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CHARACTERISTICS OF CITIZEN GROUPS WHICH  
EMERGE WITH RESPECT TO HAZARDOUS  
WASTE SITES\*

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## Introduction

An increasingly noticeable feature of American society is the presence of newly formed groups of private citizens concerned with preventing and preparing for possible disasters or with recovering from actual impacts of such types of community crises. Their increased visibility and activity is probably reflective of broader trends in the country on the rights of consumers, an emphasis on participatory democracy, and an interest in organized self help, that are some of the legacies of the social turmoil of the late 60's and early 70's (for a partial examination of the historical background, see Boyte, 1980). Apart from any changes in popular beliefs and values about the rights and obligations of individual citizens to work together, there has also been an increase in local community and formal advocacy groups interested in activating and mobilizing private citizens (examples of the variety of such groupings are presented in Freeman, 1983). Thus, it is not surprising that there are also a variety of public interest groups across the nation who are consciously undertaking deliberate efforts to educate and train people in disaster preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation. The larger changes in American society suggest that it should be anticipated that not only will emergent groups of citizens continue to surface in potential and actual disaster situations, but that their numbers are very likely to increase in the future.

The development of new small groups has long been studied in sociology going back to almost the beginnings of the discipline (e.g., Coyle, 1930). Such work has continued into this decade (e.g., Ridgeway, 1983). Similarly, the emergence of new groups especially after disasters has long been noted (e.g., see descriptions in the first systematic sociological study of disasters, Prince, 1920). The coming into being of such groups has also more recently been the focus of direct study (see, e.g., Forrest, 1974; Bardo, 1978; Nigg, 1979) as well as theoretical examination (see, e.g. Kreps, 1984, 1985; Drabek, 1986). Also, there have been a few efforts to link the general sociological approach to new groups (usually within the subspecialization of collective behavior) and empirical disaster studies (see, e.g., Quarantelli, 1970; Stallings, 1978).

However, both strands of research have been very limited. Our general understanding of the development of new groups is not substantial whether it be of new informal groups or of more formalized organizations. Likewise, although emergent behavior and groups have been looked at in the disaster area, the studies have tended to be selective and they also have tended to focus more on the phenomena during the emergency time period of disasters rather than during the pre impact or post recovery time periods (for general discussions of the existing literature prior to 1980 see Quarantelli, 1985:2-10; Stallings and Quarantelli, 1985). (The most recent analysis of the literature on emergent structures in disasters, written by Drabek, 1987, became only publically available after this manuscript has been almost completed.)

Against this background, in late 1981 the Disaster Research Center (DRC) initiated an extensive sociological study of community based citizen

groups which emerged either to prepare for and/or recover from potential threats and actual disasters. The research extended over a four year period and focused on local citizen groups who came into being outside of any immediate emergency period, and who were oriented to a full range of hazards from floods and hurricanes and tornadoes to nuclear and chemical plants and hazardous waste sites. In-depth interviewing was undertaken of members of over 50 such groups around the United States. Local organizational and community statistical and documentary data were also collected to supplement the interview data. A telephone follow up survey of selected members was undertaken a year after the groups were first studied (for details on the methodology of the study see Quarantelli, 1985).

This paper reports on the systematic DRC observations and findings on the dozen local citizen groups studied which were organized with respect to hazardous waste sites. These were located in or around Blountville, Tennessee; Bumpass Cove, Tennessee; Deer Park, Texas; Knoxville, Tennessee; Milton, New Jersey; Oak Ridge, Tennessee; Pasadena, Texas; Toledo, Ohio; Wayne, New Jersey; Wilmington, Ohio; Woburn, Massachusetts; and Yellow Creek, Kentucky. More partial but relevant data were also obtained with respect to seven other citizen groups that had emerged in or around Cincinnati, Ohio; Cleveland, Ohio; Lake County, Illinois; Mentor, Kentucky; Milton, New Jersey; Montgomery County, Maryland; and Wayne, New Jersey.

Actually we found few significant differences among emergent citizen groups irrespective of the particular potential or actual disaster agent with which they were concerned. In fact, we found little difference in the orientation to either technological or non-technological disaster agents, which some have speculated is an important distinction affecting the behavior of individuals and groups (see, e.g., Berren, Beigel and Ghertner, 1980). But consistent with our studies on other topics, differences that exist are related to other than the physical source of the potential threat or risk (e.g. the perceived potential dangerousness of the threat, its perceived uncontrollability, etc.).

In our research we studied the characteristics, the careers of and the conditions for emergent citizen groups (ECGS). But in this paper we primarily summarize our conclusions about only the first--the characteristics of citizen groups that emerged with respect to hazardous wastes. The general research findings from our two other foci of study have been reported elsewhere (see Green, 1983, 1984; Green, Neal and Quarantelli, 1989; Neal, 1983, 1984; Neal and McCabe, 1984; Quarantelli, 1984, 1985, 1988).

We report on three major topics; the social compositions of ECGS that develop with respect to hazardous wastes, their structures, and their initial activities. In the last two cases, the summary of our empirical findings presented in propositional form, are subcategorized into more specific features. Under structure we indicate what we generally learned about different types of ECGS, and certain aspects of their division of labor, hierarchy, and formalization. Under activities we note our general observations about the attempts to organized ECGS, their resource

mobilization efforts, and how ECGS try to affect decisions and policies regarding hazardous wastes.

To avoid endless qualifications, propositional statements are presented in an "ideal type" format in the Max Weber sense, meaning that generalizations are advanced about the different phenomena as though the emergent citizen group (ECG) existed in pure form. Thus, while it is improbable that all of our observations would be found in everyone of the empirical cases we actually studied or in all ECGS, depiction is as valid as we can make about an ideal type ECG or ECGS in general.

Similarly, we examined ECGS at different time periods of their development. Not all findings therefore are equally applicable for all time periods; generally we usually portray--unless otherwise specified--an ECG which has formed and has reached a point of formalization in structure, but which has not yet institutionalized, that is, which has not developed routine and established behavior. Our focus is on the emergent phase or formative stage of ECGS that have developed with respect to hazardous wastes.

Also, almost all propositions are advanced independently of most others. In reality of course there are often interactional and synergistic effects among and between the behavioral aspects alluded to in each proposition, but for exposition purposes, there are usually not examined in this article. In another publication we attempt to relate and integrate a number of the more important factors into a systematic model of the phenomena (see Quarantelli, 1985:48-51).

#### Composition

The typical ECG has less than a hundred members, but the range is from a dozen to several thousand people. Since formal membership rosters are seldom kept by the groups, the number of members is almost always an estimate and probably on the high side in terms of persons who consider themselves members. Participation in ECG activities does not correspond to what might be indicated by formal (e.g. due paying) or psychological (i.e., identification with the group) membership. In general, there are more participants--over time--than members.

There are usually three general kinds of participants in ECGS:

- a small but very active core;
- a somewhat larger supporting circle who can be mobilized for specific tasks; and,
- a great number of primarily nominal supporters (who may pay dues, receive newsletters, attend an occasional meeting, etc.

In some cases, nominal supporters do not even consider themselves group members but may nonetheless participate, e.g., by signing a petition to remove an hazardous waste site from a particular locality. Many ECGS have non-member participants such as public officials, technical professionals, or mass media reporters who provide information, knowledge, advice, or

other resources to the group because of their sympathy with the group, but who are not formal members of the group.

In all ECGS there is a very active core of members--seldom more than a half dozen in number. In some cases the core is all there is insofar as active membership is concerned. Outside of that core, participation in group activities tends to be episodic and sporadic in most groups. In fact, for lower level participants, who are under practically no group surveillance, there are only very diffuse role expectations.

Participation in ECGS is almost always a very part time activity. But core members often devote extremely large blocks of time to the group, and the work may be more than full time for an occasional core member or two. In some rare instances, the whole life of the core member is oriented around ECG activities.

Core members are usually early joiners of ECGS, and tend to remain in the group for very long periods of time. There is little turnover of core members except for some occasional "burn out" cases, or as a result of moving out of the area (for reasons independent of the hazardous waste problem focus of the ECG). Core members tend to have only very general perceptions of most other members; whereas core members are very salient to other members who often have only general impressions of others in the group. Outsiders who deal with ECGS, such as community officials or mass media personnel, seldom distinguish between perceived membership and participation, or recognize different kinds of participants in the ECG.

In most cases ECGS have a disproportionate number of women members. The core and its leadership is also disproportionately female in the great majority of the groups. While married couples--both partners--are often members of the same ECG, one partner is usually less active (frequently this is the male).

While all adult age ranges are represented in ECGS, the typical member is in the 30-40 age range. Perhaps contrary to some popular conceptions, retirees are not prominent as a whole in ECGS, although an occasional retiree may have a key role in an ECG usually because of possession of specialized knowledge regarding hazardous wastes and which are relevant to the group activities.

ECGS are drawn primarily from the middle class (white collar). But they some involve mobile members of the working class, i.e. individuals from blue collar segments. The lowest socioeconomic levels are seldom involved in emergent groups and never comprise the core or more active membership. There are occasional ECGS made up of upper middle and lower class background. These tend to be more structurally complex groups than those with other social class composition. Minorities in American society are very poorly represented in ECGS although they often reside near or around hazardous waste sites.

Many although not all ECGS are neighborhood based, i.e., draw their members from a particular neighborhood. This usually occurs where the

hazardous waste issue or problem around which the ECG is focused is neighborhood specific. ECGS involved in more community wide issues draw from a wider geographic base, but there is still a tendency for membership to be drawn from clusters of specific neighborhoods.

Overall, membership in ECGS tend to reflect lifestyle (i.e., social class position, social linkages, social experiences, etc.) more than it does personality or demographic characteristics. This seems to be true of all levels of membership.

### Structure

There are at least two major types of ECGS. The first are the specific tasks oriented groups which are likely to be but not exclusively post-disaster groups (e.g. after a hazardous waste incident has resulted in problems requiring some kind of response), and are focused primarily on personal and self interests of their members (e.g., loss of property values of their homes). The second are broader community oriented groups which are more likely to be pre-disaster groups, and are concerned mostly with raising community awareness of a possible threat or disaster from an hazardous waste site. The first type also tends to have limited goals and is inclined to have exclusive membership (e.g. from a particular neighborhood). The second type is more likely to have open ended goals, and will tend to have inclusive membership (e.g. anyone in the involved community whether potentially threatened or not by the hazardous waste threat, can join).

The specific task oriented ECGS tend to be centralized in a neighborhood or area; the more community oriented groups tend to draw their members from the community generally although not from all areas of a community (because of the social class composition of most ECGS). Task oriented groups, on the average, are smaller than community oriented groups.

Another major distinction between ECGS is between those engaged in conflict with other groups, and those in non-conflict situations. The great majority of ECGS are in conflict situations. A cross-classification of the conflict/nonconflict dimensions and the orientation dimension results in a fourfold typology of ECGS as follows:

- (1) non conflict task oriented ECGS,
- (2) conflict task oriented ECGS,
- (3) non conflict community oriented ECGS, and
- (4) conflict community oriented ECGS.

### Division of Labor in ECGS

The core of emergent groups (whatever the type) almost always a division of labor, often in terms of the particular personal skills core members have. The division of labor is therefore often sharp because roles are not easily interchangeable. Also, the division of labor tends to be more elaborate in community oriented ECGS. The division of labor in ECGS has more to do with externally oriented behavior than with internally oriented

behavior. This reflects the strong instrumental activities of ECGS regarding hazardous wastes and their weak group maintenance activities. But there is seldom any division of labor beyond the active core and its supporting circle in the largest of ECGS. The division of labor elaborates only up a certain point in most ECGS; in some cases, a more complex division of labor may actually be replaced by a simpler one contrary to certain general principles of organizational development (see, for example, the discussion of the iron law of oligarchy presented in Michels, 1915).

#### Hierarchies in ECGS

There seldom is any actual hierarchy in the group core even though there may be a formal hierarchial order as a result of having formal officers or positions. The exception to this is when there is a charismatic leader who often is the original founder of the group. In that case such leaders have more influence than others in the core. Degree of influence also appears to be related to the ability of core members to mobilize certain kinds of resources.

The formal or official hierarchy of ECGS does not necessarily reflect core membership or different degrees of influence in the core. The formal officers are often not the informal leaders and infrequently have no public visibility.

Leadership often falls upon rather than is taken over by initial core participants, that is, it evolves slowly and informally. Leadership moreover is fairly stable in most ECGS especially among those who are informal leaders or members of the core. There is both internal group pressure and self imposed pressure to "downplay" leadership. The word "leader" is often avoided and emphasis is placed on the supposedly democratic nature of the ECG.

Conflict groups tend to somewhat less democratic in procedures and are more hierarchial in structure than non conflict groups. Furthermore, conflict groups are more vertically and horizontally structured than non conflict ECGS.

#### Formalization of ECGS

ECGS with higher level socioeconomic members start out more organized and formalized than groups with primarily lower level socioeconomic members. There are varying degrees of formalization. Some ECGS only develop an informal structure; a greater proportion set up a formal organization, and most formally incorporate if they have any life career at all.

Formal incorporation means that the ECGS have a charter, formal group positions, and nominally at least an initial membership roster. Incorporation also generates a certain amount of bookkeeping, leads to the opening of a bank account, and the use of letterhead paper.



Formalization does not seem to be related to task or community orientation, but conflict groups tend to be more formalized. Outsiders tend to take seeming symbols of formalization--such as a group name or a title used by a member (e.g., chair of a committee) as an indication of ECG formalization, whether this is the case or not.

### Activities

Among the major activities of ECGS are attempts to organize the group, to mobilize resources, and to bring about decisions and policies favorable to the group. ECGS seem to seldom engage in primarily symbolic or expressive actions; they are heavily instrumentally oriented (with the possible exception of certain groups which can draw from an outside ideological base--which is clearly the case in the instance of anti-nuclear plant groups but less clear for those ECGS concerned with toxic waste sites.

The major activities of ECGS are carried out by the active core, but in the majority of ECGS the core can regularly mobilize a significant proportion of the non-active members for a public showing of numbers (e.g. showing up a special meeting of the group, participating in some public activity of the ECG, writing letters, etc.).

ECGS have far more internal disagreements and conflicts about what courses of action to follow, than are usually publically visible. Internal differences are played down. Strong dissenters tend to leave the ECG rather than to create a schism and a new group.

Some ECGS are peopled by newer residents in an area. This sometimes leads to a clash or confrontation with longer time residents seen as controlling and/or not effectively using the local governmental structure to solve the perceived problem regarding hazardous wastes. Especially in smaller communities this may lead to a wider community conflict between the newcomers organized in an ECG, and longer established residents. In such cases, activities broaden out to those relevant to community cleavages, and go beyond those involved in a dispute over a controversial problem.

### Organizing the Group.

Organizing ECGS involves an early clarification of goals and objectives, and the development of initial strategies and tactics. Although such organization is a never ending activity, it is not visualized by the first core members. In fact, it usually takes a relatively long time before there is a recognition that goals and objectives, and strategies and tactics, may have to be modified or changed often during the career of the ECG.

Goals. Most ECGS initially have only very broad and vague goals (e.g., "being able to live in a safe place."). Such goals since they involve matters of security and health--which usually directly affect the family home and life of ECG members--are implicitly deemed unassailable or unchallengeable by anyone, and certainly not by public officials or agencies with implicit if not explicit responsibilities for the safety of

citizens. Thus, ECGS view a typical initial goal as locating the responsible authorities who can take action necessary to solve the hazardous waste problem.

Almost all issues raised by ECGS in initial approaches to outsiders are perceived as being ignored or rebuffed, or as resulting in reactions not addressing their issues. This is often a correct perception. In conflict situations in particular, ECGS are initially and frequently seen by those private or public sector officials approached, as being uninformed or narrowly biased about the hazardous waste issues, and unrealistic or simplistic in solutions proposed or goals sought. This too is often a correct perception.

Redefinition of goals frequently occur after early group emergence. Goals of ECGS are far more likely to expand or change than to contract or remain static.

A major manifest activity of almost all ECGS once formed is awareness creation. Although perhaps not originally, the awareness creating function comes to be perceived as very important, and will be maintained even if other goals are changed. Core members come to believe strongly that creating or maintaining awareness of the threat or danger they perceive from hazardous wastes is crucial to holding the interest of those already members of the ECG, to obtaining more recruits for the ECG, and to convincing those officials who need to be informed and impressed about the problem around which the ECG is focused.

Initial strategies and tactics. Redefinition of the goals of ECGS also often involve a reconsideration of the means that the ECG should use. In some cases the focus on means may overshadow the old or new goals, as matters of strategies and tactics come to the fore.

Questions rather than demands constitute the bulk of the initial communications from ECGS to governmental agencies; demands only appear later. ECGS often have little idea where decisions relevant to hazardous waste problems are made, and thus many early actions are often misdirected. In time, some core members usually get fairly knowledgeable about the organizational decision making process in their communities, but correct identification of sources of power does not necessarily translate into the evoking of desired decisions or policies.

While intended results do not always follow, many ECGS appear to believe that being a "squeaky wheel" is an appropriate strategy, as long as the actions undertaken will not be interpreted as radical by the larger community. While usually avoiding confrontation, most ECGS appear to prefer operating in public rather than working behind the scenes.

Many ECGS undertake a great deal of correspondence, especially initially; phone calls and personal visits to officials tend to occur later. Conflict ECGS in particular and especially core members sometime learn to use mass media reports about hazardous waste problems as pressure on officials; in some cases such news stories have been provided by mass

media personnel who are covert supporters of the goals of the ECGS involved.

Common sense attitudes and beliefs about the value and helpfulness of different strategies seem to dictate what will be used, far more than productivity of earlier usages or availability of resources.

#### Mobilizing Resources.

Resource mobilization includes recruiting new members, holding meetings, distributing newsletters, and obtaining resources.

Recruitment of new members is seldom given a high priority in the great majority of ECGS. Such recruitment as is undertaken tends to be sporadic, haphazardous, and unorganized. Recruitment into some ECGS is handicapped because some potential members see public emphasis on the group problem as possibly generating more personal problems, such as reducing real estate values (e.g., by emphasizing the nearness of a toxic waste site)), which might make it more difficult for them to relocate later if the collective problem is not solved.

There is a tendency for early ECG recruitment to be for more members, and for later group recruitment to be for specific expertise. But the recruitment potential problem differs somewhat in the two types of ECGS mentioned earlier. Task oriented groups usually have a delimited number of people they could recruit, but in most cases they do not have to convince people there is a problem (e.g., the existence of an hazardous waste site in the neighborhood). Community oriented groups typically have a much wider base of people they could potential recruit; however, frequently they have to convince potential recruits there is a problem for them (e.g., when the hazardous waste site is not in their neighborhood).

Meetings. In most ECGS, meetings are regularly held at least by the core; larger membership meetings are held far less often. There are also far more informal than formal meetings, and it is at the former that decisions are usually made and policies are typically set.

Core group decision making is almost always informal and highly democratic except in some instances where there is a charismatic leader. In some cases agendas for meetings are usually pre-set by the core although nominal democratic procedures extend to all group activities. More often the core uses the larger ECG meeting primarily to ratify core decisions.

Formal ECG meetings are usually informally run with little attention to parliamentary procedures. Voting by balloting is rare, and secret voting almost non-existent. Decisions by seeming consensus is the norm. While concern over obtaining larger group approval is genuine among most cores, lack of overt objections at meetings is often taken as a sign of approval of what actions have been proposed.

Formal meetings tend to be held more often during the early stages of group development. Turnout of meetings drop off substantially after a

while, but some especially relevant happening may generate a high turnout for a particular meeting.

Newsletters. Most ECGS attempt to provide a newsletter or some publications for their membership. The production of such material is usually the creation of only one or two persons. Newsletters are used as a device for the dissemination of information desired by key core members. The longer an ECG exists, and the higher the socioeconomic backgrounds of members, the more likely a newsletter is published.

Resources. The great majority of ECGS have very little money, but they also need very little to operate. Funding is not a major problem for the typical ECG because even though money could be used, it is normally not crucial. Most ECGS generate funds primarily from dues and voluntary contributions of members; this is sometimes supplemented by money obtained from informal activities such as bake or garage sales or car washes.

Money is far less important as a group resource than are nonmaterial factors such as information, specialized knowledge about hazardous waste, access to key persons, being able to meet, etc. Meeting space for most groups is sometimes provided by established religious groups who otherwise are seldom important in the development of ECGS. Non monetary material resources such as paper for newsletters, typing assistance, etc. are primarily obtained through the voluntary donations or offers from or through members of the ECG.

Sympathetic local college or university faculty members sometimes are sources of specialized knowledge, especially about the specific nature of the hazardous waste threat with which the ECG is concerned. In addition, one or two core members will often as a result of individual reading, library or newspaper research and/or finding of knowledgeable individuals, become a considerable repository of relevant knowledge for the group.

Extremely few ECGS are able to obtain grants from either public or private sources. Occasionally they directly or indirectly get access to community development funds, but almost always their operations are outside of the criteria necessary for most grants.

#### Affecting Decisions and Policies

Affecting decisions and policies includes identifying the officials and organization who might be able to do something about the perceived problem of hazardous waste, actually contacting the relevant parties, and joining in like or common efforts with other groups.

Identifying relevant groups. The initial general approach of ECGS to other groups seems to rest on the assumption that some definite group or official "out there" ought to be able to "help" the group. Almost without exception, ECGS initially have little knowledge about whom they should approach with their problems. Also, the "help" sought in the initial "shotgun" approach is often undefined and unclear to the ECGS themselves.

Initially ECGS use a "shotgun" approach in approaching groups, organizations, and agencies which they think might be able to "help" them in some way. The consequence is that a variety of public and private groups are approached, as well as officials at different levels (usually those more visible). An occasional knowledgeable core member can short circuit the "shotgun" approach, but even sophisticated individuals often find it difficult to identify who should be approached first regarding hazardous waste issues.

Contacting others. Initiative in making contacts with other groups and organizations is usually taken by the ECG. At times, after the group is informed, it may be contacted by some hazardous waste oriented national level organization or public interest group. Governmental agencies and officials almost always wait to be contacted by ECGS.

There are major quantitative and qualitative differences in ECGS in conflict as compared with non conflict situations. The former tend to attempt a greater number of, and usually more powerful organizational contacts than the latter. Most ECGS--especially those in a conflict situation--make repeated contacts with organizations they think might be relevant to hazardous waste issues. Initial lack of a response or an inadequate response does not serve as much of a deterrent to later contacts. There is a strong tendency for many ECGS to keep previously approached groups and individuals on a mailing list (and to approach them in a later letter wring campaign or petition submission) even when earlier approaches have not been fruitful.

Elected more than appointed officials are more likely to go through the motions of listening to questions and complaints from ECGS. At least they are more likely to provide some kind of feedback, such as an acknowledging letter.

When women are core leaders there often is an internal core perception that the ECG is at a disadvantage in dealing with bureaucracies and governmental units. In some cases, this is a correct perception because some male (as well as female) officials do tend to discount women leaders.

Private organizations which become the object of attention of ECGS do not appear to differ substantively in their reactions from public or governmental organizations. But they sometimes mount a seemingly more systematic public relations campaign in response to the issues raised by hazardous wastes. In some localities and in certain sections of the country, the private organizations involved in conflicts with ECGS often have the little disguised support of some governmental entities at the local and/or state level.

Joining with other groups. Local ECGS almost always avoid identification with the traditional established political parties in the community. This partly reflects the differing political affiliations or leanings of the membership of typical ECGS. One consequence is the avoidance of cross pressure on many ECG members.

The hazardous waste oriented ECGS generally maintain a single issue posture, leading to their reluctance to align with other local and extra local groups with different goals, since that might lead to diffusion of group attention or surfacing of differences of opinion on other controversial issues.

While a single issue ECG reflects the typical situation, there are instances of multiple ECGS oriented toward similar hazardous waste problems within a given community. In multiple ECGS situations, coalitions may be formed among the ECGS involved. However, such groups in the same locality are more likely to cooperate than to develop coalitions, even if involved with the same problem. ECGS usually demonstrate strong internal concern over losing their autonomy of action.

Sometime in a multiple ECGS situation, core members of the different ECGS will join together in an umbrella type community wide organization concerned about hazardous wastes. This frequently results in loss of public visibility of the local or neighborhood ECGS as outsiders tend to respond to the larger umbrella organization. While some umbrella organizations form for the purpose of disseminating information, others attempt to bring about common often explicit political action. In the latter case, the umbrella organization may become part of or be associated with established community action groups. This is not always functional for the local hazardous waste ECGS involved as their particular concerns becomes subordinated to larger but often distant issues.

More typical is for local ECGS to develop extensive horizontal networking through contacts with and at times establishment of coalitions across rather than within communities. Horizontal networking with other local emergent groups is important. Ideas of how to proceed and who to contact regarding hazardous waste issues and problems are often derived from such networking. Specific core members are often appointed/designated as boundary personnel with these other organizations.

In coalition or cooperative situations, credit is sometimes claimed by an individual ECG for what has been done collectively. Whether in a coalition or cooperative effort, the contact between the organization is usually undertaken by a few core members of the participating ECGS. Mergers of ECGS is almost unknown. Even at public hearings on hazardous waste issues, where many groups are represented, members of different ECGS tend to sit apart with members of their own group.

#### A Concluding Observation

We have, based on our field studies, depicted the general characteristics of emergent citizen groups oriented to hazardous wastes. While some of the findings were unexceptional, a number certainly were unanticipated and/or contrary to popular conceptions if not prevailing social science hypotheses. As such we have taken a step forward in our understanding of the phenomena of ECGS. However, it is just that--a first step.

The research results will have to be tested with more and different groups. In particular, it will be necessary to see how our observations hold up in different societies. Only when we will come to have systematic knowledge about the universal and the societally specific characteristics of ECGS will we be able to say that our knowledge rests on solid ground that will be useful both for practical and theoretical purposes.

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