LOCAL-LEVEL AUTONOMY: A CASE STUDY
OF AN ICELANDIC FISHING COMMUNITY

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by

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Will. C. van den Hoonaard.

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PREFACE

Notes on Icelandic.

In order to clarify some orthographic uses in the thesis I have listed below some of the symbols used most commonly in Icelandic and perhaps appearing unfamiliar to some readers.

small	capital	pronounciation
á	'A	as ow in cow
é	'E	as ye in yes
ð	Ð	as th in though
í	'I	as ee in green
ó	'O	as oe in toe
ú	'U	as oo in moon
y	'Y	same as i
þ	Þ	as th in thing
æ	Æ	as i in mile
ö	Ö	as u in burn.

As far as translations are concerned, I have attempted to translate Icelandic terminologies into their English equivalent meaning. The translation may be at variance with other writings on Iceland; each concept, however, will be sufficiently clarified to dispel any misunderstandings later in the text.

Icelandic currency.

As per summer of 1970, 85 Kronurs = Can. $1.00. Kr. 200,000 = approximately Can. $2,040.00, for example.

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CHAPTER ONE

CONCEPT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

An examination of local-state relations, with an eye to assessing the level and means of maintenance of local-level autonomy in Iceland is the main purpose of this study. Analysis of this phenomenon is generated from data gathered in a fishing village of approximately 500 inhabitants, situated on Iceland's southern coast.

Whether as a concept or as an ontological phenomenon, local-level autonomy is a pertinent problem for sociological analysis. The relevancy of 'local-level autonomy', is measured by its long history in public administration. During the Roman Empire, for example, we read that the failure to develop local-level autonomy weakened directly the empire and resulted indirectly in widespread corruption and inefficiency.[1]

In modern times, the concept is again in the forefront. National unions of local authorities are continually weighing the role of the local system in

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[1]Frank Frost Abbott and Allan Chester Johnson, Municipal Administration in the Roman Empire, (Russell and Russell, New York: 1968), p. 195.

the highly industrialized, technological and bureaucratic State. The question seems to be essentially: at what cost do we maintain local-level autonomy? This debate has assumed an international flavour for which governments have taken, successfully or without success, different measures to resolve the problem. An example of such a government is Yugoslavia where considerable experimentation has been carried out in entrusting local authorities and local industries with more prerogatives.[2] The activities of the International Union of Local Authorities ever since its inception in 1913 also underlines the immediate relevancy of the concept: One of their most important spheres of activity deals precisely with local autonomy as a vital factor in municipal administration. Local-level autonomy in our study is defined as a situation in which local affairs are entrusted to local decision-making bodies. The level of local autonomy is determined by the extent to which local agencies exercise initiative, financing, and executive responsibility in matters of local relevance.

Our attention is directed towards Iceland as there has been a recent awakening of interest in Icelandic communities[3] namely in that they are assumed to be

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[2]David S. Riddell, "Social self-government:the background of theory and practice in Yugoslav socialism," The British Journal of Sociology, Vol. 19 (1968),pp. 47-75.

[3]By 1970, two other community studies were underway; one in a farming community in Southern Iceland, the other in a fishing community in Eastern Iceland.

economically secure and self-supporting.[4] The terms of reference of these assumptions are taken up in the context of the Northern North Atlantic. Comparing Newfoundland with Iceland, Ottar Brox, for example, outlines some of the major differences as regards village organization.[5] Speaking of fishing operations on the local-level he has found a lack of local entrepreneurship in Newfoundland as opposed to Iceland with the presence of independent commercial fishing operations. The processing and packing of fish, in Iceland, is often done by publicly supported co-ops or by municipal plants who often own the boats as well. In contrast, he has found that hardly any small plants exist in Newfoundland; large vertically integrated fleet-plant corporations predominate. As a further indicator of local autonomy Brox, notes the absence of a government resettlement program in Iceland which would draw inhabitants away from small communities to so-called growth centres where relative deprivation of certain services and amenities is lessened as is the case in Newfoundland. In Iceland, fishermen have tended to locate where fishing and economy were good according to their judgment; or, by means of their unique local government structure, they have developed their own

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[4]Ottar Brox, Maintenance of Economic Dualism in Newfoundland, (Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's: 1969) Newfoundland Social and Economic Studies No. 9.

[5]Ibid., p.

outlying villages into economically secure, self-reliant communities. And finally, he notices that there is an absence of local governmental decision-making in Newfoundland communities, whereas Icelandic local governments decide on use of taxes, as well as on operation of (good) fish plants. The local government sees economic development and war on poverty as one problem, while in Newfoundland the provincial government maintains a "wasteful dualism" of economic development and a war on poverty.

The above assertions concerning Iceland appear to be supported by statistical data, such as the proportional distribution of revenue of communities in Iceland (see Table 1), which indicates the minor role of the State (approximately 12 percent) in contributing to local fiscal matters.

TABLE 1

Proportional distribution of revenue of local governments in Iceland 1966, 1967, and 1968 (in percent of total revenue)

		1966	1967	1968
1.	Taxes: income/wealth	61.1	64.3	63.5
2.	Business tax	14.6	15.0	14.3
3.	Real Estate tax	4.1	3.7	4.0
4.	Other taxes and charges	4.1	2.0	2.2
5.	Equalization Fund (from State)	12.6	11.3	11.9
6.	Other revenue	3.5	3.7	4.1
7.	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Hagstofa 'Islands, Sveitarsjóðareikningar 1966-1968, pp. 18-19

These data are particularly impressive when we consider that 1967-1968 were years of an economic decline due to the disappearance of certain fish-stocks, inflation, and shrinkage of world markets for Iceland's main export item, fish.

Up to this date there have been no investigations carried out to support, or to reject, the assumption that Iceland has autonomous communities. Aside from clarifying what "autonomy" means conceptually, this study hopes to contribute to the general state of knowledge about these communities by asking itself "Does local-level autonomy exist in Iceland?". An ancillary question is: "What are the relative roles played by local vs state-wide interest groups in the political life of a small fishing community?"

Before addressing ourselves to the points raised above, an attempt is made in the following pages of this chapter to outline briefly some of the major approaches in studies of local-level autonomy. I next explain briefly the definition of "local-level autonomy" and the methodological approach taken in this study. What then follows is a model for studying local-state relations as a device for investigating autonomy. A cursory look at the history of local communities in Iceland follows, suggesting trends relevant to our research. Subsequent chapters present the background and social structure of the community under investigation,

an operational model of local-state relations, and finally, an integration of the findings into a discussion of the local decision-making process.

Definition of the problem and the concept of 'autonomy'.

Local-level autonomy as a problem area of investigation may be viewed from several perspectives. These dimensions are situated on a bipolar continuum of local-central systems. In order to properly assess the dimension employed in this study, it is necessary to introduce the other ones as well.

Essentially, three approaches to the study of local-level autonomy can be recognized in sociological and philosophical literature. These approaches can be conveniently referred to as the macro and the micro approaches, and the "local-state relations" approach. The first avenue is where the autonomy of a local system is viewed in terms of the State or national government. At the outset it must be said that such studies are rather one of emphasis than that of self-contained analysis which arbitrarily cut off the relevancy of the local system. The main characteristics of central-local systems are (1) that local systems are perceived as orbital to central ones and (2) that the central system exercises a penetrative influence on local systems.[6]

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[6]For example, Fred E. Katz, Autonomy and

At this level of analysis several distinctive views are generated. For some (mainly sociologists and public administrators), local autonomy has lost much practical significance[7] and the process of centralization cannot be reversed.[8] As a matter of fact, this group of observers seems to agree on the singular premise that autonomy is rapidly becoming anachronistic and unrealistic in the modern world. At the other extreme, in studies emphasizing central systems, we find a representative opinion of a number of scholars such as Nisbet, who speaks of a "community lost and community to be gained".[9] The forefront of his discussion implies the disintegrative centralized influence on communities and individuals while advocating the desirability of a return to local autonomy.

In current literature these views seem to uniformly agree that local-level autonomy has been lost. They disagree on whether or not this is a desirable state of affairs. The disagreement can be extended into a

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Organization: The Limits of Social Control, (Random House, New York: 1968); A.F.Leemans, "The Re-structuring of local government," in I.U.L.A. Stockholm Conference Sept. 22, 1967; William Kornhauser, The Politics of Mass Society, (The Free Press of Glencoe, N.Y.: 1959)

[7]Leemans, op. cit.

[8]A.H.Birch, Small-Town Politics, (Oxford University Press, London : 1967), p. 188.

[9]Robert A. Nisbet, The Quest for Community: A Study in the Ethics of Order and Freedom, Oxford University Press, N.Y.: 1953), p. vii.

debate as to whether priority should be given standardization of technical, industrial, and educational services through intervention of the central government, or whether community sentiments and action should prevail even at the cost of certain benefits common to the modern State. Crawford, for example, reduces this debate to a practical problem to consider: "the necessity of preserving the reality of local self-government in a democracy."[10] According to this author, it is a problem of resolving several conflicting ends at the same time: home-rule powers vs legislative implementation.

A second approach to autonomy, namely the micro approach, has its locus of investigation in the local system. The point of departure is the local community within mass society. Most studies of local-autonomy fall into this category and they have considered an all-embracing analysis of communities,[11] or one aspect of a community on which autonomy "hinges".[12] The former

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[10]Kenneth Grant Crawford, Canadian Municipal Administration, (University of Toronto Press, Toronto: 1954), p. 335.

[11]Don Martindale and R. Galen Hanson, Small Town and the Nation: The Conflict of Local and Translocal Forces, (Greenwood, Westport: 1970; Maurice R. Stein, The Eclipse of Community, (Princeton U.P., Princeton: 1960): Arthur Vidich and Joseph Bensman, Small Town in Mass Society, (Princeton U.P., Princeton: 1968); W.Lloyd Warner, Democracy in Jonesville (Harper and Bros., New York: 1949); James West, Plainville, U.S.A. (Columbia U.P., New York: 1945).

[12]For example, K.J. Davey, "Local autonomy and Independent Revenues," in Public Administration, Vol. 49 (Spring 1971), pp. 45-50.

category of research concentrates on several aspects of communities in determining the degree of autonomy. Particular regard is given to local power structures and usually the presence of national (or local) associations affecting the nature and degree of local autonomy.[13]

The state-wide approach to the study of autonomy is united in the view that autonomy is rapidly disappearing, or has ceased altogether to exist; studies of the community-level approach seem to confirm the same findings. The latter approach, however, is plagued by a methodological weakness which impedes cross-community comparisons, let alone cross-national comparisons. It is non-comparable in scope. The shifts of emphasis in subject material in various community studies have, for example, created a diversity which cannot be easily brought into focus on a single level of theoretical analysis. The methodological weakness implies one of measurement of the degree of autonomy. The above studies have shown that it is quite possible to indicate in what ways a community is related to mass society.

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[13]Edward Hassinger, "Social Relations between Centralized and Local Social Systems," in Rural Sociology, Vol. 26 n. 4, (December 1961), pp. 354-364; Roland L. Warren, "Toward a Typology of Extra-Community Controls Limiting Local Community Autonomy," in Social Forces, Vol. 34 (May 1956), pp. 338-341; Roland L. Warren, "Toward a non-Utopian Normative Model of the Community," in American Sociological Review, Vol. 35 (1970), pp. 219-228.

There are no significant problems in that regard. However, it is quite another matter to distinguish the degree of local autonomy from whether or not autonomy exists. This brings us to the third approach used in investigating autonomy: the analysis of local-state relations.

Without attempting to reduce the methodological value of the former two approaches, the inquiry into local-state relations has been selected on grounds of its utility to establish ready criteria in measuring local autonomy.

I have suggested in the above sections that the general feeling among investigators of local autonomy is that autonomy is rapidly diminishing as part of the traditional concept of "home rule", largely as a result of centralizing forces acting upon the community. In addition, there is concern about the desirability of this process.

This study takes the viewpoint that the influence of "mass society", or state-wide agencies is an unavoidable feature of contemporary society, and that researchers must adapt their methodological procedures to that feature. In other words, it is necessary to study phenomena which are external as well as internal to the community structure. While stressing the need to investigate the area of interaction between local community and mass society, Roland L. Warren argues that the exploration as suggested by the two previously mentioned

approaches is basically "extremely simple" and "inadequate".[14] In his "Epilogue" in the same book, The Community in America, he states:

> There must be some broad area of middle ground for investigation between the incurably romantic conception of the community as a focal point of virtually all meaningful social activity and the equally remote conception of a territorially undifferentiated mass society in which people's relation to the macrosystem is utterly independent of their geographic location. For in this admittedly difficult theoretical area lie numerous questions not only of theory, ideology, and social policy, but also of focal issues around which people are increasingly involved.[15]

The researcher concurs fully with Warren's statement and, therefore, our approach to local autonomy is the analysis of local-state relations. Local-state relations fall within the "broad area of middle ground" referred to above. In order to make this research methodologically practical, I have selected issues as the primary unit of analysis. The issues under investigation are classified as routine, and specific for reasons we shall attempt to outline hereunder. It is hypothesized that by dichotomizing local-state relational issues in this manner, the variability of processes can be discerned which, in turn, would lead to a greater understanding of local-state relations as a whole. The types of issues are described in the following sections.

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[14]Roland L. Warren, The Community in America, (Rand McNally & Co., Chicago: 1972) 2nd edition, p. 238.

[15]Ibid., p. 408.

(a) Routine issues are those problem areas and methods of subsequent problem solving, which have been established within a legal framework. Our working assumption is, furthermore, that they reoccur, often at regular intervals; hence, the label routine issues. Each issue passes through a resolution process in which we may distinguish, analytically, three stages or dimensions: (1) the initiatory stage, (2) the financing stage, and (3) the executive stage. The criteria by which the three stages are discriminated from one another will be elaborated upon in due course.

The selection of routine issues has been made on the basis of the Icelandic Law on Municipal Authorities.[16] According to Article 10 of this Law, these issues or tasks are defined in the formal context of duties and responsibilities. By using the Icelandic Law as our criterion for selecting the issues, we deal with issues by and large recognized as such by Icelanders themselves. The criteria are not arbitrarily imposed upon the society under study.

The primary sources consulted for the analysis of routine issues were records of the local Council, papers and documents of State agencies, and data from the Union of Icelandic Local Authorities.[17] Furthermore,

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[16]Ministry of Social Affairs, Law Relating to Municipal Authorities, Act. No. 58/1961.

[17]The assistance, cooperation, and helpfulness extended to the researcher by the agencies mentioned are gratefully acknowledged.

individuals and members of village and State committees were interviewed. In fact, we considered how much deviation existed between law and practice.

(b) As we have noted, the routine issues called for in our analysis are directly related to the formal structured relationship between community and the State, although it is recognized that patterns may vary considerably in the perhaps informal ways of dealing with the issues. Explicitly, solving issues according to law may negate the actual feelings and thoughts in a local community. What is now furthermore needed in our analysis is the introduction of a second set of factors which would allow for flexibility in responses, and of local-state processes in general. This new element has been defined as specific in character.

Within the body of sociological and anthropological literature, specific issues have been considered worthy of analysis, but have been more frequently referred to as "dramatic occurrences", "drama in events"[18] or social drama". The utility of this approach to the study of behavior has been briefly sketched by V.W.Turner:

> The social drama is a limited area of transparency on the otherwise opaque surface of regular, uneventful social life. Through it we are enabled to observe the crucial principles of the social structure in their operation, and their relative dominance at different points of time.[19]

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[18] E.g., Michael Banton, ed. Social Anthropology of Complex Societies, (Tavistock Publications, Ltd. London: 1966), pp. 143-145.

[19] V.W.Turner, ed. Schism and Continuity in African Society, (Manchester University Press, Manchester:1957)p.93.

Specific issues are characterized by the irregularity and non-ritualistic nature of events surrounding the issue. Whereas in routine issues the emphasis is on formal guidelines for resolution, specific issues are marked by interventions of the participants involved, in the absence of clear, legal guidelines.

The selection and analysis of the specific issues in our study has been arrived at by studying records of the community Council, interviews with individuals and representatives of political parties concerned, and historical documents, including newspapers and library references. The development of the local harbour, and a cotangential issue, the plans for a bridge, have been adopted as the specific issues for analysis.

Resume

So far, we have considered three approaches to the study of local-level autonomy. On grounds of theoretical and methodological integration, the ready facility of measurability, and for practical reasons, the study of local-state relations seems most appropriate. Two kinds of issues in these relations can be distinguished. Routine issues are those determined by law and represent a more ritualistic response to reoccuring situations. Specific issues are born out of crisis situations and guidelines to solving these kind of situations are not likely to be found in laws and enactments. One such issue, and a related one have been selected for analysis.

Definition of terms.

Local-level autonomy, community autonomy, and local autonomy are all synonomous terms. As regards Icelandic terminologies, these will be best defined as we proceed in our analysis. Some of these terms will be maintained in Icelandic, without repeated translation. Once the meaning of an idea is understood, it appears unnecessary to "redefine" the term in another language. For example, oddviti refers to the Chairman or President of local government. The maintenance of these concepts in their original language will improve readability by those who are not quite familiar with English.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL-STATE RELATIONS IN ICELAND

The aim of the present chapter is to shed some light on local-state relations in general as they operate in Iceland. This will be examined in the light of historical material.

The gist of the argument is that through the processes of centralization and modernization the small local community has by-passed the intermediary administrative unit, namely the district Council, and developed a direct contact with the central government. Viewed in this light, the weakening of the District Council deserves attention in our discussion on the development of local-state relations in Iceland.

Historical background.

The first permanent settlements in Iceland date back to 874 A.D. when local chieftains from Norway had left their homeland with their households. Throughout the following years, the most influential and strongest chiefs officiated at rituals and feasts, which soon became a social centre for the surrounding area. Common problems and matters of law and order were there and then

discussed and settled. In return for preserving order and regularity of judicial proceedings, the congregation was required to pay tax to the priest-chieftains. The relation of the farmer to the chief was a voluntary one however. It was then a personal union of freemen with their leader, based on mutuality of trust and advantage.[1]

In 930 a central government was brought into existence, a Parliament (Alþing) which was drawn up and accepted by the chieftains in order to make way for growing interdependence of the chieftains. The Alþing was vested with legislative and judicial powers, while the chieftains retained executive authority. During the time of the Icelandic Commonwealth immediately after the founding of the Alþing (930-1262), details concerning the duties of the municipalities were gradually formulated in the ancient books of laws known as Grey Goose. It included provisions for the care of the poor and the treatment of offenders. [2] There were also mutual guarantees between local farmers as regards coverage for damage by fire and livestock disease. A five-man committee, elected annually by the farmers, made up the Administration of the community,

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[1]Laura Thompson, "The Rural Community in Iceland: a pilot study report," in VIe Congrès International des Sciences Anthropologiques et Ethnologiques, Paris - 30 juillet-6 août 1960, Tome III, Ethnologie (premier volume), Musée de l'Homme, Paris : 1963), pp. 305-306.

[2]George R. Nelson, Freedom and Welfare: Social Patterns in the Northern Countries of Europe, (Krohns Bogtrykkeri, Copenhagen: 1953), p. 31

or commune. Since there was no king or other head of State of Iceland, the autonomy of these communes was complete.

The administrative power of the central government during the Icelandic Commonwealth period, however, had proven to be weak and ineffective.[3] Quarrels among the chieftains ensued and the Republic was dissolved in 1262. By joint agreement between Iceland and Norway, Iceland came under the Norwegian Crown in that year, and the ancient laws of the Commonwealth were mostly annulled by a new code of laws introduced in 1272. Various legislative matters on municipal administration were among these cancelled laws. The community boundaries, however, remained unchanged, as well as the election of community councillors by the local inhabitants.

Icelandic affairs came under the control of the Danish king when Norway and Denmark were politically joined in 1380. From this date the Icelandic nation was wrought with different forms of economic exploitation and natural disasters which decimated local populations. Gradually, Icelandic communities lost local decision-making powers. In 1699, for example, the Alþing decided to have local authorities appointed by the district supervisor and priest. About a hundred years later, in 1809, local councillors were to be appointed by officials

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[3]Donald E. Nuechterlein. Iceland, Reluctant Ally, (Cornell, University Press, Ithaca: 1961), p. 2.

of the absolute Danish monarch. That Iceland had fallen to such a low state in running their own political affairs (and economic life), during the four hundred years after 1380, made the British political philosopher, Lord James Bryce, make the following comment after his visit to Iceland in the 19th Century:

> Iceland had a glorious dawn and has lain in twilight ever since; it is hardly possible that she should again be called on to play in European history.[4]

The situation described above did not remain unchanged for very long after 1809. Several developments as a result of European reform movements.[5] led to greater freedom among Icelanders to reconstitute a National Assembly in 1845. The defeat of Denmark by the British in the Napoleonic War (1809) gave impetus to trade between Iceland and Great Britain, as well as encouraged Icelanders to take full advantage of Denmark's new, but weakened, place in European developments. The series of changes on Iceland's homefront, such as the right of Reykjavík to elect their own town council in 1836, and the extension of this prerogative to the northern part of Iceland in 1854, culminated in the formulation of new legislation on local government in 1872. Local authorities were granted autonomy in local affairs, all

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[4]Quoted in Nuechterlein, op. cit., p. 1

[5]Gylfi P. Gíslason, Iceland 1918-1968, (University College London, London: 1968), Scandinavian Studies Jubilee Lectures, p. 4.; H.G.van Maurik, IJsland in de golfstroom, (J.A. Boom & Zn, Meppel: 1959), p. 104.

councillors were to be elected instead of appointed, and the traditional county divisions maintained.[6] The present format of local government administration date back to that year.

When Iceland attained full independence of Denmark in 1944, the autonomous character of Icelandic communities was at least legally safeguarded by Article 76 of the Constitution of the Icelandic Republic, dated June 17, 1944:

> The right of autonomy of urban and rural communities under the supervision of the Government shall be determined by legislation.[7]

Actual legislation on the basis of the constitutional requirement has only been recently enacted in such documents as the Law Relating to Municipal Authorities (1961),[8] and the Law on the Sources of Revenue of Municipalities (1964).[9]

Contemporary administrative structure.

The Government is the final authority on municipal affairs in Iceland. The Government agency entrusted with this supervisory task is the Ministry of Social Affairs.

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[6]Jóhannes Nordal and Valdimar Kristinsson, Iceland 1966, (The Central Bank of Iceland, Reykjavík: 1967), p.104.

[7]Ministry of External Affairs, The Constitution of the Republic of Iceland, (Office of the Prime Minister, Reykjavík: 1966), p. 18.

[8]Law Relating to Municipal Authorities, op. cit.

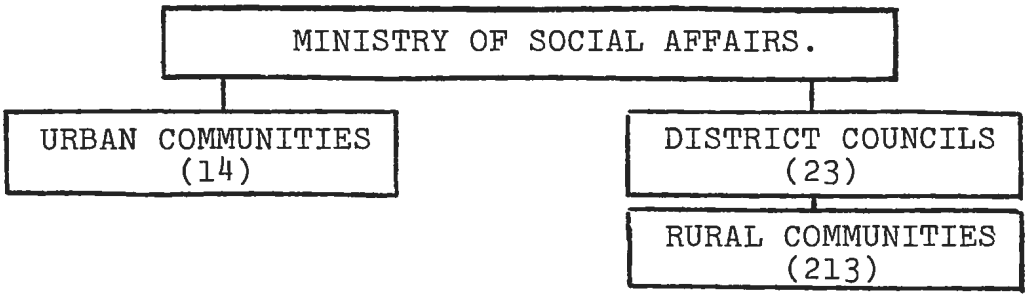
[9]Ministry of Social Affairs, Law on the Sources of Revenue of Municipalities, Act. No.51/1964.

Cities and towns (kaupstaðir), referred to in the Constitution as "urban communities" are directly responsible to this Department. There are 14 such communities.

The 213 "rural communities" in the country (hreppar) are traditionally subordinate to 23 District Councils (sýslar) which have the same legal standing vis-a-vis the Ministry of Social Affairs as the urban communities (see Table 2)

TABLE 2

Administrative divisions in Iceland



As this study deals with a so-called "rural community", we shall outline the main functions of The District Council as the intermediary institution between the State and the local community, and those of the rural community.

The main role of district councils (sýslunefn) is that of supervising finances of all villages under their jurisdiction. They also audit and render decisions of the annual accounts submitted to them by communities. They sponsor annual meetings, to which one representative

from each locality in the district is delegated. The District Council's activities are formally undertaken by approval of the representatives on the Council, but in actual fact policy-decisions, routine business and matters of a more initiatory character are executed by the Council's permanent chairman (sýslumaður). In the case of the District in which our community is located, the District Council's Office carries out functions and organizational activity relating to midwives, control of disease, an experimental farm, forestation, policing illegal catches in rivers, and maintains a small police-force.[10]

Chairing the District Council is but one of the sýslumaður's duties. He combines the roles of official representative of the State, civil and criminal judge, and chief of police. He is often compared to the equivalent role of the English sheriff in former days. His aggregate tasks and responsibilities are remnants of historic times when the sparsely populated country could but support a few officials. The sýslumaður is a political appointee for life.

At the bottom of the tri-stage administrative structure are local village governments. These local Councils are elected once every four years by direct and secret ballot. The slate of candidates is not always

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[10]The State contributes 50 per cent, the district 25 percent, and the main centre in the district in which the Office is situated, contributes another 25 per cent in the maintenance of the police-force.

drafted on a party ticket. Membership in a Council may vary from five to eleven. The candidate with the highest number of votes becomes chairman, or oddviti. Communities whose population exceeds 500 are entitled to appoint a manager (sveitarstjóri). His main function is to carry out the decisions of the local government. As a full-time employed and only employee in small communities, his influence may extend beyond the role imposed. The council, and the manager, are assisted by committees appointed by the Council. There are standing committees, as well as ad hoc ones. In the event of the presence of political parties on the Council, at least one representative of each party sits on such committees.

Recent trends: centralization and modernization.

Underlying our analysis of local-state relations is the implicit assumption that the role of the district as administrative unit has declined. The following section will attempt to explain this change. At the outset it must be realized that by doing so, it will become clear that the small community's relationship with the District has altered and has, subsequently, been replaced by much closer ties with the central government.

The key to the changing character of the District lies in the centralization and modernization processes underway before World War II. Signs of impending decline of the District could already be discerned in the period of the Great Depression during the 1930's when the State

assumed more and more responsibility for the welfare of its citizens. Providing employment opportunities, health welfare programs and coping with economic problems in general stimulated government intervention. The trend continued unabated during the War and has remained as such ever since. The War effected furthermore, a concentration of administrative power in Reykjavík heretofore exercised by only the District.

An interplay of four major developments has effected a reduction in the importance of the District Councils: (1) increasing heterogeneity within Districts, (2) problems of equal representation on the District Councils, (3) the centralization of services, and (4) the specialization and diversification of needs of communities.

An increasing heterogeneity of the communities within a district is a significant factor contributing to the state of affairs sketched previously. The early days witnessed a homogeneity of subsistence patterns; the communities were either typically a farming or a fishing economy with an occasional trading centre along the coast. Presently, the District has to account for a variety of communities, each requiring a special approach or form of assistance to problem solving. One District, for example, 'Arnessýsla, has farming communities (e.g. Skeið), fishing villages (such as Eyrarbakki and Stoksseyri), trading centres (Selfoss, Hella) and

localities such as Hveragerði which do not fall into any of the previously mentioned categories. Hveragerði is a fairly modern community which derives its economic base from commercial use of its hot springs. As resources (administrative, manpower) were (and are still) limited in the District and given the overwhelming influence of Reykjavík in political parliamentary matters as well, the efficacy of the District was vitiated and communities gradually assumed a one-to-one relationship with the central government in Reykjavík.

We can, furthermore, attribute the abdication of the District's responsibilities in some respects to the two-pronged effect of unequal representation of communities on the District Council. On one hand, the under-represented communities[11] will tend to feel at a disadvantage since the aggregate interests of smaller communities short-circuit theirs, while on the other hand, smaller localities will tend to feel that the sheer presence of numerically larger communities in the District will invalidate their own efforts on the District Council. This situation, in short, had led villages to appeal directly to the State for answers to their needs, either through the Member of the Alþing, (M.A.) or by calling upon those laws of Government which generally by-pass the

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[11] A case in point is Selfoss with 2500 inhabitants represented by one member on the District Council, the same as Þingvellir, with merely 50 registered people.

authority of the District Councils anyway. This form of behavior takes place in order for the State to vindicate the rights given to communities, or to arouse a sympathetic response to local problems. And even in these instances, direct relationships with central agencies were enforced by changes of electoral districts in 1959 which produced higher voter/M.A. ratios. Only direct dealings with the agencies could partially solve the estrangement felt in locals with the higher ratios.[12]

The centralization of prerogatives and duties of affairs within the country has been perhaps the most important single factor. Whereas the former two processes were operative on the District level as a result of the inner dynamics of the District itself, centralization is typically a phenomenon originating at the State level. The nationalization of schemes, such as health and insurance, economic planning as exhibited by some of the more recent Cabinets in Icelandic politics[13] and so on are the most distinguishable features of the centralization process. The overall result meant more reliance on state-wide agencies.

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[12]The main purpose of the change was to achieve a greater proportionality in voters/M.A. ratios, while taking into account the population growth of urban areas. The results of elections are determined by the d'Hondt proportional method. Cf. 'Olafur R. Grimsson, "Iceland: Recent Althing Elections," in Scandinavian Political Studies, Vol. 6 (1971), pp. 195-200.

[13]Nordal and Kristinsson, op. cit.

Most closely related to centralization we find, finally, a fourth factor, namely the corresponding emphasis on specialization of the services mentioned above and the recent diversification of economic patterns of communities. Accelerated by technological developments, the need to specialize cuts across all fronts and spheres of the range in services. The purposeful, directed economic planning mentioned earlier has not only contributed to the diversification of organizational and technological changes in such "traditional" economic sectors[14] as fishing organizations, but it has also created innovative economic practices and institutions accompanying new industrial segments in Icelandic society. In support of our argument that even the traditional economic sector has diversified, a recent article in Fishing News International states that "The investment behind each fisherman is ... larger in Iceland than in most countries.[15] Ever diversifying small-scale entrepreneurial activity previously unknown has placed a special demand on large-scale organizations and State agencies - the only ones beyond the District level competent enough - to provide incentives, market research and inescapable international relations.

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[14]Contrary to current opinions, Iceland has only relied on its greatest natural resource (i.e. fishing) in modern times, and not much earlier than the 1st or 2nd decade of the 20th Century.

[15]Fishing News International. Vol. 11, n.3 (March 1972), p. 13.

Summary

In summary, we can now state the following: The long history of local government has shown that communities were initially autonomous in character and function. Between 930-1262, municipal laws were gradually formulated. In the following centuries, a decline in the prerogatives of municipalities was seen. During the 19th century, powers were returned to local governments. By 1872, a basis was laid for the present-day administrative structure of local governments.

Within the framework of the Icelandic administrative structure, we can mention the declining role of the sýsla (district), due to prevailing trends in the present-day towards heterogeneity of communities within its boundaries, unequal representation of interests on its Council, a shift of functions to the State institutions (centralization, with other words), and the need for more specialization of services which can no longer be adequately filled by the district council.

Local governments turn, as one of the results of this trend, directly to the State for referral, while the central government tends to deal directly with the community as well, by-passing the district council. Other related trends were also discussed: nationalization of welfare schemes, increasing reliance on technology. Attitudes as regards social programs have also changed and we notice that the change represents a move away from assistance, or

charity, to prevention of distress.

It is suggested that the decrease of initiative by local authorities through successive stages of legislation in implementing social programs, has caused a strong reaction against such a trend and on the basis of early explicit responsibilities assumed by local communities in matters of social welfare, we may hypothesize that this reaction will prove to be an important factor in the total configuration of local-state relations, affecting, thusly, other aspects of these relations as well.

Viewed in this light, the (traditional) value of self-reliant communities as they existed previously exerts as great an influence in contemporary Icelandic society, as any current thought. We may well regard this traditional view acting as a strong incentive for communities to be, somehow, regarded as autonomous by both locals and national agencies.

CHAPTER THREE

'ARBORG

A two-fold purpose lies behind this chapter. Firstly, relevant material will be introduced so as to understand in greater detail those factors which, on one hand, will affect local-state relations and, on the other hand, are caused by these relations. The material presented here relates to sociological phenomena of the community under study, such as history, economy, households, socialization, social and political life.

The second aim of this chapter, then, is to acquaint the reader with some of the essential features of Icelandic village life. If the treatment seems too elaborate at certain points, the reason for these details may be explained in terms of existing lacunae in sociological knowledge of Iceland.

There are a plethora of questions to be posed as regards local-state relations. The most general of these concern local attitudes of the village inhabitant about himself and about others. The other significant factor that concerns us here is the role of agents of the central governments inside the community. Wherever possible, each of the sociological phenomena in the following pages will

be brought to focus on these two aspects of local-state relations. This will also facilitate our understanding of the analytical model of local-state relations to be employed in the subsequent chapters.

The Setting of the Community.

Geography

'Arborg (a fictitious name) is situated on Iceland's south coast. Its location in that area does not make it amenable to harbour facilities, as the whole south coast consists of a sandy expanse without natural harbours. The original purpose of the settlement was trade and its location had proven quite suitable for the smaller vessels until the beginning of the 20th century. Beyond 'Arborg lies Iceland's most fertile plain, fed and drained by several long rivers. This hinterland was the base of 'Arborg's prosperity during its trading days. The whole plain consists of a lava-flow formed about 10,000 years ago. The flow is 24 metres thick at 'Arborg; elsewhere at the coast it increases to 50 metres.

To the West of 'Arborg lies the Ölfús River and immediately on its western shore a sharp-featured hill-range extends 12 kilometres perpendicularly to the coast. To the North, meadows and fields stretch to about 10 kilometres at some points, or even further away at other places. The most visible mountain is Ingólfs Mountain. It is predominantly an agricultural area. In Easterly

direction, we have lowlands again and further to the East a range of mountains and glaciers, visible even on a moderately clear day. In short, we have a picture of a Dutch landscape; the image is not quite correct, however, for it is encircled by high hills and mountains, close and far away. The villagers speak of this as Fjallarhringur, Ring of Mountains.

The sea side of 'Arborg is composed of three parts; a low sea-dyke (approximately 2 metres high) stands as a reminder of former days when flooding by sea occurred much too frequently. This man-made dyke separates the actual inhabited area of the village from a relatively narrow littoral zone consisting of a beach (with occasional potatoe gardens, close to the dyke) and skerries which stretch out into the sea for 300 metres upwards to 2 kilometres. Close to the shore we find a substratum for algal vegetation. Further out, fragmentary parts of the lava layer emerge to form small lagoons, visible at low tide and extremely dangerous for vessels. Alluding to the ferocity of winter gales and the minimum protection of the coast against this weather, coupled with the ever-presence of the cliffs, a former 'Arborgian once said "Up to our door the waves roll, all the way from the South Pole." And, indeed, looking at a world map, one cannot fail but notice that no continents intervene between the village and the Pole.

The community stretches along the coast. Its

man-made harbour protrudes at its most westerly end where channels in the skerries offer safe passage to vessels to the harbour when the tide is in. But the nearby Olfús River spills out a threatening amount of sand (mainly from glaciers), filling up the skerries and forcing ice-floes in Spring time into the harbour. A barrier, especially erected for this purpose, wards off most of the sand, but fails to control the ice-floes. A noted 'Arborgian once remarked that the harbour is inaccessible for 33 days a year because of weather conditions described above.[1] In that event, fishing vessels land at Lundur. The harbour at 'Arborg can accomodate 4 boats (60-100 kilo tons) along its quay.

The weather, in contrast to what the former paragraph may suggest, is one of the most favourable in Iceland. Mean temperature for 'Arborg between 1931-1960 was 4.6 C°. Twelve communities in Iceland measured higher, with a maximum of 5.7 C°. Thirty-eight stations rated lower, with an average of approximately 3.5 C°. In 1969, mean temperature in 'Arborg was 3.4 C°. Water temperature ranges from 9 C° near the river, to 11-18 C° in front of 'Arborg proper (the highest temperatures being in the lagoons).[2] Precipitation in 1969 was 1589.6 milli-

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[1] Suðerland, Saturday, March 2, 1963, p. 5

[2] Ivka Munda, "The Quantity and Chemical Composition of Ascophyllum nodosum (L) Le Jol. along the Coast between the Rivers "Ifusa and Thjorsa (Southern Iceland)," in Botanica Marina, Vol. 7, Fasc. 1-4 (Dec. 1964), p. 80.

metres. November 1969 was lowest with 54.9 millimetres, while October ranked highest with 227.5 millimetres.

Situated 72 kilometres from Reykjavík, 'Arborg is the second last of four communities that a bus from the capital city visits three times daily. The route is a 2 hour bus-ride in a modern coach and costs 145 Kronurs one-way (equivalent to 1½ hours in wages for an Icelandic fish-plant worker). On Sundays there are four busses to Reykjavík, three on other days of the week. Many 'Arborgians take advantage of the bus-route for either visits to Reykjavík for business or to other communities dropping in on relatives.

Cars and trucks are part of the community. Of all motor vehicles (80) in the community, 62 are cars and 18 are trucks;[3] one inhabitant has four busses, although only one is normally functioning.

Other forms of contact with the outside world are through the mass media, post and telegram, and telephone. Five dailies reach 'Arborg, six days a week. Seventy-nine percent of all households read at least one newspaper, some more than one. All newspapers are backed by the political parties in Iceland. Some are official party organs. Appendix II shows the distribution of

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[3] 'Arborg (1970) and Iceland (1963) compare as follows for car and truck ownerships, respectively;
'Arborg and Iceland: 8.3 and 7.3 inhabitants per car
'Arborg and Iceland: 219 and 36.7 inhabitants per truck.
Considering that Iceland's figures are of a much earlier date, 'Arborg lies well below national average.

newspapers read in the community. Appendix III gives percentile distribution of various content matters in a major Icelandic paper. Two more newspapers are spread in the community; they are regional newspapers and, again, are aligned with a party in editorial and subject matter. They appear bi-weekly, with a summer-recess. Political "hook-up" with the rest of the nation is furthermore provided by special election newspapers, once every four years. At times, political parties in 'Arborg publish their own news at council election periods.

Both radio and television have made great inroads in the community. Contrary to the dailies, they are non-partisan and impartiality carries a heavy weight. A recent survey revealed that every night 55 percent of all Icelanders watch television all evening.[4] There is no television on Thursdays. In the light of the researcher's own experience this seems a modest figure for 'Arborg, though the reading habits of the villagers have not appreciably declined since the introduction of television. One explanation may be sought in the fact that an economic recession followed the introduction of television. This still left considerable leisure time for reading. Indeed, when the economy improved we find a sharp decline in books on loan at the local library. In 1969, a household consumed about 10 books, while in 1968 - at the low point of

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[4] Morgunblaðið, February 20, 1971. Appendix IV gives the content of T.V. programs.

economic depression - a village household read an average of approximately 14 books.[5]

Radio is a matter-of-course in 'Arborg. In Iceland between 10-20 percent listen to the radio in the evenings, a figure which I might be inclined to agree with for 'Arborg (see Appendix VI).

Post and telegrams are handled by a well-kept post-office in the village. The two-storey building is located centrally, the space being equally alloted to living quarters for the manager and his family, and to office space. The post-office is open 9-12 and 2-5 daily, Saturdays 9-12. Mail arrives 11 A.M. and is distributed by the manager's wife in the early afternoon, who also operates a switchboard for special telephone calls. The post-office writes out telephone bills for villagers and receives payment for same. Appendix VII indicates volume of mail for two 13-day period in 1968, 1969, and 1970.

An automatic telephone exchange services 'Arborg. The telephone was introduced into Iceland in 1906; telephone lines were soon laid to 'Arborg and on September 8, 1909, the village had its first telephone.[6]

With the development of mass media, the community

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[5]Appendix V gives details on loans from local library; there are 5,000 books on stock. Information courtesy of librarian.

[6]Suðurland, October 10, 1959, p. 4.

has lost its isolatory character of earlier days. Whereas at that time, the villagers interpreted correctly the ultra montes attitude of the people in Reykjavík by feeling indeed cut-off and regarding themselves as living "East of the Mountains", these feelings have now largely made way for more contact between communities. The mass media have helped bridge this gap. Some of the attitude, however, still remains when we consider that villagers in Iceland (thus, not only 'Arborg) speak of going "south", meaning travelling to Reykjavík. This expression even exists in communities situated south of the capital city, such as 'Arborg. Reykjavík is the large centrifugal force in Iceland - a force which radiates from Iceland's Southwest.

The landscape around 'Arborg speaks for itself when one's thoughts turn to past times. The sharply-featured hill-range on the West used to isolate the village from Reykjavík. The open meadows and wide expanse of valley to the North symbolized the "openness" of 'Arborg to the hinterland from which it drew its prosperity and inhabitants. Historical forces have had a profound effect on the life of the village. There is a considerable disparity between what the community was at its height of efflorescence and the character its present assumes.

History

The history of 'Arborg dates back to 980 A.D. when the first farm was established at Drepstokki, a locality from which Fjarni Herjúlfsson sailed to Greenland fourteen years before Leif Eriksson discovered America, in 986 A.D.[7] The village, however, was known by its present name since 1386. Originally the community consisted also of the neighbouring village of Höfn, situated east of 'Arborg. The total length of the community covered 22½ kilometres, the distance between the two rivers Olfus and Þjor.

Although 'Arborg can now be considered a fishing village, like many others along Iceland's coasts, it played a foremost role in the history and development of Iceland. It would be fair to say that what Reykjavík now is for the whole country, 'Arborg was for Iceland's southern area. This area has been dubbed as Iceland's legal and spiritual home. The parliament of Iceland was founded here and it is host of the Seat of the Lutheran Church. In 1662, 'Arborg was counted among the business centres of Iceland, along with Hafnarfjörður, Hofsós, Vopnafjörður, and Vestmannaeyjar.[8] Due to its

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[7]Bjarni is reported to have seen Newfoundland during that voyage and a vivid description exists of that encounter. Flateyjaútgáfan, Flateyjarbók, Vol. 1)Prentverk, Akranes: 1944), pp. 478-480.

[8]Vigfús Guðmundsson, Saga Eyrarbakka, (Unuhúsi, Reykjavík: 1945), Vol. 1, p. 276.

favourable and strategic position for ships en route from Europe and also as a result of its fortuitous location as trading centre for the hinterland, the village soon became a centre for business, supported by mercantilists. The emphasis was on barter trade (cod and other fishes, and textiles in exchange for foodstuffs). Other goods destined for Iceland from various countries passed through 'Arborg as well. In 1673, for example, 2500 nails were delivered by a vessel for the church at Skálholt, the Centre of Christianity in Iceland.[9] The significance of 'Arborg is best illustrated by the fact that the first occurrence of measles in Iceland, spread from 'Arborg (in 1644), after it was introduced by overseas contacts.[10] Smallpox contagion was also blamed on 'Arborg's place in the trading world, as an old poem testifies:

> To 'Arborgi,
> Smallpox comes in great quantity,
> Of which young people foresee
> Its effect as very ugly.
> They may thank God,
> That they die without much ado and quickly.[11]

During the reign of the Danish monarch, the influence of Danish merchants in 'Arborg was most strongly felt in the Nineteenth Century. Before that time, the King had granted monopolies to Danish firms, operating in

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[9] Ibid., Vol. 2, Part 1, p. 407.

[10] Þórvald Thoroddson, Ferðabók: Skýrslur um Rannsóknir á 'Islandi 1882-1989, (Snaebjörn Jónsson & Co, Reykjavík: 1958), Vol. 1, 2nd ed., p. 94.

[11] This poem appeared in Morgunblaðið, February 1971.

separate districts of Iceland. Under force of legal prosecution, Icelanders were required to deliver their goods to the merchant of their area. No sooner had this system taken strong hold when abuse of the inhabitants' helplessness became a norm rather than exception. Merchants exercised complete rule. Profits grew in reverse proportion to the welfare of Icelanders. One merchant in 'Arborg assigned two guards exclusively for guarding the horses of traders and had 4000 customers on record.[12]

Whatever demerits may be summed up against, or for, the Danish trade-monopolies, 'Arborg as a whole prospered in terms of social life. Some of Iceland's oldest organizations were started in 'Arborg, under influence of the Danes who regretted the lack of the (comfortable) educational and social life in this outpost, remote from the familiar surroundings of Denmark. In 1852, a school was set up in the community and has been functioning ever since. Only Reykjavík has an older school system (founded in the 1830's) but it has been discontinuous. In 1880, 'Arborg could boast of a library, commenced and supported by one of the merchants. It has 291 books and 60 loans were made in that year. One of the oldest Women's associations originated in 'Arborg (1888). The third oldest labour organization in 'Arborg belongs to

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[12]Suðurland, February 2, 1963, p. 1

the village as well, starting in 1903, two years before one was founded in Reykjavík. A Young Men's Society existed in embryonic form by 1908; it was formally established in 1920. A volunteer Rescue Society got underway in 1928 and has been active ever since. The village even had three printing establishments, one more library, drama groups, musical groups, such as a trumpet group and a choir, and two lodges.[13]

The period of Danish mercantilism ushered in a period of rich cultural life. A native 'Arborgian described the educational level of his contemporaries as follows (he was born in 1893):

> Nobody was especially brilliant,
> but one had those talents, which
> most Icelanders tried to acquire:
> he always knew what he had to.[14]

The above interviewee remembers going to school for the first time when he was twelve years old and receiving instruction in the three "R's" and bible-history. He later became a priest.

Under the spell of 'Arborg's prosperity, large numbers of immigrants flowed into the village. They could be hardly accommodated. Sometimes, three or four families lived in one dwelling unit, which would, today,

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[13]The data in this chapter were compiled from interviews with present-day organization presidents. Regional newspapers, such as Þjóðólfur and Suðurland, have proven to be of immense value.

[14]Suðurland, Saturday, February 2, 1963, p. 2

be considered only appropriate for a childless couple.

As might be expected, a change of events would seriously affect the village's life. In 1923, "times were changing" - for the worse.

The year 1923 marked the beginning of what later turned out to be a steady decline in population (see Appendix I). The decrease is mainly attributable to a decrease in employment opportunities. Firstly, the increase in size of ships necessitated these in sailing around Iceland's southwest corner to Reykjavík where a more suitable harbour could accommodate the ships. As a result, a general decline in business set in, as merchants and other entrepreneurs followed the ships to the capital. After 1923 only two in the local Labor Society executive remained in 'Arborg out of thirteen executive members who served between 1916-1923. Others, with an eye toward the future, also pulled up their stakes. Many of these emigrants were among the most active in the community, economically, and socially, and are known to Iceland for their outstanding contribution to the country after they had left the community. They have made a name for themselves. A glance in the Icelandic Who's Who shows that they all left 'Arborg between 1918 and 1933. The majority of them in the 1920's.[15] They played significant

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[15]Jón Guðnason and Pétur Haraldsson, 'Islenzkir Samtíðarmenn, (Bókaútgáfan Samtíðarmenn, Reykjavík: 1967), Vol. 1 and 2.

roles in the financial world, in the area of publishing, ship-building, and the world of aviation, to mention but a few.

The planning and erection of Bruna which was to be a trade centre close-by, but more advantageously located in the network of roads, had likewise exercised sufficient attraction for people to leave 'Arborg. By the late 1930's the Chairman of the District Council had moved his residence from the village as well and had settled in the new community. From one homestead in 1930, Brúná has now grown to 2410 inhabitants in 1969.[16]

The population drain came temporarily to a halt during the Second World War, when many local people found employment in surrounding areas in the construction of airfields for the British. However, the post-war period saw again a decrease, continuing until the 1960's. The population seems now to have been stabilized at around 500, a sharp contrast to a high of 965 in 1919.

Economic organization

Trade was 'Arborg's main economic mainstay during the early part of the century. Historical processes, as we have seen, have brought about a transition to an economic system of the village based primarily on fishing. Fishing has long been recognized as a potential source of

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[16]Hagstofa 'Islands, Tölfraedihandbók, (Gutenberg, Reykjavík: 1967), Table 20, p, 24.

wealth for the community but its realization has been delayed by the villagers' preoccupation with trade. The records of 'Alborg's Labour Society show that the Society was founded by labourers, farmers, and fishermen. The fishermen, in 1903, shared to some extent the same concerns and economic problems as other labourers in the community which primarily consisted of coping with economic fluctuations caused by varying fishing seasons. Fishermen would often work for merchants during the summer season.

The fluctuative seasonal economic character of the community still prevails today, as in other Icelandic fishing communities. It is determined by the presence of fish in general, and of certain species of marine life in particular. The resulting "seasons" may be classified into three distinct periods each year.

(1) The winter season is the most economically productive of all three with full employment and extensive utilization of fishing-gear, fishing-vessels, and the processing and other auxiliary fish-industries on shore. This period of intensive fishing spans from February to May (11th of May, traditionally). Cod (bórskur) is the primary resource, but other stocks are also exploited, such as coal-fish (ufsi) and haddock (ýsa). Fishing vessels employ twice as many men as during other periods and crew-members have to be recruited from neighbouring communities.

(2) The summer season extends from May to September. The intensity of activity which is so characteristic

of the winter period drops off slightly. The fish quick-freezing plant in the community begins to process nethrops or scampi, (humar),[17] while it continues to handle such species as haddock, ling (langa), and cod. Redfish (karfi) is also landed.

(3) The early winter season, lasting from October to January, is the most unproductive of all seasons. The summer-fishing period with its concentration of humar is over and the fishing-vessels bide their time with less-intensive fishing until the appearance of cod in the winter-season. Unemployment rises, or sets in, as a result of absence of essential fish-stocks; the main fish-plant may even witness a close-down of its operations. Fifty (26 percent) wage-earners may number among the unemployed during that season. Table 2 illustrates the economic fluctuations in employment caused by the three fishing-seasons described above:

TABLE 3

Number of unemployed in 'Arborg

Feb. 1969 - Jan. 1970.

1969											1970
Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	26	23	29	25
winter				summer				early-winter			

After the introduction of the first motor fishing-

[17]The nethrops (Nethrops norvegicus) is 18 centimetres (7") long, 30.5 centimetres (13") including its claws.

vessel into the community, in 1908,[18] the main form of processing of fish was drying. Developments during the Second World War created markets of frozen fish (chiefly Great Britain) and the establishment of a fish quick-freezing plant in the village was soon launched upon in 1943. Under the coordinated marketing efforts of the Icelandic Freezing Plants Corporation (Sölumiðstöð Hraðfrystihúsanna) of which the plant is a member, and the general support of villagers in the affairs of the plant, it managed to remain the main employer in the community, despite yearly and seasonal fluctuations in fish-stocks, and regardless of its heavy initial capital outlay. Particularly since 1960 frozen fish has become a main export item for the community, together with salted fish, (see Appendix I). About 44 per cent of landed fish are destined to be quick-frozen, while salted fish production comes second with 38 per cent. Other forms of processing are stockfish (11 per cent), fishmeal (2 per cent), and home consumption (5 per cent). On the whole, frozen fish is becoming increasingly important at the cost of salted fish. Stock fish production is also gaining.

The fishing industry in the community became more stabilized with the exploitation of rich scampi-grounds off Iceland's south coast. "Arborg pioneered in this, at first

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[18]The first motor-boat came to Iceland in 1902.

experimentally in 1952, but, in 1954, it finally became an important factor in the economic life of the community. It created summer employment for men, women, and youth. The latter two categories profited the most from the upsurge of the new product.

The fish quick-freezing plant's monopoly on processing of fish and, in fact, on the labour force as well, came partially to an end in 1965 with the erection of a fish-drying plant by a dissenting fishing-vessel owner and his brother who disagreed with the economic policies of the first plant. The multiplication of fish-processing plants in the village was not to stop here. In 1970, a second fish-drying plant got underway under the initiative of the original planner and organizer of the quick-freezing plant before he was ousted out of the Executive Board of the plant.

The raw-product for all three plants originate from five fishing-vessels in the community. Appendix VIII shows that three of these are owned by the fish-quick-freezing plant, while the two others are run by each of the other plants. The selling of old vessels and purchase of newer and larger ones can best be explained in the light of the necessity to keep up with depleting fish-stocks; grounds are increasingly more difficult to find. Larger vessels are seen as the key to maximizing fish-catches. The average of 56 kilogram tons per vessel in 'Arborg compares unfavourably with the national average of 84 kilogram

tons.[19] The community at present, then, appears to be slow to follow the trend. Larger vessels are "bought" into the village at the expense of other factors such as age of vessel, resulting in shorter length of service of vessels bought.[20] The decreasing years of service for fishing vessels (from average of 8.3 years between 1917-1929, to 6.7 years in 1956-1968) also indicates at what cost more intensive fishing with heavier gear, is introduced into the fishing industry.

The community not only has to cope with fishing-vessels (and gear) below what is minimally necessary to exploit fish-stocks, but it also has to cope with occasional sharp reductions of the fish catches. Appendix X indicates total tonnage of catches of demersal fish in 'Arborg, during the past 10 years and subsequent production of fish in the same period. From 1960 catches have been rising steadily, culminating in 1965. The period which follows shows fluctuations due to poor catches until it dips off in 1968. During 1968, the local fish quick-freezing plant was closed down. Many of the men who depended on the fish found employment outside the community as

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[19]Actual figures for Iceland are: 499 vessels (under 100 kilogram ton with total tonnage of 16,630, and 202 vessels (above 100 kilogram tons) with 41,984 tons. 1969 data from 'Islenzkt Sjómanna-Almanak 1970, p. 504.

[20]The average age of vessels bought increased from 13.8 years in the 1917-1929 period, to 18.5 years in 1956-1968. Also, before 1929, there were 4 new vessels bought, but only 1 after that year (in 1930-1942). See Appendix IX for complete details.

the State had already initiated the construction of a large dam in the district. The most seriously affected category were the female employees of the plant.

A second major source of income for the villagers are agricultural products, chiefly potatoes and hay. Agriculture in 'Arborg has always formed a part of its economy. While fishing expanded after the decline of the community as a trading centre, agriculture had always fitted into the economy pattern of merchants. However, decline became inevitable when they moved to Reykjavík and other communities. A small agricultural strip of land outside 'Arborg, Hraunshverfi, provided the basic means of income for 143 people in 1900, but after 1930, only 40 inhabitants still remained on the same lands (see Table 4).

TABLE 4

Number of inhabitants at Hraunshverfi,

1703 - 1950.

1703 : 52	1840 : 60	1900 : 143
1729 : 54	1850 : 50	1910 : 107
1962 : 64	1860 : 69	1920 : 90
1801 : 56	1870 : 80	1930 : 40
1818 : 61	1880 : 70	1940 : 32
1830 : 45	1890 : 99	1950 : 17

Source : 'Arborg historian.

The founding of a farmers' society in 'Arborg in 1927 temporarily halted emigration and it can perhaps best be seen as a reaction against a tragic fishing-vessel accident in that year. The conviction that agriculture

had indeed played a vital role in the economy may have given strength to the idea that it was the sole refuge for a stable, secure income. The Farmers' Society today is best described as a buying agent for local farmers and also a survey-agent of the State.

While it holds that potatoes (and hay) figure a large part of the economy, farms and farmers belong to a dwindling group whose means of support are now rapidly being replaced by wage-work in one of the fish plants. Milk-production has decreased from 1 per cent (289,706 kilograms) of total production for the whole district of 'Arnessýsla in 1958, to a mere 0.3 per cent in 1969.[21] In 1942, there were 276 head of cattle, but in 1963, this had become 125. While this decrease is not so significant, the rate of ownership shows a considerable decrease from 65 owners to 16 for the same years.[22] And, finally, Chart 1 gives a clear picture of the sharp decrease of farmers in 'Arborg.

The presence of potato gardens have largely supplanted the importance of farms and farming and forms the second-largest source of income for villagers. Three sorts can be distinguished in accordance with the specific use for which the gardeners have in mind.[23] (1) private

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[21]Suðurland, April 18, 1959, p. 8; 'Ársskýrslum M.B.F. 1970.

[22]Yearbooks of Mjólkurbúaflóamanna 1942 and 1963.

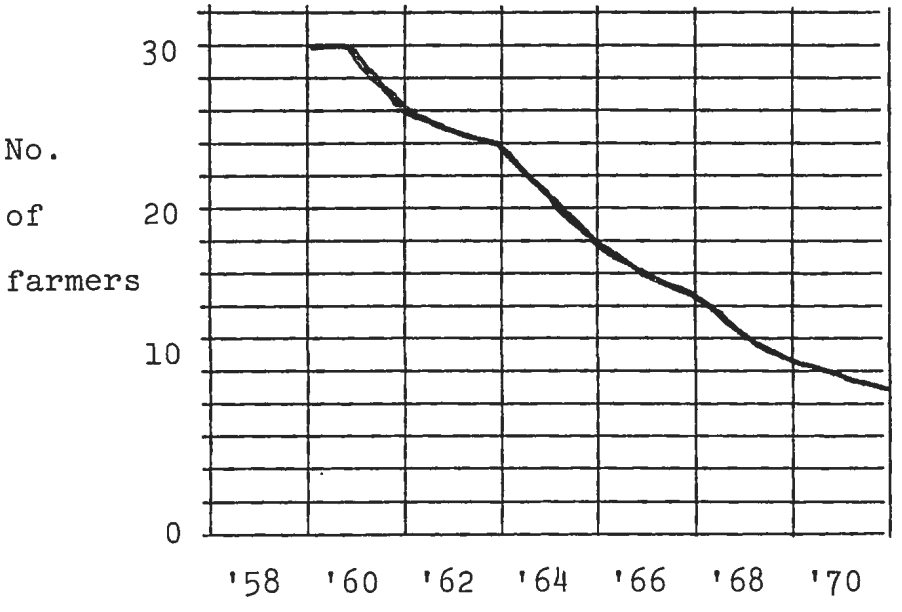
[23]These terms are my own classification.

(small) gardens, (2) medium-sized gardens and (3) large-scale gardens. For households with small gardens (usually a plot of land in the yard or near the house), the potato products are simply meant to supplement the family core-income; they are a welcome addition for its cash value may amount to $60 - $120 per year. Medium-sized gardens extend over several patches of private gardens, but are without the large equipment associated with the large-scale ones. They are not only for household use, but also

CHART 1

Number of farmers in 'Arborg

1958 - 1970



for sale, either to local people or to contacts outside the community. The size of these gardens vary from 350-1000 square metres, the majority being 350 square metres. The large-scale gardens are strictly commercial

and are located outside the community, to the West of 'Arborg. They are of considerable size (over 1000 square metres), falling into two main groups of 1000-2000 square metres and of 3 hectares (30,000 square metres = 7.41 acres). Table 5 indicates the total yield of potatoes of each of the three groups specified above. Only 7 per cent of all 144 households in 'Arborg do not have potato gardens. About 76 per cent have a small garden.

As in fishing (see Appendix VIII), the potato gardeners of 'Arborg have also adopted some of the latest technological innovations to increase yield. A gardener recently installed a $25,000 (Kr. 200,000) sprinkler-system to ward off frost.

TABLE 5

Gardens in 'Arborg, 1970

Type of garden	Households No.	Households %	Estimate production	Value
Private	109	76	50,000 kg.	600,000 Kr.
Medium	10	7	150,000	1,800,000
Large	11	7	450,000	5,400,000
Farm/Gardens	4	3	2,000	24,000
Sub-total	134	93%	652,000 kg.	7,824,000 Kr.
No gardens	10	7		
	144	100%		

The gardener mentioned above has made apparently a good investment, for 'Arborg is counted among the top-ranking potato growing areas in Iceland. It usually rates among the first eight. Occasionally, it has ranked first, such as in the early 1940's, but in recent years it occupied 9th or 12th place in national ranking. (See Appendix XI).

One other agricultural product, sea-weed, has no economic significance in the local economy. Individual households gather it, but it is not universally done.[24]

Employment

'Arborg's economic viability may be questioned when we view the rapid decrease of agriculture in the community and the seasonal character of the fishing industry. However, these factors also operate on the national level and, yet, Iceland's percentage of economically active people (15 years and over) is placed at 36.8 per cent.[25] An equally surprising figure can be found for the village. The winter season employs almost 52 per cent of the total population of 15 years and over

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[24]Munda, op. cit., pp. 81-3. The sea-weed is rated as having a low-iodine content, with moderately high protein value. Compared to other countries, the sea-weed off 'Arborg occurs on a modest scale (7-11 kg/cm^2, compared to 15.3 in Sweden, 8.9 in Scotland, 8-11 in Great Britain and 7-12 in Norway).

[25]Hagstofa 'Islands, Mannatlið 1960, (Gutenberg, Reykjavík: 1969), pp 108-111. Newfoundland's percentage of adult active workers hovers between 22-25 per cent in the same category. (according to a news clipping in Evening Telegram Autumn 1970).

(see Table 6). The summer season sees a slight decrease with a drop to 48 per cent (see Table 7). Several factors have created this particular condition, all of which are relevant to our analysis of specific issues.

TABLE 6

Economically active population (15 years and over) in 'Arborg, by category of employer and type of employment, Winter season 1971.

Category of employer	Fishing and fish industry	Farming	Services	Other Employment	Total No.	Total %
1. Local government	82[i]	-	4	5	94	49
2. Firms in village	38	-	10	11	59	31
3. State of Iceland	-	-	1	8	9	5
4. Self-employed	1	12	-	17	30	15
Totals, no.	124	12	15	41	192	100%
% (village)	65	6	8	21		100%
% (Iceland)[ii]	16	17	33	34		100%

[i]Included are employees of fish quick-freezing plant in which local government has 57 per cent control of shares.

[ii]Figures for Iceland are for 1960. See footnote 25.

Firstly, the influence of the local government as employer is noticeable. Between 49 per cent and 54 per cent of the labour force is engaged in employment provided by the government of the village. As will be discussed later, the Council is the epicentre of economic activity in the village,

for its influence extends beyond the formal percentage quoted. Mention should be made of a large number of migrant workers (25) for the winter season; these are attracted from outside the community.

TABLE 7

Economically active population (15 years and over) in 'Arborg, by category of employer and type of employment, Summer season 1970.

Category of employer	Fishing and fish industry	Farming	Services	Other	Total	
					No.	%
1. Local government	80	-	4	5	89	54
2. Firms in village	16	-	10	11	37	22
3. State of Iceland	-	-	1	8	9	5
4. Self-employed	1	12	-	17	30	18
Totals, no.	97	12	15	41	165	
Totals, per cent	59	7	9	25	100	

Secondly, certain occupational groups, such as truck-drivers, are characterized by geographical mobility which enables them to accept jobs outside the community. As a corollary to this fact there are also a number of jobs created outside 'Arborg. With other words, there is, to a certain extent, an occupational orientation of the labour force in the community to areas outside the confines of the village.

A third factor is one of mobility. Here, men supplement their primary income by work in, e.g., harvesting

potatoes in the Fall, carpentry jobs at the local fish-freezing plant and etc. The internal mobility can be seen as a "layer" of various employments constantly shifting under a layer of steady, official, employment, according to seasons and particular needs in the community.

Table 8, finally, categorizes the labour force in the village. Not listed are the 25 migratory workers mentioned recently and 23 women who are ordinarily always working in fish-plants.

TABLE 8

Labour-force in 'Arborg, 1970

1. Doctor		1
2. Clergy		1
3. Management:	plant foremen	10
	jail-warden	1
4. Fishing :	skippers	5
:	crew members	20
5. White-collar:	teachers	2
:	librarian	1
:	clerks	2
:	jail-guards	7
6. Skilled labourers:	truck-drivers	15
:	other	26
7. Unskilled labourers		41
8. Farmers/gardeners		12
Total		144

Of further interest there remains the detail that income-variance is not high and gives a "flat" impression (see Appendix XII). During the summer months, furthermore, youth returning from school are employed.

From a preceding section on fishing, autumn was

cited as the slump in economic activity of the community. During the past years, since 1967, an average of Kr. 409,209 have been paid out as Unemployment payments to approximately a minimum of three and a maximum of 25 males, and respectively to nine and 23 women.

A so-called typical household in 'Arborg would be totally submerged in the economic life as follows: the head of the household is engaged in truck-driving and finds occasional employment in a fish-plant; his wife works in the quick-freezing plant; their high-school aged son is recruited on a fishing-vessel during summer holidays and other recesses, while a younger daughter is hired by the local government as part of the 'Unglingavinna, the Youth Summer Project which performs clean-up duties around the village.

Households and socialization.

There are 144 households in the village. Each is an autonomous unit, economically and socially. As an economic unit each strives to be independent of other households, even though they might have kinship ties. Each member contributes to the general income of the family while each one, yet, is recognized as an individual within the context of the household, rather than as an extension of that basic unit.

In social terms, the household is also regarded autonomously. Observers of Icelandic society (and Icelanders themselves, also) cannot fail but notice how

the smallness of Iceland has created, or heightened, the importance of the individual. "The society has had to build mechanisms which allowed the individual to retain some psychological distance" from others.[26]

The tendency towards individualism is particularly revealing in child-rearing practices, one of the leading forces and result of the "engagement-family" in Iceland. This refers to couples who are considered married in all respects, except for the final step of formalizing it.[27] Independence is fostered at a very early age. In 'Arborg, the mean age of girls still residing with her parents, although economically self-reliant, is 18.1 years (for males: 23.0 years). While the mother works outside the home, infants are looked after by in-laws, or other relatives, or by a young mother in the village who looks after several others as well, against payment. At a later stage, children are encouraged to be on their own. And even later, we find 12 year old girls looking after the children of working mothers. Parents, furthermore, will tend not to interfere with their children when it comes to education and choice of marriage partner - a fact observed by Björn Björnsson.

The school and the age group are the next most

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[26]Sveinbjörn E. Peterson, Management, Motives and Society; A Study of the Relationship Between Sociological Variables and Some Attributes of Personality Among the Upper Classes in Iceland. Unpublished Ph.D. theses, M.I.T.,School of Management, 1970, p. 223.

[27]Ibid., p. 94.

important socializing agents. The village school is completely oriented towards the nation for its focus of programs. Subjects taught are: Icelandic, Danish (or English), Math, Christianity, Icelandic History, Citizenship, Geography, Biology/Science, Home Economics for girls and seamanship for boys, and some sport, of which swimming is obligatory. They represent 30 hours of instruction per week. Summer holiday lasts 4 months. During 1969-1970, there were 73 pupils enrolled in the three-room school house, of which 16 were in Junior High School. Instruction is available until Grade 8 (gagnfraeðaskóli): district schools provide higher levels of instruction.

A third stage in the process of internalizing values of Icelandic society includes the role of clubs and associations in the village. These are often considered as "training schools" for participation in public life. A leading member of the village once admitted "that the Youth Society was the best school I ever attended!"[29]

Considerable attention has been given to kinship in Iceland. It is for the present purpose enough to state that 'Arborg is guided by the same general patterns of behaviour in this regard. Visiting patterns are circumscribed to relatives within the community. Extra-kinship contact is normally related to neighbours who have built

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[28]Björn Björnsson, The Lutheran Doctrine of Marriage in Modern Icelandic Society, Ph.D., Edinburgh, Divinity. 1966.

[29]Suðurland, Oct. 26, 1963, p. 2.

up their homes, literally in the meaning of the word, contemporaneously, requiring a mutual exchange of ideas and assistance. Otherwise, contact is limited. One household in 'Arborg has over 70 relatives living in the community and all social activity is carried on within that network. Another household received only a small percentage of visitors who are non-relatives during one month in the Spring. 36 per cent of their guests came from outside the community, 64 per cent from inside. All 36 per cent were relatives, while the other figures stands for mostly relatives as well.

Activities on the streets of the village are generally limited to children. Several sample walks through the main street counted no more than 5 or 6 adults and 11 children. During the day, but especially in the evenings, the village has the atmosphere of a suburban North American community when it comes to meeting neighbours and other inhabitants. The isolated character of many of the households is perhaps attributable to the large number of arrivals in the village, particularly since early 1960's. The newcomers come from different areas on Iceland, to establish their home here, in relative proximity to Reykjavík. Table 9 gives percentage of native and immigrant households in the village (see also Appendix XIII).

Aside from being greater in number, non-native households are composed of mainly young couples, while

the households native to 'Arborg consist of primarily the older generation.

TABLE 9

Native and Immigrant households in 'Arborg. 1970.

	Household heads Native to 'Arborg	One head Native to 'Arborg	Household heads not native to 'Arborg	Total
Complete households	5	32	36	73%
Incomplete households	15	-	12	27%
	20%	32%	48%	100%

A second point implicated, though not evident in Table 9, indicates that 'Arborg's economy is male-based. Males-native-to-'Arborg predominate by about 60 per cent. in households, with only one of either husband or wife from 'Arborg. This seems to agree with the finding that the average age of economically independent males staying at home is 23 years; girls in this category leave home at the age of 18.

In sum, the overwhelming majority of households are not native to 'Arborg, while the minority which are from the village tend to be the older inhabitants. Girls will tend to move away from the community at an earlier age than males, the latter tending to bring their mates into the community. As a whole, the community conditions

appear to favour young couples.

Leisure activities are sponsored often by several organizations and they include excursions into the country, bazaars at Christmas time, card-evenings, and courses in public speaking. Individuals may limit their spare-time to gardening, renovating the home (or building one) and reading, naturally. The group which does not seem to find a suitable niche in the social life are the teenagers who seek leisure outside the community. The most popular activity is attending week-end dances (sveitabal) when they pool their resources to hire a bus-driver for transportation.

Political and local associations.

As indicated in the previous section, organizations play an active part in the leisure activities of the community. However, even today local organizations are considered as "training-schools in practical democracy,"[30] although much of the practical aspect of their work (e.g. in health, labour) has been gradually absorbed by the local and central governments.

A well-known quote about 'Arborg says, "'Arborg can remember her 'flower' more beautiful than it is now" ('Arborg má muna sinn fífil fegri) and the local inhabitants are quick to point to "Iceland's oldest house in existence" (built in 1764), or "Iceland's oldest community

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[30]Nelson, op. cit. p. 36.e.v.

centre", -- all survivals of the dominant influence of organizations in the community. No doubt, the role of community societies must have been important in the general level of education and gearing people to an active, participatory life. A number of these organizations rose to meet the needs of the Danish merchants, and others due to the economic activity of the community.

Today, we find eleven such societies still in existence. The oldest is almost 83 years old, and the majority are not younger than 30 years. The youngest society is the Kiwanis Club which is actually located in Brúná and to which four 'Arborgians have become members.

The societies, or organizations, in 'Arborg can be classified into social, economical, and political societies. (see Appendix XIV)

In the first category, the organizations have clearly abandoned their functional character, in terms of wide-scale involvement, and are now simply seen as social clubs. If issues in the community are judged of wide enough importance, they may be called into action. Among this group, the Women's Society, ranks as the oldest and is now responsible for outings by bus into the country, sewing clubs, and several drives for funds. These activities are also shared by the Young Men's Society, the local Sea Rescue Society. A national holiday might produce cooperation among them, but they are definitely still seen as separate entities.

The most important economic society is the local Labour Society which at one point in time (before W.W.II) carried out many functions which the local government has incorporated presently. The Society has labour relations as its prime concern and acts now as representative of the State in numerous ways, such as implementing minimum work-condition standards and regulating unemployment payments. The Farmers' Society is considerably younger in age and acts as a local agent for farmers and gardeners.

The political party clubs in the community are of a more recent date (1940); their precursors were Young Men's Clubs of the two parties in the village. The clubs, however, are only active at local and national election times.

Elections in 'Arborg are taken in a very serious vein and are ceremoniously carried out in the community hall. Appendix XV) indicates electoral participation in local community contests and Appendix XVI shows village participation in national elections. In both cases, the rating is quite high, with one case of 100 per cent turn-out (at the 1944 Plebiscite separating Iceland from Denmark). The figures also show a steady increase from about 75 per cent in 1942, to 93 per cent in 1970. National elections show the same increase. This is probably attributable to the politicization of the local government[31]

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[31]The term "politicization of local government" has been analyzed in a historical context in Norway be Torstein Hjellum, "The Politicization of Local Government: Rates of

since the latter part of the depression in the '30's. Parallel to this development was the decline in duties and functions of local organizations which were giving more ground to the local government.

Since 1938, the local government was controlled by two parties; a third party is of minor significance in this regard. In view of community-level participation we see an increase from 5 committees appointed by the Community Council in 1938, to 20 in 1970.[32] From 16 posts in 1938, we find 75 in 1970; 15 and 41 officers respectively, filled these posts. The committees meet infrequently. Some are paper-committees, while others are active, depending on the issues at hand.

Two local parties are the chief participants in the political life of 'Arborg: the Social-Democrats and the Independence Party. Table 10 gives us a brief overview of the self-image each party attempts to project, and, also, how they view one another. This data was primarily culled from local elections pamphlets and newspapers; discussions with party-members resulted in selecting the one adjective which best describes the party.

One is tempted to attribute a Gemeinschaft vs Gesellschaft orientation to the parties in 'Arborg.

Change, Conditioning Factors, Effects on Political Culture", in Scandinavian Political Studies, Vol. 2, 1967. pp. 69-93 (Universitestforlaget, Oslo: 1967)

[32]For 11 villages of similar size in 1970, average number of committees was 12. Fishing villages have twice as many committees as farming communities. Sveitarstjórnar manntal 1970-1974 (S.I.S., Reykjavík: 1971). Handbók Sveitarstjórna 8.

However, this would be quite misleading as the focal issue for voters tends to be the political figure, rather than his party program. This point is examined at length later.

TABLE 10

Party image in 'Arborg

		POLITICAL PARTIES	
		Social Democrats	Independence Party
IMAGE	As seen by self	Community-minded (félagshyggjumaður)	Progressive
	As seen by others	Conservative	Individual-minded (einkahyggjumaður)

At the national level, the Social Democrats' voter stronghold lies in the less remote areas, especially along the coasts as in the case of 'Arborg, although it has lost its former support among labour across the country. Morris Davis describes this party as the least ethnocentric and most pro-Western in dealing with foreign powers.[33] In his study of the fisheries limits question, he has found that the party has exhibited the most "responsible course of action" in connection with the limits crisis and expressed a "greater tone of reasonableness and compromise" than

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[33]Morris Davis, Iceland extends its fisheries limits: A political analysis, (Universitetsforlaget, Oslo: 1963), p. 59. See also Neuchterlein, op. cit., pp. 15-17.

the other parties in Iceland.

The Independence Party has generally been the largest Icelandic party. At the State level it is best represented in urban areas, such as Reykjavík. According to Griffith, "It is ... today the most forthright champion of free trade and private enterprise.[34] It has special appeal to fishermen, industrial, commercial and certain farm groups. And despite this variety it has been able to maintain cohesion.[35]

When we consider that 'Arborg's Social Democrats have been in power for 24 years (1946-1970), the situation in the village is somewhat unusual in relation to Iceland as a whole, where the national party has been either weak, or has had to share its powers in coalition with other parties.

General features

For a community of the size of 'Arborg, there are a fairly large number of services available to the local residents. One of the two cooperative stores is a small-scale supermarket offering a reasonable choice of food-stuffs and some goods. Other facilities introduced from the outside include the post-office, the State Prison,[36]

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[34]John Charles Griffith, Modern Iceland, (Praeger & Pall Mall, New York and London: 1969), p. 103.

[35]Nuechterlein, op. cit., p. 13

[36]Iceland's only State prison is located in 'Arborg. In 1971, there were 29 prisoners. The building was initially partly built by the surrounding villages as a hospital. After funds dried up, it was put to use as a Prison by the State.

and a bank branch. There is also a meeting-house in the village - in a somewhat dilapidated condition. A new, concrete seaman's home is located close to the harbour and provides lodging to crewmembers on the boats during the winter season. During the summer months it houses temporary prison guards (mostly students), migrant labourers, and visiting researchers from Newfoundland. Other buildings include a three-room school, the Church and a sea-rescue house. A home for the activities of the Young Men's Society has been recently (in 1971) transferred from Reykjavík as a bus-terminal building and converted into its new use. A doctor's residence serving an adjoining community as well, is located in 'Arborg. Dispersed throughout the community are various ware-houses, a carpentry shop, gas-pumps, and a few stables.

The buildings in the village fall essentially into two categories: those constructed before 1920, and others built primarily after World War II.[37] The former are easily distinguished by the corrugated plate covering. They are usually well kept with fresh, colourful paints, although a long wet summer might prevent a thorough paint job. The newer homes are built of concrete (reinforced) and, upon completion, are painted with bright colours which nevertheless do not distract the eye from the landscape.

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[37] In 1960, mean age of homes in communities with 200-999 inhabitants was 27.1 years; for 'Arborg this was 41.1. Húsnaedisskýrslur 1960, Table 2, pp. 6-9.

Roofs of all homes are painted in green, although more recently red and, to a lesser extent, blue are also seen. Another distinction of age in housing can be found in the names alloted to the homes. Street names and house-numbers are nonexistent, but are instead designated by names. Older buildings will have 'functional' names such as 'shop', 'bakery', etc. Newer names are known by their decorative uses, for example 'sun-field' and so on.

The most recent building boom in 'Arborg took place in 1966/67, at the height of fishing prosperity. In national dailies, news-reports from communities across Iceland carry the figure of homes under construction and are taken to be signs of 'progress' for the community. In 1971, 5 homes were under construction, as well as a local museum. Most modern homes are well furnished and have the latest kitchen-devices, wall-to-wall carpeting. Spacious living-rooms are a norm.

The streets in the village are not paved, but are regularly ploughed by a grader of the District. During the summer-months, the streets are also watered by a tank-truck, also operated by the government of Iceland.

In one of the preceding sections we discussed the fluctuating seasons ever present in the village. Days, also, are subservient to a rythm. Work in the community is scheduled to start early, for some at 7 A.M. At 9:30 A.M. workers emerge from their work-places for a coffee-break,[38]

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[38]Coffee-time includes a coffee-table. The

a most popular leisure time habit in Iceland. At noon, lunch-break, with, again, a coffee break at 3 P.M. The 'Arborgian leaves work at 5:30 or 7 P.M. In the evening, house-repairs and work in the garden are expected to take place.

The weekly work-routine in the community is "bracketed" by two events: the sailing out of the fishing vessels on Sunday evening, and their return at the end of the week. Often, boats sail in out out twice weekly, during the summer. The winter season demands that the vessels sail out and return every day. The activities of the plants in the village are sharply regulated by the behaviour of the ships, which ultimately depend on the presence of marine resources. Sixty-five percent of the village depend upon this, but also on the skills of the skippers, the condition of the boats, and the prevailing weather circumstances. 'Arborg is indeed a fishing village.

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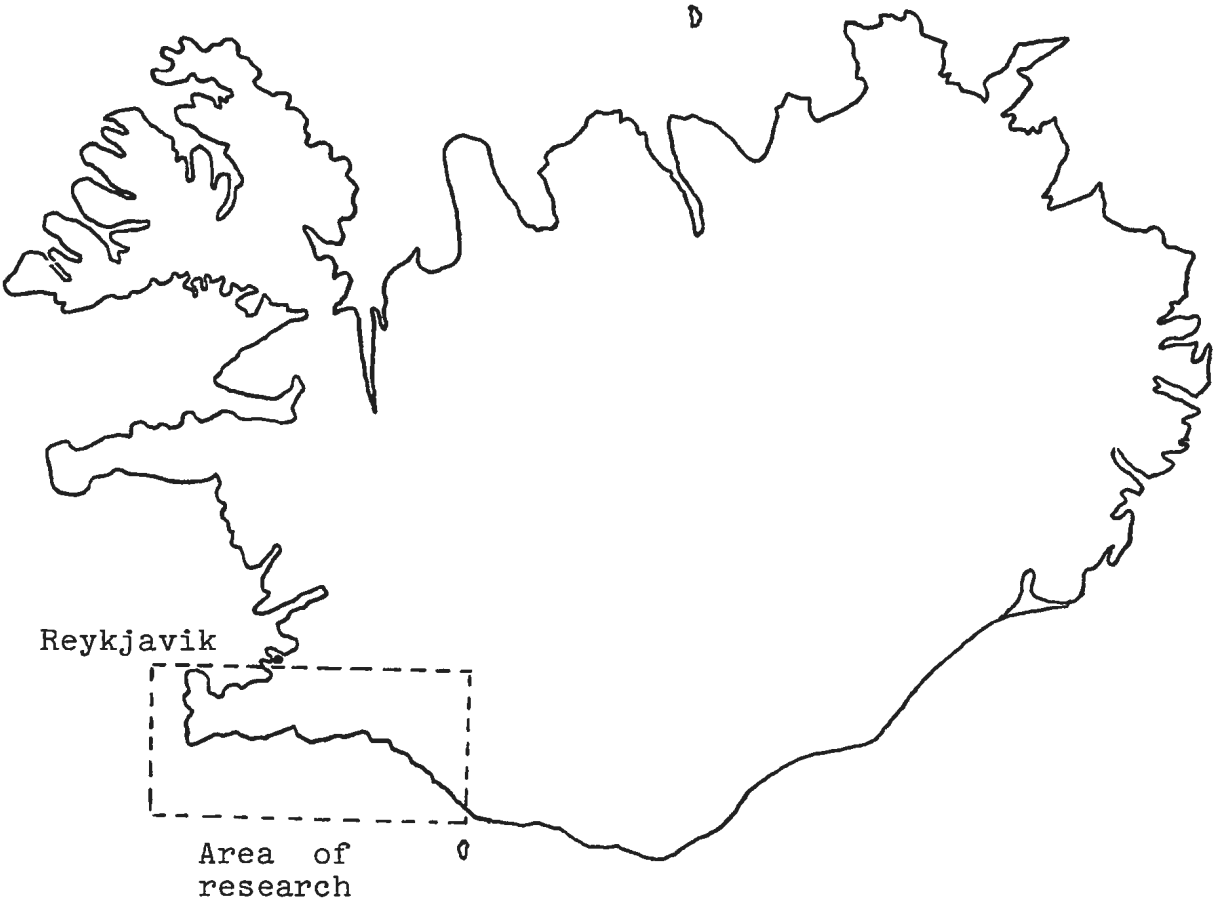
researcher's informants drank between 8 - 10 cups of coffee a day. The researcher consumed 13-15 per day.

MAP I

ICELAND.



Summary

Economic, demographic and associational changes may be depicted as the most outstanding features in 'Arborg's history. The village's image as a regional trade-centre belongs to the past, and through successive

stages, it has become a fishing village. In accordance with this transition, the community has experienced a sharp decline in population since 1923 when entrepreneurs and wageworkers sought economic activity elsewhere, such as in Reykjavík and Brúná, a newly created trading location. Associations in 'Arborg were originally intended to fill the needs of resident Danish merchants, but became soon the hub of a number of other organizations whose main interests are in the arena of economic and social assistance. Many of these functions were progressively transferred to the local government, particularly in the latter part of the 1930's and associations now play primarily a social (recreational) role, with the exception of a few; these have become extension arms of the State in carrying out its policies.

Village Associations have advanced the general level of education; this is presently maintained by the mass media, and educational institutions, which are responsible for orienting villagers towards a national goals.[39] In the economic field, national standards are emulated at the local level for example in the high proportion of economically active adults. The local government is seen as the epicentre of economic activity. Economic life in the village is further enhanced by the presence of potato garden cultivation and by a substratum of minor jobs

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[39] A failure to perceive national/provincial problems is considered to be the most serious problem of Newfoundland inshore fishermen. O. Brox, op. cit. p. 28.

which provide a substantial part of secondary income. It was noted that incomes in the community show no remarkable differences and, that those involved directly with fishing rank highest. Households as separate entities within the village form another economic feature. They are, furthermore, shown to be socially independent of one another as well.

Three distinct, but related, problems can be singled out from the material presented in this chapter. The decline in agriculture has resulted in greater reliance on the fishing industry. Due to the marine ecological adaptation, seasonal employment fluctuations cannot be avoided and must be coped with in various ways. One such means was processing of new marine-species in the plants during low seasons. The most uneconomically productive season has placed about one quarter of the labour force on the employed list. The problem of weather and the geographical location of the village has contributed somewhat to insecure landing of fish. Inadequate harbour facilities have prevented acquisition of larger more mobile vessels needed to overcome the problem of decreasing fish stocks in local waters.

It can be expected that 'Arborg is economically more stable than many other fishing villages. Although its fishing equipment is insufficient to maximize fish resource extraction in good years (as elsewhere in Iceland), the community is less likely to suffer from bad fishing years. Its reliance on potato-gardens as commercial enter-

prises and its orientation towards the surrounding area and region for employment guarantee economic stability during the "off" years.

This chapter may provide us some clues as to why issues in local-state relations are solved in the way they are. Its relative economic stability is an expression of belief in self-reliance as a value among villagers whereby the community has managed to solve its difficult economic problems. And what appears to be an indifference on the part of the State towards 'Arborg's periodic economic difficulties may be translated in the same terms: the respect for the village to handle its own affairs. We might add that this feeling of respect is more implicit than explicit, as cultural values often are.

In the next chapters we will be primarily concerned with those factors implicit in local political culture, especially as regards the decision-making in local-state relations.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYTICAL MODEL FOR LOCAL-STATE RELATIONS: ROUTINE ISSUES

This chapter presents the analysis and findings of our investigation of local-state relations by means of routine issues. The final chapters analyse the specific issue and attempt to integrate the findings.

Our analysis of routine issues, as a vehicle for local-state relations, will establish the existence and the degree of local autonomy present in the village. The routine issues refer to the responsibilities allocated to the local government, as defined by Article 10 of the Law Relating to Municipal Administration No. 58/1961. They are as follows:

(1) public relief
(2) child and youth welfare
(3) education
(4) employment service
(5) planning and building
(6) sanitation and health
(7) fire protection
(8) law and order
(9) fodder supervision and gathering of livestock
(10) roads and streets
(11) sewers
(12) harbour development
(13) water-supply
(14) electricity
(15) music-school
(16) public library
(17) playground

(18) community centre
(19) local museum
(20) slipway construction

Two groups of data have been employed in our analysis of these routine issues. (1) A "control" group comprising data compiled from a report of the Union of Icelandic Local Authorities entitled Verkefnaskipting Ríkis og Sveitarfélaga[1](The Division of Roles between State and Local Authorities), and (2) an "experimental" group, that is, the data found in 'Arborg. The purpose, then, is to weigh the findings in 'Arborg against the control group.

The control group is measured here to characterize the allocation of local and central government roles in such manner as to represent local autonomy. These are in fact advocated standards. The Report referred to above advocates for autonomy of communities by dividing the roles into national and local concerns. When a task, for example, is entirely local in character, it is only the local government which has the sole responsibility in initiating, financing, and executing that task. A distinction has thus been made between the various roles or tasks according to whether it is a local or national concern. This model accounts for that fact then that some duties

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[1]Samband 'Islenzkda Sveitarfélaga, Verkenfnaskipting Rikis og Sveitarfélaga (The Division of Roles between the State and Local Authorities) (Hagprent, Reykjavík: Jan. 1970)

must be carried out by the State, and that no community can be thought of as an island unto itself in the modern state. The Report of the Union on which the data in our "control" group are based, appears to be realistic in that regard. As we have adopted the Report in the light of its design within the context of Icelandic society, the "control" group is amenable to comparison with the data in 'Arborg.

Operationalization.

Information about the allocation of functions is ordinally ranked on a five-point scale. The scale represents the measurement of involvement of either central or local authorities as follows:

(1) role is assumed entirely by State,
(2) " " mostly by State,
(3) " " jointly by local authority and State,
(4) " " mostly by local authority
(5) " " entirely by local authority.

In order to establish the interval for each task in the control group we followed the recommendation of the Union report. The control group will be referred to as "S.I.S." As regards plotting our findings in 'Arborg on the interval scale, we have taken case histories of each of the tasks found in the village and determined their values accordingly. When two or more cases were known to exist for a particular task, the obtained score on the interval scale represents the average of scores. A number of the following examples will serve to illustrate the scaling process.

A function left entirely to the State to perform is found in roads and village streets maintenance. At regular intervals, graders and other road equipment, such as trucks to keep gravel roads wet at summer season, visit the community. The responsibility lies with the State in this regard.

In cases where the State assumes greater responsibility in the matter than the local authority, educational affairs stand out as an example. Here, the State pays all salaries, but maintenance is shared jointly with the local community, while operating expenses are generally carried by the community itself. The construction of a doctor's residence in the community is also performed in cooperation with the Council, although the State contributes almost 2/3 of expenses.

A joint function is typically seen in the case of a public relief case whereby an old member of the community has been institutionalized in a home for the aged. The community Treasury and the State share in expenditures. The whole matter of fodder supervision is only accomplished by joint effort as well. The State acts as a coordinator and advisor (e.g. to establish fodder/livestock ratios), but a local Farmers' Society with support from the Council takes upon itself to supervise. The locus of decision-making to execute a harbour development lies at State level; the execution itself was entrusted to local government to supply manpower, equipment, and other resources.

Cases where the community plays a dominant role in relation to the State are rather few in number. One example is the financial upkeep of fire-protection equipment in the community. A small share of fire-insurance premiums paid to the State Insurance Board flows back to the community to maintain the equipment partially.

More numerous are the cases of tasks whereby the village Council assumes entire responsibility in initiative, financing and execution of the task. Child and youth welfare in the community is in the hands of a local committee which convenes when needed. It consists of appointees of the local Council. In employment matters, there is no formal labour exchange. The Council, however, initiates activities to augment employment opportunities in the community by providing collaterals for loans to local entrepreneurs, granting tax concessions to incoming business, and by investing in the local fish freezing plant as the major employer in the community. In planning and building, the village has expressed concern over bureaucratic master planning in Reykjavík. The State acts merely as consultant. In a current case, strong opposition has been registered in the community to the Master Plan; the Council hired an engineer to substantiate its claims. Law enforcement is also entirely in the hands of the community; as of 1971, the village Council had decided against hiring a policeman.

Aside from transmitting the findings in 'Arborg

to an interval scale, each task was, furthermore, measured along three dimensions: initiative, financing, and executive responsibility. The main purpose of this was to differentiate among the three stages that a task passed. Possibly, we could record what kind of tasks correlate along the three dimensions. For example, do tasks with considerable financial participation from the State also exhibit less initiative on the part of the local community?

The initiative-dimension refers to the genesis of the idea and preliminary steps taken prior to the other two stages. Webster defines "initiative" more generally as "energy or aptitude displayed in initiation or action."[2] It is not sufficient to merely aspire or wish that a task be brought about; it is the effective action which is the criterion.

The finance-dimension appears to be self-explanatory. In most cases, the interval has been determined by contributory participation of local and national authorities.

The execution-dimension refers to the process of putting into effect the particular task. This may involve the locus of decision and use of resources as well. In applying this dimension, we may be able to establish the correlation between autonomy and the availability of local resources in carrying out a task. The State may be

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[2]Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary, (Thomas & Allan & Son, Toronto: 1965)

inclined to be less involved in executive responsibility in the presence of local resources.

Without further reflection, it may be advanced that "measuring" issues is plagued by a methodological weakness, or an empirical one for that matter. What happens if issues are typically handled over a period of time? Why not introduce temporal limits to the cases studied? For the present purpose, our study argues against the use of temporal limits on grounds of practical concerns. In adopting a temporal limit to the cases under study we will not only sharply reduce the issues that can be examined by eliminating those which have taken place before the period of time under study and those which fall partially outside the view of our time sector, but will also introduce an unnecessary restriction to our study: many of the functions of Icelandic villages have been traditional and it is only very recently that a major shift in local-state relations has been introduced by enacting the Law of Municipalities in 1961. Many of the provisions in this Law are even continuations of traditional roles of local governments. Thirdly, we can question the value of separating the present from the past in dealing with only contemporary issues. The resolution of issues in the past leaves an impact on local government concerns which are rather hard to negate; the manner of dealing formerly with issues has a cumulative effect on the experience and knowledge of current treatment of issues.

In sum, the analysis of routine issues will:

(1) provide us with a comparison between the S.I.S. set of scores and the 'Arborg findings, and focus our attention on the three dimensions examined,

(2) with particular reference to finance as the most outstanding difference between S.I.S. and 'Arborg,

(3) and to tasks which exhibit more autonomy in the village than S.I.S.

(4) lead us to consider the amount and nature of participatory activity of local organizations and the public as a whole, and

(5) establish the nature of cognition of the villagers in their relationship to the nation and the State. As will be demonstrated, the matter of cognitive ordering of concerns acts as an important ingredient in the management of village affairs.

Analysis

(1) Degree of autonomy. The first objective of our analysis will be to derive some broad comparisons between S.I.S. set of scores (Table 11) and 'Arborg set of scores (Table 12) (see Appendices XVII and XVIII).

There seems to be a high congruency between the two sets. But, if we take the mean of means of all three dimensions as the level of autonomy, we find that 'Arborg may be deemed more autonomous that the S.I.S. scores.

TABLE 11

S.I.S. Set of scores

("control group")

Scale :	1	2	3	4	5	Totals	X
Initiative	1	1	1	2	15	20	4.45
Financing	0	6	3	2	9	20	3.70
Execution	1	0	3	2	14	20	4.40
Totals :	2	7	7	6	38	60	4.18
%	3.3	11.7	11.7	10	63.3	100	
%	15.0		85.0				

X = Mean of scores, S.I.S. set.
4.18 = Mean of means.

TABLE 12

'Arborg set of scores

("experimental group")

Scale :	1	2	3	4	5	Totals	Y
Initiative	0	0	1	3	16	20	4.75
Financing	0	3	8	5	4	20	3.50
Execution	1	0	1	3	15	20	4.55
Totals :	1	3	10	11	35	60	4.27
%	1.7	5.0	16.7	18.3	58.3	100	
%	6.7		93.3				

Y = Mean of scores, 'Arborg set.
4.27 = Mean of means.

Let us consider in greater detail the scores on hand. Comparing the dimensions in the two sets of scores, we find that 'Arborg exhibits more autonomy in the initiative-dimension" than the S.I.S. scores (4.75 vs 4.45). What characteristics are associated with those tasks in which 'Arborg chooses to express itself more autonomously?

As we will see below these tasks have no heavy financial commitments. Tentatively, we can state that a correlation exists between "more autonomous" tasks and light financial responsibilities. The section "Cultural values" in this chapter deals extensively with this matter.

Looking at the "finance-dimension", 'Arborg clearly demonstrates less autonomy than S.I.S. scores (3.50 vs 3.70). The features associated with this dimension are discussed below.

If we look at the interval scale itself, the five-point scale can be grouped into two groups of scores, whereby one group represents the scores ranging from (1) to (2); the other group consists of the scores in the (3) to (5) interval. For 'Arborg, more scores are located within the (3) to (5) interval, than is the case for the S.I.S. scores (93.3 per cent vs 85.0 per cent of the scores, respectively). While the scores of the S.I.S. set are more evenly distributed between the (2) - (4) intervals, 'Arborg's scores gravitate in the (3) - (5) interval. There is no ready explanation for this, except perhaps the fact that the S.I.S. set of scores will tend to gravitate scores toward more State participation in the finance-dimension. The report stressed the need to separate, or to delineate, financial responsibilities more clearly than the current situation in Iceland warrants. Our attention is again focussed on the role of finance, and it seems best to proceed with this aspect of local-state relations immediately.

(2) Finances. There is striking dissimilarity between the two sets of scores in the financial dimension. In the S.I.S. set of scores, 9 out of 20 financial decisions rest in the hands of the local authority, whereas, for 'Arborg, only 4, with 8 decisions shared jointly by State and local authorities. The following discussion will touch upon the essential features of financial tasks in the village, the judicial aspects of the community budget, the effects of a fishing economy on community financing, and several other considerations which are less general and more peculiar to 'Arborg.

The fact that many tasks in 'Arborg are mutually financed by the State and local community has been observed already. A closer look (Appendix XVIII) shows that joint financing exists particularly in those areas where financial burdens are expected to be heaviest (e.g. public relief, and public utilities). Table 13 permits us to see that 15 per cent of the Community's revenue budget originates from the State to be expended on such heavy-finance tasks. (1970).

The financial transactions between State and local community are complex. The local administrator describes them as a "jungle". Many transactions only take place on paper, forcibly removing the local government from any actual decision-making as regards allocation of funds. The loss of sense of involvement has been recognized as a result of the so-called paper transactions.[3]

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[3]Union of Icelandic Local Authorities, op. cit.,p.1.

TABLE 13

Total revenue of 'Arborg Village Council, 1970.[i]

Item	
Receipts on Capital Account	
- Balance from previous year	18 %
Revenue from local sources	57%
Revenue from state sources	
- Equalization Fund	10%
- Education grant	6%
- Public Relief	1%
- Law & Order grant	1%
- Roads & streets	1%
- Unemployment insurance	6%

i = excluding harbour development contributions and loans.

Table 14 shows the development of revenues as per 1938 and 1970, the earliest and most recent data available, by receipts on capital account, local sources, and state sources. Local contributions to the Community Council Treasury have declined 22 per cent, though receipts on capital account have remained stable.

TABLE 14

Distribution of revenue of 'Arborg Village Council, 1938 and 1970.

Item	1938 (%)	1970 (%)
Receipts on capital Account	19	18
Local revenues	79	57
State revenues	2	25
	100 %	100 %

Local participation in financing certain tasks is further minimized by judicial procedures, whereby the ultimate authority in matters as regards even local revenues is not the local community, but bureaucratic institutions in the district, or in Reykjavík. The law,[4] of course, defines the duties of the local government, leaves the decision on certain local taxes (e.g. capital gains tax) in the hands of outside administrators (the Tax Commissioner), and prescribes the duties of Tax Commissioners who can intervene for corrective measures, illegal procedures, and handling of complaints. It should be pointed out that much still is left up to the local appointed tax committee. The local community represents the first stage, but an important one, in tax issues. Most tax complaints and tax evasion,[5] for example, are handled locally. A further prerogative, which is exercised to the fullest extent, is the use of an assessment scale in levying local-tax.

The village employs an unaltered assessment rate, while other communitits in Iceland may reduce the scale up to 70 per cent or more. In 1967 only 24 communities used the scale unaltered, 38 had 5-10 per cent reduction, 39 13-20 per cent reduction, 79 communities had 21-50 per cent and 27 had 52-70 per cent reduction, 6 had 90-95 per

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[4] Law on the Sources of Revenue of Municipalities, op.cit.

[5] In 1968, 9 complaints were registered with the Council and 5 delinquents in 1971.

cent reduction (total: 213 localities).[6] This variation is a function of whether or not it is up to the local Council to provide public enterprises and the paying ability of the villagers.[7]

Tables 6 and 7 shows that employment provided by the local government is quite labour-intensive in proportion to the other entrepreneurs in the community. Public funds are often the only means by which debts are settled in insolvent enterprises controlled by the Council. As a result, e.g. the fish quick-freezing plant in which the Council has controlling shares, poses a considerable burden to the treasury as profit margins are either non-existent or marginal. In December 1971, a local inhabitant had informed the researcher that the Council had sold all its boats to individual entrepreneurs. The other reason for maintaining an unaltered assessment scale in levying local tax is due to fluctuations of income in fishing. A drop in income results in difficulties in collecting taxes in the following year. Also, a year of prosperity for the villagers may give way to unrealistic planning by the Council. A case in point is the harbour development for which the most ambitious plans were developed around 1965 - a good year for fish-catches. A number of stratagems have been developed by the Council to

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[6] "Afskipti Sveitarstjórna af Atvinnumálum," in Sveitarstjórnarmál, Vol. 28, N. 6 (1968), p. 190.

[7] Ibid.

cope with tax revenue fluctuations due to changes in income. For example, under promise of a legal stipulation that any local tax paid in the year in which it is due may be deducted from taxable income, villagers are urged to settle their taxes in the current year. Tax payments can also be staggered, a practise which has only recently been initiated.

Part of the Council's reliance on the State for revenue in providing essential services may be attributed to the failure to build up capital investments during the War years. Some communities in Iceland, such as Neskaupstaðir,[8] managed to utilize capital generated locally during World War II, to build up a fishing-fleet. As Appendix XV shows, 'Arborg villager interest in the affairs of the local government began to accelerate following the War (only 75 per cent of the electorate voted in Council elections in 1942, as opposed to 93 per cent in 1970). Public utilities, most of which were present in 1920's, remained outdated. Many of the present expenses are now incurred by maintenance of the antiquated utilities. Any improvements can be more appropriately classified as "patchwork" arrangements. But, providing better and new facilities has become mandatory through State legislation. Each step taken towards providing them, entails considerable investment which can only be

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[8]From an interview with a government official in Reykjavík.

accomplished through mutual financial participation with the State and through loans, and even by having the government assume most of the financial responsibilities involved.

(3) Cultural values. A further comparison of the findings in 'Arborg with the S.I.S. set of scores suggests that 'Arborg demonstrates more autonomy in the following mostly specific culturally valued tasks: employment, law and order, planning and building, music school, public library, playground, and slipway construction. The community demonstrates less autonomy in functions involving water utility, sewers, community centre, public relief, roads and streets, and education.

It seems that tasks involving more autonomy are more "prestige-laden" than the tasks in the other group. Some of the prestige tasks stand out because they correlate with values current in Icelandic society. Literacy, for example, is one such value (see Appendices II, III, V) and the concern for literacy is reflected in the maintenance of a public library, and, indirectly, the music-school. Villagers also display employment as a significant cultural value in their society. In this connection, we might mention that 48 per cent of the population (15 years and over) are economically active (39 per cent for all Iceland, in 1960, see p. 53). Some of the developments in the village, such as the harbour development scheme, are underpinned by an ideology that better facilities in the community create

more employment. A good harbour provides services for a good fleet (at least, a larger one than if the harbour was underdeveloped). More vessels attract crews from outside the village and the immigrants finally settle permanently in the community. The role of the local government in employment matters is further stressed by references in Freedom and Welfare, an authoritative introduction into social policy of the Northern countries. "Their mission (i.e. of local employment bureaus) is to follow labour market developments on the local level and if necessary to initiate public works to provide employment opportunities for the unemployed" (Italics mine).[9] Closer to home, we find the former Chairman of the 'Arborg Council pointing out the necessity and importance of work in the community:

> The other communities which owing to their geographical location or other conditions, are not as favourably placed must resort to social planning in order to provide the necessary economical conditions for their inhabitants, and those programmes must often be more or less financed by the community if they are to compete successfully with the conditions in other communities.[10]

And again, further in the lecture, the Chairman spoke of the fact that "most people should want their own community to prosper and be made as secure as humanly possible." He reached the following conclusion:

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[9]Nelson, op. cit. p. 155

[10]A lecture on the Administration of Community Affairs, April 24, 1968. Sveitarstjórnarmál, op. cit.

> It can therefore only be considered natural that the local authorities interfere in various sectors of the economic life of the communities when those are in serious decline endangering the livelihood of the community members.

Finally our findings indicate that heavily financed tasks (e.g. water utility, sewers, public relief, roads, streets, education) invoke less autonomy. Funds have to be contracted from the government in order to maintain even minimum standards. It seems that the community responds negatively in terms of initiative and executive responsibility when large financial commitments are called upon. Returning to our data in Appendices XVII and XVIII it is also apparent that such tasks will tend to be less autonomous in all three dimensions.

(4) Participatory activity. What seems important as prestige, or status also comes out in terms of participatory activity. In the late 1940's the central government decided to move the district-doctor from 'Arborg to the recently established centre of Brúná. Feelings ran high in the community as three organizations plus the Council opposed this decision. Within two years, the groups involved had built a doctor's residence which could accomodate a doctor for 'Arborg and the nearby village of Höfn. The district's doctor had moved away, but the loss in the status of the community was restituted by the recruitment of another doctor. This project had taken only two years to complete, a sharp contrast indeed to many of the other programs and projects in the community (see Table 15).

TABLE 15

List of projects in 'Arborg with number of years to complete

Project	Period	No. of years.
Building doctor's resid.	1950	2
Introducing Medicare	1936-1940	4
Installing electricity	1905-1919	14
Purchasing fire-engine hall	1942-1957	15
Constructing museum	1956-1972	16
Harbour development, Phase 1	1930-1950	20
Laying water-piper	1946-1968	22
Building play-ground	1939-1970	31
Hospital construction[i]	1919-1958	39
	Average:	18 years

i. The hospital was initially built in 'Arborg. Construction ceased with the lack of funds and a government decision converted it into the present-day State prison; and the district hospital was finally built in Brúná, the capital.

We have taken initial debate of a project as the first phase of the time factor, and final completion of the task as the cut-off date.

A considerable length of time is required to complete projects initiated in 'Arborg. An average of 18 years. The obvious cause of delay is lack of funds. The example of cases enumerated above, speak clearly of the frustration and feelings of despair among villagers (and associations) that must have prevailed at that time,-- the feelings engendered were accentuated by the population and business drain on the community. The Council's records are full of reports of active involvement of local organizations to carry out some of the tasks or projects, at

least on paper. No sufficient data have been found to suggest that projects might have been delayed as a result of internal processes, such as conflict in the ranks of the organizations' members and executive.

The dividing line between organizational and public participation lies between the 'non-functional' (or status) tasks and 'functional' ones. Organizations center their activities around the former group, while the public's participation is limited to the latter. Cooperation among organizations is most outstanding in such public manifestations as June 17 (National Day), but otherwise they tend to have their own nucleus of supporters[11] and want to be recognized as associations in their own right. The public, on the other hand, is primarily concerned with 'functional' tasks. Villagers, for example, have laid the water-pipes when water was introduced into the community. In earlier times, households themselves provided for sewage, and on a number of occassions villagers contributed to the continued existence of the local fish-quick-freezing plant in times of crises.

(5) Cognitive ordering of the villagers. Under "The Problems of the Inshore Fishermen" in Newfoundland, Ottar Brox states that "the shortage of cognition, (i.e. the lack of perceiving national concerns of local importance)

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[11] Björn Björnsson, op. cit. states that single-sex societies in Iceland will tend to be more active than multi-sex ones. This can be neither substantiated nor negated in 'Arborg for the present.

as the most serious problem of the inshore fishermen."[12] A separate study could be devoted to the relationship between Icelandic inshore fishermen and the nation as a whole. In the village, local entrepreneurs are the first to recognise that a solution to their own problems, i.e. economic ones, are tied to the nation's welfare. They interpret local problems in terms of national concerns. A round-robin letter from one of the local fish-plants to all the households in the community as regards the economic difficulties in which the plant found itself, sees the problem as follows:

> Now, financial difficulties, the drop in export-prices of freezing-plants and a drop in catches have contributed to cessation of operations of the freezing-plant here, as in the whole country, so that it is ruled out that this could have operated unaided again.[13]

and it continues:

> The (general) meeting calls upon the powers in government of the country and loan institutions to empower their assistance which is needed to insure the necessary operations - and, with this, employment of the community, and to create thus export-prices which will benefit the nation as a whole.[14]

The managers of the three local fish plants realize that the plants' potential can only be fully realized through successful marketing procedures of their respective national associations to which they are affiliated.[15] When

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[12] O. Brox, op. cit., p. 28

[13] Almennur fundur, 3. Nov. 1968. A letter from fish quick-freezing plant.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Namely, the Icelandic Freezing Plants Corporation, The Federation of Iceland Cooperative Societies, and Union of Stockfish Producers.

asked the destination of the processed fish, the reply from the local entrepreneurs suggested an awareness that went beyond national boundaries. Iceland is sensitive to possible market fluctuations on the world economy and to the particular demands of its main buyers of fish. In 1971, a national meeting was convened in Reykjavík to discuss pollution hazards in and around fish-plants.[16] Meetings such as this one, are reactions to what the buyers are concerned with. Local governments, and indirectly, local entrepreneurs were made aware of the new trend and, supported by the media, villagers were informed of the possible consequences to the local economy of any future measures to enforce stricter health standards in the processing of fish.[17]

The local government, next to the entrepreneurs, is also made constantly aware of the 'national picture'. A sampling of Council business in 1940 (June), showed that no national concerns were brought up for discussion. In 1955 (June), Council discussions had expanded to include the Union of Icelandic Local Authorities and national elections. Fifteen years later, in June 1970, the business of the Council had increased over three-fold what it was in 1940. Almost half of the business was related to

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[16] Sveitarstjórnarmál, Vol. 31, n. 2, (1971), pp. 51-68

[17] An organizer of the national meeting proclaimed that a fish-plant worker should be able to wear a suit in a plant which is up to standards.

national affairs, such as electing a representative to a district meeting of Local authorities and taking note of a national wage agreement having local consequences.

In an economic sense, as well as in local governmental matters, villagers perceive themselves as a part of the larger whole, the nation. But how deep is this awareness? Does it really influence political behaviour of the village? It seems reasonable to say that villagers are ultimately dependent upon the economic factors operative in the nation, and that they are aware of the relationship between national and local economics. In the governmental and political sphere of activity, however, no evidence suggests that the 'Arborgian perceives these institutions solely in terms of the nation. I suggest that governmental and political concerns themselves are cognitively differentiated into local-national and local spheres. Taken one step further, such a cognitive ordering of concerns (i.e. local-national and local) may contribute to the autonomous character of the village (and of Icelandic villages in general).

Three areas may be examined in 'Arborg, which are indicative of such cognitive ordering. They refer to the specific characteristics of politicization of Icelandic local government, local elections, and issues falling outside "the arm" of national influence.

The local Council in 'Arborg is run on a multi-party basis. Only two parties have had any major role in

the government. Figures show that the acceptance of the Council's administration of local affairs must be increasing since local electoral participation is likewise increasing (see Appendix XV). For countries such as Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, there is an increasing body of literature which suggests that politicization of local government has accentuated the differences in alternatives (for the voter) and that local elections are, in effect, "nationalized" local elections.[18] A positive relationship has been found between electoral participation and the level of politicization.

In Iceland, however, the politicization of local government has not advanced in this way; elections cannot easily be generalized as "national" elections. Some communities interpret local elections indeed as weighing factors in consecutive national elections. Many other communities, however, present a different picture and for them local elections are divorced from national ones.

A large number of local Councils are elected from a non-party list. One simply votes for the "best man". A significant number of other Councils have party-lists which are purely local in character and bear no resemblance to any of the national parties.[19] The researcher's

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[18] Hjellum, op. cit., p. 83 Politicization refers to party control over local government administrative machinery. The reference is especially to national parties.

[19] Þjóðólfur, Jan. 25, 1964, pp. 4 and 6. See also, Sambad 'Islenzkra Sveitarfélage, Sveitarstjórnarmannatal 1970-1974, op. cit.

attempts to draw a relationship between local party elections and national party elections failed because there were no statistically sufficient "national" local parties on which an analysis could be made.[20] Evidence suggests, however, that national parties (in power) have influenced local communities in national elections through a process which is commonly known in Iceland as "fishing-for-votes" (átkvaeðaveiða). A case in point is the issue we will analyze in the next section. Here, the deliberate attempt of the national government to proceed with harbour development in the village, has given one of the local parties, resembling at least in name the national political party in office, enough support to win the majority of seats in local Council elections. And yet, this finding must be interpreted with caution for the local parties in 'Arborg are determined by individuals within it, rather than by a uniform party platform operative on a national level. Often, the status of a given local party within the community may determine the extent to which it assumes the character of the national party. A party in opposition may, for example, be more outspoken than the national one. The Conservative Party shows signs of being the most innovative in the community, while the Social Democrats

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[20]This difficulty was compounded by the fact that ballots of local polling stations in national elections merge with ballots from other communities in the same constituency, rendering local preferences for national parties almost unanalyzable.

have tended to adhere to a conservative policy of action (in contrast to the national political party and to the local party's program of action during its incipient days). Furthermore, the local elections of 1970, which saw the return of the Conservative Party after 24 years, were influenced by local processes and not necessarily by national ones. Economic difficulties with the village's largest fish plant, and the standards of public utilities (sewage, water, electricity) as seen in burgeoning complaints on the part of recent immigrants (see Appendix I, 1967-1971) may be cited as the prime reasons for political change in the village. The harbour development may have had only a tangential influence.

Next to this tenuous relationship between local and national parties in Iceland, we may cite the predominance of the personality factor in the local political culture of 'Arborg. Both participant observation and commentaries on Icelandic political life appear to be in agreement in this regard. Griffith, for example, states the importance of "personal influence playing a more important role than party allegiance" in Iceland when it comes to local elections.[21] The non-ideological base of politics has also been discussed by Nuechterlein who asserts that even national politics take on a "highly personal character."[22]

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[21]Griffith, op. cit., p. 108.

[22]Nuechterlein, Reluctant Ally, op. cit., p.8

The field-material suggests that person-allegiance (rather than party-allegiance) extends even further than local elections in the village. This particular characteristic of Icelandic local politics is reflected in the manner in which Council business is conducted, deserving certainly a separate study, but this will be elaborated upon in the final chapter. For our purpose, it is sufficient to say for the moment that discussions in the Council chamber follow personal opinions, and are not dictated by party allegiance. Members of the Council do not hesitate to take sides no matter how the opinion expressed reflects differences with other "party" members in the Council. Among Council members one finds regular shifts of formal party allegiance (at election times).

In our discussion of villager cognition, the most salient feature seems to be an inconsistency in how economic affairs are perceived in the community as opposed to local governmental/political institutions. Villagers and entrepreneurs readily acknowledge the ties binding the local economy to the national affairs in that regard. In other matters, it seems that villagers perceive them as local concerns. Local political culture is not only largely divorced from the national political parties, but it is characterized by individuals playing out their role within that culture.

Some interesting questions may be drawn from the above material. Does the local political culture contribute

to the level of autonomy of the fishing village? In fact, we will examine the assumption that decision-making in local-state relations is situated locally for locally relevant functions, and that local decision-making bodies are distributed throughout the whole community as they are represented by committees, firms, and associations.

Summary

Generally speaking, it has been found that the set of scores for 'Arborg were higher than those of the S.I.S. scores. Although the village appeared to be more autonomous than the Union of Icelandic Local Authorities (S.I.S.) had proposed for Icelandic communities in general, a closer look suggested that 'Arborg was in fact only more autonomous as regards initiative and execution of the tasks or roles as stipulated in the Municipal Law, while in finances the community scores lower than the S.I.S. set of scores for that dimension.

In the financial dimension, the main conclusion is reached that the complexities of financial transactions has tended to lessen the initiative and execution of the various projects on the local level.

What seems to exacerbate the financial picture of the village Council is the major role the Council takes upon itself in employment matters. Previous tax concessions for incoming enterprises, such as the Plastic factory, affect later tax assessments. It is unlikely that the introduction or increase in tax assessments will fall on

good ears when tax concessions are the rule. The Council's controlling share in the local Quick-Freezing Plant has also contributed to the financial burdens of the Council. Quite characteristically, the Chairman of the Council once admitted to the researcher that he was prepared to sell the Plant to any buyer who might happen to come along. On the local level, there are also ecological conditions to take into account. As we have noted, income fluctuations are correlated with ecological factors. This has tended to seriously inhibit a steady, dependable flow of income. Furthermore, the village has not made any significant capital investments since World War II. Facilities and utilities have become outdated, requiring complete overhaul. Without aid from the central government, these tasks could not be accomplished.

On the initiative and executive dimensions the following factors seem to operate: of the tasks in which the village has chosen to be more autonomous in the initiative level, we have found that the so-called "prestige" items rated highest. (employment, law and order, planning and building, music-school, public library, playground, slipway). This emphasis is correlated with the fact that these roles require little financial outlay. Tasks which demand heavy capitalization will tend also to score lower on the initiative dimension.

Local societies and organizations are sectors in the community which are the most concerned and involved in

the execution of prestige tasks, while the public itself seems more actively engaged in the heavily financed roles. As an explanation, we should bear in mind that local organizations may be regarded as reservoirs of the duties formerly assumed by them (but which have been taken over by the local Council). The societies will perhaps tend to gravitate towards that kind of activity which is culturally highly valued within Icelandic society. Also, the societies will feel more responsible to the community than newcomers to the village. Most of the citizens in the village are immigrants and, no doubt, this may have its effect on their attitudes in supporting those tasks which help them personally, more so than the community as a whole. It has been shown that the public has indeed participated mostly in these "functional" tasks. Furthermore, the State is related to by far more individuals than by organizations. Many of the individuals' needs are fulfilled through State agencies; local organizations, however, must always turn to the local community in order to fulfill their goals, although in certain formal aspects they must also turn to the State.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYTICAL MODEL FOR LOCAL-STATE RELATIONS: THE SPECIFIC ISSUE.

This chapter will focus our attention on the specific issue, the development of the harbour project, as a means for establishing behavioural patterns in local-state relations.

Harbour development in 'Arborg provides us with diachronical insight as regards local-state relations and any factors of change in them. A second, but no less significant, feature of the development sheds light on local political culture itself. These two characteristics of the harbour issue, are in broad lines, the central concerns in our analysis.

The study of local-state relations as a means of studying local-level autonomy is the main thrust of our study. As a corollary to the study of the harbour development we are interested in the local political culture, mainly because it is the main sphere of activity in which this issue has been resolved. By " local culture" we refer to the social organization of the village. In using "local political culture", we refer to everything "that is public, goal-oriented, and that involves a differential

of power" among groups and individuals in the community.[1]

The discussion will proceed as follows: a short historical sketch of the harbour development between 1930 - 1952 will be presented. In the period 1952 - 1960 we see that the issue of development has died down, and a new issue takes its place. Village politics in the post-1960 era manifests a resurgence of interest in the harbour, and a continued concern with the "new" issue (i.e. a bridge project). Of particular interest is the emergence of factions in the latter period.

The first phase: 1930 - 1952.

The topographical characteristics of the 'Arborg coast have been a persistent consideration in the development of the harbour. The need for a harbour was not felt until 1907 when boats became gradually larger and began heading towards Reykjavík. It became evident that the customary mooring of these larger vessels from Europe, off the coast, was becoming increasingly impractical. Reykjavík was further away, but it had the potential of a good harbour. This was quickly seized upon by Reykjavíkers. Although just before 'Arborg's demise as a trading centre, the first motor-boat was purchased into the community (1917) and three years later the first (private) pier was built,

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[1]Marc J. Swartz, Victor W. Turner, Arthur Tuden, eds., Political Anthropology, (Aldine Publishing Co., Chicago: 1966), p. 7. The local concept "local-level politics" is not appropriate for Icelandic local political culture, since it implies more formal contact between politics at the local-level and that at the national level. Marc J. Swartz,ed., Local-level politics: social and cultural perspectives, (Aldine Publ. Co., Chicago: 1968), See Introduction.

nothing short of building a harbour and the construction of a railway-line between 'Arborg and Reykjavik could have rescued the village from its impending decline. The harbour did not materialize due to the balance of parliamentary power in favour of Reykjavík.[2] And the railway remained a dream.[3]

The first construction of a jetty with public funds commenced after the founding of a permanent "landing Wharf Improvement Committee" (Lendingabotanefnd) in 1930. The Committee's efforts were soon rewarded with the, albeit slow, completion of the jetty in 1934-1936. The main duty of the Committee was to establish and maintain contact with the government, and to press for funds at the State level.

According to an older member of the Committee, local politics were either underplayed or ignored in the Committee. Members were appointed for their knowledge and interest in seeing 'Arborg flourish again.[4] The development at the harbour-site was occasionally bedeviled by lack of finances, however. Local support provided up to one-third of the needed funds for each successive improvement, raised partly by local taxes, and partly by a

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[2] Ibid., p. 5.

[3] American-Scandinavian Review, Vol. 16, No. 7, (July 1928), p. 406.

[4] One member is now a noted consultant for a national organization, one of the aims of which is purchasing trawlers abroad for the Icelandic fleet.

surcharge of fish landed at 'Arborg.[5] The central government was coaxed to provide the remainder. The Committee's role to persuade the authorities was no sinecure, as the Chairman of the Committee (and skipper) testified:

> We waited many days in the reading-room of the Parliament. It was the best method - never give them any peace. Two or three men went usually. If I was out at sea, the Committee members kept in touch with me by radio, to keep abreast of any developments. Often, B. would meet me in his car after I had come ashore and we would be off to Reykjavík again.

From the inception of the Committee, until the early 1950's, the tactic of "never give them any peace" was the sole means by which funds were obtained. Or, as the same informant, succinctly put it: "many years, many words."

Towards 1950, pier improvements slowed down considerably as a result of vast harbour facility improvements at Lundur, a community situated "across" the mouth of the river near 'Arborg. The local government felt it even "untimely", in 1948, to be concerned over road maintenance in the village - a bridge from Lundur to 'Arborg would alter any existing main roads through the village. The fact that the other community's responsibility to develop its harbour was assumed by the governments of two regions in South Iceland, in 1946, had served as an impetus for regional commercial activity to gravitate towards Lundur.

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[5] In April 1942, this surcharge had increased from one-half per cent of landed fish prices, to one and one-half per cent. In 1945. Council voted to spend Kr. 32,818 on improvements which totalled Kr. 96,000.

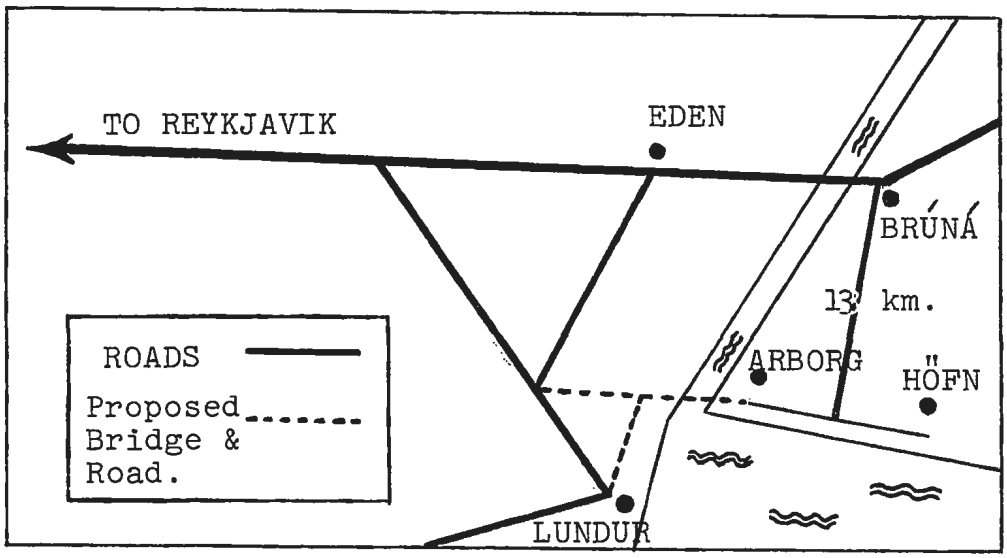
In spite of pleas and delegations to the capitol, any hopes for a better harbour had ceased to exist in the minds of the villagers. The Committee had done all it could. Economic problems of the nation also were in no small measure responsible for a curtailment of public investment.[6]

The Second phase: 1952-1960/3.

The period 1952-1963 saw no improvements to harbour conditions in 'Arborg. Instead, we see the possibility of constructing a bridge (as suggested above) becoming an idee fixe among the villagers - more so for the Social Democrat leader and Chairman of the Village

MAP 2

SCHEMATIC ROAD MAP OF SOUTHERN ICELAND



Council, Arí. A bridge would provide better connections, (see Map 2) increase employment, and shorten the distance

[6]Nordal, op. cit., pp. 218-220.

to Reykjavík, amongst other things, and its construction would also prove considerably less expensive than an extensive harbour scheme in 'Arborg. It seemed an attractive alternative to the insecurities of harbour development. The bridge-issue was repeatedly activated during local Council elections from 1952 to 1966. Arí's stand on the matter would not only enhance his position on the local level, but it would also provide him with a platform to run as candidate for the national Social Democrat Party ticket in parliamentary elections. The main proponents of the bridge were indeed M.P.'s of the Party. In 1953, Parliament had included the bridge under the Bridge Act. The bridge had become a national issue. The press was mobilized[7] by Arí and, backed by the local Council, Arí goaded regional, national, and parliamentary powers to transform "the bridge on paper" to concrete reality. Two meetings in that period, with village councils from the surrounding area were sponsored by the 'Arborg Council under the initiative of Arí. Ministers and Members of Parliament were invited to attend. Promises were made and one national newspaper reported that "it seemed that the M.P.'s were unanimously interested in the success of this project."[8]

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[7]Between 1956-1963, seven major articles appeared in regional and local newspapers alone from the hand of Ari.

[8]Timinn, "Atkvaeðagreiðslan um 'Oseyrarnessbrúnna," December 15, 1961, p. 7. When the interest in the bridge was highest, the issue had become a major political debate among the nation's leading newspapers. (December 1961).

In the aftermath, the (coalition) Cabinet no longer considered the bridge of any major national importance. Arí never did achieve his ambition to be elected as M.P.[9] As the popular saying goes, "the tide went out, but it was not to come in again." The bridge-issue was slowly moving into the recesses of political interest.

The third Phase: 1960/3 - 1971.

At the crest of interest in the bridge in 1962, opposition to the idea grew from several quarters. The first article to that effect appeared in a regional newspaper;[10] it rejected the bridge on technical grounds, high construction costs, and because the bridge would cause migrations from 'Arborg. It also made clear that the issue was "political." The next day, the Chairman of the 'Arborg Council, convened the Council and said he would draft a reply to the article. In the next issue, his counter-arguments appeared.[11] A few months later, in May 1962, the bridge issue was again included in the platform of the local Social Democrat Party; the special election issue carried a feature length article, and a drawing of the bridge on the front page. Arí won the local elections, but

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[9]He ran six times (1956-1963). Since 1942, a total of eleven candidates for national elections were from 'Arborg: a housewife, author, teacher, labourer, and carpenter. None were returned in the national elections for Parliament.

[10]G.K., Suðurland, Jan. 27, 1962.

[11]Suðurland, Feb. 10, 1962.

the two-member minority on the Council included the school principal, who by various means had activated the local Independence Party.[12]

Sveinn, the school principal, submitted a lengthy article in the same regional newspaper on the possibilities and merits of harbour construction in 'Arborg. Interests began grouping around two village political figures: Arí and Sveinn and his proponents. Local events after 1963 served to heighten the differences between the two local parties. Due to lack of proper harbour facilities, a fishing-vessel shipwrecked. The old vanguard of the Council felt embarassed, apparently, that the news could reach the national newspaper. The newly-elected Council member, Sveinn was, in a sense, encouraged by this event; it would not only make the serious harbour conditions in 'Arborg more widely known, but it would also act as proof that harbour construction was the only means to solve the problem.

Later in 1963, the State Lighthouse Authorities granted Kr. 500,000 to 'Arborg for the construction of the main pier in the harbour. Two years later, another Kr. 1.7 million came forth from the State. This amount was augmented by another 500,000 through loans and local funds. Pessimism made way for optimism as the most knowledgeable members of the community put their heads together to arrive at designing the best casing possible for the

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[12]Nine years prior.

construction of the pier. A skipper who was affiliated with Arí in an entrepreneurial development voiced public approval of the harbour scheme. The arguments put forth by him[13] in Suðurland were common knowledge (a "sensible discussion" as one said), but it changed more villagers in favour of the harbour development. Within one year, the harbour was back on the priority list again as far as the villagers were concerned.[14]

Only once again, in 1966, did Arí support the bridge issue. On May 4, 1966, a Bill on "National Harbours" was passed in Parliament. The State would take over Lundur from the two regions that previously supervised and financed it. As stated earlier, the bridge had become politically inexpedient. Five communities would have been affected by the bridge; for the two most populous communities it would have been greatly to their disadvantage. In one case, a community would have been situated outside the main road network system. The "log-rolling" of interests in the government stimulated development in each of the five communities. In early 1968, the village Council was informed that a new harbour-development plan was passed in Parliament. 'Arborg was to be among the 18 largest harbour developments in the country. Seventy communities were to receive assistance.

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[13]Suðurland, February 27, 1965, pp. 1 and 6.

[14]Economic prosperity in Iceland during that period relaxed restrictions on public investment.

On the local level, economic difficulties resulted in the close-down of the fish quick-freezing plant. Political action of the Independence Party combined the interests of a local grocer in order to establish a second store in the community in the name of the party. These issues, as well as Arí's failure to realize the bridge project, may be counted as the predominant factors leading to the defeat of his party in the local elections of 1970.

Analysis

Throughout the earlier stages of the harbour scheme (1930-1952) and during the years since 1963, the project's success could only be determined by the extent to which the local, and particularly, the central governments were willing to invest funds into the project. This seems not an unusual problem; it is a source of vexation, not only for the individuals and governments involved, but also for the fact that delays and procrastinations tended to telescope the side-effects of unrealized potential far into the future. For example, the failure to maximize harbour construction possibilities tends to postpone and discourage acquisition of larger fishing vessels which would, in turn, optimize use of shore fish processing facilities.

The community has been quite aware of this fact. This concern is vividly evident in its forty year-long struggle to solicit funds for harbour improvements. With the recent development, considerable aid has been given to 'Arborg. In more precise terms, the 1969-1972 development

exceeds over 200 times the amount put aside for a harbour project in 1945.[15] Investment into the harbour has been seriously questioned. One executive of a major semi-State national organization labels the expense as "unwarranted" and expressed some concern about it:

> It is an unwarranted expense to improve the harbour. Firstly, the physical nature of the harbour requires too much funds for even a modest improvement.[16] Secondly, in view of the national trend to acquire ships up to 250 kilogram tons, the harbour improvements at ('Arborg) will have to be considerable and the costs would be far too prohibitive for such a small community.

Nevertheless vast sums have been expended by the State.

As we have noted, the construction of a bridge between 'Arborg and Lundur would have been politically inexpedient. Two communities, Brúná and Eden, the most populous of the five, voiced objections. Political leaders in at least one of the two communities opted to support harbour development in 'Arborg in order to subvert the bridge plans. Furthermore, a project in <u>each</u> of the five communities in the area would amount to a much more satisfactory arrangement than the limited benefit of having built the bridge.

<u>Political careers</u>. The political events surrounding

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[15]Actual figures: 1945: 96,000 Kr (see fn.95), 1969-1972: 20,000,000 Kr. State participation lies between 40 per cent - 75 per cent. Hafnamálastofnum Ríkisins, <u>Hafnagerðir: 4 Ára Áaetlun 1969-1972</u>, (Gutenberg, Reykjavík: May 1969)

[16]Any substantial deepening of the harbour involves the lengthy procedure of breaking through the lava-bedding and hoisting the exploded lava-rocks out of the water.

the harbour development and bridge issues may be usefully approached in terms of the political careers of Arí and Sveinn. This approach is also important in that the local political culture in Northern Countries, including Iceland, has been a starting point for many National political careers. Speaking about local government, George R. Nelson, for example, states:

> During the growth of democracy in the 19th Century the local councils served as training schools for future parliamentarians who there learned to handle public affairs. A great many members of the national legislatures still start their political careers in local government.[17]

The development of political careers at the local level has also been demonstrated by H. Valen's findings, in which only 11 per cent of elected M.P.'s in Norway did not have local political experience.[18] No detailed study of this nature has, as yet, been carried out in Iceland, but some evidence suggests that a similar pattern occurs in Iceland. For example, of the seven Ministers of the present-day Cabinet (1971) in Iceland, only one has no prior experience on the local level. Four had served on local Councils, while two were active exclusively in local political clubs.[19]

The model we employ in analyzing the issue of the bridge and the harbour, associated with the development of

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[17]Nelson, op. cit. p. 32.

[18]Henry Valen, "The Recruitment of Parliamentary Nominees in Norway," in Scandinavian Political Studies, Vol.1 (1966), p. 152

[19]Morgunblaðið, Wednesday, July 14, 1971, p. 14.

political careers, is game-theory. The career-aspirations of the two main actors in our case, can be interpreted as a game, within which,

> there is a well-established set of goals whose achievement indicates success or failure for the participants, a set of socialized roles making participant behaviour highly predictable, a set of strategies and tactics handed down through experience . . ., an elite public whose approbation is appreciated, and finally, a general public which has some appreciation for the standing of the players.[20]

The two players, Arí and Sveinn, sought to enter, or aspire, new political fields, national and local, respectively.

After having played out a wide range of local political activity, Arí launched consecutive attempts to enter national party politics. The main channel through which his aspiration was to be fulfilled was as candidate for parliamentary elections in the constituency in which 'Arborg was situated.

As carpenter, Arí was at an early age involved with the community's associations, notably the Young Men's Association and the Labour Society, aside from a plethora of other activities in which he was generally known to have been either the initiator or an active supporter. When the village's decline became evident, Arí stayed on and at different periods of time since then, he established the quick-freezing plant and other (modest) enterprises, such as a plastic factory. In Council matters,

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[20]Norton E. Long, "The Local Community as an Ecology of Games," in A.J.S. Vol. 64, N.3, (Nov. 1958), p. 253.

his influence was felt in all directions: on Council Committees, Council enterprises (e.g. Electricity utility) and on the Council itself. He served as Chairman of the Council for 24 consecutive years. Arí's firm hand in the local political scene had served as an example for other local Social Democrat clubs, such as in Reykjavík. He is cited in Iceland's Who's Who. The Party executive in the constituency began to feel he would be a suitable nominee for parliamentary elections. His interests expanded to national politics and, at times, the Council and villagers noted his prolongued absences from the community.

Arí's strategy was based on the following set of assumptions. Firstly, since he aspired to run as M.P. candidate, his eligibility had to be based upon a norm which would be acceptable to an elite public, his Party Executive. A local issue would have been too narrow of base for his nomination. Regional issues would be more appropriate for the scope of his constituency, or general public which was to be regional, not local. From several points of view, the selection of the bridge-project as his political platform, had several distinct advantages. A Bill which refers to the Bridge had massive support of Parliament in 1953. The Social Democrats were the responsible agents for having included the possible construction of a bridge into the Act. Support for the bridge could, therefore, easily be mobilized, both from without and within party ranks. Furthermore, the popularity of the

bridge was related to the rather vigorous development of Lundur as key harbour for the district. A bridge would connect that harbour with the rest of the district as it reduced distance. And, by supporting the bridge, the Social Democrats in the district, traditionally weak in that area, would have a unified platform.

Here our attention is turned to Sveinn. Instead of aspiring for national political involvement, the school principal sought admittance to local politics. By resorting to a "local" issue his political platform would arouse sufficient interest from the villagers, in order for his party, the Independence Party, to win the necessary majority on the local Council. Local council elections in 'Arborg have usually reflected local issues, as an election brochure of the Independence Party shows (e.g. harbour development, employment, water and electricity utilities, land tenure, education, and the promise of hiring a town-manager) - no other issues were mentioned.

The harbour as a local political issue was certainly interpreted as such, as an observer from the next village had clearly seen:

> An improvement of the harbour-conditions in South Iceland is a matter concerning all the inhabitants of 'Arborg and Höfn to whatever political conviction they may adhere to, and is beyond all political squabble. And it is undisputedly against the will of the majority of the people in these coastal villages that this matter should become subject to a conspiracy in order to use a possible gain as an adornment in the turban of any political party whatever.[21]

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[21] B.S. "Hafnamál Sunnlendingar," in Suðurland, March 27, 1965, p. 8.

One might be inclined to interpret Sveinn's role as political careerist solely in local terms. To a degree this is quite true; he "grew" into local politics via local associations. The public whose support he needed, was the local citizenry. However, Sveinn was equally forced to appeal to outside assistance to further the harbour development. Within the village, Sveinn became the "expert", or someone skilled in political contacts. His role as expert was even heightened when the national Independence Party received the Ministry of Communications as a pay-off in coalition behaviour with the Social Democrats. Sveinn's success was assured when it appeared that the Cabinet Minister was an M.P. from the constituency, of which 'Arborg formed a part.[22]

Summary/Conclusion.

More significant than the fact that the locus of decision-making in the harbour/bridge issue was external to the community, is the process of decision-making itself which invites the following observations. When ecological and financial circumstances were the deciding factors in the development of the harbour in the period (1930-1952), slow progress was being made in the harbour project. As

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[22]After constituency enlargement, (1959) the Independence Party won the majority of seats for that riding in Parliament. In 1963, the Party was offered the Ministry responsible for harbour-development. This had proven to be a most favourable arrangement for Sveinn.

a matter of fact, progress was so slow, that villagers chose another alternative to increase the local economy. The project to construct a bridge offered this alternative. The local political leader (Arí) seized upon this opportunity as a strategy to further his political ambitions, e.g. to aspire to involvement in national party politics as M.P. for the constituency.

However, the bridge project had proven to be doomed to failure as coalition party politics replaced this project with schemes which would reap more political benefits for all coalition parties concerned. As a corollary, we may state that the Social Democrats to which Arí belonged were traditionally weak in the region where the bridge was projected. The majority representation in Parliament by Independence Party members of the constituency was not inclined to give a bridge as the "pay-off", but rather the harbour development in 'Arborg as part of other developments within the region.

The second aspect of the study of the issue is its relation to tactical manoevres on the part of local politicians as careerists. This can be schematically presented as follows:

TABLE 16

Political careers of 'Arborg politicians.

Aspired goal:	National Party Politics	Local Politics
Strategy :	Bridge project	Harbour Develop.
Actor :	Arí	Sveinn

The specific issue has given us a clear example of how political careers from the local-level to the State-level are planned. Taking this as one of the chief characteristics of Icelandic politics we might do well to consider its full-range effect on the local political culture. As the next chapter indicates, one facet of local-level autonomy in Iceland is the principle of cognitive ordering of the villagers and State politicians alike. As a result, decision-making of local importance is maintained in local bodies, while decisions of national consequence are retained at the State-level. The process of cognitive ordering strengthens the local political culture as a viable unit for decision-making. It can be argued that political careering as is known in Iceland is a contributing factor to maintaining local culture viable because most State politicians themselves have come up from local communities and, as such, understand the need in keeping decision-making at the local-level.

Thirdly, the pattern of coalition behaviour on the national level may have a definite effect on local issues requiring decision-making external to the community. It is known that coalition behaviour is often characterized by (open) bargaining between groups within the coalition, resulting in equitable sharing of pay-offs.[23] If a local

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[23]Peter H. Merkl, "Coalition Politics in West Germany," in Sven Groennings, E.W.Kelley, and Michael Leiserson, eds. The Study of Coalition Behaviour: Theoretical Perspectives and Cases from Four Continents, (Holt. Rinehart and Winston, New York: 1970), p. 15.

politician succeeds in selecting an issue which would best represent "equitable sharing" among the parties in power, he can rely on its success. However, a local politician aspiring to enter national party politics as parliamentary nominee has far less chance of his issue being carried out on two accounts: firstly, his choice of issues is severely limited by the preferences of his Party Executive. That is, he cannot necessarily choose an issue within the context of "equitable sharing"; and, secondly, if his party represents but a minority of voters in the district, the payoff will be proportionate to that.[24]

Fourthly, the development of the so-called vertical alignments of local parties with the national political parties may result in a conflict of values within the local political culture.

In 'Arborg, we still find considerable cooperation among members of the two parties, e.g. designing a casing by politically unaffiliated members of the same party, or taking a stand on an issue which to an outsider seems to betray the actor's (previous) political commitment. Moreover, personal ties still are the norm in 'Arborg local political culture. Issues are only played up at election times and local political party clubs lie dormant in the in-between years. Votes are cast for the individual, rather than for political affiliation. Local issues are still

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[24]Wayne L. Francis, "Coalitions in American State Legislatures: a Propositional Analysis," in Groennings et al, op. cit., p. 464.

thought to be of local importance, rather than national.

It is clear that the development of vertical alignments will threaten to undermine the local political culture with its traditional premises. The next chapter will deal with this area of possible conflict, and the manner of avoiding conflict. Local issues can be decided externally by national political parties. Local parties may find themselves patterning their political behaviour in accordance with the national parties. And, personal, affective, ties may have to make way for competition, instead of cooperation.

Finally, we may note here that participation of local businessmen and skippers has been minimal as regards the issues at hand. This matter will be raised in the following chapter, as it ties in with our analysis of the "routine" issues.

CHAPTER SIX

ANALYTICAL INTEGRATION OF ROUTINE AND SPECIFIC ISSUES.

The purpose of this chapter is to integrate the findings of our study of routine and specific issues. A glance at the data yielded by converting the division of tasks and roles between central and local authorities into statistics shows that 'Arborg compares favourably with S.I.S. Standards for local autonomy. By this measure, local-level autonomy can be said to exist at a high level in 'Arborg. A closer look at the data reveals that the village expresses more autonomy in initiative and execution of tasks entrusted to them by the central government, than in financial matters.

The following paragraphs summarize the most salient aspects of the three dimensions employed in the study of routine issues (i.e. initiative, execution, and financing). Finally, some points of conflict between local-state relations will be dealt with, with particular reference to the local political culture vis-à-vis national level politics.

Initiative and execution of tasks.

It seems that the most important question that can be asked as regards the initiative and execution dimensions

is what factors contribute to the high degree of local-level autonomy in these areas of local-state relations?

It seems that this question may be too general to adequately analyze the factors contributing to the high degree of autonomy in initiative and execution. Our earlier definition of initiative as "aptitude displayed in initiation of action" enables us to single out more precisely those factors in our analysis that are responsible for the development of the kind of aptitude indicated above. In the following paragraphs we will discuss "external" and internal factors. In describing the internal factors, the arguments may be best summed up as follows: Village council decision-making processes cannot be validly included as one of the factors of initiative. Decisions which have a binding effect usually take place outside the Council chamber, by the use of experts and committees in the community.

Many of the external conditions (i.e. external to 'Arborg and generic to Icelandic communities) have affected the village "atmosphere" in the manner that can best be depicted as "setting the stage" leading to the development of aptitude in initiation. Firstly, we have the high value placed on the role of villages in Iceland in the performance of duties. A very long tradition has been established in that regard: a period of over 1030 years (since 939 A.D.) saw the formulation, development, and establishment of specific duties quite independent from the State.[1] It was

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[1]This period was interrupted by 173 years of loss of

not until 1944 when autonomy of communities was officially safeguarded in the Constitution, and 1961 when the division of tasks between State and local governments were determined, albeit only partially.

The impact of technology and modernization since World War II has indeed made inroads in local-state relations and has most significantly affected their financial aspects. Initiative and execution of tasks have been and are still retained by communities as traces of the long historical development outlined earlier. In other words, communities have certain expectations of themselves in that regard and central authorities anticipate the role of communities as initiator and executive agent.

Secondly, the government's political structure is another external factor, whereby coalition behaviour is the key principle. The relationship between widely extended public expenditure and coalition behaviour has been aptly put by Gisli Blöndal, an economist in Iceland:

> "Members of the Althing to a large extent represent four political parties fairly similar in size. Because of this multi-party system, whose existence is, incidentally, favoured by electoral laws, the country has mainly been governed by a coalition cabinet, which changes frequently. Such a system tends to create unfavourable conditions for the formation of a strong government and tends to produce rising public expenditure since the representatives of one party in the coalition try to realise their plans by logrolling against other coalition parties. Thus each coalition party is prepared to accept the claims of other parties only to get their agreement to its own proposals. Moreover, since governments tend to change quite

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powers of local communities (1699-1872).

> frequently, cabinet ministers are induced to achieve as much as possible in the available time, both, in order to promote the political party to which they belong and to improve their position within the party." (italics mine)[2]

When it comes to developmental schemes (such as, for example, the harbour in the village), payoffs are distributed across the country. It is therefore quite likely that a local initiative will be reciprocated by the national government. The amount of development could possibly be determined by the local community's locus in the whole payoff system. The main point of this argument, however, is that coalition behaviour on a national level will stimulate initiative locally since the initiative may yield results. To put it more openly: payoffs from national coalition behaviour act as positive reinforcements for local initiative.

We now turn our attention to a number of internal factors which may be said to contribute to initiative.

We are interested in determining where the locus of decision-making resides in the community. The obvious point of departure would be the Council itself, since it is the formal organization within the community which stands out at one extreme of the local-state continuum.

The findings in 'Arborg concur rather closely with Johan P. Olsen's material on a Norwegian commune so far as the structure of decision-making process in the Council

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[2]Gisle Blöndal, "The Growth of Public Expenditure in Iceland," in the The Scandinavian Economic History Review, Vol. 17, No. 1, 1969, p. 12.

is concerned.[3] He has found that Council decision-making does not appear to be a very important indicator of what is going on in the community. What underlies this conclusion is, amongst others, the "emphasis on verbal activity connected with important parts of the value and belief system in the commune."[4] Issues are not affected by Council debates and, if they are, it happens only seldom. There is, furthermore, the "floor-carpet syndrome". Large issues are discussed but never changed, while small issues are discussed and changed. A strong negative correlation can be said to exist between the amount of money involved in an issue and the time devoted to it. A typical example of this is when a communal office has bought a floor-carpet which is a few kronurs more expensive than another one which the representative thinks is good enough. A third basis of sameness is the "not-now-but-later syndrome" in which decisions are postponed to the future and effective action is indefinitely postponed. The council is, by these various mechanisms, not able to forecast future activities, nor imagine alternatives. In short, the Council has lost its freedom in dealing with routine issues,[5] or that freedom is minimal.

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[3] Olsen, "Local Budgeting Decision-making or a Ritual Act?," in Scandinavian Political Studies, Vol. 5 (1970) pp. 85 - 118.

[4] Ibid., p. 98

[5] "routine" issues are here understood within the context of Olsen's discussion, namely as "regular business" of the Council.

Not only is the structure of the decision-making process in the Council one of the causes for making the Council ineffective in making binding decisions in the community, but also the nature of topics not debated has an important bearing on the whole matter.

Council discussions are characterized by following personal viewpoints, rather than political allegiances. The discussants act as private citizens and are rather reluctant to identify themselves as leaders of the community.[6] There is no "conversion barrier" between what are considered to be the feelings and aspirations of the community, on one hand, and its elected representatives, on the other hand. Members of the community are very aware of each other's political affiliation and personal viewpoints. A good example of this occured in the 1966 Council elections. With a margin of error of two votes, aspiring Council members were able to predict the total number of votes cast (N = 115) for one of the parties running. The high rate of electoral participation is perhaps another indicator that the conversion barrier between the electorate and the elected is held at a minimum level. There is no single clique which casts its ballots, but the whole populace. In brief, the awareness

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[6]My experience with quite a few Icelanders bears out this general expression. Peterson's attempt to have a genealogist rank class in Iceland, is illuminating. The attempt miscarried because he had selected people, whether high or low, known to the genealogist. (Cf. Peterson, op. cit. p. 121).

of issues among Council members is almost the same as that among the general population of the village.[7]

It follows that certain issues to be decided upon may also be determined by the avoidance of party politics in the Council chamber. As an example, we can take employment in the community. Due to uncertainties of various sorts, such as sea-conditions, weather, skills of skippers and crew-members, marketing conditions abroad, etc. and due to the very large number of villagers dependent upon the marine-based employment patterns, we can expect that the Council may be called upon to make certain critical decisions. A case in point was the firing of what was formerly a good skipper on one of the Quick-Freezing plant vessels.

What happens then if "critical decisions" must be made? In other words, where does effective decision-making power reside, if not in the Council? Studying the records of agencies outside the Council, it struck the researcher that decisions which have party political interpretations or those decisions which affect the community are taken by these agencies. These agencies may either be the Quick-Freezing Plant Executive Board,[8] the local Labour Society, or one of the many Council Committees. Most of these

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[7]For a discussion on the relationship between village structure and consensual decision-making in the Council, see, F.G.Bailey, "Decision by Consensus in Councils and Committees, "in M.Banton, ed. op. cit. pp. 1-20.

[8]We recall that the Council has 57 per cent control of the shares in the Plant.

agencies carry out the political decision-making "entrusted" to them by the Council. One agency in particular, acted over a long period of time as political decision-making opponent to the Council! Our assumption that extra-Council agencies serve as viable decision-making units, is strengthened by the knowledge that practically all committees of the Council have members representing the different political blocks in the village.[9]

Considering the role of local organizations against the council and other agencies (i.e. Quick-Freezing Plant, Committees, and the Labour Society), the following conclusions may be drawn from the data presented: Due to their very long tradition, often extending back to 1880's, there is the feeling that local societies must share in the activities of the community. It is our observation that their range of activities will tend to stay clear of partisan politics. Politics in these societies are frowned upon. As noted earlier their activities will usually include the "prestige" tasks in the community.

Financing

Preliminary to our general discussion on finances in 'Arborg it is useful to outline the major factors contributing to the strength and weakness of community finance. Also, we hope to include some notes on rather paradoxical aspects of the manner in which community finances are

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[9]In 1970, there were 75 posts to be filled on local committees, and thereby activating a large number of citizens.

handled in Iceland.

(1) Strengths. By virtue of legislative measures, the local government has preserved and received certain financial powers. From our previous discussion it seems that the community has fully utilized the established prerogatives set aside for communities. Examples are: providing collaterals for loans, granting tax-concessions, determining the assessment scale, and other numerous smaller administrative details, of which tax collection, budget-making and appointing a tax evaluation committee may be cited as the most important.

From the central government point of view, the national government has had to make concessions in order to safeguard village autonomy as stipulated in the 1944 Constitution. K.J.Davey draws our attention to the nature of such concessions:

> It must be appreciated however that the assignment of part of these tax fields to local government represents a considerable sacrifice by the centre. In Sweden, for example, local income tax in deducted from income before it is assessed for central taxation. Respect for local autonomy could well be a pre-condition for allocation of these revenue sources by Government[10]

Concessions such as these, moreover, may be expressed in indirect ways as well, such as for example encouraging industries to move "out into the country" by establishing lower tax rates for the industries.

(2) Weaknesses. From our data, it seems that the

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[10]Davey, op. cit., p. 50.

main weakness lies in the financing of heavy-finance tasks which result in lowering the level of initiative by the village, accompanied by a shift in responsibility for decision from the local community to the central government. A more general phenomenon is the "jungle" financing which, also, lowers participation on the local level. No doubt, national insurance schemes and other welfare programs may have contributed significantly to "paper-financing". The local community does not "see" the monies related to these programs in financial transactions because credits to the community are deducted from the debit owed the central government.

Of course, a major limit on developing a sound local economy is attributable to ecological conditions. The key in meeting financial responsibilities with any semblance of local autonomy, is having a resource base sufficient to the local government's income to expand beyond the rate of inflation. K.J.Davey, again, speaks for us: elasticity of income can only be provided by sufficient resources, and this can best be achieved

> where the taxable base expands of its own accord in keeping with the growth of the economy, the rate of inflation and the demands for expenditure.[11]

Apparently this is not achieved in 'Arborg. "Natural increases" are greatly hampered by the marine-base of the economic structure of the village. Property

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[11] Ibid. p. 47

taxes cannot expand at the same rate as physical growth. The upward evaluation of property cannot always be met by the taxpayer. In other words, the whole tax structure is ultimately dependent upon marine biological resources, which are characterized by more variability than stability.

Before moving on to outline the paradoxical nature of Icelandic community financing, we will encounter the role of entrepreneurs in the village.

Particularly during times of inflation the central government exercises restraint in national economic matters, and may have to intervene in local affairs as well. It has been suggested that the entrepreneurs in the village seem quite aware of this; their behavioural patterns in that regard indicate that awareness. We can cite, for example, their affiliation with national organizations to further economic interests. This may well account for the fact that this sector of the community is "uninvolved" in local affairs. Their orientation is towards centrally located organizations, State and otherwise. However, the researcher hesitates to be final in this matter, as there is evidence to suggest that entrepreneurial activity occupies the same status as national politics in terms of an individual's pattern in a career. The career pattern flows from local politics to either national politics or entrepreneurial activity. With other words, for those who do not wish to enter politics on the national level, there is always the option of becoming

an entrepreneur without the loss of status associated with a career in national politics. All the entrepreneurs in 'Arborg were formerly involved in local politics.

(3) Paradox in community financing. A report dealing with local government finance in Iceland stressed the view that local initiative and State financing can be regarded as the chief strengths in the financial arrangements of the local authority.[12] But it also states:

> The increasing role of economic programming during the last years of which this system is a part has, however, resulted in some loss of the autonomy of the local authorities in the timing of the various projects and increased centralization. The interdependence between the State and the local authorities is hence in its nature both a strength and a weakness in the financial arrangements.[13]

Aside from sharing the responsibilities in financial matters which highlight the paradoxical nature of the role of finance as agent in local-level autonomy, we are furthermore referred to the village's involvement in employment matters. It has been pointed out that the community's active participation in employment affairs has serious financial effects. What value does this task play in the overall pattern of local-level autonomy?[14]

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[12]Samband 'Islenzkra Sveitarfélaga, Local Government Finance: Report prepared for the 19th World Congress of Local Authorities, Vienna June 16-21, 1969. Mimeo.

[13]Ibid., p. 13.

[14]Olsen poses the same question as regards amalgamation. The protagonists and antagonists can each argue that their solution would strengthen local government. Olsen, op. cit., p. 116. (footnote 10).

One can argue favourably for autonomy as employment matters in the community are seized upon by the local government (and its "agencies"), although we have also to take into account the low margin of profit of the enterprises initiated and encouraged by the local government, and the seasonal fluctuations of its employment structure.

(4) The local political culture. Here we shall briefly attempt to describe the main interactional processes between the local political culture (of 'Arborg) and national government, i.e. national level politics; how resultant potential areas of tension are resolved merits our observation as well.

On one hand, we have a local political culture which is characterized by the following qualities: (1) local elections are usually not interpreted as "national" elections in the sense that they are good indicators of how the public will vote in a true national election, (2) national parties are usually not "represented" on the local level, even though local parties are namesakes, and (3) the villagers place stress on the personality factor in local politics.

If we look at national level politics as represented by the national government we can say, on the other hand, that it necessarily must make inroads on the local political culture and perhaps even threaten the stature of local parties. We may refer to this process as vertical alignments"; it is conditioned by the following factors:

(1) the role of modernization in technology, economic policies, and national legislative programs, (2) the trend in planning local schemes based on (national) political expediency, (3) the development and influence of the mass media, and (4) the direct relationship between the private citizen in the local community and the national government.

The above process has been intensified by a polarization effect created by the decline of the importance of the district as an administrative unit, and a change of boundaries of electoral districts which gave support to that decline. The interests of the local community have, as a result, been brought in direct contact (face-to-face) with the interests of the national government. The district plays less and less the role of intermediary.

Particularly with regard to the local political parties, their position appears to be threatened by the forces described above; in more precise terms, the processes seem inimical to the traditional structure of local-level politics. There have, indeed, been instances in the community whereby local parties <u>appeared</u> to be picking up behavioural cues from national parties. We believe that this is only in appearance as there are sufficient indicators to suggest the contrary. As will be shown below, it is not so much the local parties which sometime "mirror" the national parties, but rather individual personalities

within the local community.

Two means of resolving potential conflict are offered here in the context of 'Arborg local politics and national political culture, as represented by the national government.

Firstly, there are indications of formal behaviour in local-state relations which circumvents national political involvement in the local political culture. Among these we find the "neutrality" of local government acting as a mediator between the two political levels. The use of experts and creation of such new positions as the town-manager, are other examples of neutral mechanisms which serve as conflict resolution. Naturally, coalition strategies lend focus to this as well. An equitable sharing of developmental projects gives at least an outward appearance that the community's development is part of a national program in which all communities derive profit. Covertly, these development schemes are an expression of party politics. In other words, the equitable sharing of projects among the many Icelandic communities takes the "politics" out of it, at least overtly.

Secondly, both national and local political cultures resort to informal behaviour in order to avoid infringement on each other's sphere of influence, heightening the feeling of respect, particularly the national political representatives vis-à-vis the local ones. This has been aptly demonstrated in 'Arborg's case where even

in periods of economic difficulties, the State remained rather indifferent towards its problems. The community is thrown back on its own resources and if this does not take place, it is expected from the State that it will.

We have found in our data that the relation between these two levels of politics is characterized by personal contact. The personal factor in this relationship has several considerable advantages which work to maintain the autonomous character of the local political culture. It affords, for example, a great opportunity for cooperation among members in the community who are politically unrelated. There is no strain placed on individual members to conform to national party program and emphasize, instead, a feeling of cooperation. If contact between the two political levels takes place along party lines villagers might feel less inclined to follow up the need to cooperate with fellow villagers. Furthermore, the channeling of political contact between individuals rather than local parties <u>per se</u>, reduces partisanship among national and local parties. Also, the local party is not an intermediary for the national party; it is not a broker in any formal sense of the word.

From the national perspective, it is customary for national parties to appeal to private citizens directly at election times. The local parties take great interest in the national elections, but party propaganda is maintained by the national party, not by local political chapters.

Summary

In the preceding analysis we have indicated several factors either conducive to local-level autonomy, or somehow in opposition to it.

Among the contributing factors we can mention the following:

History

There is no need at this point to retrace the entire historical development, but the main point we should bear in mind is the fact that local autonomy is high on the scale of Icelandic cultural values. As an expression of this value the State had remained indifferent towards the community while it passed through economic distress and decline.

The concern for autonomy also finds a positive expression in respect for the sphere of local politics. This is achieved by (1) emphasizing the "neutrality" of the local Council, in the meaning that political decision-making takes place outside the Council chamber. The attitude conversion barrier between the Council and the villagers is minimum. The status of neutrality is upheld by State politics as well as by certain internal mechanisms of the Council, whereby effective political decision-making occurs outside the Council. A case in point is the matter of employment; critical decisions in this area are handled by extra-Council bodies. (2) Experts are used to de-emphasize the role of politics of the Council. The recent

appointment of a town-manager in 'Arborg is an open recognition of the fact that the most desirable aim is to maintain the Council as a neutral zone. (3) Informal behaviour is resorted to, i.e. the personality factor overrides the political factor in the relationship between local and national politics. (4) At election times, local parties are avoided by national parties in the matter of propaganda by appealing directly to private citizens.

Coalition behaviour. Our routine issues indicate that there is a considerable amount of local initiative as regards local tasks. It is pointed out that coalition behavioural strategies on the national level contributes significantly to that. Coalition behaviour has the effect of producing an equitable sharing of programs which enhances and encourages local initiative. It serves as a stimulus and positive reinforcement for local initiative.

Legal measures. Local autonomy is assured by constitutional measures. The legal proceedings surrounding this safeguard are best exemplified by financial arrangements, whereby local tasks are generally handled by local authorities and national functions by national agencies. Certain prerogatives are reserved for the local Council, such as with regard to local taxes. The State has also made concessions in order to maintain local communities as entities with full rights and privileges. In this light, we noted that local taxes may be deducted

from national revenue assessments.

Among the factors which account for a reduction in local autonomy we can emphasize the following:

Marine resources. The characteristics of local marine resources work to make the local community rely even more on State contributions in matters of finance. As a result of fluctuating ecological conditions, only a minimal natural increase in local taxation is exhibited.

Vertical alignments. The most important contemporary influence on local-level autonomy relates to vertical alignments, created by the mass media, national political implications of heavily subsidized local issues, the increased direct relationship between individual and the State, and the characteristics of modernization.

It is suggested that heavy financing tends to lessen local initiative. The latter is further threatened by a pattern of jungle financing whereby financial transactions between the local community and the State take place on paper.

In conclusion, the potential tension between factors of autonomy (namely historically derived attitudes about autonomy, and the rather shorter history of coalition behaviour with its effect on initiative and execution) on one hand, and the threat of vertical alignments on the other hand, is in fact adapted to by a strategy of avoidance in local-state relations. This pattern of avoidance involves the engendering of respect for the sphere of

influence of local political culture.

Particularly the analysis of routine issues has shown that the village is characterized by considerable local decision making which is contained in numerous community-level bodies. The capacity for these bodies to continue to function as decision-making agents is enhanced by the very factor of respect alluded to above. This recognition of spheres of influence is maintained by local bodies as well as by a cognitive ordering of local and national concerns.

The main purpose of this study was to establish an understanding of the character of local-level autonomy in Iceland and, what factors contribute to its maintenance or threaten its existence. In so doing, we have arrived at an understanding of the main characteristics of local-state relations in Iceland, with particular reference to the local political culture.

A wide range of areas remain still to be investigated. At the local-level, the process of cognitive ordering of concerns needs a more precise analysis; of particular value is the socialization process whereby values are internalized.

The effect of coalition behaviour in Icelandic politics on local community behaviour needs more elucidation.

The most intriguing question to the researcher, however, is the problem of maintaining the local (political)

culture as a system in its own right. What particular characteristics accompany the parallel development of local and national institutions in coping with the problems facing contemporary Iceland? In the face of increasing technology Icelandic communities must cope with the problem of preserving their autonomous character and maintaining decision-making at the local level. Communities have to consider at what cost they are willing to do this. A no less important issue concerns the recent trend in recruiting national political representatives from academic institutions. Will they see less need in preserving local institutions than those politicians whose schooling consisted primarily of performing political roles at the local level?

APPENDIX I

POPULATION IN 'ARBORG

1910 - 1970

Yr.	Pop.	Yr.	Pop.	Yr.	Pop.
1910	737	1931	635	1951	507
1911	878	1932	634	1952	514
1912	862	1933	602	1953	527
1913	879	1934	578	1954	505
1914	925	1935	583	1955	495
1915	925				
		1936	591	1956	474
1916	931	1937	586	1957	483
1917	942	1938	580	1958	480
1918	917	1939	610	1959	469
1919	965	1940	621	1960	475
1920	956				
		1941	616	1961	460
1921	930	1942	604	1962	461
1922	945	1943	592	1963	470
1923	893	1944	590	1964	481
1924	843	1945	579	1965	482
1925	808				
		1946	566	1966	483
1926	754	1947	528	1967	458
1927	701	1948	542	1968	505
1928	706	1949	535	1969	504
1929	671	1950	513	1970	514
1930	647			1971	537

Source:

Hagstofa 'Islands, Mannfjöldaskýrslur. for the years 1911 - 1960, and unpublished data of the Hagstofa 'Islands.

APPENDIX II

NEWSPAPERS DISTRIBUTED IN 'ARBORG

1. Number of newspapers per household.

Households with one newspaper:	101	(70%)
" " two " :	12	(8%)
" " three " :	2	(2%)
" " none :	29	(20%)
Total :	144	(100%)

2. Type of newspaper, by number and percentage.

Morgunblaðið (Independence Party)	90	(67%)
Tíminn (Progressive Party)	16	(12%)
Þjóðviljinn (Communist Party)	6	(4%)
Alþýðublaðið (Social Democrat Party)	12	(10%)
Vísir (Independence Party)	10	(7%)
Total	134	(100%)

APPENDIX III

PERCENTILE CONTENT OF ITEMS IN MORGUNBLAÐIÐ*

1.	Home news, including feature story	19.9%
2.	Entertainment ads (e.g. movies, T.V.,etc.)	7.1
3.	International news, incl. feature stories	6.5
4.	Literary (book reviews, poetry)	4.2
5.	Sports	3.9
	- special insert	5.7
6.	Obituaries	3.5
7.	Parliamentary reports	3.4
8.	Social notes (e.g. weddings, meetings, etc.)	3.3
9.	Fish news	1.8
10.	Editorials	1.6
11.	Religion	1.4
12.	Cartoons	1.2
13.	Miscellaneous (weather, humour)	1.1
14.	Commentaries	1.1
15.	Serial Story	1.1
16.	Letters to the editor	1.0
17.	Fashion	.3
	Total	100.0%

Newspaper consists usually of 32 tabloid pages.

* Survey taken in the period of March 28 - April 3, 1971.

APPENDIX IV

CONTENT OF T.V. PROGRAM

(in percent)*

Nature of program	Percentile ranking
1. Entertainment (of which music, poetry: 5.7%)	46.2
2. Educational	23.1
3. News and weather forecast	16.6
4. Children's program	6.9
5. Sports	6.1
6. Religious	1.2
	100.0 %

Total broadcasting time was 20 hours 35 minutes.

No television on Thursday.

* Survey was taken March 28 - April 3, 1971.

APPENDIX V

AVERAGE NUMBER OF BOOKS BORROWED FROM LOCAL LIBRARY PER HOUSEHOLD IN 'ARBORG, 1939 - 1970.

Yr.	No. of loans	No. of households borrowing	Average
1939	522	89	5.9
1940	1,325	52	25.5
1941	392	35	11.2
1942	1,294	49	26.4
1943	2,179	79	27.6
1944	1,274	86	14.8
1945	1,484	76	19.5
1946	906	67	13.5
1947	*	*	*
1948	616	55	11.2
1949	584	54	10.8
1950	563	53	10.6
1951	673	53	12.7
1952	1,120	80	14.0
1953	1,258	63	20.0
1954	914	57	16.0
1955	818	55	14.9
1956	717	51	14.1
1957	821	89	9.2
1958	717	82	8.7
1959	1,056	79	13.4
1960	1,004	*	*
1961	1,180	53	22.3
1962	1,299	56	23.2
1963	1,184	57	20.8
1964	1,022	64	16.0
1965	512	38	13.5
1966	733	44	16.7
1967	708	45	15.7
1968	680	50	13.6
1969	754	78	9.7
1970	1,063	46	23.1
		Average for 30 years:	15.2 books per household.

Note: In 1970, there were 4,470 books deposited in the local library.

* no data available

APPENDIX VI

CONTENT OF RADIO PROGRAMS

MARCH 28 - APRIL 13, 1971

(in percentage)

Nature of program	Percentile ranking
1. Entertainment (music, quiz)	41.7
2. Educational (interviews, literary, poems, plays)	13.9
3. Special programs (chess, sociology, language, travel, etc.)	10.9
4. News and weather forecast	8.9
5. Forming	6.2
6. Announcements	6.2
7. Children's program	4.3
8. Radio-chats	3.5
9. Religious	2.9
10. Fishing	1.5
11. Sports	.3
	100 %

Note

Total broadcasting times was 102 hours in the week-period.

APPENDIX VII

AVERAGE INCOMING AND OUTGOING MAIL IN 'ARBORG OVER 13 DAY PERIOD* 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971.

Year	Incoming	Outgoing
1968	728**	118
1969	714	111
1970	754	135
1971	683***	101****

Note

* Averages were calculated over two 13 day periods in each year (except for 1971). These two periods were 6-19 March and 6-19 November. In 1968, 6-19 May replaced 6-19 March, due to special circumstances brought about by traffic change-over period which fell in March.

** Excludes calculation of 150 pieces of mail sent to 'Arborg in conjunction with traffic changeover.

*** Excludes 8 pieces of mail received by a resident visitor.

**** Excludes 15 pieces of mail sent by a visiting foreigner to 'Arborg.

APPENDIX VIII

DATA SHEET ON FISHING VESSELS IN 'ARBORG.

Vessel No.	Material of hull, ship-yard, year of make.	Bruto kg Tons	Length in metres	Machine h/p and year	Navigational equipment and fishing aides
1	Oak Raa 1955	49	18.97	255 1959	radio and echo-sounder
2	Oak Iceland 1957	61	20.62	280 1957	radio, echo-sounder, and radar
3	Oak Denmark 1957	56	20.78	280 1957	radio, echo-sounder, and radar
4	Oak Sweden 1956	53	21.10	300 1965	radio, echo-sounder, radar, and direction-finder.
5	Oak Denmark 1957	64	19.87	280 1957	radio, echo-sounder, radar, and direction-finder.

Source: 'Islenzkt Sjómanna-almanak 1970.

APPENDIX IX

AVERAGE LENGTH OF SERVICE AND AGE OF VESSELS USED IN 'ARBORG 1917 - 1968.

Period	Number of Vessels	Number for each category	average age of vessels at purchase per category	Average length of service of vessels per category
1917-1929	13*	4	new	12.3
		7	13.8	8.3
1930-1942	3	1	new	21.0
		2	17.5	7.0
1943-1955	6	0	no new ships	-
			16.2	8.0
1956-1968	14**	0	no new ships	-
			18.5	6.7***
Totals	36	5	new	14.0
		31	mean: 16.6****	8.9 (mean)

Source: 1. 'Islenzkt Sjómanna-alamanak (Yearbooks 1930-present)
2. Council minutes of 'Arborg
3. Suðurland, January 31, 1970, p. 7
4. Private notes.

* no data available for 2 vessels.

** no data available for 4 vessels.

*** excludes averaging of 5 vessels still in use in Summer 1970, and also 3 other vessels which became inoperational during first year of use. The average would have read 1.4 year, giving a mean of 5.4 years of all vessels for all periods.

**** The mean for 'Arnessysla is 13.0 years.

APPENDIX X

LANDING OF UNGUTTED DEMERSAL FISH AND PERCENTILE PROPORTION OF FISH PROCESSING, FOR 'ARBORG

1960 - 1970.

Year	Total landed (in kg. tons)	PROCESSING				
		Frozen	Salted	Stockfish	fishmeal	home cons.
		(in percentage)				
1960	296	33	41	-	11	15
1961	681	54	36	2	1	7
1962	1,132	60	32	5	0*	3
1963	1,684	31	51	12	1	5
1964	1,950	37	44	12	2	5
1965	2,436	40	39	19	-	2
1966	2,068	40	43	11	0*	6
1967	2,347	45	33	18	0*	4
1968	2,125	47	41	7	2	3
1969	3,209	48	30	17	3	2
1970	3,263	50	33	15	-	2
Percentile average:		44	38	11	2	5

* Production figure too minute to be calculated.

Source: Fiskifélag 'Islands, unpublished data.

APPENDIX XI

RANK AND YIELD OF POTATOES IN 'ARBORG 1943 - 1963.

Year	Ranking in Iceland	Yield (x 100 k)	Yield of highest in Iceland (100 kg x)
1943	1	1,470	1,470
1944	1	1,902	1,902
1945	*	*	*
1946	4	1,926	2,388
1947	5	788	2,153
1948	5	1,249	3,641
1949	6	888	1,756
1950	6	1,405	5,154
1951	4	2,135	*
1952	2	1,675	5,519
1953	5	3,403	5,921
1954	4	1,717	5,934
1955	6	811	4,617
1956	2	2,793	6,686
1957	6	1,540	12,152
1958	8	1,309	12,437
1959	7	1,394	9,097
1960	13	1,011	14,351
1961	16	933	6,161
1962	9	947	4,837
1963	12	959	3,751

Sources: Búnaðarskýrslur 'Arin 1943 (up to 1963)

* no data available

APPENDIX XII

MEDIAN TAXABLE INCOME, EXCLUDING DEDUCTION FOR DEPENDENT CHILDREN, FOR WAGE-EARNERS IN 'ARBORG

1970

	Amount in Kr.	N
1. Doctor	453,440	1
2. Crew-members on vessels	271,700	20
3. Skippers	257,720*	5
4. Management[1]	257,720	12
5. Truck-drivers	238,148	15
6. White-collar workers[2]	210,730	12
7. Skilled labourers[3]	209,839	26
8. Unskilled labourers	201,809	41
9. Farmers/gardeners	173,760	12
		144

[1]Plant foremen, jail-warden, clergy.

[2]Librarian, teachers, jail-guards, clerks

[3]Plasterer, carpenters, mechanics, machinists, painter, electrician, baker.

* This figure is unduly low since three skippers who were operating Quick-Freezing Plant vessels, made considerably lower income than the two "independent" skippers. Median income for the latter is Kr. 327,620.

APPENDIX XIII

BIRTH-PLACE OF HOUSEHOLDS RESIDING IN 'ARBORG. SUMMER 1970.

Complete households:	number	%
Husband and wife born outside 'Arborg:	52	35.8%
Husband is not 'Arborgian but wife is:	18	12.5
Husband is 'Arborgian, but wife is not:	28	19.4
Husband and wife are 'Arborgians :	8	5.5
Incomplete households:		
Man is 'Arborgian :	16	15.3
Woman is 'Arborgian :	6	
Man is not 'Arborgian :	7	11.7
Woman is not 'Arborgian :	10	
	144	100.0%

APPENDIX XIV - 1

LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS IN 'ARBORG

IN 1970.

TYPE	DURATION (in yrs)	MEMBERS	ACTIVITIES
I. Social			
1. Women's Association	82	69	Founded in 1888. Social evenings, outings, sewing clubs, bazaar, drives. 5 meetings per year.
2. Young Men's Society	50	65	Founded in 1920. Modest recreational activities; card-evenings, excursions.
3. Theatre-group	27	5-10	Founded in 1943. Almost inactive.
4. Sea-Rescue society	42	400	Founded in 1928. Has modern rescue-house. Token memberships are taken out by villagers.
5. Church-choir	78	12	Founded in 1892.
II. Economic			
6. Labour Society	67	155	State agent for labour relations, unemployment insurance. Executive meets 6 times a year, and general 4 times a year. Founded in 1903.
7. Farmer's Society	43	36	Founded in 1927. Buying agent for local farmers and gardeners. Compiles figures for State. General meeting once a year.
III. Political			
8. Social Democrats	30	15	(Nominate candidates (for local government. (Arouses interest for
9. Independence Party	30	15	(national parties on (local level. Both are (founded 1940-1942.

APPENDIX XIV - 2

	TYPE	DURATION (in yrs)	MEMBERS	ACTIVITIES
IV.	Miscellaneous			
	10. Library	43	46 homes	Received grants from State. Founded 1927. Has 4,470 volumes and full-time staff (1).
	11. Kiwanis	0	4	Founded 1970.

APPENDIX XV

ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION IN 'ARBORG IN VILLAGE COUNCIL ELECTIONS 1942-1970, BY ALL ICELAND AVERAGE, ONLY VILLAGES, AND 'ARBORG, IN PER CENT

Year	Average for all Iceland	Only villages	'Arborg
1942	-	-	75.1
1946	-	-	82.7
1950	77.7	56.0	86.9
1954	80.3	57.0	89.5
1958	82.9	62.2	87.6
1962	84.2	68.3	-
1966	85.9	66.1	90.1
1970	86.6	79.8	93.0

Source: Tölfraeðihandbók 1967
Sveitarstjórnarmál. 1942 to 1959
Sveitarstjórnarmanntal 1966 -1970
Suðurland, June 6, 1970, p. 1

APPENDIX XVI

ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION IN 'ARBORG IN NATIONAL ELECTIONS AND REFERENDA 1942-1968, BY ALL ICELAND AVERAGE AND 'ARBORG, IN PERCENTAGE

Year	All Iceland	'Arborg
1942(summer)	80.3	77.7
1942(fall)	82.3	80.4
1944	98.4	100.0
1946	87.4	88.3
1949	89.0	90.3
1952	82.0	88.0
1953	89.9	92.8
1956	92.1	92.3
1959(summer)	90.6	87.6
1959(fall)	90.4	88.2
1963	91.1	92.0
1968	-	92.4

Sources: Alþingiskosningar. From 1942-1963.
Other publications from Statistical Bureau

APPENDIX XVII - 1

ALLOCATION OF FUNCTIONS BETWEEN LOCAL AND CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, MEASURED ON FIVE-POINT SCALE: S.I.S. SCORES

as proposed by the Union of Icelandic Local Authorities.

Function	Dimension	1	2	3	4	5	Score	Average
1. Public Relief	I.					V	5	
	F.					V	5	5.0
	E.					V	5	
2. Child and Youth Welfare	I.					V	5	
	F.					V	5	4.3
	E.			V			3	
3. Education	I.					V	5	
	F.		V				2	4.0
	E.					V	5	
4. Employment Service	I.			V			3	
	F.		V				2	2.7
	E.			V			3	
5. Planning and Building	I.		V				2	
	F.			V			3	3.3
	E.					V	5	
6. Sanitation and Health	I.					V	5	
	F.					V	5	4.3
	E.			V			3	
7. Fire Protection	I.				V		4	
	F.					V	5	4.7
	E.					V	5	
8. Law and Order	I.	V					1	
	F.		V				2	1.3
	E.	V					1	
9. Fodder Supervision	I.				V		4	
	F.					V	5	4.7
	E.					V	5	
10. Roads and streets	I.					V	5	
	F.					V	5	5.0
	E.					V	5	

APPENDIX XVII - 2

Function	Dimension 1 2 3 4 5	Score	Average
11. Sewers	I. _ _ _ _ V	5	
	F. _ _ _ V _	4	4.7
	E. _ _ _ _ 5	5	
12. Harbour Development	I. _ _ _ _ V	5	
	F. _ V _ _ _	2	3.7
	E. _ _ _ 4 _	4	
13. Water Supply	I. _ _ _ _ V	5	
	F. _ _ _ V _	4	4.7
	E. _ _ _ _ V	5	
14. Electricity	I. _ _ _ _ V	5	
	F. _ _ V _ _	3	4.3
	E. _ _ _ _ V	5	
15. Music School	I. _ _ _ _ V	5	
	F. _ _ 3 _ _	3	4.3
	E. _ _ _ _ V	5	
16. Public Library	I. _ _ _ _ V	5	
	F. _ V _ _ _	2	4.0
	E. _ _ _ _ V	5	
17. Playground	I. _ _ _ _ V	5	
	F. _ _ _ _ V	5	4.7
	E. _ _ _ V _	4	
18. Community Centre	I. _ _ _ _ V	5	
	F. _ _ _ _ V	5	5.0
	E. _ _ _ _ V	5	
19. Museum	I. _ _ _ _ V	5	
	F. _ _ _ _ V	5	5.0
	E. _ _ _ _ V	5	
20. Slipway	I. _ _ _ _ V	5	
	F. _ V _ _ _	2	4.0
	E. _ _ _ _ V	5	

Notes:
Dimension; I = Initiative of the task
F = Financing of the task
E = Execution of the task

Five point scale: 1 = wholly undertaken by State
2 = mostly undertaken by State
3 = jointly undertaken by State and local
4 = mostly undertaken by Local
5 = wholly undertaken by Local

APPENDIX XVIII - 1

ALLOCATION OF FUNCTIONS BETWEEN LOCAL AND CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, MEASURED ON FIVE-POINT SCALE: 'ARBORG SCORES

in accordance with findings
'Arborg (1970-1)

Function	Dimension	1	2	3	4	5	Score	Average
1. Public Relief	I.	_	_	_	V	_	4	
	F.	_	_	_	V	_	4	4.0
	E.	_	_	_	V	_	4	
2. Child and Youth Welfare	I.	_	_	_	_	V	5	
	F.	_	_	V	_	_	3	4.3
	E.	_	_	_	_	V	5	
3. Education	I.	_	_	_	V	_	4	
	F.	_	V	_	_	_	2	3.7
	E.	_	_	_	_	V	5	
4. Employment Service	I.	_	_	_	_	V	5	
	F.	_	_	_	_	V	5	5.0
	E.	_	_	_	_	V	5	
5. Planning and Building	I.	_	_	_	_	V	5	
	F.	_	_	_	V	_	4	4.7
	E.	_	_	_	_	5	5	
6. Sanitation and Health	I.	_	_	_	_	V	5	
	F.	_	_	_	V	_	4	4.3
	E.	_	_	_	V	_	4	
7. Fire Protection	I.	_	_	_	_	V	5	
	F.	_	_	_	V	_	4	4.7
	E.	_	_	_	_	V	5	
8. Law and Order	I.	_	_	_	_	V	5	
	F.	_	V	_	_	_	2	4.0
	E.	_	_	_	_	V	5	
9. Fodder Supervision	I.	_	_	_	V	_	4	
	F.	_	_	_	_	V	5	4.7
	E.	_	_	_	_	V	5	
10. Roads and Streets	I.	_	_	V	_	_	3	
	F.	_	_	V	_	_	3	2.1
	E.	V	_	_	_	_	1	

APPENDIX XVIII - 2

Function	Dimension 1 2 3 4 5	Score	Average
11. Sewers	I. _ _ _ _ V	5	
	F. _ V _ _ _	2	4.0
	E. _ _ _ _ V	5	
12. Harbour Develop.	I. _ _ _ _ V	5	
	F. _ _ V _ _	3	3.7
	E. _ _ V _ _	3	
13. Water Supply	I. _ _ _ _ V	5	
	F. _ _ 3 _ _	3	4.3
	E. _ _ _ _ V	5	
14. Electricity	I. _ _ _ _ V	5	
	F. _ _ V _ _	3	4.3
	E. _ _ _ _ V	5	
15. Music-School	I. _ _ _ _ V	5	
	F. _ _ _ V _	4	4.7
	E. _ _ _ _ V	5	
16. Public Library	I. _ _ _ _ V	5	
	F. _ _ V _ _	3	4.3
	E. _ _ _ _ V	5	
17. Playground	I. _ _ _ _ V	5	
	F. _ _ _ _ V	5	5.0
	E. _ _ _ _ V	5	
18. Community Centre	I. _ _ _ _ V	5	
	F. _ _ V _ _	3	4.0
	E. _ _ _ V _	4	
19. Museum	I. _ _ _ _ V	5	
	F. _ _ _ _ V	5	5.0
	E. _ _ _ _ V	5	
20. Slipway	I. _ _ _ _ V	5	
	F. _ _ V _ _	3	4.3
	E. _ _ _ _ V	5	

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the assumption that Iceland has autonomous communities and establish the factors contributing to or threatening local-level autonomy in this case study of a fishing community in Southern Iceland (population 500). An ethnographic account accompanies the study.

Prior to analyzing the factors involved, three theoretical approaches to the study of autonomy are evaluated. The approaches are embodied in macro-studies whereby the national framework predominates, in micro-studies which incorporate community studies, and in analyses of local-state relations. The latter approach is seen as the more realistic one in the sense of its methodological value in revealing dynamic processes of interaction, and operational factors between the State and the community. The study of local-state relations is directed along the study of routine and specific issues. Routine issues refer to legally prescribed ways of solving problems arising in local-state relations, while specific issues refer to informal ways of dealing with irregularly occuring problems. Twenty issues were selected.

Chapter II traces the historic development of local-State relations in Iceland. The role of the

intermediate administrative institution, the District Council, is found to be declining. Challenges of modernization and centralization cannot be met by the Council and, as a result, there is more "face-to-face" contact between the local community and the State.

Chapter V integrates the findings of the analysis of routine and specific issues in Chapters III and IV. The following factors operate in local-state relations in Iceland in support/rejection of local-level autonomy:

(1) the traditional role of the community in Iceland as a self-reliant unit acts as a strong incentive for maintaining the local community as a viable unit.

(2) coalition behaviour on the national level encourages initiative on the local level in the execution of tasks;

(3) constitutional rights and fiscal policies work to safeguard local-level autonomy;

(4) the development of vertical alignments and biological marine-based economy of Icelandic communities pose a threat to autonomy. Vertical alignments are explained by modernization, programs of national political expediency, influence of mass media and the creation of direct ties between the private citizen in communities and the State. Marine-based economies hinder natural increase of community financing;

(5) potential tension between traditional factors of autonomy and contemporary factors which mitigate against it, is resolved by (a) a process of cognitive ordering

whereby issues are perceived as either local or national. This cognition is expressed by keeping the local government "neutral", acting as a buffer between actual local-decision-making bodies and the State; and (b) the characteristics of the local political culture of Icelandic communities support autonomy: the effects of the personality factor, and the locus of decision making being invested in community-wide agencies.