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# Constitutional Change in a Long-Depressed Community: A Case Study of Duluth, Minnesota <sup>a</sup>

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**ABSTRACT**—Duluth, a “boom and bust” city with a marginal economy, has a unique position outside the mainstream of American life that adds a different dimension to the understanding of community politics. Settlement patterns have contributed to the development of separate “business” and “labor” subcommunities that are substantially alienated from and hostile to one another and have rarely been able to cooperate in any civic endeavor. Operating within the framework of a political system caricaturing that of Minnesota as a whole, the two subcommunities reversed the pattern of local concern found in other cities; labor became the progressive force in local matters while business played a highly conservative role. Since World War II, the decline of the city’s established economic base has been completed. At the same time, the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party has emerged as the dominant political party locally. Its leaders, in alliance with organized labor, have tried to do something about Duluth’s predicament. In 1956, they secured a major change in the city’s form of government that was designed to open the door to progress on other fronts. To do so, they forged an alliance with the business community that, at least temporarily, transcended the city’s normal cleavage. While the constitutional change was of little immediate importance, the effect of the alliance was to convince community leaders on both sides that cooperation for civic improvement was possible, thus opening the door to a series of government-aided developments that may have far-reaching consequences for Duluth’s economic and social well-being.

## Duluth and the Study of Community Political Systems

Knowledge of American local politics is almost invariably based on studies of communities that participate in the continued economic growth that generally characterizes American society. Indeed, since their initiation

<sup>a</sup> This article is part of the author’s larger study of community political systems in medium-size metropolitan areas (100,000 to 450,000 metropolitan population with one or more central cities of at least 50,000) in the Upper Mississippi-Missouri Valley States of Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, undertaken under the auspices of the Institute of Government and Public Affairs, University of Illinois. The research for the study was conducted during the years 1960-1963; field research in the Duluth area was concentrated in August 1960. The entire study will be published in several volumes as the “Cities of the Prairie” series, plus articles such as this one that deal with specific civil communities and specific political problems. The first volume will contain a detailed outline of the methodology of the research as well as a full statement of the fundamental questions raised in the study as a whole.

Local constitutional change was one of the major concerns of the study. Virtually all the cities studied experimented with some form of governmental structural change in the half generation following World War II and all underwent substantial constitutional change in some way. As a general rule, political conflicts generated by every effort at constitutional change tended to reveal the basic cleavages in each community and to underline basic areas of consensus as well. Consequently, the study of those conflicts proved most useful in understanding community political systems. The Duluth situation presents a unique variation on that pattern, hence the focus of this article.

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some two generations ago, such studies have been confined to “mainstream” communities. The pioneering urban studies of the political reformers at the turn of the century concentrated on “exposing” the politics of cities with rapidly expanding economies — “cities on the make,” as Nelson Algren characterized Chicago.<sup>1</sup> A generation later, during the years of the Great Depression, sociologists and anthropologists discovered the “city of despair,” incidentally providing us with the only substantial studies of American cities in a state of economic decline (although still reflecting the state of American society as a whole).<sup>2</sup> In our own generation, we have seen political scientists return to the study of the city in an effort to obtain objective knowledge about city politics. Their studies, however, also focus on mainstream cities and usually on the larger ones.<sup>3</sup> It is only the occasional small community study, usually undertaken by sociologists trained in the depression-born tradition of *Middletown*, that reveals life and politics in a community that is not within the mainstream economy.<sup>4</sup>

Duluth, Minnesota, lies outside the mainstream of the American economy and of the American urban development in a number of ways. Most obvious is its geographic position at the northernmost fringe of the central United States, not quite within the Mississippi Valley physiographically and neither in any other nationally important natural region. Its size category is also atypical. As a free-standing city of approximately 107,000 population it is big enough to be considered metropolitan but not metropolitan enough to be the center of a suburban com-

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Because of a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship during the 1964-1965 academic year he was able to work on the completion of his studies in pre-twentieth century American federalism.

plex or even to fit the common image of a metropolis. Duluth belongs to a group of cities that embraces approximately 25 per cent of the total urban population of the United States but has never been assigned a firm place in the folklore of American life—a good indication of the isolation of such cities from the nation's mainstream.<sup>3</sup>

Even the character of Duluth's population is atypical. Settled, in the main, by immigrants who came directly from Europe (Scandinavia, Finland, and Eastern or Southern Europe), Duluth did not begin its existence as a community with a substantial population base of native Americans. Its citizenry had to become Americanized by looking at "America" outside the civil community rather than by emulating a strong established internal population.

Most important, however, in determining Duluth's atypical character has been the city's economic position. Located on the fringes of the American economy, Duluth has depended on the most unstable elements to provide it with an economic base: lumbering, mining, and the transshipment of agricultural commodities. The juxtaposition of these three unstable elements has contributed to the creation of a perpetually fluctuating local economy with a propensity to long-range decline. In its first half century of existence, Duluth alternated between great booms and equally great busts, with longer periods of each, until its greatest and longest boom gave way to the continued decline that has marked its second half century. Contrast this history with the record of the majority of cities of similar or larger size in the United States; their histories are of more or less continuous growth punctured by periodic depression only.

It should be noted that while Duluth is atypical it is not unique. Indeed, it may be considered somewhat representative of those American cities that grew up in relation to the various extractive industries that have flourished from time to time to fill the nation's natural-resource needs. Most of these cities have undergone similar experiences as their natural-resource bases have been depleted. The mining boomtowns of the mountain West represent the cities that Duluth resembles most, although, since most of the boomtowns never grew to medium size or lasted as cities for more than a generation (the few exceptions found other advantages, such as location and climate, that completely altered their purposes), their problems were different than Duluth's. Similarly, the coaltowns of Appalachia represent another example. Unlike their western counterparts, a number of such cities, particularly in Pennsylvania, grew to medium size or larger and have histories stretching back into the early nineteenth century, at the very least. The very eastern location and character of the cities make their situations and their political ramifications in many vital ways substantially different from those of Duluth. Duluth may be considered illustrative of the examples given although it should not be considered typical.

The study of an atypical American city fills in certain lacunae in our knowledge of American community politics. It becomes possible, through an exposure of similarities and differences and a testing of common hypotheses

under differing conditions, to develop a more honestly comparative understanding of community politics in the United States and in cities more closely identified with the mainstream of American life. By exploring the reasons for Duluth's economic atypicality and its political consequences, it is possible to develop a greater understanding of the externally imposed limits on a civil community's political efforts. At the same time, study of the city's political singularity can be useful as a contrast to the rather standardized local political systems that are found throughout the rest of the country. Furthermore, Duluth as a city plays an important role in the life of Minnesota and the Northwest and is deserving of study for that aspect. Finally, just because it is atypical, Duluth has developed certain political techniques and government programs that, while addressed to roughly the same problem areas that confront all cities in contemporary American society, are unique and have not really been tried out elsewhere. While their suitability to Duluth may be a function of Duluth's unique characteristics and, as such, may, perforce, be limited in their applicability elsewhere, they may suggest to other cities the existence of other options for political organization and government response to community problems than those most frequently discussed or tried.

This article is a preliminary discussion of the economic and social elements that have influenced Duluth's political system and have contributed to that civil community's atypical character. The author attempts to describe briefly in broad strokes the geo-historical setting within which Duluth's economic and political systems have developed, the essential relation between local economics and politics and, through exploration of the exemplary case of city charter change, to expose something of the manner in which the political system has functioned to deal with its immediate and long range problems. A consequence is the uncovering of a paradox of some proportions. This finding may require some changes in the political scientists' perception of the political consequences of conflict over constitutional change. Finally, some notions will be put forth about the city's political system in which the author will attempt to point up the possibilities for developing comparative questions that will be useful in the study of community politics.

### **The Geo-Historical Setting<sup>4</sup>**

Duluth is a city of approximately 107,000 people. It is located at the far western tip of Lake Superior, the southwestern anchor of Minnesota's northeastern "Arrowhead," and in the lower reaches of the state's northern cutover lands, across the St. Louis River from its sister city, Superior, Wisconsin.<sup>5</sup> A lakeport and railroad center, it is also the gateway to the Mesabi Iron Range, which is 60 miles to the north and was once the nation's most important source of iron ore, the major center for the shipping of grain grown on the prairies of the northwestern United States and the Canadian prairie provinces, and the "capital" of a tri-state (northern Minnesota, northern Wisconsin, and upper peninsula Michi-

gan) lakehead region in all of which is found a substantially depressed economy.<sup>8</sup>

Duluth is the largest city and county seat of St. Louis County, one of the largest counties in the United States. With a total area of 6,318 square miles, the county stretches from the Canadian border southward to the city of Duluth and encompasses an area the size of Connecticut and Rhode Island combined. Within St. Louis County are two bands of settlement, the settled area along the lake shore immediately around Duluth, and the settled area 60 miles to the north along the Mesabi Iron Range. Between Duluth and the Range there exist scattered farmsteads held in the main by Finns and other Scandinavians. North of the Range, except for isolated trappers and a few villages, the land is empty.

St. Louis County is almost a state unto itself because of its size and diffusion of population. These two factors have induced the development of intra-county political cleavages that are normally found within a state rather than in a county: cleavages between urban and rural areas; between the big city (Duluth), the Range and the out-county areas; and between the smaller communities that are centers for subcounty regions. The population of St. Louis County is ethnically heterogeneous in about the same proportions throughout its settled parts while its over-all ethnic composition is substantially different from that of its adjacent areas. The population make-up has contributed to the development of a singular variation of the Minnesota political tradition within the county, which has also strengthened Duluth's isolationist tendencies.

Duluth proper has an area of 62.6 square miles and consists of a long, narrow strip of land that extends 24 miles along the north shore of Lake Superior and the north bank of the St. Louis River at the foot of a 600-800 foot high escarpment that rises up almost directly from the lake, plus a 9-mile long sandbar extending out into the Lake, which is known as Minnesota Point. Its land boundaries have remained the same since 1912 when the last of the six municipalities incorporated along the shore was annexed. The areas — mostly vacant — that extend above the escarpment were incorporated whole into the city by the turn of the century.

Despite its large area, the city's population is concentrated in the narrow strip along the lake shore and extends up the face of the escarpment wherever it has proved feasible to build houses. Lack of population growth and its ensuing lack of pressures on land use during the last 40 years has perpetuated an initial scattering of settlement even along this lake-front strip, so that in many places there are large vacant areas between the urbanized neighborhoods (most of which were originally separate settlements). On the east side, the more fashionable section of town, these gaps are really natural intrusions into the city, where the streams that flow into Lake Superior tumble down the escarpment and carve small but lovely canyons in the rugged terrain, on the way. These streams and their banks have, by-and-large, been left in their wild state, either as city-owned park lands or simply as untouched wild lands. They not only dissect the city into neighborhoods but make it possible

for Duluth to be both an urban center and a unique part of the northern wilderness as well. As such, they enhance the beauty of Duluth even while preventing easy communication between neighborhoods. On the west side, the working-class section of town, there are larger areas of flat land. There the empty stretches are usually covered with thick and not particularly attractive undergrowth. The several neighborhoods are politically recognized in the city's charter that divides Duluth into 75 specific election districts. These districts serve as the basis for party caucuses and councilmanic, county commissioner, and state legislative districts.

This linear pattern of settlement not only makes the maintenance of community services costly but has also served to reinforce the city's fundamental socio-economic bipolarization into two very distinct sub-communities. The business community is dominated by representatives of absentee-owned timber and mining interests, by managers of absentee-owned downtown banks, and by the small percentage of downtown property owners who have remained in the city. They express their views through the Chamber of Commerce and the Governmental Research Bureau (a low-tax lobbying agency). They all live on the east side and have traditionally had almost no lasting contacts with the labor community.

The latter, west siders all, are highly unionized. The CIO unions are the largest but the AFL unions are also well organized. They are united in an unusually strong labor alliance built around three unions, the United Steel Workers, the bulk of whose members work at the American Steel and Wire Company plant in the west end; the Retail Clerks Union, well organized among the downtown white-collar workers; and the State, County, and Municipal Employees Union, which represents the civil servants in the city hall and in the county courthouse. The labor movement provides a full range of community services for its members that are built around its Community Services Committee, an agency designed to help the working people and their families make full use of available community services and to encourage union men to participate in civic activities.

The two subcommunities have become so alienated from one another over the years that they have rarely been able to cooperate in any civic endeavor. Indeed, local folklore has it that, when one element takes a stand on an issue, the other will automatically embrace the opposite position just out of spite.

In Duluth, as in most cities, the initial settlement of various population groups followed well known patterns of ethnic ghettoization and social stratification. Several of the ethnic neighborhoods even existed as separate municipalities for a time and at least one was originally founded as the company town of Oliver. Unlike most other cities, however, the transcendence of these ethnic neighborhoods by the second generation was aborted, partly by the closing of the city's period of economic prosperity but also because of the limitations of geography. The linear spread of the city and the gaps between neighborhoods made it difficult for people living in different parts of town to develop interpersonal relations

with one another nor did they encourage movement across town as against movement in a more natural centripetal direction.

The geographic difficulty increased near the center of the city where the escarpment protruded southeastward right down to the water's edge, neatly bisecting Duluth physically. This protrusion is now diminished by the construction of a highway which was literally blasted through it. During Duluth's formative years, however, only a narrow road crossed the point making communication between the two halves of the city very difficult.

The original neighborhood concentrations have been somewhat diluted in the past half generation by a combination of suburbanizing tendencies and technological advances in home construction that led to a spread of settlement outward into new areas along and upon the escarpment. The population movement, however, intensified the bipolarization of the civil community because residents from each side of the geopolitical division have tended to move farther away from the center of the city (and, by implication, the other side) while remaining on their respective sides. Since Duluth has a great deal of open space within its city limits, the suburbanizing trend was substantially accommodated without the creation of extra-city settlements and without the diminution of tradition cleavages that is often stimulated by a removal of population to the suburbs.<sup>9</sup>

Duluth's social cleavage is quite unlike the cleavages found in its sister cities in the Upper Mississippi-Missouri Valley; those cleavages, although partially related to socio-economic differences, are more clearly reflections of the cosmopolitan-local division than of any other.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, the geopolitical character of Duluth's cleavage is one of the two major political phenomena that are unique in that civil community (at least as compared to the other cities of the prairie). The second phenomenon is the strong reliance placed on a government-labor coalition rather than on the business community for progressive and innovative action in the civil community. In the other cities of the prairie, government agencies, particularly city government, tend to remain in the background and to rely upon other elements in the community for the initiation of civic action. Progressive and innovative actions, in particular, seem to be the province of the business community as it becomes concerned with various civic problems. In Duluth, the business elements are not only conservative but devoted to the status quo. Locally initiated civic action stems from the activities of various city agencies usually in cooperation with the local labor leaders whose counterparts in other civil communities tend to resist the changes proposed by local innovators.

In order to understand these two phenomena, it is necessary to understand something of Duluth's unique pattern of historical development.<sup>11</sup> While the first settlement within contemporary Duluth's city limits was made by French fur traders sometime during the eighteenth century, in the days before the American occupation of Minnesota, American settlement of the city dates only from the latter half of the nineteenth century. A few set-

tlers occupied the site of downtown Duluth after 1856, moving across from Superior in search of opportunities generated by the opening of the canal around the rapids of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. That project opened Lake Superior to navigation from the lower Great Lakes and stimulated the settlement of the American shore in anticipation of a great commercial boom.

The expected boom did not materialize, except in the copper mining areas of Michigan, because there was no economic reason to attract settlers to that out of the way corner of the United States when greater opportunities were available hundreds of miles to the south and east. Even southern Minnesota had difficulty in attracting settlers in those years because of its northerly location off the main routes of east-west migration. Furthermore, the new settlement was deeply affected by the depression that followed the Panic of 1857 as was settlement of even the more accessible West. The effects of the Panic on outposts such as Duluth were catastrophic. Although the first settlers had already established instruments of local government, most of them left the new settlement in the early 1860's when Duluth experienced its first "bust."

A few settlers remained on the site and the number of them began to increase after the end of the Civil War; but it was not until 1870 that settlement in Duluth took on a permanent character with the completion of the Lake Superior and Mississippi Railroad (now part of the Northern Pacific system) that connected the lakehead with St. Paul. Like the Soo Canal, that railroad was built through the efforts of the state—in this case, Minnesota—with the assistance of a federal land grant. For the second time, Duluth was the passive recipient of outside assistance, just as earlier it had been the victim of an externally caused disaster.

The coming of the railroad in August, 1870, brought growth and prosperity but also launched the boom-bust cycle so typical of those Western cities whose economies are based on the extraction of natural resources. In March of that year, Duluth was granted its first charter as a city and its first municipal election was held in April. The railroad also made it possible for Duluth to develop its first local industry, lumbering, which was already moving north from the St. Croix River valley as the southern stands of timber began to give out. Within three years, however, another nationwide depression ended Duluth's second boom and caused another evacuation of population. The ramifications of the Panic of 1873 were so devastating that the few people who remained in the community after 1875 felt compelled to surrender their city charter and Duluth reverted to village status for 10 years (1877-1887). Again there began a period of slow resurgence, which became a boom only with the opening of the Mesabi Range.

Iron mining began in earnest in the late 1880's and with it came Duluth's greatest period of growth. This boom—the city's last—was an extended one lasting until the first World War. Its success was the result of a convergence of several factors.

The opening of the Mesabi Range brought in the

newly enlarging steel interests from Cleveland who developed Duluth as their field headquarters from which to oversee the exploitation of the Mesabi mines. These great steel companies, including the Hanna and Rockefeller interests and, ultimately, United States Steel, established branch offices in Duluth, created some small processing plants to manufacture steel products, and built a railroad to the Iron Range (the Duluth, Mesabi, and Iron Range Railroad) to transport ore to the port. Then, with the assistance of the federal government whose Army Engineers dredged, enlarged, and improved the Duluth-Superior harbor, they built the port facilities needed to ship the ore down the Great Lakes to the Ohio, and later to the Indiana and Illinois steel mills. In short order, the iron mining industry became the mainstay of the city's economy.

At the same time, the Northern Pacific Railroad, which had been built westward to the Pacific Coast from Superior-Duluth under the terms of its Congressional land grant, was completed in its entirety. Duluth acquired a transcontinental railroad of its own with little effort, and had only to compete with Superior for pre-eminence at the lakehead. As other railroads arrived to connect the city with Winnipeg and the Canadian West, Duluth began to develop as an important shipping center for the region's agricultural produce. The Northern Pacific connection also made the city an important point for the transshipment of goods from the Orient to the Atlantic coast.

A third industry, also the product of existing natural resources but this one combined with external effort, boomed in the Duluth area at the same time. The lumbering industry, which had been moving northward and westward across the United States since the 1840's, centered in the Duluth region in the 1880's and 1890's. Like the steel companies, the lumber companies established field headquarters in Duluth while they proceeded to strip the forests in the vicinity.

Beginning in the 1890's, Duluth benefited from a great expansion of agricultural settlement in the lands to its west that were located along the railroads serving the area. Homesteaders came in great number to settle the prairie and even to try to farm the cut-over lands of the North Woods. With the outbreak of World War I, wheat prices in Europe went sky-high and a brief bonanza period brought thousands more to claim acreage on the northern plains. This "wheat rush" meant additional prosperity for Duluth, the region's major port.

The fortuitous combination of these factors gave Duluth a period of expansion that raised the city's status from a backwater village to a major American metropolis, overnight. The city's population rose from 1,300 in 1876 to 26,000 in 1886. By the turn of the century, Duluth was one of the nation's 50 largest cities and, by 1917, it boasted more than 90,000 residents.<sup>12</sup> (For a summary of Duluth's population growth, see Table 1.)

Duluth's extended boom lasted until World War I when the city suffered a series of blows that combined to reverse the trend established a generation earlier. The sequential pattern was reversed. The first blow was the

Table 1. Population of Duluth: 1860-1960

1860	80	1890	33,115	1930	101,463
1870	3,131	1900	52,969	1940	101,065
1880	3,483	1910	78,466	1950	104,511
		1920	98,917	1960	106,884

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

opening of the Panama Canal that caused Duluth's Orient trade to disappear as rail transshipment ceased to be competitive. There are persons in Duluth who maintain to this day that the construction of the canal was fatal to their city, although the statement appears to be something of an exaggeration.

The other blows, striking more closely to home, had an even greater effect. By the end of World War I, the lumber industry had virtually played out its streak in the North Woods. The decline meant the end of important payrolls and the exodus of key people from the Duluth area. If that were not sufficient, the postwar agricultural depression that continued through the 1920's and 1930's affected the Northwest more drastically than any other section of the country. Settlers who had homesteaded millions of acres of marginal lands in Duluth's hinterland in the previous two decades were forced to abandon those lands as the bottom fell out of the wheat market. The value of grain shipments declined and Duluth was left with another liability. At the same time, the expansion of operations on the Mesabi came to an end. Although mining continued unabated there, the population, payrolls, and locally beneficial profits ceased to grow proportionately after 1920. The railroads also reached their peak in 1920 and thereafter their role in the nation's economy began to decline as truck and air transport expanded. This turned out to be a double blow to Duluth since its railroads began to move their operations to Minneapolis and St. Paul, the region's prime rail center, once the Orient trade disappeared.

Since World War I, Duluth has been in a slump that has now lasted longer than the boom that preceded it. The census figures bear this out (Table 1). While the city's population has continued to increase slightly, the increase has not kept pace with the local birthrate, indicating a substantial outmigration from the community since 1920.<sup>13</sup>

It is clear that Duluth's initial prosperity was largely based on the economic system of America's rural-land frontier and, slightly later, on the country's urban-industrial frontier. During the days of the land frontier, the city's ability to contribute to the economic system linked to that frontier enabled its settlers to overcome the obstacles of geography and to found successfully a settlement. Then, when the Duluth area turned out to be the best source of supply for a major ingredient needed on the urban-industrial frontier, the settlement turned into a city. However, the dynamics of American economy are based on society's continuous advance on successively new frontiers and the local "little" economies must adjust themselves to these new frontiers as they appear or sink into prolonged depression. Duluth's economy

was one of the least suited for an adjustment to the national economy of the metropolitan-technological frontier that has replaced that of the urban industrial frontier. Hence, the city was in a difficult position that could not have been prevented even if its citizenry had been prepared to respond to the changing frontier.

Despite the changes of the war period (1914-1918), several decades were necessary for the old industries to decline into their present state. Lumbering in the old style continued fitfully until the Depression of the 1930's. Railroading remained important until the close of World War II (its superfluous labor force contributed to the city's unemployment roles throughout the 1950's). What was left of Duluth's immediate agricultural hinterland after the bust of 1920 virtually disappeared as the Depression induced farm abandonments in northern Minnesota. While grain, particularly wheat, continues to flow through the city from the plains states, automated handling techniques have reduced its direct impact on the city's economy. Mining continued to be a major source of the revenue even as Duluth was being further reduced to a point of transshipment for the Mesabi ores.<sup>14</sup> After 1950, however, the Mesabi deposits began to fade while new discoveries in northern Quebec and elsewhere proved to be far richer and more readily exploitable. The decline of the Mesabi was felt during the 1950's but it was not until the 1960's that the bottom dropped out.

Thus, the close of the earlier decade still saw some hope for the future remaining, hope that has been substantially dashed since the recession of 1958. That recession apparently delivered the *coup de grâce* to Duluth's old economy. The total labor force, which had remained in the vicinity of 50,000 until then, dropped to the vicinity of 45,000 by 1961. The number of employed dropped from 48,400 to 41,600, in 1961, while the number of unemployed rose from 2,100 (4.15% of the labor force) to 4,200 (9.17%) in the same period.<sup>15</sup> Whereas Duluth's unemployment rate was not significantly higher than the national average before that recession, by 1961 it was almost one and a half times as high. Having little of the new technology within its boundaries, Duluth was unable to recoup its aggregate job losses. Even the development of the taconite industry has had a minimal impact on Duluth. Slow to expand in any case, the taconite developments have been located elsewhere in the Duluth region.

Duluth's poor economic position has been enhanced by the community's lack of preparation for any change in the economic base while times were good. It was as if there was a local faith that the natural resources that underlay the great boom were inexhaustible. Duluth's cardinal error lay in its leadership's willing acquiescence to become an outpost for the cities of the eastern Great Lakes, particularly Cleveland, rather than to make an effort to give Duluth a hinterland of its own. Perhaps this was inevitable since Duluth never really developed a locally based, high level group of civic-minded leaders who had substantial economic interest in the maintenance of the community. Its top level economic leaders

were invariably transients sent out from the main office for a tour of duty in the field. Even if the "tour of duty" lengthened into years, there was always the hope of better things elsewhere that prevented the development of a permanent stake in the community. Lack of leadership at this level, which is only now becoming commonplace in other medium-size civil communities, created a vacuum at the point where creative ideas for economic growth locally must develop. In Duluth, even the major banks were absentee-owned; they were parts of banking trusts operating out of Minneapolis with the same type of transient managers as those serving the local branches of the corporate empires in more basic industries.

Most cities of the American West began as outposts of eastern interests, located within the hinterlands of cities "back east." The successful ones rapidly converted into centers of influence by developing hinterlands of their own farther to the west whose economic support served to make them increasingly independent of the eastern interests that had founded them. The development of western hinterlands tributary to cities farther to the east was a natural concomitant of the basically westward movement of settlement across the continent (the one major exception to this is the intermountain West's dependence on the cities of California because of a reversal in the pattern of settlement in the 1850's). What is somewhat less expected is the degree to which this pattern has persisted long after the completion of America's continental expansion. Particularly, in the area between the Great Lakes and the Rocky Mountains this pattern has persisted most forcibly and visibly. Those cities that have been able to develop the largest hinterlands over the years have become—and remain—the region's centers.

Unlike its sister cities, Duluth never made the transition to independence by developing a hinterland to the west. Instead, it continued to be dominated economically by eastern "parent" cities. Although it naturally became the trading center for a relatively large area along the Lake Superior shores, its leadership paid little attention to the development of a real metropolis-hinterland relation, even ignoring its trading area except insofar as the residents came to them. Proud of their eastern connections, they were not moved by the needs of the region around them. The area to the west was rapidly absorbed into the orbit of the Twin Cities whose leaders were concerned with their "west." The Twin Cities capitalized on their location to build the railroad connections that Congress had given to Duluth even before it had become a city. It was as if the great escarpment that closes Duluth's urban area off from the west and fences it in along the eastward-looking coast, fenced off the Duluthians' outlook at the same time. Consequently, when the eastern interests no longer had need for what Duluth had to offer, the city had no place to turn to recoup its fortunes.

Lack of easily available opportunity led to increasing disillusionment by Duluth's businessmen, the only potential source of economic readjustment within the community. Perhaps this was a natural consequence of a history of externally provided opportunities. Unlike the citizens of cities with a few natural advantages who had built

their cities through concerted effort to create an economic base and who had inculcated into succeeding generations the tradition that drive was necessary in order to succeed, the first Duluthians either succeeded because of external factors or left town. Consequently the city had no tradition of local initiative to fall back on.<sup>16</sup>

As the boom faded and Duluth's economic life became increasingly static, the business community became increasingly conservative. The top echelons, representing outside corporations and with few serious local attachments, were concerned with extracting the maximum profits from the area recognizing that the decline would continue to diminish their local economic interest. Their major concern became the prevention of increases in government expenditures and in their own tax bills. The middle echelon merchant and service group, which had never furnished important local leadership, remained in the tow of the former. They contented themselves with attempting to extract the maximum from the status quo, joining their "senior" compatriots in opposing higher taxes and any public improvements that might lead to tax increases. The more aggressive among them sought to send their children away to college in the hope that they would carve careers for themselves elsewhere.

This conservatism is very different from the business conservatism of communities in the mainstream of American life. In the latter, businessmen tend to be political conservatives because they are satisfied sufficiently with their position in life to want to hold onto "a good thing." At the same time, they are ambitious in business because they have hopes of fulfilling their ambitions. This tends to make them progressive in their efforts to improve the local economic climate that, today, means the improvement of the community's civic life and public facilities.<sup>17</sup> Duluth's conservatism is a conservatism of despair, founded on the premise that nothing could be made significantly better and that prudence dictates that one hold onto whatever he has left. Not believing that the economic situation could be substantially improved, Duluth's businessmen could not make the effort necessary to improve it.<sup>18</sup>

The labor movement in the city, on the other hand, is moderate to progressive, and has been turning more progressive in matters of civic concern in recent years. It is, of course, liberal (in the common-sense use of the term) in matters of social welfare, and public intervention in the economy, as are most labor unions in the United States. In this respect, it does not differ from its counterparts in Duluth's sister cities. However, unlike its counterparts elsewhere, it is also more progressive than the business community in matters pertaining to local economic development and civic improvement. In other communities, where civic leadership and concern for community progress have been the province of the businessmen, the labor movement and working men generally have tended to take a back seat. This is partly because the field of civic action is new and unfamiliar to unions—their relationships with local business and civic leaders in the past were generally hostile because they revolved around the fight for union recognition; at that time their

political efforts were concentrated at the national level. It is also because there often remains a legacy of suspicion between labor and business that dampens the desire of both sides to become involved with each other. This legacy makes local labor leaders who lack self-assurance outside the union particularly suspicious of their business counterparts. Another factor mitigating against labor participation in most civil communities is the opposition of their rank and file to locally sponsored public improvements paid for out of the primary source of local tax revenues, the property tax.<sup>19</sup>

In Duluth, however, the labor movement is directed, prodded, and led by a group of labor and political leaders who represent the most progressive element in the city. It is this leadership, in cooperation with other leaders of the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party, that is most likely to provide the wherewithal and the energy that can create the possibility for a change in Duluth's static economic situation. While their rank and file may not be much more sympathetic to local expenditures than their counterparts elsewhere (actually, they do appear to be somewhat more liberal in this regard), they have been led to recognize what their leadership discovered earlier—that, in the absence of a civic-minded business element, it is up to labor to provide the public non-governmental support necessary for local progress. Nor is this a matter of altruism on labor's part. Unlike the resident managers who have no local ties or even the local businessmen who will send their children elsewhere, the working people have no place to go. They must make the Duluth economy work or they suffer the most.<sup>20</sup>

One more factor has been of great importance in Duluth: the European tradition of trade unionism. That tradition, strong in the city, embraces the idea of civic action to a far greater extent than the "bread and butter" unionism traditional to America. It exists in Duluth because of the city's unique pattern of settlement.

The second settlement of Duluth after the Civil War brought with it an influx of Europeans who came directly from the countries of their origin, and by 1870, more than half the civil community's population was foreign born. In most areas of the United States west of the Appalachian Mountains, the first settlers were American born "emigrants" from settled areas "back east." Only after the first settlers had come and established certain fundamental social patterns did immigrants from Europe move in. This was true in the vast prairies of the central United States, except for the Upper Midwest, and for most of the major cities in the United States, even in those of the Middle Border that were early influenced by German settlers (again excepting most of those located in the Upper Midwest).

In Duluth, both the order and pattern of settlement are examples of Upper Midwestern singularity. While the very first permanent settlers in the Duluth area to settle permanently were American born, they were such a small group that they left no significant permanent pattern except for the bare outlines of a local political structure organized along traditional American lines. These native Americans were a mixed lot, an amalgam of indi-



vidual adventurers who came from every corner of the country. This, in itself, was unusual in the Upper Midwest, most of which was settled by persons from the northern migrational current—predominantly Yankees—just as areas to the south were settled by persons from the middle or the southern current.<sup>21</sup> By the turn of the century, however, the New Englanders were the most prominent economic leadership element, primarily because the parent corporations of Duluth's industries were dominated by Yankee stock.

The Americans were joined so quickly by immigrants who came directly from Europe that the permanent social pattern of the city was substantially influenced by the new arrivals. Consequently, Duluth's Europeans were not forced to adjust to existing social and political patterns as the price of Americanization. Within the limits imposed by certain basic political institutions, they were free to infuse much of their own ways of life into still-developing patterns and could adjust to American conditions at much their own pace.

Settlers came to Duluth from a number of European countries. Scandinavians were prominent: Swedes and Norwegians (the two largest ethnic groups, in that order), some Danes, and many Finns (the third largest ethnic group). Eastern and Southern Europeans also came in substantial numbers, to form the backbone of the labor force on the railroads, in the forests, in the mines, and in the factories. Most were Slovenians and Croatians, others came from Italy and Poland, and there were small numbers from virtually every ethnic group found in those sections of Europe. Small but influential groups of French, Germans, Irish, and Jews also settled in Duluth in the early days. The largest English-speaking group consisted of Canadians, the fourth largest ethnic community in the city.

It must be noted, however, that the Americans contributed one very important ingredient to Duluth's emerging civil community, the formal institutions of its political structure. The existence of basic American political institutions was of crucial importance and should not be minimized. Indeed, the very existence of those institutions forced the Europeans to adapt themselves politically far more quickly than they were forced to adapt themselves in other spheres. The county and township system with its elected boards and multiple executives, the system of municipal government with its mayor, aldermen, and wards, the system of school district organization with an elected school board, the pressures of the party system—even though nonpartisanship later became the rule of the day—all contributed to fastening a basically American order onto a community that was barely American for many years. Here is one of the places where the essence of the concept of "civil community" becomes most visible, where the civil aspects of the community are decisive.<sup>22</sup>

While the European elements in Duluth's social system are still pronounced and quite influential in shaping the city's political culture, the practical expressions of political activity have long been quite American. At the same time, since all the various ethnic elements came to

Duluth in roughly the same period, traditional political hierarchies and a pattern of "old stock" political dominance, such as was found in most American cities had no time to develop. Political participation—and political power—were spread throughout the civil community to a substantial degree, from the very first.

Duluth's unique pattern was able to emerge and maintain itself primarily because of Duluth's relative isolation from the rest of the country. On one hand, it is geographically isolated. Duluth is a settled oasis in a rocky, forested wilderness, much as Santa Fe, New Mexico, is an oasis in a mountainous desert or Butte, Montana, is an oasis in a mountainous wilderness, not only off the mainstream of settlement and commerce but surrounded by difficult forest lands not amenable to permanent settlement, except in isolated areas. This veritable wilderness has kept even those settled portions of the Duluth area from being physically absorbed into the stream of American settlement. Even in 1964, the city was cut off from the rest of the country by lands with less than two people per square mile on all sides, lands that would have been classified as "beyond the frontier" in an earlier age. Thus, Duluth has been surrounded by the space necessary to shape its own social patterns.

#### **Duluth's Political Culture and the Minnesota Political Tradition**

Duluth's isolation has also been reënforced by its location in the state. Minnesota, like Duluth, was settled mainly by Europeans who came to it directly from the old world. Except in the southeastern part of the state, where the first settlers were predominantly Yankees intermixed with small German and Irish minorities, there was no "purely American" social order established before the Europeans came. Consequently, Minnesota has, as a state, developed a social structure and a political tradition that differ considerably in certain crucial points from those common to the rest of the United States. Indeed, Minnesotans have carved for themselves a sequestered niche in a corner of the Union in which they go about maintaining their own way of doing things as much as is possible in America's intensely cosmopolitan society. While considerably less obvious about it than Texans, Minnesotans could rightfully claim equal uniqueness for their state, a uniqueness that is protected by geography, climate, and an interlocking network of statewide governmental and public nongovernmental institutions that function to preserve what a more pompous population would be wont to call "the Minnesota way of life."

Minnesotans have long been aware of these differences, although generally unable or uninterested in articulating them, and, because they value their own way of life, have worked hard to maintain the self-contained system that they have created.<sup>23</sup> Of course, one of the primary means of maintaining singularity is through politics. The more open political manifestations of Minnesota's singularity are wellknown. Less apparent are the underlying political characteristics of the state, the ele-

ments composing the state's political culture; they probably contribute even more to the maintenance of uniqueness than the relatively few overt differences in political structure.

Minnesota's and Duluth's political culture is a product and extension of the community-oriented individualism that was brought into the State primarily by the Yankees, Scandinavians, and other products of the northern currents. The values and attitudes characteristic of it, although also basically individualistic in orientation, are those that place a premium on, (1) utilizing communal—preferably nongovernmental but governmental if necessary—power to intervene in the sphere of "private" activities when necessary for the public good or the well being of the community; (2) the extension of government action into areas determined to be in the public interest, including the field of social regulation where necessary, as well as the utilization of government resources to promote economic development; (3) acceptance of the legitimacy of utilizing government and its powers for at least middle range planning and policy-making, not just for *ad hoc* responses to immediately pressing problems; (4) the insistence that government service is public service; this insistence places moral obligations upon those who participate in government that are more demanding than the moral obligations of the marketplace and also rejects the idea that the field of politics is a legitimate realm for private economic enrichment; (5) the concept of serving the general welfare or the public interest as the central core of the political relation even when it conflicts with individual loyalties and friendships; (6) the recognition that a concern with issues is at least one of the central concerns of politics, which is meant to have programmatic as well as power-seeking characteristics; and (7) a general support of the two-party system so long as the parties embody some recognizable programmatic differences and some receptivity to the aforementioned standards but, along with it, embody a willingness to seek achievement of political goals through nonpartisan systems, special local parties, or—in extreme cases—third-party movements.

This political culture rests on two fundamental conceptions of politics of its own: the conception that politics exists primarily as a vehicle for coming to grips with the issues and public concerns of civil society and, accordingly, the conception that politics is ideally a matter of concern for every citizen, not just those who are professionally committed to political careers. Accordingly, voters as well as politicians are encouraged to be active in politics, to take public stands on issues, and to run for political office.

The Duluth civil community is an integral part of the Minnesota civil society in this respect. In fact, its isolation from other American political cultures is considerably more extreme than the political isolation of the state as a whole. Such isolation at the local level is made possible because the state functions as a buffer between its civil communities and the rest of the nation. Duluth benefits extensively from Minnesota's protective services, to the point where its residents are able to take their

political culture for granted without fearing for its maintenance.<sup>24</sup>

Politics, in Duluth, has consistently been an activity open to and dominated by amateurs. The cause may be the persistence of issues, one important element in determining alignments in Duluth politics, which, in turn, has meant (a) the recruitment of new elements into the parties as issues have changed and (b) the domination of the parties by issue-conscious persons, rather than by persons interested in politics as a business. In such a situation, the number of individuals who earn their livelihoods from politics is correspondingly reduced, particularly since the idea of politics as a business is contrary to the accepted local morality. In turn, the ranks of political leadership and opportunity are opened to more amateurs interested in political activity for other than pecuniary benefits since there are so few opportunities for any. This is not to say that at times in Duluth's history local party organizations have not followed their natural inclinations to become ingrown and exclusive groups interested in making profit; when such entrenched groups develop, however, becomes those outside the inner circle, either other party actives or the community's voters, remove them from power.

#### **Community Politics and the Basic Cleavages**

In theory and by law, local politics in Duluth is nonpartisan. Only state executive and national officials are elected on partisan ballots. City, county, and state legislative officials are elected on formally nonpartisan ballots. In point of fact, however, the Democratic-Farmer-Labor and the Republican parties are very active at the local level, and, since the DFL often divides itself into more or less permanent factions in local elections, there is frequently a third party in those contests as well.

This has not always been the case. Until the post World-War-II period nonpartisanship, which had been introduced in Duluth in 1912, existed in fact as well as in name. Prior to 1912, Duluth was governed under a traditional mayor-aldermanic form of government with legally partisan elections. In that year Duluth, still counted among the progressive cities in the United States, changed to commission form of government, then the latest word in municipal organization.

Commission government brought with it formal nonpartisanship. Nonpartisanship brought with it the problem of selecting candidates to run for office. The Chamber of Commerce, the front group for the business coalition for many years, stepped into the breach sometime after those first years of nonpartisan chaos and quietly developed lists of candidates in each election that were then submitted to the voters for approval. The Chamber's function was to establish (with the help of the Governmental Research Bureau) a committee of leading members of the business community who would either review prospective candidates, or find candidates where none existed, and then endorse them for election, usually quietly.

This system worked reasonably well since the Cham-

ber and the business community had few demands to place on the candidates they selected. The screening of candidates was really done to determine their outlook on one issue, the property-tax question. Candidates were otherwise free to think and do as they pleased so long as they did not attempt to raise property taxes. Their party affiliations were considered to be a private matter and were not generally known. The citizenry of the community got reasonably good government (in the context of their expectations) during those years and the Chamber was reasonably successful in keeping taxes down.

After World War II, the complexion of local politics changed, primarily because of the statewide party realignment that merged the Democratic and Farmer-Labor Parties and led to the emergence of the DFL as the new majority party in Minnesota. Accompanying the 1944 merger was the intraparty struggle that led to expulsion of the Communists from DFL ranks. St. Louis County DFLers had a large share in that struggle. The county has always had more than its share of left-leaning elements, even in the context of Minnesota politics. Indeed, much of the grass roots support for the Communists came from residents of the rural area just north of Duluth known locally as the "Red Finns"—Finnish-American radicals who have traditionally supported the party presenting the most radical image. Many "Red Finns" had been sympathizers with the IWW in the early part of the twentieth century and most transferred their allegiance to the Communists after 1920. Today they maintain constant, if unsuccessful, pressure on the local DFL leadership to take more left-leaning stands on issues.

By 1946, the Communists had not only infiltrated the DFL at the state level but had virtually taken over the Duluth-St. Louis County section of the party as well. The struggle came to a head in that year when the liberals led by (Vice-president) Hubert Humphrey and (Senator) Eugene McCarthy and including most of the state's present leading political figures, managed to wrest control of the party from the Communists. Among those active in this fight on the liberal side was a young attorney, Gerald Heaney, who had just moved from Red Wing to Duluth, who was to become the leader of the Duluth DFL in the 1950's. While the liberals were winning in Minnesota as a whole, their local representatives were clearing the Communists out of the Duluth-St. Louis County organization by using the same tactics of tight discipline and active maneuvering that were successful on the state level. The participants in that struggle formed the core of a resurgent DFL on both state and local levels after 1946 by using the methods of organization and the intraparty discipline that they had developed in the struggle to gain control of the party.

The outcome of that struggle endowed the DFL with a three-way coalition as the basis of its organization and membership. The party's rank and file and middle-level leadership were drawn from the labor movement in urban areas and from the liberal farm movements in the rural areas scattered through the party at various levels and dominating the upper leadership echelons were a

group of intellectuals, university people and professionals, who had emerged as the leaders in the anti-Communist campaign. In Duluth, the combination led to the formation of a DFL-Labor coalition (linking the local labor elements with assorted intellectuals, particularly professors from the University of Minnesota, Duluth) that also has the support of some of the small businessmen under Heaney's overall leadership. Heaney himself became Democratic National Committeeman from Minnesota.

One of the first things the DFL-Labor coalition did was to begin competing quietly in the nonpartisan elections. They prepared rival slates (often after primary contests that were really intracoalition struggles for party endorsement) for city and school-board positions to oppose the Independents endorsed by the Chamber of Commerce group, and then campaigned for their election. (The county government, which had been in the hands of a veteran courthouse group since the late 1920's and had generally been immune to Chamber pressure in any case, was left unchallenged. There, free nonpartisanship continued to prevail.) Campaigns for state legislative seats in Duluth's legislative districts were also brought into this system of partisan nonpartisanship as the DFL began endorsing legislative candidates and organizing election campaigns in each district.

Public reaction was not at all hostile. In the context of Minnesota's political culture, nonpartisanship originated as a device to enable representatives of reform movements, who were handicapped in winning office by the traditional ties of the state's electorate to one of the major parties (generally the GOP), to gain power for political purposes—i.e., to implement programs of political reform. It was an antiparty device, not a device for removing government from the influence of politics per se. It was certainly not simply the antipolitical device for the promotion of "business-like" civil administration, as it has been in states and localities sharing a political culture that forces "honest" people to conclude that politics as such is evil. Consequently, there was no significant or lasting negative reaction to the interjection of reasonable partisanship into an already acceptably political realm.<sup>25</sup> The business community protested briefly, particularly after they began to lose elections, and then began to adopt the same device of partisan nonpartisanship themselves under the guise of endorsing Independents.

DFL endorsement and campaigning proved singularly successful. In a city in which voters generally support Democratic candidates for statewide and national offices with better than 65 per cent of the total vote, there was a willing following for DFL-endorsed local candidates. Soon, the city government, the school board, and the state legislative delegation came under the influence of candidates supported by the DFL or one of its factions.<sup>26</sup> After a few years, the very conservative business leaders decided that the time had come to build a Republican organization to challenge the DFL by conducting the same kind of partisan nonpartisan campaigns, at least for state legislative offices. While the new Republican organization could not really compete with the DFL in

the face of the lopsided majorities given that party, the availability of funds and the existence of a permanent voting base on the east side of Duluth did give it a solid foothold in the civic community. And, as the Republicans organized to compete with the DFL, the latter party began to give serious consideration to taking on the county elections as well. By 1960, a party system, operating in local elections under the guise of non-partisanship, had clearly emerged.

What is unique about Duluth's two party system is not its partisan non-partisanship but the way in which each party represents a very definite local economic interest and virtually a different socio-economic class, more in the manner of the European party tradition than the American. In reality, the basic social cleavage in the community is carried directly over into politics. Each party is an adjunct of one of the two socio-economic coalitions that dominate the city and each commands the loyalty of the overwhelming majority of its voters on the basis of their class orientation.

This is not to say that overt class appeals are made by candidates at election time—far from it. The American ethic prohibits such an appeal even in a social setting as Europeanized as Duluth. But the greater reliance on issues as opposed to personalities as the basis for campaigning provides a mechanism for the insertion of class biases where open appeals to biases would not be acceptable.

Among the consequences of this political bipolarization along class lines is the greater polarization of attitudes between the influentials of each party. The Republican influentials are very conservative, much more so than the state party, to the point where liberal Republicans have virtually disappeared from positions of influence on the local scene. The DFL influentials, on the other hand, are considerably more liberal than their counterparts in the rest of the state. This has made it even more difficult for permanent lines of communication to be developed between the two subcommunities in Duluth.

### **Constitutional Change in Contemporary Duluth**

The rise of the new party system coincided with the emergence of an era of widespread political change in Duluth. In fact, Duluth was only following the national pattern in which the reconstitution of civil communities all over the United States occurred in delayed response to pressures generated by the Great Depression and World War II.<sup>27</sup> Of course, the basic pressures that had been generated in Duluth were not very similar to those in the majority of American civil communities. However, many of the concrete programs inaugurated to deal with those pressures were quite similar.

Six major programs captured the attention of Duluthians during the 1950's. They were, (1) the change in the form of city government from commission to strong mayor-council; (2) the expansion of the Duluth branch of the University of Minnesota; (3) the creation of the government-operated Port of Duluth to take advantage of the St. Lawrence Seaway; (4) construction of the high

bridge to connect Duluth and Superior; (5) inauguration of urban renewal; and (6) tax equalization within St. Louis County. Although all six became major political issues, the first struck right to the heart of Duluth's constitutional system.

Changing the governmental structure in any community raises constitutional issues because it involves a reorganization of the formal structure of government and requires a similar reorganization of the carefully nurtured arrangements of accommodation among the political interests and groups that support the formal structures. A constitution, in this sense, is more than a frame of government, following the manner of Aristotle, it is also a more or less permanent system of social and economic relations within a community that has achieved some level of political equilibrium to promote the common good or, at least, to maintain the public peace. Furthermore, constitutional change not only challenges the equilibrium of interests but also involves a re-examination and renewal of the public consensus which underlies that equilibrium and makes its existence possible. Every political change of any significance must affect the equilibrium of interests; it is this challenging of the public consensus as well as the structure of interests that makes the difference between major political changes of a lesser magnitude and constitutional change. It might be assumed, then, that initiation of constitutional change would provoke intense community conflict—deepening the community's normal political cleavages, and bringing out a greater number and variety of interests in order to weigh one against the other—because it represents a fundamental challenge that reaches down into the very base of political society. This is what has actually happened in most communities.

Yet, when Duluth embarked on a major change in its governmental structure, the exact opposite happened. The normal cleavages in the community, which had been or were to be so prominently important in the other five issues, virtually disappeared. At the negotiating stage, leaders from both the business and labor communities cooperated in a manner that was considered unusual in Duluth and, in the voting stage, the normal class cleavage was replaced by a cosmopolitan-local division.

The absence of any particular reluctance to change governmental institutions to incorporate erstwhile innovations is noticeable in Duluth. This is partly because of the ethic of honesty and efficiency that is built into Duluth's political culture (indeed, into Minnesota's political culture), an ethic that is coupled with an earnest desire in virtually all segments of the community, regardless of their other differences, for governmental economy. It is not only the business community that is interested in economy to put government on a business-like basis. Even the labor community, which is anxious to support public improvements and is not primarily concerned with measuring governmental efficiency in dollars and cents terms, tends to support economy measures.<sup>28</sup>

Thus, in 1912 Duluth was one of the cities that embraced the commission plan of government in the hope of replacing a mayor-aldermanic government that was

considered to be both dishonest and inefficient. Commission government survived in Duluth for 44 years, partly because there were agencies in the community that could serve as a check on the commissioners and prevent the spread of the general deficiencies of commission government (particularly the tendency of commissioners to govern themselves without outside interference and, thus, not to be subject to external checks aimed at minimizing inefficiency and interdepartmental logrolling). In Duluth, the Governmental Research Bureau, created in the early 1920's as the watchdog arm of the business community, continued, under the leadership of a dedicated and shrewd executive director, to maintain close watch over the activities of the city commissioners. Since the commissioners were themselves products of the Duluth political culture and entered public service, not as professional politicians intent on achieving material success but, as persons interested in performing a civic duty or acquiring some prestige, they were generally amenable to surveillance.

By the early 1950's, however, the commission government had used up its credit with the political influentials in town, partly because of the national trend that had convinced many voters that commission government was, in and of itself, a bad system. Still, there was no scandal among the commissioners in Duluth to instigate the change of governmental structure, nor was there any hint of one. The governmental structure had just outlived its usefulness to those whose support was needed to maintain it. This, in itself, might not have been enough to stimulate a change but for the convergence of several different groups interested in promoting a change. The business community felt that taxes were going up too fast and that a greater degree of efficiency was needed to get the most out of each tax dollar than was possible under commission government. The rising DFL group felt that they had less chance of success in their efforts to gain control of city government if they had to elect the entire city council at large. They wanted to elect councilmen by district where geography could work to their advantage and, at the same time, provide representation for all segments of the city.<sup>29</sup> Finally, the few "public interest" progressives in town wished to revitalize Duluth by revitalizing its city government in a dramatic way. From a long-range point of view, the change in city government was simply one aspect of a multifaceted reconstitution of the Duluth civil community that was supported by at least some of the local influentials (not the business leadership) in the hope that it would lead to a reconstitution of the local economy as well.

Apparently, the desire for change in the structure of city government was first made explicit by the new progressive leadership of the DFL-Labor coalition. The Chamber of Commerce element in the business community had been toying with the idea of proposing the adoption of the city manager plan for a number of years. However, they had done little more than circulate the idea among themselves. When the dynamic elements on the other side of the fence also indicated a willingness to make a change, certain leaders in the business com-

munity took the unusual step of responding favorably. Both groups started negotiations with at least a willingness to come to a meeting of minds.

It was at this point that the representatives of the city government stepped in to provide the leadership needed to unite the leaders of the two communities in support of a joint plan. Utilizing the one important institution that normally bridged the gap between business and labor, the Community Chest, the top leadership of both met together and thrashed out a proposed charter, under the aegis of the city attorney and the city planner (two of the city's higher civil servants). Both men were longtime members of the city administration whose daily impact on the city's government was recognized by all as of the utmost importance. Both were highly respected throughout the community for their dedication and foresight.

The two men, together, were the major repositories of progressive energy in Duluth. They were in no small measure responsible for the unusual innovating role played by the city government in their civil community. The city attorney had a continuously important role as the chief negotiator between the two great factions in matters requiring their agreement for the public welfare. The city planner was the man of vision who foresaw the needs of the civil community and not only drew up plans for their implementation but put the city government in a position to implement those plans. He was responsible for the advance reservation of important lands around the city as sites for public projects such as schools, parks, playgrounds, and fire stations. He had acquired and set aside the lands for the new campus of the University of Minnesota and for the Port of Duluth's facilities in the 1930's, holding them in readiness against the time that they would be needed for just those purposes.

In the first stage of negotiations, the Chamber of Commerce group insisted upon council-manager government as the best change to propose. However, the DFL-Labor leaders, who were opposed to a city manager, were able to convince them that such a proposal would not gain much support in the community at large. It represented too radical a break with the principle of popular control over policy-making officials to achieve much success, particularly since the labor community would be forced to oppose it, much as labor has opposed the manager plan in other cities. The labor leaders' opposition was primarily due to their fear that the city manager would be dominated by the business interests and would not be sympathetic to labor, not only removing them from positions of influence but even using his great powers repressively against them.<sup>30</sup>

Opposition to the council-manager plan in Duluth was fed by another stream as well. City-manager government has been most successful in communities whose political culture leads people to conceive of reform as getting government out of politics. It has not been popular in communities where politics is accepted as the means by which good policies are effected. Duluth fell into the latter category; hence manager government had little appeal for its citizens.

Even the business community recognized this. The initial enthusiasm for the plan on the part of some of the Chamber leaders was more a reflection of the influence of a national fad than a local commitment. Anxious to gain some type of governmental structural reform and astute enough to realize that the labor leaders' assessment of the public attitude was accurate (and that the labor community had a majority of the votes in town), they compromised by choosing a device that was just then beginning to gain some national publicity, a strong mayor-council plan that provided for the appointment of a professional administrative assistant to the mayor, who would be responsible for the actual day to day operations of the city government. This plan provides the strong trained administrator whom the business community felt was needed to oversee the administration of civic activities in a manner best calculated to encourage economy and efficiency while retaining the elective policy-making positions desired by labor.

Perhaps the influence of the Minnesota political tradition was present here. Minnesota had been one of the first states in the Union to adopt a similar plan on the state level, i.e., gubernatorial appointment of a commissioner of administration, who oversees certain of the administrative operations of the state government, as an administrative assistant to the elected governor. The plan appeared to have worked well in close to two decades of its existence and had satisfied the state's business and labor factions both.

The charter amendment as finally drawn up also provided for the election of a nine-member city council, four chosen at large and five elected from districts, all to be elected on a nonpartisan ballot. This plan overcame the other difficulties defined by both sides. The office of mayor was open to control by either the DFL-Labor group or the Republican-business group. The city council would be assured representatives from both elements in the community through the district plan plus some representatives elected at large to provide a more comprehensive view of the city's needs.

The proposed charter amendment was placed before the people and, after a spirited but not exciting campaign, was adopted on March 20, 1956, by a vote of 20,252 to 12,554. The voting did not follow the usual lines of class cleavage. From the voters' comments available in press files, the newspaper surveys of voter reaction made at the time, and the assessments of voter response made by politicians active in the community, the observer is led to the conclusion that the vote was almost strictly along cosmopolitan-local lines. The cosmopolitan elements in both the business and labor communities endorsed the plan, came out and supported it publicly, went to the polls on election day and voted it in. The locals in both communities opposed the plan but, while many of the business community locals went to the polls to vote against it, the labor locals tended to take no part in the referendum.

The charter passed primarily because the locals, who outnumbered the cosmopolitans, stayed home. As in other civil communities, there were more cosmopolitans

in the business community, where the ethic of voting was strongest and more locals in the labor community, where such political participation is held to be less important. Consequently, all that was necessary to achieve victory was to bring out the business cosmopolitans and keep the labor locals home.

The cosmopolitans were reached through an active newspaper campaign. In addition, the usual cosmopolitan groups, particularly the League of Women Voters (who had actively championed charter change for a number of years), the businessmen's clubs, and the Chamber of Commerce, actively supported the plan. There was unquestionably a split in the ranks of labor over the desirability of the change. Most of the locals, satisfied as they were with the status quo, would have voted against the proposed change simply on the grounds that the business community supported it. However, the top DFL-Labor leadership which was cosmopolitan, lent its support to the charter change by not mobilizing those voters and bringing them to the polls. This effectively stymied the opposition since they did not take it upon themselves to come to the polls on their own accord.<sup>81</sup>

The cosmopolitan labor leaders recognized that they would gain greater political advantage by changing the form of government and they acted accordingly. Their perceptions were quite accurate. The DFL-Labor coalition has been able to elect the mayor (or agree upon a candidate who was then elected) in every election since the new charter took effect. It has also elected either majorities or strong minorities to the city council and has substantially extended its own control over city government generally. The business community, however, seems to be equally satisfied with the new system. They have the organizational structure they want and do not find themselves at any greater disadvantage in their dealings with the city government, although so much political power has ostensibly passed into the hands of the west side, than the labor community did when the Chamber-endorsed candidates ostensibly controlled the city government. The active minority of devoted Republicans is trying hard to rebuild their party, which has only gained slightly in organizational strength in recent years, and is somewhat dissatisfied with the present situation but even they feel that the new governmental structure is fundamentally sound and that, over the long run, they will be able to gain control through the normal electoral process.

The effect of the city charter change on municipal administration during the first 4 years of operation has been minor. Things have gone on generally as before; "amateur" mayors and councilmen have come and gone, served brief terms and never really became "at home" in city hall. The mayors have been unable to find and hire administrative assistants of the right calibre, so the department heads continue to maintain control over their departments much as they had before under the commission system, except that the logrolling aspects of commission government have been generally eliminated and the departments are slowly being placed in the hands of more professional higher civil servants.

Perhaps the most important aspect of the campaign to change the structure of the city government was its effect in transcending the normal cleavage in the civil community. This, of course, explains its immediate success. The transcendence of the normal cleavage had a much larger effect on the community as well since it showed that it was possible for cosmopolitans on both sides of the class cleavage to reach a common agreement on specific issues and to join on specific projects. While this has not yet changed the overall character of the cleavage nor eliminated conflicts over specific political issues between the two sides, it has since become possible to develop some kind of *modus vivendi* that opens the door to new cross-community cooperative endeavors. Several of the other major projects undertaken in the late 1950's benefited considerably from this new consensus, for that is indeed what it was.

In this latter respect, at least, the charter change was indeed a constitutional change of the first magnitude, altering much more than the formal structure of government. Actually, the immediate changes in formal day-to-day governmental operations were relatively minor. What was important was the reconstruction of a community-wide consensus, however fragile.

#### **Conclusion: Some Notions About Politics in a Duluth-Style Community**

Duluth may be considered a paradigm of the civil community caught in the backwash of the American economy and a testing ground in which to examine notions of the nature of community political systems developed in more prosperous civil communities. Even within the limits of a small comparative study such as the "cities of the prairie" project, it is possible to see certain patterns of political behavior in Duluth that raise important *caveats* for consideration if too-facile generalities about community politics based on the politics of prosperity are to be avoided. At the same time, it is also possible to note the great similarities between the politics of prosperity and the politics of adversity in American civil communities. What remain are important questions about the meaning of these *caveats* and these similarities. Only a few of them are raised here.

1. It is easy to say that no civil community in the United States stands alone as the master of its destiny—even its political destiny. Certainly, Duluth from the very first has been extremely dependent on external political forces, particularly at the state level, and external economic forces, so that it has been unable to adjust to changing external conditions that result in unfavorable local impacts. The extreme degree of Duluth's dependence on external forces makes the Duluth case valuable as a source of information on the effects of the total economic system on local political systems. Although the conclusions to be drawn from the Duluth case may be somewhat extreme, it is nevertheless clear that the hopeful forecasts of those who like to consider local politics as isolable from the national scene are misplaced.

Parenthetically, it should be noted that the Duluth

case also raises some fundamental questions on the relation between economics and politics in a post-Marxian world. Just as Marx' formulations of politics as projections of economic necessity were rightly rejected by the first post-Marxian social scientists, so it is now necessary to re-establish the high-level theory that will account for the important mutual relation between economics and politics that can be seen to exist in civil communities such as Duluth and, I venture to say, in civil societies as well.

2. One of Duluth's most serious problems is its lack of locally rooted top-level business leaders who are forced to be concerned with civic affairs for reasons of self-interest, if for no other. Absentee-ownership, which came to Duluth two and three generations ago, is now coming to most medium-size civil communities. Duluth's problem, then, may foreshadow the problems of its sister cities in the next generation. In other communities, until recently, absentee ownership has meant that the basic industries were controlled by outsiders. This, in itself, makes a difference locally. In Duluth, however, absentee ownership extended to institutions such as the banks, which normally serve as the economic pillars of a community's political system. This pattern is also becoming more extensive elsewhere now. The absence of these pillars has led to a substantial weakening of the entire structure to the point that even the central offices of the leading banks, located elsewhere, are becoming concerned with its political consequences. It certainly helps to account for the lack of economic foresight on the part of the business leadership and their continued lack of economic aggressiveness. The question remains whether the absence of top-level business leadership is not fatal to the ability of any civil community to adapt itself to changes in the larger economy.

Absentee ownership also helps to account for the greater importance of government and labor as forces for economic improvement and civic innovation. In contradistinction to the business leadership, both government and labor are oriented toward and rooted in the local community. They have a stake in it that leaves them no place else to go. While the government-labor partnership in Duluth has kept some hope alive there, it remains to be seen whether it can succeed in its aims, given the predispositions in American society to relegate government to a supportive, rather than an aggressive, role in local economic development, and to rely upon business to promote such development, while relegating labor to a clearly secondary position. If this partnership does succeed, it will mark a great departure from traditional patterns in the United States and will certainly raise some fundamental questions for other communities that are faced with the problem of absentee ownership in their efforts to adjust to the changing situation.

3. The impact of great class cleavage that has torn Duluth assunder for so many years helps to clarify the meaning of the concept of "civil community" and the need for every local community to be concerned with such a concept, even in an inarticulate way. Every urban civil community with a sufficiently large population has a major internal cleavage of some sort. Such is the way

of urban life. It is not necessary to have "community" in the neo-medieval sense advocated by followers of the Toënnies school of thought to secure effective government and civic action at the local level. All that is needed is a sense of *civil* community, or a sense of mutual political responsibility for the future of the city, in order to forge the necessary institutions that will cut across cleavages for significant civil or political purposes. Lacking that sense of civil community, Duluthians have been hampered in their efforts to solve their fundamental problems. As that sense is restored, they have found new ways to cooperate with each other in an attempt to meet those problems. A sense of civil community is no guarantee of success but its absence may well be a guarantee of failure.

4. The sense of civil community in the Duluth of 1960 was greater than it had been for many years because of an event that could have torn the city further apart but apparently did just the opposite. By all accounts, a political scientist, using the knowledge available to him in 1954, would have predicted that a struggle over charter change would only lead to a greater separation between the labor and business communities. When the issue came up, however, it turned out to be a unifying rather than a divisive force. Rather than re-exposing the basic cleavages and then intensifying them, it exposed areas of faint underlying consensus and intensified the possibilities for deepening that consensus. Why was this the case? Was it just a coincidental convergence of basically different interests on a common program acceptable to both sides? Or was it really the exposure of a consensus that few suspected existed? Why did the charter campaign temporarily shift the lines of cleavage from class to reference group (the cosmopolitan-local division)? What relation exists between that shift and the emergence of a consensus? This study cannot answer these questions adequately. All that it can conclude is that the constitutional issue did indeed lead to a constitutional change of great magnitude, a change that has tended to strengthen the ties that bind the citizens of Duluth to each other.

#### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>The classic examples of these pioneer works either fall into the pattern set by Lincoln Steffens in his series of muckraking studies of political corruption in the major cities of the United States or into the pattern set by Frank J. Goodnow who, in his efforts to come to grips with urban problems through adaptation of the principles of the "science" of public administration to city government, also focused on the problems of the nation's great cities.

<sup>2</sup>The classic examples of the research in this period are the Lynds' studies of Muncie, Indiana, in the *Middletown* books and Lloyd Warner and associates' studies of "Yankee City," "Southern City," and "Elmtown-Jonesville," three communities in New England, the South, and the Middle West, respectively.

<sup>3</sup>While it is too early to recognize classics of this period, the works of Banfield on Chicago politics, Dahl on New Haven, and Hunter on Atlanta are recognized as standards in the field. Supporting them are a large number of studies covering the other major cities of the country, and ranging from New York to Los Angeles and from Minneapolis to Miami.

<sup>4</sup>Particularly, studies such as that of Arthur J. Vidich and Joseph Bensman. 1960. *Small Town in Mass Society*. New York, Doubleday.

<sup>5</sup>Some may challenge this last assertion by pointing to the image of Peoria or Pasadena or Sinclair Lewis' Winnemac in American folklore and literature. Even acknowledging that image of the overgrown hick town populated by rural types with urban pretensions as a valid exception, it appears that the medium-size city can do no better than to acquire an image as a slightly larger Podunk, certainly not an image that is independently its own. Furthermore, that image dates back to a period when at least Peoria and fictitious Winnemac, the free-standing cities, were considered to be in the large city category. They were stereotyped as large cities that could not become big cities. In the case of Pasadena, which was never considered to be anything but medium-size, there are overtones of provincial suburbia that are clearly derived from that city's proximity to Los Angeles.

<sup>6</sup>The specific sources of the data in the following pages are not always indicated. They include published studies of Duluth's history and society, which are mostly descriptive; data drawn from intensive interviews with some 60 public officials, influential persons, and politically knowledgeable individuals that were conducted by the author in August 1960; government reports and documents concerning Duluth; newspaper files; and the author's personal observations based on the foregoing sources. A list of the sources are in the Appendix.

<sup>7</sup>The 1960 Census showed Duluth to have a population of 106,884. Subsequent estimates show a slight gain to somewhat above the 107,000 figure. The United States Census Bureau defines the Duluth-Superior complex as a single metropolitan area. The author found, however, that, except for their harbor, the two cities have little in common and have no serious political connections. There is little reason, then, to consider the two cities as an entity for political purposes.

<sup>8</sup>(a) In the calendar year 1961, the Duluth-Superior harbor shipped 31,376,472 tons, making it the third largest port on the Great Lakes, after Chicago and Toledo, and the ninth largest in the nation. This, in itself, is indicative of Duluth's economic decline; for years it had been by far the largest port on the Great Lakes and the second largest in the country in tonnage shipped because of its iron ore shipments. (b) Aside from the local iron-range railroads, Duluth is a major terminus for the Great Northern, Northern Pacific, and Soo Line Railroads. (c) In 1960 Duluth-Superior shipped 137,138,000 bushels of grain through its port, three times as much as the next three ports (Chicago, Toledo, and Milwaukee) combined. In 1961 this total decreased to 135,019,000 bushels, or only twice as much as the other three combined. (d) Duluth is the center of a 14-county region in the three above-mentioned states. This region is carefully delineated in the annual reports of the Audit Bureau of Circulation for the Duluth daily newspapers.

The best source of economic data for the period under consideration in this study is Cecil H. Meyers and Haakon L. Andreasen. 1962. *Population, Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment in Duluth, 1947-1961*. University of Minnesota, Duluth.

<sup>9</sup>For specific migrational data by census tract for the decade 1950-1960, see Meyers and Andreasen, Table 1a and Chart 2.

<sup>10</sup>For a discussion of the cosmopolitan-local division, see Daniel J. Elazar and Douglas St. Angelo, "Cosmopolitan and Locals" in *Contemporary Community Politics, Proceedings of the Minnesota Academy of Science*, May 1964. The case of Duluth is so diametrically different from the cities discussed in that article that it stands as a confirmatory exception to the general hypotheses advanced there.

<sup>11</sup>While no analytic study of Duluth's history is available, there are a number of reasonably good descriptive studies and a growing collection of analytic articles on various phases of the city's past. Among the longer studies are: Dora Mary Macdonald. 1950. *This Is Duluth*. Duluth; Dwight E. Woodbridge and John S. Pardee, eds. 1910. *History of Duluth and St. Louis County*; C. F. Cooper, Chicago; Federal Writers' Project. 1938. "Duluth" in *Minnesota: A State Guide*. Viking Press, New York; 1946. *The Minnesota Arrowhead Country*, Albert Whitman, Chicago. The bulk of the articles may be found in *Minnesota History*, the journal of the Minnesota State Historical Society. The summary of Duluth's history is taken from the aforementioned sources.



<sup>12</sup> Duluth's meteoric rise to city status gave the community a metropolitan tone that has never been dissipated and gives the city a metropolitan air even today, when times are bad. Duluthians even built the appropriate symbols of its new metropolitan glory—a civic center worthy of a city four times its size and a main street with high-rise buildings (now substantially empty) to house the city's banks, lawyers, and hotels.

<sup>13</sup> It is clear that Duluth lost 13,257 people between 1950 and 1960 when the excess of births over deaths is considered, despite an absolute growth of 2,373 over the 1950 figures. Holger R. Stub. 1961. *Migration to Duluth*. University of Minnesota, Duluth.

<sup>14</sup> For the data on the changing structure of employment by industry since 1947, see Meyers and Andreassen, Part II.

<sup>15</sup> Data from the Duluth office, Minnesota Employment Security Division. The average national percentage of unemployed went from 4.3 to 6.7 in the same period.

<sup>16</sup> Statements about traditions of initiative are fraught with difficulty when made by social scientists. Nevertheless, it appears to this author that this factor is of no little significance in the development of a community. Consequently, it must be brought out into the open even in these tenuous terms.

The bleak picture should not obscure certain positive aspects in Duluth's economic situation. In some respects, its employment problems resemble those of the nation as a whole but only more so. The bulk of those seeking employment are the unskilled and the semi-skilled, particularly those entering the labor market for the first time. However, unlike the national situation, 60% of all job seekers of every age have either attended or graduated high school, thus providing a rather highly educated if minimally skilled labor pool. Among those employed in manufacturing in 1961, average gross weekly earnings (\$94.01) exceeded the national average (\$92.34) slightly, and the number of hours worked per week (37.4) was slightly less than the national average (39.8). These figures are indicative of the higher level of skills required in Duluth's local industry and the existence of stronger unions than in many other parts of the country. At the same time, Duluth has some small imaginative industries, primarily in electronics, food processing, and printing, that have located in the city to capitalize on the presence of an educated labor force. If they succeed in gaining some national attention, it is possible that Duluth will finally make the transition from a land-based economy dependent on outside efforts to a technology-based economy developed through local initiative.

<sup>17</sup> This type of conservatism was found in every one of the other civil communities included in this study. Indeed, in Illinois communities it was possible to trace the periodic revival of interest in local political change on the part of the business community and to show the linkage between that interest and the periodic renewal of the need for improving the local economic climate. This was clearly the reason behind the wave of civic reform that swept those civil communities in the post-World-War-II period.

<sup>18</sup> It should be added that this attitude was not entirely self-generated. The few half-hearted attempts made to change the local economic situation generally failed to live up to expectations and sometimes even worsened the situation. One of the most recent examples of this was the climax of the local drive on behalf of the St. Lawrence Seaway. Local boosters—few businessmen among them—worked hard on behalf of the seaway on the grounds that this would make Duluth a seaport and enable the city to attract a substantial export trade from its hinterland. The seaway was opened in due course and the first foreign ship to arrive in Duluth carried a cargo of Swedish wire that was in direct competition with the wire manufactured in Duluth's own American Steel and Wire Company plant.

<sup>19</sup> Labor's interest in federal spending for public welfare does not mean that the rank and file workers favor all government spending. The workers will resist public spending, particularly at the local level, where such spending hits them hardest because of the tax structure. This membership reluctance acts as a substantial brake on local labor union leaders. See Elazar and St. Angelo, *op. cit.*, for a more extensive discussion of this ambivalence.

<sup>20</sup> One qualification must be added here. The author has ob-

served a much higher degree of labor participation in civic affairs in Joliet, Illinois, and Pueblo, Colorado, than in any of the other cities of the prairie with comparable populations outside of Duluth. The leading union in both cities is the United Steel Workers of America, which is also one of the three leading unions in Duluth. The USW international leadership has unquestionably made a conscious effort to encourage its local people to become involved in civic affairs. In addition, the author has observed more consciously middle-class attitudes among the local leaders of that union in at least two of the three communities. In Duluth, for example, the USW is not only active in progressive politics but also was instrumental in the creation of the city's United Fund, an organization with high middle-class identification. Clearly, this combination of factors has had an effect on labor involvement in civic affairs in those communities.

<sup>21</sup> The human currents of migration, native and non-native, that settled the United States have had a profound impact on the regional and local political cultures in this country. This impact is discussed more fully in Daniel J. Elazar, 1966, *American Federation: A View from the States*. New York: Thomas J. Crowell.

<sup>22</sup> The term "civil community" is used in the author's longer study to define and delimit the overall local political entity with which students of community politics are concerned. It is sociologically more comprehensive than the term "political system" and structurally more comprehensive than the term "city." This writer would argue that the political character of American society precludes consideration of a local community as a social system without considering its political organization as central. Duluth is not only a case in point, but as the foregoing paragraph indicates, its experience throws light on why this is so. By the same token, it is generally true (though here Duluth is the exception) that the dynamic character of American society keeps boundaries of the entity served by a discernible local political system from being necessarily coterminous with the boundaries of a single city or even coextensive with the boundaries of its standard metropolitan statistical area so that reliance upon normal designations of local government becomes highly inadequate. Invariably several formal governments are included in any local political system while the level of social "community" within that system may be very low (as in the case of Duluth). For all these reasons, the term "civil community" provides a more accurate means to delimit the entity with which we are concerned.

We may identify a local political system as the organized sum of the political institutions that function in a given locality to provide the bundle of governmental services and activities that can be manipulated locally to serve local needs in light of the local value system. Accordingly the entity that a local political system serves becomes a community insofar as its existence is defined by its organization for political—or civil—purposes. Such an entity can properly be called a civil community. The politically significant components of the civil community include: (1) the formally established local governments that serve it; (2) the local agencies of the state and federal governments that are, for all intents and purposes, adjuncts of the local community; (3) nongovernmental public bodies that serve local governmental or quasi-governmental purposes; (4) the political parties that function within it; (5) the system of interest groups that functions in the local political area to represent the various local interests; and (6) the body of written constitutional material and unwritten political tradition that serves as a framework within which sanctioned political action must take place and as a check against unsanctioned political behavior within the civil community.

<sup>23</sup> One of the ways in which differences are recognized is through literature; an extensive and distinctive literature is one mark of the existence of a society. Minnesota possesses such a literature, as demonstrated in the *Bibliography of Minnesota Writers and Writings* that was published by the University of Minnesota Press in 1959. For our purposes, however, it is the political and historical literature that best supports the idea of Minnesota as a civil society. Among the most important works in this literature are G. Theodore Mitau, 1960, *The Politics of Minnesota*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis; William W. Folwell, 1921-1926, *History of Minnesota*, Minnesota State Historical

Society, St. Paul; Federal Writers Project, 1938, *Minnesota: A State Guide*, Viking Press, New York; and, more recently, Theodore G. Blegen, 1963, *Minnesota: A History of the State*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.

<sup>24</sup> This is in sharp contrast to the civil communities in Illinois, such as Rockford, that share the same political culture as Duluth. There, in order to remain different, such civil communities must create their own immediately local buffer zones against a state political system that not only provides no protection but actively intrudes its different political patterns. Even then, those buffer zones can only be maintained through constant vigilance. See Daniel J. Elazar, 1966, for a full description of this contrast.

<sup>25</sup> Little attention has been paid to the differences in the meaning of nonpartisanship in the context of different political cultures. On the basis of the *Cities of the Prairie study*, this author must conclude that the differences are profound. Most of Duluth's sister cities in Illinois have also embraced nonpartisanship but for entirely different reasons. In them the proponents of nonpartisanship have indeed been seeking businesslike governments free from politics because they have no faith in the ability of traditional politics to provide what they believe to be the proper climate for economic growth. The different consequences of this type of nonpartisanship are of vital significance, particularly in determining the kinds of political reform that will be attempted in different civil communities. See Elazar, 1966, *op. cit.*

<sup>26</sup> Lest this brief description of the rise of the DFL-Labor Coalition leave the impression that Duluth's local government is now controlled by a smooth-running political machine, some indication must also be given of the mild chaos that continues to prevail even within the coalition and certainly among the candidates it supports. As in most civil communities, the problem of obtaining candidates is usually far worse than the problem of controlling the power drives of ambitious men. Indeed, many of the elected local officials have gained office because they were willing to run for office and continue to hold office only as long as they are moved to do so by considerations other than the drive for power. Such men are basically uncontrollable by any political organization, particularly by one operating in the context of Duluth's political culture where independence is considered a high political virtue. Furthermore, the existence of strong factionalism within the coalition that is expressed almost entirely in local elections (which may serve as the safety valve that keeps the coalition united in the more important state and national elections) serves to weaken party control over endorsed candidates.

<sup>27</sup> The term "reconstitution" is used advisedly since the magnitude of change in most American civil communities actually included the alteration of the community's old constitution (used in its largest meaning) and the *reconstitution* of the community in such a manner as to broaden its influential political base. This writer would suggest that reconstitution is a useful term for describing an American-style revolution, of the kind that took place at the local level in this period, in which great changes in the distribution of political power are made within the framework of constitutional government, using appeals to the American ethical constitution for their justification.

<sup>28</sup> This is not only because of the burdensome character of the property tax. It is also an aspect of the Upper-Midwestern "socialist" tradition and Western progressivism; both were oriented toward saving money for the man in the street as well as toward spending money for public improvements.

<sup>29</sup> During the days of the business-endorsed council, the east side monopolized the seats while the west side was barely represented. This was possible despite the larger population on the west side because east siders turned out to vote in larger numbers in city elections to "fulfill their civic obligations" while many west siders felt no incentive to vote and stayed home.

<sup>30</sup> Labor's opposition to council-manager government has been noted in the literature of community politics. See Edward C. Banfield and James Q. Wilson, 1963, *City Politics*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, and Banfield, 1960, *Urban Politics*, Glencoe, The Free Press.

<sup>31</sup> For a more extensive discussion of cosmopolitan and local voting patterns in similar campaigns, see Elazar and St. Angelo,

*op. cit.*, and Daniel J. Elazar, 1960, "Metro and the Voters." *Planning*, 1959.

## Appendix

### *Additional Sources Used*

#### I. INTERVIEWS

Ray Allen, AFL-CIO Community Services Activities Representative  
Chester Barnes, City Auditor, Duluth  
Emmett Davidson, professor, University of Minnesota, Duluth  
Mark Flaherty, City Planner, Duluth  
Gerald Heaney, attorney, former DFL national committeeman from Minnesota  
Richard Hicks, Duluth Civil Service Director  
Richard Humes, Executive Director, Housing and Redevelopment Authority  
John Hunner, City Planning Director, Duluth  
Dorothy Kennedy, City Staff Research Assistant  
Robert B. Morris, Executive Secretary, Duluth Chamber of Commerce  
Bert Parson, City Clerk  
Harry Reed, Director, Governmental Research Bureau  
John Rutford, Executive Secretary, Eighth District Minnesota Republican Party  
Robert Smith, Duluth Port Authority Director  
Albin Stolen, Duluth Superintendent of Schools  
Harry Weinberg, City Attorney, Duluth  
Louis Wendlant, Chief Clerk, Municipal Court  
Walter L. Wiski, Duluth Chief of Police

#### II. NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS

*Duluth Budgeteer*  
*The Bridge* (city employees newsletter)  
*Citizen's Business* (Governmental Research Bureau)  
*The Duluthian* (Duluth Chamber of Commerce)  
*Duluth Employment Trends* (Minnesota Department of Employment Security)  
*Duluth Herald*  
*Duluth News-Tribune*  
*Duluth Register*  
*Duluth Skandinav* (Norwegian-English)  
*Minneapolis Star*  
*Minneapolis Tribune*  
*Missabi Iron Ranger*  
*St. Paul Dispatch*  
*School Record* (Duluth City Schools)

#### III. PRINTED MATERIALS

AFL-CIO Community Services Committee, brochures and announcements  
*Charter of the City of Duluth, June 11, 1956*  
City of Duluth. 1959. Descriptions of city departments (city attorney, department of public finance and records, city auditor's office, city treasurer's office, city assessor, city clerk, central license bureau, secretary of the city council, commissioner of registration)

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\_\_\_\_\_. 1961. *U. S. Census of Housing: 1960*.
- Walter L. Wisky. 1959. "Your Police Department."

IV. VOTING RETURNS

- A. City Clerk's Office Files:  
(1) Number of Registered Voters at Various Elections, 1929-1960.  
(2) Special Elections, 1945-1958.
- B. St. Louis County Official Canvass  
Primary and General Elections: 1938-1958.