

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE STATE

by

Camilla M. Stivers

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APPROVED:

Charles T. Goodsell, Chair

Cynthia J. McSwain

Carol L. Wamsley

John A. Rohr

Orion F. White, Jr.

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Camilla M. Stivers

Committee Chair: Charles T. Goodsell

Center for Public Administration and Policy

(ABSTRACT)

The intent of this research has been to develop an answer to the practical question of active citizenship in the administrative state. In political philosophy, the literature of direct democracy suggests that active citizens are people capable of learning to make decisive judgments in the public interest. But critics have held that the idea is unworkable: that modern governmental bureaucracies are too large and complex, interest group politics too entrenched, and human nature too self-interested for ordinary people to practice citizenship in an administrative framework.

The project has two parts. First, the classic features of active citizenship have been recast in administrative terms, as citizens' exercise of purposeful discretion in the conduct of administrative affairs delegated to them by public administrators. It is argued that cooperative action by lay citizens and administrators-as-citizens within the framework of a public agency perspective can be seen as constituting a polis. Second, an example of existing interaction between lay citizens and administrators is examined: the Community Health Center Program in the

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is argued that this example, while neither capable of nor intended to support a general normative theory of public administration, illustrates that a true practice of active citizenship is possible within the administrative state. Features of the illustration are interpreted in light of this argument.

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Don Tiller has prepared the manuscript with great skill and good humor. He is a real pro and a valued friend.

John Marvin continued to put up with me, when no one should have been expected to.

This project is dedicated to the active citizens of the community health center movement. Long may they share in governance of the administrative state.

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CHAPTER 1:
THE QUESTION OF ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

Defending the legitimacy of administration has been a problem since the earliest period in American governance. The crucial question has been how to reconcile the need for stable, efficient and capable administration with responsiveness to the popular will. Evidence of difficulty in achieving this balance recurs like a Leitmotif in the history of the U.S. administrative state. One observer even sees in the continuing struggle a "grand irony": that every reform effort aimed at enhancing popular control has "inadvertently planted the seeds of modern bureaucratic power." (Nelson 1982, 747)

The Trend Toward Scientific Administration

Ironic or not, the tension was perceived by the framers of the Constitution. Writing in The Federalist Papers (No. 70: 1961, 472), Alexander Hamilton asserted that the foundations of legitimate executive power included both "energy," meaning structural adequacy, and "safety," or accountability to the people. Hamilton stressed the need for energy, and patrician early administrations paid heed; but it was not long before the political weight began to shift. Soon, the Jacksonian era tipped the balance to the side of--as it turned out--ill-considered popular control. In reaction, Progressive reformers came to interpret administrative legitimacy as political neutrality. While the Progressives saw neutral, expert administration as a means to faithful execution of the will of the

people, over time professional expertise became, in many quarters, nearly an end in itself.

The attempt to make administration professional or scientific set in motion a data-based search for value-free general laws that has shaped tellingly the modern quest for administrative legitimacy: Herbert Simon's Administrative Behavior (1945) heralded this trend. When joined to standards of neutrality and scientific management established by reform theorists such as Wilson, Goodnow, Gulick, Urwick, and Taylor, Simon's behavioral science perspective weakened interest in responsiveness to the people, a notion that does not fit well within its framework, and put the field of public administration at odds with the ancient idea that governance is inherently a normative concern. The tumult of World War II had made it clear that administration could not be separated from politics; but most public administration theorists ignored the opportunity this new insight might have presented for reflection upon the value dimensions inherent in the idea of administrative legitimacy. Instead, they took the breakdown of the "politics-administration dichotomy" as a mandate either to document the terms of interest group-dominated policy making and bureaucratic politics, or to strengthen attempts to scientize management and policy. Despite critiques marshalled first by Dwight Waldo and then by the "New Public Administration" movement, for public administration the term "normative theory" has remained essentially an oxymoron.

The Shift Toward Values

In recent years, however, there is evidence of a resurgence of concern for the value dimensions of governance. In particular, the "Blacksburg Manifesto" (Wamsley *et al.* 1987) has taken the lead in characterizing the present legitimation difficulties of public administration as due to a failure to give as much notice to the "how-to's" of democracy and the public interest as has been paid to effective management. The Blacksburg theorists trace the difficulties of American public administration to tensions inherent in our political system, a Constitutional representative democracy committed both to individual freedom and justice and to national prosperity and stability, attempting to find its way through a complex post-industrial age.

The tensions to which the Manifesto alludes are value conflicts, which cannot be addressed adequately by administrative theory defined as a set of covering laws or a management technology. An important corollary of the Manifesto, then, given the intellectual history of the field, is that American public administration can only chart its course successfully by re-thinking the nature of its theory. As another recent analyst of the situation puts it:

Disentangling the reformist dilemma of democracy and administration requires more than good intentions or ingenuity in creating novel administrative arrangements. At the very least, successful completion of the task demands large-scale normative political theory. (O'Toole 1984, 163)

Absent such theory, the administrative state assumes the aspect of a fait accompli. To avoid this, we need to understand how public values can be embodied in administrative action rather than seeing them simply as external constraints. John A. Rohr's To Run a Constitution (1986) has precisely this aim. Rohr argues that The Public Administration presents the constitutional word made flesh, as it were, and suggests how the founding values can be reflected by practicing administrators in the routines of public organizational life.

My own project is, I hope, in the same spirit, but takes a different tack. Its argument is that the quest for a normative theory of American public administration will be aided by a re-examination of the relationship between administrative practice and the ultimate source of values in a democratic polity, that is, the people. In my view, administrative legitimacy requires not just conceptual but active accountability to citizens, from whom the ends of government derive. Clearly this need is met in part as public administrators answer to elected officials, who are the people's representatives. But as Hanna Pitkin suggests, the legitimacy of representative government hinges on whether the people really do act through their representatives. This, she argues, depends upon whether the governed are actually capable of action and judgment, even though most of the time they may not communicate specific judgments directly to their representatives (1972, 232 ff.). The Anti-federalist framers of the Constitution also believed that practical linkages between citizens and their government were necessary in order to keep representation from turning into a sham, or worse, a tyranny. These

ideas support the view that the administrative state cannot be justified to citizens who, because of their exclusion from the public sphere, are incapable of understanding the argument or have no mechanism for hearing it or interacting with it. The legitimate administrative state, in other words, will be one inhabited by citizens who are in some sense "active."

The idea of active citizenship is, of course, far from new. Its major terms were set forth by Aristotle in The Politics (1981) and remain definitive to this day. For Aristotle, the active citizen is one who, exercising practical wisdom in the public interest, renders decisive judgment about some aspect of governance. The active citizen rules and is ruled, in turn. In addition, Aristotle and contemporary theorists in this tradition, such as Hannah Arendt and Benjamin Barber, argue that the practice of active citizenship is not simply an instrument to the achievement of some larger aim but has value in its own right. The purpose of the state is to establish the conditions for its exercise. It may strike the reader that construing active citizenship as an ultimate public value is inconsistent with using it as a means to improve the legitimacy of the administrative state. But if my concern is to encourage my fellow public administrationists, many of whom are indifferent or even hostile to the notion, to take active citizenship seriously, a plausible starting point is to demonstrate that it is compatible with the administrative state and important to its legitimacy; given this, it may come to assume yet a higher value for them. As a citizen said to me in the course of my research, "You have to start where people are." The key question, of course, is the extent to which active citizenship so understood is possible within the framework of the post-industrial administrative state.

The Problem of Active Citizenship

The citizenship question has already attracted fresh interest in the field of public administration. The practice of "citizen participation," injected during the 1960s and 1970s into government at all levels, has survived in one form or another the demise of the activism that gave it birth. The literature of citizen participation reflects a continuing sense that various relationships between bureaucrats and citizens are instrumental to the effective formation and implementation of public policy. But participation is still more typically treated as a cost to citizen and bureaucrat than as a benefit to society, and one finds little evidence in the literature of substantive decisionmaking by citizens and even less understanding that active citizenship constitutes an end in itself.

In any case, it seems clear that existing institutionalized relationships have not been sufficient unto the need for administrative legitimacy. Contributors to a 1984 special issue of Public Administration Review remarked on the current apathy of citizens and their lack of understanding of the policy process. This dialogue dwelt at length on the need to "revitalize citizenship by means of the craft of public administration," (Gawthrop 1984, 103) and reflected on the disparity between the weak view of citizenship held by the framers of the Constitution and a residue of "high citizenship" that nevertheless persists in our civic culture. (Rohr 1984, 136) Uniting the contributors was the sense that bureaucrats need citizens of a new kind and in a new

way. But this need appears to be fundamentally at odds with a long-standing consensus in Western political thought: namely, that substantive involvement by citizens in governance, or direct democracy, is unworkable, however desirable it may be (about this there is argument).

Critics of direct democracy have charged, first, that it is impossible to implement because human nature is flawed: either too passionate and selfish or too passive and apathetic. For another thing, they argue, in contrast to the classic intimacy of the Greek city-state, the modern administrative state is too big and complex to make possible the kind of face-to-face relationships on which the practice depends. Another criticism is that interest group politics is too entrenched to make room for the ordinary citizen. Finally, it is said that too much activity by citizens would, by heightening political conflict, destroy the social stability on which their freedom depends. Citizen participation in contemporary governmental programs has not served to refute these criticisms. Instead it has been said to show that active citizenship in practice is quickly transmuted to a symbolic procedure by the political economy of the administrative state.

In order to form a theory of active citizenship, then, it is necessary to develop a modern understanding of it that is consistent with the terms of the tradition of direct democracy but at the same time responds to the charge of impracticality.

What Kind of Question is Active Citizenship?

The question of active citizenship has at least two important aspects. One issue is how to reinterpret its classic characteristics so that they appear plausible in the context of late-20th century American bureaucracy: What would we mean by "active citizenship in the administrative state?" The other is whether, even if an answer to the first question can be developed, we have any confidence that it can actually be acted upon. As Pitkin observed, the governed must be actually capable of action and judgment. How do we know they are, or could become so? How would we know active citizenship when we saw it? Why do we think it might work, that it is more than just a nice idea?

The modern terms of a theory of active citizenship and the issue of its feasibility are two sides of the same question: What form might the practice of active citizenship in the American administrative state actually take? This is not an easy question to answer; and part of the reason goes beyond addressing major criticisms to the nature of the question itself.

In public administration, despite the ostensible collapse of the politics-administration dichotomy, there is still a strong tendency to categorize questions in one of two ways: either as technical, by which we mean that they are puzzles that can be solved by some empirically grounded method; or as normative, by which we mean that they cannot be answered empirically but involve values, which must be demonstrated

philosophically, taken on faith, or resolved politically--that is, not "answered" but "settled."

The question of active citizenship is neither of these kinds of questions, but is yet a third type: what Aristotle (1976) called a practical question, or one the answer to which involves working out issues of values within real-world contexts. Aristotle called the answers to such questions "practical wisdom," by which he meant knowledge of what it is right to do given the circumstances. Such answers, being contingent, are tentative, and take the form of practices rather than solutions; in fact, "answer" has too final a connotation for what essentially is a process instead of a formula.

To seek a theory of active citizenship in the administrative state is therefore to ask: in what sorts of actions and under what circumstances does or could active citizenship find its fullest expression in the administrative state? As a practical question, this query has both empirical and normative dimensions: requiring interpretation of actual experiences in terms of fundamental principles, and blending social science with political philosophy.

What should be the approach to a project of this sort? As I see it, there are two possibilities. One would be to accept the assessment implied in long-standing criticisms of active citizenship--that no such thing now exists--but present an argument as to what it might look like in contemporary circumstances and what changes might be made to facilitate

its introduction. This approach would represent simply the development of a normative theory--what Sheldon Wolin (1960) calls a "vision." As an approach to this particular project, this orientation appears to me to fall short in that the chief barrier to active citizenship is not simply that many people do not believe that it is worth doing, although there are those who are indeed unconvinced. The chief difficulty is rather that most people believe that active citizenship simply will not work. Therefore, the more powerful approach, and the one I have attempted to follow, is to present the vision, but also to back it up by examining an existing situation in which citizens are engaged in public sector action and arguing that this example constitutes an authentic illustration of active citizenship in actual practice.

Such an interpretation has its hazards, because as soon as one purports to turn to the real world for support, one is apt to be perceived as engaged in the exercise of trying to prove a hypothesis. But the answers to practical questions are not judged by technical standards. The task of responding to such a question involves making a convincing argument. Therefore my project in this research is to try to convince the reader by: (a) setting forth a vision of active citizenship; (b) presenting a real-world situation; and (c) giving good reasons for interpreting that situation as active citizenship. My hope is that, in Wolin's visionary terms, the reader will come to "see" the situation as active citizenship, although it is not now seen that way. In so doing, I want to counter the charge that active citizenship is unworkable, or at least give pause to those who level it, as well as offer encouragement and

practical suggestions to those who would strengthen the role ordinary citizens play in public life.

Before sketching the details of the approach, however, one definitional issue needs attention.

Who is a Citizen?

Consideration of the question of active citizenship is complicated by a pervasive tension in American political thought, and indeed in various bodies of political thought on which Americans have drawn, between two understandings of the legal meaning of citizenship. According to citizenship by ascription, whether one is a citizen depends on objective circumstance such as place of birth. From the consensual perspective, on the other hand, citizenship depends upon individual free choice, on consent (Schuck and Smith 1985, 9-41). The first is a structural view--one is a citizen because of who one is; the second view turns upon action--one is a citizen because of something one does.

A choice of one or the other definition raises significant problems for the viability of the state. As Schuck and Smith suggest, defining citizenship purely by birth weakens the idea of free choice, and appears to compel the state to protect some persons it may be actively trying to keep out (for example, the child born in a U.S. hospital to a Mexican woman who crossed the border just to ensure the child's American citizenship). Alternatively, defining citizenship only on the basis of

consent could lead to so much diversity of language, ethnicity and custom that political community cannot be sustained.

Since the founding period, the United States has maintained a distinct ambivalence on the nature of citizenship. The word "citizen" appears eleven times in the Constitution but is nowhere defined in the document, nor are the rights and duties of citizens definitively spelled out. Certainly the ideology of consent was an important element in justifying the break with the mother country and the establishment of a new nation. Yet birth appears to have been used from the beginning as the de facto basis for citizenship, with the obvious exception of blacks, whose citizenship birthright was not established until the 14th Amendment. Women were a continuing anomaly until 1920: they were considered "citizens," but were barred from exercising a fundamental right of citizenship, the right to vote.

As Schuck and Smith note:

The American Congress, courts and statesmen [drew] freely on both traditions, selecting among them largely on grounds of expediency. The result was a law that sacrificed theoretical consistency for some putative practical advantages (71).

Although the legitimacy of the Constitution is grounded in the idea of the people's consent, and although we Americans prefer to think of our system of government not as imposed upon us but as something we would choose given the opportunity, today only naturalized American citizens

actually exercise that choice. For most of us, citizenship is a status ascribed to us, rather than something we enact. Indeed, as Rohr (1984, 138) has suggested, legal citizenship fundamentally connotes possessing the right to certain forms of personal protection provided by the state: "There are virtually no duties associated with American citizenship." Even voting is popularly interpreted to be a self-interested action, rather than an obligation.

How does this definitional issue relate to the question of active citizenship? The connection comes about as a result of asserting that active citizenship entails ruling, or sharing in political decision-making, and of differentiating this role from much of what passed in recent times and still passes as "citizen participation." In practice, citizen participation has usually connoted the involvement of those receiving publicly provided services of one sort or another in expressing their service needs or their views on methods by which the services are to be delivered. The question of who is authorized to participate turns on the issue of eligibility to receive the service and not directly on whether one is legally a citizen. In this context, the issue of legal citizenship is not particularly important, since the participators have no real authority or responsibilities and since the point of the mechanism is to improve the services or the delivery process. This relationship between recipient-participators and public sector service providers is, in essence, social rather than political. The participators are asked simply to express their own needs or views, rather than to take on the obligation to consider the general good.

Active citizenship, on the other hand, not only connotes having a share in ruling, which implies being legally authorized, but also putting the public interest ahead of one's own preferences. In addition, as I have indicated, political thought in the Aristotelean tradition maintains that the exercise of active citizenship is not to be thought of only as a means to larger ends but as an end in itself. From this perspective, citizens are members of the state rather than of society, which is larger than the state. At least potentially then, not every member of society is necessarily a citizen. (For example, in Aristotle's polis, women, slaves and the foreign-born were not citizens.) But if one is not a citizen, in this view, one is not a political being and therefore, in a sense, doomed never to become fully human. Thus, excluding someone from active citizenship is much more serious than denying him or her the privilege of voicing an opinion about service delivery. From the perspective of active citizenship, "Who is a citizen?" is therefore a much weightier question than "Who can participate?"

It appears that we have two options for answering this weightier question, that is, we can answer in terms of who one is or in terms of what one does. These are not necessarily mutually exclusive criteria, and in fact to abandon any consideration of ascribed status such as place of birth would appear to strain structural logic, no matter how much the notion of active citizenship cries out for a definition rooted in what one does, or how much we would wish to avoid a definition that excludes any member of society from full political humanity. (Illegal aliens are the obvious dilemma here, but not one I am able to resolve.) But I would also

want to insist that place of birth does not make one a citizen, at least not an active citizen. That we must become; and it is attention to the "action" option for answering the citizenship question that forms my project in this research.

Approach to the Project

As I said earlier, defending active citizenship in the administrative state appears to me to be an effort to answer a practical question--an exercise that is part political philosophy and part social science. The difficulty of such a project is that it entails trying to see certain values embodied in practice, which is an interpretive rather than either a descriptive or an inferential move, involving persuasion rather than proof. According to Charles Taylor (1971), interpretation is the attempt to make sense of a human situation--to say what it means. The relationship between the situation and the meaning put forth is complex. The meaning does not correspond simply to a pre-existent reality, but neither can thinking alone "make it so." Instead, the interpretation contributes to the way the situation is viewed, and if internalized by those engaged in practice within it, shapes their action and alters the situation. At its heart, Taylor argues, interpretation is a "moral science." (51)

In the case of this dissertation, the act of interpretation must link a normative theory of active citizenship (a form of political philosophy) with documented practice in the real world (an exercise in descriptive

social science). The ingredients of the process are as follows: (1) to set forth the norm of active citizenship reflected in the philosophical tradition of direct democracy; (2) to recast this norm in terms of a particular context, which is to say, to develop a theory about the forms in which broadly understood political values might be specifically expressed in practice in a concrete situation; (3) to describe the situation itself, bringing those practices to life; and (4) to develop an interpretation of their meaning in terms of the traditional values newly understood.

The political philosophy part of the exercise is represented in the attempt to present relevant aspects of a philosophical tradition and then to recast them in contextual terms. The social science part entails examining practices and the context in which they occur. The development of a meaning out of the situation, since it draws on both an attempt to understand and recast enduring values and engagement with real-life activity, is itself a form of practice.

The Tradition of Active Citizenship

With respect to active citizenship in the administrative state--a concept that itself expresses an enduring value in a particular context--the philosophical tradition is generally reflected in the literature of direct democracy. In Chapter 2, I review key exponents, ancient and modern, of this tradition, and describe four attributes the tradition views as definitive:

- (1) Authoritative action: Citizens engage directly in some aspect of governance, involving the exercise of decisive judgment.
- (2) Consideration of the public interest: Citizens' authoritative action is animated by concern for the public interest; as such, it constitutes an end in itself.
- (3) Learning: Through the exercise of decisive judgment in the public interest, citizens learn to judge wisely, and develop aspects of their beings that can be developed in no other way. They become political persons.
- (4) Relationship: Citizens act together for the public interest; in so doing, they form a political community, a polis, that is the mechanism for handling conflict and for constituting and carrying forward shared values--ultimately, for perpetuating the practice itself.

The narrative in Chapter 2 explicates key terms used above, distills major arguments, and reviews principal critiques--the bases on which active citizenship is said to be unworkable or counterproductive. It then moves toward the task of trying to recast these attributes in terms that appear to make them more plausible within the context of the modern U.S. administrative state. How might active citizenship be understood, how might it be practiced, in such a context? My approach to this issue is first to review briefly some of the major ideas about democracy in public administration in order to develop an understanding of the key questions that have been asked about the role of citizens in administration, rather

than in other modes of governance (voting, say, or serving on juries). Following this review, I then summarize the high points of the "citizen participation" literature, mainly to flesh out and partially justify the distinction made in the preceding section between active citizenship (political beings) and citizen involvement in service delivery (participators).

A Theory of Active Citizenship

Having mapped the major features of the terrain of active citizenship as understood in Western political thought generally and in the literature of American public administration, the narrative shifts in Chapter 3 to offer a theory of active citizenship in the administrative state. The effort consists mainly of reinterpreting classic features of direct democracy in terms that make them harmonious--or at least not inconsistent--with modern normative understandings of the administrative state, as reflected, although not exclusively, in the Blacksburg Manifesto. I suggest that the arguments of the Manifesto can be extended, without doing them mortal damage, to help inform our understanding of the part active citizens might play in public administration as a form of governance. Features of the administrative role set forth by the Blacksburg theorists are interpreted in Terry Cooper's (1984, 143) terms: as elements that make administrators "citizens in lieu of the rest of us." These include the exercise of administrative discretion, the public interest as habit of mind, and the agency perspective. My argument will be that these features are also reflected in lay citizen action as it

currently occurs in at least one corner of the administrative state, albeit a small one, and that, if so, this example constitutes authentic active citizenship being practiced in the contemporary U.S. administrative state.

Additional conceptual groundwork is necessary, however, before turning to the practice situation. In the balance of Chapter 3, I suggest that one reason it has been so difficult for observers--not to say those directly involved--to see active citizenship in the type of situation I will describe relates to the common-sense way in which we tend to view organizations: as structural frameworks, rather like the girders of a building within the limits of which action goes on. Such assumptions about the relationship between organizational structure and human action are important because they are the lens through which political practice is assessed and understood: first formally, in social science; then informally and practically, as social science findings become part of the larger culture. Briefly, my argument is that neither the reigning social science frame of reference nor the principal alternative framework is helpful to a vision of active citizenship; in fact, they lead to understandings that inhibit the political effectiveness of ordinary people. The reigning structural functionalist paradigm, which has assumed the status of common sense, views the institutions and organizations of modern political life as "hard" realities beyond the control of mere mortals, and therefore encourages people to view themselves as politically impotent. Interpretivism, the chief alternative paradigm, has the advantage of viewing institutions as results of interaction, but from the

perspective of active citizenship falls short because of its implicit concern for the control (rather than facilitation) of social processes and its neglect of oppressive political and economic dynamics, the effects of which bear more heavily on some members of society than others.

In my view, active citizenship--indeed, the administrative state generally--needs a way of thinking about public organizations that neither incapacitates ordinary people nor underplays the political and economic impact of prevailing organizational practices. In short, the field of public administration needs a new theory of public organization. But recourse to organization theory as a strategy in developing a praxis, or an approach to political life, has its hazards. Although Burrell and Morgan (1979), among others, have pointed out how theories of organization have political assumptions and implications, normative political theorists generally resist the organizational frame of reference because they see it as blurring the distinction between politics and other modes of social interaction, with the result that politics as a positive and uniquely fulfilling form of life "disappears." As Sheldon Wolin (1960, 431-433) argues, the organizational move puts politics in the position of "residuary legatee, shouldering those tasks which other groups or organizations are unwilling or unable to perform..., politiciz[es] the character of non-political groups", and obscures the special attribute of politics: that it addresses general interests. Nevertheless, an attempt to rethink the nature of action in public organizations must be made, because people's views of institutional structure have a decisive impact

on whether or not they see their own actions vis-à-vis those institutions to be potentially effective.

This link between views of structure and the nature and limits of public sector action is not new; rather it dates back to the founding of the administrative state. The framers of the Constitution saw the structure of the new government as a system that would, through mechanisms such as the separation of powers and checks and balances, ensure that people's actions on the basis of their natural inclinations would be refined to produce the common good. As reflected in the title of Michael Kammen's (1986) discussion (A Machine That Would Go of Itself), the founders' faith in constitutional structure was often expressed in the language of Newtonian mechanics, with government conceived as a mechanism that, once it was up and running, would "go of itself." From this perspective, the boundaries of human political action were drawn in advance, as it were.

The call for a revised understanding of public organizations is not meant to imply necessarily the need for fundamental structural change, but instead the need for a broader range of public action. I want to suggest that there is room within the broad constitutional framework for active citizenship to be enacted, if citizens can come to see public organizations and the governance that goes on through them in another light. The attempt to rethink the nature of public organizations need not result in rejection of the structures the founders devised. Although its particular shape is the product of its designers' skeptical view of human

nature, the framework is capacious and flexible enough to allow a broader and more positive range of human action than the founders envisioned.

The social theory of Anthony Giddens appears to be a potential framework within which to develop this new perspective on public organizations. Giddens's work is useful here because he views organizations in a way that can be seen as supportive of active citizenship. Giddens (1984, 1979) puts human beings--"actors"--at the center of his conceptualization of society. He sees them as inherently knowledgeable: able to use existing social rules and resources to engage in social practices; able to use new knowledge to change things. In Giddens's view, organizations are simply regularized patterns of human actions. At the same time, he sees organizations as the medium for practice. Since organizational structures are both the medium and the product of action, actors can be seen as possessing inherent capability to alter institutions.

Giddens is determined to strike a balance between institutions and actors: to see neither as prior, but to view them as mutually enabling and constraining. Thus his emphasis on the capacity of actors to "make a difference," as he puts it, does not lead him to underestimate the difficulty of changing institutions that "stretch away" in space and time beyond face-to-face interaction. Also, Giddens is properly aware of the impact of material resources and institutionalized power over conditions of people's lives, hence over their potential for action. Thus, Giddens (1984) lays down a (nicely edited) version of the famous Marxian maxim:

"Men [let us immediately say human beings] make history, but not in circumstances of their own choosing.'" (Brackets in Giddens).

My argument uses Giddens's work to recast active citizenship in the administrative state in the following ways:

- (1) I suggest that if actors are the source of patterns of action that constitute societal institutions, then citizen action with respect to the institutions of governance take on a potential new aspect of efficacy. If citizens are capable of using new knowledge to alter their own actions and as a result institutions as well, as Giddens argues, then one barrier to their effectiveness lies not in their own natures or in the complexity of institutions, but in their lack of knowledge, that is, the sort of understanding about the nature of institutions that would enable citizens to reshape them. I will argue that, in this respect, Giddens's work provides a potential basis for developing the capacity of citizens to exercise decisive judgment and to learn from the experience of governance, as well as countering the view that institutions are beyond human control.
- (2) Following Giddens's lead, I will not assume that interactive practices are likely to be sufficient in and of themselves to make active citizenship workable. Structural support is necessary in order to make the required "resources and rules" available to be drawn upon in interaction. I will suggest the

kind of structural support that appears likely to work: that is, the kind that reduces governance to human scale; the kind that facilitates decisive judgment and learning; the kind that fosters mutual understanding between citizens and bureaucrats. Given this framework, I argue, interaction between citizens and administrators literally constitutes a polis, a practical political community within the grand dimensions of the post-industrial state.

Practicing Active Citizenship

In Chapter 4, I turn from the development of a theory of active citizenship to the task of bringing it into contact with an ongoing situation in which citizens are engaged in practice within a policy context. Here I use the theory to examine an existing practice by citizens in the American administrative state. The situation that serves as an illustration is the federal Community Health Center program (Section 330 of the Public Health Service Act). I look at two aspects of the program. Consistent with the goal of integrating structure and action, I examine its interactive aspects, the experiences of ordinary citizens and bureaucrats involved in it; and I look at its structural framework: the development and current outlines of enabling legislation, regulations, other written policy guidelines and so on. In the course of the examination, I aim to interpret the practice of citizens in terms of the key features of direct democracy as I have recast them, that is, in terms that show them to be consistent with the dimensions of modern public

administration understood as a form of governance. As a part of this effort, I attempt by drawing on Giddens's work to present citizen practice as both the source of as well as shaped by structural elements. Thus their practice can be seen not as an ornament of the administrative state but--like the actions of bureaucrats themselves--constitutive of it. In a detailed interpretation of one situation, I intend to identify existing features that are consistent with my theory as well as to point out where the illustration falls short.

The Future of Active Citizenship

Finally, Chapter 5 is an effort to pull together themes sounded in the theory and reflected in the practice situation and synthesize them in the form of a summary vision of active citizenship in the administrative state. At this point, I look back to major objections to the idea of active citizenship--the bases on which critics have held that it won't work--and attempt to assess the extent to which this research is responsive to them. In a concluding section, I offer several guidelines suggested by the research situation that might facilitate or enhance the practice of active citizenship. These include an institutional and situational framework, the encouragement of a specifically citizenship orientation, and revisions in the model of the public administration professional.

CHAPTER 2:
THE TRADITION OF ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

As I suggested in Chapter 1, an active citizen is one who is directly involved in governance who rules and is ruled in turn. In political philosophy, a state governed directly by citizens is characterized as a direct democracy. The argument of Chapter 2 turns to various theories of direct democracy, ancient and modern, to develop a picture of active citizenship, highlighting key points rather than attempting in-depth analysis of the full range of any one thinker's work.

The classic vision of active citizenship is Aristotle's. He declares that mere residence in a place does not entail citizenship, nor does the possession of legal rights ("Who may prosecute or be prosecuted"). The distinguishing characteristic of the citizen is a form of action:

What effectively distinguishes the citizen proper from all others is his participation in giving judgment and in holding office (1981, Sec. 1275a22).

And further on in the same chapter of The Politics:

[A]s soon as a man becomes entitled to participate in office, deliberative or judicial, we deem him to be a citizen of that state...(Sec. 1275b13).

Still later Aristotle declares:

[A] citizen in the fullest sense is one who has a share in honours [i.e., such as are peculiarly gained from holding office - ed. note]....For he who has no share in honours is no better than a resident alien (Sec. 1278a34).

Although this definition of citizenship is consistent with that offered by later writers on direct democracy, assigning Aristotle to this category is problematic because of his complex distinction between democracy and what he referred to as "polity." He was concerned to separate states in which the rulers govern with a view to the common good from those that are ruled for the private advantage of those in control. Thus, in one section of The Politics, Aristotle defines democracy as rule for the benefit of men without means and polity as "[p]olitical control exercised by the mass of the populace in the common interest" (Sec. 1279a32-b4). This rather neat formula is upset later, however, when polity is defined at one point as a mixture of oligarchy and democracy but leaning more toward democracy, and at another, as a mixture of the well-to-do and the poor (Sec. 1293b22- 1294a9). Aristotle argues that the "well-mixed" polity is such that it could be described either as oligarchic or democratic, depending on the particular feature under examination; the point of the mixture is that it can "be kept stable by means of itself and not through outside agencies," (Sec. 1294b14-36) the apparent assumption being that rule by poor people in the public interest could not be achieved in the pure type, but would require oligarchic elements in order to maintain itself.

Therefore, although we cannot call the Aristotelean citizen "democratic" without substantial qualification, the vision of the populace ruling in the public interest is first distilled here.

Changing Interpretations of Democracy

For Montesquieu, a principal source of political theory for the founders of the new American state, the operative phrase with which to

imply rule by the people in the public interest was "democratic republic," that is, "a regime in which the many, the demos, hold sovereign power and in which citizens participate directly in deliberative and judicial functions," subordinating their own private interests to the common good. (Krouse 1983, 59) Here the term "democratic" implied a formal property of the state (rule by the citizenry-at-large) while "republic" carried forward the crucial idea of governing in the public interest. Rousseau expressed a similar interpretation: "I therefore call any state a republic which is governed by laws, under whatever form of administration it may be; for then only does the public interest govern..." (1967, 40).

According to Gordon Wood (1969, 53), at the time of the American revolution "[t]he sacrifice of individual interests to the greater good of the whole formed the essence of republicanism..." Tom Paine's Rights of Man, Part the Second argued that republican government was not connected with any particular form, but that in order to conduct the res publica, or public business, after a community had become too large for "the simple democratical form," it was necessary to graft representation upon democracy (Shoemaker 1966, 87). By this process the chief defect of democracy, its inapplicability to large states, would be remedied. Here "democracy" still implies the formal property of popular rule and is essentially a positive term, while "republic" now begins to carry a double meaning: not only rule in the public interest, but also a method or form by which this end will be achieved, namely, representation.

By the time of the Federalist Papers, James Madison could assert that "the elective mode of obtaining rulers is the characteristic policy of republican government" (Federalist No. 57: 1961, 384). For Madison, as Garry Wills (1981) argues, the point of representation is the refinement and enlargement of public views through the assignment of decision-making to "a chosen body of citizens, whose wisdom may best discern the true interest of their country" (Federalist No. 10: 1961, 62), in order to preserve the pursuit of public virtue in a large state. This arrangement is "democratic," in that the people select their rulers and are still considered the ultimate source of the state's legitimacy. But the scope of participation implied by "democracy" has been narrowed drastically. In fact, for the Federalists, "democracy," while still implying popular rule, has now become both impossible (unworkable in large states) and dangerous because of its instability and its vulnerability to passions--hence its lack of public spirit or devotion to the public good (Arendt 1963, 224). Furthermore, with the change in the meaning of "republic" to imply a particular form of government, there is no longer a term available in the American political lexicon for rule that is both participatory in the original Athenian sense and legitimate (Krouse 1983, 64). Along the way from Athens to the new United States, the democratic citizen has been transformed from one who rules and is ruled to one who selects his rulers wisely and then returns to the pursuit of private interests.

In the modern era, discussions of the term (Dahl 1956; Pennock 1979) tend to turn on the question of whether the definitive characteristic of democracy is procedural--are the people involved in the policy process at

least to the extent of selecting their leaders?--or substantive--does the policy process produce decisions that can be viewed legitimately as expressions of the people's will? Also, as Carole Pateman (1970, 1-2) suggests, recent American theory reflects pervasive concern for "the stability of the political system, and with the conditions, or prerequisites, necessary to ensure that stability..." These issues have tended to divert the focus of attention away from the necessity and value of direct popular involvement in ruling. In a somewhat extreme incarnation, such as the work of Joseph Schumpeter (1943), democracy implies simply a competitive struggle among leaders for the people's vote.

It is only a short step from describing democracy as a struggle among elites to the raising of this empirical observation to a normative principle, accomplished in the work of pluralist theorists like David Truman (1951) and his successors. From this perspective, competition among diversified interest groups prevents any one interest from dominating for long and makes up for individual citizens' apathy by articulating their concerns to decision-makers. Pursued to a more radical viewpoint, this argument takes the form of explicit distrust of the people at large, as in these words of Thomas R. Dye:

Mass governance is neither feasible nor desirable...Efforts to encourage mass participation in American politics are completely misdirected...It is the irony of democracy that masses, not elites, pose the greatest threat to the survival of democratic values. More than anything else, America needs an enlightened elite capable of acting to preserve individual freedom, human dignity, and the values of life, liberty, and property (Wengert 1985, 80).

At this point, one could argue, the use of the term "democratic" has become largely ideological--emptied of much of its classic or traditional content, including the implication of substantive citizen rule, and thereby readied to justify a wide range of political arrangements including, around the globe, totalitarian and/or authoritarian "democratic peoples' republics".

In the following review of ideas about direct democracy, I will describe briefly the major ideas from the literature pertaining to the four key attributes outlined in Chapter 1, in each case treating relevant work from the general body of Western political thought and material dealing specifically with the U.S., showing how these ideas develop--or undercut--a notion of active citizenship.

Democracy as Authoritative Action

The central tenet of direct democracy is that citizens themselves take part in governance, rather than assigning this responsibility to representatives. Since governance entails the exercise of authority, it is important to consider the term "authority" in order to understand in what respect active citizens can be said to be acting authoritatively.

Although I recognize its importance, I want to leave aside the question of whether or not authority needs to be lodged in a small group of governors or can be equalized across all citizens. The viability of my project does not depend upon convincing anyone of the feasibility of fully

implemented direct democracy. Instead, I turn to this philosophical tradition as an exemplar of the qualities of active citizenship in order to argue that there is room for this sort of practice in the administrative state as presently constituted.

The issue that does need examination here is the nature of authority. What sort of authority do active citizens exercise? John Schaar's treatment of authority is instructive. Schaar says that authority is legitimate power, with its legitimacy grounded "in a realm of things beyond the wills of the holders of power" (1969, 287). This view is asserted in reaction to the idea that legitimacy is purely subjective, a matter of the beliefs and opinions of the governed. Schaar's argument is that the claim to rightful power must be tied to an external foundation, that is, to law.

In addition, following Bertrand de Jouvenel, Schaar suggests that authority is "the faculty of gaining another man's assent." Here he addresses the interactive as distinguished from the structural aspects of authority. "An authority is one whose counsels we seek and trust...who starts lines of action that others complete." The two basic functions of interactive authority are to provide counsel and to increase the confidence of those subject to it. According to Schaar, perceived tension between liberty and authority is a misunderstanding: "In an older understanding, authority, while it defined and limited liberty, thereby also fulfilled and directed it" (1969, 291-2).

What we learn from Schaar is that authority is both structural and interactive. The authority of the active citizen, then, must be both grounded in law and acted out with others. Active citizens are both legally empowered to make decisions and respected because of the wise counsel they provide. Because, as Aristotle has told us, they both rule and are ruled, their authority is limited, but with respect to the responsibility they have been delegated, it is decisive.

Moses Finley's (1973, 20-24) detailed analysis of Athenian democracy makes it clear that, in this one state at least, albeit for a relatively brief period, ordinary citizens had the right to decide about matters of public policy, by means of their membership in the Assembly, where issues were debated and decisive votes taken. Finley points out that most Athenian citizens, while poorly educated, understood perfectly well the necessity for expert advice but still exercised final judgment themselves about what was to be done. Furthermore, although there were leaders such as Pericles who were "stars" in Assembly debate and might be considered to have constituted an elite, this leadership was personal rather than institutional. Membership in the elite was attained by public performance and was not self-perpetuating; continued membership required continued performance. Thus, as Finley puts it, citizen "recognition of the need for leadership was not accompanied by a surrender of the power of decision."

Although Aristotle conceived of the citizen as one who rules and is ruled in turn, neither he nor Plato appears to have had much faith in the

ordinary person's ability to rule wisely. Corcoran (1983, 16-17) points out that Plato and Aristotle felt that the idea of democracy was inherently flawed, in that the masses--those without wealth--inevitably would let their judgment be overcome by a selfish desire for equality that would make impossible the pursuit of genuine public good. Aristotle (1981, Sec. 1318b1-6) suggests that democracy might work better in an agrarian society since most citizens would be too busy with their work to attend the Assembly: "It is always the weaker who go in search of justice and equality; the strong reckon nothing of them."

Except for Aristotle's stress on the ends of government, this position is similar to the modern pluralist reliance on popular apathy as justification for governance by leaders. As Pennock (1979, 449) sums up this position:

"The elitist is not only content with representative government, he believes [that it] provides an important...opportunity for those who possess the best political talents to be selected for governing...The elitist puts little stock in the value of participation [except] as a tool..."

Few of the framers of the Constitution were ready to wager that the average person had or could develop the intelligence, wisdom, and "candor," or disinterestedness, necessary for political life, though in matters such as the love of liberty, "the mechanic and the philosopher, the farmer and the scholar, [were] all upon a footing" (Hamilton; quoted in Wood 1969, 508). Government was a complicated science, requiring the efforts of an elite. But who were the elite? Here, according to Gordon

Wood, there was difference of opinion. The Anti-federalists held that leaders of the new nation could and should be drawn not from the gentlemanly few but from "men of middling circumstances," since only the latter would share the views and sympathies of the great body of the people (1969, 491). "A Federal Farmer" argues that the idea of an elite can reasonably be expanded to include "the substantial and respectable part of the democracy:...a numerous and valuable set of men, who discern and judge well, but from being generally silent in public assemblies are often overlooked..." (Storing 1981, 275) Toqueville (1945, I, 242) made the argument that while virtue was important, similarity of interest between leaders and masses was even more crucial. Since no political system would favor all interests equally, leaders should have interests like those of as many members of the society as possible.

This point of view essentially abandons an assumption of cultural homogeneity that had undergirded the theory of republicanism. Those who saw the new state potentially as a virtuous republic had argued that the involvement of the citizenry-at-large was possible because affinity of interest among the general populace would facilitate decision-making. Interestingly, however, the Federalists employed assumptions of homogeneity to reach the opposite conclusion: since, despite class disparities, peoples' interests were essentially unified, representation was justified. Because all levels of society were organically connected, the natural elite could be trusted to act in the interests of the people at large (Wood 1969, 499). This arrangement was not only desirable but necessary, because while the people "commonly intend the public good

[...they do not] always reason right about the means of promoting it" (Federalist No. 71: 1961, 482).

The result, as Wood notes, was "an amazing display of confidence in constitutionalism, in the efficacy of institutional devices for solving social and political problems" (1969, 517). Underlying this confidence was a tacit reliance on the fixed quality of human nature and a belief that institutions were essentially neutral devices that would serve as a framework within which action would occur. Storing (1981, 73) has observed that the Anti-federalists took a different view: namely, that to design a government based on a negative view of human nature would ensure that citizens would continue as deficient in civic virtue as critics perceived them to be. As "A Federal Farmer" puts it:

The body of the people, principally, bear the burdens of the community; they, of right, ought to have a control in its important concerns, both in making and executing the laws, otherwise they may, in a short time, be ruined. (Storing 1981, 320)

There is one point, though, at which the reasoning in the Federalist Papers appears at odds with the view of human nature that otherwise prevails in the Federalist position. In Federalist No. 53 (1961, 362), Madison lays out his notions of legislative competence. In addition to "upright intention and a sound judgment," the legislator must have knowledge of the matters under consideration. Part of this knowledge, Madison says, "can only be attained...by actual experience in the station which requires the use of it." As Muir's (1982, 2-5) interesting study of

the California legislature points out, Madison's view (scattered among several of the Federalist papers, notably 53, 55, and 56) was that, in order to prevent a few superior legislators from becoming an oligarchy, "a good legislature had to devise procedures to deepen the intellects of all its members and to place within their reach the mastery of public affairs necessary to discourage personal consumption." These conditions, according to Muir, included an office and books for each member; diverse colleagues to learn from; information provided by lobbyists and executive agency specialists; legislative records; and bill-carrying responsibilities. Implicit in Madison's scheme are twin assumptions: diversity of legislators' qualifications at entry, and their innate ability to develop as a result of their legislative experience, given a few enabling circumstances.

Such assumptions were in fact different from Anti-federalist views on the subject only in the extent of their applicability. Storing (1981, 72-73) has pointed out that even the most pessimistic Federalists, if they were to ground the new government in the people's genius, had to assume a modicum of public-spiritedness--"other qualities in human nature which justify a certain portion of esteem and confidence" (Federalist No. 55: 1961, 378) or "a portion of virtue and honor among mankind" (Federalist No. 76: 1961, 514). Similarly, Madison's thoughts on the legislature imply that at least some men of natural abilities who were to form the governing elite had yet, at the point at which they were summoned, to demonstrate the full range of those abilities or to develop them completely. Legislative wisdom was something that, in part, could only be learned by doing.

It is clear that the founding dialogue reflected divergent assessments of the ordinary person's fitness to participate in making decisive public judgments, but that even the Federalists' comparatively pessimistic view of human nature found a few positive qualities. The crucial question, of course, is not whether most people (as opposed to the Madisonian few) have the innate capacity to govern but whether, like the few, they can acquire it. Further consideration of this issue of whether people can learn to rule I will postpone to a subsequent section (Democracy as Learning) and proceed to consider what, in fact, ruling is. When citizens exercise "decisive judgment" in the public sphere, of what does such judgment consist?

In Aristotle's view (1976, Book 6), political deliberation in the daily administration of public affairs displays the kind of intellectual virtue known as prudence (phronesis). It has the following characteristics: it deals with particular circumstances; it spans the gap between thinking and acting; it is acquired through experience; and it makes it possible to do the right thing. Prudence is virtue acquired through experience and applied to practical, especially public, problems. As Hannah Arendt (1963, 127, 130) points out, judgment in public is what distinguishes the citizen from the subject. A subject may have civil rights and private happiness; but only the citizen is, in Jefferson's words, "a participator in the government of affairs." Prudence exercised in the public sphere involves the citizen in giving binding answers to public questions. Such questions are particular, inherently entail action (since even not to decide is to decide), and seek the general good.

Ronald Beiner's (1983, 90-95) recent study of political judgment makes a number of interesting points that amplify these classic dimensions: first, that judgment is not bound to rules nor susceptible to exact specification; second, that at the same time judgment is "not without rule or reason, but rather, must strive for general validity"; third, that the faculty of judging, not being resolvable to a matter of technical expertise, is shared by all citizens. Beiner points to Aristotle's contrast between the skill of the solitary expert, concerned with specialized knowledge and with universals, and the practical wisdom exercised by the many, which deals with situational truths and with action, and as Beiner says, is "geared to the determination of proper ends." Beiner's modern view of judgment is remarkably similar to Madison's outline of necessary legislative competencies: Madison's upright intention matches Beiner's "determination of proper ends"; Madison's sound judgment is the same as Beiner's striving for general validity; and Madison's knowledge of the matters at hand is consistent with Beiner's dealing with particular truths.

Matters of judgment, according to Beiner, are not settled by means of proof, but by the giving of reasons. This process must always balance the "institutional framework of givens" with concepts of right. Because its exercise cannot be explicated by means of rules, and never occurs in the abstract, we can only understand judgment through exemplars, and we can only acquire it through experience. Therefore, to "learn" judgment, "what is required is not a 'decision procedure' but an education in hermeneutic insight, taste, and understanding" (162).

Democracy as Action in the Public Interest

This section is concerned with views of democracy that see it as involving not just any sort of authoritative activity by citizens in government but specifically activity that aims at the public interest. Some consideration of terminology is in order first.

A discussion of the aims of citizen action turns on the question of whether substantive goals should be identified or whether a procedural interpretation is preferable. Addressing this question makes it necessary to distinguish "the public interest" from "the common good." The latter term is pre-modern, and implies that there is a substantive good for communities, one that is independent of particular wishes (Rohr 1988). The common good has to do with needs rather than wants; use of the term implies the existence of an objective standard for the determination of the merits of government action. "The public interest," on the other hand, is a usage that grew from liberalism's concern for strengthening the political prerogatives of individuals. From this perspective, the assertion of an objective "good" is a threat to freedom to pursue individual interests, which liberals held were self-evidently valuable. As Richard Flathman notes:

It was not until the satisfaction of subjective, even idiosyncratic, individual interests came to be considered a prime object of politics that "interest" could replace "good" as the primary commendatory concept of political life....The age-old quest for more stable and elevated [policy] criteria...had to be set aside in deference to the all-encompassing demands of interest. Appropriately, writers such as Jeremy Bentham adopted "public interest" as the standard of public policy...(1966, 14-15)

The replacement of "common good" with "public interest" was followed, as modern political science came on the scene, with the positivist assertion that "the public interest" was a purely procedural term with no substantive--in the positivist view, empirically determinable--content (e.g., Schubert, 1960). On these terms, if the process is fair (for example, competition among organized interests), there is no basis for elevating the collective choice of Franklin Roosevelt's policies over those of Adolph Hitler.

If active citizens are not to be seen as just another interest group, then active citizenship requires reconsideration of the question of the substantive dimensions of public action. The difficulty lies in specifying an objective general standard of "the good." Fortunately, Flathman offers a way of dealing with this thorny question that allows us an understanding of "the public interest" that is not purely procedural.

Flathman argues that our ordinary usage of the term "the public interest" connotes consideration of the full range of policy effects and the mobilization of normative concerns in justification. "The public interest" is the standard we use to legitimate the exercise of governmental authority, which is binding on all members of society and therefore must not be imposed partially (1966, 6-8). The idea that central authority should decide among conflicting interests implies, Flathman says, the existence of objectively determinable interests:

[T]he argument concerning authority commits us to some form of the view that those in authority are able to define the individual's personal interests for him; it commits us to some form of an objective view of interest (48).

Because it is commendatory and because policies are inevitably contextual, the meaning of "the public interest" cannot be equivalent under all conditions to any single substantive value (67). Nevertheless, although no universal meaning is applicable to all policies, Flathman argues, a nonarbitrary meaning is determinable in particular cases. It is found through reasoned discourse that "attempts to relate the anticipated effects of a policy to community values and to test that relation by formal principles" (82).

Using Flathman as a guide, it is possible to consider active citizenship as action that follows from normatively grounded consideration of the full range of its probable effects and that has been determined to be legitimately binding upon members of society within the particular context. This definition of the public interest is as close as this discussion, at least, is likely to come to revivifying what Aristotle referred to as citizen virtue: that is, political action in pursuit of substantive goodness and justice. Although it occasionally has an anachronistic ring in what follows, I will restrict myself to the term "the public interest" to attempt to minimize confusion.

As Corcoran (1983, 20) has pointed out, both Aristotle and his teacher Plato held that the nature of something could not be understood without consideration of its telos, or purpose. This axiom is one factor that lies behind Aristotle's stress on the difference between democracy and polity: the latter entails a substantive notion of the good. Since the nature of the polis is justice (or the public interest), democracy--rule

by the common people in their own interests--is a perversion. Aristotle is insistent that "the state's purpose is not merely to provide a living but to make a life that is good (1981, Sec. 1280a21)." The good life can only be led by human beings who are free to choose and therefore can be happy; as Hannah Arendt (1958, 30) says, "freedom is the essential condition of what the Greeks call felicity." Thus, if the state is not about the good, it might as well be made up of animals or slaves (1981, Sec. 1280a21). Seeming to speak directly to liberals who are not yet to be born for many centuries, Aristotle declares:

...The state is not an association of people dwelling in the same place, established to prevent its members from committing injustice against each other, and to promote transactions. Certainly all these features must be present if there is to be a state; but even the presence of every one of them does not make a state ipso facto. (Sec. 1280b29)

If the purpose of the state is to make a life that is good for its citizens, then its laws must promote virtue in them ("Otherwise the association is a mere military alliance"--i.e., not a state [Sec. 1280a34]). That form of the state is best which does the most to cultivate virtuous (good and just) citizens. As Arendt (1958, 36) has pointed out, from Aristotle's frame of reference, the good life lived by virtuous citizens was not just better than other modes of life, it was essentially different: not weighed by necessity, not bound to biology, and not private, in contrast to life lived in the realms of the household or the economy. The good life was in fact political life, for only there were activities truly human: free and self-realizing. Goodness and justice were thus not abstract ideals, but real practices constituted in

and by politics. The ends of the state lay not beyond the process of politics but in it; political activity thereby became a reality (entelecheia). As Arendt says, the very performance of politics was also its product (206). What I draw from this is the implication that public-interest politics is a good in its own right rather than the conclusion that outcomes do not matter.

Thus Aristotle's polity is imbued with substantive purpose made manifest in practice, which must be shaped so that it is accessible to the person of middling abilities and virtue: "...The best life must be the middle life, consisting in a mean which is open to men of every kind..." (Sec. 1295a34); not a politics for heroes or gods, but a politics for people who are both good and flawed, but whose better natures can be developed in the course of the practice itself.

Rousseau (1967, 27) shares with Aristotle the view that the essence of the state is the pursuit of good ends. For Rousseau the formation of the state brings into being a "moral and collective body," or a public (moral) person, an "imaginary being" that expresses the general will. The possibility of a general will is based on the presumption of a certain amount of agreement of interests among members of the state: "...If the opposition of private interests has rendered necessary the establishment of societies, the agreement of these same interests has rendered it possible." This potential for agreement, or generalizability, is what marks the general will rather than the number of voices raised in support of a proposal (1967, 34); and at least one student of Rousseau has argued

that the theory of the volonté générale seems not to require democracy, on the assumption that people's interests may be genuinely satisfied by a proposal whether their approval of it is expressed or not (Ryan 1983, 51). But the emphasis Rousseau places on the transforming effect of man's passage from the state of nature to civil society, where through the exercise of his reason and moral sensibility he is changed from an animal to an intelligent being, would appear to argue otherwise. That is, Rousseau stressed not merely occupying a place in the state, but certain modes of activity as the mark of true humanity, including primarily action on the basis of principles of justice and duty to larger than individual aims (1967, 22).

Like Aristotle's polity and Rousseau's state, the distinguishing feature of Montesquieu's democratic republic is virtuous action by citizens: what drives politics in these states is preference for the public interest over private interest--Montesquieu refers to this public virtue as "love of the republic." (Wills 1981, 185) He specifies that power in the democratic republic is exercised directly by the demos, the many, in deliberative and judicial functions. As Krouse (1983, 59-63) points out, the outcome of investing sovereign authority in the mass of participating citizens depends on their civic virtue: control in such a state is primarily a matter of self-control. Montesquieu argues that this sort of state must be homogeneous in order for people to be willing to subsume their private concerns in favor of the public interest, although he believes that much homogeneity of outlook can be brought about deliberately through political education.

Gordon Wood has argued that Montesquieu's brand of democratic republicanism represented the animating spirit of the American revolution--its "Polar Star":

Here Governments their last perfection take.
Erected only for the People's sake:
Founded no more on Conquest or in blood,
But on the basis of the Public Good.

(Anonymous; Trenton, NJ Gazette, 5/20/1778;
quoted in Wood 1969, 55)

According to Wood, this revolutionary philosophy was akin to the English notion of commonwealth--a state belonging to the whole people, not to the Crown. In the commonwealth, the public interest was a matter of common feeling and common consent; again, the assumption here is that the people form a homogeneous body whose "interests when candidly considered are one (58)." Wood argues that there was a strain of republicanism in the thought of the revolutionary period; though perfectly aware of the multitude of private interests in any community, these thinkers, in an echo of Aristotle, held that private concerns occupied a separate realm from that of politics; that in serious discussion of what ought to be, these interests were a perversion. As Wood sums it up: "For the republican patriots of 1776 the commonwealth was all-encompassing--a transcendent object with a unique moral worth that made partial considerations fade into insignificance (61)."

The revolutionary republicans laid the foundation of their state in the qualities of its citizens: they must be virtuous--act politically in the public interest--if order were to prevail. But a virtuous citizenry was deemed to be a real possibility, in that the happiness of each was

partly congruent with the happiness of all, so that it would be in each member's interest to protect the commonwealth (Wood 1969, 69-70).

Toqueville made much the same point in his notion of "self-interest rightly understood," in which initially self-interested participation educates citizens to view public affairs from a larger frame of reference, and identify the public interest with their own. (1945: II, 131)

It has been suggested that it was social turmoil during the Revolution and under the Articles of Confederation, a time in which distinct economic and professional interests began to surface and in which acts of crass self-interest were all too common, that led the framers of the Constitution to withdraw their faith from the qualities of the people themselves and to trust instead in structure and law (Wood 1969, 428; Hanson 1985, 75). For whatever reason, the Federalists took an approach that was decidedly skeptical about the governing capacities of the common people. Nevertheless, their intent to focus the aim of government on the public interest was clear; in fact, it was because of this aim, they argued, that they put so much emphasis on building institutional support for its accomplishment. Garry Wills (1981, 204-205) suggests that Madison never intended that politics be made up solely of competition among factions. The whole point of representation is to "refine and enlarge the public views by choosing men whose wisdom may best discern the true interest of their country." Madison says that the object of government is both "the public good and private rights" (Federalist No. 10: 1961, 61).

The Federalist stress, however, on the form of government necessary to guarantee the fruitful exercise of virtue and wisdom introduced a dynamic

into American political theory that carried this emphasis far beyond the Founders' intentions--fostering the public interest through a design "adequate to the exigencies" of governance--to a reliance on method as such. Twentieth century American democratic theory reflects considerable concern for characteristics of government design: strength, stability, efficiency, and orderliness. The reasons why it is important for a government to be strong, stable, efficient and orderly are neglected; in fact, these qualities have become ends in themselves:

The gradual rejection of participatory theories by the contemporary political science of democratic politics was at once a claim to better explanation and a call for commitment to the values of stability and moderation (Cawson 1983, 173).

Reinforcing this emphasis in modern times has been the liberal belief in the primacy and incommensurability of individual preferences, so that the theorist cannot prescribe participation by the citizenry in governance because of reluctance to "presume to say what others should desire." (Pennock 1979, 446) From this perspective, a citizen has no duties or obligations, only interests to be pursued and rights to be defended. Politics is characterized by competition among interest groups, and the product of this activity is held, by definition, to constitute the public interest.

Recently, however, there is evidence of a resurgence of concern to re-establish democracy as the exercise of virtue and therefore as valuable in itself. For example, Benjamin Barber has suggested that, while democracy cannot be grounded in a universally-held definition of the

public interest, it is itself an enabling norm with which to grapple with concrete problems. From Barber's perspective, the public interest is a product of democracy; thus democracy is to be defended as a form of life through which practical wisdom is constituted, rather than because it furthers unarguable ends. In this frame of reference, active citizenship is the starting point for working toward shared values, instead of the outgrowth of such values; as Barber puts it, "there must be citizens before there can be common truth (1984, 65)." Barber calls for "a politics of mutualism that can overcome private interests" (198)--one in which all members of society may join.

In summary, from the ideal of direct democracy we draw a picture of citizens making decisive judgments in the public interest, defined substantively in context through reasoned discourse. This form of life is seen by theorists as unique, for only in this mode are human beings released from the necessity that binds them in other areas of their lives--only in pursuing goodness and justice together in public are they truly free.

Democracy as a Mode of Learning

If Athens is remembered today it is not because
she once ruled the sea.

-Eric Vogelin

The idea that democracy is an experience in which citizens can acquire knowledge and develop the capacity for practical wisdom is one that is encountered frequently in the literature. The principal lines of argument have been, first, that human beings need the experience of governance--of

wrestling with problems larger than their own individual spheres of interest--in order to develop fully, and second, that this capacity to develop is what will ensure that a state in some meaningful sense run by citizens will be run well.

The classic exemplar for democracy as learning is ancient Athens. Here citizens attained, as Finley (1973, 18-19) says, an intensity of involvement that has probably never since been matched. Attendance in the Assembly was open to every male citizen over the age of 18, and there was little if any other "government": only an administrative council chosen by lot, a few other ad hoc commissions and a few clerks (who were slaves) to keep necessary records. The Assembly was an open-air meeting held about 40 times a year; normal attendance might have been 1,000 citizens. The Assembly had the power of decision on all policy issues including war, treaties, finance, and public works. Issues were debated and decided typically in a single day (1973, 52-56). As Finley emphasizes, the Assembly was less an institution than a process. Its leadership was not fixed: "A man was a leader solely as a function of his personal, and in the literal sense, unofficial status..." Also: "Influence had to be earned and exerted directly and immediately...in person...lacking that buttressing or cushioning effect, which is provided by a bureaucracy or a political party... (1973, 60)"

The type of experience that the average Athenian citizen must have had in participating in the Assembly is what Aristotle (1976, Sec. 1140a1-23) called praxis, or knowledge of human action. Aristotle distinguishes

praxis from techne, or mastery of a craft: in the case of techne, the craftsman forms material in accord with a preconceived plan, and is assumed to have control over the process. Praxis, in contrast, requires practical wisdom: it is a situation-specific form of knowledge which can be entered into, but not controlled fully. As William Sullivan (1982, 66) points out, Aristotle's understanding of praxis led him to conclude that "the possibility of coming to understand a form of cultural life requires competence in moving within that life. Practical involvement is the precondition for reflective clarification." The implication is that it is not possible to understand politics without entering into it as a form of life, or learning by experiencing.

If an understanding of politics requires praxis, this suggests that a government which is dependent in any sense on the virtue of its citizens requires that they enter into the practice of governance in order to develop the political sensibilities necessary to grow in virtue. As John Stuart Mill argued, this is as true for representative government as for any other form. Mill (1972, 233) makes an essentially Aristotelean case:

It is not sufficiently considered how little there is in most men's ordinary life to give any largeness either to their conceptions and their sentiments... Giving [them] something to do for the public, supplies, in a measure, all those deficiencies.

Mill goes on to argue that, even though the terms of modern government do not make possible for 19th century men the intensity of experience that the citizens of Athens enjoyed, still such activities as service on juries

and in parish offices "must make them nevertheless very different beings, in range of ideas and development of faculties, from those who have done nothing in their lives but drive a quill, or sell goods over a counter." The key point for Mill is that the education thus received is a moral education: the citizen

is called upon while so engaged, to weigh interests not his own; to be guided, in case of conflicting claims, by another rule than his private partialities; to apply, at every turn, principles and maxims which have for their reason of existence the common good...

Mill concludes that while representation is necessary since it is not practical for all to participate fully, nevertheless "any participation, even in the smallest public function, is useful": since political institutions are the work of citizens, the quality of those institutions must depend heavily on the virtue of citizens.

The question of whether citizens were, or could learn to be, virtuous was a central issue in the American founding debate. Gordon Wood's interpretation of the revolutionary and post-revolutionary periods concludes that, while the revolution was animated by a republican philosophy that trusted in citizens' commitment to act virtuously, or at least in their educability in this direction, subsequently that sort of trust began to appear more and more risky. In general, the post-revolutionary state governments were based on republican principles, according to Wood, especially the "reciprocating relationship between the structure of the government and the spirit of its people...Republicanism was...not only a response to the character of the American people but as well an instrument of reform (1969, 119)."

The Federalists hoped to preserve the spirit of republicanism--aim at the public good--while modifying the form to what they hoped would be "adequate to the exigencies" of a large, complex state made up of flawed human beings: as Madison put it, they hoped for a "republican remedy for the diseases most incident to republican government" (Federalist No. 10: 1961, 65).

The Federalist trust in human propensity for virtue in politics was restricted to a small cadre of leaders. As I have already indicated, some students of the period believe that it was the blotted record of citizen participation under the Articles of Confederation that turned the Federalists toward a more "realistic" assessment of human nature. At any rate, the Federalists viewed the consideration of fundamental political questions as too risky to reopen once decided upon. Thus, Storing (1981, 74) suggests, in Federalist No. 49 Madison rejects appealing directly to the people for the resolution of disputes between different departments of government, on the grounds that frequent appeals would weaken popular veneration and stir up public passions with unpredictable consequences. For the Federalists, in fact, a government well run by natural leaders will maintain the people's affections and obviate the need for direct participation.

Although the Anti-federalists were by no means advocates of direct democracy, and the founding debate turned principally on the nature of adequate representation, through Anti-federalist arguments there runs a thread of real concern for the virtue of average citizens and a belief in

the educative dimensions of governmental forms and practices. A Federal Farmer argues for a bill of rights in the new constitution on the basis that express declarations "establish in the minds of the people truths and principles which they might never otherwise have thought of, or soon forgot." He goes on:

Men, in some countries do not remain free, merely because they are entitled to natural and unalienable rights; men in all countries are entitled to them, not because their ancestors once got together and enumerated them on paper, but because, by repeated negotiations [sic] and declarations, all parties were brought to realize them, and of course believe them to be sacred. Were it necessary, I might shew [sic] the wisdom of...constantly keeping in view, in addresses, bills of rights, in news-papers, etc. the particular principles on which our freedom must always depend (Storing 1985, 80-81).

The Impartial Examiner points out that the new code is "solemnly proposed to every freeman in America" in order that "a free, a candid, and impartial discussion" take place, one in which every citizen and not just "a few persons of eminent characters" can "exercise his own judgment" (Storing 1985, 286-287).

Because of the importance of citizen virtue, the Anti-federalists argued, government should attend to the education of its citizens. A Maryland Farmer suggested local "seminaries of useful learning, with professorships of political and domestic oeconomy [sic]", where citizens could be instructed not in "the philosophy of the moon and skies" but in such useful knowledge as "the principles of free government" (Storing 1981, 21). Charles Turner advocates specifically moral and religious education

adequate to the divine, patriotick [sic] purpose of training up the children and youth at large, in that solid learning, and in those pious and moral principles, which are the support, the life and SOUL of republican government and liberty,

thereby rendering "the people more capable of being a Law unto themselves" (Storing 1981, 23).

A Federal Farmer's (Storing 1981, 320) criticism of the "judicial department" envisioned in the new Constitution emphasized the importance of the jury in a free country as both a form of citizen authoritative action and an educative experience. He argues that juries are drawn from "the body of the people." It is true, he acknowledges,

the freemen of a country are not always minutely skilled in the laws, but they have the common sense in its purity, which seldom or never errs in making and applying laws to the condition of the people, or in determining judicial causes, when stated to them by the parties.

Furthermore:

the jury trial brings with it an open and public discussion of all causes... This, and the democratic branch in the legislature...are the means by which the people are let into the knowledge of public affairs.

A Federal Farmer stresses that the importance of the "jury trial of the vicinage, or the trial of the fact in the neighborhood," lies in the process of openly, directly, and orally laying the evidence before the common people. When trials are held at a distance, oral testimony by witnesses becomes prohibitively expensive, and reliance on written

evidence is problematic, because "to the common people [it] is...almost useless..."--probably, one assumes, because most of them could not read. The new government must, in A Federal Farmer's view, establish mechanisms whereby the common people "have a part and share of influence" in both judicial and legislative affairs. Simply to assert that, in theory, high offices (such as judge or senator) are open to them is a sham: most of the populace cannot afford the formal education required to qualify.

But service as a representative or juror enables them to acquire information and knowledge in the affairs and government of the society; and to come forward, in turn, as the centinels [sic] and guardians of each other. (Storing 1981, 249-250)

That is, they will learn to exercise judgment in the public interest.

Although the Anti-federalists lost the founding debate, it is evident from Toqueville's account of political activity among ordinary American citizens that the Anti-federalist vision of localized politics was a factual reality at least forty years after the Constitution was adopted. For Toqueville's interest in the developmental and education aspects of citizen activity was not simply an abstract proposal but based on an account of his own observations. In the 1820's, Americans were politically active to a degree that astounded Toqueville, no doubt partly in contrast to the state of affairs in his native France.

Toqueville's argument is that it may be difficult for the average person to become concerned about issues of national import,

because he does not clearly understand what influence the destiny of the state can have upon his own lot. But if it is proposed to make a road cross the end of his estate, he will see at a glance that there is a connection between this small public affair and his greatest private affairs; and he will discover, without its being shown to him, the close tie that unites private to general interest (1945: II, 111).

The implication is that the sort of political activity that engenders virtue is local activity, where citizens have an opportunity for a praxis based in what Toqueville called self-interest rightly understood. Toqueville believed that human beings were animated principally by self-interest; but he also declared:

Although man has many points of resemblance with the brutes, one trait is peculiar to himself: he improves; they are incapable of improvement (1945: II, 34).

Therefore, given enabling circumstances at the local level, citizens would "attend to the interests of the public, first by necessity, afterwards by choice (1945: II, 112);" and initially self-interested participation would, through the process of education that occurs as a by-product of practical activity in pursuit of larger-than-individual interests, be transmuted to something approaching classical virtue.

This emphasis on the educative capacity of local politics is underscored by Mill's discussion of municipal government, which he sees as the "chief instrument" of citizen education. Mill (1972, 378) argues that while attending public meetings, reading newspapers, discussing issues with friends, and the like are important pedagogical devices, they are

limited in that "the practice which they give is more in thinking than in action, and in thinking without the responsibilities of action..." In contrast, by being elected or appointed to fill some local office, citizens "have to act for public interests, as well as to think and to speak...[emphasis mine]" Here, Mill evokes much of the riskiness and open-endedness that Arendt argues is the essence of politics: action, rather than work culminating in a product. Part of the meaning of taking on an institutionalized post, for Mill, is assuming the responsibility for making necessary decisions.

Mill (1972, 390) also gives considerable thought to the relationship between local and national levels of government, pointing out that while those in the national government may have deeper knowledge of administrative principles, local people have the advantage of greater interest in affairs at their own level; thus the national government can teach locals the principles of governing, while greater familiarity with particular circumstances will equip locals to handle administrative details. The importance of national oversight of local affairs, for Mill, is that if the locals are left to "grope their way to [knowledge] without help," they are likely to remain ignorant; but with instruction from the national level they can "learn, by the use of their reason, to distinguish the best."

Democracy as a Relationship

The tradition portrays direct democracy not only as a process embodying important values, a way of making societal decisions, or an

educative experience for individual citizens: it is also a relationship, a social phenomenon. In fact, its proponents tend to view the social aspects of democracy as contributing importantly to its moral, functional, and cognitive dimensions. The sense that a democracy in some way brings into being and maintains a community lies beneath concern over the feasible size of the democratic state, on the basis that the shared values, common knowledge, and affiliative feeling that characterize a community can only be developed and perpetuated through face-to-face interaction. Aristotle (1981) writes:

If [a state] has too many people...it is difficult for a constitution to subsist in it. For who will be military commander of this excessive population? Who will be their crier unless he has the voice of Senator? (Sec. 1326b2)

As Moses Finley points out, the Greek world depended on the spoken rather than the written word. Politics was conducted by means of face-to-face discussion, debate, and rhetoric, in small groups, in commissions, and in the Assembly. "This was a world not only without mass media, but without media at all, in our sense" (1973, 17-18). As Aristotle implies, the "true constitution," then, was literally constituted, made and kept real, by means of interpersonal relationships that were not mediated in print or any other way, but experienced directly. These relationships were facilitated by the consciousness of common destiny, of common faith that arose out of shared religion, myths and traditions (Finley 1973, 29).

The sense of community supporting politics in ancient Athens was not dependent, however, on unanimity of opinion. The factions that were to loom so large for James Madison were well known to the Greeks; but as Finley points out, contention among factions has its good side as well as its dangers:

Substantial inequalities, serious conflicts of interest, and legitimate divergence of opinion were real and intense. Under such conditions conflict is not only inevitable, it is a virtue...for...conflict combined with consent...preserves democracy from eroding into oligarchy (1973, 72-73).

For Arendt (1958, 57), the inevitability of conflict is what makes the public realm, the space where politics takes place, real: public life depends on innumerable perspectives that have no common denominator--this is what makes being seen and heard by others, public speech and public action, significant. "[The] family 'world' can never replace the reality rising out of the sum total of aspects presented by one object to a multitude of spectators." The polis, Arendt points out, is not a place but a relationship, "the organization of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together (194)"--but not as one.

Thus democracy-as-community appears to involve, historically at least, two issues: (1) the means by which community is to be constituted, or the mode by which relationships are to be sustained, and whether or not small size is a necessary characteristic of the-state-that-is-communal; and (2) how conflict relates to--either enhances or hinders--relationships, and

particularly those relationships that are, even indirectly, for the purpose of making societal decisions.

Certainly, as the Federalist Papers makes clear, Madison believed that the extended geographic scope and social complexity of the new American state made direct participation by citizens both unworkable and dangerous. One of Madison's arguments against democracy was, that direct participation--popular governance--had to be "confined to a small spot. A republic [i.e., representative government] may be extended over a large region" (Federalist No. 14: 1961, 84). Even more important, however, in Madison's view was the tendency of popular governments to the "violence of faction." He points to the "instability, injustice and confusion" that characterized state governments of the period--"our governments are too unstable...the public good is disregarded in conflicts of rival parties..." And, the chief danger of democracy: "measures are too often decided...by the superior force of an interested and overbearing majority" (Federalist No. 10: 1961, 57).

Here, then, is the danger of faction: that decisions will be made on the basis of private interests, rather than for the public good. Since there will always be differences of opinion and differences of property, Madison argues, we must look to the structure of government to control the effects of these differences. Democracy cannot cure "the mischiefs of faction." But representative government can "refine and enlarge the public views, by passing them through the medium of a chosen body of citizens, whose wisdom may best discern the true interest of their

country..." Moreover, in an extended republic, each representative "will be chosen by a greater number of citizens,...[therefore] it will be more difficult for unworthy candidates to practice...vicious arts (Federalist No. 10: 1961, 62-63)"; and more interests will be included, making it more difficult for any one of them to gain permanent control.

Madison's belief in the inevitability of faction is well known. But Madison also saw America as a community, "knit together...by chords of affection,...fellow citizens of one great respectable and flourishing empire", united by "kindred blood...which they have shed in defense of their sacred rights (Federalist No. 14: 1961, 88)"--in other words, by the same sorts of cultural, quasi-religious ties that the Greeks saw as the basis of community. As we have seen, the Anti-federalist position was grounded in the view that these ties had to be nourished by a facilitative structure that put relatively more power at the state level; otherwise the people's "voluntary attachment" would dissipate over time. Although the Federalist argument prevailed, there is some indication that Madison himself came later to put greater stock in the importance of a knowledgeable, active citizenry ("...a people who mean to be their own Governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives" [quoted in Hanson, 1985, 76]).

But despite the balance struck in the Constitutional design, the question of how to maintain social bonds necessary to restrain liberal individualism remained an open one. As early as the 1780s, Wood points out, property was assuming a significance beyond that of other factors. Americans were beginning to group "different and discordant interests"

into two inclusive categories--those who possessed "the rights of persons" and those with "the rights of property." Making property a criterion for membership in the Senate reinforced popular perception of this division (1969, 218-219).

By the time of his American sojourn, the initial manifestations of industrial capitalism were plain enough to cause Toqueville concern over how the notable independence of the average U.S. citizen, reinforced by the competitive spirit of capitalism, was to be counter-balanced by collective arrangements. Toqueville's fear was that democracy--which he saw in the American emphasis on "equality" to the neglect of the public good--would encourage citizens "to imagine that their whole destiny is in their hands":

Thus not only does democracy make every man forget his ancestors, but it hides his descendents and separates his contemporaries from him; it throws him back forever upon himself alone and threatens in the end to confine him entirely within the solitude of his own heart (1945: II, 105-106).

Toqueville argued that associations could remedy the defects of democratic equality, could "stand in lieu of those powerful private individuals whom the equality of conditions has swept away" (II, 117). By joining together in civil and political associations for common purposes, citizens would acquire necessary skills as well as an appreciation for shared activity (II, 123-127) and an understanding of the principles of relationship. ("The independence of each individual is recognized;...all members advance at the same time towards the same end, but they are not

all obliged to follow the same track [I,205])." Such associations would also counter the tendency, as capitalist society became more complex, for government to take on increasing numbers of functions and constitute a potential threat to individual freedom.

Toqueville's argument supports the view that, even in a complex state, meaningful small-scale activity not only can but must nourish the relationships among citizens necessary to temper the effects of capitalism and therefore stabilize its attendant political arrangements. As William Sullivan (1982, 63), a modern student of Toqueville's work, argues, contractual relationships such as those that liberalism places at the heart of modern free states are not an adequate replacement for the sorts of custom-hallowed bonds that linked people in ancient times. In contrast to ties of tradition and mutually understood values, modern contract-based society is conceived of as "'the system,' a fabricated set of linkages among individuals pursuing their own, largely economic, interests."

In a similar way, Benjamin Barber emphasizes the social dimensions of personal development, arguing that modern politics denies human sociability, hence the potential for growth (1984, 89). Moreover, by regarding men and women as generically autonomous, the liberal viewpoint sees conflict as "a problem created by political interaction rather than a condition that gives rise to politics (6)." In contrast, somewhat in the way that for Arendt a multiplicity of viewpoints engaged in consideration of a single question is what makes politics real, Barber's idea of "strong democracy" suggests that the exploration of a disputed issue or of the

terms of a relationship among political beings "is in fact to permit the dispute or the relationship to be redefined. And such redefinition may hold the dialectical key to solving conflicts and amenities." Barber's point is that the essence of politics is not the stifling of conflict but its facilitation: only through "strong democratic talk" can average citizens become "capable of genuinely public thinking and political judgment and thus able to envision a common future in terms of genuinely common goals" (Barber 1984, 197). Thus it is the relationship constituted in dialogue that becomes the mode of learning whereby citizens develop the capacity for decisive action in pursuit of the public interest.

Active Citizenship: The Traditional Model

From the foregoing review of direct democratic theory, we can extract a model of active citizenship the terms of which have remained fairly constant during the course of Western political thought.

As a form of authoritative action, direct democracy presents active citizenship as the exercise of the power of decision linked to the ability to decide well. Not only do active citizens, as agents, rule; they must do so in the public interest. Therefore they must use sound judgment and rely on practical knowledge of the situation at hand. Legitimate power requires justification in terms of its practice and its effects; the power of active citizens is redeemed both by the uprightness of its intentions and the wisdom of its exercise.

From an understanding of direct democracy as action in the public interest, we derive a view of active citizenship as a practice in and by means of which goodness and justice are constituted. Active citizenship is not just any kind of political activity, but virtuous activity--"about" (in two senses--"aimed at" as well as "made up of") the public interest, defined substantively in particular contexts through reasoned discourse. It is a mode or vehicle for practical truths. As such it is not wholly instrumental but has value in its own right.

As a mode of learning, the ideal of direct democracy implies that active citizenship can and must be learned: that devotion to the public interest and sound judgment depend on the experience of ruling, of assuming the responsibility for making decisions with consequences larger than immediate self-interest; further, that such experience is necessary to the realization of full humanity. Active citizenship is a process of individual development.

Finally, as a relationship, direct democracy suggests that the practice of active citizenship involves human interaction. Like all such interaction, its particulars are heavily influenced by cultural, religious and traditional values and heavily dependent on the quality of the dialogue within which it takes place. At its best, the relationship constituted in the practice of active citizenship is maintained by "strong democratic talk," by means of which conflicts can be worked through rather than stamped out or papered over.

The next task in developing a theoretical framework for active citizenship in the administrative state is to explore how the characteristics I have just described have been reflected over the course of U.S. public administration. The key question in this part of the review will be the extent to which the administration of a representative government has been able to accommodate the idea of a citizenry actively involved in aspects of administrative practice, or to put it more broadly, the extent to which administration is seen as capable of being democratic.

Democracy and Administration

The Federalists held that good administration itself would win the continuing allegiance of citizens, making their direct involvement unnecessary:

I believe it may be laid down as a general rule, that [the people's] confidence in and obedience to a government, will commonly be proportioned to the goodness or badness of its administration (Federalist No. 27: 1961, 172).

Hamilton goes on to argue that there is reason to expect the new government to be well-run: the Senate (for which, as John Rohr (1986) has held, the Federalists envisioned much the same role as is now assigned to the top echelons of the civil service) will be made up of men with wide knowledge and good judgment; being broadly elected, they will be less susceptible to the "Spirit of faction." Hamilton clearly suggests that good administration is well-informed and impartial. He goes on to attempt to allay fears specifically of national administration, arguing that as people grow accustomed to national authority "in the common occurrences of

their political life," familiarity will "put in motion the most active springs of the human heart" and win for the national government "the respect and attachment of the community (173)." As competent and fair national authority is extended to concerns that are close to home, as encountering it becomes habitual, need for enforcement will lessen, and citizens will accede their loyalty to it voluntarily.

This argument, grounded in a view of the people as the legitimate fountain of power but in need of protection against their own errors and delusions (Federalist No. 63: 1961, 425), sounds a theme that persists throughout the subsequent course of American public administration. This history reflects a continuing tension between the need for responsiveness to the will of the people, the ultimate source of governmental legitimacy, and the desire to make administration competent and thus a hedge against the excesses of popular passions. As competency has in modern times been increasingly equated with practice on the basis of specialized professional and technical knowledge, the problem has come to be, as Frederick Mosher's (1969, 3) classic study puts it, "How can a public service so constituted be made to operate in a manner compatible with democracy?" Over time, the nature of the administrative equation has shifted, from "well-run equals competent and impartial" to "well-run equals scientific and professional," with the implicit assumptions that competence must be scientific and that professionalism is impartial.

By the time of the birth in Woodrow Wilson's essay ([1887] 1978) of public administration as a self-conscious discipline, the practice of

public administration had moved from the founders' patrician administration ("old boys' network" may be an anachronistic though not unfair characterization) through the Jacksonian effort to democratize and rationalize administration by simplifying and opening it to the average man, to the advent of Progressive reform, aimed at rescuing administration from corruption and inefficiency set in motion in Jackson's time. Writing in the Progressive era, Wilson argued that all the great constitutional questions had now been answered: the problem was how to run a constitution, that is, the question of administration. Wilson believed that the legitimacy of administration would be assured if it were accountable and responsive to the popular will. Like Hamilton, he believed that administrative power was only dangerous if irresponsible; hence, he sought both to base administration on foundations of principle and to design structural--in fact, quasi-parliamentary--changes to improve its responsiveness. Soon after Wilson, Frank Goodnow's Politics and Administration (1900) displayed a similar interest in tying execution of the popular will firmly to its expression in the Constitution, laws, and executive ordinances. Goodnow thought that excess political influence in the administrative process would reduce the people's power by acting as a barrier to the efficient execution of their general will. In Goodnow's view, the execution of the popular will was simply a matter of transforming its expression into a rule of conduct.

During the same time that Wilson and Goodnow were writing, in certain quarters of Progressive reform attention had begun to focus on changing the administration of the public's business not only by improving

administrative techniques but also by improving the public. The need for and possibility of a more knowledgeable and active citizenry as an ingredient in good government came into sharper focus through the efforts of citizen associations organized in the late 19th century to attack urban problems. The failure of the political machines then in control of most of the nation's larger cities to deal adequately with basic public service needs led to the organization of voluntary groups bent on securing adequate sanitation, clean water, paved streets, better schools, and honest, efficient municipal governments. The need for a solid understanding of the nature of municipal problems led civic leaders Frederick A. Cleveland, William H. Allen and others to establish the New York Bureau of Municipal Research in 1906. These leaders viewed the public at large as a vital natural resource in the municipal reform effort, a precious element simply in need of refining through education in order to realize its value.

In 1907, Allen declared:

Without ... facts upon which to base judgment, the public cannot intelligently direct and control the administration of township, county, city, state, or nation. Without intelligent control by the public, no efficient, progressive, triumphant democracy is possible (ix).

Allen saw citizen reformers unarmed with knowledge as well-meaning but ineffective do-gooders--"candles under a bushel"--who could be transformed by the acquisition of facts into "efficient citizens." Cleveland argued that each citizen had a duty to ensure the living conditions necessary to maintain a democratic system: "Such standards of life and action among

his fellows as will lead them to act in accord with the highest principles of life and social well-being." (1913, 460) The first executive director of the New York Bureau, Henri Bruere (1912, 123, 197), suggested methods such as a municipal "fact center" to serve as the contact point for information exchange with citizen groups, and budget exhibits that would demonstrate graphically to citizens the results they could expect city governments to achieve from the expenditure of tax dollars for city services. One idea was to display specimens of tainted food so that citizens could see for themselves what their food inspection dollars were protecting them from.

This flurry of interest and faith in the potential usefulness to administrative practice of the average citizen was short-lived, however. As Dwight Waldo has wryly observed:

"Bliss was it in that dawn, etc.!" Gradually, in the public administration movement as a whole, research and facts have come to be regarded less and less as devices of citizen cooperation and control and more and more as instruments of executive management. (1948, 43n)

The advent of scientific management and efforts to professionalize the public service transmuted "facts" from ammunition for efficient citizenship to the basis of increasingly specialized modes of public management. Alice B. Stone and Donald C. Stone (1975, 25) have summarized the forces influencing the development of public administration during the pre-Depression period: citizen-based reform efforts; analytical problem-solving, as reflected in the research bureau movement; scientific management; and the growth of public-sector professional associations.

These themes--"reform," "problem-solving," "science," and "professionalism"--are writ large in the work of the "principles of administration" theorists of the time, such as Gulick, Urwick, and Fayol. It is fair to say, however, that these writers did not view scientific and professional management as an end in itself but as a mode of public accountability. They saw the administrative ethic of neutrality as constituting the public interest at the level of administration. Public servants had to be scientific and efficient in order to avoid any taint of the corruption that had resulted from the excesses of democracy. This line of thinking is still reflected in the thrust of the Brownlow Commission report in 1937, where "efficiency" is defined as consent of the governed combined with good management, and concern over efficient governmental structure points toward the centralization of authority in a powerful chief executive.

Good intentions aside, the trend in the field continued in the direction of the development of scientific knowledge as the basis for dealing with administrative problems. With the advent of the behaviorist frame of reference in the social sciences, it began to appear possible to many that universal laws of administration might replace the rather naive "principles" of earlier days, and positivists like Herbert Simon (1945) argued that administrative theorists should settle for no less an eventuality. The quest for a scientific basis for public administration undercut concern for accountability to the public will by declaring it to lie outside the boundaries of knowledge. At this juncture, scientific, professional administration was perilously close to becoming an end in itself. Democracy appeared to have been shut out of the administrative

purview by default, as both inefficient and, as a "value," inconsistent with administrative pursuits. While this result may not always have been consciously intended, the frame of reference that helped to produce it had been established at the founding--recall Hamilton's insistence that good administration would be enough to win the people's allegiance (Federalist No. 27), as well as Madison's call for the "total exclusion of the people in their collective capacity" (Federalist No. 63: 1961, 428).

Soon after Simon's credo however, Dwight Waldo's critique of the field appeared, advancing the claim that public administration questions were inescapably questions of value. Waldo argued that knowledge could never emerge from piling up facts; rather, observations required interpretation in terms of human values and purposes in order to become knowledge. Thus administrative theory was--or would have to become--political theory in the classic sense in order to uncover practical answers to its central questions:

What principles legitimate political power in the late-modern state? How are the methods and criteria of social science ... made consonant with the political realm? How should the important modern concept of efficiency affect the organization and operation of government? (1948, li)

Waldo's position was that political theory is not produced in the abstract but in the process of solving pressing problems. By seeing the development of systematic knowledge in public administration as a form of political theory, Waldo was able to restore--or at least to make a case for restoring--the balance between democracy and efficiency that the positivist-behavioralist approach was threatening to upset permanently.

In his introduction to the second edition of The Administrative State, Waldo admits that he is less sure than he once was that a synthesis between politics and administration (to state the tension another way) is achievable: "In essence, we can neither live with or without the distinction, realistically separate the two nor find an agreed, proper joining (1984, lv: emphasis in original)." Nevertheless, he points to "participation and citizenship" as one concern that has emerged in recent years to reinforce his view of public administration as political theory: a matter, he advises public administrationists, that is "plainly ours," pertaining to "core questions of The Good Life, The Criteria of Action, and Who Should Rule? (lvii)", and as such unavoidable by those in the field.

Waldo's critique seems not to have had much impact on the field during the early years after its appearance. With the administrative demands of World War II having shaken confidence in the adequacy of administrative maxims, during the 1950s and 1960s the field reflected a variety of attempts to achieve a more complex and more reliable understanding of the nature of public service. Some approaches, such as the systems frame of reference and examinations of the cognitive limits on rational decision-making, tried to respond to the challenge raised by Simon. Others, accepting the belief that government is politics, worked through the implications of an apparent collapse in the politics-administration dichotomy. None of these approaches was particularly hospitable to the notion of direct democracy, however; the pervasive aim was still on achieving maximum rationality in management decision making and maximum

efficiency of implementation, and the focus was on the internal workings of public organizations (seen increasingly as little different from private corporations) or the dynamics of the "iron triangle"-type policy subsystems in which they were embedded, rather than on improving their responsiveness and accountability to the public at large.

These preoccupations were challenged by the political activism of the 1960s, to which the federal government responded by significantly increasing the range and diversity of mechanisms for citizen participation, especially in programs associated with the War on Poverty. Although the modern move toward involving the governed in administrative activities had begun in 1946 with the Administrative Procedures Act, the mid-1960s witnessed a quick evolution in the politics of participation, though with questionable results. The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, setting forth the goal of "maximum feasible participation," contained within its terms the germ of real citizenship as distinguished from "involvement" by service beneficiaries (see Chapter 1). That is, it authorized a determinative role for citizens in deciding about sizeable expenditures of federal dollars and the design and execution of significant programs. As such, the Act immediately raised the issue of control, and was met with considerable resistance. Mayors protested the funneling of federal funds directly to neighborhood groups within their jurisdictions. As a result, only two years after the Act was implemented, the design of the Model Cities program channeled federal funds to municipal governments instead of directly to citizen organizations. In 1967, the "Green Amendment" put poverty programs under similar municipal

control. Thus, the federal government flirtation with "power to the people" over broad-spectrum programs was short-lived. By 1969, only five short years into the War on Poverty, one well-placed critic could argue convincingly that the effort was a "maximum feasible misunderstanding"-- almost wholly the work of "social scientists and professional reformers" (Moynihan 1970, 164 et passim). The perceived importance of some sort of "meaningful" citizen involvement persisted, however, and as we will see in Chapter 4, real citizenship lived on here and there; but participation came to be seen primarily as a tool for the achievement of administrative ends. In Waldo's terms, bureaucratic strategies reconciled democracy with an overriding emphasis on efficiency, rather than seeing democracy as valuable in its own right.

The contemporary literature of citizen participation in the bureaucracy displays a range of approaches, but nowhere is democracy treated in non-instrumental terms. At the extremes of concern over efficiency, citizens are viewed as clients or consumers, whose needs and demands--though legitimate--compromise the rational allocation of resources and the impartiality of standardized procedures (Mladenka 1982; Thomas 1982; Sharp 1982; Jones 1981).

More positively, citizens are frequently seen as sources of information necessary for decisionmaking: for example, in his analysis of irrigation projects, John Montgomery (1983) argues that bureaucrats need to gear their decisions about when to use participatory approaches according to the nature of the task at hand, using citizen input where

rapid and frequent feedback is important. Kweit and Kweit (1984) suggest that citizen advice, as a source of information outside organizational boundaries, is particularly crucial in helping public organizations to fine-tune marginal adjustments to environmental conditions.

Bureaucrats also view citizens as a constituency, the source of important political support. Thus, the literature suggests, the more vulnerable the agency (say, to funding cuts) the more likely it is to depend on citizens as allies (e.g., McNair et al, 1983). Along similar lines is the view of citizen values as a source of legitimacy for policy, through offering advice or simply by inclusion on advisory committees of various kinds, where the actual impact of citizens' views is frequently weakened by staff pre-selection and weighting of alternatives (Stewart, et al, 1984). Observers such as Terry Cooper (1980) in fact argue that prolonged relationships between citizen organizations and the bureaucracy result in co-optation. (See Chapter 3 for a consideration of the Selznick theory of co-optation in relation to my own view of active citizenship.)

One mode of contemporary participation that assigns real significance to citizens' efforts is "co-production," that is, conjoint responsibility for the production and delivery of services, sometimes up to and including citizen co-responsibility for policy formulation and implementation (Sharp 1980; Brudney and England 1983). When perceived by the parties on both sides as a partnership, such a relationship comes close to the idea of active citizenship reflected in the literature of political theory. Where it falls short is in the instrumentalism with which the parties generally

view it. Founded thoroughly on outcomes, that is, the services being jointly delivered, arrangements for co-production are vulnerable to dissolution when and if consensus on the value of the services dissipates or funding dries up. The idea of co-production is in fact too much a strategy, at least in its present form, to take on the status of institution value for itself.

In general, then, from twenty years' remove the goal of "maximum feasible participation" looks at best like an excess of naive optimism, and citizen involvement has been cast in procedural terms that leave it at the mercy of more solidly institutionalized policy dynamics. Nevertheless, unease over the failure to balance democracy and efficiency persists. The recent special issue of Public Administration Review (1984) on "Citizenship and Public Administration" has already been mentioned (Chapter 1). Terry Cooper's essay in that volume attempts to re-cast the public administrator's role in normative terms, as "citizen for the rest of us." For Cooper, the key aspects of that role, derived from the classic understanding of active citizenship, include: (1) the establishment and maintenance of horizontal relationships of authority with fellow citizens; (2) the continuing reaffirmation in action of a covenant with other citizens expressed in mutual expectations; and (3) an ongoing search for the public interest.

Cooper's view of the public administrator is not inconsistent with the Blacksburg theorists' (Wamsley et al 1987) perspective, which casts public administration as governance: the exercise of discretion informed and guided by constitutional principle, the public interest as a habit of

mind, and the institutional framework of an "agency perspective." It seems to me that together these perspectives suggest a way of re-thinking active citizenship to make it harmonious with--yet not co-opted by--the administrative state. The next chapter begins to develop this approach.

CHAPTER 3:
A THEORY OF ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP
IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE STATE

This chapter presents a vision of active citizenship in an administrative context. Its contents should not be construed as an attempt at a theory of public administration that applies to any and all agencies and circumstances. Its aim is much more modest: to suggest the administrative forms that the classic features of active citizenship might take, and to specify at least some of the enabling conditions for its exercise.

The Administrative State

If active citizenship is to be practiced in the administrative state, it must be interpreted in terms that make it harmonious with the administrative frame of reference but preserve its essential characteristics. In order to work toward this harmony, it is important to be clear about what sort of entity the administrative state is.

Although the concept is rapidly becoming an "idea in good currency" in the field of public administration, it was a novel concept when Dwight Waldo (1948) introduced it. In my view, Waldo's point in using the term was to show that public administration is a value-laden enterprise. His aim was to confront the field of public administration with its own unacknowledged value assumptions--for example, individualism, materialism, liberty and equality, "administrationism", professionalism, and science. In order to demonstrate that public administration embodies a normative

theory of governance, Waldo enumerated the classic questions of political philosophy (such as the nature of the good life and "who should rule") and then proceeded to show how the field--far from eschewing such questions--encompasses them as central, though frequently tacit, concerns.

The term "administrative state" conveys the idea that administration is not a neutral science or technology that can be divorced from determination of the ends of governance but is a form of statecraft--an integral part of governance. Discourse about "the administrative state" thus inevitably deals with such normative questions as what the role of administration should be in relation to government as a whole, and how public administrators should go about integrating public values and technical skills in the exercise of administrative discretion. Discretion, in fact, is the crux of the matter in considering administration as governance, for, as John Rohr (1984, 139) points out, public servants "through their discretionary authority... share in governing a modern administrative state."

The term "administrative state" also, of course, directs attention to administrative practice rather than other forms of governance such as serving in the legislature or on a jury. As Rosenbloom (1983) has observed, legislative, judicial and executive functions are intertwined in the exercise of administrative discretion; so the distinction here is institutional rather than substantive. When the term "administrative state" is used, it indicates concern for the activities of governance, reflecting a variety of functions as they are carried on within the framework of administrative agencies.

The question of active citizenship in the administrative state deals with how citizens can join with public administrators in governance as it is practiced in administrative agencies--a pursuit that is both technical and normative. The immediate aim in pursuing an answer to this question--to re-state a theme sounded in Chapter 1--is to strengthen the legitimacy of the administrative state: to improve its responsiveness and responsibility to the popular will by establishing more direct links between administrators and the people. What we aim to prevent by practices of administrative active citizenship is the possibility that the professional exercise of administrative discretion becomes so autonomous that citizen views no longer have much relevance for administrators, and citizens lack the understanding of governance that would enable them to make informed judgments and to trust that public administrators want to do the right thing. The administrative state cannot be respected by citizens who are ignorant of the practical dynamics of governance and who are suspicious of that which they do not understand.

If governance in the administrative state takes place in the exercise of administrative discretion by professional public servants, then the nature of the present task is to develop a citizen analogue to this activity: an understanding of active citizenship in the administrative state in terms of the exercise of administrative discretion.

Active Citizenship as Administrative Discretion

At first blush, the vision of lay citizens governing by exercising administrative discretion may appear to depart too radically from accepted theory and practice. Ordinarily, we think of discretionary administration as a professional pursuit, while citizen involvement in the public sector, of whatever kind, generally connotes activity by amateur volunteers: by people who are neither specially trained for the activity nor paid to perform it. Then, too, the prospect of lay citizens taking on responsibility for making discretionary judgments--in essence, making policy--may appear to encroach too much on the prerogatives of professional administrators, or may raise questions about the citizens' qualifications or intentions and whether these would constrain or divert the agency mission. Administrators might reasonably fear loss of control over activities for which they have ultimate responsibility in law, or have difficulty imagining a structure within which such an effort might be managed successfully.

These are only some of the objections that might be fairly raised. There are two ways of responding to them, and this project uses both. The first, pursued in this chapter, is to present a way of thinking about this form of active citizenship that shows it to be at least theoretically consistent with the public administrator's role understood as a form of governance. The second--the business of Chapter 4--is to see actual citizenship being practiced in this mode in a real-life situation, and in so doing to allay, at least partially, fears about its feasibility.

Thinking of active citizenship as administrative governance requires two theoretical ingredients. It requires an explication of administrative governance--a normative theory of administrative discretion--and it requires re-interpreting this activity as a form of citizenship. The Blacksburg theorists have, in my view, given us a normative theory of administrative discretion. I intend simply to show the conceptual harmony that exists already between the Blacksburg frame of reference and the enduring characteristics of active citizenship when administrators themselves, despite their being paid professionals, are seen as citizens. Terry Cooper's view of administrators as "citizens for the rest of us" helps establish this connection. If it is plausible, then the only remaining issue is whether the difference between "paid professional citizen" and "active (amateur, volunteer) citizen" is a fatal flaw in the conceptual scheme.

An overview of these conceptual relationships is presented in Table I.

The Public Administration and the Governance Process

The problem involved in "running a Constitution", say the Blacksburg theorists,

lies not simply in a lack of organizing and managing skills, though we still have plenty of room for improvement. Rather it goes beyond, to the problem of governing a modern republic... (Wamsley et al 1987, 295).

These theorists believe that an active role for "The Public Administration" in the governance process is both necessary and desirable, and argue that the field of public administration has paid too much

TABLE I

CONCEPTUAL RELATIONSHIPS AMONG THE BLACKSBURG THEORISTS'
ADMINISTRATIVE GOVERNANCE, COOPER'S ADMINISTRATIVE CITIZENSHIP
AND CLASSIC ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

<u>CONCEPTUAL ELEMENT</u>	<u>BLACKSBURG THEORISTS</u>	<u>COOPER</u>	<u>CLASSIC ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP</u>
Mode of legitimate authoritative action	Exercise of strategic discretion	Horizontal authority relations ("power with")	Decisive judgment
Ethical anchor	Public interest as symbol, language and practice	Search for the public interest	Concern for the public interest
Form of Knowledge	"Agency perspective" (Specialized knowledge, legislative mandates and institutional culture)	Responsive professionalism	Practical wisdom
Mode of relationship	Giving of reasons; trusteeship	Covenant; mutual promise	Community

attention to ways in which public administration was like private business management and not enough to its distinctive character, its publicness.

The Blacksburg Manifesto points to three elements that set public administration apart from private management: its Constitutional framework; its obligation to pursue the public interest; and its contextual framework, styled the "agency perspective":

Agencies are repositories, and their staffs are trustees of, specialized knowledge, historical experience, time-tested wisdom, and most importantly, some degree of consensus as to the public interest relevant to a particular societal function. (301)

All three of these elements serve as both enabling and constraining moral frames of reference for the practice of public administration.

Each of the Blacksburg theorists has dealt in other work with the Manifesto's themes or is in the process of doing so. For example, the purpose of John A. Rohr's To Run A Constitution (1986, ix) is, as he says, "to legitimate the administrative state in terms of constitutional principle." Rohr argues that the dimensions and dynamics of modern public administration are consistent both with the Constitution per se and with the "great public argument of 1787/88" of which the Constitution is the centerpiece:

In stressing the argument of the founding, rather than its outcome, we follow Arendt's observation on American politics that more fundamental than the written Constitution itself is the "principle of mutual promise and common deliberation" that made it possible (9: emphasis in original).

The preceding review of exemplary discussions of active citizenship dealt with the Framers' views, pro and con, on the relationship between citizens and their government. This review shows, I believe, that a closer, more substantive link than citizens now have was advocated by some of the Anti-federalists; therefore the present argument is at least consistent with elements of the larger public conversation that took place over the Constitution, though in large measure not with views held by the winners of the debate. Rohr himself says elsewhere (1984, 136), however, and without apparent anxiety, that "the Federalist view of citizenship triumphed in the development of a low-profile, legal understanding of [citizenship], while our actual political practice retained something of the ancient vision." Therefore, my working assumption is that the proposal to include active citizens in administrative governance processes is at least provisionally consistent with our constitutional framework broadly understood. As the Blacksburg theorists suggest:

The popular will does not reside solely in elected officials but in a constitutional order that envisions a remarkable variety of legitimate titles to participate in governance (1987, 312).

According to the Manifesto, the discretion administrators exercise and thus the real governing they do is constrained by the constitutional heritage, laws, and the shared history of the American people. This context finds its institutional expression in what the Manifesto calls "the agency perspective".

The Agency Perspective

In a recent paper, Gary L. Wamsley (1987) enlarges on the meaning of the agency perspective, which he sees as a "compass" to guide public administrators in search of the public interest. Wamsley sees the administrator's "strategic discretion" as a "shifting fulcrum" that makes governance possible (31). He sees that knowing how to govern, which blends normative and technical considerations, is a practical question that spans the boundary between political theory and organizational sociology. The concept that establishes this link is "the agency perspective," a framework for governance that joins specialized knowledge, organizational history, political and economic context, institutional culture and bureaucratic procedure in the service of enabling and constraining norms; including "the broadest possible public interest (40)" relevant to the agency's context. The agency perspective is, in fact, Aristotelean practical wisdom expressed in an organizational mode. Public administrators are trustees, whose entitlement to govern is legitimated by giving reasons for their actions, a practice which forms the interactive link that, in addition to laws and regulations, is the real source of legitimate administrative authority. In Schaar's (1969) terms, Wamsley's picture of administration shows that its legitimate power is grounded externally as well as acted out in the giving of counsel.

The Public Interest

Charles T. Goodsell (1985) has amplified the Blacksburg notion of the widest possible understanding of the public interest as a habit of mind

that grounds the deliberations of public administrators. Goodsell suggests that "the public interest" is not only a verbal symbol of important public values but also an institutional force.

Public bureaucracy, by means of its administrative processes, institutionalizes the public interest in the broader polity and in society-at-large.

The institutionalization of the public interest is represented in such characteristic features of modern American bureaucracy as professional expertise responsive to ethical and legal standards; equal employment opportunity policies; the provision of needed services long after the enabling wave of public sentiment has subsided; the principled examination of options through policy analysis; and consideration of program effects through evaluation. Although Goodsell's emphasis is on the process aspects of the public interest, its placement in the agency context makes room for the achievement of substantive content in particular situations based upon reasoned discourse.

Administrators as Citizens for the Rest of Us

The Blacksburg view of administrative governance may be seen as consistent with active citizenship by considering Terry Cooper's (1984) suggestion that administrators are "citizens in lieu of the rest of us," an idea of Michael Walzer's whose implications Cooper has drawn out. Cooper argues that the ethical obligations of the public administrator are like those of the democratic citizen. These include:

responsibility for establishing and maintaining horizontal relationships of authority with one's fellow citizens, seeking "power with" rather than "power over" them; engaging in activities that renew and reaffirm a mutual covenant, or set of shared expectations; and a search for the "larger common interest" (143-144).

There are four ways in which Cooper's view of the public administrator as citizen is, if not in unison, at least in close harmony with the views of the Blacksburg theorists.

- (1) Cooper's horizontal authority relations, or "power with", matches Wamsley's assertion that administrative discretion is made legitimate in the process of "giving reasons", so that citizens and administrators share a "coherent body of shared memories, images, ideas and ideals", the basis for mutual trust and confidence.
- (2) Cooper's reference to a search for the common interest as ethical guideline for public administrators is clearly consistent with the Blacksburg theorists' call for the public interest as habit of mind, discourse and bureaucratic embodiment.
- (3) Cooper's notion of responsive professionalism, wielding contextual expertise on behalf of citizens and under their sovereignty, corresponds closely to the agency perspective, which shapes expert knowledge in terms of legislative mandate, history, political context, and the public interest.
- (4) Cooper's idea that public administrators have a covenant with citizens, involving the "regular readjustment or reconstruction of

[their] mutual expectations" is in the same spirit as the Blacksburg theorists' call for the giving of reasons to the larger polity as the basis for mutual trust and confidence.

For both Cooper and the authors of the Manifesto, administrative governance is characterized by a horizontal understanding of legitimate authoritative action; by a contextual definition of the public interest; by expert knowledge recast as practical wisdom, responsive professionalism and the agency perspective; and by norms shared with citizens and made manifest in practice through reaffirmed covenant and the giving of reasons.

If the Blacksburg view of administrative governance is now understood as a form of citizenship practiced by administrators, it only remains to explore how closely this form of citizenship fits the model of active citizenship derived in Chapter 2 from the literature of the tradition. As we will see, the fit is a good one.

From "Administrators as Citizens" to "Citizens as Administrators"

The four dimensions in which Cooper and the Manifesto display a common understanding of administrative governance add up to a normative theory of the administrative state. On this basis we can develop an understanding of how active citizenship can be enacted in the administrative mode.

(1) Mode of Legitimate Action. The tradition of active citizenship views authoritative action by citizens--a share in ruling--as a definitive

characteristic. True active citizens make decisive judgments in the public sphere. As we have just seen, legitimate authoritative action by public administrators, that which makes it possible to consider them "citizens for the rest of us," consists of discretion exercised in a horizontal mode, manifested in the giving of reasons. Active citizenship as administrative governance, then, in Cooper-Blacksburg terms involves a share in the exercise of discretion. Citizen actions in this mode will be made legitimate by the legal and regulatory framework in which it occurs; and by their accountability to others, in the act of giving reasons to other lay citizens and to public administrators. Like administrators, though on a lesser scale, citizens possess both structural and interactive authority.

(2) Ethical Anchor. Classic active citizenship is not simply the exercise of authority. Citizen actions are animated and guided by a concern for the public interest. In this respect, clearly, active citizens are well suited to join in administrative governance, for in the normative theory serving us as a guide in this exploration, the public interest acts as symbol, language, and practice guide, for achieving contextual "right answers."

(3) Form of Knowledge. In Chapter 2 we discovered that active citizenship is an education for citizens. Through joining in governance, they acquire knowledge, understanding and a broad perspective on public issues. By assuming the responsibility for making public judgments, they learn how to make them wisely. They acquire "practical wisdom"--a praxis of citizenship. Cooper and the Blacksburg theorists tell us that the form

of knowledge characteristic of administrators as citizens is expertise exercised in a normative, practical context both responsive to the larger polity and able to cope with realities (opportunities as well as constraints) of a given situation. Active citizenship as administrative governance on these terms, then, involves learning and practicing this sort of contextual expertise within the agency framework. Active citizens' practical wisdom takes the form of an agency perspective.

(4) Mode of Relationship. The tradition of active citizenship views it not just as a form of action but as a relationship, a community enacted and maintained in the process of making decisive judgments in the public interest. Cooper and the Blacksburg theorists also discuss a mode of relationship, one that allows us to see administrators as citizens for the rest of us. This relationship is a covenant continuously reaffirmed with the larger citizenry, tangibly demonstrated in the given of reasons, and resulting in mutual trust and confidence between them and those on whose behalf they act. Thus, citizens joining in administrative governance will engage in these activities of mutual promise, both with public administrators and the larger citizenry.

Citizens: Professional and/or Volunteer?

Having drawn out the links between the role of professional administrator-as-citizen and classic active citizenship, we can conclude provisionally that, at least in principle, active citizenship can be practiced by both lay citizens and professional administrators in an agency framework. Modes of authoritative action, norms, knowledgeability

and interactive practices of the two roles are consistent. The remaining question is: given that, in the proposed scheme, professional administrators and lay citizens share in the exercise of administrative discretion--an activity now interpreted as a mode of active citizenship, does it make any difference that this scheme makes active citizens out of both professionals and volunteers?

My suggestion is that this assertion does not make the sort of difference that invalidates the scheme, and I believe that both Cooper's and the Blacksburg theorists' views point in a like direction.

Cooper argues that it is the ethical and historically voluntary form of citizenship--that which makes it a practice and not simply a legal designation--that public administrators must identify with if they are to continue to democratize American governance. Clearly, then, Cooper sees no difficulty in using what has been in American historical practice a voluntary activity as the exemplar for professional public administrators.

In a recent commentary on the Manifesto, Blacksburg theorist James F. Wolf and his colleague Robert C. Bacher (n.d.) outline three facets of the professional public administrator's role: job--a form of labor, aimed at survival; career--a form of personal development; and vocation, involving a form of public service aimed not at personal growth but at collective development. As Wolf and Bacher observe: "An affirmation of citizenship and a special group of citizens--public servants--is made more possible in the world of vocation (13)." It would seem that the idea of payment is not the point of the concept of vocation.

Thus, at least among these theorists, who display a commitment to drawing out the normative dimensions of public administration, and who have turned to dimensions of lay citizenship as guidance, the distinction between professional and lay citizenship is in this respect unimportant. I agree. The important thing about citizenship is the intentionality of its practitioners, and not whether a pay check is involved. My argument is that active lay citizenship is similar in quality, not equivalent in scope, to professional public administration. Within the arena specifically delegated to them in, or made possible by, law, active citizens exercise authoritative discretion to reach contextual definitions of the public interest.

Are Citizen-Administrators Merely Tools of Administration?

With the posing of the above critical question, this theoretical exploration begins the transition to its second stage, which involves re-thinking an aspect of organization theory. The question was raised by Philip Selznick in his classic TVA and the Grass Roots (1949). Selznick argues, based on the evidence in his case study, that in general what passes for citizen "participation" in bureaucratic affairs is actually co-optation, an organizational survival strategy. Selznick suggests that when bureaucratic organizations want to implement complex programs in local areas, they need both to win local approval and support and also to mobilize local assistance in administering the programs. In Selznick's view, co-optation serves these needs of the organization without incurring the cost of an actual sharing of power:

The forms of participation are emphasized but action is channeled so as to fulfill the administrative functions while preserving the locus of significant decisions in the hands of the initiating group (14).

Selznick observes that involving citizens as administrative conveniences is a form of what more contemporary critics have called "distorted communication"--in other words, it is a sham:

It is easy enough for administrative imperatives which call for decentralization to be given a halo; that becomes especially useful in countries which prize the symbols of democracy. But a critical analysis cannot overlook that pattern which simply transforms an unorganized citizenry into a reliable instrument for the achievement of administrative goals, and calls it "democracy" (220).

Selznick's own operational test for whether a particular arrangement constitutes co-optation or democracy is whether access to the citizens' association by outside elements is channeled through officials of the co-optating agency. The possibility that outsiders can deal directly and definitively with the citizen group indicates a real sharing of power. With that test as a guide, I believe that the illustration that will be provided in Chapter 4 passes muster as real citizenship and not co-optation. Nevertheless, Selznick's insight has been a powerful and enduring one, and I think is one source of continuing skepticism among contemporary public administrationists about the likelihood of democratizing bureaucracy--doubt that can be healthy when used as a check on the pursuit of agency self-interest, but that has also blocked potentially effective arrangements. Therefore, I want to present a way of viewing the organizational framework that makes it somewhat more difficult to write off meaningful interactions as co-optation (used here, of course,

in part as surrogate for a whole panoply of "But it won't work" objections to active citizenship).

Selznick himself appears to have perceived at least the germ of the direction I plan to take here, as evidenced by the following observation:

Discretion is a process of selection--above all the selection of tools for the execution of policy. But these tools are social facts with lives of their own, with needs and demands, with determined responses which do not permit an easy subordination to alien or indifferent ends. Tools are recalcitrant; they ask a price, the price of commitment. He who would induce cooperation must agree to be shaped in turn, to submit to pressure upon policy and action (64:emphasis mine).

In Selznick's eyes, the mutual shaping that occurs between administrative agencies and citizen organizations (the "tools" of policy execution) is an unavoidable and predictable consequence of the attempt to turn abstract doctrine into organizational action. It is a dysfunction of bureaucracy, a reflection of the fact that organizational action is expressed in human behavior, which cannot be perfectly controlled, and also of the reality that the decision to move in a certain direction has opportunity costs. From Selznick's perspective, even the best intentions of public administrators to share authority with citizens are overridden by inherent needs of organization itself, needs that set in motion a dynamic that is difficult if not impossible for administrators to counter through purposeful action. I would like to examine the relationship between organizations and human actors from another frame of reference.

Toward a Sense of Efficacy

Clearly, Selznick is concerned not to defend bureaucracy but to warn us that, as he says, "Something more than virtue is necessary in the realm of circumstance and power (266)." But the concept of co-optation is the creature of a particular way of thinking about organizations, one in which they have "needs" that are separable from those of the human beings who comprise them. Before examining active citizenship in a real-life organizational expression, I want to offer an alternative frame of reference, one that, rather than encouraging administrators and citizens to see agencies as impersonal, complex entities with lives of their own, enables them to see themselves as capable actors who have a measure of control over the organizations of which they are a part, that is, who through their own actions constitute a polis. In this way, it is hoped, citizens and administrators can develop a sense of their own capacity to make changes in their situations. In Selznick's terms, one of the things that "bind the hands of good men," and presumably of good women, is the common sense way in which they see organizations, and the effect this has on how they assess the possibilities for action.

The sense of efficacy necessary to practical action depends on moving beyond a long-standing disagreement among organization theorists about the relationship between social structures (such as bureaucracies) and human actions. Those who are skeptical ^oabout the viability of active citizenship take it as commonplace that the structures of modern society are governed by forces that are largely impervious to the purposive action of

individuals. Meaningful action is blocked in advance by this world-view, which sees it as pointless. In order to show how citizens can exercise decisive judgment about real-world public problems, a convincing argument must demonstrate that citizens can do more than function effectively only within the interstices of a system that otherwise restricts their action. Confidence in the possibility of meaningful action would be aided considerably by perception of political, economic and bureaucratic structures not as a fundamentally distinct order of reality from individual actions but as in fact the cumulative result of them. If such an understanding came to permeate citizen consciousness, we would have reason to hope that members of society, newly conscious of the part they play in system dynamics, could assert some measure of control over them.

This is not to suggest that justifiable belief in the efficacy of social action is enough in and of itself. A practical theory can neither conceive of people as driven mysteriously to perform certain actions by forces beyond their control, nor suppose that they can do--or conceive of the system to be--whatever they like. As the state of current social science reflects, however, this is not an easy balance to reach. Contemporary theorists, as Burrell and Morgan (1979) suggest, divide into two camps, depending upon whether they see structures or action as primary.

Structural theories treat the social world as made up of objective artifacts and relationships existing outside of human consciousness. As such, these manifestations can be studied using natural science methods to

examine their observable properties. The concern of theorists in this mode is to understand how society holds together; stability and order are seen as the norm. As Burrell and Morgan observe, much contemporary structural theory consists of "empirical snapshots of reified social structures," while human processes are neglected. The entire social world tends to be viewed as a "system" which has to solve "functional imperatives" of adaptation in order to survive (54). These systemic imperatives are, of course, entirely distinct from the intentions of any human actors. This view of social reality assumes a somewhat determinist view of human nature, since action is viewed as explainable at least in part in terms of organizational needs.

Clearly, this perspective, which treats the social world and related notions such as bureaucracy, government, and organization as essentially different in nature from human action, reinforces a pessimistic view of active citizenship. But numerous critiques of this frame of reference have pointed out its shortcomings, in particular its disregard of the distinctive inherent meaningfulness of social phenomena, and its overly deterministic understanding of action (seen as "behavior").

In contrast to structural theories, interpretivist theories take action as fundamental. They "view social reality as an emergent process--as an extension of human consciousness and subjective experience (253)." Organizations, from this perspective, are constructed and sustained in human interaction, and thus have the nature of a process rather than an object. Being fundamentally different from "natural" objects, organizations and other phenomena of the social world require

those who investigate them to use other than natural science methods. While the natural world is inert and therefore meaningless until the scientist interprets it, the objects of study in action theories (that is, human beings) do their own interpreting, as well, of the situation being studied. Action has inherent meaning for the actors involved, and the investigator's first task must be to understand it from their perspective.

Interpretivism thus construes the world in a way that, by showing organizations to be the on-going product of human interaction, appears at first glance to offer potential support for a theory of active citizenship. If "bureaucracies" and "policy networks" are no more than on-going patterns of human interaction, then it would seem that actors could alter their terms simply by acting differently, and citizenship, like other modes of social interaction, would be shown to have inherent potency. Clearly, however, action does not generally produce such results. This fact is answered by interpretivists with the notion of reification. As Berger and Luckmann put it: "Man is capable of producing a world that he then experiences as something other than a human product (61)." These products escape the control of their creators and appear instead to take control of them--or at least constrain them. Berger and Luckmann argue that "through reification, the world of institutions appears to merge with the world of nature. It becomes necessity and fate, and is lived through as such, happily or unhappily as the case may be (90)." Moreover, it is an unconscious process, which is why the social world has such a taken-for-granted, "obvious" reality. Berger and Luckmann see reification as a sort of ontological survival mechanism to keep at bay an inherent human terror of meaninglessness. "All social

reality is precarious (103)," they argue, and reification is the vital means whereby we keep it literally from coming apart. For the interpretivist, then, control of human process is the prime concern; deliberate change is viewed as risky.

Apparently, then, although they view human action as the source of the social world, interpretivists offer as little practical potential for change as do structuralists. Action's potential for change is constrained by the reification mechanism, and, as Michael Harmon (1980) observes, while "de-reification" is theoretically possible, it is a phenomenon associated with considerable personal maturity in the human actors involved. In addition, interpretivism falls short as a framework for change in its neglect of material realities, such as inequities in the distribution of income and other life resources, that differentially affect people's prospects for purposeful actions as well as their understandings of their situations. The interpretivist focus on actors' understandings in isolation from the dynamics of political and economic context inhibits critique and hence a move toward change.

We are left with the dichotomy in which, from the structuralist view social structures are seen to have objective reality, while from the action perspective, structures are seen as products, albeit alienated products, of human interaction. But neither seems to offer much hope for the viability of active citizenship. What is needed is a perspective that moves beyond this disagreement about the nature of social reality: a view in which both structure and action are "real;" one that, without

minimizing the difficulties reflected in contemporary political and economic life, at the same time invests individual actors with some measure of control over that which now appears, from both perspectives, to lie beyond it.

A New Understanding of Organizations and Action

The British social theorist, Anthony Giddens, has developed a way of looking at the relationship between organizations and action that, in my view, strikes the needed balance. Giddens (1987, 60-61) observes that most English-speaking social scientists interpret the idea of organization structure as analogous to the girders of a building or the anatomy of a body. Seeing structure in this way, they conceive of it as an external constraint on action, a set of limiting "presences." Instead, Giddens argues, structure should be seen as an "absent totality," in the way the full range of syntactical and semantic rules of language is "absent" from any particular utterance but is nevertheless necessary to understand or produce it. If structure is seen in such a manner, it can be understood further as "both the medium and outcome of the human activities which it recursively organizes." Organizations, like language rules, are the result of the continuous and patterned actions of human beings. At the same time, just as language rules limit but also make possible human speech, so the structural properties of organizations both enable and constrain the actions of organization members.

In his work, Giddens directly addresses the bifurcation in social science outlined in the previous section. He points out that each point of view has its strengths, and he is concerned to perpetuate them:

Those who belong to objectivist traditions...have surely been correct in arguing that "society" or "social institutions" have structural properties stretching "beyond" the activities of individual members of society. Those who veer to the subjectivist side...have quite rightly seen us as being capable of understanding the conditions of our own action, as acting intentionally and having reasons for what we do. (59)

On the other hand, Giddens observes, each perspective has serious shortcomings. Objectivists have neglected characteristics that define human beings as agents rather than automatons, such as intentionality, self-understanding, and acting for reasons. Subjectivists, for their part, have neglected long-term processes of change and the large-scale organization of institutions, as well as the unintended consequences of action (1987, 61; 1979, 7). Giddens views his theory of "structuration" as moving beyond these shortfalls.

Giddens conceives of the structural properties of organizations as a set of "rules and resources" that organization members draw upon in practice, and that are the result of previous practice. These rules and resources include language rules; bureaucratic rules; norms; technologies; knowledge of the availability of raw materials and artifacts; procedures of domination; assessments of individual life chances, and so on. As rules and resources, they--even the most material--"exist" in the consciousness of human beings. In this way, organizations "consist" of

what actors know, and what they know how to do. At the same time these properties stretch away in time and space beyond any one actor. This is how organizations take on a "life of their own." (1984, 17-25, 256-262; 1979, 65-73)

Giddens develops and justifies this scheme in great detail, far beyond what is required to include here. The significance of his perspective for a theory of active citizenship is that it is a way of looking at the relationship between organizations and human beings that, without underestimating the constraining effects of structural dynamics that stretch away in time and space, still puts human actors at center stage, as the bearers and perpetrators of organizational properties and as therefore able to make a difference. For this reason, it offers a plausible base for developing the sense of efficacy that I have argued is important in order to facilitate practices of active citizenship.

Giddens himself is not hesitant to make explicit the normative implications of his views. His assertions that human beings are knowledgeable, and that their knowledgeability is both the source of large-scale social institutions and the required basis for social science "findings" about them, are, Giddens acknowledges, equivalent to a political stance. (1979, 16) Unlike the inert objects of natural science, human beings are continuously interpreting and giving meaning to their own and others' actions. Therefore organizations cannot be understood without knowing first how the people in them understand them, although Giddens believes that social theory can and should move beyond actors'

understandings when addressing the unacknowledged conditions and unintended consequences of action. But in principle, actors are capable of understanding and adopting new ideas that social science develops, that is, they are capable of changing their practice on the basis of new information. Therefore social science has inherently transformative capacity.

To return to Selznick and the idea of co-optation, I believe that Giddens would share Selznick's concern to do something about the elements in bureaucratic practice that "bind the hands of good men." Giddens would argue that his own theory offers a framework in which organizational actors can be seen as fundamentally capable of acting freely, rather than conditioned totally by organizational needs and the dysfunctional externalities of organizational process. Giddens would share Selznick's view that co-optation is an unintended consequence of organizational dynamics, though he would see it as emerging from the patterned practices of organizational actors rather than from inherent systemic needs. But he would argue that the inherent knowledgeability of human beings makes it possible for them to pursue their intentions purposefully--not to "do anything they like," but to move in directions that they choose, including taking actions to institute forms of active citizenship that do not amount to co-optation.

The Political Implications of Organization Theory

It should be clear that Giddens' entire theoretical stance has consciously political ramifications. In this final section of Chapter 3, I

want to draw out a few more of his theory's specific implications for active citizenship. The conceptual relationships I intend to discuss are summarized in Table II.

The Knowledge of Active Citizens

Clearly, viewing actors as inherently knowledgeable is logically and normatively consistent with envisioning them as capable of decisive judgment in the public interest. Knowledgeability involves the selective and interpretive use of existing rules and resources, as well as being able to give reasons for one's actions. Also, from this frame of reference, the link between citizens (actors) and government (a social system), in which their knowledge and actions are implicated in system reproduction, can be seen in essence as a sharing in power. What prevents an expansion of this power is the existing limitations on their ability to use it purposefully, which is a function of limited understanding: political and economic conditions remain hidden, the consequences of action continue unanticipated, and rarely do citizens see themselves as determinatively involved in the dynamics of administrative agencies to which they are linked. These barriers to understanding limit their capacity to reshape their situations deliberately.

Fortunately for the present argument, Giddens's theory directly addresses this constraint. It makes plausible a confidence in the capacity of citizens to take and apply new knowledge of and new perspectives on their situations, or as active citizenship puts it, to learn. We have seen that an important characteristic of active

TABLE II

CONCEPTUAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN NORMS OF ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP
AND ELEMENTS OF A. GIDDENS' THEORY OF ORGANIZATIONS

	<u>Active Citizenship</u>	<u>Giddens' Organizations</u>
MODE OF ACTION	Decisive judgment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Actors' knowledgeability- Actors' participation in system reproduction- Shared power
ETHICAL ANCHOR	Concern for the public interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Contingent claims sustained in practice- Giving of reasons
FORM OF KNOWLEDGE	Practical wisdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Context of action- Reflexive monitoring- Giving of reasons
MODE OF RELATIONSHIP	Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Mutual knowledge; bracketing- Context of interaction- Locale- Face-to-face interaction

citizenship is its propensity to perpetuate and develop itself. By providing the framework in which citizens, through the experience of sharing in administrative governance, can learn to care more deeply for the common good and improve their capacity to judge wisely, each institutionalized practice of active citizenship contributes the very conditions necessary for its own flourishing. Giddens's work suggests that there are two workable approaches to fostering this development. One is by providing citizens with knowledge about the unacknowledged conditions and unanticipated consequences of their ongoing action--knowledge they can then use to change their own practices and thereby their situations of practice. The other is by altering directly particular governmental rules and resources (that is, regulations or simply agency policies, depending on circumstances) in order to provide institutional support for the development of practices of active citizenship. Let us consider each of these briefly.

I have already indicated that Giddens's theory of the inherent knowledgeability of actors leads him to argue for a revision in social science thinking about the relationship between knowledge and practice. From his perspective, the problem with respect to citizens' learning is not that they do not learn, but rather what they learn. This is because theories of all sorts have practical consequences whether their authors intend them to or not; as they make their way into the climate of opinion they are taken up as actors' theories-in-use, where they help to constitute the repeated patterns of interaction we characterize as "institutions." Citizens learn about the meaning of citizenship and the

possibilities for worthwhile action not only from popularized social science theory but also from newspapers, television and other media whereby the conventional wisdom about such matters is promulgated.

Giddens's argument is that given the demonstrated sense-making capacities of human beings, it is misguided to argue that citizens do not or cannot learn. But what many appear to have learned is that, for the average person, most forms of citizenship, frequently including voting, are a waste of time.

Given this state of affairs, it is important that citizens be able to develop a critical understanding of political situations and issues relevant to the terms of their own lives. What we would hope for is the development of understanding that strengthens citizens' capacity for purposeful action. Citizens must, in fact, come to see themselves as citizens, in the sense I have outlined, rather than as consumers, clients, or beneficiaries. If they have the opportunity to see themselves as engaged in--or inherently capable of engaging in--the exercise of administrative discretion, therefore in governance, with public administrators, rather than "involved" simply to the extent of petitioning administrators to satisfy their needs, they may be able to develop improved practices and make wiser judgments. In essence, it is hoped that in this way, and under enabling structural conditions, citizens and administrators together can transform the agency perspective into a conscious polis: a public space in which human beings with different perspectives join to decide what to do and to act together. The necessary conditions and the practices that make a polis may not be possible in

every agency. On the other hand, there may be more such contexts than we now realize.

Rules and Resources of Citizenship

The second strategy for citizens' learning suggested by Giddens's work is to foster rules and resources--laws, regulations, and agency policies--that enable citizen action as well as constrain it. These new frameworks have to meet the other requirements for active citizenship: that is, impart to citizens authority for decisive judgment; foster the development and exercise of the kind of practical wisdom that comes from having the responsibility (as J.S. Mill observed) not just to think but to act; and be aimed at the public interest. My suggestion is that, when generally empowered by the law rather than given orders by it, agency members can use their discretion to implement (design and carry out) programs deliberately in order to facilitate active citizenship. Program rules and practices are not neutral but more or less supportive of citizen practice. If public administrators are conscious of the need, and committed to working toward it, sometimes they can do much within existing constitutional, legislative, historical and political frameworks. This is not to imply that administrators' discretion can be a substitute for or a contravention of enabling legislation. Indeed, the illustration to be provided in the next chapter suggests that an enabling legislative framework provides crucial support for practices of active citizenship. Perhaps, however, in the case of agency programs supported by vague legislative mandates, there may be room for agency policies and procedures that further active citizenship as well as the goals of the law.

Obviously, viable strategies of the sort I am suggesting--the development of critical understanding among citizens and the design of program policies to facilitate active citizenship--must answer the critics' charge that the bureaucracy is too big and complex for the kind of face-to-face interaction upon which ancient citizenship depended. Giddens provides a way of viewing interaction that responds to this objection, with his notion of mutual knowledge. This is a "bracketing" process by means of which an observer is able to hold his or her own contextual knowledge in abeyance in order to understand the actions of another person from that person's point of view. Bracketing is a method necessary to generate a valid description of "how actors find their way around in the contexts of social life" (1979, 336). Through respect for another actor's point of view, the observer generates the mutual knowledge that must precede the development of social science knowledge.

Transferring this idea to the public organization, what we are looking for in a structural framework for active citizenship is the condition or context whereby lay citizens and public administrators can engage in mutual critique, bracket their respective points of view in order to understand the perspective of the other, and thereby work toward a common understanding. This process can be facilitated, according to Giddens, by attention to the context of interaction. In order to facilitate an authentic relationship among citizens and public administrators, the way of thinking about context that I am suggesting in this project is Wamsley's agency perspective. Giddens's theory suggests a way of looking at the agency perspective as a context of interaction in order to show how it contributes to relationship.

Giddens devotes considerable attention to the context of interaction. Context has three aspects: time-space boundaries; face-to-face interaction; and reflective awareness of these phenomena, making conscious influence over them possible. Together, Giddens argues, these elements connect "the most intimate and detailed components of interaction to much broader properties of the institutionalization of social life." (1984, 119)

Boundaries of time and space define the settings of particular interactions, or what Giddens calls "locales." Features of these settings are used routinely by actors to constitute a meaningful context of interaction (1984, 119); that is, time-space boundaries are the medium through which actors transform the properties of system-wide institutions, such as "the bureaucracy," to human scale, and, as Giddens points out, vice versa: "Institutionalized patterns of behavior are deeply implicated in even the most fleeting and limited of 'microsituations' (1984, 141)." The connection between structure at the level of interaction and structure at the system-wide level is traced by "the time-space paths that the members of a community or society follow in their day-to-day activities." (1984, 142) I suggest that the agency perspective is a form of locale: a setting perceived by actors as bounded in time and space, thus a perceptual link between bureaucracy writ large and the day-to-day practices of particular administrators and citizens. The agency perspective locale is structured by properties such as a legislated mandate and agency mission to deliver particular services; rules (regulations, policy guidelines) governing how the services are to be

delivered; resources (grant funds, technical and procedural knowledge); program history, neighborhood focus, and so on. These elements as they exist in the consciousness of administrators and citizens help to pattern their activities. The agency perspective, constituted by these elements, makes action not an insignificant "blip" on the vast screen of bureaucracy, but a manageable world. Such a world may not be possible in every agency. But if the rules empower citizens with the authority to exercise some form of discretion; if the program is, as government programs are presumed to be, focused on furthering the public interest; and if, through sharing in governance, citizens and administrators constitute an authentic community, then the conditions for practice of active citizenship are fulfilled. Under these circumstances, I would argue, through the agency perspective, we have in fact a polis--a true public space.

By bringing together public administrators and lay citizens in face-to-face interaction within the locale--the agency perspective--of a particular program, the necessary bridge between system-wide patterns and the situated doings of the actors involved is secured. Face-to-face contact makes possible the mutual reflective monitoring of conduct from which shared meaning of interaction--the agency perspective itself--is formulated and maintained, drawing on (among other elements) rules and resources that "stretch away" in space-time to constitute entire systems. In this manner, the features of large institutions help to constitute face-to-face encounters in daily life. And, of course, face-to-face encounters reproduce, maintain, or potentially change the properties of

large institutions. This is why such face-to-face interaction is not to be thought of as merely an empty exercise, but as capable of making a difference beyond itself. In addition, if in the face-to-face situations, citizens and public administrators are each able to bracket their distinctive knowledge long enough to understand the perspectives of the other, they can reach a level of mutual knowledge that transforms the institutions that serve as the framework of their interaction.

The reciprocity between institutions and interaction is what makes it possible to argue that consciousness on the part of those involved in such a mutual enterprise about the inherent link between their own situated doings and the characteristics of related systems can help them gain some measure of control: can help actors choose, purposefully, actions that gradually reshape institutions in directions they believe to be right.

The Institutionalization of Citizen Virtue

There is an additional aspect of active citizenship the administrative mode of which is illuminated by Giddens' view of organizations, namely, democracy as the exercise of virtue. We saw in Chapter 2 that the theory of direct democracy holds that democracy is not simply an instrumental value, but constitutes an end in itself. From this perspective, the public interest lies not just beyond politics, but also in it.

The practice of politics in the public interest is made manifest in mechanisms of accountability, whereby those in a particular situation of

governance, involved in determining what Martin Diamond (1981, 65) has called "the binding answer," must account to others for what they do: must justify their judgment through the giving of good reasons. Here again, Giddens's understanding of social interaction is relevant, in its emphasis on the ongoing accountability of actors, the process by which, through reflectively monitoring their own conduct, drawing upon their stocks of knowledge, they are able to give reasons for their activities. (1977, 31) Within a political context, the giving of reasons serves as a moral rule. The extent to which such accountability mechanisms, which aim to demonstrate the bona fides of those involved, are able to influence unacknowledged conditions and unanticipated consequences of action is, of course, problematic. Involving citizens in a quest for action in fulfillment of the public interest is no panacea. But, here again, Giddens's views allow us hope, in his understanding of norms as contingent claims.

Giddens says:

I consider it very important to reject the idea that power has primacy over truth, or that meanings and norms can be explicated as congealed or mystified power (1977, 226).

For Giddens, action itself implies the "interlacing of meaning, normative elements and power" (1984, 28). This becomes most evident in situations such as politics where meaning is being contested. As we saw in Chapter 2, theories of direct democracy do not assume that conflict can be eliminated from politics: recall, for example, Arendt's observation that the public space is defined precisely by the shared experience of one

object or goal seen from a multiplicity of perspectives. The public interest, from this point of view, is inherent in a process whereby the widest possible interpretation of it can emerge as the result of mutual engagement of the issues on the part of all perspectives. "Public thinking" (to use Barber's term) only comes out of such an engagement. Shared norms need not be assumed as a condition for participatory politics, as some critics have argued; rather politics is the condition for the possibility of shared norms.

Giddens's view of institutions takes exactly this tack, arguing that interaction is the medium whereby values are constituted. He has criticized functionalist sociology for exaggerating the extent to which institutional norms have been internalized by members of a society, a perspective that makes it easy to assume that behavior is shaped by members' agreement with and conformance to pre-existent values. Giddens believes that there is ongoing tension between formal codes of conduct and the practices of societal members. In his view, "the normative elements of social systems are contingent claims which have to be sustained and 'made to count' through the effective mobilization of sanctions in the contexts of actual encounters (1984, 30)." In other words, norms about the rights and obligations of members of the polity are not previously internalized ingredients that are simply drawn upon as givens in the course of interaction. Their salience must be sustained by members in the process of holding themselves mutually accountable: by giving reasons for their views and actions and by supplying the normative grounds for their justification. This is exactly the definition of politics reflected in

Arendt's view of how the public space is defined. Political values expressed in interactive dialogue are in fact, rules and resources; as such in Giddens's scheme, it will be recalled, they have no transcendental status but only a "virtual" existence in the memories of actors and in action itself, the meaning of which is derived by the actors themselves through reflective accounting.

To sum up: the normative implications of action are reproduced in day-to-day encounters that bring institutions to life. Such normative rules and resources "make it possible for discernibly similar social practices to exist across varying spans of time and space and...lend them 'systematic' form" (1984, 17). In a quite literal way, then, for Giddens as for theorists of direct democracy, the performance is the product. Institutions are the patterned practices of actors drawing upon stocks of knowledge, values, and resources of power, linked to other actors and sustained for themselves through the giving of reasons. The significance of this view is that it puts generative and transformative force in the hands of actors themselves: what they know, what they value, and what they can do is responsible for reproducing and changing systems.

Having established a framework for seeing the relationship between organizations and actors that nourishes the inherent capacity of human beings to make a difference, I turn in the next chapter to a real-life "agency perspective," in which, I will argue, public administrators and lay citizens are joined in an authentic practice of active citizenship.

CHAPTER 4
PRACTICING ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP:
THE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER PERSPECTIVE

The intent of this chapter is to offer a convincing account of an existing practice of active citizenship: to present this practice in a framework that brings to light the traditional features and values of direct democracy and thereby calls into question the prevailing objection that the theory is unworkable.

In Chapter 3, I made the general argument that people's understanding of the relationship between citizens and the administrative state is unnecessarily limited: that in the course of structured interaction with public agencies, far from having no impact, lay citizens are intimately involved in reproducing and maintaining--hence potentially in changing--the structure of the state. They display capacities traditionally held to constitute active citizenship, and could exercise these capacities more strategically and more wisely if they understood the part they themselves play in shaping the dimensions of the agency within which their practice takes place.

In this chapter, I attempt to show how, in at least one corner of the administrative state, citizen action in conjunction with public administrators constitutes active citizenship at a fairly complete and fully developed level, consistent with the classic dimensions. The intent of the narrative is to illustrate how the practice of active citizenship goes on within one "agency perspective," a federal grant program with

legislated requirements for lay citizen involvement. The setting under consideration is the federally sponsored Community Health Center Program administered by the Bureau of Health Care Delivery and Assistance (BHCDA) in the Public Health Service, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Unfortunately, this ongoing citizen action is not understood by those involved as citizenship; therefore it is less significant, and the practice itself less effective as citizenship, than it might otherwise be. In short, participants' actions have both a greater impact and a deeper meaning than those involved realize.

The Community Health Center: History of an Idea

Before it became a federal program, the Community Health Center (CHC) assumed a number of guises. Over the course of its history, the CHC idea blended a number of diverse notions, such as making health services accessible to those who lack them, combatting poverty, community or neighborhood development, citizen participation, and health system reform. As we will see, the relative importance of these concerns has changed over time and varies with the observer, but all have played a decisive part in making the CHC idea what it is today. The strong flavor of reform or social change common to these notions has helped to give the idea the status of a "movement," and many of its proponents refer to it as such. But unlike many other movements prominent in the heady days of the 1960's War on Poverty, the CHC idea has persisted and found its way into the enduring policy mainstream.

The CHC idea is partly medical and partly political. Some of its advocates have been primarily concerned to apply medical science and clinical techniques effectively to the needs of the deprived, and have used the policy arena as a framework for addressing this aim. Others have focused directly on changing the political fortunes of the poor and the powerless, and have turned to health care as a vehicle.

"Medicine" and "politics" make rather uneasy partners. Because United States health care, although publicly funded to an important extent, is almost totally provided in the private sector, the idea of "medical care policy" has, at least in some quarters, a certain tinge of illegitimacy to it. As a result, programs like the Community Health Center that are forms of medical care policy remain contested concepts, defined in the eyes of disparate beholders. As we will see, one can view the citizen role in CHC affairs--for that matter, the entire grant program--as wholly instrumental to delivering quality health care to poor people, or as valuable in its own right. My research is intended to suggest that the choice matters.

The Dispensary

The earliest progenitor of the CHC idea was almost entirely a medical notion. This was the dispensary: an organizational device, created in late 18th century England and immediately copied here, for providing the urban poor with medical care. According to Rosenberg's (1978) account, dispensaries were not associated with hospitals but were autonomous and were supported by private contributions. In this setting physicians volunteered their services principally in the treatment of minor illness by dispensing prescription drugs.

Dispensaries were established and justified on several grounds: a sense of responsibility on the part of the better-off for the "deserving" poor; the desire to maintain the labor force in good working condition; interest in saving tax dollars that would otherwise be expended on almshouse or hospital care. Dispensaries also

helped fill an important pedagogical void. Not only could visiting and attending physicians themselves accumulate experience and reputation while more firmly establishing their private practice--but they could use their dispensary appointment as a means of providing case materials for their apprentices. (160)

It was this last factor which proved decisive in the course of the dispensary phenomenon. In the early decades of this century, medical education came to be conducted in hospitals, and the profession lost its need for dispensaries. They could not retain physician interest simply as vehicles for providing charity medical care. Some of the seeds of the CHC idea were planted, however: the organizational alternative to the individual care provider; the neighborhood focus and setting; and the concern to make care available to those who would otherwise go without.

The First Neighborhood Health Center Movement

During the early part of the 20th century, the idea of neighborhood-based medical care for the poor assumed another shape, one noticeably closer to the current model. Known as the "neighborhood health center," it sprang up in crowded big-city districts settled by immigrants. (My account is drawn principally from Rosen 1971. See also Stoeckle and Candib 1967.) The neighborhood health center was an outgrowth of the

better-known settlement house movement, the goal of which was to help immigrants integrate themselves into the American mainstream by attacking specific, practical problems such as economic exploitation, crime, alcoholism and ill health. The settlement-work theory was that the poor and foreign-born needed to be met on their own ground in order to be helped; that by working with as well as for them, involving them in solving neighborhood problems, the slum dwellers' self-respect would be enhanced.

Using much the same philosophy and drawing on prototype health efforts at Chicago's Hull House, New York's Henry Street Settlement, and municipal "infant milk depots," pioneers Wilbur C. Phillips and his wife Elsie Cole Phillips instigated neighborhood health centers in Milwaukee and Cincinnati.

The Cincinnati effort is particularly significant, in that it went far beyond simply providing health care. It was sponsored by the New York-based National Social Unit Organization set up by Wilbur Phillips, the purpose of which was to support "democratic community organization through which the citizenship as a whole can participate directly in the control of community affairs." The Cincinnati project included an elaborate system of citizens' block councils that had the power to endorse project activities. As its principal chronicler sums it up:

In short, beginning with health as a field of activity, Phillips and his coworkers endeavored to develop a consciously self-governing local unit in the midst of a large city... It offered a vision of a community in which citizens working together...sought the common welfare rationally and intelligently. (Rosen 1971, 191)

The significance of the Phillips effort for present purposes is the shift in emphasis: from using the community site for meeting health care goals, to using health programs for the development of an active community. This emphasis raised profound anxieties among key interests in the city. Considerable opposition developed from the city's mayor and welfare director, the medical society, and conservatives who dubbed the project a "Red plot." It was disbanded in 1920.

In a number of other cities, however, municipal officials and private health and welfare groups combined forces to establish neighborhood health centers with less radical overtones. By 1930 there were an estimated 1,511 of them, about evenly divided between public and private sponsorship. Some included councils of local residents who participated in center affairs. The definitive characteristics of the concept at this time were said to be "the selection of a definite district, ...with the aim of serving all therein who need the services offered...[and] coordination of services..." (Michael M. Davis [1927] quoted in Rosen, 193.) This particular observer viewed the usefulness of citizen participation in neighborhood health centers as questionable, holding that it "has generally yielded little result in proportion to the effort expended."

The neighborhood health center appears to have declined during the 1930s as immigration slacked off, the foreign-born began to disperse themselves throughout the community, and the attention of health experts turned to the growing problem of financing medical care. Nevertheless, taken as a whole the "first neighborhood health center movement" developed

the concept considerably. To the dispensary notions of neighborhood focus, organization base, and care for the poor were added ideas of enhancing the self-respect of recipients by involving them in project affairs, and in the case of the Phillips project in Cincinnati, the full-blown notion of the health center as instrumental to the cultivation of democratic governance by ordinary citizens.

While general interest in the neighborhood health center concept was at a low ebb during the period from World War II to the Great Society era, there were a few experimental efforts at this time that kept the idea alive. These are important because individuals involved in them later played key roles in getting the current CHC movement underway. For example, Dr. Jack Geiger, founder of the first two Office of Economic Opportunity- sponsored CHCs in the mid-1960s, did part of his medical training in Dr. Sidney Kark's family health center program in South Africa. Dr. Geiger later commented: "That was where I learned about population...social epidemiology...and community organization in relation to health care." (quoted in Anderson, et al. 1976, 10) In New York City, the Montefiore Hospital Family Health Maintenance Demonstration Project led by Dr. George A. Silver pioneered a number of germinal ideas: serving middle-class and low-income families in the same facility; addressing social and psychiatric needs of the families; and providing services on a "pre-paid" basis (characteristic of today's health maintenance organization, or "HMO"). Dr. Silver later played a central role in developing the CHC idea within the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

The War on Poverty

In 1964 the Economic Opportunity Act authorized the establishment of the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), with the mandate to "eliminate poverty." (Anderson 1976) The original "war on poverty" concept did not include health care until physical examinations of participants in some projects revealed many untreated health problems. At that point health services began to be seen as part of the strategy of "breaking the poverty cycle." (Sardell 1983; New and Hessler 1972) Dr. Geiger and other health professionals began to press OEO to use discretionary demonstration funds to establish neighborhood health centers, as they were then called.

There were three themes prominent in the self-understandings of those involved in setting up the OEO-sponsored centers: the idea of comprehensive, neighborhood-based health services; community participation in center affairs; and the use of centers as springboards to community economic development, especially by providing center jobs for neighborhood residents. Where the emphasis lay depended on individual circumstances. Many of the early centers were started in minority communities by "idealistic white physicians" (Schwartz 1970). In such cases, community participation tended to be seen as instrumental to the provision of health care, and "consumers" were recruited to give advice only after the centers were up and running. While OEO viewed consumer involvement as crucial to understanding community health needs, "how-to-do-it" was mostly left up to non-community-based project sponsors.

The medical school, hospital, and health department physicians and administrators who figured prominently in early centers stressed the idea of getting health care to those in need. But many inside OEO began to push other ideas: community economic development and participant involvement in decision-making--moves that social scientists argued were necessary to the eventual elimination of poverty (Anderson, 13). One analyst has claimed that OEO activists used "the ideology of comprehensive health services" to cloak with respectability more radical activities such as community organizing and political mobilization. (Brandon 1977, 81) In any case, what proved to be a continuing tension between medical and political goals was established.

It is fair to say, however, that health care for the poor has prevailed as the foremost policy objective of the CHC program. In 1975, the program finally received its own legislative authorization. (P.L. 94-63; 42 U.S.C.254[c]) The legislative history attached to this law states: "The Committee intends that the provision of high quality health services in all American communities be a national objective." The community health center is defined here as "a public or private nonprofit entity" providing primary, supplemental and environmental health services, and information and referral to health services provided elsewhere.

If this law did not specify citizen governance as a definitive characteristic, nevertheless it did require each center to have a governing board "composed of individuals a majority of whom are being served by the project and who, as a group, represent the residents of the community." The board's powers and responsibilities were to "establish

general policies...including the selection of services to be provided...and a schedule of hours during which services will be provided. The board should also be charged with the responsibility of approving the [center's] annual budget and its selection of a director."

P.L. 94-63 had the effect of institutionalizing the CHC idea within the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW). Stimulus for passage of the law was provided by President Nixon's 1974 directive, as part of his effort to demolish OEO, that OEO health centers be transferred to HEW's purview. The number of centers had increased from 49 in 1970 to 157 in 1974, and once it had its own legislative authorization the program grew rapidly: 302 centers in 1976, 703 in 1978, and a peak of 872 in 1981. Approximate funding also increased, although not proportionately, from \$196.7 million in fiscal 1975 to \$327.1 million in fiscal 1981. Although the Reagan administration aversion to federal "social programs" finally put the brakes on the CHC program's growth, nevertheless the program has maintained a respectable level during the dry Reagan years. Some smaller centers have been closed or merged, and funding levels for individual centers have held constant or declined. But the FY 1987 appropriation of \$395.4 million to support 580 projects attests to the program's persistent political strength.

This continuing federal support has naturally attracted the attention of parties other than the low-income community groups at whom the program has been primarily aimed. Public and private hospitals, whose emergency rooms and outpatient clinics provide stop-gap medical services to many poor people, have eyed the CHC funds with interest, as have big city

governments, who see the program as a potential source of support for municipal health clinics. For these entities, the legislated governing board requirement is a serious hinderance to qualifying for CHC grants. Municipal charters and private corporation articles and by-laws normally contain provisions making it difficult if not illegal to turn responsibility for substantive policy over to a board of "users." Therefore, considerable pressure has been put on Congress to modify if not eliminate the governing board requirement. That this pressure has met with little success points to the central place user involvement plays in the program concept, as well as to successful counterpressure brought by the centers themselves, through their lobbying group, the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC).

When the CHC program was re-authorized for the third time in its history by the 99th Congress, the governing board requirement remained intact, including the provision that no more than 5% of appropriated funds may be used to fund centers sponsored by public agencies. Such boards have all the powers and responsibilities of other boards except that of establishing general policies for their centers. (P.L. 99-280)

Thus although the provision of health care to those in need remains the core of the CHC program, few would dispute that the substantive involvement of service users is also a central characteristic. The CHC is not only in the community but of it. It is this involvement that will be the focus of my interpretation within the framework of a theory of active citizenship. But first, some important structural elements need to be sketched out.

Structural Features of the CHC Program

Before launching into a description of the structural elements of the CHC program, it is worth recalling why an understanding of structures is important when interpreting a real-world situation as an example of active citizenship.

Remember that structures, or rules and resources, have a virtual reality. They are "present" only in action: as actors' knowledge of how to do things, and as practices organized in terms of that knowledge. True, they also have historical duration and spatial extension, encoded as regulations, policy statements, written agency goals and priorities. But in a real way, they are "absent" until they appear in the practices of actors. Before examining the practices themselves, then, we need a general understanding of the structures they will reflect.

The structural framework has distinct levels. The legislation and regulations constitute a fairly stable anchor. Their terms are only reviewed when the legislation comes before Congress for reauthorization. Even then, modifications are relatively minor. This framework, however, leaves a great deal of room for the exercise of discretion by administrative officials in the federal Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS): by "central office" officials of the Bureau of Health Care Delivery and Assistance (BHCDA), where program oversight is national in scope; and by regional officials in each of the ten DHHS regions, where detailed monitoring of individual projects and other geographic area-specific functions is performed. At both national and regional

levels, policies are selected and priorities set with the aim of ensuring that appropriated funds are spent in a manner consistent with the terms of the law; but as we will see, these terms leave administrative officials a great deal of leeway. Finally, at the level of the individual CHC--which is of course subject to all the structural elements just enumerated--organization-specific structure comes into play: articles of incorporation and by-laws; written organization policies and procedures. Each center's board of directors thus has a host of structural elements to draw upon in action. Once these are spelled out more specifically, we will be able to see how these elements both enable and constrain the practice of citizenship as it can be observed in face-to-face situations and as displayed in the self-understandings of individual participants.

The CHC Law

This law, Section 330 of the Public Health Service Act, has been renewed three times since its initial passage in 1975, but the program's major dimensions have changed little. The law defines:

- (1) what services must be provided by CHCs and will be supported with federal funds ("primary health services"), as well as those that CHCs may provide but must support with other resources ("supplemental health services");
- (2) geographic areas and special population groups that must be included among those served by a CHC in order to qualify for federal support (these areas and groups are designated by the secretary of HHS on the basis of specific criteria of medical underservice);
- (3) allowable costs, such as the costs of acquiring and modernizing buildings, developing programs, attracting additional resources and building community support, as well as general operating costs;

- (4) how much of the additional resources generated by the center, such as through patient fees, may be retained by the center and what uses are allowed for such funds;
- (5) how each center is to demonstrate annually that its target area has a shortage of health resources and that its programs are focused on the area population's most critical health needs;
- (6) required organizational features of the CHC, such as fiscal stability and efficiency, a quality assurance program, a contract with the state for designation as a Medicaid provider, an annual budget, a fee schedule, collections procedures, an annual audit and a governing board with a majority of members who are users of the center's services.

By the terms of the legislation, the attention of CHC board members is focused on particular geographic areas and on specific health needs of residents of those areas. They know what services they are responsible to provide and to whom, as well as others they may offer on their own. A number of administrative concerns are also laid out for them: sensing and responding to the organizational environment (the target area, the Medicaid agency, etc.), quality assurance, budgeting and financial management. Thus, within a nationwide multi-million dollar federal program, the people connected with each health center draw upon the structures encoded in the law and regulations to focus their efforts on a particular community in a manner consistent with broad federal policy.

By means of the law, CHCs receive federal funds in order to fulfill their purposes. CHC board members, like the public administrators who exercise ultimate authority over them, are legally responsible for expending these funds for purposes mandated in law. In essence, this responsibility constitutes a form of delegated governance. Therefore, in

my view, CHC board members are, in this respect, active citizens. As we will see, laws and other policies only partially determine citizens' actions within the context of the program. In many ways, board members themselves must decide how best to fulfill the law's intent. Despite many constraints, they retain considerable discretion, an important characteristic of active citizenship. In addition, the terms of the law give their activities a meaningful and manageable focus, so that what could be (and is) thought of otherwise as a giant, complex federal bureaucracy takes on human scale within their arena of concern, enabling them to have a noticeable impact on the manner in which bureaucratic actors fulfill their own responsibilities. In other words, the agency perspective of the CHC program makes possible an authentic relationship between active citizens and public administrators. The sharing of governance responsibility that takes place through this creates a polis within the perspective of the CHC program.

A governing board handbook issued by BHCDA spells out in considerable detail the responsibilities of board members (DHHS 1983). According to this manual, the board has legal responsibility to provide "policy leadership and guidance to the health center's management and staff" (i). This involves setting organizational goals and operating policies; selecting and evaluating the chief executive; monitoring center performance; representing the center in the community; and evaluating the performance of the board itself (6). The board has "power and authority" except as limited by law; it also has "ultimate legal responsibility and accountability for the operation of the health center" (18).

As the handbook spells out, the primary link between BHCDA and the individual health center is the regional office project officer:

The project officer is the health center's primary contact with BHCDA. He or she acts as the agent of BHCDA in carrying out its policies for community health centers... Specifically, the project officer's role is to help the center develop a primary care delivery program, and to monitor the use of its resources (19).

When my interpretation reaches the level of face to face interaction, the relationship among project officer, executive director and board members will receive considerable attention; for this is where the link between citizens and the administrative state is maintained.

Administrative Policy at the Central Office Level

The BHCDA central office in Washington is where the CHC laws and regulations are interpreted in terms of current national needs, political priorities, and trends in the health care delivery sector, both public and private.

Prior to the transfer in 1974 of the CHC program from OEO to HHS (then HEW), public administrators in HEW had used existing legislative authority to fund a few centers as demonstration projects, but the activity did not have the status of a program. The Department's general view of project grants was as a vehicle for assisting states and localities, with the assumption that recipients would gradually take over projects, federal support diminishing to zero over time. (Merthen and Nothman 1975, 250)

The 1974 transfer of CHCs to HEW confronted health bureaucrats with a sizeable new responsibility. For one thing, HEW was now dealing directly with private community-based groups. At first, federal officials instituted a policy aimed at stimulating CHCs to become self-sufficient over time. Emphasis was placed on starting up a great many new, smaller centers that offered a narrower range of services than the original OEO centers. "Maximizing third-party reimbursements" -- collecting from Medicaid and from private insurers -- and "efficiency" became the CHC watchwords. Gradually, however, it became clear that since CHCs were deliberately placed in areas with large numbers of poor people, many of whom have no health insurance, expecting CHCs to serve these patients and simultaneously to achieve financial independence was unrealistic. Policies then shifted to focus on establishing indisputable criteria of community need and project efficiency, so that officials could argue before Congress that, despite the continuing dependence of CHCs on federal funds, the public interest was being served in that projects were efficiently providing care to those who otherwise would go without. Along these lines, the Bureau developed several instruments for centers to use to measure their efficiency, and began to tie center performance on these indicators to annual grant levels.

During the balance of the 1970s, a "filling the gap" argument linked CHCs to what was widely perceived as the inevitability of a national health insurance system: CHCs were characterized as maintaining vital services in poor neighborhoods, capacity that would be needed when national health insurance arrived. The election of Ronald Reagan eliminated the utility of this argument, as a 1980 Heritage Foundation Assessment of the program made clear:

The BCHS [now BHCDA] has interpreted its mandate in the broadest sense, pursuing an agenda not envisioned in the law... Their goal should be altered to assure services that are truly needed to be provided in a cost efficient manner without interfering with the...private sector...and without using these programs as a bootstrap to a national health service program (quoted in NACHC Guidebook 1981).

The Reagan administration's emphasis on "true need," reinforced by a highly critical Government Accounting Office study of the CHC program, which accused it of placing centers in neighborhoods where they were not needed, stimulated BHCDA to institute an elaborate annual needs assessment methodology for CHCs to perform. Naturally, the emphasis on efficiency, serving more people for the same dollars, continued.

Recent policy bulletins issuing from the BHCDA Central Office appear to indicate that attention is shifting somewhat from essentially administrative concerns such as efficiency and need assessment to the quality of the services centers provide, or "the enhancement of clinical effectiveness" as the BHCDA director's latest annual policy memo to regional officials puts it. (NACHC Guidebook 1987). Issues to which top priority has been assigned include how centers can recruit and retain well-qualified physicians; the clinical leadership role exercised by center medical directors; and center quality assurance programs.

In part, this shift reflects changes in the broader health care environment, including increased numbers of physicians and the development of "managed care systems" that aim to control health expenditures by stricter attention to the efficacy and intensity of care each patient in the system receives. "Managed care" is essentially an offspring of the

greatly increased competitiveness among health care providers in recent years, and reflects an attempt by policy makers to reconcile efficiency with quality by establishing a mechanism to eliminate "unnecessary" care.

Clearly, in comparison to key BHCDA policy emphases over the past decade--efficiency, demonstration of need, clinical quality--the governance of health centers has received little attention. The composition and effectiveness of center boards have never entirely disappeared from BHCDA's list of concerns, however, nor could they, being matters of law. But boards have been viewed as instrumental to the provision of needed services in poor communities, on the theory that such communities would neither use nor tolerate the presence of services delivered entirely by outside professionals. From this perspective, boards with a majority of "service recipients" from the target area perform the important function of legitimizing the centers in the eyes of local residents, enabling centers to fulfill their primary role, which is the provision of needed services. There are signs, however, that the part played by CHC boards is beginning to attract greater attention among federal officials, as will become clear in following sections.

The Regional Office

As is the case with a number of HHS grant programs, detailed oversight of community health centers has been delegated to the ten HHS regional offices. At this level, broad national policy thrusts are translated into specifics, including how much money each center receives based on its performance on key indicators. While the central office retains final

approval rights, especially in the case of "problem" centers, the regional office is normally responsible for making judgments as to whether the plans and/or ongoing programs of each center fulfill the intent of the law and of current policy. The regional office approves or rejects new and continuing applications, requests for supplemental funds and special projects, and requests for exemptions from compliance with particular performance indicators.

The regional office thus performs the important function of turning generalities into specifics and transmitting policy in a form that makes it usable and understandable to people associated with individual centers. Essentially the regional office brings policy down to human scale. This process is codified in the form of memos, letters and other documents exchanged between regional office officials and health center people.

The regional office is also responsible for sensing the priorities of state governments and, increasingly, of localities, and for meshing federal policies with state and local needs, as well as for involving state and local officials in federal program planning. Regional offices have entered into agreements with state health agencies for joint planning, and supported the formation of associations of health centers in each state in order to facilitate a focus on state concerns.

The regional office project officer is the bureaucrat who deals most directly with individual CHCs. He or she is responsible both for monitoring several centers and for helping them by offering information,

advice and warnings. Good project officers know their centers well without losing their ability to be critical. They are expected to be advocates for their centers but not apologists. In general, they deal directly with the chief executives of centers, although frequently they attend board meetings so that board members can hear significant news "from the horse's mouth." The interaction of the project officer with center directors and board members is a key source of bureaucratic knowledge about how policies are being implemented in day to day activity, as well as of center knowledge of bureaucratic policies. Materials that centers submit to the Regional Office in written form (proposals, reports, letters, and so on) as well as records available for review on-site, are also important sources of information. But the conversations project officers have with health center people are the means by which mutual understanding of policies and mutual interpretations of center performance are made. If administrators and lay citizens ever achieve a common understanding of the significance of their joint activities, it is here that it happens. In reports of my field observations and interviews I will attempt to bring this interaction to life. But first, in order to complete the survey of structural context, a word about structure at the level of the individual center.

The Health Center

Although the scope and scale of activities vary from CHC to CHC, all centers provide basic medical care to adults and children (the sort of care the "family doctor" offers); preventive dental care to children; other preventive care such as health education, immunizations and physical

examinations; laboratory, x-ray and pharmacy services. Many provide specialized care such as mental health counseling, podiatry or dermatology; all are responsible for referring patients to specialists or hospitals as necessary and for keeping track of what happens to patients when they are referred. Other special services include transportation to the center for patients who need it and advice on how to qualify for benefits offered by other social programs.

A number of organization-specific structural elements affect the day-to-day activities of community health center people, including the deliberations of board members. Like other structural properties, these organizational elements have emerged from prior human action, and have been written down and legitimated. But they now "exist" as structures to the extent that they are drawn upon in ongoing interaction as decision rules, norms of conduct, and bases for judgment. Organization-specific structures include grant proposals, which set forth program plans for the year and the annual budget; procedural protocols, delineating standards for the conduct of clinical and administrative affairs; organizational by-laws and articles of incorporation; the organization chart; minutes of meetings; and miscellaneous memos, letters, flow charts and the like. Because the focus of my research into active citizenship is on the interface between citizens and bureaucrats, I give less attention to these internal materials in my project than they would deserve in other contexts. Among the other parts they play, however, organizational-specific structures certainly shape the manner in which health center people interpret ongoing activities among themselves and in their communications with bureaucrats about the meaning of what they do. In

this guise they are significant elements in developing a complete picture of the practice of active citizenship.

The World of the Community Health Center:
Practicing Active Citizenship

The programmatic history and policy structure of community health centers provide an important contextual framework, but ultimately it is in the lives of community health center people, as they fulfill their day-to-day responsibilities, that the practice of active citizenship must be sought.

Research Methods

This research has used three ways to develop an understanding of the community health center world and human practice within it. Considered as a research method, one approach is historical and relatively tangential, rather than immediate and direct, but nonetheless important: involvement in the movement over a 10-year period as a CHC staff member and consultant. I served as director of development for a community health center from 1976 to 1978. My principal duties were organizing special projects and raising the funds to support them; then from 1981 to 1986 I did consulting work mainly of the same type--grant proposal preparation and board/staff training project management--for three centers in one city. This work amounted to a full-time job, although as a consultant I had a somewhat more detached perspective on the centers I served than I had had as a staff member. In the course of my consulting work I also served for four months as acting deputy director and director of finance

for an organization that managed two of the three centers. This occurred at a period of great organizational turmoil brought about by what turned out to be an irreconcilable dispute between the executive director and the board. Essentially my role during this period was to keep the organization going while this battle was fought.

Although I did not think of it at the time as a research method, this decade of experience gave me first hand knowledge of the way community health centers work--I should say at least several of them, since I have no basis for judging the extent to which the ones I have come to know are either typical or unique. This experience furnished a wealth of first-hand observation of decision-making and problem solving by CHC boards, through attendance at countless regular board meetings and periodic retreats. It was this observation that led me, when I encountered it during my doctoral coursework, to question what seemed to me the simplistic way in which notions of big bureaucracy and interest group liberalism tend to brush aside the possibility of participatory citizenship. Ultimately this experience suggested the present project to me, helped me focus the research, and gave me a "feeling for the organism," (Keller 1983)--that is, an intuitive grasp of the subject matter that helps the researcher frame the problem, identify what it is important to look at and decide how to go about the research.

The second method I used was systematic observation. From April of 1986 until September 1987, I served as board member of a community health center. During that time, I regularly attended board meetings, training sessions, and several special meetings with regional and national office

officials occasioned by a threatened withdrawal of the center's federal funds. I took extensive notes during or immediately after these meetings, focusing especially on how the board went about trying to solve its problems and how board members and federal officials interacted. (More details on this will appear below.)

Finally, I conducted 14 interviews. I talked with four board members from centers other than the one in which I was directly involved. These included board chairpersons of two centers in a large northeastern city; the former chair of a CHC in a mid-Atlantic city; and the chairperson of a rural organization in a Midwestern state. I also interviewed five project officers in one of the HHS regional offices, all of whom have or have had direct responsibility for overseeing several CHCs. Finally, I also spoke with executive directors of CHCs: three from large eastern cities, one from a rural center in the south, and one director of a consortium of centers in the Pacific Northwest.

My approach to interviewing these CHC people was non-directive. My aim was to probe broadly but avoid eliciting the kinds of responses that would guarantee what I hoped to get, that is, evidence of active citizenship. So, although I began by explaining that my interest was in how CHC boards operate, the questions themselves were quite broad--so much so, in fact, that more than one person said afterwards, "You didn't ask anything about your main subject." With the exception of the HHS officials, the topics I raised were four:

- (1) The history of the respondents' own involvement with the CHC movement;

- (2) What changes they had seen in federal policy and government-CHC relationships;
- (3) Particular problems or significant situations they might want to share with me;
- (4) How they viewed the future of the CHC program or their own centers.

In the case of the interviews with federal officials, I kept to essentially the same outline, but injected a few more specific queries where it seemed appropriate about their views on the effectiveness of citizen boards, particularly the basis on which they assessed effectiveness of particular boards or boards in general. I taped all the interviews and also took extensive notes.

In reflecting both on the interviews as well as on my own observations, I organized the material according to the four essential features of active citizenship introduced in Chapter 1:

- (1) Authoritative action: direct participation by citizens in governance; the exercise of discretion
- (2) The exercise of virtue: action animated by concern for the common good
- (3) Learning: development of capacity to judge wisely
- (4) Relationship: formation of a political community, a framework for handling conflict and constituting shared values.

As I take up each element, I will illustrate its characteristic features with material from interviews and from my own observations. The perceptions of the Regional Office project officers will be dealt with in a separate section.

Active Citizenship as the Exercise of Authoritative Discretion

In considering citizenship as a form of authoritative discretion, I refer to situations in which citizens exercise their capacity to make a difference. This involves having some control over the situation for which they are responsible, control effectively delegated to them by the government. In using this authority, they are exercising discretion rather than simply carrying out governmental dictates. This type of discretionary action is the essence of governance, because its content is neither fully determined, nor its outcome determinable, by rules; although rules such as regulations and BHCDA policies help to shape its substance, they do not constrain it totally.

In deciding whether citizenship as discretionary action is reflected in the comments of CHC people and in my own experience as a board member, I have looked for instances in which board members took decisive action: action that at the moment they took it had the capacity to make a difference in the situation. Decisive action does not have to make a particular difference--to have a certain outcome--in order to be counted. If I were to take that tack, I would be considering the situation from an instrumental frame of reference. This approach would be inconsistent with the nature of democracy as action, which is the unboundedness of an end in itself rather than the limited quality of a means to some "higher" aim. I have looked therefore for actors' awareness of the riskiness inherent in having to act; for being responsible means not being able to avoid acting. I have also looked for indications that the actions or perspectives of board members figured in the decisions and actions of

bureaucrats. This reflects the exercise of power as both Arendt and Giddens viewed it--as a relationship in which neither party has full control.

The research brought to light many examples of board member actions that suggest the exercise of authoritative discretion. Let us begin with these words of a board member from a health center in a large northeastern city:

We had to fight to break away from the hospital [the original grantee] and convince the feds that we were sophisticated community people. We could run a health center--take on a task, make sure their dollars were not misspent or misused...When they put the dollars in your hands and say now you must do a good job or even a better job than [the hospital] did...Then the dollars began to shrink. We had to lay off people. Change the sliding fee scale [system of charges proportionate to patient income], make people pay. We had to educate the community. When there's a major change you have to go to the community, whether they belong to the center or not! Telling people that a change must come: bring your Medicaid card and don't give the staff a hard time...Then people were not paying. We had to hold more meetings and say, "We have to accept the changes." We're still not totally self-sustaining, but we're closer...You have to find ways to live within the dollars: cut staff, cut evening hours. You have to give up something.

The situation this board member describes involves the transfer of project authority from the original OEO grantee, a large medical center, to a community board: "We had to fight to break away...and convince the feds that we...could run a health center." Here the community people are assuming an authoritative role, one they fought to gain but have never had before: running a complex health program and bearing the responsibility for wisely expending a large amount of government money. This was a big

risk: they felt themselves held to a very high standard--to equal or exceed the hospital's performance. Thus they had to make a great many difficult decisions that involved balancing one interest or aim against another, with the outcome quite unknown. There was no precedent or rule from their previous experience for them to go by in fulfilling what was being asked of them.

The situation was further complicated by shrinking funds, probably as a result of the transfer of the CHC program at about this time from OEO to HEW. This made necessary several painful adjustments in center policy. The most significant was instituting a system of charges for patient care; under OEO, all the services had been completely free. The sliding fee scale was a government requirement; but making it work in the community was the responsibility of the board. First the board itself had to decide on the charges. Then board members had to explain to the community the reason for the change, in other words to be accountable, and to the whole community, "whether they belong to the center or not." The board members also had to develop organizational policies that would enable them to live within the money available to them. Many of these were painful decisions--"We had to lay off people...cut evening hours. You have to give up something." Thus the exercise of discretion was required. In exercising their responsibilities, the board members were constrained in certain ways: by the federal rule requiring them to charge for services; by past history--the hospital's performance, community expectations of free service; and by the amount of money available to them, making trade-offs among competing uses of funds necessary. Did these people act, or were they co-opted? My argument is that this constitutes the

former--authentic citizen action: authoritative, responsible, accountable exercise of decisive judgment regarding the execution of federal policy, in a risky situation the outcome of which was unknown. They appear to have done it well: made the decisions and lived up to their responsibility to answer both to the "feds" and to the "whole community." I believe this action reflects active citizenship.

The chairman of another urban center describes a similar situation:

Prior to 1977, the funds went through [the hospital]. Then the feds said, you have to be the direct grantees. We had to start paying rent, covering malpractice... it took 400 thousand more to cover it. We thought we'd go under. We had to lay off some employees. But we had a director who was totally dedicated, and I had a lot of experience working with bureaucracies. It did get very political. When the Regional Office got in our way, we came to Washington and we prevailed. We said, we won't lay anybody else off. On our own, we got additional funds, city, state, and private. The feds became quite impressed... We have a new center this year. We're the first to move into a new facility totally on private financing. We had two different banks competing for our loan.

Again, confronted with a fiscal crisis triggered by transfer of the grant responsibility from the hospital to their autonomous community corporation, board members were faced with effecting painful economies. Here, however, they chose to confront pressure from "the feds" directly: they came to Washington to plead their case with their congressional delegation--and prevailed. With political backing, they bought enough time to raise additional money on their own, and won the confidence of federal officials. Their success is symbolized in their new, privately financed health center. Thus these board members have demonstrated their capacity to assume and fulfill weighty responsibilities for raising and

expending funds, and for playing the political game according to the rules. Their successful exercise of authoritative judgment is reflected in the respect accorded them by "the feds" and by local bankers eager to win their business.

The former chair of yet another center says:

Our board has had to flex muscle with the city to get approvals--for example, we had trouble getting certified as a medicaid provider. They thought we weren't like the other centers. Finally, the Board voted to have our lawyer petition the director of the department--say, the only thing left is to sue. It didn't take long to get the medicaid status.

Here again the Board has had to take a risk and be willing to incur the expense of a law suit and the possible enmity of city officials in order to win the vital medicaid certification, without which the center had no chance of attaining financial viability even with federal grant funds. But, as this same respondent indicates, the making of tough decisions does not always guarantee success:

The Board stood tall on several occasions. For example, the federal monitors took a paternalistic attitude, and refused to believe that favorable arrangements the Board had negotiated [with vendors] were real. The Board had to be pushy. We lost some opportunities because of timing, because the monitor didn't understand. Once, the Board had negotiated leasehold improvements. The monitor said, there must be something wrong, hassled us for six months. Finally they had an outside consultant evaluate it. They analyzed it at a price of 420 thousand; we had a price of 270 thousand but we lost it because of the delay.

This board member describes a situation in which the monitor (undoubtedly the regional office project officer responsible for

overseeing this center) does not yet trust the board's ability to act authoritatively and wisely. As a result, regional office approval is withheld, and a good deal falls through. Nevertheless the board has displayed its ability to seek out and negotiate cost-effective purchase agreements and its willingness to push for the authority to make them stick. The point of the story for active citizenship is not success, but the exercise of discretion in project administration. Such demonstrations are an important means by which boards build a track record with their monitors, the record that becomes the basis for growing trust in the board on the part of the responsible public administrators.

During my own term as a CHC board member, I had many opportunities to join with my fellow board members in making decisions about health center policy and administration. On these occasions we had to decide what it was best to do given the circumstances, and to exercise the authority effectively delegated to us when we assumed responsibility for expending federal grant funds in accord with the broad purposes of the national program. We had to translate these broad directives into specific policies and actions appropriate to the context of our particular center and its community.

Examples of the kinds of decisions we had to make included the following:

- o Based on the results of research into the current patient population, including its demographic make-up and the health problems it reflects, our board had to decide which--if any--new

services we should offer during the coming year. The decision had to take into account whether the community would use whatever new services we chose, whether we could afford to offer them, whether regional office officials would view our decision favorably, and if not, how we could convince them.

- o After many years of negotiating with the regional office, the center had been given permission two years ago to add a mental health department. Now our project officer told us that, since the department was losing money, it should be shut down. There were no other mental health facilities in our community. We had to decide whether and how best to fight the decision: to reassess our sense that mental health services were in the interest of our community, and if so, to develop a means of protecting them on our community's behalf.
- o City officials approached our center about offering a methadone drug treatment program. There were many drug addicts in need of treatment in our community. We had to decide whether helping them would hurt our other programs.

At a recent meeting of the National Association of Community Health Centers (NAHC), a retired BHCDA administrator told an audience of board members:

The intent of Congress was that you be in control, and that you see it to it that poor people get the services...BHCDA doesn't want you to lie down and roll over--they want you to fight back.

This comment underscores the point that the exercise of authoritative discretion by board members is viewed by Congress and by federal officials as a definitive aspect of the CHC program. Thus this aspect of active citizenship is built into the program's fundamental policies, which provide a framework that facilitates the sorts of actions just described.

Active Citizenship as Action in the Public Interest

Active citizenship involves more than just discretionary action. Active citizenship is action in the public interest, defined substantively in particular contexts by means of reasoned discourse. The public interest may be embodied specifically in language or symbol, or reflected in the dimensions of practice. It does not depend upon a generalizable content or outcome, but on commitment to reach substantive interpretations in context. This commitment, faithfully carried out in practice, is what the Greeks referred to as virtue, or the good life. In interpreting board members comments as reflecting the exercise of virtue, I have looked for expressions of motivation by "the good of the community" or its equivalent, as well as situations in which individual opinion was consciously put second to the need to achieve a consensus on the public interest.

During my conversations with CHC board members, a coherent interpretation of the public interest emerged. Those I talked with see the purpose of their involvement with their CHCs as an opportunity to be of service to those in need, whom they tend to see as a community rather than as isolated individual clients. They spoke of their CHCs as being

"beneficial to the community," helping "a group of people who'd otherwise not have [services]." Members of communities served by the CHCs are "patients the private sector doesn't want."

As board members, those interviewed see themselves as both servicing and representing or fighting for their communities. For example, the chair of a rural CHC told me: "I said to myself, this is probably a way I can be of service...[As a board member] you have to represent your community, the public in general...You need to be multi-faceted and bipartisan." A big-city board member put it in much the same way: "I don't foresee a time when we won't have people that need us...I see a continuing struggle...We have to advocate, struggle and fight." Another board chairperson, whose center was being threatened with the loss of federal funds, demonstrated the ability to separate the public good from the personal satisfaction she derives from involvement with the center:

The important thing is not whether I'm the chairperson, but whether there is a health center in this area. If they decide to de-fund us, that's really O.K. as long as they give it to a group with the community's interest in mind. If it meant that the center would stay open, I'd step down, gladly.

The board members interviewed in this research also had a clear view of the type of attitude appropriate to a CHC board member. One of them put it this way:

The board is cohesive; they may see the issues differently but they are of one purpose.

This, of course, echoes Hannah Arendt's view of public action, which inherently involves people of diverse viewpoints joined "in public" to decide what to do. This same board member continues:

The board has chosen [new members] who they felt had a commitment and could work with people from any background, and who have a basic respect for human beings.

This commitment extends not just to the individual CHC's own community, but beyond it to a feeling of solidarity with other centers and their communities--to what CHC people commonly refer to as "the movement":

Our responsibility is not always to accept assumptions the feds make. We have to advocate, struggle and fight--preserve the movement--and help each other out.

These comments reflect the public interest as several CHC board members interpret it. (It should be noted that these are spontaneous remarks; I never asked them why they were involved, only what they were doing.) Clearly, what moves these people is the desire to be of service to others, and particularly to vulnerable segments of the community, who, but for the CHC, would have "nowhere else" to turn to for health care--often, this perception is a literal reality. They see their shared commitment as a binding force that helps them be effective: "they are of one purpose". They see their involvement not as a form of self-aggrandizement but for a larger aim: "If it meant the health center would stay open, I'd step down". During my own involvement, I once heard a fellow board member, faced with having to carry out some less than pleasant task, gather energy by exclaiming: "Well, let's do it for the community!"

They are constrained on some occasions in their efforts to strive for the public interest by the perceptions of others, including the "feds". The reference here is to a recent BHCD A emphasis on making community

health centers more like private sector medicine. I myself heard federal officials say that centers should be "like private group practices," an emphasis reinforced by a decade-old policy stressing "business-like" methods. Many CHC people see this trend as a retreat from the CHC mission, since being business-like and mimicking private group practices have limits when most of one's patients are poor and uninsured. Nevertheless the citizens reflect considerable realism about the situation. They see their responsibility as not to expect such assumptions to disappear, but not to accept them: to "advocate, struggle and fight--preserve the movement.... and help each other out".

Active Citizenship as a Form of Knowledge

We have seen that active citizenship is consistently viewed by theorists as an experience that educates citizens, making them better able to judge wisely. Practical wisdom consists in knowing what it is right to do, given the circumstances. In other words, the context of action is integral to the form it takes; context becomes, as Giddens (1987,99) says, "an anchoring element in the 'mutual knowledge' whereby agents make sense of what others say and do," as well as in the content of particular decisions. As I have also suggested, in the administrative mode citizens' practical wisdom can be seen as both reflecting and helping to shape the agency perspective.

As the comments of board members I spoke with indicate, if CHC people are learning as a result of their experience, a major reason is their consciousness of the responsibility to teach others, including each

other. One board member described how he encouraged members of his board to develop their understanding of factors that influence health; as a result of this broader view, they accepted the responsibility to improve community living conditions:

We found that a big health problem was housing. I fought to get that across to the other board members. Over time, I got them to see it. Now, they have pride of ownership.

Another board member tells how her board learned the importance of educating their patient population:

Then I realized that some people just wanted a marketable skill and I said--I'll just take people as far as they want to go...We tried to educate people that they needed to have a say in what happened to them. They learned about asking for a fair hearing, how to take the landlord to court. We taught them how to read a thermometer, how to store food, basic things. Private doctors won't bother.

According to one executive director, some of the education board members receive comes from staff, who have the technical knowledge board members must be able to draw on if they are to make wise decisions:

In most cases the Board doesn't know that much about health care. You have to keep them up...educate them early, so when moves are necessary, it's something we've already talked about.

Regardless of the source, however, an important piece of the process is getting board members to understand the larger political framework in which they must guide their center. The more experienced teach others:

You can cut staff and still give quality care. You can keep your head above water as the dollars shrink...The toughest

problem is finance--making sure the money you have pays the bills and that the finance department is run correctly.

In the above comment, this board member reflects conscious concern for an important funding agency priority: that the money is spent wisely and properly. Sometimes board members' understanding extends to the constraints that impinge on federal officials. One of the most crucial areas of learning for board members is to develop and understand the policy framework and political forces that affect not only their own judgments but those of federal officials as well:

We originally approached planning on a network concept, but after the transfer [from OEO to HEW] they looked at centers more from a neighborhood standpoint. We had language and definition problems...the biggest thing was to get HEW people to get a handle on them. They had a limited understanding of how neighborhood organizations ran.

In the case of the board on which I served, it became clear to me that the more experienced board members had developed quite a sophisticated view of the interaction between federal officials and themselves. They had learned how to make a case for things they wanted to do, and to do so in terms that would address the concerns they knew through experience the "feds" would have. I also observed old hands patiently explaining to newer members why some actions were unwise or the basis upon which we could predict federal reactions. Much time at board meetings was spent making sure that everyone present understood the significance of issues under discussion.

Detailed knowledge of the field is something about which CHC people can educate "the feds," as a board member representative of NACHC--the CHC lobbying organization--said. But a certain amount of tension between the federal and community perspectives is inevitable:

NACHC gets mixed reviews from the feds. They're happy when we're educating, especially Congress, 'cause we succeed in getting the reauthorization through, and that means jobs for them. The problem is when we advocate for centers. The federal role isn't easy, 'cause you have to monitor the use of funds, advocate and be an adversary also. It takes a special person to be effective. It's especially important to be able to control your ego; you're not God, you don't have all the answers.

Here, this board member demonstrates understanding--gained through practical experience--of the context within which federal officials operate. He understands the give and take that is necessary between CHCs and their federal monitors. Over the long haul, CHC people have basic confidence in many of the BHCDA people, as one former board chair points out:

[Bureau] people from the early years have held true. They've had a good appreciation, focused on improving operations, modes of care. Another school of thought relates more politically...they put you through storms...

In the last analysis, however, as the board member of a network of rural centers pointed out at a recent NACHC conference, even learning has boundaries:

No board member knows everything. Set the policies and monitor them. Let your staff do what they know best how to do.

Active Citizenship as Relationship

Throughout its history, defenders of the concept of active citizenship have insisted that its significance extended beyond its effects on individual citizens to the bonds that the shared experience of governing forges among those who are engaged in it and the ties they maintain with the community as a whole. Active citizenship is an expression of what Arendt calls mutual promise, in which those who are directly involved enact a tacit covenant with each other and with those in whose stead they serve. The actions they take and the reasons they give for them embody this covenant and provide the basis for mutual trust that legitimizes the actions of a few people on behalf of many others.

In earlier comments illustrating board members' understanding of the public interest, we saw that they viewed an important aspect of it as commitment to serve and to advocate for the members of their communities. But this is more than an abstract value. The comments of board members make it clear that the CHC covenant with the community is a very tangible one:

We'd take a jar of instant coffee and donuts and knock on people's doors...find out who the spokesperson was in the building and asked if we could use their living room. It wasn't hard to find them--when you asked who talks a lot about health around here, people could always tell you.

In such a way did board members from this center spread the word about the services that were available and find out from community people what their needs and opinions were. Thus, the community came to see the center as a

part of the community, and as run by people they knew and knew how to find, if they had a problem or a complaint. In such actions as having coffee and donuts with neighbors do the horizontal lines of authority cited by Cooper take shape. Thus community becomes a reality.

One executive director puts the relationship in terms of the sensing of community needs and reactions that board members accomplish in their daily interactions as members of the communities they serve:

Board members are your public relations...they reach out...they are your eyes and ears. They let you know when things aren't being perceived right.

The relationship is more than one of public relations, however: it involves a sense of accountability. Paraphrasing a board member quoted earlier: When you make a big decision, you have to go to the community, and the whole community, not just those who use the center. You have to explain to them the reasons for what you do. In this way, your own decisions are grounded in the sense, gained through tangible relationships with other community people, of how they might interpret particular issues. Your decisions are also rooted in the trust that develops from accountable interaction.

Another board member sees relationship in terms of networking with other organizations in the community and in the larger policy arena:

The board needs to be very active in developing community support. Most board members serve on more than one board...We have to be good at networking with other

organizations...use our own influence to get funds and legislation. We should be calling the senators, not their staffs.

Yet another emphasizes the relationships among various CHCs themselves, and the sense of a "movement" that has infused CHC activity from its early days:

I like to see our center as part of the movement. I like to think of our sister centers. I like to think of the future collectively.

This board chairperson stresses the sense of solidarity that board members share among themselves, that helps them overcome differences of opinion:

We debated and discussed issues, but the whole board would support the final decision. By doing that, we've overcome serious problems.

Relationship also takes the form of a sense of understanding of the federal administrator's role, though the perception is not wholly positive:

We have a good relation with the feds...you can communicate and negotiate. You go through cycles of the good and the bad...Sometimes they don't recognize the reasons [that you don't meet the criteria], they just make a penalty. If they'd just make one serious visit. We haven't had anyone visit us since 1984...There's a limit to what you put people through. I want the Pentagon to have indicators too! Sometimes I feel they are out to get us...I don't mean there aren't some nice guys...you have to roll with the punches and laugh at it.

This comment goes through its own "cycles of the good and the bad." This executive director understands that federal officials face constraints, but voices frustration that officials don't make a bigger effort to get to know local circumstances. She understands the need for "indicators" but feels that sometimes they are misapplied. In general, she tries to "roll with the punches and laugh."

Another director shows a similar understanding of the federal role in relation to CHC political fortunes:

The policies have helped us exist. People ask: Why [should we] do the BCRR [Semi-annual statistical report]? We're still here and a lot of other [grant] programs aren't. The BCRR is an important factor that made that happen. [BHCDA Director] Ed Martin was perceptive and saw a lot of changes coming down and reacted to them ahead. They've created problems for us, but it's kept us in business.

Most important to this director, though, is the sense of solidarity with other CHCs:

When one center is de-funded, that is a piece of us. How do I help you stay alive? That's how we'll continue to grow and rise up.

How "The Feds" See It

Now that we have at least an initial idea of some board members' perspectives on their activities in community health centers, I want to present the public administrator's point of view as illustrated in the

comments of five project officers. Remember that, according to the theory presented in Chapter 3, active citizenship in an administrative context implies that citizens and administrators share in the exercise of discretion aimed at the public interest as defined by the agency perspective. If we accept the combined wisdom of Terry Cooper and the Blacksburg theorists, I suggest that in the context of this activity both lay citizens and professional public administrators display characteristics of active citizenship. Their joining together in action within an agency perspective constitutes a polis. Therefore, in the comments of CHC program administrators, we look not only for their views on the actions of CHC people, but also we look to their own actions for reflections of the qualities of citizenship: authoritative action, (the exercise of discretion); virtue (expressed as a search for the public interest); practical wisdom (the agency perspective); and relationship (mutual promise).

The Project Officer's Perspective

The comments of project officers interviewed in the course of this research shed light on their own practice of citizenship as well as on their relationships with lay citizens in the context of the community health center program.

All five of the project officers interviewed characterized what they do in quite similar terms. One of them sums it up this way:

It's a protean role. It evolves according to its occupant and the community. We see that the regs are being adhered to, but that's incidental. Really, you're a representative of the federal government in the community. You might be called on to answer a hundred different types of questions...an infinite variety. You're a liaison, an adversary and an advocate.

Here we see that the project officer's role involves discretion, since it "evolves according to its occupant." It involves the exercise of authority ("seeing that the regs are adhered to"), but in a way that calls upon the occupant to exercise judgment. The "hundred different types of questions" must be answered in a manner consistent with being a "representative of the federal government;" that is, the project officer must be a responsive professional, faithfully representing his agency's perspective in the community, but without being an automaton. How well this role is filled depends upon the quality of the project officer's relationship with his or her community, as "liaison, adversary and advocate."

Another project officer says:

Within the limits, you have a lot of flexibility. No one's looking over your shoulder, but if something blows up they'll try to pin it on you...A lot of the job is interpreting things to project directors, seeing that they're producing, assisting if they have a problem. It's a funny kind of job 'cause on one hand you're a cop and on the other a consultant--you're a chronic schizophrenic. It's a strange kind of job, but rather enjoyable. You're allowed to do a little original thinking...

In these comments we can see reflected a number of the qualities of citizenship. The exercise of discretion is clearly a part of the project officer's role: in answering the hundreds of different questions project participants raise, the project officer must interpret regulations in terms of specific situations. This calls for judgment ("a little original thinking"); and like the citizens we have already heard from, in exercising judgment the project officer takes a risk: "No one's looking over your shoulder, but if something blows up, they'll try to pin it on you." This open-endedness of the situations the project officer is called upon to deal with means that often he or she defines the role in process.

These project officers did not dwell a great deal on their understanding of the public interest, but the reality that they do consider it--and therefore practice the definitive virtue of citizenship--comes through here and there in their remarks. Their sense of the public interest is reflected in an awareness of the government's responsibility to see that CHC people administer their centers well:

If you can't do the job [in the CHC], for the sake of the people you're serving, we'll come in.

Project officers see this responsiveness to the larger community as a major factor in the legitimacy of what they do:

The fact that people get care they need justifies me drawing my pay.

Project officers also see the involvement of community people in the CHC Program as a fulfillment of the public interest:

People said the community people didn't have the background in health care or the expertise in financial management... but they also didn't have a parochial view of health services. Representation provided that voice to hear directly what people wanted in the way of services.

Sometimes the depth of a project officer's own involvement with his or her centers leads to the view that those more separated from the community do not understand the public interest:

In Washington, they only see state by state; they've forgotten there are individual people involved. At the upper level, its just a job and a pay check and a lifestyle. They don't have the feeling about public service. They don't care about poor people...

Thus the concern of project officers for the public interest is expressed in terms of their commitment to the people served by CHCs ("poor people") and to the delivery of "needed care" and "appropriate services." They distinguish this commitment ("the feeling about public service") from more self-interested ("parochial") views or, in one view, from higher echelon bureaucrats who are perceived to care more about pay check and lifestyle than about people. Since their own commitment is seen by them as what "justifies me drawing my pay." they are skeptical of those who appear to lack a similar commitment. Also, significantly, they see the involvement of community people as a mechanism for ensuring that community need is met, rather than the narrower interests ("parochial views") of health care professionals. But when community people "can't do the job," it is the responsive professional's job to protect the public interest by stepping in.

Throughout the remarks of these project officers is reflected practical wisdom embodied in an agency perspective: legal guidelines, a shared history, an interpretation of the agency's political-economic context, and a set of agency norms and self-understandings that are the obvious product of a great deal of group interpreting over the years. All the project officers see the history of the agency in terms of a shift from a liberal era in which there were few financial or programmatic constraints to a much more cost-conscious approach. This shift in the broader political and economic context of the program is reflected in an evolving set of regulations, guidelines and perspectives:

The regs haven't changed that much but the way we view the centers has changed a lot. The OEO centers emphasized jobs..."take some money and shut up." That mentality...got us off on the wrong foot...We've moved from providing care to people who need it, to becoming budget conscious.

Fiscal austerity and a shift in emphasis from "helping the poor" to "delivering cost-effective services" have led to a shift in the agency perspective:

Under OEO, there were no objectives and the purpose of the program was three-fold, not one...Now we don't emphasize jobs or political activity. We're running a business and want competent people.

Not only has the nature of the mission changed, but the way of measuring its accomplishment has changed as well. Criteria of success have become more business-like:

Under OEO, the dollars were free-flowing...Under HEW, the focus began to narrow to what we considered primary care, and with the narrow focus came reduction in dollars. We've always had criteria, but they weren't tied to the funding. Now they are...Now it's more structured, more scrutiny.

It is the project officer's explicit responsibility to see that the actions of CHCs are consistent with this evolved agency perspective:

The Bureau has goals. The center's goals should be consistent. I'm guided by the regs, the policy guidelines. My monitoring is based around policies and the law.

Clearly, the agency perspective among these public administrators includes the sense of having shifted from a rather irresponsible mode of handing out money without demanding much accountability to a more detailed form of monitoring and the expectation of business-like behavior from projects. But budget-consciousness is sometimes seen as being in tension with providing care:

The centers have to function like businesses...they can't do it. On the one hand they have to give [care] away, but they have to make it up somewhere else. We keep them from doing it.

Project officers in this agency stress the setting of objectives, establishment of criteria, and intensive monitoring as central to the agency mission. They are aware that much of this perspective has developed as a result of the changes in the overall political and economic environment rather than in legislative intent or specific regulations:

"The regs haven't changed that much, but the way we view the centers has changed a lot..."; and that change is reflected in agency policy and in the project officer's relationship to his or her centers--"more structured, more scrutiny."

The agency perspective is heavily influenced by what the outside world thinks of the agency's programs:

The CHC has gained more attention than ever...There's constantly the need to justify...That's the reason we have to monitor, to see they're on track meeting goals set by the bureau.

This agency's identity, both internal and external, is only partly a function of what its own employees do; the actions of CHC people and the discretion they have been granted inject a real limitation on the agency's own control over its situation. When a CHC performs badly and the project must be de-funded, community resentment is incited, or--far worse--the project's poor performance hits the newspapers and the agency shares in the bad publicity.

The centers are well-organized nationally and have made a concerted effort to educate Congress. I just hope performance improves, 'cause bad news surfaces fast. If it comes out they're not well managed, it could be detrimental as hell.

The agency's vulnerability as a result of their inability to control many aspects of the CHC's performance is reflected in the project officers' rather negative views of some of their projects. They tend to be fairly skeptical and suspicious of the capability and performance of some project people, including board members:

Most of the boards have been responsive [to our guidance] but a small group have neglected their authority... They depend too much on the executive director... You have to have the community representatives, 'cause that's the pulse of the people, but you also need seasoned people who've sat on corporate boards... These people have fiduciary responsibility. Sometimes I don't think they realize it.

Because even the tightest monitoring has limits, project officers feel frustrated over their incapacity to keep a handle on their projects--again, a reflection of the autonomy of citizen action. Sometimes even good news looks bad:

We pretty much have to look at what's presented to us, and take it on face value. You're only given what you ask for; naturally they only want to show you the positive. Sometimes I think they keep two sets of books, and only show us one. The BCRR [semi-annual statistical report] says they're in 100% compliance, but when we do it, it's not nearly that.

Some say boards are a necessary evil. Our expectations of their knowledge of community needs is a little too great...many don't have a clear understanding of their responsibilities.

But the agency perspective on CHC boards is not wholly negative. The skepticism is balanced by a sense that boards are an integral part of the agency mission. The project officers reflect a sense that program quality would suffer if CHCs were not under the guidance of citizens who understand their communities and serve them to the best of their abilities:

They're necessary because you do get some input. Being really practical, given the kinds of communities we serve, it can't be different.

A certain authority, the board must have. It can't be a subsidiary.

What they do isn't traditional public health. No one else is going to do it.

Thus, although project officers tend to convey the impression that their lives would be easier if they themselves rather than lay citizens had control of their CHCs, they also admit that citizen involvement is in the public interest.

Project officers see themselves as both "cop and consultant," "adversary and advocate" for the centers under their guidance. Let us look more closely at the nature of their relationship with CHC people. The following series of comments from four different project officers illustrates the extent to which this relationship, and the accomplishment of project officer responsibilities that depend upon it, are constituted in personal interaction with CHC people:

Sometimes we get requests from the Board. To me, that shows mutual credibility. Generally when we explain things in person, people are reasonable. They'd rather relate to a live person than look at a memo.

We look at the management of the dollars...how they organize themselves to deal with it. We talk with the Board, the director, the middle management. We get a flavor for the competency.

We've had to intervene a dozen times [when projects were in trouble] out of over a hundred grantees. We've been able to see and intervene early. [Whether this action of ours helps] depends on the responsiveness of the boards. Most have been, but a small group have neglected their authority.

You don't have the time to get involved at the [individual project] level. It's probably good to go to [board] meetings, but then they're on their best foot. We'd have to do a stronger job.

All of these comments, even the ones that reflect skepticism about the relations between project officers and their projects, display awareness that true relationship, the giving of reasons and the fulfillment of trusteeship, depend on interaction with project people. One project officer observed that when he gives explanations in person, "people are reasonable." Another points out that only in the course of talk with CHC people can he get a "flavor for the competency"--that is, can he really know whether the program's purposes are being competently addressed and the money wisely spent. One has to be able to see the situation and talk with the people involved in order to know whether intervention is necessary. Of course, this in itself is a reflection of the discretion citizens have in administering their centers. Even the strongest skeptic about the possibility of real relationship with CHC people admits that "it's probably good to go to board meetings" and that some of the responsibility for lack of relationship is his own: "You don't have the time to get involved...we'd have to do a stronger job." While not expressed in explicit terms of covenant or mutual promise, these public administrators assume the importance of face to face interaction as the means of what Cooper calls "regular readjustment or reconstruction of mutual expectations," or as one project officer puts it, "mutual credibility."

Integrating the Agency Perspective

In the comments of community health center people and of public administrators, the various motifs of active citizenship have been heard, but the way in which they are synthesized in a unified whole within given

situations cannot be suggested by means of isolated remarks. It is important to try to convey the process by which a polis is created as the qualities of active citizenship are enacted in the course of interaction among citizens and administrators within an agency perspective. The creation of a polis in the context of a public agency is, as we saw in Chapter 3, the creation and maintenance of a real political world within a public organizational context. Organizational process becomes the medium of human interaction out of which political values, are constructed and replicated. The polis takes organizational form.

To illustrate this process, let me examine one situation in depth in order to show construction and maintenance of meaning and values--indeed, of an "agency perspective"--at work in a small segment of interaction. The situation in question is one in which I have been a participant. In interpreting it, I attempt to show how the ingredients of active citizenship take organizational form in the course of interaction and thus to suggest how an agency can be a polis.

Background of the Situation. In the spring of 1986, I joined the Board of Directors of a community health center. At the time I joined, the Center was celebrating ten years of providing health services to its community. But as I soon discovered, things were not going well for the Center. For several years running, the center had ended its grant year with a deficit: its revenue projections had been overly optimistic, and in order to cover program costs BHCDA had come forth at the last minute with supplemental grants. As I learned, this is known as a "bail-out," and is fairly common; several years' worth of bail-outs of one center may be less common, however.

As I began attending board meetings, it became clear that the Regional Office perceived our Center as not well managed. The project officer came to a couple of meetings to explain various "special conditions" being imposed on us: extra reports to be filed, deadlines to be met (put together a revised budget, hire a permanent medical director), or risk losing our grant entirely. Instead of being re-funded for an entire year, we were given an eight-month extension of our existing grant. The Regional Health Administrator himself (in charge of all health programs for the Region, not just community health centers) came to a board meeting to explain to us why BHCDA would not give us money to subsidize our mental health department despite demonstrated community need, and to warn us that we would have to "shape up fast" or another organization would be found to deliver health services in our area.

As the months went by and the Center staff worked to meet all of the special conditions and prepare our next application for re-funding, it became clear to me that a struggle to define reality was taking place. The staff would prepare a report. The board would approve it. We would send it to the Regional Office, believing we could cross that special condition off of our list. There would be no reaction from the Regional Office. Then a letter would come, ignoring whatever we had sent in, and reiterating that we had better get busy and fix things, or there would be trouble.

We submitted our re-funding application. After several months, it was rejected. Meanwhile, we began to hear rumors that another organization had submitted a proposal to take over our center. "They" were from out of town. The rumors had it that behind this organization were former Regional Office employees, now in business to make money from the program they had administered as public servants. Finally, we received word that the Regional Office had rejected all the applications from our city, including both that of the other existing organization and that of the "out-of-towners", and were going to put out a request for proposals for a city-wide community health system under one grantee.

At this point, two meetings occurred, and it is these that I want to focus on. The first was a meeting our board requested with the Regional Health Administrator and the regional official in charge of community health centers. We wanted to clarify the basis for rejection of our earlier application and learn what the Region would consider a "good" application for a city-wide system. The second meeting grew from the board's dissatisfaction over the first; it moved us from the Regional to the National Office and involved us with the deputy director of the entire Bureau. These meetings are interesting ones in which to try to discern a polis in the process of being constructed and maintained, because of their contentious nature. But it is this process, I will argue, that constitutes the polis.

The Regional Office Meeting. The board president, another board member and I, the executive director, medical director and finance director from our CHC met with the Regional Health Administrator (RHA), the official in charge of CHCs, our project officer and a representative from "grants management" (financial overseers).

The RHA began by sounding themes that are currently prominent in the BHCDA agency perspective, but couching them in terms that were intended to put our CHC at a disadvantage. He remarked that CHCs "developed out of the community" and that therefore "clinical effectiveness hasn't been a priority." Explicitly asserting that "Your center hasn't had effective medical leadership," he went on that "CHCs may feel the need to be competitive, but the real mission is to take care of the poor." In this statement the RHA uses the tension between traditional terms of the BHCDA mission--serving the poor and being business-like--to put the individual CHC in a sort of "Catch 22." No matter which of the two we choose as the basis to defend our performance, he can then fall back on the other in order to catch us out. But it is important to note at the outset both that his approach perpetuates the agency perspective and constitutes a strategic exercise. This is not an exertion of unilateral authority, but a negotiation: although fraught with conflict, this is a relationship between administrators and lay citizens, aimed at working out how the public interest is to be interpreted in terms consistent with the agency perspective.

Our board president met the RHA's challenge by pointing out that our CHC had always tried to serve the poor--the homeless, for example. But the RHA hammered away at the theme of clinical effectiveness, as the following exchange illustrates:

RHA: Clinical resources are the most critical. People say, "we can't pay enough to recruit top doctors." I say, you can't afford not to. The core medical practice should look like a group practice. Historically that hasn't been true at your center.

Board President: Are you saying you're willing to let us pay higher salaries?

RHA: I don't expect that you can recruit if you don't. CHCs are harder work. I don't know where people got the idea we were against it... You have to recruit a Medical Director who can give you the guidance. It's not for us to tell you.

In the above exchange, the RHA appeared to be placing top priority on hiring first-rate physicians as a means to clinical effectiveness, so that the CHC "should look like a group practice." Given the severe limitations that the agency's continuing emphasis on efficiency has imposed on salaries, physician recruitment has been a prime concern of all CHCs. Here the RHA appears to imply that the Region might be willing to increase our budget so that we can improve the quality of our medical staff. His position is that we need a first-rate Medical Director's guidance in order to develop sound health care policies and programs for our center: "It's not for us [the Regional Office] to tell you."

Although the RHA seemed once more to acknowledge the discretion CHCs are expected to exercise over the design and conduct of their own programs, he struck a sensitive nerve here. We board members were skeptical of his good faith in implying that more money for physicians' salaries was a real possibility. We had struggled too long on an inadequate budget to trust that this limitation was about to be raised at a time when, overall, our stock with the Regional Office was low. Our trust in the RHA was shaken (not for the first time, but the details are beyond the bounds of this story).

At this point, the RHA shifted gears and expressed his interest in an "integrated system" in our city--one that would unify the administration of the three existing CHCs (ours and two controlled by another organization). Since there is nothing in law or regulations about integrated systems, this "interest" reflects a clear exercise of discretionary authority.

Next, he launched into a theme that prevailed for the rest of the meeting: the poor performance of our center and the bases on which the performance of a CHC is assessed. This proved to be an area of contentious negotiation--but again, negotiation rather than unilateral laying down of the law, and a dialogue that in itself illustrates aspects of the agency perspective, including accountability and cost-effectiveness. The RHA referred to indicators such as "only 2-1/2 visits a year per patient," and made vaguer charges such as "the Board doesn't exercise proper control" and "your center has never lived within its budget." We board members attempted to parry these thrusts by asking for more specifics: If we had three annual visits per patient, instead of only two and a half, what difference would that make in our overall standing with the Bureau? What does "proper control" mean? Is five years of deficits really equivalent to "never" having a balanced budget when the center is 10 years old? Our president emphasized a sore point with us: "When I send a letter describing what we've done, your people don't acknowledge any progress." This exchange illustrates that our relationship with Bureau officials has led us board members to expect responsiveness from them: reasons, explanations, clarifications that have helped us in the past to understand and implement Bureau directives. This

past history of relationship leads us to interpret the current vagueness as bad faith. At one point I asked for an idea of whether actions we had already taken were on the right track. The RHA's response: "Not nearly enough. I can't tell if you're on the right track. We're not looking for business as usual."

The other board members and I left this meeting feeling that we had not received specific answers to our questions. We wanted them to give us measurable, or at least tangible, standards--in other words, we wanted to reduce their flexibility, to narrow the range of their judgment so that we would not have to accept whatever answer we received to the next application as fair simply because the Region said it was. Regional officials, for their part, had sought to establish a picture of us and our center as ineffective by making broad judgmental assertions and resisting our efforts to pin them down to specifics.

This is a troubling interchange because the arena of dispute has widened, from ordinary marginal negotiations such as whether center performance on one indicator is adequate, to central aspects of the entire grant program such as whether clinical quality has ever been a priority (not to mention that the dispute now also centers on the identity, including the self-image, of our center). Here the bracketing process, whereby citizens and public administrators hold in abeyance their own perspectives in order to understand each other, is threatened because of the level of disagreement. Administrators aggressively seek to assert control, and citizens react defensively.

Yet I would argue that a shared practice of active citizenship is still reflected here. The agency's definition of the public interest is expressed--"to take care of the poor"--and accepted. Discretionary judgments are made both by administrators and citizens. What Giddens calls the dialectic of power is clearly visible in their relationship, for administrators are negotiating to regain (rather than unilaterally asserting) an "acceptable" level of control over aspects of program implementation that they perceive to have gone off the track. The rule of giving reasons is quite visibly accepted by both administrators and citizens, even though the definition of "reason" is being contended. It is the operational meaning of agency knowledge that is under the greatest stress here, but even so, both administrators and citizens tacitly accept objectives and criteria of program performance as legitimate norms. Further, although I have not the basis to assert that the administrators are deliberately trying to mislead the citizens, even if this were true, the citizens cannot be viewed as helpless victims of "distorted communication." Instead they show themselves to be capably acting on the basis of the knowledge that they do have, and purposefully seeking to widen that knowledge by actively negotiating its definition in terms that are consistent with the agency perspective. They are in fact sharing in the ongoing constitution of the agency mission and its expression in guidelines, procedures and interaction.

Meeting with BHCDA. Sensing the failure to agree on basic terms whereby our performance would be interpreted by Regional officials, we lay citizens decided to "raise the ante." We turned to our own support network, the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC), for

help in setting up a meeting with the BHCDA deputy director: the Central Office official in charge of community health programs including CHCs--the BHCDA deputy director. The NACHC director agreed to request a meeting with the BHCDA deputy on behalf of two NACHC member organizations: our center and the other existing grantee, who had had a similar unsatisfactory encounter with Regional officials. At this meeting, in addition to the BHCDA deputy, board members and staff of the two CHCs, and NACHC representatives, were several municipal officials, in recognition of BHCDA's desire to link policy implementation with state and local governments. The Regional officials involved in our previous meeting declined to attend on the basis of other "pressing appointments." The expressed agenda for the meeting was to gain a clear, shared understanding of the criteria by which the application for an "integrated community health system" would be judged.

The NACHC director, acting as advocate, began by sounding the theme of the meeting: the CHC representatives' desire for specific measures by which proposals would be assessed. The BHCDA deputy picked up and responded to this theme:

Our concern is that we could be doing more in [your city]. Specifically, we haven't seen progress toward partnerships to deal with public health problems that are bigger than one organization can deal with.

This lack of "progress toward partnerships" was immediately disputed both by CHC board members and the municipal officials present; but the tone of the interchange was in contrast to the earlier meeting. As subsequent

interchange confirmed, we were relating to an official who was attempting to be responsive, to give reasons, rather than one who was trying to avoid doing so.

As the discussion went on, it became more specific instead of increasingly vague. The BHCDA deputy clarified that by "progress" he meant "a more ambitious effort, with more players." One municipal official asserted another aspect of the agency perspective--"community support." What support, he asked, did a mysterious "third applicant" have? The BHCDA deputy countered: "But the problem is bigger than what these two groups can do...We want to leverage other resources." Here yet another aspect of the agency perspective is brought in, that is, cost-effectiveness. Thus, the fully-rounded agency interpretation of the public interest has now been laid out as the framework for negotiation: accountability by means of specific criteria; community responsiveness confirmed by community support; and the cost-effective use of resources.

The two CHC board presidents picked up these themes. We have leveraged other resources, they argued, pointing to other grants they have won from the city and from private foundations. Also, one of them pointed out, "our application was denied by the Region for very nebulous reasons. What does a city-wide system mean? What will give us a chance of success?"

Once more, the BHCDA deputy came back with specifics: "We want a wider service area than the current ones combined." Pressed further, he continued to pin the meaning down even more: "We want new access

points...a unified needs assessment...a unified health care plan...the city as a partner in the system...a unified management plan and budget...clear working relationships with hospitals...if not a unified board, at least a formalized working relationship." Significantly, he backed up his criteria with a formal assertion of his authority: "I am speaking for the Public Health Service here." Thus we lay citizens knew that we could trust him, for he was giving us the decisive measures the Regional Office had withheld, and, to that extent, backing us in our negotiation with the Regional Office. He was not simply "pulling rank" but letting us know that he was aware of his responsibility: he knew he was governing in listing the criteria by which we would be judged. Thus we all shared the understanding that we were jointly engaged in more than a game: the working out of the public interest in the context of a particular program.

We board members left this meeting feeling as though we had reestablished a relationship with our agency, one affirmed by a joint "readjustment of mutual expectations," in Cooper's words. We felt that we had met our objective of getting BHCDA officials to be specific about their expectations, and, without being excessively optimistic about our chances, we felt a renewed sense of trust and respect for the BHCDA official who struggled to define his sense of "the public interest in his agency's perspective" on very concrete terms and who was willing to speak authoritatively. We came away believing that, for this man, the agency mission is (as it is for us) more than just a slogan, and we had evidence for this belief in his willingness to speak ex cathedra--to make a commitment to abide by his statements. We felt challenged by what he

asked of us. At the same time, we had a sense of our own authority and of the breadth of our discretion, since the criteria established at the meeting would require much independent thought, judgment and action on our part in order to meet them. Working out a plan to merge with our sister center would be a tall order all by itself.

In this situation--which is part of an unfinished story--the characteristic of active citizenship and the dynamics of organization meet and merge. Is the agency perspective a polis or an organizational phenomenon? Obviously, it is both. Political values must take organizational form if democracy and administration are to move from dichotomy to dialectic. Is the giving of reasons a form of political covenant or a methodology whereby human beings maintain a social reality? Surely it is one process that has dual significance. In the situation just described, we have seen administrators and citizens sharing a jointly constructed perspective: for the BHCDA "agency perspective" is not formed inside the agency and then disseminated in the community. It is constructed, maintained and changed in face-to-face interaction between citizens and administrators, who have sometimes divergent but never wholly dichotomous interpretations of the basic rules and resources that bound their interaction both cognitively and normatively.

True, the agency has ultimate power over the citizens, since it can withdraw the funds. On the other hand, the agency cannot do its work without citizens, either legally or practically. It must find ways to work with citizens, and that means granting them significant authority over the conduct of project affairs. Community health centers are complex

organizations in their own right: too complex to be "micro-managed" by federal officials, and drawing sustaining institutional life from community values and culture that administrators must trust citizens to understand and embody in organizational form. As Selznick knew, "he who would induce cooperation must agree to be shaped in turn." This agreement can take the shape, the community health center program suggests, not just of co-optation, but of a true practice of active citizenship.

CHAPTER 5:
THE FUTURE OF ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

The intent of this dissertation has been to develop an answer to the practical question of active citizenship. As we saw in Chapter 2, the tradition of direct democracy suggests that active citizens are people capable of learning how to make decisive judgments on questions of public policy, who care about the public interest and accept their obligation as public persons to work toward it. On principle, this view of citizenship implies that it need not and should not be limited to an elite: most ordinary persons are capable of joining in such a pursuit and many might develop an interest if they saw others around them so engaged.

But those who accept active citizenship as a worthy ideal have been handicapped in their attempts to advocate it by the ostensible verdict of history, namely, that the ideal is unworkable. Particularly in modern times, when the state is embodied in giant bureaucracy and politics assumes the shape of the iron triangle, critics condemn active citizenship as a pipe dream. Social science appears to confirm conventional wisdom, and as Dennis Thompson (1970, 30) suggests, faced with a conflict between democratic ideals and social science evidence, "many writers tend either to discount the evidence or to give up the theory."

But if active citizenship is a practical question, we can do neither of these things. We can neither ignore what the world seems to tell us, nor bow to its apparent dictates. Therefore, in this project I have

attempted to re-think the issue of active citizenship in terms that improve its plausibility when considered in the context of the administrative state. In addition, I have described real world activity that appears to contradict conventional wisdom--a practice that, I argue, it is reasonable to consider authentic active citizenship.

In this final chapter, I want to suggest what the practical significance of this excursion may be, and what if any lessons may offer themselves to be studied by others who cherish the idea but have despaired of its attainment. Since this has been an exercise in interpretation, what it has to offer in the way of results is food for thought rather than inferences. Philosophers from Aristotle to Arendt have argued that, ultimately, the practice of politics can only be learned by doing; nevertheless, the example set by others may suggest practical approaches in other arenas or, at least, give us hope.

In the following pages, I sum up the major points of the argument. Having moved in previous chapters from theory to the real world, I want to move back toward theory but in so doing, bring, in a sense, the real world along so that the two can be seen as joined, as aspects of a practice. This chapter includes reflections on the relationship between the practice observed in this research, the theory it offers, and the ongoing political and economic dynamics within which the practice of active citizenship must take place. Referring back to major continuing criticisms of active citizenship, I attempt to show the extent to which this research has answered those objections and so to situate this practice of citizenship within a larger framework. To conclude, I offer several guidelines that

are suggested by reflection on the community health center experience: steps that could be taken to extend to other settings the sort of citizen involvement in governance the CHC program represents.

Active Citizenship in the Administrative Mode

According to the theory developed in Chapter 3, the classic features of active citizenship can be recast in administrative terms without losing their essential intent. The decisive public judgment that is the distinctive mark of active citizenship takes the form, in an administrative context, of citizens' exercise of purposeful discretion in the conduct of administrative affairs delegated to them by public administrators. We saw that, in the case of community health centers, the structural framework for this arrangement is legislatively mandated, empowering (and holding accountable) community-based citizen organizations to deliver a complex mix of services under broad policy guidelines. We saw reflected in the comments of citizens and public administrators that the kinds of decisions community health center citizens make in fulfilling their responsibilities cannot be interpreted adequately as the simple carrying out of orders but entail the establishment of organizational policies and the exercise of judgment.

We also saw that in the course of interaction citizens not only negotiate with public administrators agreements about what services will be provided, how much federal money they will receive, and so on. They also negotiate the meaning of terminology, of the structural properties that are jointly acknowledged and used by citizens and administrators

alike. Citizens' discretion is not simply exercised in the community but also in the context of the agency perspective, which thereby becomes a different perspective than it would otherwise be. The meaning of terms such as "specific criteria," "integrated system," "high quality care" and so on emerges as the result of interaction among CHC citizens and administrators and shapes future interaction. Administrators cannot tell citizens the way "things are;" the two work this out in practice. Thus citizens help to shape not only their own rules, but those of administrators as well. By participating in such negotiations, citizens have a hand in deciding what counts as the public interest in the particulars of day-to-day implementation of a significant federal initiative. Playing a decisive part in shaping public organizational knowledge, they become--literally--policy makers: active citizens.

Engaged in such activities, citizens become experts in exercising contextual wisdom. Through their experience, which includes the kind of interaction with public officials that I just described, they learn the difficulties of deciding what it is right to do given the circumstances, such as how to make the grant funds go as far as possible without slighting the community, how to be both business-like and compassionate. They come to understand that public officials, like themselves, cannot do whatever they like, but are subject to their own set of political and economic constraints. They learn the necessity and the value of being able to give reasons for what they do and to understand and evaluate the reasons officials give. In this way they are accountable to the agency and to the community; they also reduce their vulnerability to manipulation and loss of control over their center.

It is important to point out that while consciousness on the part of lay citizens and public administrators of the citizenship implications of the community health center program might strengthen practice, the impact of citizen action upon the shaping of the agency perspective does not require this consciousness in order to take place. As we saw in the research, lay citizens and bureaucrats draw upon, maintain, re-shape and carry forward the agency perspective in the course of face-to-face interaction with one another. Because, in doing so, they jointly exercise knowledgeable discretion to accomplish the common good within a particular context, this action can be seen as constituting a polis, as active citizenship, even though neither administrators nor community people currently interpret their actions in this way. Consciousness is required, however, in order to broaden the significance of the observed practice beyond the situation in which it now occurs. The question of how far this practice can be extended to other situations cannot be answered by the case I have examined. As was suggested in Chapter 1, this project is an argument that active citizenship should be practiced in more contexts than it now is, not an attempt at a general theory of public administration.

Answering the Critics

Let us recall continuing objections to the viability of active citizenship that have been lodged by critics over the centuries, to see if the Community Health Center Program suggests perspectives or approaches that will meet these criticisms.

Human Nature

Critics including our own Founding Fathers have claimed that active citizenship is unworkable because human nature is flawed--either too self-interested and passionate, on one hand, or somewhat paradoxically, too passive and apathetic. This view of humanity frequently has led to the conclusion that government is only safe in the hands of wise leaders who presumably are exempt from, or able to surmount, these dismal human realities.

It appears that the CHC Program refutes this claim, or at least suggests that it can be refuted, since the research offers numerous examples of ordinary people motivated by a concern for the community, engaged in efforts to serve their community and at the same time to keep faith with the larger public interest implicit in federal policies and guidelines. Unless we are to take refuge in the tautology that all human action is self-interested by definition, as some public choice theorists appear to do, the CHC program seems to present us with evidence that it is unsafe to assume that ordinary people are unqualified for and uninterested in governing. The fellow board members I worked with and those I interviewed included welfare mothers, a receptionist, an elementary school teacher, a local government employee, a city manager, a home health aide, a legal aid attorney, and many more. Some had done post-graduate work and some had not finished high school. Some were apparently well-off, and some qualified to receive food stamps. It is fair to say that they constitute a self-selected group in that they all came to the CHC program out of interest; therefore we could hypothesize that they amount to the

few among the masses who are willing to assume the responsibility of governance. Nevertheless the CHC program suggests that sweeping generalizations about human nature are risky and that, just as the CHC people have obviously deepened their understanding of federal policy and its implementation, so others may be capable of similar learning.

The Administrative State

A long-standing criticism, one that has only gathered strength as the dimensions of bureaucracy have burgeoned, is that active citizenship is unworkable in large states, where sheer numbers of people, heterogeneity of interests, and institutional complexity preclude necessary face-to-face relationships and shared societal aims.

Again, inquiry into the workings of the CHC program may at least give pause to those who believe that the administrative state is too big and complicated for citizens to play a meaningful role. Using the Blacksburg notion of the agency perspective, I have interpreted CHC experience to suggest that sense of mission, written rules, shared informal views of the meaning of policy, and organizational configurations, together establish a manageable "locale" within which the practice of active citizenship can take place. Human actions need not be decisive for the entire nation-state in order to constitute governance. It is important that such actions be linked institutionally to the larger polity, for this link is central to what we mean by governance. Thus the involvement of people in wholly private efforts to benefit society, while worthy, are not a form of governance. But CHC citizens participate in forming and carrying out

policy, within organizations institutionally joined to a larger policy framework. Within this setting, governance on a human scale is facilitated.

In addition, the CHC program suggests that a diverse group of people can share a vision of the common good. Given a basic commitment such as the provision of needed health services to those who would otherwise go without, heterogeneous citizens can find a way to work together. Granted, it could be argued that citizens' own private interests are not threatened by the limited commitment to the common good represented by the CHC program. But a central claim of the theory of active citizenship is that occasions for its practice provide frameworks within which citizens learn to care more deeply for the common good and to enlarge their frames of reference to be able to see beyond "the solitude of their own hearts." I suggest that the CHC program at least points in the direction of this possibility, by demonstrating how lay citizens and public administrators, who in some ways have conflicting views on how program affairs ought to proceed, learn in the course of interaction, to bracket their own interests enough to be able to understand each other's viewpoints and reach a mutually agreeable conclusion more often than not. In line with Barber's argument, the CHC Program should be seen as the starting point for the possibility of consensus, not a guarantee of it.

Interest Group Politics

Yet another objection to the idea of active citizenship is that the dynamics of policy-making in the United States are so dominated by large,

well-organized and well-financed interest groups that involvement by ordinary citizens will necessarily be both rare and ineffectual. Mainstream theories of policy-making put organized interests in a determinative position (e.g., Lowi, 1979), or even further, link them with legislative and administrative policy makers in "iron triangles" or issue networks that would appear to exclude others (Jordan, 1981). From such perspectives, the CHC Program could be made to appear irrelevant. Recently, however, a less rigid view of the policy process has begun to appear in the literature, one that sees policy actors linked in subsystems specific to rather broad areas of concern (e.g., Wamsley 1985; Wamsley and Milward, 1984). From this perspective, the impetus for policy formation can be seen as both top-down and bottom-up, that is, not controlled solely by elites at the centers of state power but also shaped in networks of interaction that are both flexible and permeable.

The CHC Program seems consistent with this new perspective. The program can be seen as a network on its own, involving individual health centers and their communities with federal officials at national and regional levels; local and state officials; interested members of Congress; relevant committees and legislative staff; and the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC). This network is part of a broader health policy subsystem that encompasses medical and hospital interests, insurance companies, Medicare and Medicaid officials and others.

From the policy subsystem perspective, there is room in the policy process for ordinary citizens, given an institutional vehicle for linking

them in a decisive way to broader policy dynamics. The federal grant-in-aid and its accompanying regulations, mediated by a responsible federal agency, provide the institutional framework whereby citizens can join the policy network. That they understand the dimensions and dynamics of this network is reflected in the existence of NACHC, which serves the citizens of the CHC Program, advancing their interpretation of the public interest just as other interest groups serve their constituencies. The CHC experience simply points up the importance of organization as a mode of practice: while other "social programs" were decimated during the early Reagan years, ardent lobbying on the part of CHC board members organized in NACHC successfully turned back Reagan administration plans to slash program funds and turn the program over to states, thus destroying its nationwide base.

Social Stability

Finally, some critics of active citizenship suggest that it is a dangerous prospect, in that too much activity by citizens would heighten conflict to such a degree that social harmony in general would be threatened.

While there may be potentially disruptive modes of citizenship, nothing in the CHC program experience suggests that sharing governance responsibility with citizens within a grant-in-aid framework constitutes this sort of danger. Indeed the real danger seems to be, as Selznick argued, that citizens are co-opted, becoming a kind of administrative "hired help" in the community and thereby cloaking agency intentions with

a mantle of legitimacy. But this project suggests what Selznick also allowed, that "tools are recalcitrant...He who would induce cooperation must agree to be shaped in turn." While citizens indeed fulfill agency purposes in their communities, they also learn the agency perspective, and, by becoming participants, share both in perpetuating and re-shaping it.

The CHC program does not make possible a final answer to the critics on the question of conflict. In part, the answer would depend on how "conflict" is defined. To some, any threat to vested interests and entrenched power is dangerous. To others, such threats represent a source of hope. Overall, the CHC program would appear to contain little potential to turn the world upside down. Marilyn Gittell's (1980) analysis of community-based government-funded organizations found that a focus on service delivery and the need to maintain "vertical" relationships with the funding agency kept many such organizations from becoming heavily involved in broader political issues and in recruiting and organizing large numbers of community people. While the interviews I conducted provide no basis for either confirming or calling into question Gittell's position, my own decade of experience in community health centers suggests that concern for broader issues and the involvement of growing numbers of community people in center decision-making can take place as the organization matures beyond the stage where sheer survival is paramount. (Interviews and observations in this project do suggest that lay citizens have a real impact on the perspectives of the agencies with which they are involved. Since citizens and administrators can learn from each other, their interaction at least leaves open the possibility that in the long run, such learning is transformative.

Guidelines for Practice

What guidelines can be drawn from this research that might help to extend the practice of active citizenship to other settings?

For one thing, it seems clear that a framework for active citizenship is possible by means of a legislative mandate through which the accomplishment of broad public purposes, such as the delivery of health care to poor Americans, is delegated to citizens. While it is still unclear in what other circumstances active citizenship is possible, the community health center program suggests that active citizens can be an appropriate and valuable resource in the implementation of complex public services, particularly where detailed knowledge of the needs of individual communities and solid community support are important factors in design of programs that will be acceptable to the community and in the accomplishment of program objectives. Or, to reverse the logic, opportunities for authentic active citizenship present themselves in programs like the community health center, which depend on the development of a working partnership between citizens and administrators if program purposes are to be implemented.

As the theory in Chapter 3 and field observations in Chapter 4 suggested, a joint practice of active citizenship by lay citizens and administrators is facilitated by the creation of a structural context of interaction that connects face-to-face relationships between community people and public servants with broader institutional properties that stretch away in time and space. In the kind of administrative context

examined in this research, I have argued, the agency perspective provides the sort of perceptual and conceptual boundaries that enable administrators and citizens both to achieve mutual (shared) knowledge and to transform system-wide properties to human scale, so that a true polis is possible.

The community health center experience provides a suggestive illustration of the sorts of contextual elements that can--perhaps must--be employed consciously in other settings if additional practices of active citizenship are to be possible: mandates encoded in legislation, regulations and other policy guidelines; budgets and program plans, both of the agency as a whole and of individual centers; and shared knowledge of the program's history, values and relationships with other elements in the policy subsystem. These factors are "structures" of interaction to the extent that they are known and drawn upon--therefore perpetuated and subtly shaped--by the actors within particular situations. The fact that citizens as well as administrators acquire and use this knowledge is an element in their authoritative participation in governance.

Conscious attention to the creation of contexts can enhance citizen-administrator interaction and knowledge in other settings than the Community Health Center program. The kinds of considerations that may facilitate this practice include:

- o The sharing of real authority and responsibility with citizens--not seen as "privatization" (which smacks of government getting rid of responsibilities) but as a partnership, a form of

co-governance. This responsibility imbues with real weight the citizens' learning and use in practice of agency legislated mandates, policy guidelines and informal mission.

- o The creation of concrete situations of interaction between citizens and administrators. Program implementation should depend on such interaction so that it will not be left to chance or good will. If citizens have real authority, then administrators must consult with them, and vice versa.

- o The use of the (renewable) grant-in-aid mechanism as a time boundary, and of space boundaries such as regionalized federal administrative structures and bounded geographic implementation areas such as the "neighborhood" or "community."

- o Agency leadership that views active citizens as necessary to the fulfillment of the agency mission--as a benefit rather than a cost--and that transmits this message to all members of the organization.

In addition to the above factors, it is important that service delivery and the practice of citizenship both be seen as important aspects of the agency mission. Although active citizenship can be observed in practice in the community health center program, lay citizens are currently perceived both by public officials and themselves not as citizens but as "consumers" or "users" of services. This terminology is selling the program short. As I indicated in Chapter 1, consumers do not

share in governance, they simply consume. They do not contribute anything to institutions, they only use up resources. Consumers have no responsibilities and no accountability to anyone other than themselves.

Not perceiving themselves to be citizens--therefore co-governors with public administrators--community health center board members sometimes have a tendency to underrate the significance of their actions. Others have the same tendency: not being party to the deliberations of board members, and frequently caught up in preserving their own prerogatives, public administrators often see community boards as more passive and less knowledgeable than they may appear from another perspective. This limited frame of reference on the part of both citizens and administrators may partly explain why the CHC program has so rarely been examined from the perspective of the board member role and never as a form of citizenship. Just as the Blacksburg Manifesto points to public interest language as an important mechanism for institutionalizing concern for the public interest as a guideline for public administrative practice, so the language of citizenship might help strengthen citizen practice within specific contexts such as the community health center, and in doing so, improve the implementation of policy objectives that depend for their fulfillment on detailed knowledge of community needs tied to a pragmatic understanding of the larger constraints that impinge upon federal program implementation.

In addition, I would argue that viewing their role as a mode of governance would deepen the commitment of citizens, by imbuing their activities with the kind of public dignity that Hamilton believed was necessary in order to attract the right sort of persons to positions of

public leadership. Our shared sense of who constitutes "the right sort" has widened considerably since the founding. It may be that ordinary people are also attracted to public life by the prospect of the "honor," to use the Federalist term, that comes with serving the public good. That governing is what the citizens of the community health centers do should be made clear to them and to others. In this way, their role can be seen by administrators as an enhancement of the agency's public purposes.

In addition to establishing legislative and institutional frameworks for active citizenship and conceptualizing the involvement of community people in such legislated programs as a form of governance, another guideline for citizenship is suggested by the CHC experience. This has to do with the role of public administrators in strengthening opportunities for substantive citizen involvement.

In Chapter 1, I argued that active citizens were a necessary ingredient in the legitimacy of public administration: citizens will not come to see the enterprise of public administration as legitimate until public administrators view citizens themselves as legitimate in administrative affairs. Such a move involves going beyond commitment to a vague "will of the people" that can all too easily be rationalized to conform to agency self-interest. The agency perspective needs to be grounded outside itself by means of concrete relationships with citizens, if citizens are to trust administrators to choose rightly when circumstances preclude their own participation. Bureaucrats' conversations and joint actions with citizens breathe life--that is, tangible accountability--into the agency perspective.

Although I believe that the CHC program suggests that such relationships are possible, there are tensions inherent in the kind of transformation I advocate. One of the most basic stems from public administration's pervasive quest for professionalization.

Professionalism as it is usually understood poses a problem because professionals claim autonomy based on specialized expertise. From this perspective, the citizen is unqualified for governance because he or she is not an expert. Administrative pursuits are viewed as a technology and administrative knowledge as, at least ideally, a science. Yet there is growing evidence that the challenges of post-industrial society are too complex and uncertain to be mastered by the kind of comprehensive analysis that public administration has held up as an ideal. (See, for example, Dror, 1983) In large measure, it is the bureaucrat's faith in technical expertise and the possibility of comprehensive solutions that make him or her hesitant to turn to the citizen. But, as David Korten (1981) puts it, if bureaucratic structures are to evolve, organizational processes must shift from "the control of bureaucratic deviations from centrally defined blueprints...[to] generating policy choices out of...a social interaction process."

If this perspective offers a useful insight, then active citizenship in public administration need not be thought of as something purchased at the sacrifice of efficiency. If contemporary governance demands tentative strategies, social interaction and frequent feedback, in order to minimize agency vulnerability to unpredictable forces and events, then the

administrative state is not only not inconsistent with active citizenship, it positively requires it.

Terry Cooper's model of the public administration professional as citizen for the rest of us (see Chapter 3) provides the basic framework for a revised view of professionalism. In addition, there are particular modes of administrative practice, habits of mind as well as of the heart, that will advance active citizenship in the administrative state. These include:

personal reflexivity: consciousness of how socioeconomic status, race, gender and professional membership shape one's own values and intellectual assumptions--hence, in turn, one's practice;

a critical perspective: the continuing re-examination of institutional practices in light of new knowledge (or existing knowledge as yet unapplied) about political-economic conditions surrounding practice;

commitment to the giving of reasons: consideration during decision-making of the concerns of all relevant stakeholders, including the public at large, and the development of arguments that are responsive to the public interest.

Such habits of practice, joined to a commitment to seek practical ways of involving citizens in agency affairs and deepening their understanding of the agency perspective, will facilitate the extension of opportunities for active citizenship not to every agency but certainly beyond those settings, such as the CHC Program, where they are now found.

The Future of Active Citizenship in the Administrative State

Any man can engrave tables of stone, or bribe an oracle, or pretend secret intercourse with some divinity, or train a

bird to speak in his ear, or find some other clumsy means to impose on the people. He who is acquainted with such means only will perchance be able to assemble a crowd of foolish persons; but he will never found an empire, and his extravagant work will speedily perish with him. Empty deceptions form but a transient bond; it is only wisdom that makes it lasting.

As the above words of Rousseau (1967, 43) suggest, there is no great trick to maintaining the appearance of democracy in administration. The real feat is to create a substantive practice of it, one in which administrators and lay citizens share administrative wisdom along with administrative responsibilities. My research has intended to convey a sense of what the ingredients of a substantive practice may be, both by developing an argument about how the classic features of active citizenship might be embodied in an administrative framework and by describing a real-life situation in which this sort of practice now goes on. It will be for the reader to judge whether or not the project has met its aims. If I have conveyed a sense that practices of active citizenship are possible within the administrative state, as well as an understanding of why they are worth pursuing, then I will not mind if I have not answered every objection or uncovered every potential roadblock. Readers--fellow citizens--as in all things, the future of active citizenship lies in our own hands.

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