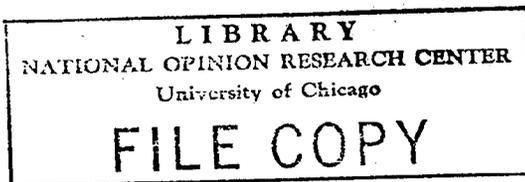


INDUSTRY AND COMMUNITY

A pilot study of community relations of local  
telephone companies and other businesses.

Conducted for the  
AMERICAN TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK



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## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. An Overview of the Mediana Study

This is a report on the findings of a pilot study of the relationships between business enterprises and local communities. Although primarily concerned with the telephone company, this company is viewed in a perspective supplied by contrasting it with a variety of other enterprises.

A small mid-West city, here given the pseudonym "Mediana," provided the community setting for the study. Within Mediana, we were concerned with four groups: managers and owners of Mediana's businesses, the general public, community leaders, and persons on the local managerial levels of the telephone company. Our findings are based primarily on intensive interviews with representatives from these four groups.

As a pilot study, our research in Mediana was primarily concerned with the exploration of a new content area: the location of significant variables affecting business-community relationships, the devising of methods for the measurement of such variables, and generally the working out of a strategy for definitive research on this topic. At the same time, a pilot study always produces substantive findings, sometimes of considerable interest. We hope that this is the case with this pilot study as well, although it must be borne in mind that generalizations going beyond the community of Mediana, and the handful of people we interviewed there, cannot be justified scientifically.

The primary concern of the Mediana study was to see whether data could be gathered which would answer the following questions:

What are the community relations policies of various business enterprises, and how are these policies related to the functioning of the businesses in question?

What are the expectations held by various segments of the community concerning the roles to be played by businesses and their personnel in community life?

What are the motivations for participating in community life, both for business institutions and for the managers of business enterprises?

How does the participation of a business in the life of the community contribute to its reputation in the eyes of various parts of that community?

How does the telephone company compare in these respects to other enterprises?

Although the findings of our study are given in greater detail in the body of this report, it is often useful to have a brief summary of the major findings in mind as one reads the more detailed presentation. The next few pages contain such a summary. If the reader desires to know the grounds for any of these statements, he will find a more detailed presentation later on in the report.

B. A Summary of Major Findings

1. In Mediana, community participation was defined by members of the business community and community leaders as contributions of money and time to the Chamber of Commerce, United Fund, "Citizens Committees," Service Clubs, and the Country Club. Central activities were the Chamber and Service Clubs.
2. All the major companies in Mediana had policies which encouraged their managerial personnel to participate in one or another of the central activities defined as community participation.
3. Leadership in the community organizations came primarily from two sources--the managers of large absentee-owned companies, and from among smaller businessmen who were local in origin. The outsiders achieved leadership through the weight of their organizations, while the locals achieved leadership through their personal reputations and abilities.
4. A number of rationales were offered by businessmen for their participation. All expressed a desire to improve the level of living in Mediana. In addition, many stressed that participation improved the morale of their workers, or built up a better public acceptance of their companies. Few could point to immediate dollars-and-cents benefits to their companies from their participation policies.
5. Examining the total system of participation from a sociological viewpoint, the system was seen as performing the following social functions:
  - a. providing an organizational framework for the development of a social life within the business community;
  - b. providing a link between locals with popular appeal and outsiders with economic resources;
  - c. providing for access of businessmen to each other and to the community leaders; and
  - d. providing means for allocating prestige among businessmen and firms which were not competitive to each other.
6. The expectations held of business firms varied according to the segment of the community considered. Among businessmen and community leaders, a business firm was expected to contribute money and manpower to the civic organizations and community projects. Among the general public, interest was heaviest in the wage and labor policies of the company: a business being seen as having the obligation to provide reasonable wages, steady employment, and pleasant working conditions.
7. Utilities were seen by the general public as owing the additional obligations to provide good service at reasonable rates. In Mediana, most agreed that the telephone company was presently living up to these expectations.

8. The image of the local Bell Telephone Company among businessmen was one of a relatively small firm which "went along" with what the rest of the business community was interested in, staffed by high caliber, but somewhat stuffy personnel. In addition, it was seen as a very "rational" organization, somewhat overly bureaucratic in flavor. Among the general population, the image was somewhat more favorable, although here, too, the local phone company was seen as very small in size. The general public saw the phone company as efficient, a good place to work, which hired high caliber personnel.
9. Finally, we investigated the factors which go into the reputation of a firm. Among businessmen, the major factor seemed to be how "cooperative" was the firm in participating in the central community activities of Mediana. Here Mediana Bell was rated a "little above average," but not as one of the most important firms in that group. Among the general public, firms were considered more by their employment policy than according to their participation, a criterion which gave Bell a higher place in public regard.

In addition, we attempt to set forth what we believe to be some of the implications of these findings for the participation policies of the telephone company. Some of the recommendations we make are as follows:

1. We suggest that the telephone company pay more attention to the symbolic character of its physical plant and attempt to maximize its perceived size by more central locations for its business office.
2. We suggest that the local managers try to correct the impression of powerlessness which they give by emphasizing their authority rather than their subordinate position in the company.
3. Finally, we advocate a participation policy with the appearance of greater spontaneity, suggesting, in addition, that the local telephone company attempt to "specialize" in participation in what are perceived by the general public as the important problems of the community.

## II. THE DESIGN OF THE MEDIANA STUDY

To design a study means to pick a strategy for obtaining observations which will most nearly fulfill the purposes of the study within the limitations imposed by time and budget. Our purpose was to explore an area of research. Hence, a strategy of considerable flexibility was called for. Since time and budget restricted the total operation to but a few months' duration, we had to concentrate our efforts; hence the decision to study a single community and to ignore undoubtedly large variations among different cities and towns.

Beyond the devising of the overall strategy, a number of additional decisions had to be made--the form and type of interviewing, the selection of a sample and its size, and so on. Finally, while in the field, modifications were introduced in order to take advantage of what appeared to be unusual opportunities.

The purpose of this section of the report is to present a somewhat detailed rationale for the strategy and tactics of the Mediana study as they were finally worked out. In the course of doing so, we will also present a description of Mediana which will serve as a background introduction to the substantive portions of the report which follow.

### A. The Selection of Mediana

No one community can be typical. Each has its idiosyncratic features, products of a unique history, a distinctive population composition and a different relationship to its environment. Given these considerations, the best strategy in selecting a community seemed to be to choose one which did not have obvious gross, atypical characteristics. With this in mind, the following negative criteria were applied:

1. The community should not be dominated by a single economic enterprise.
2. It should not show an excessive growth or decline either in size or economic well-being.
3. It should neither be an excellent nor a poor city as far as telephone service was concerned, as determined by various indices.

In addition, time and budget considerations dictated the following positive criteria:

4. It should be within the 40-75,000 size class and within reasonable travel distance of Chicago.
5. It should be a city in which there were both a district headquarters and a local exchange, so that sufficient telephone company personnel on the management level would be available for study.

Following these criteria, Mediana was selected out of a range of possibilities. How well this city fulfills the criteria set down can be judged by the reader by glancing quickly over the information contained in Table II.1. As these statistics indicate, Mediana is primarily a manufacturing community, considerably diversified in the types of products produced by its factories.

TABLE II.1

SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF MEDIANA CITY

A. Population: (1950 Census)

Population Size --	40,500	(est. 1957: 44,000)
Increase 1940-1950	8.0%	
Non-white	6.0%	
Median age	31.4	years
Median years of education (persons 25 and over)	9.2	years

B. Household Income:

Median family income (1949)	\$3,064	(est. 1957: \$5,390)
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C. Employment:

Workers in manufacturing	40.2%
Workers in trade	22.8%
Number of workers in principal industries	
Electrical equipment (2 major firms)	2,414
Ceramic tile (1 major firm)	2,350
Glass (1 major firm)	2,300
Iron and steel (2 major firms)	1,170

D. Telephone Indices: (based on 330 interviews, Spring 1957)

	<u>State</u>	<u>Mediana</u>
Company service . . .	91.7%	95.5%
Company attitude . . .	70.8%	73.0%
Attitude toward costs	72.0%	72.0%
Proportion who know employees . . . . .	33.0%	33.0%
Number of telephone employees in Mediana . . . . .		315
Dial cutover occurred in 1950		

Concerning those aspects of community life which do not reflect themselves in the volumes of the U. S. Census, Mediana shows the following characteristics:

1. Political Structure:

Mediana has at the present time a council-mayor form of government elected under non-partisan electoral rules. The present composition of the six man city council is predominantly small retail business, local in origin. Within a short period of time Mediana will shift to the city manager form of government, a move successfully sponsored by the business community in its many organized forms.

Medianians are not very active politically, if the proportions showing up at the polls are any indication. In the 1956 presidential campaign, 63 per cent, in the 1955 local election, 44 per cent, and in a 1954 gubernatorial election, 49 per cent, respectively, showed up at the polls to cast their votes.

The Mediana political climate is heavily Republican. The county, of which Mediana represents almost half, cast 70 per cent of its votes for Eisenhower in 1956. In 1948 the Republican candidate for President, Thomas E. Dewey, received 54 per cent of the county vote. In the last four gubernatorial elections Mediana County gave majorities to all the Republican candidates, rising as high as 63 per cent in 1956. Locally, the Democrats elected a mayoralty candidate in 1953 for the first time in 16 years, barely squeaking through, however, with 51 per cent of the vote.

While far from being as well organized as the so-called political "machines" of the large urban centers, Mediana's political parties are perhaps better organized than in other cities of similar size. The Republican Party has its enduring organizational form in the Republican Club, a lively group which meets regularly in a loft office off Main Street. It is presently headed by the owner of a small printing establishment and its powerful executive committee is composed primarily of small businessmen with a scattering of lawyers. The Republican Club orients itself to Mediana County as a whole, rather than just to Mediana City, regulating the nomination of candidates for all offices within the county and the flow of patronage that results from success. The Republican Party in Mediana is prosperous: patronage and the financial help of industry being both good, steady sources of income.

In the past, Republican Party internal politics was apparently a series of running battles among sets of warring factions. Although some twenty-five years have passed since a local "boss" was overthrown, persons active in political life still referred back to the days when the "Brown gang" ran the Party and Mediana with one iron hand and the other allegedly in the public till. At present, however, while there is some opposition to the ruling group within the Party, internal strife is definitely at ebb.

Because the Democrats have been in a sort of permanent opposition both in Mediana City and County, the organization of the Democratic Party is weaker as far as numbers are concerned, although perhaps stronger organizationally. The acknowledged head of the Party in Mediana is a prominent lawyer who, with his brother, runs a law firm whose business is, surprisingly, "big city" in scope. Tollhouse runs the Party as a sort of latterday "rotten borough," achieving his control over the party through his heavy financial contributions and using this control as a powerful lever on community life. Control over the Democratic Party

throughout the many years of national and state Democratic administrations meant control over access to the higher levels of state and federal government and the ability to channel patronage in the area.

We were unable to discern what were the mass bases of the two parties in Mediana. Election statistics were not detailed enough to make analyses of the geographic distributions of the vote, nor were respondents able to articulate whether class or ethnicity or some combination were at the heart of the differences between Republican and Democratic voters.

One outstanding characteristic needs to be noted concerning the pursuit of political goals in Mediana. Those who are organizationally involved in politics are primarily locally born and reared. This is a sphere run by the "locals." (More about this group will be given later on.) No one of the "outsiders" (roughly defined as recent arrivals) is prominent in Mediana's political parties. This is an activity, consequently, which is left primarily to the lawyers and small businessmen. Indeed, as we will see later on, the political sphere is shunned by businessmen from the industrial firms as an area fraught with considerable danger.

Aside from minor peccadilloes, local government in Mediana is rather free from sin. While it is possible to gamble and place bets, and perhaps "fix" traffic tickets, open gambling, organized prostitution, wholesale raids on the public treasury and most of the other major political sins are apparently absent. Mediana is a "clean city" at present, or so the majority of our respondents believe.

## 2. Community Life:

One cannot help but be impressed by the vigor and strength of the community organizations in Mediana. As one approaches the town on the main highway a small forest of signs announces meeting places and times of more than eight service clubs. In addition, the heads of two national fraternal societies make their homes in Medina, testifying to the vigor of the totemic animal organizations in the town.

The Chamber of Commerce likewise shows a considerable vigor with 850 members, a young professional manager of considerable vitality, and an impressively luxurious headquarters. The city's Junior Chamber of Commerce, recently founded, shows a similar, if not greater, activity. The Jaycees have contributed the basic manpower for a number of "projects" which have, according to general opinion, raised the level of living in Mediana.

According to some informants, civic life in Mediana has shown a recent gain in pace and success. They point to a number of successfully completed civic projects as evidence: three successful school bond referenda have given Mediana a very handsome modern high school and refurbished its outmoded educational plant; a drive to change the city charter will bring in a city-manager form of government within a few months; bond issues were passed which will be used to modernize the water supply system and install a sewage disposal system; and, two fund drives raised more than four million dollars to double the capacities of the two voluntary hospitals. These recent successes, aided undoubtedly by the skillful pleading of the aggressive manager of the Chamber, have earned for Mediana a highly publicized award from a national magazine.

It is hard to say whether these successes actually represent a recent surge in civic spirit. Success in the bond issue drives meant, literally, putting across referenda which in the past had failed by only one or two percentage points. In addition, Mediana has apparently always had a fairly successful set of civic organizations, and similar successes dot its history throughout the twenties and thirties. Whether its alleged recent growth is fact or myth, however, does not detract from

its present status: civic life in Mediana is quick, perhaps more so than in similar cities of its size.

Although Mediana was not chosen with the high level of its civic life in view, this turned out to be a useful occurrence. With a vigorous civic life, this area of community structure was much in the minds of some residents as we interviewed them. Perhaps expectations are more crystalized and clearer here than in some communities wherein civic life is less quick.

### 3. Mediana's Social Structure:

The outstanding social structural feature of Mediana is the absence of enduring group conflicts. It is hard to discern any alignment of the population into groups which are presently contending with each other in the public arena.

This is not to say that there are no fault lines in the city's social structure which might at some point give rise to conflict. These potential points of cleavage do exist and some of the strains they generate do show from time to time. However, at present, these strains have not yet (and may never) taken on an organizational form.

Political strife, for example, is presently at a low energy level. Internecine struggles occur within the Republican Party, but these do not concern persons outside the inner circles. Each local city election apparently involves ad hoc groups of contestants with little continuity of struggle from election to election.

Religion, which forms the basis for serious cleavages in many of our larger urban centers, hardly plays a role in Mediana, despite the presence of a large Catholic\* contingent, estimated at roughly between twenty and twenty-five per cent. Some degree of "gentlemanly" anti-Semitism exists, but the proportion of Jews in Mediana is too small to make this group a significant minority.

Although six per cent of the population are Negroes, little in the way of open race conflict exists. Mediana Negroes are not militant, nor are whites hell-bent on maintaining a lily-white segregation policy. Through the gradualist tactics of an inter-racial Council on Human Rights, the once firm color line typical of the Mediana area is gradually being penetrated.

Mediana's major fault line is the division of the population into social classes. The industrial character of the city, plus its function as the market place for a rural and small town hinterland, divides its population into three major social groups: a "working class" composed primarily of the workers in industrial plants; a "merchant" group, composed of the owners and managers of small retail and service establishments; and a "managers" group, those who run the larger industrial plants. Together, the last two constitute what we have called the "business community," a relatively cohesive and extensively organized group.

These class fault lines manifest themselves at present primarily as identifications. Thus the industrial workers refer to themselves as "labor," while

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\*It has been suggested that the migration of Catholics to the smaller urban places in the American hinterland was primarily an individual rather than a social movement. Hence, such Catholics were less cohesive in the places where they settled, since migration meant for each a lower degree of identification with nationality and church.

members of the business community refer to themselves as "business." (The term "labor" does not necessarily mean "organized labor.") The significance of these class divisions lies more in their potential rather than in their present bearing for public life in Mediana. At present the city is firmly in the hands of the business community, who, without conspiring to do so, furnish the manpower and the ideas for the administration of community institutions. (We should also add that for the large part, particularly the voluntary welfare organizations, the business community also foots the bill.)

The only dissenting challenge to the present pattern of business control comes from the Taxpayers' League, an "offbeat" note in an otherwise harmonious concert. The Taxpayers' League, as far as we could find out, consists of a small handful of dissidents and is officered by men "who are just nobody" (as one respondent put it), a retired printer, retired carpenter, and the owner of a small corner grocery. The League exists way on the outside of the business community, and although every businessman respondent knew of the League by name, no one knew any of the leaders personally.

The League enters a dissenting voice on virtually all of the projects which are the proud accomplishments of the business community and the community leaders. It opposed the bond issues, charter revision, accuses community leaders of dragging their feet on industrial development, and generally sees Mediana as controlled by the business community--colorfully referred to as the "bloodsuckers"--for its own narrow interests. The Chamber is the executive committee of the business community and is one of the prime targets for their attacks. Both interviewers present at a group interview with the Taxpayers' League leaders felt that there was a definite paranoid flavor to their view of the community, although it must be admitted that they somehow managed to hit on themes of dissent which have some elements of appearing to be true.

Despite the lack of popular support for the League's point of view--as evidenced by the poor showing of its leaders in the last election for City Council--the views of the League get considerable publicity. They are colorful men and their colorful statements make news. At times they have managed to hold up community projects through "taxpayer suits." The community leaders are somewhat in awe of the League, definitely unsure of how to handle arguments they present, and somewhat afraid both of the leaders as individuals and of the possibility that the League may sometime hit a note of dissent which will strike popular fancy.

Within the merchants and managers who form the business community, an important distinction must be made between the "locals" and the "outsiders," terms which we have devised to cover respectively those who have been in Mediana long enough to be accepted as a native and to act like one, and those who have so recently arrived as to be still regarded as newcomers and to regard themselves as such. Roughly, a "local" is someone who has been born in the community, migrated to it at a very young age, or has lived there as an adult for two or more decades. If a migrant to Mediana, his arrival, preferably, should not have been in connection with his present job. In contrast, an "outsider" is one who has moved into Mediana primarily because his job carried him there and who has lived in Mediana for less than a decade. This distinction must be applied somewhat loosely, especially to those who have been in the community for some time.

The merchants are largely locals and the managers, largely outsiders. The industrial workers are also largely local. Although there is no sense of hostility between locals and outsiders, perhaps the suspicion of strangers being somewhat

balanced by their greater economic standing, there is a division of labor of a fairly complex sort between the two groups in the management of community affairs. Few, if any, outsiders are active publicly in politics, while the major spark for some of the voluntary associations comes from the outsiders. The details of this division of labor and its functions for the smooth working of civic life will be given later on in this report.

#### 4. Mediana's Economic Structure:

Mediana's income comes from two major sources: manufacturing, and trade and service. Two-fifths of its labor force of 16,000 are engaged in manufacturing, another one-fifth are engaged in wholesale or retail trade, and the remainder are in the miscellaneous service occupations.

Although close to fifty industrial firms are listed in the directory of the Chamber of Commerce, the largest dozen employ the bulk of the industrial workers. These are listed below, with pseudonyms, to facilitate reference throughout this report:

American Ceramics: This company employs approximately 1,500 employees and manufactures ceramic products. It was founded locally and is presently owned by local families. Mediana is the home office for this firm which has branch factories throughout the country.

Midwest Electrical Company: This is a branch factory employing about 1,400 and manufacturing small electrical component parts for the radio and television industry. A large proportion of its employees are women assembly line workers.

Smith-Jones Glass Company: This firm is a subsidiary of a large container manufacturing company (recently acquired) hiring 1,800 employees and manufacturing glass containers of a wide variety.

Ajax Steel Company: This is a branch factory producing specialty steel for the electrical industry. Ajax has been in Mediana for more than fifty years and employs about 800 men. It is perhaps the best paying industry in the community. (One of our respondents, a skilled worker, earned \$12,500 work-for Ajax last year.)

Power Parts Company: This firm is a branch factory employing about 900 persons engaged in the manufacture of heavy electrical equipment for power companies. Power Parts came to Mediana during World War II.

Farm Equipment Company: This is a branch factory employing 240 employees in the manufacture of farm machinery.

Indian Pottery Company: This is a locally owned and controlled firm manufacturing specialty pottery primarily for the retail market. It employs 180 employees, mostly women.

Metal Tools Company: This is a branch factory of a very prominent national manufacturer of steel tools, employing 320 employees.

Mediana Packing Company: This is a meat packing firm employing 350 employees owned by an individual living in the nearby capital city.

Mediana Boiler Company: This is a branch factory employing 325 employees, manufacturing industrial boilers.

The three public utility companies in Mediana are as follows:

Mediana Bell: Mediana is both a district headquarters and the headquarters for a local exchange serving Mediana and the surrounding area. There are 315 employees working for the telephone company in the district headquarters and in the local exchange.

Mediana Power Company: This is also a district and local headquarters, employing about 100 persons.

Mediana Gas Company: Mediana is also a district and local headquarters for the gas company, which employs 67 persons in Mediana.

In addition, a number of smaller manufacturing plants are located in the town. Some of the prominent national firms maintain warehousing facilities for the distribution of their products throughout the Mediana area.

Although the bulk of the retail establishments in Mediana are small stores, there are a few that are large enough to warrant special attention in this report. These are listed below:

H. Klein & Sons: a locally owned men's wear store on Main Street.

Kresges: a branch of the national chain.

Sears, Roebuck & Co.: a branch store with heavy hinterland trade.

Montgomery Ward & Co.: a branch store.

Smith Brothers: a locally owned general department store.

In addition, the large midwest food chains each have a store in Mediana:

Krogers, A & P, National Food Stores, and so on.

Despite the picture of industrial diversification, Mediana is not presently a booming city. As late as 1956 Mediana County was a "labor surplus" area, indicating a higher-than-average level of unemployment. Even today's picture of diversification is of fairly recent origin. As late as 1940, Mediana was still in the throes of the Depression, caused locally by the failure of pottery and glass manufacturers, the two main payrolls in those days. Mediana did not make a comeback after the general depression of the 1930's until the War brought some war plants into town. Those firms which remained on after the end of World War II now furnish a good proportion of the total payroll of Mediana.

There were several reasons advanced by our respondents for the belated participation of Mediana in business boom of the War and its aftermath. So intertwined are the strains of myth and fact that it would be beyond our competence to pinpoint the "real" reasons. Almost all respondents subscribe to the same view of the recent past. When Mediana was primarily a pottery and glass town, say the respondents, these industries held up the influx of new firms for fear of competition for workers with higher paying industries. Some, agreeing with the Taxpayers' League, believe that the industries presently in Mediana are preventing

the arrival of new industry in the contemporary period. Others point to the City's uncongenial topography, in which good plant sites are reputedly rare. All agree that the nearby cities have been much more successful than Mediana in attracting and holding new industry.

The acquisition of new industries is perhaps the major local problem which is shared by all members of the community. Our interviews with the general public, with community leaders, and with members of the business community all point to "industrial development" as the central social problem of Mediana. While there is sharp disagreement concerning why this problem exists and concerning the various solutions being attempted, all feel that the attraction of new industry to Mediana would substantially improve its level of living.

The preceding pages provide a thumbnail sketch of Mediana as we saw the town through the eyes of our respondents and through such documentary materials as we were able to collect. The reader may match this portrait with his knowledge of other cities and judge for himself how typical or atypical is Mediana of the large number of middle sized American cities.

#### B. The Selection of Respondents

Our major concern was to study both the community participation policies of a number of business enterprises and the expectations held of business on the part of community leaders and the general population. Special emphasis was to be placed on the telephone company personnel seen particularly in comparison with other business enterprises.

To carry out this plan, we designed the following sample: Given the short period of time allotted to the field work, we felt that a total of 60 interviews could be obtained within Mediana, divided among four significant groups in the population along the following lines:

1. Fifteen "community leaders" to be selected from within local government and important civic organizations of Mediana.
2. Fifteen managers or owners of business enterprises, selected so as to represent a spread of types of businesses, the public utilities, commercial organizations, and industrial plants.
3. Fifteen telephone company employees, selected to represent a spread of telephone employees on the supervisory level, containing persons from the plant and traffic as well as the commercial departments.
4. Fifteen members of the general public, selected according to some kind of random sampling procedure.

Full details of the persons selected and interviewed are given in Appendix A to this report.

In the field, the original sampling plan was modified in part to take advantage of unanticipated opportunities that presented themselves and in part to provide greater comparability between telephone company personnel and that of other business enterprises. In the end, we interviewed fewer telephone employees (12 instead of 15), more business managers (17 instead of 15), and more community leaders (16 instead of 15). The changes made were all designed to improve representation in the sample from important segments of the community.

### C. The Interviewing

Because this was to be an exploratory study, unstructured interviews were made with all but those in the general population sub-sample. After a small number of initial interviews in which both field workers participated, an interview guide was developed specifying the topics to be covered in each subsequent interview. The topical outline which was the guide for these interviews is shown in Appendix B. Using their discretion, the field workers departed frequently and often heavily from the guide, endeavoring to pick up information and attitudes which would aid in the interpretation of responses.

Respondents other than in the general population sample were contacted and appointments made by phone. No prospective respondent refused to be interviewed, although two did postpone interviewing repeatedly until the field work period expired.

Most respondents were interviewed at their places of business. The shortest interview lasted half an hour, and the longest ran for four hours, the average being about an hour and a half. Most respondents became quite involved in the interviewing process, and although many had indicated that they had only a limited amount of time to give us, they usually ran far over this allotted period.

Perhaps one or two respondents were considerably less than candid and frank with the field workers. Most were seemingly quite open in talking about the community, themselves, and their organizations. The interviewers took rough notes of the interview, from which they dictated a summary reconstruction of the interview (usually the same day). Stenographers transcribed these summaries from dictating machines and the transcripts were coded and analyzed by the senior author. (Transcripts, disguised to preserve as much as possible the promised anonymity of the respondent, are available in very limited supply as a supplement to this report.)

Part of every interview with the business managers, community leaders, and with the telephone company personnel was devoted to a standardized rating task. The respondent was asked to give his impression of the reputations of each of 20 business enterprises including Mediana Bell and all of the major industrial and commercial firms in the town. Particular attention was paid to getting as full as possible an exposition of the respondents' attitudes toward the local telephone personnel and the telephone company.

Interviews with the general population were conducted using an interview schedule, copies of which are also shown in Appendix B. Respondents were selected by the use of random numbers from the latest (1956) Mediana City Directory. (A detailed description of the general population respondents is given in Appendix A.)

The field work lasted for a three week period. All told, a total of 65 interviews were obtained. In addition, the field workers attended meetings of the City Council, Rotary Club, Kiwanis, and the Chamber of Commerce. At these meetings, notes were taken which also form part of the data on which this report is based.

D. Evaluation

A pilot study such as this should be taken at its face value, as an exploratory excursion into an area. Sixty-five interviews cannot be a firm base for conclusions about either Mediana or about communities in general. While the authors of this report feel that much of what they say about the business community and about the community leaders in particular would stand up under more extensive coverage of both these groups, it is by no means a certainty that this would be the case. Particularly weak is the general population sample. Fifteen individuals cannot be a good sample of a population of close to 45,000.

Particularly hazardous are generalizations beyond the community studied. The telephone company personnel in Mediana are quite small in number when we consider that it is primarily the commercial managers who present the face of the telephone company to the civic organizations.

The purpose of a pilot study is to present an opportunity for the researcher to discern what are the important issues that can be encountered in the field. Hence all our findings in Mediana raise problems rather than settle them. The study should therefore be looked upon as the prologue to the more definitive program of research which is outlined in the final section of this report.

### III. THE NATURE OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN MEDIANA

In an ultimate sense, almost everything that a person may do might affect the fabric of community life to some degree, however small. The borderline between what is "private" and what is "public" behavior necessarily is vague. Similarly, the concept "community participation" must ultimately be arbitrary, although we may be guided by what is socially defined as such.

By "community participation," we mean all action designed to affect the institutions of a community--local government, community-wide charitable organizations, and other institutions whose purpose it is to provide some good to the community on a non-profit, service basis.

Within this broad definition, it is essential to distinguish between three important types of community participation, distinctions among which are implicit in much of what our respondents had to say:

#### A. Non-Partisan Community Activity:

Activities or organizations which in the consensus of the community are believed to be directed toward the good of the community as a whole or of some segments which all agree should be helped toward achieving that good.

Examples: United Fund Drives, Hospital Drives, and the like.

#### B. Partisan but Non-Competitive Community Activity:

Activities or organizations generally recognized as being primarily for the good of some segment of the community but which could be achieved without depriving directly any other segment of the community.

Examples: Country Club, fraternal societies, Kiwanis, Council on Human Rights.

#### C. Partisan and Competitive Community Activity:

Activities or organizations recognized as being directed toward achieving a good for some segment of the community at the expense of, and perhaps against, the opposition of another segment.

Examples: Political parties, labor unions, electoral campaigns.

While each organized group in Mediana can be roughly classified as belonging to one or another of these types of community participation, no group is completely one or the other. Each group has its purely convivial functions (Type B.), and consensus never is completely unanimous on the disinterested character of even the United Fund (Type A.). There is a tendency for organizations to move, if they can, from Type C. to Type A., or at least to identify their activities as Type A. Thus, the Chamber of Commerce, perhaps once primarily devoted to furthering the interests of businesses as such, now takes on "projects" which can only be broadly construed as being beneficial to business enterprises in Mediana.

Bearing these distinctions in mind, let us turn now to the social definition of "community participation" as we found it used by members of the business community and community leaders. In this connection we may raise two questions: First, has the concept (or equivalents) found its way into the vocabulary of these two groups? Secondly, what are the specific activities covered by the terms used?

"Community participation" is definitely part of the standard vocabularies of both leaders and the business community. This term and its equivalents--"community work," "community activity," "community cooperation," "being active in community work"--are, as far as we could see, integral parts of the working vocabulary of individuals in these two groups. (Among the general population, however, this is a less familiar term and topic, and for a majority of the latter group the term must be defined by specific examples.)

In addition to the apparent currency of this term, there is considerable agreement on what "community participation" means in specific terms. At the core of community participation are five central activities, listed below roughly in order of their importance to respondents:

1. Activity and membership in the Chamber of Commerce.
2. Activity in and contribution to the United Fund and special fund drives (e.g., hospital construction, Heart Fund, and the like).
3. Activity and membership in "committee work" (e.g., the Committee for the Mediana Dam, etc.).
4. Activity and membership in the service clubs--Kiwanis, Rotary, Optimists, Sertoma, and the like.
5. Activity and membership in the Country Club.

Among community leaders, each of whom were vitally concerned with one or more of these areas of community life, the rank order would vary, a leader tending to view his own activity as more important than others would. In the business manager group the rank order also varied. The less active the man or firm in affecting the general trend of community life, the more the man regarded the Country Club as the central focus of community activities. Indeed, several respondents, in giving their opinions of Mediana's business firms, rated each primarily on how much each had given to the various Country Club fund drives.

All respondents made distinctions between "passive" and "active" roles in these five activities. Thus, all business enterprises, with the exception of certain chain retail stores on Main Street, maintained memberships in the Chamber of Commerce, but for many the memberships were nominal, since the individuals involved did not play any important role in the Chamber. Since a distinction was made between "leadership" and "followership" as modes of participation, it was conceded that minimum participation was the latter, while the social rewards went to the former.

Significantly, while there were terms in the vocabularies to designate activity and its various gradations on the positive side, respondents tended to fumble when describing firms or individuals who did not participate at all. Being "active" was regarded so positively that the term "inactive" took on an opprobrious meaning which respondents tended to avoid. Hence, we discerned an inflationary trend in the rhetoric of community participation--a man described

as active with no further description was likely not to have been active at all.

Of all the activities listed above, perhaps the one over which there was most disagreement concerned the Country Club. For some, this was at the core of community activities. For others, the Country Club was a convenience, but definitely private in character, not partaking of the flavor of a community organization. Thus, the President of the Chamber, in rating the Mediana Packing Company, gave the following reason for his very high opinion of this company:

"Lots of people feel they (Mediana Packing Company) don't do enough. I know for a fact that he (the owner) contributed a great deal to the Country Club."

In contrast, the Manager of the Mediana Power Company, talking about company policy concerning donations to the fund drives, had this to say about the Country Club:

"Well, we wouldn't give money to the Country Club. That wouldn't be for the public good."

Two distinguishing characteristics mark those who rate the Country Club as an important community activity. First of all, those respondents who were born and raised locally are likely to think the Country Club more important. Secondly, those who are not active in other areas of community life tend to fall back on their Country Club membership as the major expression of their participation. For this latter group the meaning of community is restricted implicitly to the world of business managers and owners.

What is excluded from the term "community participation"? Perhaps the most important activity excluded under the social definition of this term centers around the field of activity of politics. Almost all community leaders spoke of "politics" separately from the discussions of the five activities listed above. Almost all business managers were unanimous not only in separating out politics from community participation, but also in their opinion that politics was a dangerous area.

The definition of politics comes out most strongly in the following quotations:

"They told me to keep it on a high plane (referring to his organization of a committee for the revision of the city charter) and to have it absolutely non-political." (Past President, Rotary Club)

"You gotta resist bad politics. You should not get into an area which will be ticklish to deal with. A manager can back a movement for city manager, but if he backs a particular candidate he's bound to get into trouble." (Personnel Manager, Power Parts Company)

"Industry and business tend to shy away from local affairs when they have a political connection. They don't want to be identified with the people in power because they don't know how long they'll be in. This was primarily characteristic of retailers and it was one of the basic reasons why we haven't got a higher type of person for public office here." (Former Editor, newspaper)

"I can think of a couple of businessmen who have made more enemies than friends by going into government." (Assistant County Prosecutor)

Politics in the minds of our respondents was defined primarily in terms of electoral campaigns. When a man said he thought he should stay out of politics, he usually meant he felt he should not run for office or publicly support candidates who are running on a party platform. Certain political activities which did not involve open and acknowledged partisanship were permissible, however. These included running for school board, membership on "citizen's committees" for the charter reform, and the like. In other words, politics means, particularly, engaging in combat on the person-to-person level, while non-partisan activity, even though involving, in the larger sense, political objectives, was entirely within reasonable limits. Indeed, as indicated by the central place of "committee work" in the social definition of community participation, non-partisan activity of this sort was highly valued.

Fear of retribution was a primary manifest motive for remaining out of politics. The source of retribution for the industrial manager lay in his own employees, who presumably would be antagonized by his sponsorship of candidates. For the merchant, retribution had its source among his customers. For the public utility, the vague fear of antagonizing public opinion seemed to be the main reason.

Typical comments from businessmen went as follows:

"There's no point in my taking any action. I can't benefit by doing anything, and I can only antagonize people in the town. Working for us we have both Democrats and Republicans and if I took on one side, why I'm sure I would offend some of my own workers."  
(Manager, Indian Pottery)

Some businessmen stressed the differences between the political and managerial roles:

"Of course no industrial manager is going to get himself into politics. An industrial manager has the know-how but he doesn't know how to suck up to people, to shake hands like the professional politicians do. The industrial leader is never a popular man. He's the kind of guy who gets things done instead."  
(Manager, Midwest Electrical Company)

"A businessman when asked about the tariff generally made a fool of himself because he knew nothing about the question whereas the local shop steward, by virtue of his participation in the union, had a much better grasp of the issues."  
(Manager, Chamber of Commerce)

During our stay in Mediana, the Chamber of Commerce inaugurated a "Civic Affairs Committee" designed to improve the political skills of businessmen. "Watchdog groups" were to attend meetings of the City Council and study local issues in order to be able to present the coherent businessman's viewpoint on the local political scene. Having been invited by the Manager of the Chamber, we attended the first organizational meeting of this committee. The most striking theme of the meeting was the fear expressed by businessmen concerning their prospective participation in politics, that they would not be able to hold their own in what they viewed as the rough-and-tumble world of political struggles.

Surprisingly enough, of all the business managers, the Mediana Bell employees were most favorable to political participation, primarily because of their orientation to company policy. The characteristic orientation of the telephone company employee was something as follows: "If the company allowed something to happen, then it must have been OK." Thus, knowing that some telephone company employees have been active in running for public office and in holding public offices, was sufficient indication to the respondents that these were permitted, and indeed desirable, activities for them to get into. For example, in talking about community activities that should be avoided, a telephone employee's interview ran as follows:

"He fumbled but was unable to come up with an example of the activities that should be avoided. He ran over a list of things: politics were not controversial. He could think of several examples of telephone people on school boards and city councils or who were mayors of small towns." (Supervisor, Plant Department)

Telephone employees frequently noted what they believed to be a shift in company policy regarding participation in politics from prohibition to permissiveness. It was now "permitted" to run for office, although doing so was not something that was either required or necessarily desirable. In talking about this area, however, there could be detected a feeling of unreality in the respondents' speculations concerning such participation on their own part: they knew that some telephone company employees in some places some distance away were doing so, but right here in Mediana it was not likely that anyone would either do so or want to do so.

In terms of typology of community participation which we set forth at the beginning of this section, the socially desirable forms of participation in the eyes of Mediana's business community are those which are clearly acceptable to the community as disinterested and which meet with no overt opposition. Participating in political affairs is acceptable only when the element of hostility and possible opposition are removed from the scene, preferably in advance. Hence, the preference for the "citizens' committee" form of organization, a citizen's committee being ordinarily composed of representatives from all segments of the community which might possibly raise some opposition. Thus, in Mediana, the citizens' committee which sponsored the school bond issue drives was headed by a Protestant, a Catholic and a Jew.

Furthermore, there is a strong tendency to upgrade both the reputations of organizations and activities. The Chamber thinks of itself as a "community" organization, meaning that it looks after the interests of the total community. Labor unions have begun to talk about their community responsibilities, indicating their desire to take on activities which are of the higher grade. Partly, this upgrading tendency is a function of the professionalization of organization management. As labor union organizers, Community Chest managers, and Chamber of Commerce managers become recognized occupations calling for special training, the drive toward legitimacy brings about a search for activities which would achieve community-wide prestige for the office holder.

Because the business community entertains such a strong negative evaluation of the political area, it is worthwhile to spend some time in this report on trying to understand this point of view and to seek for its sources.

It should be noted that there are a number of paradoxes involved in this view point. First of all, a good proportion of the civic activities which they prize so highly are directly political in character. The bond issue drives, the move to change the city charter, to get the expressway bypass, all involve some sort of governmental action. The problems which agitate the general population, to the extent that we were able to discern them in our interviews with this group, are primarily political issues--street repair, water service, tax rates, and the like. The main social problems of Mediana are political, but there is a depreciation of politics and a definite reluctance to get into this area.

Secondly, although all expressed their unwillingness to get into politics in terms of the adverse effects such participation would have on their businesses, this rationale does not ring very true. For one thing, most of the individuals presently holding political office in Mediana are businessmen, as well as a large proportion of the leaders of both political parties. (For example, only one member of the City Council is an industrial worker; the others are all either the owners of small businesses or on the supervisory levels of some industrial plant.) Those who are in the thick of political life claim that there is no resultant noticeable effect on their businesses. In addition, the business community considerably overestimates the affect given to politics by the general population. They believe that the "average man" cares a great deal, whereas, in fact, he cares probably less than the businessman. It is almost as if the business community fears and is unable to sustain hostility. In fact, one of the clear characteristics of the business community is its uncertainty about how to handle both opposition and hostility.

Finally, although there is widespread recognition of the need for "better" (i.e., businessmen) public officials, at the same time, there is a definite and firm rejection of the possibility of personal participation in this sphere. The politician in Mediana is viewed by the businessman as a pariah: a man who does necessary and even essential work but who contaminates himself in the process of so doing. There is a feeling that a better "type" of man could do much better, without changing the essential character of present institutions. Just as the pariah is dangerous because of his contamination, so politics is dangerous because of the possibility of achieving pariah status. Politics, say the respondents, forces a man to be untrue to himself:\* He must compromise principle, associate with undesirables (i.e., across class lines), be prepared to be assaulted unfairly and to retaliate in kind.

Perhaps the ultimate understanding of the way in which political activities are articulated with other community activities must wait until there is a definitive analysis of the local community as a total system. The beginnings of such an analysis are given in a later section of this report.

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\*It is interesting to note that the businessman and the politician both accuse each other in somewhat the same terms. Thus the businessman says that the politician is afraid to do anything because it might cost him votes, while the politician says that the businessman is afraid to do anything because he would "sell one less pair of socks." All told, however, the businessman gets the better of the argument, because it is more generally accepted that a man should look after his business than it is that a man should preserve his political power.

#### IV. WHY DO THEY DO IT?

All we have written here or have seen personally in our field experience points to the high vitality of civic life in Mediana. Mediana's civic organizations are flourishing and manned by enthusiasts. A significant number of important civic changes have been effected, others are presently underway, and community leaders have started outlining plans for additional projects in the few years ahead.

The individuals who man the organizational apparatus are by no means a representative sample of Mediana's population. Even on the lower levels of participation, few come from among the industrial workers, the largest occupational group, and few from among the lower levels of trade and commerce. The apparatus is manned by Mediana's white collar class, and, within that group from among primarily business proprietors and persons on managerial levels within the industrial and commercial establishments of Mediana. Leadership, furthermore, rests in the hands of an even more restricted circle.

As Americans we take civic organizations for granted. Every American town and city has its own proliferation of such organizations, and everywhere the same occupational levels furnish the manpower and womanpower to run them. For the moment let us take on the role of a stranger to American society and ask the question, "Why do they do it?"

Why is there participation? What are the needs, desires, and goals which motivate civic activities?

Why do participants come from the business class? What does participation mean to the functioning of business enterprises in general?

We will try to answer these questions, first, by considering the reasons given by business men and community leaders who are participating, and second, by looking at Mediana as a functioning unit trying to interpret these responses by fitting them into the needs of the community and of the social life of businessmen.

##### A. The Role of Company Policy

Considering primarily the larger business enterprises in Mediana, company policy seems to have the strongest role in determining whether or not its managerial personnel participate at all in community affairs. All of the large firms studied had some policy which encouraged its managers at least to join community organizations. Almost all firms had policies allowing corporate contributions to the United Fund, the Chamber of Commerce, and special drives or projects. At a minimum, policy is expressed as, "We want to do our share;" at a maximum, "The company expects us to be leaders in the community."

Every major company purchases memberships for its managers in the Chamber of Commerce. Most companies pay the membership dues of its managers in one or more service clubs, although few of the companies have as extensive a policy of paying membership dues as Mediana Bell. A few pay initiation and membership fees in the Country Club.

In only one of the major firms has company policy changed within recent times. The Smith-Jones Glass Company was recently acquired by a national container manufacturer and as a consequence has shifted its policy from one of non-participation to full community participation. Many respondents indicated that they now

expected that the managers would become more active in the Chamber, that lower level supervisory employees would be joining service clubs and the contribution of the company to the United Fund would consequently increase. Some remarked that the top manager in Smith-Jones would probably find it difficult to make the shift himself and that it would probably take a change in management personnel to make a complete policy turn.

Activity beyond passive membership--office holding, the chairing of committees, and so on--is not so much the province of company policy but it is more the perquisite of company importance. Thus leadership in the Chamber or service clubs comes either from well-established local persons or from among the largest and most heavily contributing firms. In large part, this is because there is some need for popular figures as leaders--hence the emphasis on locals--and, in part, because the high positions of a large firm's managers leads them to be asked to participate in positions of leadership. In other words, there would be two easy ways for a man to become a community leader: he might either head up one or more of the three or four big firms in town, or be so well established in the community as to have some degree of popularity. Thus the anomaly in Mediana of very small businesses providing leadership along with the largest enterprises.

Another way of stating this is to say that leadership in community affairs is expected of the managers of large enterprises but that the managers of small enterprises can exercise leadership if they show some ability to do so.

What is meant by a large enterprise? In part, it is the number of employees. Thus, in Mediana, any firm employing over 500 employees is numbered among the largest firms. Some part is played by the "overall" size of the firm, taking into account the operations outside of Mediana. However, these two principles of classifying by size are not the total picture. For size to become visible and recognized, a firm's management must be active in the community. Perhaps this is most dramatically shown by considering the size of firms according to the number of persons employed:

1. Smith-Jones Glass (1800)
2. American Ceramics (1500)
3. Midwest Electrical (1400)
4. Power Parts (900)
5. Ajax Steel (800)

The sizes of these firms as perceived by the respondents were quite different. The three biggest firms were seen as American Ceramics, Power Parts, and Ajax Steel, while Smith-Jones Glass and Midwest Electrical were both counted as rather small firms. Significantly, these two firms are among the least "active" of the firms on the above list. Thus there appears to be a mutual relationship between size and activity: a large firm is expected to be active, and an active firm is expected to be large.\* The size of an inactive firm is therefore seen as less than its actual size would indicate.

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\*This is a finding for which we do not have adequate documentation. We did not ask respondents to rate firms by their size. In judging that the two relatively inactive firms were seen as smaller than others, we have relied on the adjectives which were employed in discussing these two businesses. Thus Midwest Electrical and Smith-Jones Glass were often referred to as "small" plants, even though their labor forces were among the largest in Mediana.

Parenthetically, it should be noted that the size of a firm was a positive rather than a negative characteristic in the eyes of all segments of the community. The bigger the firm, the greater the admiration given to it. Thus, an industrial worker, talking of the company for which he worked, would often mention the position of his firm in the industry of which it was a part. For example, an employee of Power Parts might say that his company was the third largest in its field, or a telephone employee might mention that AT&T was the second largest corporation in the world. Very often it was apparent that these size statements were not factually correct, the benefit of bias always going to the company in question. This suggests that working for a corporation which was in some sense a leader in its field was a source of some pride in the worker and his evaluation of other corporations was affected by his perception of their size and importance in the industry in question.

Company policy then serves the function of indicating whether or not a company's managers are going to be active at all in community activities, but does not determine the degree to which this activity will be carried out. In part, the larger the company, the more favorable would be the reception of its managers in the civic organizations. In part, some managers exercise the option of providing leadership, others do not do so. In a later section of this report we will go into some of the factors which account for the differences among individuals.

#### B. Rationales for Community Participation

During the course of each interview with individual businessmen, we sought to obtain from each respondent the reasons why he and his company participated in community affairs. The answers we obtained obviously are those reasons of which the individual is aware and which he can articulate. This is not to deny the sincerity of the rationales offered; it is merely to indicate that the full explanation probably requires more than these answers alone.

Almost uniformly, the first response to the question why they participated, was phrased in terms of the benefits that would accrue to Mediana. The individual manager and his company desired to make some contribution to improve the level of living in Mediana. Some looked upon this desire as primarily affecting themselves and their families; others, of perhaps a more paternalistic cast, talked in terms of improving the lot of their employees; most, however, talked in terms of the community in general without specifying a target population. All recognized an obligation on the part of their firms and of themselves as businessmen to contribute in some way to the welfare of Mediana.

At the same time, businessmen also acknowledged that their efforts to improve Mediana had other consequences for themselves and their firms. In line with the general pragmatic character of American culture in which "good works" and altruistic "positive" thoughts are also thought to yield material benefits, so the members of Mediana's business community all felt that community participation also materially benefitted their companies or themselves, as well as being good for the general welfare. However, the benefits to be derived were not uniform from individual to individual or from company to company. A number of different rationales were given, with many offering several at once.

The most common themes touched upon in the reasons offered by respondents for their participation are described below:

1. Reference to Impact on Employees:

Examples of interview responses which fit under this rubric are as follows:

"The company feels it has an obligation to provide the proper living conditions for its employees. (As a consequence) we can hire anybody we want to. The workers like to see my name in the newspapers. I don't mean to boast, but the fact that I have provided leadership to the community means that the worker out here in the plant knows that his company is doing something for the general benefit of Mediana." (Manager, Ajax Steel)

"The people in the plant become aware of the part you play in civic affairs and see you as representing their company in the community. They feel pride when an industrial manager plays a prominent part."  
(Manager, Power Parts Company)

"I would say that they (civic activities) make good will for the store and good will from the employees. I can't quite put my finger on it but you might say that if your firm is active, there's a healthier attitude." (Manager, chain department store)

A dissenting note comes from one respondent: asked whether one of the major reasons for company participation was the feeling of pride the workers might feel in seeing the manager's name in the paper, he replied that he thought it might be true but it really was not important:

"It's awfully hard to stop yourself from being paternalistic. There you are up here in the office and after a while you begin to think that the workers are waiting impatiently to hear every little word you might have to say."  
(Personnel Manager, Power Parts Company)

This rationale for participation came primarily from industrial managers. Of the 15 respondents who mentioned this theme, 9 were managers of industrial plants, one was the manager of a large chain department store, one was the head of a local construction company, and three were from the telephone company, significantly from the plant and traffic departments only.

As the dissenting respondent above indicated, there is an overtone of paternalism to this theme. Indeed the strongest exponent was the Manager of Ajax Steel, by reputation the most paternalistic corporation in Mediana as evidenced by the existence of a company union, an employees' park, and other similar policies.

2. Reference to General Public Opinion:

Some of the firms considered their civic participation activities as creating a better public acceptance of the firm. It is significant that the largest group of respondents in this category came from the public utilities.

Examples of the references are given below:

"It's important that the people understand what we're doing. It's better for the company if the people in the town understand what the gas company is doing for them."  
(Division Manager, Gas Company)

"(He felt that) a telephone man in his community organization work is a representative of the company. People in general would get a good impression of the company if employees were active in community welfare. The company would tend to become ingrown and fail to adjust to the demands of the community if managers and supervisors did not go out and get to know other people in the community."

(Plant department, Mediana Bell)

"I would say the main benefit for the company is from a personal standpoint. If a man gets into an organization and if he impresses people well, then when people think of him they say, 'There's a guy who works for Bell. He's a nice guy.' Then they will think well of the company as a whole if they think the people are top-notch."

(Traffic Department, Mediana Bell)

Of the eight persons who stressed this theme in our interviews, seven were telephone company employees, the other being the Divisional Manager of the Gas Company. Significantly, all the telephone company employees are either in the traffic or plant departments where, in fact, the level of participation in community organizations is quite low. The public opinion reference was generally made in the context of discussions of behavior of personnel, on the job and off, vis-a-vis the general public. Only among telephone people were there any comments on personal conduct of employees or supervisors off the job. Whether this reflects the public relations policy of Bell is hard to say; certainly it is clear that there is a stronger identification between telephone personnel and their company than in any of the other firms in Mediana. There is much more self-consciousness of how their own behavior will affect the general standing of the company.

The peculiar structural characteristics of the telephone company as an organization serving households as primary customers, plus being subject to public regulation, makes the general body of citizens an important reference group which is shared by few other firms in Mediana. Among those few with some structural similarity to the telephone company are the two other utilities and the many retail stores. However, neither the gas company nor the power company paid as much attention to the public as a theme, perhaps because their primary customers were not households, but heavy industrial users. Although we interviewed only a few of the retail businessmen in Mediana, the general public was not an important theme in this group either, perhaps because no one store has the entire population as customers nor are stores regulated by the agencies of local and state government to anywhere near the same degree as the telephone company.

### 3. Business Community References:

Some respondents referred to the business managers of the community as the primary reference for their participation. Those respondents who mentioned this theme essentially were concerned with what the rest of the business community thought of themselves and their firms. They were concerned, in other words, with the reputation of their firms in the eyes of other business managers and community leaders.

Examples of references of this sort are given below:

"If a manager is not in a position to hold up his head in civic affairs, and if the top management of the company does not allow him to contribute time and money, he will suffer in the eyes of the community about him. Some industries don't do their part, and the rest of us all know about it. The poor devil who happens to be working for a company which does not encourage participation is automatically downgraded in the eyes of the business community."  
(Manager, Power Parts Company)

"As for myself, I often wonder why I do these things. I think the major thing is that I really would be ashamed for my company if the top man didn't do his part. You know, a company is judged by its management policies. The labor policy really counts most with the general public, but wages don't really count with the business community. It's the way in which you fit in with what the businessmen are mostly interested in that counts here. In this town it's community activity. In some other town it might be the country club or even golf ability. Here it's what you do in the Chamber and in the Rotary or in the United Fund, or what your company does, that really counts. After all, the only way a guy can get to know whether a company is good or not is the way in which it seems to be doing its part in what happens to be the most important activity to the business community in the town."  
(Manager, Indian Pottery)

Of the seven respondents who employed this theme in their interviews, five were industrial managers, one was the manager of a chain retail store, and the remaining person, president of a local construction firm. All respondents emphasized how their participation affected their own reputations in the business community and the reputations of their firms. In only one case--the local construction firm--were these companies who had other businesses in Mediana as their prime customers.

Persons using the business community as a reference group for their participation show a sensitivity to the expectations of the business community. This is a "peer group" response, indicating a kind of "other-directed" awareness of social demands.

It should be mentioned that perhaps those respondents who employed this theme were among the most astute observers of the local scene.

#### 4. Noblesse Oblige:

For a very small group of primarily local businessmen of old established family lines, participation is part and parcel of the family tradition. The modes of participation were laid down some time in the past by an earlier generation and carries into the present generation as a kind of fiduciary trust. Thus, the family whose ancestors endowed the Art Institute continues on its Board of Directors, and each generation adds to the endowment. Another family administers the Scholarship Trust Fund, which gives quite generous scholarships to local residents.

The old family mode of participation in Mediana lies mostly outside the hurly-burly "progressiveness" of the service clubs and Chamber. This participation is built to last, as a kind of permanent ancestral monument. The major point of contact of the old families with the other business managers is through the Country Club, within which they form a somewhat exclusive set referred to frequently in our interviews as the "core" group of the Country Club.

The old family mode of participation is not one which provides leadership in the solution of contemporary community problems; rather, it consists of the administration, and perhaps some elaboration and extension, of previous solutions, a matter about which some of the local leaders felt they had considerable cause for complaint.

#### 5. The Profit Motive:

The majority of respondents denied that they or their firms received any immediate dollars-and-cents returns from participation. In fact, many complained (without much pain but with some pride) that their participation meant out-of-pocket expenses for which they did not expect or receive any reimbursement. Of course, many pointed to others, mainly to salesman and lawyers,\* as types of persons who benefited directly. Whatever economic benefits accrued to our respondents or their firms, however, were of a long-term character, operating through the improved morale of the working force or a better public acceptance of a firm.

Among our respondents, lawyers were the largest group to acknowledge that participation was of direct immediate benefit to them. The denizens of the Chamber and service clubs are clients, and one way of getting known is to make "contacts" through participation.

Among business managers, only the local head of the Power Company was able to indicate an immediate dollars-and-cents goal for his participation in community affairs. In Mediana, as in many other places, the power company was very active in trying to bring new industry into town. The profit motive of the power company was obvious: more industries, more power consumed. Parenthetically, it is interesting that the power company manager seemed to be the least uncomfortable of the respondents who were asked why they participated. Most fumbled and gave their reasons without seeming conviction, while the power company manager was able to give easily a very coherent answer. Of course, his rationale was very clearly in line with the felt needs of the community--both general population and business group--and the declaration of a pecuniary motive did not detract from the fact that the community as a whole would benefit. In contrast, the more usual respondent talked in terms of vague benefits both to himself and to the community, and his remarks did not carry the sense of conviction which marked the power company manager's rationale.

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\*Strangely, a few salesmen were mentioned to us as persons prominent in the community organizations. In fact, the salesman was the favorite symbol used by businessmen to indicate someone who was crassly materialistic and perhaps a little vulgar. Ranking close to the salesman was the retail merchant, whose interest in the dollar was seen as too intense to be proper.

## 6. Management Ideology:

Several industrial managers referred to the new "group management" movement as a source of support for their participation. By this term is meant a discernable tendency toward decentralization of authority group, rather than individual responsibility for management decisions, a "softer" and more accommodative relation to organized labor, and a firmer, more "positive" attitude toward participation in local affairs. Indeed, those companies with the strongest group management policies were also those with the strongest and most widespread participation.

Among the professional community leaders (the managers of the Chamber of Commerce and of the United Fund organization in particular), this stress upon the change in management policy over time was quite heavy. They saw the increased participation of industrial firms in civic affairs as part and parcel of a change in the general management ideology of business firms in America.

These, then, were the major themes touched upon in our interviews which offered a rationale for the participating activities of business managers. It should be noted that these are manifest or surface rationales offered by our respondents when asked why they participate and why their firms have policies which permit or encourage participation. It is interesting that, depending upon the nature of each firm, the rationale involves the major concerns of the managerial position involved. Thus, for the industrial manager whose job is production, the reference is his labor force; to the telephone company employee, the references are both to the labor force and the general public; for a lawyer, the reference is to a prospective clientele.

In most cases there could be discerned in the course of the interview a certain lack of conviction as to the worth of the rationale offered. (The major exception is the Power Company Manager.) The reasons for participation are given easily enough, although they do not stand up to the scrutiny of the respondent himself. Thus, when asked what would happen if a firm or individual manager did not participate, few respondents were able to say that anything important would happen. Indeed, the question itself often had a disconcerting effect on respondents, who clumsily fumbled for an answer. In short, it appeared that while there was general agreement that participation was a good thing and that their companies were correct in either permitting or encouraging it, no one had a particularly strong feeling that it was an important or central activity for a firm to get into. All respondents felt that the major thing for a firm was the way in which it fulfilled its major economic functions, and for the individual, the carrying out of his major managerial responsibilities. All felt that if a man was good at community affairs this would help him career-wise, or if a firm had a good community participation policy, this would help the firm, but the absence of such activity or policy would not have a very strong deleterious effect upon the functioning of either manager or business enterprise.

If we look a little bit more closely at the reasons why the business managers' rationales were held so tenuously, we perhaps may discern the causes for this lack of conviction. To begin with, participation of some sort is so much taken for granted in Mediana that its rationale has never had to be worked out individual by individual, but rather, the prevailing rationales have been adopted without much question. Secondly, the benefits of participation lie mainly in the intangible realm--morale, "progress," and so on--and will accrue to the benefit of the business firms only "in the long run." Thirdly, as far

as any one individual career is concerned, the major component of success is strictly on the job performance. Hence, the consequences of non-participation for the occupational career are, in fact, minor.

The best explanation which comes to mind classifies the participation of Mediana businessmen as a conformity phenomenon; that is to say, this is an activity which is part and parcel of the definition of the way of life to be followed by businessmen in Mediana; "Everybody's doing it," and no one likes to be left out. Of course, the game is optional, and the least that is expected is that a manager will go along and help out with contributions. The only thing which he should not do is be a dog-in-the-manger and decry the essential importance of the hurly-burly life of Chamber and service clubs.

### C. A Functional Analysis of Community Participation

A more fruitful way of looking at community participation is from the perspective of what functions it serves for the business community. What does the community participation pattern do for the business community? What are its consequences which seem to fit into a pattern of inferred needs? In this connection, we must look beyond the manifest or surface motivations to view the community organizations as a system performing some sorts of functions for the participating individuals and organizations.

Perhaps the most obvious function served by the service clubs and other community organizations is to provide a framework for social life, opportunities for interaction and for the gregarious pleasures. Many respondents, particularly those who had experienced mobility from community to community, remarked how the service clubs provided opportunities to meet and become acquainted with persons on roughly the same status level. Indeed, the former president of the Jaycees felt that the secret of the success of this organization was its many "social functions."

Secondly, participation provides a context in which businessmen may build up the right of access to each other and to community leaders. At the same time, community leaders can have easy access to those who control the economic institutions of the community. Most business managers are on a first name basis with each other and with city and county officials. The number of times these "contacts" are employed is considerable. During many of the interviews, telephone calls were received by respondents from other businessmen and community leaders concerning "favors" and other actions facilitating the conduct of business. As one city official put it:

"If a new firm comes in and remains completely aloof (from civic affairs) there would be no effort from the city to make their load lighter." Asked how the city might make a firm's load lighter, he replied, "Of course, for a firm coming in, the city can do a hell of a lot. There is one firm in this town that is only paying a dollar a year for water. Or, you might rent them city property at a nominal rate. Now, Power Parts and American Ceramics: we helped them out on their parking problem." (City Solicitor)

Mediana Bell commercial managers have excellent access to officials of the city government and to the local newspaper. The number of items on Bell activities appearing in the newspaper is quite large, a function, we believe, of the

excellent relationships between the local manager and the editor of the newspaper. Several of the city councilmen, known through membership in the service clubs, are so accessible to the telephone manager that they have requested information on non-telephone matters from him. On one occasion the local manager was asked to supply information to a city councilman on the National Municipal League which the city was considering joining.

While the traffic in favors among businessmen and between businessmen and community leaders is not a traffic in heavy goods, it does constitute a steady flow of a considerable magnitude. The stream of favors is a lubricant, making the conduct of business in Mediana much easier than if every request had to go through official channels and be subject to bureaucratic scrutiny.

Community participation also builds a bridge between the locals and the itinerant managers of business enterprises. The locals, who can command popular support by virtue of their personal reputations and higher degrees of notoriety, occupy the posts of leadership in the local government and in those civic organizations which rest on mass support. It is in the civic organizations that the business manager outsiders establish contact with the local leaders and obtain their support in actions involving the general population.

Finally, the community participation system provides a means of ordering firms and individuals who have no intrinsic ordering relationships among themselves. Most of the firms in Mediana are not competing with each other but with firms located elsewhere. Business managers do not compete with each other in their career lines, which are located primarily within the industries of which their firms are parts. In the absence of any enduring economic traffic among firms and individuals, the status of units within both groups is quite ambiguous. The community participation activities provide a means of ordering firms according to a unitary criterion. Indeed, the reputation of a firm in Mediana among members of the business community--an important reference group for businessmen--is to a large part determined by the extent to which its managers participate in community affairs. Note that this explanation also provides an understanding of why firms and their managers are not allowed to participate beyond what is their proper level--or, at least, they are not given credit for such participation. If the Doaks firm, perhaps employing 25 persons, were allowed to rise to the top of the heap by furnishing the major leaders for civic associations, the fundamentally economic basis of order would be upset. This is an ordering device for separating firms which are alike in size and wealth, not for producing anomalies.

As a device for allocating prestige among businessmen, community participation furnishes the major outside-of-plant method of cashing in on one's success and achievements. This is particularly important for the top men in each of the industrial plants, the remainder of whose firms are located at some distance. For these persons success in community organizations represents on-the-spot prestige returns. It is significant that for the telephone company, especially the plant and traffic departments, where company loyalty is much greater on the managerial level, and where career opportunities within the company are so plentiful, community participation does not seem to be as important a source of gratification.

One consequence of the development of community participation as a ranking device is to give to the professional community organization manager (e.g., the Chamber of Commerce manager or the United Fund manager) the function of

prestige broker. He serves as the information center relaying to each businessman how he stands vis-a-vis the others. Indeed, as we shall see in a later section, the Mediana United Fund manager has managed thoroughly to convince the telephone company personnel that they are much lower on the totem pole of United Fund contributions than they actually are. Since the success of the managers of community organizations depends on the extent to which they are able to rally the financial and manpower support of the business community to their organizations, a clever man has a powerful weapon at his command.

In a way, community participation is like the primitive potlatch with the important exception that the funds and labor expended are not wastefully consumed, but employed to further important community goals. To get recognition, a man and his firm must contribute funds and manpower to community "projects" in a way that is not demonstrably related to the purely economic functions of the enterprise. To justify his participation, he has only relatively intangible benefits to which to point.

This is not to deny that the rationales offered by business managers do not have some reality basis to them; nor does this analysis imply that the community participation system has no important consequences for firm manager and the community. On the contrary, these functions, as we have pointed out, serve the ends of the companies involved, provide an important source of gratification for the manager himself, and exist independently of whatever other benefits in the way of improved worker morale or better public acceptance that may also result. At least one thing is certain (and this may be justification in itself) Mediana certainly benefits.

This analysis implies that the primary audience in front of whom the roles of community participation are played consists of the members of the business community. This, of course, is not the only audience. To some degree what a firm's management does becomes known to the workers in the plant and to the public at large. A firm which has a good reputation in this respect probably benefits by being able to recruit workers and in obtaining a favorable acceptance, generally. But the process by which the activity of a firm becomes known is slow and somewhat tricky. The things which are best known about firms by the general public are not those which necessarily mean the most to the business community. For example, the outstanding company in public esteem is Ajax Steel, whose employees' park (an impressive place indeed) was often referred to as its major contribution to the community. The busy committee life of the Chamber or the service clubs receives some mention in the newspaper, but, like announcements of births, deaths, and marriages, such notices seem to be read mainly by those most closely concerned. Indeed, it would almost appear that the general public was about a decade behind in its perception of various firms' activities.

## V. LEADERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

The managers of the "average" business enterprise are at least members of the Chamber and one or more of the service clubs. The firm contributes to the various fund drives and allows the solicitation of contributions from its employees. Some of the firms provide "leadership"--that is to say, its managers take on more than rank and file duties, perhaps setting up drives or becoming members of the various boards of the civic organizations.\* Even more important is the type of leadership which goes beyond office holding to supply some kind of initiative and momentum to community projects.

The leaders of Mediana--both office holders and "hot rods"--come from two sources. Locals provide a good proportion of the leadership. Particularly political office, which involves popular appeal, is almost the exclusive province of this group. For a local it often does not matter what his occupation is as long as he is in business. A local, in other words, can rise to a leadership position on his personal merits, whatever they might be.

Not so for the recent arrival, however. His rise to leadership seems more dependent on his job and his firm. The new manager of a large plant can find himself a place in the local firmament much easier than the new manager of a small enterprise. All he need do is give in to the invitations he will receive. If he is from a small firm--say, the manager of a chain store--it will be hard for him to get into a leadership position early in his stay in Mediana, although eventually, if he is so minded, he may do so.

It should be noted in passing that Bell is a small firm in Mediana's opinion. A large firm is on the order of Power Parts or Ajax Steel. For an employee of Bell to rise high in the civic organization takes either a local origin or a long residence, coupled with some degree of ability.

At least part of the reason for the high leadership chances of the larger firm lies in the larger resources at its command. The large firm's greater contributions to the Chamber, the United Funds, and the service clubs make their managers attractive members and leaders. (It is no accident that the heaviest per capita corporate contribution to the United Fund comes from the firm whose manager is presently President of the Fund. See Table VI.1.)

While leadership is open to the large outsider firms, it is not expected that leadership necessarily is forthcoming. However, for the managers of locally owned\*\* large enterprises, leadership is definitely expected. Hence the common

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\*Considering the total number of civic organizations in Mediana, the number of leadership positions is necessarily quite large. Hence leadership in terms of office holding is not a rare phenomenon among the businessmen. Practically every businessman who has reached the middle 50's and who had been in the town for more than a decade has at one time or another been on the boards of one or more of the civic organizations. Office holding is, therefore, not a good index of leadership in Mediana as it might be in some communities where the number of positions is somewhat smaller. In fact, our definition of leadership as employed here implies that people we have interviewed have mentioned the persons as sources of power and influence in the community.

\*\*A local industry is one which has its home office in Mediana. Thus American Ceramics, which has half a dozen branch factories throughout the country, is considered a local firm, while Ajax Steel, a branch factory of a firm whose home offices are located some 200 miles away and which has been in Mediana for more than 50 years, is still considered an outsider firm.

complaint in our interviews concerning the failure of the owners of American Ceramics to provide leadership for the community. The old local family of wealth is looked upon as being able to provide especially desirable leadership, because they are reputedly able to swing the general public as well as members of the business community. Expectations concerning leadership are consequently strongest for the local industrial firms.

Although local leadership is preferred by locals over that which could be provided by outsiders, there is also some recognition that the outsiders provide a more disinterested type of leadership. Local businessmen are, to some degree, regarded as peculiarly susceptible to the drive for personal power. The itinerant manager, in contrast, has less of a personal stake in his leadership position, for his real rewards come from the outside, and whatever he gains from his participation is an increment rather than a main portion.

These considerations all lead to the conclusion that it is difficult for the manager of a small branch of an outside firm to make any significant impact on Mediana's civic life. Mediana Bell, which fits into this category, can rise only to the second level of leadership, because it is neither local nor large. Indeed, the personnel of Mediana Bell tie in most closely with the second level of command in large industries (e.g., personnel director, general foreman, and the like), or on the level of the small retail merchants.

Among the various management levels within a particular firm, each finds its own niche in the organizational structure. In Mediana, all persons on the top two or three levels within a firm are in the Chamber of Commerce: usually it is mainly the top man who is active enough to get on the Board of Directors. (Incidentally, this is one advantage to being top man in a small company: you can fit in at a higher level than a man of similar salary level in a larger plant.)

There is a rank order to the service clubs as well. The personnel of Mediana Bell demonstrate this rather nicely: the District Commercial Manager is in Rotary, the Local Commercial Manager is in Kiwanis, and the Plant and Traffic Chiefs are in such lower ranking clubs as Sertoma and Optimists. There is a saying in Mediana to the effect that Rotary owns the town, Kiwanis runs it, and the Jaycees do all the leg work.

If we look at differences among individuals in their participation levels and patterns, one is immediately struck by how important is an individual's age. The young men below the age of 35 are rarely very active in any organization except the Jaycees. Men over 55 are also somewhat inactive. Indeed, many of our older respondents explained to us somewhat defensively that they had to "taper off" in their activities. This older group often tended to talk of Mediana's civic life as it had been when they were very active. The peak of activity, as a consequence, comes in the age period of 40 to 55. If a man is going to play some important role in Mediana, then he will play it at this period when his occupational career line is well laid down and he can afford to take time off from his job, for leadership in civic organizations is time consuming. One respondent said that the Past President of the Jaycees had attended 358 committee meetings in a one year period.

Several respondents noted that civic life in Mediana reflected this age grading in a kind of cyclical alternation of activity and quiescence. As a particular age cohort passed through its active period, the tempo of civic activity would speed up. As this cohort aged, but still retained office, things would slow down until the next generation became numerous enough to take over the reins

of leadership. Indeed, the past history of Mediana seems to show some cyclical characteristics.

As to the extreme of highest participation, it is necessary to consider more personal characteristics. An individual who is highly active over a considerable time span is indeed an unusual person. He must be willing and able to spend as much as half of his time on his community work. As a consequence, he must obviously have his job well in hand. He must be able to stand the frustrations and tensions involved in "committee work" or in fund solicitation. Finally, he must be prepared to donate heavily himself to all of these or to get his firm to do so, for leadership has its pecuniary responsibilities as well as its social ones.

There are several types of individuals who are likely to show some of these characteristics. To begin with, bachelors and childless married men without heavy family responsibilities might fit the bill at least as far as time availability is concerned. Indeed, the city solicitor, a bachelor, and the present president of the Chamber, a childless married man, tend to confirm this hypothesis, although there are numerous examples of its contradiction in other cases.

Men who are over-intelligent for their jobs, or who are in jobs which do not consume their entire energies, are also likely to find their way into the hyper-active group. Civic life offers an outlet for their surplus intelligence or energy. Both field workers were struck by the manifestly high intellectual abilities of community leaders.

Finally, the small businessman who runs a local sales agency for a national firm most nearly fits the bill as far as time availability on his job is concerned. Businesses that do not involve full time tending to the demands of the occupation tend to provide more than the usual amount of leaders in community affairs. Perhaps the most congenial example here is the individual who was awarded the title of "Mr. Mediana" and who is involved in most every committee or club in town. (In fact, wherever we went in Mediana, we ran into him.) "Mr. Mediana" is local distributor for a national oil company, a man between 40 and 50 years of age, and if we judge his verbal ability correctly, somewhat over-intelligent for his grade.

## VI. COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS OF BUSINESS ENTERPRISES:

### WHAT IS EXPECTED BY WHOM FROM WHOM?

If the participation of business managers in community affairs is as we have interpreted it, a matter of conforming to company policy and to the prevailing patterns of life in the business community, then we should be able to detect the existence of commonly agreed upon expectations concerning the roles to be played by business managers. Such is indeed the case, as we shall show in this section.

However, the expectations as we encountered them are not entirely uniform. Expectations vary according to the holder and according to the firm and person about whom the expectations are being held. As far as the holders of expectations are concerned, we may distinguish three groups: the general public, the business community, and community leaders, the latter consisting of office holders in the civic associations and the local government. As for firms, we can distinguish four types: enterprises which are branches of national companies, public utilities, absentee controlled commercial establishments, and locally owned firms, either industrial or commercial.

Expectations held by each group of the various types of firms are inferred from the interviews rather than directly manifested in them. As in the case of most role expectations, both the audiences and the role takers have so thoroughly assimilated the social definitions of the parts they are supposed to be playing that there is considerable confusion in their minds between what is done and what is expected to be done.

This last point leads to some important policy considerations that are worth discussing in a digression at this point. Except in the areas of behavior where firm moral or legal strictures apply, public opinion more often follows behavior with its approval rather than leading behavior with its expectations. Especially in this rather optional area of community participation, it cannot be expected that expectations will exceed what is being presently done. We are fairly sure that if business policies were to change in the direction of greater participation and heavier contributions, public opinion would shift its level of expectations to cover the new norm. In pursuing policies of merely meeting what expectations are at a given time, one runs the danger of "me too-ism," of being always a follower in an area where innovation and leadership gain special recognition.

To return to the main topic of this section: since expectations are rather vague, the reconstruction of them as detailed below presents a picture of greater firmness than exists in reality. The reader should keep this point in mind.

#### A. What Is Expected By The Professional Community Leader

The most definitely structured expectations are those held by persons most directly concerned with the community, the office holders in local government and civic organizations. Professional managers of the Chamber and United Fund, the officers of city government, and leaders of service clubs are the most vocal sources of pressure for participation in Mediana. It is obvious why this is so. Participation is their business, and the success of their endeavors depends heavily on their abilities to marshal enough in the way of volunteers and contributions

to demonstrate the viability of their respective organizations. While this is particularly true of voluntary organizations, it is also the case, although to a lesser degree, for the officers of local government.

What do these leaders expect from business enterprises?

1. Expectations from All Businesses:

Perhaps the main expectation concerns financial contributions to the organization. Here expectations vary according to the size and prosperity of the business operation. The larger and more prosperous the operation, the more it is expected to give and to help the civic organization to obtain funds from other businesses.

In part, expectations are greater for the larger companies because they are believed to be the pace setters for others. In part, it is because large firms contribute so great a proportion of the civic organization's total take, and hence are the most important source of support.

In addition, businesses are expected to supply personnel to man committees, and to do all the work that constitutes a "project." A "cooperating" firm is defined as one which is liberal in assigning one or another from their staffs to do community "duties."

To enforce these expectations community leaders wield a potent weapon. They are in a position to make authoritative comparisons among companies. This sanction is employed self-consciously, somewhat to the embarrassment of those who have felt its sting as the following examples show:

"It isn't the community that expects you to foot the bill for every two-bit charity that goes on in this town. It's the managers of the various funds who are trying to make a big name for themselves in the community."

(Manager, Midwest Electrical)

"No, it's not the community (that expects a lot from the telephone company). It's the few individuals in key spots who use these things for selfish purposes." (Manager, Telephone Company)

Both of the respondents quoted above feel that more is being expected of their organizations than they can legitimately deliver within the limits of their authority. Their feelings about the managers of the Chamber of Commerce and of the United Fund drive are that the latter are manipulating expectations to give a better appearance to their activities than is really necessary as far as the purposes of the civic organizations are concerned.

Community leaders hope that each firm lives up to the expectations they hold of it. However, the highest rewards do not go to those who fulfill these expectations alone. Additional credit goes to those firms whose participation is performed in proper style. Grudging and reluctant fulfillment of expectations, even if such is complete, is not regarded as highly as partial fulfillment accomplished in a spontaneous and generous mood.

Perhaps the best way to define this style element is to give a few examples: the two companies which received especially commendatory remarks from the United Fund manager were Mediana Power and Power Parts. Mediana Power's

manager was praised because he had worked out a method, by cooperating with the Utility Workers' Union, of getting around the Power Company's stricture against payroll deductions for the United Fund. Union representatives and company personnel men stationed themselves at the pay office on pay day and solicited contributions from the Power Company employees.

Power Parts received special praise because of its policy of permitting its workers to work up to four hours overtime at time-and-a-half, the wages so earned to be contributed to the United Fund. The overtime is worked on a particular day each year, specially designated as "Good Neighbor Day." Power Parts gives to its participating workers special stickers for their cars and windows of their homes as visible indicators of contributions as "Good Neighbors."

The common element running through these two examples is their unbureaucratic quality. The Power Company manager sidestepped company policy; the Power Parts' "Good Neighbor Day" has a dramatic character.

It is especially informative to compare the United Fund manager's opinion of Mediana Bell to his opinion of the Power Company which he singled out for special praise. In point of fact, Mediana Bell's contribution to the United Fund on a per capita basis--both its corporate contribution and personal contributions of its employees--was higher than that of the Power Company. The rank order of firms and their contributions to the United Fund are shown in Table VI.1. Indeed, Bell Telephone in Mediana ranks third highest in its overall contribution to the United Fund and first in its employee contributions as Table VI.1 shows.\*

Despite the very high showing of Mediana Bell in the rank order of contributions to the United Fund, the manager of the United Fund talked in the interview as if Mediana Bell was doing relatively poorly. Perhaps the best way to show his attitude is to take some excerpts from the interview itself:

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\*Note that Table VI.1 lists the number of Mediana Bell employees at about 150, approximately half the official figure given the researchers by the company. It may be that the figures shown here refer only to those Bell employees who reside in Mediana proper, accounting for this discrepancy. Obviously, if the number of Mediana Bell employees were double this number, then the per capita contributions of Mediana Bell would be considerably smaller. Whether this is the case or not does not really affect the discussion on these few pages. Since the manager of the United Fund believes that his employee figures are largely correct, then his misperception of the per capita contributions of various companies cannot be based upon the accuracy or possible inaccuracy of those figures. It should be noted also that the sizes of the various other firms in Mediana are underestimated in this report.

TABLE VI.1

PER CAPITA CORPORATE AND EMPLOYEE CONTRIBUTIONS  
TO UNITED FUND IN MEDIANA: 1957

(Shown only for firms with 100 or more employees)

Firms	Number of Employees	Per Capita Corporate Gift	Employee Gifts	Per Capita Combined Gift	Rank Order Combined Gift
Power Parts	(900)	11.11	6.72	17.83	1
Metal Tools	(320)	15.20	2.51	17.71	2
<u>Mediana Bell</u>	(143)	5.59	7.97	13.56	3
Mediana Publishing Co.	(164)	6.71	6.10	12.81	4
National Electric	(178)	4.33	7.87	12.20	5
Ajax Steel	(950)	8.61	3.33	11.94	6
Mediana Minerals	(137)	9.67	1.61	11.28	7
Mediana Power	(100)	5.00	6.15	11.15	8
*Cement Company	(360)	6.67	3.31	9.98	9
*Ferro Company	(232)	4.31	4.17	8.48	10
American Ceramics	(1829)	4.92	2.92	7.84	11
Farm Machinery	(240)	5.63	1.90	7.53	12
Indian Pottery	(179)	6.44	0.00	6.44	13
Battery Company	(107)	3.27	3.02	6.29	14
Mediana Package	(350)	1.49	3.43	4.92	15
Midwest Electric	(882)	2.83	1.88	4.71	16
Mediana Boiler	(325)	3.77	0.38	4.15	17
Smith-Jones Glass	(1282)	3.12	0.00	3.12	18
Plumbing Company	(175)	1.71	0.00	1.71	19

\*Firms located outside Mediana in nearby small towns.

Source: Mediana United Fund

"The Power Company manager (compared to the Telephone Company manager) has more autonomy. The Power man has been president of the Chamber, while the Telephone man has only been president of Rotary. The telephone man doesn't 'get the total picture.' He doesn't admit the overall civic importance of the community to the Telephone Company's activity. While the president of (State) Bell has been active in the Community Chest, this group here does not have as high a participation."

"Davis then asked whether there are any extremely high participants in the United Fund in town. (The manager) replied that there were two companies who were especially outstanding in this area. The first was Power Parts Company. They were the largest contributors to the United Fund, and in addition sponsored local sports, a baseball team. On the other hand, the largest employee contribution was at National Electric and this is consequence, said the manager, of the fact that (one of the founders of National Electric) was one of the original leaders of the Community Chest movement. National Electric has always cooperated very strongly with United Fund."

It is interesting that the United Fund manager rates National Electric above Mediana Bell in its contributions, whereas, in actual fact, as Table VI.1 indicates, Mediana Bell gave both a larger corporate gift and obtained larger pledges from its employees. National Electric is fifth in the list of firms while Mediana Bell is third.

Perhaps part of the reason why Mediana Bell fares so poorly in obtaining credit for the contributions it does make to the United Fund can be seen from our interviews with the local commercial managers. Both commercial managers expressed very defensive attitudes toward the United Fund contributions of the company. Both felt that Mediana Bell in its corporate giving and in its employee gifts was under attack from the United Fund for being somewhat niggardly. As a consequence they had readily available a battery of arguments to indicate that they could not give any more to the United Fund. One of the arguments concerned a state tax on the operations of public utilities, a tax which is earmarked for public welfare use. The amount of the tax collected in Mediana was around \$17,000, which both commercial managers proudly displayed to our interviewers as Bell's high contribution to social welfare in the Mediana area. In addition, both complained that they themselves have relatively little autonomy. A "formula" was applied in the division headquarters which automatically yielded the amount which could be contributed to the United Fund in Mediana. Because these arguments were so readily brought out by both commercial managers, the interviewers had the feeling that these were also the arguments which were paraded before the United Fund manager or the Industrial Solicitation Committee when the time came for the United Fund campaign.

We are certain that the Mediana Bell Telephone managers were unaware of the rather high place in the rank order of firms that their company occupied as far as contributions to the United Fund were concerned. In contrast, other managers of business enterprises were much more firm in indicating that they were doing their share, or better than their share, in contributions to the fund. In short, the telephone managers left an impression with the interviewers of being both apologetic and defensive about a level of contribution concerning which they had every right to display a considerable pride.

This same defensive attitude was also reflected in some of our interviews with employees in the plant or traffic departments. One plant man, when interviewed, was told by the interviewer that the Mediana Bell Telephone Company did rather well in its employee contributions. The respondent completely misunderstood our statement and immediately went into a defensive story about how the employees' contributions could not be much higher because of the uncooperative attitude of the union. When told again that the employee contribution of Mediana Bell was the highest in Mediana, he looked rather skeptical and went on to another topic.

In contrast to this picture of grudging compliance and openly admitted powerlessness, we may view the attitudes displayed by the personnel manager of Power Parts. While we were interviewing him, he received a telephone call from a Fund solicitor. It was obvious from the content of the call that the solicitor was trying to get the personnel manager to raise the contribution of Power Parts to a fund drive presently being sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce. The personnel manager was extraordinarily skillful in giving the impression that he and the plant manager were primarily responsible for granting such contributions, and, at the same time, indicating that he would have to pass the matter on to higher echelons. He accomplished this by indicating to the caller that higher echelons generally followed the recommendations that he and the plant manager gave. Immediately after the telephone call the personnel manager called the plant manager and displayed quite a different viewpoint. At this point the conversation was all about how they could word the request to the home office so that the latter would accede to it.

In short, for the manager of the United Fund the spirit of giving is as important as the actual amount given. In the same way, the Chamber of Commerce manager's view of the "cooperativeness" of various enterprises also weighed heavily the elements of spontaneity and style. This is perhaps best illustrated by the manager's reference to the Mediana Bell manager in the town:

"'Mediana Bell,' said the manager, 'chisels on its contributions to the Chamber of Commerce and to the other community funds.' He felt that they were not paying their share. More specifically, concerning the Telephone Company, he said, 'They are almost obnoxiously efficient. If you make a request to them they will route you quickly through six people and never let go of you. If you call the business manager you have to talk to six people, each of whom is so efficient that you want to slug him. You just can't say you'll call back. They just won't let you off the hook. They're very touchy to any criticism. They may think they're giving the right support to the Chamber but... (shrug)''\*

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\*Both commercial managers warned us that the opinion of the Chamber of Commerce manager of Mediana Bell would be less than perfect. The local manager indicated that the Telephone Company had at one point dunned the Chamber of Commerce manager for a long overdue bill. This was the cause for the Chamber of Commerce manager's attempt to reach the telephone manager on the phone. There was also apparently another instance of a run-in between the manager and the Chamber of Commerce fellow. This concerned a request made by the Chamber's Industrial Development Committee that Mediana Bell offer to move a long distance line, located where an industrial plant was proposed to be built, without cost to the construction company. The manager stated that in order to do this they would have to get permission from a division headquarters where liaison was maintained with A.T.&T. The telephone manager indicated that the Industrial Development Committee personnel were quite put out by this explanation.

The local leader of the Republican Party referred to the style and spirit of participation as "the local touch." The local touch, by his definition, was a method or a way of proceeding with one's contacts in the local community, which was calculated to bring about good will on the part of locals and the various organizations in the town. He classified companies according to whether or not they had "the local touch." His remarks concerning Mediana Bell were as follows:

"They stay out of things. They tend to their own business. Now they don't hold back--they don't throw cold water on things." Asked if they had the local touch, he replied: "Well, they do have two or three people in the Country Club, but I wouldn't say that they were leaders in town. They don't hold back, though."

#### B. Business Community Expectations

The business managers in Mediana have somewhat less firm expectations concerning the participation of other business enterprises in the community. Perhaps the common theme which ran through all the interviews was that they expected other business managers to "do their share." In fact, this comes out quite clearly in the way in which they talked about their own companies. Perhaps the most frequent response was, "We do our share."

Specifically, a "proper share" means participating in the following activities: a company should have a number of memberships on the Chamber of Commerce, the number being proportionate to the size of the company's operations in Mediana. The company should make a reasonable corporate contribution to the United Fund and to the special drives. It should allow the fund solicitors to have access to its workers, and to allow a payroll deduction plan for United Fund gifts and pledges to other fund drives. The company should send some of its managerial personnel into the various service clubs and its younger executives into the Jaycees. Some member of the firm should be in the Country Club.

In addition, the managers should be "good fellows," that is to say they should go along with the rest of the business community in enjoying the kinds of pleasures, private and public, that are the prevailing modes of social life in Mediana.

It is not expected that a company should strive for leadership in the civic organizations or in other community activities. However, if some member of the company does provide leadership, it redounds to the benefit of the company.

Concerning the Mediana Bell Telephone Company, the opinion of the business community was that Mediana Bell was doing its share but not anything more than that. The following excerpts from some interviews indicate the prevailing opinion of Mediana Bell:

"Asked whether the utilities in general were active or inactive, he replied, 'They normally contribute. They do their share.' Asked specifically about Mediana Bell he said, 'I don't know. I guess they do their share.'" (Manager, Mediana Chemicals)

"I haven't run into them very much."

(Manager, Chain Retail Store)

"They have provided leadership in the past. Their manager is ex-president of Rotary and has been active in the Chamber. They're not as active in industrial development as we are. It's not as important to them, of course. If a new firm comes into town they could be a big load for us but might get just two or three telephones." (Manager, Power Company)

"There's not much difference in Mediana Bell any place. Those service companies, that's all they have to do, offer service, and they have to have their people out so they're all active." (Manager, Smith-Jones Glass Company)

"They're fine as far as I know. They hire high type people there. Their district manager is a past president of Rotary." (Past-President of Rotary Club)

There were a number of enthusiastic comments on Mediana Bell, as the following atypical comment shows:

"Their policies are farther reaching than Mediana Power's. AT&T, of course, is one of the larger firms in the country. They're larger than Mediana Power. I would say that their patterns are more crystallized and their scope is greater. All things considered, I'd say they had more latitude at the local level than Mediana Power. They tend to develop a set of general principles and then they break them down on the local level. They do a marvelous job of screening, a wonderful job. People in Mediana Bell are topnotch men. There are some of these fellows, they're fine men." (Plant Superintendent, Midwest Electrical)

### C. Expectations Held by the General Public

Perhaps the weakest expectations concerning participation along the lines desired by the business community in Mediana are held by the few members of the general public whom we interviewed. For the general public, the world of community organization is a newspaper phenomenon--that is, something about which the newspaper generally prints articles but which has relatively little connection with their everyday life. The typical respondent was more concerned with those community problems which were amenable to political treatment than to those which were amenable to treatment through the voluntary organizations. Typically, the average citizen was concerned with such community problems as parking, street conditions, the pollution of Mediana's rivers, and the provision of adequate recreation for children. Business community projects are usually on a "higher" plane, concerned with less "concrete" matters.

When asked what should be the obligations of a business to the city where it is located, the replies received from the general public were as shown in Table VI.2. Twelve of the fifteen respondents indicated that a primary obligation of a business was to pay "adequate" or "just" or "decent" wages. This obligation to maintain a reasonable wage policy was the most important one in the minds of our respondents. Another nine referred to "working conditions" indicating that it is the obligation of an industry to provide conditions of work which are not

dangerous to life or limb and have some amenities. The typical respondent would refer both to wages and working conditions as areas in which businesses had their primary obligations.

Four indicated that businesses should not be "anti-labor"--that is, they should have an accommodative attitude toward labor unions. Three referred to the permanency of the plant, indicating that the industry should "stay in Mediana." Another trio spoke of contributions to fund drives--significantly, the three middle class respondents in the general population sample.

Two referred to "contributions to community progress," meaning largely aiding the town to obtain additional industries.

Finally, one each referred to "becoming part of the town" and to keeping their plants looking well.

Note that the major emphases given by the general population sample, concerns obligations to offer and maintain high labor standards, referring to wages, working conditions, and attitudes toward unions.

A minority of respondents referred to the typical activities of the civic organizations of the community. Significantly, the three respondents who referred to this sort of obligation were members of the business community themselves; a medical doctor, the owner of a business equipment and stationery store, and an engineer in one of the industrial plants.

TABLE VI.2  
GENERAL POPULATION SAMPLE EXPECTATIONS OF  
BUSINESS ENTERPRISES IN GENERAL

"What should be the obligations of a business to  
the community where it is located?"

<u>Response</u>	<u>Number of Respondents</u>
"Decent" or "reasonable" wage policy	12
"Reasonable working conditions"	9
"Humane labor policy"; i.e., not anti-labor union	4
"Stay in town"	3
"Make contributions to fund drives"	3
"Contribute to community progress"	2
Become "part of the town"	1
Have a "good housekeeping policy;" i.e., beautify plant	1
Total respondents	<hr/> 15

Although there were only 15 respondents, 32 responses are recorded in reply to this question, indicating that a respondent had two obligations in mind in answering this question, typically referring both to the wage policy and working conditions.

Respondents were further questioned specifically about the obligations of public utilities to the community which they serve. Four of the respondents saw utilities as having no special obligation other than that of an ordinary business organization in town. Five respondents considered that utilities owed an obligation to provide the best possible services. Another three respondents focused upon the rates charged by utilities, indicating that they had an obligation to provide their services at "reasonable" rates. Two respondents indicated that they felt that public utilities should stay out of politics, one respondent going so far as to say that they "should not bribe our politicians like they've been doing." Probing a little further into the responses made concerning politics, it was our impression that the respondents were referring to public utilities bribing or otherwise inducing certain leaders to allow them to raise rates. Finally, one of the respondents referred to contributions to community funds, one to "being fair to workers" (this respondent was a Negro), and another one referred to the theme of becoming "part of the town."

In short, the expectations held by the general community, as reflected in our sample at least, were primarily along the lines of providing good service at reasonable rates. It should be mentioned in this connection that two or three of the respondents indicated that good service was currently being given. One respondent who was vociferously "anti-business" and "anti-Chamber of Commerce" referred to the utilities with considerable praise as being outside the business community.

TABLE VI.3

GENERAL POPULATION SAMPLE EXPECTATIONS OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

"Do you think they (public utilities) owe something special to the community because they are utilities, or are they expected just to be the same as any other business?"

<u>Response</u>	<u>Number of Respondents</u>
"Same as any other business"	4
"They should provide the best service"	5
"They should have reasonable rates"	3
"They should stay out of politics"	2
"They should be fair to workers"	1
"Make contributions to funds"	1
"Become part of the town"	1
Total number of respondents	15

In sum, the important segments of Mediana hold the following expectations concerning the obligations of business enterprises in the local community:

1. Community leaders, understandably, hold the strongest and highest expectations. They expect business enterprises, especially the larger ones, to provide financial support, manpower, and some degree of leadership to community enterprises. Their expectations are best fulfilled when the participation is accomplished in a spontaneous and unbureaucratic fashion.
2. Businessmen hold similar expectations, although not as strongly. A business enterprise is expected to "go along" with community activities, contributing its "fair share" in manpower and money.
3. The general public is more concerned with the labor policy of a firm, considering it to have an obligation to provide steady employment, at adequate wages, under decent conditions. The contributions of firms to fund drives are appreciated but not considered vital. Participation of managers in community organizations is viewed likewise with, at best, lukewarm approval.
4. Public utilities are not expected by either community leaders or businessmen to be outstanding contributors or to provide leaders in community projects. Rather, they are viewed as part of the cohorts in the community organizations.
5. Public utilities are not viewed much differently from other business enterprises by the general public, with the exception that they are viewed to be under an obligation to provide good service at reasonable rates. By and large, Medianians are certain that good service at reasonable rates is being rendered by both the power and telephone companies. In this sense expectations are being fulfilled.

Whether or not these expectations would also be found to characterize the same groups in other communities is, of course, impossible to say. In Mediana, the business community is well-organized around the Chamber of Commerce and the service clubs. In another community whose civic life was less well developed, expectations are likely to be weaker. Similarly, in a community in which employment is not a problem, the general public might focus its attention on other types of business activities.

There is one characteristic of these expectations which bears comment. By and large, expectations do not run very far ahead of performance. There is great confusion between what is done and what should be done. By and large, in Mediana, things are going well. Only laggards are not living up to expectations. This suggests that expectations generally do not lead practice but follow and legitimate it. The highest praise and regard in all quarters go to those who exceed expectations, especially when the excess is accomplished in a graceful or dramatic fashion.

## VII. THE IMAGES OF MEDIANA BELL

Throughout the report we have from time to time shown some evidence of the kinds of images which Bell has among different segments of the community. This section of the report is designed to bring these scattered remarks together in one spot.

Fitting together the remarks made by all the various respondents, we come to the following pair of composite images: One is the image held by the members of the business community, and the other that held by the general public. Although there are some features in common to the two images, there are enough differences to make it worthwhile to view them separately:

### A. The Business Community Image of Mediana Bell

In the eyes of the business community, the local telephone company is not numbered among the more important enterprises in Mediana. When major firms are mentioned, it is likely that a businessman has one or more of the large industrial plants in mind--Power Parts, American Ceramics, or Ajax Steel.

The low salience of Mediana Bell occurs despite the fact that the number of Bell employees is substantial (as many, for example, as are employed at Metal Tools, which is more frequently mentioned as an important enterprise). It is likely that many of our respondents would be surprised to learn the number employed by Bell; in fact, one telephone employee mentioned that on a public visitation to the long-distance office, a businessman visitor remarked that he had believed up to that point that Bell employed only one operator in Mediana. Nor does the very aggressive public relations efforts of the local manager, resulting in newspaper articles on Bell in almost half of the editions published, make any dent upon the business community.\*

Even the power company, employing less than half the number of employees that Bell does, has more mention than Mediana Bell. (Our file on Mediana Power contains more than twice as many entries as the file on Bell.)

There are several reasons one might advance for the image of Bell as a relatively small and somewhat unimportant enterprise in the community. For

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\*Much of the newspaper publicity received by Mediana Bell is primarily of interest to telephone employees--the induction of new members into the Pioneer Club, the award of a prize for bravery to a lineman, and the like. Most firms in Mediana get such publicity in the newspaper, although not with as much regularity as the telephone company. The function of such publicity is primarily internal to the company; all Mediana employees referred to the frequency of newspaper articles with some pride. In contrast, no other respondent interviewed made any reference to them, although the ads run by one company, Metal Parts, did receive some wide mention as being very good publicity.

one thing, the dispersal of Bell facilities among a number of buildings means that the size of its operations cannot be apprehended directly.\* While the industrial firms in Mediana have physical plants which are, in most cases, quite imposing and from which the employees stream at quitting time, Bell employees dribble out of four offices at staggered intervals throughout the day and night. The out-of-phase nature of telephone activities, of course, hinders public realization that the number of Bell employees in Mediana is quite large.

The building identified as the locus of the telephone company in Mediana is the business office, whose appearance is more that of another retail store--rather handsome, but a store nevertheless. The larger buildings housing the dial exchange or the plant department are so inconspicuous that the interviewers passed one of them several times without realizing they were telephone buildings. (In contrast, the local warehouse for National Electric is conspicuously marked with a sign in bold red and white letters.)

In this connection, the higher subjective salience of the power company is understandable if one takes into account the location of its business office on Main Street, on a busy intersection, and the extremely large steam-generating plant located a few miles out of town. Mediana Power is identified in the minds of businessmen with its main office and the power plant out of town.

Businessmen also see the telephone company as having a distinctive organizational flavor, as compared with other firms. Several respondents remarked that Bell was "pretty much the same wherever you go." The local Bell outfit was the on-the-spot manifestation of a system-wide blueprint, without much room in it for either deviation or embellishment. (In some cases this was pointed to as a positive feature, sometimes negative, but usually stated as a bald fact without either approval or disapproval.)

Bell's organization was also seen as bureaucratic--using the word in a descriptive rather than pejorative sense. Lines of authority were more clearly seen in Bell than in other companies. In addition, its activities were seen as manifesting a high degree of rationalization. "Rationalization" is used here in two senses: first, the Bell system has set up a series of rational rules for meeting most any situation that might be encountered in the conduct of telephone business. Second, Bell employees were so impressed with the way in which the company had figured things out that the benefit of the doubt in case of some question on company policy always went in favor of the company. If the company does it, it must be right. The field workers themselves could not help being impressed about the degree to which all contingencies which might arise in the course of conducting telephone business in an extremely wide variety of situations were provided for in one or another set of rules.

Our impression was that Bell employees helped to foster this bureaucratic image by their use of company jargon. The typical Bell employee describes himself as follows: "I report to X, and A, B, and C report to me." Bell employees

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\* Perhaps the latest move of the business office from a central location on Main Street to a modern office on a side street further de-emphasizes Bell in Mediana. Indeed, the local commercial manager indicated that since this move, the number of visits to the business office has declined, as well as the number of telephone contacts, even allowing for the usual seasonal slump in business office transactions.

also referred frequently to company policy as the authority for their actions, almost relying on this reference as sufficient justification. None of the other business employees referred as frequently to lines of authority and to company rules. Our impression was that the other organizations had not codified their rules to the extent that the Bell system had.

Bell's efficiency in conducting its business was a subject of admiration, particularly on the technical side. As the local commercial manager indicated, any talk on technical developments was generally highly appreciated at service club luncheons.

Particularly singled out for comment was the high caliber of Bell personnel. The image of a telephone employee was that of a solid citizen, churchgoer, lover of home and family, morally straight, but perhaps a little on the dull side. This flavor is caught best in the words of one respondent, "Nice enough fellows but--."

Surprising to the interviewers was the finding that few respondents referred to either the larger (state) Bell company or to A.T. & T. Just as the employees were more oriented to the nearby division headquarters than to either the state company or A.T. & T. headquarters, so the respondents rarely traced Mediana Bell's connections with the remainder of the Bell system. Mediana Bell's connections with the Bell system were, of course, well known, but regarded as quite an acceptable and necessary fact which had no implications for the operations of the telephone company locally. In short, this was not an image of a local tentacle of a gigantic octopus with its headquarters in the metropolis.

In sum, then, Mediana Bell is viewed as a small operation, efficient, somewhat impersonal, providing excellent service, whose employees are admirable Christian gentlemen but somewhat stuffy and dull, and on the lower levels of a rather tall and well-organized totem pole.

#### B. The Popular Image of Mediana Bell

In most respects, the popular image of Mediana Bell matches that held by the business community, although the telephone company is viewed as a small firm, perhaps in the size range of the chain retail department stores like Sears or Ward's. Generally, respondents expressed considerable satisfaction with, and even admiration for, the service rendered and the rates charged by the telephone company. In these last respects, the popular opinion of Mediana Bell is more favorable than that held by the business community.

The general public considers the telephone company to be as good as, or perhaps somewhat better than, Mediana Power. Many of the towns surrounding Mediana are served by independent telephone companies with, apparently, notoriously poor service. Medianians, therefore, have a standard by which to evaluate Bell service which always is to the latter's advantage.

The one respondent who had a relative who worked for Bell felt that it was an excellent company to work for, and generally all the sample rated it as better-than-average in this respect, although somewhat below either Ajax Steel or Power Parts. However, to ask whether the company was a good place to work for often was not a very meaningful question to our working-class respondents.

While most workers have either thought of working for or have actually worked for most of the large industries in town, Bell is not significant enough as an employer to make working for it a real possibility which has been considered in some detail by a large proportion of the population. An industrial worker generally knows, either by direct experience or by personal contact with someone who has had direct experience, the half-dozen or so major industrial companies in the town. The widespread coverage of the industrial firms is, of course, aided by the fluctuating nature of their employment and by the high labor turnover experienced. In contrast, Bell employees are notoriously stable in their employment, and Bell's levels of employment do not fluctuate much from time to time. A job at the telephone company was, as a consequence, considered a rather remote possibility by our respondents, and hence cannot be expected to have been realistically appraised. (Perhaps evaluation by women would be quite different, since the turnover of female personnel is somewhat greater in the telephone company.)

Those few who had any contacts with Bell employees remarked on the caliber of people hired. Here, as in the business community, emphasis was on personal characteristics--neatness, personability, politeness, morality, and the like. Interviews with the lower-level people in the telephone company provide a symmetrical reflection of this popular attitude. The two service representatives interviewed both indicated how, when their friends or acquaintances learned that they were working for the telephone company, their friends would remark how lucky they were to work for such a good firm.

While businessmen tended to see the telephone company people as rather powerless, our respondents from the general population were more willing to accord them a central place in the local firmament. One respondent, who saw the Chamber of Commerce as an executive committee of an industrial cabal bent on keeping Mediana from achieving progress, specifically excepted the telephone company and other utilities on the grounds that they were big enough to be "independent" of the local firms. Another was sure that Bell wielded a great deal of political influence, especially in connection with rate cases. The higher power rating of Bell's image in the general population was based more on guesswork than on definite knowledge of actual activity.

In sum, then, the popular image of Mediana Bell is that of a small company, providing excellent service, staffed by high-caliber personnel, and, for its size and interests, relatively powerful on the local scene.

## VIII. THE PRESTIGE POSITIONS OF BUSINESS ENTERPRISES

In both the qualitative interviews with businessmen and community leaders and in the more systematic interviews with members of the general population, attempts were made to discern how individual firms were rated vis-a-vis each other. Starting out with the notion that a general prestige rank order could be found which would place each firm in its position along a reputational measuring-rod, we soon discovered that this was a model which did not fit the actualities of the case. No general prestige ranking of firms could be discerned.

### A. The Business Community Rank Order of Firms

As far as the business and community leaders were concerned, such a generalized rank order did not exist; each firm was seen as a special, individual case, perhaps good in some respects, but poor in others. Furthermore, respondents were reluctant to mix together what they thought to be separate types of organizations in one rank order.

Perhaps the strongest modification that had to be made in the initial expectations of the researchers was brought about by this last finding, that business enterprises were judged primarily within "family groups," each "family" composed of those businesses which shared in common some crucial characteristic. The major business "families" in Mediana were as follows:

1. Industrial companies
2. Retail merchants
3. Service companies
4. Public utilities

Each family was judged more or less according to a separate criterion. For the industrial group, the crucial elements were as follows: "cooperativeness," i.e., the extent to which the firm was cooperating with the central activities of the business community; the wages and benefits rendered its employees; and, finally, the quality of the product involved. In these regards the industrial firms which stood out as top-rank in the community were the familiar trio of Ajax Steel, Power Parts, and American Ceramics. Down at the bottom of the list, each for its own particular reason, could be found the Smith-Jones Glass Company, the Indian Pottery Company, and, from time to time, the Farm Machinery Company. The low position of the Smith-Jones Glass Company

was achieved by its "uncooperativeness" the former policy of the Smith-Jones Glass Company discouraged participation by its managers in community affairs.\*

Indian Pottery was low on the list because most pottery companies had the long-standing reputation of paying poor wages, of having held back progress in the town by dragging their feet on inviting new industry into the community, and because it had been close to failure in recent years. Our impression of Indian Pottery, from interviewing the president and manager, was that this company was making a rather strong comeback. It will take some time, however, following through our principle of lag in the diffusion of knowledge throughout the community, for the general business community to be aware of the now-strengthened position of Indian Pottery. Its present manager is very much in favor of community participation, but his time has been taken up in bringing Indian Pottery back as a going concern. Finally, the low rating of the Farm Machinery Company can be allocated to its highly tenuous position as a solvent business enterprise. Its work now is very seasonal, and there are rumors that it will close its plant completely and move out of town.

The high-ranking firms had certain characteristics which were frequently pointed to by the persons interviewed. Ajax Steel was always pointed to as a company which had contributed leadership to the community and manifested a high regard for the welfare of its employees, as evidenced by the Ajax Employees' Park and the number of fringe benefits given to workers in the plant. Power Parts was lauded particularly for its cooperation in community affairs, its fine wage structure, and its accommodative attitude toward labor unions.

Perhaps the large firm with the greatest variation in reputation from individual to individual was American Ceramics. Some pointed to American Ceramics's contribution to the community as a reason for putting it very high. Others pointed to the fact that it was part of the pottery industry and therefore was with the group that had held back the progress of Mediana so many years. Others

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\*While the policy of the company had been to discourage managers from participating in community affairs, this did not prevent the supervisory personnel in the Smith-Jones Glass Company from running for public office. The plant manager of one of the two plants of Smith-Jones had been Safety Director in a previous mayoralty regime. Others had played parts in other posts. Despite this, however, Smith-Jones Glass Company was given a rating as being relatively uncooperative.

This was a company presently undergoing a transformation in its community-participation policy. It had been acquired within the last few years by a large container corporation, whose policy with regard to community participation was almost the exact opposite of the previous management. Now managers were requested and, indeed, required to go out into the community and participate in Chamber and service club activities. Several respondents in the business community referred to this change in policy as producing difficulties for the present managers. It was generally felt that the present management would somewhat hold back on fulfilling the new policy because of being somewhat unused to playing a role. Since the manager of Smith-Jones Glass Company was close to retirement, it was likely that he would be kept on until his retirement and then replaced by someone who would be more willing to go along with the general spirit of Mediana's business community.

felt that its wage structure was very low and that the company should, therefore, be penalized in its general reputation. Among community leaders, particularly, American Ceramics was not considered one of the best in the town of Mediana.

Concerning the retail merchants, no clear picture of their rank order emerges. In general, they would be considered a relatively weak group as far as participation goes, with no one of the Main Street merchants playing a prominent role in community affairs. When a merchant did play a role of some magnitude, it was felt to have been his particular accomplishment as an individual and relatively unconnected with his enterprise. Perhaps the small size of the retail stores makes their operations appear highly individualized. The store is so much the personification of its owner that it is seen as having little organizational life apart from the owner himself. A chain retail store like Sears is evaluated similarly, despite the obviously large organization of which it is a part.

As a group, retail merchants were not considered very important. They were regarded as somewhat grubby, backward in their social and organizational skills, and incapable of "seeing the large picture."

Service enterprises were regarded as quite similar to the retail merchants, even though a good proportion of the community leaders were recruited from this group. Again, whatever is done by an individual redounds to his particular benefit but has little effect upon his organization. Thus, "Mr. Mediana," the local distributor of a national oil company, was divorced from his distributorship when he was discussed as a community leader, as was the president of the Chamber--head of a local construction company. In contrast, the head of Power Parts, Ajax Steel, or Mediana Bell would never be torn out of his organizational context when discussed. This finding, of course, reinforces our hypothesis concerning the non-organizational basis of locals as compared with outsiders.

The three utilities rank generally as follows: first, the power company; second, and very close behind, the telephone company; and last, by a good distance, the gas company. The gas company's poor showing is primarily a consequence of its weak participation policy and the residue of an apparently badly-handled rate case a few years ago. As discussed previously, the power company's part in industrial development, a central community concern, has put it ahead of the telephone company.

Note that the business enterprises, retail stores and service companies excluded, share at least one rating criterion in common--namely, the extent of community participation. This criterion becomes the only rank order to be discerned among business enterprises in Mediana. Respondents can place firms vis-a-vis each other into some kind of rank order according to their reputations as making contributions to the community; however, as we have discussed previously, it is not simply the amount of activity engaged in by the firms' business managers and supervisory personnel, but the total size of the firm as well. In a way, the impact of the firm is a product of its momentum, the pace of its activity, and its weight, the amount of resources at its disposal. At a given level of activity, the larger firm, therefore, makes the greatest impact. Hence, the rank order of firms according to their contributions to the community shows the characteristic of large firms, almost regardless of their activities, coming 'way out on top. The perceived rank order of firms according to their contributions to the community goes roughly as follows in the eyes of community leaders and businessmen:

--"The Top Group"

Power Parts  
Ajax Steel  
American Ceramics

--"Just Below the Top"

"My company"

--"A Little Better Than Average"

Metal Tools  
Mediana Publishing  
Mediana Bell  
Mediana Power  
Sears-Roebuck

--"Below Average"

Midwest Electrical  
Mediana Gas  
Farm Machinery  
Mediana Packing  
Mediana Boiler  
Indian Pottery  
Smith-Jones Glass  
The small retail stores

--"Outright Chiselers and Free-Riders"

Businesses who are not members of the Chamber,  
as, for example, the small chain retail stores  
on Main Street

Note that there was a tendency for the respondents to put their companies just below the top group. In addition, those who were put in the "average" or "a little better than average" groups were smaller firms, whose positions would have been greatly enhanced were they somewhat larger in size.

B. The Popular Rank Order of Firms

By the time we were ready to do the general population sample, we had a much more definite view along which dimensions firms were ranked in Mediana. We were able, therefore, to proceed in a more systematic way in the general population questionnaire.

Using the same twenty firms about which we inquired in the qualitative interviews, we asked each respondent to rate each firm along the scale of one to five: first, as a place in which to work; second, as to its contribution to community welfare; and, finally, as a producer of a product or service.

Two difficulties immediately appeared in this rating task. First, none of the respondents was knowledgeable enough to give ratings for each one of the firms along any one dimension. Second, while most respondents were fairly sure they knew enough about the matter to rate firms as places of employment and as contributing to the community, they were much less sure about the quality of the product produced or the service rendered. Table VIII.1 shows how all respondents were able to do the rating task.

Table VIII.1 contains the frequency with which firms were not rated by the respondents according to the type of rating employed.

Surprisingly, among the top five firms in the degree to which they are known to the population, can be found the following: Mediana Publishing Company, Ajax Steel, American Ceramics, Smith-Jones Glass, and Mediana Bell. Mediana Bell's particularly high position comes about primarily because everyone has experienced its service, and many know of its employment practices. In fact, Mediana Bell is as well known as the publishing company and the largest department store in town--Smith Brothers. If we omit utilities, retail stores, and service companies, the extent to which a firm is known is pretty much a function of its size. Thus, the best-known firms are those which employ large blocks of workers.

If we omit consideration of those respondents who were unable to give a rating, the average ratings given to each firm are shown in Table VIII.2. The lower the rating, the higher the regard of the respondents. The firms in Table VIII.2 are arranged according to the average of their three ratings. Thus, the firm with the highest average rating is Ajax Steel, and the firm with the lowest is Indian Pottery.

Note that the general population agrees with the business community and the community leaders as to the top firms in Mediana. Thus, the firm highest in reputation is Ajax Steel, which shares this position with Power Parts. The latter is followed at a very short interval by American Ceramics. Below American Ceramics are the two utilities, Mediana Bell and Mediana Power, which share the same rating. Mediana Bell is considered rather highly as a place to work, somewhat less so as a contributor to the community, and very high in the quality of its service.

The industrial firms closest to the bottom of the list are those which have reputations throughout the community as being relatively poor wage-payers and providing very unsteady employment--namely, Smith-Jones Glass, Farm Machinery, and Indian Pottery. The low position of Mediana Publishing Company is a function of several factors: a recent typographers' strike and some feeling that the newspaper is biased in its coverage of local news.

Despite the very high position achieved by Mediana Bell, it would be misleading to say that Bell was considered by the general population as the best firm in town, or "up there" along with Ajax Steel, Power Parts, and American

TABLE VIII.1

NUMBER OF TIMES FIRMS WERE NOT RATED BY GENERAL  
POPULATION SAMPLE

No ratings for				
	<u>Employment</u>	<u>Contribution to Community</u>	<u>Quality of Product or Service</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>A. <u>Industrial firms</u></b>				
Ajax Steel	1	0	6	7
Local Mineral	10	8	11	29
Mediana Boiler	4	5	10	19
Midwest Electrical	2	2	8	12
Farm Machinery	2	5	11	18
Smith-Jones Glass	1	1	5	7
Power Parts	1	1	7	9
American Ceramics	1	1	4	6
Indian Pottery	1	4	5	10
Metal Parts	5	5	4	14
Average	2.8	3.2	7.1	
<b>B. <u>Public utilities</u></b>				
Mediana Bell	1	2	3	6
Mediana Power	7	3	7	17
Average	4.0	2.5	5.0	
<b>C. <u>Banks</u></b>				
1st National	2	3	8	13
1st Federal Savings	7	7	9	23
Average	4.5	5.0	8.6	
<b>D. <u>Stores and service companies</u></b>				
Mediana Packing	3	5	5	13
Smith Brothers	3	2	3	8
Plant Construction Co.	5	4	4	13
Sears-Roebuck & Co.	2	4	4	10
Klein's	2	2	4	8
Mediana Publishing Co.	1	1	3	5
Average	2.6	3.0	3.8	
Grand Average	3.0	3.3	6.1	

Table VIII.2

## GENERAL POPULATION RATINGS OF FIRMS

<u>Firms</u>	<u>As a Place to Work</u>	<u>Contribution to Community</u>	<u>Quality of Product</u>	<u>Average of Ratings</u>
Ajax Steel	1.5	1.7	1.3	1.5
Power Parts	1.4	1.5	1.7	1.5
American Ceramics	1.9	2.0	1.3	1.7
Mediana Bell	1.5	2.3	1.5	1.8
Mediana Power	2.0	1.8	1.5	1.8
Metal Parts	2.4	1.9	1.5	1.9
Local Minerals	2.2	2.0	1.8	2.0
1st Federal Savings	2.1	2.4	1.7	2.1
Klein's	2.5	2.4	1.9	2.3
Plant Construction	2.6	2.5	2.0	2.4
1st National	2.5	2.3	2.3	2.4
Smith Brothers	2.6	2.4	2.5	2.5
Mediana Boiler	2.8	3.0	1.8	2.5
Mediana Packing	3.0	2.4	2.0	2.5
Midwest Electrical	2.9	2.9	2.2	2.7
Smith-Jones Glass	3.1	2.8	2.3	2.7
Sears-Roebuck & Co.	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7
Farm Machinery	3.5	3.2	1.8	2.8
Mediana Publishing	3.1	3.0	3.6	3.2
Indian Pottery	3.6	3.6	3.1	3.4

Ceramics. While Bell is acknowledged as being a superior type of firm, its perceived size is such that its over-all importance cannot be considered as very great. If Bell were to have the same rating as it has now and be perceived as considerably larger in size, its total impact on the community as far as the general population is concerned would be very high.

Table VIII.3 illustrates the importance of the impact. While Bell is fairly highly rated, it is not mentioned at all as one of the firms which has contributed most to the community. In this respect it is the same trio--Ajax Steel, Power Parts, and American Ceramics--who receive the popular accolades.

TABLE VIII.3

FREQUENCY OF MENTION OF FIRMS AS HAVING  
CONTRIBUTED MOST TO MEDIANA

<u>Firm</u>	<u>Frequency of Mention</u>
Ajax Steel	10
Power Parts	8
American Ceramics	4
Mediana Publishing	1
(No other firms mentioned)	

It is noteworthy that although the general population and the members of the business community use different criteria for arriving at a company's reputation, the resultant ranking is very much the same. This suggests that either community participation is highly related to employment policy, or that the explicit criteria used in rating are not the actual ones employed. We tend to accept the former explanation, as do some of our respondents who pointed to "management ideology" as the source for a positive participation policy. It is apparently the case that those firms which had a strong policy of participation were also the same firms who paid their workers relatively well and which were highly regarded as places to work. It would seem that these two policies tended to go together as a package in the firms in Mediana.

## IX. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

In a report on a pilot study we have no right to draw firm, absolute implications from our findings. On the other hand, we do have a responsibility to indicate what are the meanings which could be given to our findings so that their implications for policy are clear. It should be borne in mind by the reader that these are primarily illustrations of how findings of this sort could be made relevant to policy. Only a more extensive, systematic, definitive study can make these implications firm enough to be a reliable guide for policy.

### A. The Audience for Participation

If we take the Mediana Study findings seriously, the businessmen and community leaders are the sections of the community for whom the activities or participation are primarily performed and who, in turn, watch closely and evaluate this performance. These two groups are the primary audience even though the general public is felt to be an ultimate audience. Participation is engaged in for the purpose of obtaining the approval of the core group, who provide the prime motive power for the civic organizations and community projects.

As far as we can tell, the general public--especially the bulk of the industrial workers and the lower levels of the white collar group--looks upon the civic activities from an uninvolved distance, mostly with benevolence but without conviction that this is the most important thing that a business enterprise could do. In a sense, civic activity is somewhat abstract: meetings, charter revision, and charitable actions are not dramatic enough to draw attention away from the more immediate and pressing claims of everyday life and the entertainment fare offered by the mass media. Concrete and dramatic actions--as, for example, Ajax Steel Employee Park, or Power Parts "Good Neighbor Day"--produce more popular acclaim than the heaviest committee work engaged in by a business manager. Especially when added to a generous wage scale which is well publicized, the more concrete manifestations, as mentioned above, achieve a considerable impact on the general public.

While this finding may produce some disappointment, especially if the general public was being viewed as the primary organization for the participation policy of Bell employees, a policy of participation is not entirely without considerable benefit to a company. In Mediana, the business community and community leaders are the most organized element in the community. This is the audience to which the press and the mass media are oriented, to which public officials pay attention on a day-to-day basis between elections, and so on. To function easily and without overt opposition from local government and the other organized aspects of the city, the good will and acclaim of community leaders is useful and perhaps essential.

The fact that the commercial manager of Mediana Bell is asked to explain to an obviously sympathetic ear the company's position on a rate case or that the editor of the newspaper publishes so much of the company news regularly fed to him by the same source, means that the decision points in the community are accessible and listening. If the company gets into "trouble," the business community will rally to its side. The local officials will do it favors, and the conduct of telephone business in Mediana will be somewhat easier.

A stronger community participation policy will strengthen the ties between the telephone company employees and the business community. This eventuality plus the high regard of the general public, occasioned primarily by the company's reputation as an employer and as providing an excellent service, will cushion the jolts that may be occasioned by any untoward act directed against the telephone company in Mediana. (Some of the ways in which the policy might be strengthened, rising out of the Mediana Study, are spelled out later on in this section of our report.)

Since it is so desirable to make an impact on the general public, particularly the most numerous group of blue collar workers and their families, it surely is worthwhile to borrow or at least to consider some of the devices of those companies who have been particularly successful in reaching this group and achieving its acclaim.

While it is obvious that Mediana Bell should not increase its labor force for the sole purpose of increasing its apparent size in the community, it can do more to let the community know how large it is at present. The policy followed presently of letting cost considerations dictate the location of telephone buildings, each activity finding its minimum cost location, could be modified to take into account the symbolic nature of physical plant as well. If the telephone company office looks like a retail store, the company will be looked upon as similar to a retail business. The dispersed and scattered pattern of Mediana Bell operations means that no one can, in the course of his everyday life in Mediana, get an acquaintance with the size of the local activities.

In addition, the general public willingly gives its acclaim to those firms who are known as paying and treating their workers well. While Mediana Bell certainly has a high reputation in this regard at the present time, it would be well to emphasize this feature of Bell's operations. Certainly, the emphasis presently placed on the role employees play in their day-to-day contacts with the public on and off the job will aid along these lines considerably.

#### B. The Style and Content of Bell Employee Participation

As worked out in practice in Mediana, Bell's participation policy consists of two main efforts: first, that of establishing contacts with community leaders so that they will be accessible and willing listeners to the telephone company's viewpoint; and secondly, of going along, somewhat grudgingly, in the financing of community projects. Mediana Bell probably does a little bit more than average in everything it is asked to participate in, but its employees are neither leaders nor enthusiastic followers.

Compliance has its rewards, but the greatest accolades go to those who appear autonomous, set the pace, or who invent new styles of participation. In this connection, Mediana Bell apparently cannot get full credit for its activities because its employees use the excuse of powerlessness as a counter to the demands made of them, rarely set the pace, and mostly go along with what others have been doing.

Several things come to mind as possible remedies for these minor defects in policy:

First, local telephone company employees can avoid jargon which emphasizes their subordinate authority position within the company. To describe one's position in terms of to whom one reports is to emphasize the subordinate aspects of that position. Rather, if one defined one's authority positively in terms of over what one has control, the superordinate aspects of the position are emphasized.

It is a propos here to mention the impact of the desk arrangements in the telephone business office on the impression of the local manager's status. Both field workers felt that the location of his desk in the same office as the service representatives somewhat off to one corner had something of the flavor of a Victorian overseer of copy clerks. This flavor depreciated his status considerably.\*

Thirdly, in meeting the demands of community organizations for contributions or other forms of participation, it seemed to us that the telephone company should rely less upon the argument that they must "clear" all requests with division or central headquarters and more on arguments which emphasize their control over these contributions. It seemed to us that it was a perfectly acceptable argument as a counter to the United Fund demand to say that your business was not as good it might be, but that it was an argument which cheapened one to say that one did not have the power to set the contribution. Here the example of the cleverness of the personnel manager of Power Parts in countering the demands of the Chamber of Commerce should be borne in mind.

Fourthly, it should be possible for the Bell organization locally to find some project which it could define as its special interest. The Power Company gets its rewards from its activity in industrial development. Industrial development is, of course, not contradictory to the business aims of the telephone company and, as a matter of fact, might be looked upon as being directly in line with its desire to increase its business locally. Particularly since the problem of industrial development is one which is close to the heart of the desires of both the general public and the business community, the sponsorship of activities in this direction by Mediana Bell would certainly strike very close to the needs and aspirations of both of these important segments of the community. In other communities where other problems are at the fore of people's concern, the adoption by Bell of these problems as its special concern would certainly redound to the organization's benefit.

Finally, although it is hard to "legislate" spontaneity, it is obvious that a more spontaneous attitude toward participation would have its pay-off. The attitude should be more "Let's see what we can do," rather than "I doubt whether division headquarters will let us do it." It might even be possible for the commercial manager to build up his spontaneity by appearing to fight division or central headquarters, rather than by his appearing to be most anxious to comply with whatever limits they have set upon him.

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\*This depreciation of status is reflected curiously in an interview with one of the service representatives who pointed to the commercial manager's desk as an example of the democratic treatment of employees in the telephone company. She felt that since his desk was no different than her own and located in the same general environment, that the telephone company's policy was one of equality between authority and those who were subordinate within the organization.

## X. FUTURE RESEARCH ON BUSINESS COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

Properly to benefit from the experience of a pilot study requires drawing out both its limitations and its implications for future research. The main body of this report has laid out the major hunches, hypotheses and ideas which have stemmed from our experiences in Mediana. Much of what we have learned could not have been fully anticipated, although to persons in the telephone company our findings may have a very familiar flavor. More important, perhaps, than the substantive findings is the experience gained in research know-how and confidence. We now feel very confident that we can design and carry through a full-scale study of business community relationships that will have relatively few "bugs."

The purpose of this section is to state what we believe to be the next steps in research on this topic. The proposals made here are given only in very rough outline showing primarily the major dimensions along which research in this area should be extended, rather than detailed blueprints.

We propose in this section to extend the research on business-community relations in three complementary directions: first, we suggest that the existing data collected by the telephone company in the course of its own operations and internal research be explored, with a view to obtaining an understanding of some of the factors, other than community participation, which are involved in public attitudes toward the telephone company. Second, we propose to extend the study to cover a variety of communities. Finally, we propose to introduce variation in the performance of the telephone operations themselves as a major variable. The details of these suggestions are given below:

### A. The Exploration of Existing Data

One of the side effects of the Mediana study was to impress the researchers with the extensiveness of the data collected by the telephone company in an effort to assess its own operations and its impact on the general public. While these data have been analyzed with what are apparently equivocal results for the relationships between company operations and public reactions, they may still serve as an important means of locating the kinds of communities which deserve special study.

Because our acquaintance with these data is very superficial, we can only give very rough indications of how they may be employed. Actual use of them must obviously be undertaken in conjunction with the appropriate research department of the company.

An important way of making use of such existing data in the design of future studies would be to make available to the research staff the results of whatever analyses have been made on the following topics: The relationship between company service and public reactions to the company; and, the relationship between public relations efforts of local managers and public reactions to the company. Whatever results have been attained may point the way to the incorporation of factors which have been neglected in the pilot study.

Perhaps the primary advantage to be obtained from the use of these data may be to provide some definite leads to the kinds of communities which should be studied more intensively. For example, if it has been found that there is some correlation between service indices and attitudes toward the company but that this relationship is not perfect, then it might be best to pick communities where service is poor but opinion of the company high and where the opposite obtains, so that we may investigate those factors which produce these deviations from the general trends.

The precise uses to which these data might be put cannot be entirely anticipated in advance. Better acquaintance with their nature and quality, and the extent to which they have already been analyzed, would be required before we could anticipate specifically how they can be used.

#### B. Extension to Additional Communities

The characteristics of Mediana which distinguish it from other American communities condition, heavily the findings of this pilot study. Mediana is a small city, whose industry is relatively diversified in ownership, type of products produced, and in the sizes of individual establishments. Its community life is quite vigorous, although perhaps not exceptionally so for its size and location. Mediana's political life is one-sided, being a heavily Republican community. These are all features which, if changed, might have conditioned the findings arrived at. We stress "might" in the last sentence because it is not clear that they would do so, only that it is reasonable to assume so.

There are several significant dimensions along which communities are known to vary with concomitant effects on the nature of living within them. Perhaps the most important is size, the differences between hamlet and metropolis having furnished materials for several generations of sociologists. In the large metropolis, the business community itself is stratified with its highest levels perhaps even further removed from the general population than in Mediana. At the same time, the telephone company higher headquarters location is likely to be in a metropolis so that the position of the company in the business community might not be as slight as in Mediana.

Another important dimension concerns the extent to which a community is economically independent or dependent. One extreme is represented by the dormitory suburb, where few residents work in the communities where they live, and the major businesses are stores. What is the position of the telephone company and other business enterprises in such a community? At the other extreme, the fully developed city with its dependent hinterland, exchanging goods and services with other communities, is approximated to some degree by Mediana, where the telephone company is considered relatively unimportant.

A third difference among cities concerns its social organization. Mediana's community life has a "seamless" quality to it, with no major gaps between conflicting groups. With a lively two party system, and the existence of rifts between segments of the community, the nature and evaluation of community participation may be quite different. For example, the importance of access to community leaders on all sides of the major alignments may be considerably augmented, both as far as public attitudes toward the company and as far as making telephone activities, as such, easier.

### C. Variations in Telephone Company Operations

Despite the degree to which the telephone company appears to be rationalized, variations in its operations are almost inevitable. There are differences among individual managers, differences in the situations faced, differences in the quality of services rendered. These are all factors which might conceivably alter the portrait of the local telephone company as we discerned it in Mediana. After all, Mediana Bell is represented in the community by only a handful of persons on the managerial level. The nature of the response to the company might be a function of personal qualities of these persons, to some extent. In addition, no respondent in Mediana was dissatisfied with telephone service, and only one had anything adverse to say about its rates. It seems likely that the good quality of service rendered placed a floor under the opinion of the telephone company in Mediana.

What would be the results of a study like this in cities where telephone activities were different? In selecting communities for further study, some variations along the lines indicated above should be built in. The research suggested above on existing telephone company data should provide the clues to the major axes of differentiation to be built into the selection of communities. In the absence of such research, perhaps our best bet would be to consider situations in which both service and the community relations activities of commercial managers varied.

APPENDIX A

Roster of Persons Interviewed

Roster of Persons Interviewed

1. Business Managers:

Plant Manager, Ajax Steel  
President, Local Minerals  
Plant Manager, Midwest Electrical  
Supervisor, Midwest Electrical  
Supervisor, Midwest Electrical  
President, First National Bank  
Plant Superintendent, Smith-Jones Glass Company  
Plant Manager, Power Parts  
Personnel Manager, Power Parts  
Plant Superintendent, Power Parts  
Treasurer, American Ceramics  
Division Manager, Mediana Gas  
Division Manager, Mediana Power  
Manager, Chain Retail Store  
President, Indian Pottery  
President, Mediana Publishing

2. Community Leaders:

Former Editor, Mediana Publishing  
Manager, United Fund  
Past President, Rotary Club  
Chairman, Mediana County Republican Party  
City Councilman  
City Councilman  
Member, Library Board  
City Solicitor  
"Party Boss," Democratic Party  
Member, Mediana Board of Education  
President, Junior Chamber of Commerce  
President, Chamber of Commerce  
Superintendent of Schools  
Mediana Historian  
Officers, Taxpayers' League (3)  
Manager, Mediana Community Center  
Manager, Chamber of Commerce  
Catholic Priest

3. Telephone Employees:

Commercial Department:

District Manager  
Local Manager  
Business Office Supervisor  
Business Representatives (2)

Traffic Department:

District Traffic Manager  
Assistant Traffic Managers (2)  
Chief Operator

Plant Department:

District Plant Superintendent  
Plant Chief  
District Plant Engineer  
District Construction Superintendent

4. General Public: (Note: Only men were interviewed)

Sales Manager, Candy Company  
Shearsman, Ajax Steel  
Tile Matcher, American Ceramics  
Physician  
Pipe Puller, works for oil well company  
Helper, rolling mill, Ajax Steel  
Manager, Shoe store  
Truck Driver, Construction company  
Guard, Battery Company  
Engineer, Cement Company  
Teacher, High School  
Teacher, High School  
Foreman, Construction company  
Supervisor, Art pottery  
Proprietor, Stationary and office supplies company

APPENDIX B

Interview Forms Used in Mediana Study

APPENDIX B

Interview Guide Used for Qualitative Interviews  
with Businessmen and Community Leaders

I. Uniform Background Data:

- A. Age
- B. Place of education and educational attainment
- C. Marital status and life cycle position
- D. Place of birth
- E. Length of time in "Mediana"
- F. Religious affiliation: (denomination if Protestant)
- G. Politics: local and national

II. Topical Outline:

- A. Structural position of informant:
  - 1. Authority within firm
  - 2. Activity involved in role
  - 3. Community institutions contact involved in role
- B. Amount and kind of community activity:
  - 1. Business organizations
  - 2. Community service organizations: e.g., United Fund, etc.
- C. Expectations for activity perceived
  - 1. Who expects
  - 2. What do they expect and why
- D. Consequences of activity:
  - 1. For the firm
  - 2. For the individual
  - 3. What would happen if they didn't participate
- E. Perceived position of other firms and positions in activity:
- F. Special position of utilities vis-a-vis other business firms:

QUESTIONNAIRE USED IN GENERAL POPULATION SAMPLE

NORC  
Survey 406  
7/57

We are conducting a survey of public opinion here in Mediana. We have been asking Mediana citizens what they think of their community and of various businesses and industrial firms.

1. How long have you lived in Mediana?

IF LESS THAN WHOLE LIFE:

1a. Where did you live before that?

1b. How did you happen to come here?

2. In every city there are some things that the community is particularly proud of. What are some of the things in Mediana that you are most proud of?

3. Are there any things you can think of in the city that need to be improved?

Anything else?

4. FOR EACH AREA NOT MENTIONED IN DETAIL IN QUESTION 2 or 3:

4a. What is your impression of the employment situation in Mediana?

4b. How about wages?

4c. City government?

4d. Schools?

4e. Public utilities?

5. You mentioned (problem areas from Question 3). Are there any groups or individuals in town that are working to improve that?

What are they doing?

6. As far as you know, are there any groups or individuals in the community that would tend to block improvements in (areas mentioned in Question #3)?

What are they doing about it (i.e., blocking)?

7. I'd like to know what you think about the general community spirit here in Mediana. Would you say that this is a community with a great deal of public spirit, or is it one where people pretty much don't care about how things go?

I wonder why that is.

8. Now, about the industrial and business firms here in town. Would you say, in general, that they are very public spirited, or would you rate them not so high in public spirit?

Why do you say that?



	Place to Work	Contribution	Quality
1.	Ajax Steel		
2.	Local Mineral		
3.	Smith Brothers		
4.	Mediana Corporation		
5.	Midwest Electrical		
6.	Mediana Packing		
7.	Farm Machinery		
8.	Local Construction		
9.	First National Bank		
10.	Smith-Jones		
11.	Power Parts		
12.	American Ceramics Co.		
13.	First Federal Savings & Loan Association		
14.	Mediana Bell Telephone		
15.	Mediana Power Company		
16.	Sears, Roebuck & Co.		
17.	Indian Pottery		
18.	Metal Parts		
19.	H Weber and Sons		
20.	Mediana Publishing		

10. Of all the firms we have just talked about, which would you rate as doing the most for Mediana?

Why do you say that?

11. Which one would you say has done the least for Mediana?

Why would that be?

12. Now, about some different types of business...Which do you think has contributed more to the general welfare of the community?

12a. Locally owned firms or firms which are branches of national companies?

12b. Industrial firms (factories) or commercial firms (retail and wholesale)?

12c. Public utilities (gas, electric, telephone) or private businesses?

How about, say, the Telephone Company?



Now, I'd like to ask you a couple of questions about yourself.

16. How old are you?

17. Are you married?

18. Who else lives here with you?

19. What is your occupation?

20. What is the name of the last school you attended?

21. What was the highest grade in school you completed?

22. In a national election, do you think of yourself mainly as a Republican or mainly as a Democrat?