various levels of the media as well as the public at large. Lobbying the media would include educating reporters, writers, editorialists, and news analysts about the pervasiveness of deteriorating inner city housing conditions. This could be done by conducting a series of tours through the inner city similar to those conducted by John Sewell through Toronto neighbourhoods during that city's recent mayoralty campaign. The

media would come into first-hand contact with the symptoms of the problem while at the same time receiving Housing Action Coalition's interpretation of the cause of the problem. In addition to supplying as much information as is available to sympathetic reporters, the Coalition would make its members accessible to the media for interviews, news releases, and for comment on any housing initiatives emanating from government. The Coalition would also have to make better use of community access television. Conducting a series of shows dealing with the housing crisis followed by interviews with key actors such as tenants, financiers, councillors, and administrators would be a useful tactic towards heightening both media and public information concerning the nature of the problem.

To educate the public at large an expanded media campaign will be necessary but probably not sufficient to gain public recognition of the problems and available policy solutions to the problems. HAC would have to conduct separate meetings with existing groups such as tenant associations, Resident Advisory Groups, coalitions dealing with different but related issues, church groups, student organizations, unions, etc., in order to deliver its analysis directly to the wider public.

The education program directed at the media and the public would be conducted with the intention of augmenting HAC's direct lobbying initiatives with editorial backing, sympathetic news coverage, and personal support from various segments of the public at large. Sustained pressure from the lobby itself, the media, and elements of the general public may change enough minds on Council to institute

positive policy changes. Since policy change, not systemic change, is the object of the pressure, the urban effect of reform is all that is possible through such action.

Although Housing Action Coalition would have to significantly increase in numbers and formalize in some fashion to coordinate the educational initiatives, its present level of analysis of the housing crisis and the role of the state (local government) is sufficient to carry out the improved lobby option.

The reform electoral option may be placed coincident with the electoral example on the continuum. Therefore, actions are collective, analysis is comprehensive and dwells on policy change, and the maximum urban effect to be achieved is reform or change in only individual elements within the urban system.

To enter electoral politics Housing Action Coalition must admit that its lobbying function, while possessing some value as an educative tool, fails to win any substantive changes in Winnipeg's housing scene. It must accept that the current Council is unmoveable on the housing question and must be replaced with individuals who are willing to institute the necessary policy changes.

Changes in the structure and analysis of HAC would be contingent upon the decision to enter into a reform coalition or a full-blown political party. If HAC opted for the reform coalition it could retain its housing focus to a far greater extent than if it opted for a party structure. The reform coalition would allow HAC the freedom of running candidates in those areas or wards where housing problems are most severe. Candidates would not be constrained to any

diversified party line. Housing issues would remain paramount during campaigns and in office.

The Coalition would have to identify key inner city wards where existing councillors are not serving the housing interests of the resident population and go after those areas. This would allow HAC to apply its limited resources (in terms of manpower and finances) in areas where it could have maximum benefit. Candidates could be endorsed or sponsored by HAC as supporters of positive housing measures. On the one hand, this would mean minimum resource commitment, but on the other hand, it would mean minimum political control. The other drawback to reform coalitions, whether they exist prior to, or form after elections, is that there is no guarantee of commitment within the broad coalition to similar issues. For example, a reform group elected on the basis of heritage building conservation may condone the conversion of a residential block to commercial use just to ensure the existence of the building while HAC may oppose such a move. Therefore, a reform coalition does not ensure a united front on many substantive issues. The reform coalition does however allow HAC to move into electoral politics with minimal changes in structure and analysis.

If HAC opted for a formalized party structure, it would have to institute substantial organizational and analytical changes. To develop a credible city-wide presence HAC would have to expand its housing focus to include issues such as transportation, parks, finances, growth, and other issues of interest to the greater city populous. An expansion may only serve to blur the former strong

housing focus forwarded by the Coalition.

If HAC chose to either join an existing party or form a new one it would have to undergo immense organizational transformations. A party structure with by-laws, membership, constituency organizations, fund raising and policy committees would have to be accepted or instituted by HAC members. Full-time staff, offices, media campaigns, would all mean a much more formal structure than is the case now.

Because of the broader analytical focus and organizational base of the formal party structure HAC may find housing issues receiving only partial party energies. It might find considerable screening of its housing policy position as it travels through party machinery from constituency group to constituency group. However, the party system offers many more tangible electoral resources and far more political control (party discipline) than the reform coalition model.

The point to be made is that the focus on policy changes or changes within the management element of the urban system will lead only to the maximum urban effect of reform no matter which electoral option (reform coalition or formal party) HAC chooses and no matter which electoral outcome is realized (victory or defeat).

The final option to be examined goes beyond the reform category in both analysis and organization. The socialist urban politics option described here is patterned after the Montreal Citizens' Movement (MCM). This option is collective in nature, possesses a linked critique of capital in the workplace and the community, and has the possibility of achieving the urban effect of social change. This option uses a two-prong line of political attack through the employ-

ment of neighbourhood organizing and electoral strategies.

Neighbourhood organizing as opposed to community development strategies are instituted to politicize the residents or workers who live in the neighbourhood in order to aid them to resist the decisions of capital which adversely affect the place where they live. In addition, the residents in their role as workers, are urged to oppose and fight against the abuses inflicted by capital in the workplace. The hope is to link these community struggles with workplace struggles wherever possible. For example, in Montreal the MCM organized a struggle against bus fare increases while at the same time advocating higher wages and fairer benefits for bus drivers. In this way the individual is not split into the separate roles of resident versus worker. A higher degree of politicization is achieved when it is realized that the roles are inseparable and that conflict with capital on both fronts is considerable. This style of organizing is much different than the previous community development example because of its emphasis on conflict not consensus. In this option only conflict produces the politicization necessary to produce social change.

The socialist urban political electoral style is also far different than the reform example. While reform electoral groups may draw their energy, policy, and support from the neighbourhoods the ultimate power rests with the reform caucus or group. Power stays centralized in the city council and the bureaucracy. Representative democracy is the predominant political paradigm. The purpose of electoral victory to socialist groups is to decentralize or devolve

power and responsibility back to the neighbourhoods. The politician is a delegate operating on the direction of the local neighbourhood council and is not a representative to that Council. The aspiration of electoral victory is subservient to the ideal of neighbourhood control of local decision-making and the local economy (capital flows in and out of the neighbourhood). Socialist urban politics therefore, stresses organization and politicization at the base much more than the electoral gamesmanship of reform politics. A coherent and cohesive alliance of local neighbourhood councils is crucial before electoral gains may be hoped for.

This option not only departs from other options in its organization or style; it is radically different in terms of its method of analysis. First, the analysis sees urban problems as a result of the process of capital accumulation during the production of urban space. Further, the resolution of these problems lies outside of capitalism's ability to solve them. Policy changes are inadequate. Nothing short of restructuring the current mode of production will do. Ideals such as local decision-making, local control of the economy, production based on socially determined use value not market determined exchange value must become reality. Any analysis which perpetuates the stability of the present system is rejected. Reform moves such as policy management changes are viewed as especially counter-productive since they appear to resolve immediate or superficial issues while ignoring the underlying structural cause of the urban crisis. Such reform initiatives quieten dissent and hinder the process of politicization. Consequently, socialist analysis includes an explicit

conflict component. The more apparent the contradictions inherent in the current mode of production as experienced through urban issues and problems, the greater the ability to organize radical opposition.

If Housing Action Coalition decided on this option it would have to institute radical shifts in both analysis and organization. First it would have to transfer its analytical focus from a policy critique to a systemic critique. The Coalition would have to reach the conclusion that working within the system fails to achieve social change and adopt the conflict style of politics of urban socialism.

On the organizational side HAC would have to forsake its advocacy/representative posture in favour of the delegate model of political relations. In addition, it would have to expand its membership and devote far greater time to achieve the goal of organizing local neighbourhood councils through methods of collective politicization.

#### Conclusions: Toward An Effective Strategic Position

To achieve the goal of improved inner city housing conditions Housing Action Coalition should consider only those options which will gain the urban effect or reform or social change. The evidence supplied in the previous chapter clearly indicates that status quo or control options should be rejected. The analysis of councillors' attitudes and receptiveness to housing policy changes, derived from Goldsmith's modified model demonstrates that a majority of Council (62 percent) is opposed to changes in the city's non-involvement housing role (see Table 9, Chapter Six). To opt for the status quo would only reinforce this prevailing attitude. Such a choice will

allow the existing housing conditions and the current policy positions to continue unopposed. Council is unwilling to become involved in social housing beyond regulation and incentives to the private sector. Strategies leading to the urban effect of control will do little to alter this situation. Therefore, the retreat option should be rejected outright. The participation and community development options should also not be considered because of their minimal effectiveness. Both options would necessitate a great deal of time and energy on the part of Coalition members while at the same time integrating and coopting the Coalition into the existing lower-level bureaucratic decision-making machinery.

As demonstrated in Chapter Five the options having the potential of achieving reform come closest to aligning with Housing Action Coalition's current analytical and organizational make-up. By choosing the improved lobby option Housing Action Coalition may be able to increase public awareness regarding the housing crisis. HAC may even be able to bring sufficient pressure to bear upon the existing Council that minor changes may be made in city housing policy. However, it is unlikely that even a heightened lobby position will alter the general non-involvement stance of the city. This negative social housing bias coupled with Council's inaccessibility to outside pressure groups like HAC renders the lobby option impotent. Statistics from Chapter Six indicate that in addition to 62 percent of Council being opposed to HAC's housing stance, 73 percent of Council is not receptive to external lobby pressure from groups like HAC (see Table 8, Chapter Six). The previous chapter demonstrated that Council is

not susceptible to lobby pressure. No councillors could be placed in the grouped factor categories which require lobby attention and are most vulnerable to external HAC pressure (see Table 9, Grouped Factor Categories Three and Five, Chapter Six). In addition, the key committees and bodies of Council which deal with housing matters are controlled by those councillors who are opposed to HAC's stance and unreceptive to external pressure (see Table 10, Chapter Six).

If Housing Action Coalition is to produce the maximum effect within the sphere of reform it should get involved in electoral politics. Such a decision recognizes that the existing Council must be altered before significant changes in housing policy will be forthcoming. The Coalition could endorse or run independent candidates who support progressive policy changes in housing policy or it could join and work with any reform municipal party which emphasizes housing as a priority item (NDP municipal wing). Either way the Coalition would have direct influence on the development of policy positions in housing and areas which may affect housing. There would be some amount of political control if candidates were chosen and endorsed on the strength of their commitment to the housing issue. If the Coalition opts for the electoral position it would turn its energies from trying to influence sitting councillors to defeating those councillors unsympathetic to the conditions caused by the housing crisis. If elected with a majority, such a Coalition supported reform group could easily institute the changes currently advocated by HAC and the urban effect of housing reform would be realized. Consequently, electoral politics is the strategic option which most completely fulfills HAC's

reform aspirations.

The socialist urban politics option is the preferred option in terms of its potential for realizing significant change by directly challenging the structural supports of the housing crisis. However, this option is not even within the realm of possibility for HAC, given the group's existing orientation. If a socialist urban political group evolves in Winnipeg it will not be conceived through any actions taken by the Coalition. Such a group will develop independently of all reform groups such as HAC. Such a group will in fact be a political adversary of HAC. It would charge that reformists only appear to advocate ameliorative action but in reality serve to perpetuate the systemic causes of the housing crisis by camouflaging the most offensive evidence of the housing crisis.

Although socialist urban politics has the most potential for positive change, HAC's current contextual position in terms of its analysis of housing, the role of the state, and its place in the theory of urban political action deny the choice of this option. Therefore, within HAC's own context of reform, electoral politics is the strategic alternative which has the greatest potential of bringing HAC closer to its stated goal of improved housing conditions.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The intent of this final chapter is to present a summary of the logic used in this thesis and a summary of major findings as a result of this exploration. Conclusions regarding strategy will then be drawn. The main objective or purpose of this thesis is to examine the strategic implications of Housing Action Coalition's current actions. The method used to uncover and assess these implications is praxis or the linking of theory with daily practice. To only draw conclusions regarding strategy would represent a task half completed. Consequently, conclusions concerning the utility of the use of praxis as an analytical tool will also be drawn. Lastly, suggestions for further research flowing from some of the statements, propositions, and analysis in this thesis will be presented.

#### Summary Of The Thesis Logic

To meet the purpose of this thesis an internal logic was devised to link theory and practice in order to ascertain the implications of Housing Action Coalition's strategic orientation and make recommendations regarding future action. First, Housing Action Coalition's actions were listed in chronological order to give the reader the

factual background of the Coalition's history. Second, Housing Action Coalition's analysis of the inner city housing problem was examined in relation to recent theories of housing activity. Third, Housing Action Coalition's analysis of the role of the state was explored in juxtaposition to critical thought on the role of the state. Fourth, HAC's actions were studied within the context of the theory of urban political action. To facilitate this step in the logical process a continuum of urban political action was developed from the recent critical writings of individuals such as Castells and Schecter. Steps two, three and four are the linkage points of Housing Action Coalition's actions, analysis, and practice with theory. This linkage allows for a more precise knowledge of Housing Action Coalition's strategic strengths and shortcomings. Fifth, HAC's strategy of the lobby was put to the test. Questionnaires were used to determine if Winnipeg City Council's negative housing position could be changed by HAC's lobby action. Sixth, alternatives to HAC's current strategy were drawn from the theory of urban political action, and assessed for potential effectiveness and probable impact on Housing Action Coalition itself.

#### Summary Of Major Findings

Housing Action Coalition is an advocacy group consisting of volunteers from social agencies operating in Winnipeg's inner city. It formed in the spring of 1977 to share information concerning client related housing problems. It soon became apparent that problems were related and some political action would have to be

taken to address them. HAC adopted the posture of a political lobby. During the time span covered in this thesis HAC presented its policies, and analysis of the housing crisis to Winnipeg City Council, the Committee on Environment, the Executive Policy Committee, Development Plan Review Committees, the provincial Minister responsible for MHRC, the media, planning administrators, and so on. Housing Action Coalition focused most of its energies on the local or civic level. It was felt that the government closest to the people would be most susceptible to pressure. In addition, if the city could be persuaded to act then it could serve as a major lobby to produce positive changes at the provincial and federal levels. However, all this effort has produced no positive changes in Winnipeg's inner city housing situation. In fact, all three levels of government have reduced their responsibility and involvement in social housing programs.

Housing Action Coalition's analysis of the housing situation has accurately described the existing problems. The Coalition has documented the decline in housing quality, the reduction of low income units, and the income/affordability problems of many inner city residents. The Coalition's answer as to the cause of these conditions is an inadequate policy and program response on the part of government, particularly local government. Government must step in to correct this policy deficiency in order to maintain social stability in the inner city. In contrast to HAC's proposition of administrative flaws leading to housing crisis, recent theory on housing points to economic and political reasons.

Housing like all other commodities, including labour, in advanced capitalism is subject to market conditions and the drive for capital accumulation. Scarcity is the powering mechanism behind this drive for capital accumulation. Housing crisis according to theory is a result of the contradiction between the housing market and the labour market. If all of labour's housing demands were met, scarcity in the housing market would disappear. The housing market would dry up. Conversely, if all labour power were employed and receiving a wage sufficient to enter the housing market, capital would lose control over labour, scarcity in the form of unemployment would not exist and the labour market would also disappear. Therefore, housing shortages in terms of supply, quality, and income/affordability problems are a result of necessary scarcity in the labour and housing markets.

The solution to the housing crisis is not available under capitalism. It is at this juncture that a clear understanding of the role of the state is important.

Recent theory demonstrates that the state intervenes to correct the social disruption created by the capitalist mode of production and maintain social order. It must fill the structural gaps created by the contradiction between the housing and labour market. However, the state must not impede capital accumulation. In fact the state must foster and support the process of capital accumulation.

Therefore, all state actions carry with them the characteristics of accumulation and legitimization. The state must aid the process of private capital accumulation in order to ensure a tax base sufficient to fund the activities of government which legitimate the present

system (public housing, welfare, unemployment insurance, health insurance, etc.). In the housing market the accumulation supporting activities of the state include, government insured mortgages and the provision of infrastructure such as roads, sewers, water, schools, and parks. This process has spatially manifested itself as a rapid increase in investment, building and development on suburban lands (owned by large integrated development companies), and a concomitant flow of capital away from and deterioration of inner city areas.

In recent years inflation coupled with slow growth has led to a fiscal crisis where state revenues cannot continue to retire an ever increasing debt position and meet existing levels of service. State cutbacks in social services and increasing incentives to spur capital accumulation have been the result. In housing the state is attempting to reduce its capital expenditure through the reprivatization of certain activities in the housing field (loans, building, selling off land banks). The local level of the state in Winnipeg is refusing to take any direct responsibility in the housing field beyond regulation.

Although HAC's analysis of the role of the state recognizes the current fiscal crisis, its actions have failed to recognize the duality of accumulation and legitimization. Instead, HAC has only pressed for increased government participation and expenditure in the social housing field necessary to maintain social stability. HAC has not mounted any attack or critique of the state's accumulation function or support of the capitalist system. In fact, in the face of fiscal crisis HAC has not continued its demands for increased housing

expenditure but has retreated to a position where it only asks that existing social housing programs be maintained.

When examined in light of recent theory of urban political action HAC's actions may be placed in the reform/protest category. Recent theory postulates that there are three possible levels of effectiveness which may be brought about by urban political groups or individuals. These are: participatory actions or groups which achieve the urban effect of control or reproduction of the system; protest actions or groups which achieve the urban effect of reform or changes within only one facet or element of the urban system; urban social movements which achieve the urban effect of social change or a structural change within the present mode of production or a shift in power relations between socio-economic classes. Urban social movements and social change are the highest expression of change within the urban system. Reform and control are lesser expressions of change. This body of theory states that political groups must possess a critical and linked analysis of the operation of capital in the workplace and the community before the root cause of urban problems may be known and social change achieved. Further, groups must be sufficiently organized to resist and disrupt the functioning of capital in the dual sites of exploitation. Consequently, using social change as a benchmark, a continuum of change starting with the urban effect of control leading to social change was developed for the thesis. Typical actions drawn from theory were placed on the continuum after having examined their level of analysis, mode of organization, and assessing their probable urban effect.

HAC's analysis of the housing question and the role of the state  
in addition to its current form of organization cause its placement in  
the reform/protest category. HAC does not trace the root cause of the  
housing question to the structural determinants within capitalism.  
As a result HAC does not focus its critical energies on capital. HAC  
points to inaction by the state in the field of social housing as the  
principal cause of housing problems. Even in its criticism of the  
state HAC does not recognize the extent to which the state supports  
and extends the private accumulation of capital in the housing field.  
HAC's analysis merely describes the symptoms of the housing crisis and  
singles out government as the primary inflammatory agent. HAC focuses  
its analysis and directs its energies on one facet of the urban  
system - housing. It does not link this community struggle with  
workplace struggles such as high unemployment in the construction  
trades. Further, it does not trace the problem to the workings of the  
capitalist mode of production. Therefore HAC's analysis of housing  
and the role of the state renders it incapable of achieving social  
change as defined for the continuum. It does however, seek to change  
or achieve reform in one facet in the urban system (improved housing  
conditions through policy changes).

HAC's present voluntary advocacy form of organization is totally  
inadequate to meet the organizing challenge to achieve social change.  
Social change demands full-time organizing and politicization of  
people as they experience the contradictions inherent in the existing  
mode of production. Goals and strategy emanate from the people in the  
neighbourhoods who are engaged in a political struggle. They are not

advocated at arm's length by an elite group of volunteers. In addition, the local organizing is meant to evolve into a democratic form of neighbourhood political and economic rule. HAC's organizing desires end at the policy advocate client-worker relationship. HAC has neither the will nor the manpower to build an organization more suited to achieving social change. Its current level of organization is adequate to carry on its governmental lobby strategy but not sufficient to create the politicization needed to challenge capital in a concerted manner. In short, HAC's current organization cannot achieve social change but does have the potential to achieve reform.

The examination of HAC in light of the recent theory of housing, the role of the state and urban political action demonstrates that Housing Action Coalition as it presently exists will not gain social change. It does not recognize capital as the cause of housing crisis. It does not criticize the state's support of capital in the housing field and only asks that the state patch up the current crisis by stepping up its programs of legitimization. It does not possess the analysis and organization necessary to qualify as an urban social movement. It is however a typical example of a protest group attempting to achieve reform. Its focus on policy and its desire to have the state improve housing conditions in order to promote social stability are its essential reform characteristics. It does seek changes within the system (housing policy changes) but it does not seek changes to the system.

In order to discover if the group is satisfied with its existing strategic position questionnaires were administered to HAC members.

The overwhelming majority of HAC members desire to remain as a lobby, although an improved one. To determine if this strategy has any possibility of achieving reform housing objectives, questionnaires were administered to all members of Winnipeg City Council. The questionnaire model is based on a model developed by political scientist M. J. Goldsmith. The model seeks to discover the receptiveness of a given political system to external demands. His model was modified for the purposes of this thesis to determine the lobbyability of the present City Council. Three variables were chosen: accessibility to interest groups, housing stance, and level of housing information. A majority of Council (26 persons were interviewed) was found to be non-lobbyable on the housing issue. Councillors who were found to be opposed to HAC's housing stance and not accessible to interest groups were categorized as the unmoveable opposition and most immune to lobby efforts.<sup>1</sup> Fifty-four percent of the councillors interviewed fell into this category. Further an additional 8 percent of councillors were categorized as opposed to HAC's housing stance, operating with high levels of housing information, and accessible to interest groups. This group would prove extremely difficult to lobby, accessibility notwithstanding.

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<sup>1</sup>This grouping can include councillors with both high and low operating levels of housing information. The most important point is that they are not open or sympathetic to external influences like HAC. Consequently lobbying would be an incorrect strategy to apply to this group.

The combination of an opposition housing stance and high level of information on the housing issue would point to some sort of ideological barrier to HAC's position of greater civic government involvement in the housing field. Therefore, the results of the questionnaire determined that lobbying would not be a successful strategy with the existing Winnipeg City Council. Since a majority will not respond favourably to HAC's lobby efforts new strategic positions were examined.

Strategic positions were drawn from the theory of urban political action. The positions examined were: dissolution of the Coalition, institutional citizen participation, and community development, leading to the urban effect of control; an improved lobby function and electoral politics, leading to the urban effect of reform; and socialist urban politics (MCM style) leading to the urban effect of social change. Since Housing Action Coalition desires to change and improve the inner city housing situation all options leading to the maintenance of the status quo or the urban effect of control were examined and rejected as counter-productive. On the other hand, Housing Action Coalition's current analytical and organizational makeup is not adequate to adopt the socialist urban political stance. This option was examined and rejected as inappropriate for the Coalition.

The strategies best suited to HAC's analytical and organizational strengths and liabilities are those leading to the urban effect of reform. The strategy of the improved lobby function was explored and found wanting due to the opposition and inaccessibility of the

majority of councillors. Although heightened lobbying might produce some small administrative change, it is unlikely to pressure the hard core (62 percent) opposition councillors into making significant housing policy changes or reversals. The strategic option most likely to further HAC's goals and match its current analytical and organizational make-up is reform electoral politics. If Council cannot be persuaded to make policy changes then housing opposition politicians should be challenged at election time. HAC can easily plug into a reform coalition or actively campaign for an existing party which supports progressive housing policy. By directing its energies from convincing the unconvinced to defeating them electorally, HAC stands a much better chance of achieving the urban effect of reform. This strategy does not conflict with its analysis of the housing situation and the role of the state, nor does it overtax its organizational abilities. As well, electoral politics is not a major deviation from its lobbying stance in terms of movement along the continuum of urban political action.

The analytical method used to arrive at these strategic implications or conclusions was praxis or the linking of theory and practice. The use of praxis allows for greater definition of the subject and therefore a greater understanding of the external and internal environments. In terms of political or interactive exploration, praxis is not only useful but necessary to understand the future implications of current action. To analyze only the practice or daily action, one runs the risk of ad hocery and disjointedness. Actions and issues become segmented and isolated

from one another. No logical thread connects the events and makes sense of them. Analysis invariably degenerates into a description of a sequence of incidents. The activity quickly becomes the focus leaving other important considerations such as appropriateness of action, the probable effect of action, and inconsistency of analysis and action unexplored. On the other hand, to only examine theory of urban political action runs the risk of irrelevance especially in a prescriptive exercise such as this. Without being grounded or at least compared to reality, the study of theory alone will not provide much guidance to groups or individuals now involved in urban political activity.

The combination of an integrated analysis of theory and practice clarifies daily action and leads to reflective future action not impulsive reaction. Through the course of this thesis the use of praxis uncovered HAC's analytical deficiencies (its inability to discern the root cause of the housing question and its misconceptions regarding the role of the state). It also revealed the shortcomings and limitations of HAC's present strategic and organizational orientation (the inappropriateness of the lobby and its inability to move beyond an advocacy organizational form). Praxis also aided in the prescriptive component of this thesis. Options were drawn from theory and evaluated in terms of their probable urban effect and appropriateness to the current orientation of the Coalition.

This exploration did not intend to criticize Housing Action Coalition for something it is not and analytically/organizationally could never be. However, the use of praxis does lead to the

unavoidable conclusion that urban politics must move beyond reform if the root cause of urban problems is to be challenged. If social change is to be achieved political groups have to begin tracing urban problems to their cause within the capitalist mode of production. The contradictions implied by the organization of urban space should be the rallying point of politicization towards collective action. Without a critical analysis of the capitalist organization of urban space the highest form of urban political effect to be gained is reform - symptoms treated, the cause ignored.

#### Areas For Further Research

The exploration conducted in this thesis has uncovered several issues and trends which deserve future analytical attention. Recent developments in the housing field and the realm of urban politics also warrant further investigation. In this regard, research in the following areas would advance our knowledge of the housing question and urban political action.

- 1) Recent shifts have been evidenced in housing policy at all levels of the state. The state seems to be disentangling itself from all forms of capital expenditure in the social and market housing fields. An investigation into this matter is warranted to determine if the recent shifts in housing policy are as a result of ideological shifts (the swing to the right) or a consequence of the fiscal crisis of the state. In addition, the likely impact of these new policy directions on the housing situation should be assessed.
- 2) Housing Action Coalition pressured a city government which

denies responsibility in the social housing field. The city claims social housing is the constitutional responsibility of senior levels of the state. To refute or substantiate the city's claim an examination of the municipal role in social housing is necessary.

A comparative analysis between Winnipeg's position and the social housing commitment of other Canadian cities of comparable size would be a valuable research tool to explore this question.

3) This thesis commented on the existence of red-lining or the non-availability of mortgage money for certain inner city properties. An examination of this phenomenon should be conducted to discover the incidence of the practice, the criteria employed by financial institutions, and the policy implications of this procedure. General theoretical analysis concerning the effect of finance capital on the organization of urban space should be included in this examination.

4) The Manitoba municipal wing of the New Democratic Party (NDP) is currently reorganizing to more effectively campaign in the next civic election. Organizational and policy changes are being instituted to present a credible challenge to the ICEC. This electoral strategy should be analyzed in much the same way HAC was examined in this thesis. The NDP's analysis and action should be explored in light of theory in order to achieve praxis.

5) One of the causes cited for the poor quality and high rents in relation to income of older apartment blocks is over-financing of these properties or the maintenance of high debt levels (2nd and 3rd mortgages) coupled with little owner equity. Few substantial reasons have been forwarded and tested to explain this occurrence.

Consequently, a study of the incidence of, and the factors or reasons behind the over-financing of older residential properties in the City of Winnipeg would be a valuable addition to housing research.

6) This thesis offered a continuum of urban political action as a framework for analysis. This initial attempt at placing strategy and political action in a continuum model needs further refinement and testing. The continuum itself could provide the basis for a discourse on urban political research methods. New variables and different examples or cases could be examined to test the analytical strengths of the model.

#### Epilogue

After the 20 December 1978 Council meeting where the city officially adopted a non-responsibility housing policy, Housing Action Coalition held a series of meetings to regroup and prepare a new strategy. The consensus of these meetings was that HAC should continue to monitor city housing issues and policy changes. Further, HAC decided that it should remain as a lobby. However, it should conserve its energy until key issues or situations surface (elections). In this regard, HAC participated in and presented a series of questions concerning the ramifications of federal housing policy at an all candidates meeting in Winnipeg's inner city during the federal election campaign. In addition, they participated in and presented questions concerning city responsibility in housing at an inner city town hall during the mayoralty by-election necessitated by the unexpected death of Mayor Robert Steen.

Since the June 1979 mayoralty contest HAC members have remained inactive. Several announced they would not remain involved with the group because it did not seem to be going anywhere. Some have moved out of the city and still others have joined with other more active housing related groups. One such group, the Dufferin School Housing Group is attempting to push for housing policy change with the support of a tangible and definable constituency, something HAC never developed. In addition to monitoring and pressuring city government, they are linking their critique of housing with inner city school enrollment and mobility patterns of inner city residents. Housing Action Coalition has dissolved for the time being, and may or may not regroup when a key issue or situation arises.

Meanwhile, housing conditions in the inner city continue to deteriorate. Although vacancy rates have climbed substantially as a result of increased upper-income apartment construction and a low overall population growth rate, the problems of poor quality deteriorating housing, and insufficient quantities of decent affordable housing still prevail in Winnipeg's inner city.

APPENDIX A

HOUSING ACTION COALITION QUESTIONNAIRE

INTERVIEWEE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF INTERVIEW \_\_\_\_\_

1. a) What is your occupation? \_\_\_\_\_

b) Do you live within the inner city boundaries as defined for  
this thesis? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the housing issue priority for HAC?

a) Shelter (affordability, supply) \_\_\_\_\_

b) Neighbourhood stability (support services, conservation)

c) Combination of above \_\_\_\_\_

3. When did you become involved with HAC? \_\_\_\_\_

4. a) Why did you become involved with HAC? \_\_\_\_\_

b) Why have you continued/discontinued active participation?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. a) Has HAC been successful in its attempt to raise housing as a  
public issue? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b) Has HAC been successful in its attempt to force any changes in

the city's housing situation? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Do you wish HAC to remain as a lobby or move towards electoral politics (endorsement, candidacy)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Do you wish HAC to remain as an advocacy 'leading' group or develop at the base? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Would you endorse extra-institutional (extra-legal) tactics to further HAC's goals? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Which councillors do you view as particularly vulnerable to HAC pressure? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Should HAC have an inner city, or a city-wide perspective? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. Is public education a viable strategy for HAC? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. Is there a tenant orientation vs. owner orientation conflict in HAC? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. Where should HAC be going next? What strategies and roles should be assumed? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
14. Which institution should be the prime target of HAC's future energies? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX B

### CITY OF WINNIPEG HOUSING GUIDELINES

His Worship the Mayor and Councillors:

Your Committee on Environment submits the following Report and recommends, namely:-

Adoption of Guidelines with  
respect to the involvement of  
The City of Winnipeg in the  
provision of Housing. File EX.

376 - 1. Your Committee submits with a recommendation for approval and adoption, the following guidelines with respect to the involvement of the City of Winnipeg in the provision of housing, being generally a support role, and having no involvement in the construction of new housing or reconstruction of existing dwelling units, namely:-

#### GUIDELINES FOR HOUSING INVOLVEMENT BY THE CITY OF WINNIPEG

- (1) Co-ordination of planning control, building standards, occupancy standards, and resources of various existing municipal departments, other governments and agencies and the private sector.
- (2) Creation of incentives for involvement by the private sector which is presently winding down building activity, either by tax concessions, development bonus rights, or by seed money grants for the implementation of innovative programs.
- (3) Alteration of existing regulations and procedures where possible that are presently counterproductive and discourage private development and investment.
- (4) General support of private non-profit housing groups through such means as long-term leasing of surplus City-owned land at attractive rates in order to assist them in achieving economic project rents.
- (5) Maximum utilization of N.H.A. Neighbourhood Improvement Programs, R.R.A.P. Programs, and community service grant monies, within the present administrative capacity of the City, and where senior governments will guarantee their portion of funding for the agreed term of the project.
- (6) Eliminate the activity of the City's non-profit housing corporation, which at best would provide only a very nominal contribution to the housing stock, and for which the economics of their involvement are extremely questionable.
- (7) Encourage senior levels of government to employ their legislative authority to create incentives in the following areas:
  - a) for home owners on fixed incomes to maintain their present homes;
  - b) to assist first time purchasers of homes;
  - c) amend rent control legislation to allow pass through of costs resulting from upgrading orders as rent increases;

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December 20th, 1978

Report of the Committee on Environment, dated December 11th, 1978.

- d) amend Income Tax Act to allow capital cost allowance taken on rehabilitation and upgrading costs to be offset against other income;
  - e) encourage the expansion of the R.R.A.P. Program to more effectively deal with apartment rehabilitation;
  - f) amend Landlord and Tenant Act to allow for a 90 day eviction notice where buildings are to be closed or demolished voluntarily by the owner;
  - g) the City should petition the Province for enabling legislation to institute an Anti-Demolition Control By-law.
- (8) Encourage senior levels of government to utilize their greater financial resources in the provision of housing for:
- a) senior citizens;
  - b) single parent families;
  - c) low income families.
- (9) Adoption of zoning and land use controls designed to allow flexibility on types, densities and occupancies of housing in response to specific requests.
- (10) Sale of City-owned surplus lots for infill housing, experimental housing and socially-assisted housing for low income families.
- (11) Continue the monitoring and inspection programs already implemented by the City under its maintenance and upgrading by-laws.

REASON:

The monies available to the City come from the limited property tax base. Taxes collected from property were originally intended for services to property, although that has altered somewhat in recent years. In any event, the growth of taxation income through assessment increases is severely limited, and is projected to decrease over the next ten years.

We are involved in a period of restraint, with cut-backs in levels of service most certain if a no-mill rate increase objective is to be attained. The City's mandate is to provide, in the first instance, basic services to its taxpayers, which is becoming increasingly more difficult each year with rising inflation. New programs, albeit nominal in nature in their introduction, will make increasing demands on available resources presently directed toward the basic service provision and other existing programs.

Both Federal and Provincial Governments have some assistance programs in the housing area that Municipalities may take advantage of, but current trends in those senior government policies indicate that cut-backs in those areas are contemplated and/or already implemented. In fact, it has been the experience in the past that many assistance programs are implemented in the short-term by senior governments, and once the municipal program is functioning well, the senior funding is cut off leaving the whole burden on the property taxpayer, and leaving the Municipal Government unable to deliver the built-up community expectations.

Moved by Councillor Ernst,  
Adoption of the report.

Moved by Councillor Johnson,  
That Council go into Committee of a Whole.

Lost.

December 20th, 1978

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Moved by Councillor Johnson,  
 Seconded by Councillor Keeper,

That the report of the Committee on Environment, dated December 11th, 1978, and the proposed amendment be referred back to the Committee on Environment to reconsider in view of the report Plan Winnipeg and certain studies prepared by the Institute of Urban Studies for the Tri-Level Committee and to hold public meetings on this issue.

His Worship Mayor Robert Steen called Councillor Angus to the Chair.

Moved by Councillor Westbury,

That Council continue in session beyond the hour of 11:30 p.m.

Carried.

His Worship Mayor Robert Steen resumed the Chair.

The hour of midnight having arrived Council continued in session.

Thursday, December 21st, 1978.

Councillor Johnson's motion to refer was put and declared lost.

Moved by Councillor Bockstaal,

Seconded by Councillor Chornopyski,

That Guideline No. 6 be dealt with first and separately.

Carried.

The motion for the adoption of Guideline No. 6 was put.

His Worship Mayor Robert Steen called for the yeas and nays which were as follows:

Yea: His Worship Mayor Robert Steen Councillors Angus, Ernst, Filmon, Gerrie, Hudson, Leech, McGarva, McGonigal, Moore, Nordman, O'Shaughnessy, Piercy, Provost, Ragsdill, Rizzuto, Ross and Yanofsky. 18.

Nay: Councillors Bockstaal, Chornopyski, Ducharme, Johnson, Jorowski, Keeper, Skowron, Smith, Wade, Westbury, Zuken and Norrie. 12.

and the motion for the adoption of Guideline No. 6 was declared carried.

Moved by Councillor Johnson,  
 Seconded by Councillor Zuken,

That Clause 1 of the Report of the Committee on Environment, dated December 11th, 1978, be amended as follows:

- 1) By the deletion of the following words in paragraph 1:  
 "Being generally a support role, and having no involvement in the construction of new housing or reconstruction of existing dwelling units, namely"
- 2) By the addition of the following as paragraph 1 (12):  
 "By making use of the City of Winnipeg's non-profit housing corporation first approved by Council two years ago, to implement the objectives set out in paragraphs 1 - 12 herein as well as to obtain and make use of funds from senior levels of government for both these purposes and for the original purposes as set out in its Articles of Incorporation."

Lost.

Moved by Councillor Bockstaal,  
 Seconded by Councillor Chornopyski,

Be It Resolved that the balance of this clause be tabled until such time as the updated Plan Winnipeg report is reviewed by Council.

Lost.

The motion for the adoption of the balance of the clause was put.

Councillor Zuken called for the yeas and nays which were as follows:

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December 20th, 1978

Yea: His Worship Mayor Robert Steen, Councillors Angus, Ernst,  
Filmon, Gerrie, Hudson, Leech, McGarva, McGonigal, Moore, Nordman, O'Shaughnessy,  
Piercy, Provost, Ragsdill, Rizzuto, Ross, Smith and Yanofsky. 19.

Nay: Councillors Bockstael, Chornopyski, Ducharme, Johnson, Jorowski,  
Keeper, Skowron, Wade, Westbury, Zuker and Norrie. 11.

and the motion for the adoption of the balance of the clause was  
declared carried.

(Sgd.) James A. Ernst, Chairman.

## APPENDIX C

### COUNCILLOR QUESTIONNAIRE AND GUIDE TO SCORING

INTERVIEWEE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF INTERVIEW \_\_\_\_\_

1. List in order of priority the most pressing issues facing the City Council. (Number from 1 - 10)

1. Aqueduct \_\_\_\_\_
2. Historic Preservation \_\_\_\_\_
3. Housing Policy \_\_\_\_\_
4. Plan Winnipeg \_\_\_\_\_
5. Problems of Urban Natives \_\_\_\_\_
6. Restraint/Fiscal Problems \_\_\_\_\_
7. Sherbrook-McGregor Overpass \_\_\_\_\_
8. Storm Sewer Assistance \_\_\_\_\_
9. Tow Truck Contracts \_\_\_\_\_
10. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

2. In order of priority list three major city-wide housing issues.

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What are current city activities and responsibilities in the housing field? What programs etc.?

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4. a) Should the city's housing role be changed?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

b) If Yes, in which direction? Expanded \_\_\_\_\_ Reduced \_\_\_\_\_

5. Do you see a need for a comprehensive city housing policy or strategy? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

6. a) Should housing issues be dealt with through the present political set-up (various committees) or a separate housing committee?

Separate Committee \_\_\_\_\_ Present set-up \_\_\_\_\_

- b) Should housing issues be administered through the present administrative set-up (various departments) or through a city housing division?

Housing Division \_\_\_\_\_ Present set-up \_\_\_\_\_

7. Which of the following techniques do you see as beneficial measures towards the improvement of housing within the city? (Check one category for each technique).

Beneficial    Don't Know    Not Useful

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1. Zoning to protect existing residential areas
2. Faster rezoning and subdivision approval procedures
3. City landbanking
4. Anti-demolition by-laws

Beneficial   Don't Know   Not Useful

- \_\_\_\_\_   \_\_\_\_\_   \_\_\_\_\_   5. City acquisition and rehabilitation of existing dwellings for lease and sale
- \_\_\_\_\_   \_\_\_\_\_   \_\_\_\_\_   6. Two part loan scheme for orders and rehabilitation to private landlords
- \_\_\_\_\_   \_\_\_\_\_   \_\_\_\_\_   7. Tax incentives to property owners for rehabilitation of dwelling
- \_\_\_\_\_   \_\_\_\_\_   \_\_\_\_\_   8. Direct provision of housing for special need groups (not currently emphasized by CMHC and MHRC)
- \_\_\_\_\_   \_\_\_\_\_   \_\_\_\_\_   9. An expanded city housing data bank
- \_\_\_\_\_   \_\_\_\_\_   \_\_\_\_\_   10. Less civic restrictions on land use

8. What do you see as the chief function of the councillor?

(circle only one)

- a) To represent the view of his constituents using his/her experience and best judgement
- b) To represent his constituents after having informed them of the issues and having consulted with them (RAGs or individuals)
- c) To help form citizen groups (RAGs excluded) so as to promote active citizen involvement and facilitate extensive consultation
- d) To serve essentially as a delegate of the citizens of the constituency

9. In your opinion, the role of the civic staff should be to:

(circle only one)

- a) Serve as technical experts for councillors
- b) Provide technical expertise for citizens and councillors
- c) Function as policy advisors
- d) Function as policy advocates (promoting policies)

10. a) Have you ever requested housing information from the civic administration? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

b) Have you read the following administration sponsored housing reports? (if Yes, indicate with a ✓)

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Apartment Loss Study
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Tenant Relocation Study
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Housing: Background Report: Plan Winnipeg

11. What are the three most pressing inner city housing issues?

(prioritize)

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

12. Where do you get your most reliable information concerning the public's opinion on housing issues?

- \_\_\_\_\_ a) from friends and acquaintances
- \_\_\_\_\_ b) community committee/RAGs
- \_\_\_\_\_ c) from polls and surveys

- d) letters and phone calls
- e) interest groups (briefs and delegations)
- f) media
- g) other: \_\_\_\_\_

13. Have any of the following interest groups had any persuasive influence on your council decisions concerning housing?

- a) Resident Advisory Groups (RAGs)
- b) Associated Tenants Action Committee (ATAC)
- c) Councillors
- d) Housing Action Coalition (HAC)
- e) Housing and Urban Development Association of Manitoba (HUDAM)
- f) The Institute of Urban Studies (IUS)
- g) Social Planning Council (SPC)
- h) Development Plan Review
- i) Other: \_\_\_\_\_

14. Which of the following groups/individuals have been most successful at raising housing as a public-political issue within the city?

(rank if more than one)

- a) Associated Tenants Action Committee (ATAC)
- b) Council
- c) Resident Advisory Groups (RAGs)
- d) Media
- e) Housing and Urban Development Association of Manitoba (HUDAM)
- f) Housing Action Coalition (HAC)
- g) Institute of Urban Studies (IUS)

- \_\_\_\_\_ h) Social Planning Council (SPC)
- \_\_\_\_\_ i) Department of Environmental Planning
- \_\_\_\_\_ j) Environment Commissioner
- \_\_\_\_\_ k) Other: \_\_\_\_\_

15. Do you support the recently approved guidelines on housing?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

16. Do the recently approved guidelines constitute a policy?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

17. Should the guidelines be reviewed subject to the information and recommendations contained in the housing section of Plan Winnipeg?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

18. Do you agree with the recent media reports of inner city housing decline?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

19. Do you agree with the Environment Commissioner's stated perception of the inner city? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

20. What roles should the following groups play in the housing scene in Winnipeg?

- a) Private Sector              b) Civic Government
- c) Provincial Government d) Federal Government
- a) Private Sector: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

b) Civic Government:

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c) Provincial Government:

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d) Federal Government:

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## GUIDE TO SCORING COUNCILLORS' RESPONSES

### General

All questions have been framed to ascertain the councillors' housing stance, level of information, and accessibility to interest groups like HAC. Two questions (nos. 14 and 16) are not included in this model. These questions were included merely to test the opinion of City Council. They indicate nothing regarding housing stance, level of information, and accessibility. Responses were weighted, with positions matching HAC's viewpoint receiving maximum points. The questions will be presented below with an explanation of the variable(s) behind the question and the allocation of points.

Question 1: This question tests the housing variable. Three points are allocated if housing is the councillor's number one priority; two points if it is second; one point if it is third; and none if it is lower. A maximum of three points within the housing variable is possible for this question.

Question 2: This question tests the housing variable. One point is allocated for each concern which matches Housing Action Coalition's concerns (inadequate supply of low-income units, poor quality housing, affordability problems, uncontrolled suburban growth, etc.). A maximum of three points within the housing variable is possible for this question.

Question 3: This question tests the level of information variable.

One point is allocated for each responsibility or duty given which matches the following list: NIP, use of RRAP funds, land use regulations, Flora Place and other city operated projects, land-lease scheme, and the Civic Housing Guidelines. A maximum of four points is possible within the level of information variable for this question.

Question 4: This question tests the housing variable. One point is allocated for a 'Yes' response in part a), if it is coupled with an 'expanded' response in part b). The 'expanded' response receives one point. A total of two points is possible within the housing variable for this question.

Question 5: This question tests the housing variable. Two points are allocated for a 'Yes' response. This is a major HAC position. A maximum of two points is possible within the housing variable for this question.

Question 6: This question tests the housing variable. Two points are awarded for a 'separate committee' response in part a), and another two points for a 'housing division' response in part b). These are also major HAC positions. A maximum of four points is available within the housing variable for this question.

Question 7: This question tests the housing and information variables. One point is awarded for each technique with which the councillor is familiar. A maximum of ten points is available within the information variable for this question. Within the housing variable one point is allocated for a beneficial designation

beside technique three, two points for technique four, three points for technique five (one point for resale only), two points for technique six, one point for technique seven, three points for technique eight, and one point for technique nine. A total of thirteen points is possible within the housing variable for this question.

Question 8: This question tests the accessibility variable. One point is awarded if b) is circled, two points for c), and three points for d). No points are given for the a) response. A total of three points is possible within the accessibility variable for this question.

Question 9: This question tests the accessibility variable. Two points are awarded for response b), one point for response c), two points for response d), and no points for response a). A maximum of two points is available within the accessibility variable for this question.

Question 10: This question tests the information variable. One point is awarded for a 'Yes' response in part a). One point is awarded for each of the three reports read by the councillors in part b). A maximum of four points is possible within the information variable for this question.

Question 11: This question tests the housing variable. One point is available for each councillor response which matches HAC's concern of supply, quality, and affordability. A total of three points is possible within the housing variable for this question.

Question 12: This question tests the accessibility variable. One point is available for response b), one point for c), one point for d), four points for e), one point for f), one point for g), (if a source sympathetic to HAC). A total of nine points is available within the accessibility variable for this question.

Question 13: This question tests the accessibility variable. One point is awarded for response a), two points for b), four points for d), one point for f), one point for h), one point for i), (if group sympathetic to HAC). Nine points are possible within the accessibility variable for this question.

Question 14: This question notes if councillors view HAC as successful at raising housing as a public-political issue.

Question 15: This question tests the housing variable. Three points are available for a 'No' response. A total of three points is possible within the housing variable for this question.

Question 16: This question notes if councillors view the housing guidelines as city housing policy.

Question 17: This question tests the housing variable. One point is awarded for a 'Yes' response. A maximum of one point is available within the housing variable for this question.

Question 18: This question tests both the housing and information variables. One point is awarded for a 'Yes' response within the housing variable. A total of one point is available within the housing variable for this question.

One point is allocated if councillors demonstrate familiarity with the media reports. A total of one point is possible within the information variable for this question.

Question 19: This question tests both the housing and information variables. One point is allocated for a 'No' response. A total of one point is possible within the housing variable for this question.

One point is awarded if councillors are familiar with Commissioner Henderson's letter regarding the core of the city. One point is available within the information variable for this question.

Question 20: This question tests the housing variable. Three points are allocated if councillors desire increased or substantial housing involvement. One point is awarded if the municipal role is increased slightly over the status quo. No points are allocated for a limited or status quo municipal role. A total of three points is available within the housing variable for this question.

A total of thirty-nine points are possible within the housing variable. If a councillor scores twenty points or greater, he/she will be designated as possessing a housing stance sympathetic to HAC. A total of twenty-five points are available within the accessibility variable. If a councillor attains thirteen points or greater he/she will be considered accessible to interest groups similar to HAC. A total of twenty points is available within the information variable. If more than fifteen points is gained within the information variable the councillor will be deemed as possessing a high level of housing information. The high threshold was chosen for this category because information will reach most councillors just by

participating in civic politics. In addition, both the housing stance and accessibility variables possess some ideological characteristics. The level of information variable does not. Councillors would have fewer problems accepting and noting information than they would accepting HAC's political position or becoming sympathetic to citizen groups. Hence, the threshold for the information variable is higher than the other two variables.

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