A REEVALUATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATIONS:
A CASE STUDY OF THE UNION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA MUNICIPALITIES.

by

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Abstract

This paper concerns itself with the nature of local government associations in Canada. The small body of literature concerning local government associations which precedes this study confines itself to an evaluation of local government associations based on their performance in the intergovernmental arena. In other words, ability to lobby the provincial government is the yardstick by which local government associations have been measured in the past. As this body of literature maintains that local government associations are a type of interest group, it is appropriate to attempt to situate the behaviour of these associations within some kind of interest group framework. A review of interest group literature suggests that it is inappropriate to analyse and evaluate local government associations based on the single activity of lobbying the provincial government. Local government associations spend much of their time providing other services to their membership. As well, the provision of these services impacts their ability to lobby effectively.

The interest group literature suggests that members join interest groups for a variety of reasons, only some of which are related to the pursuit of a collective good. The criticisms of Lionel Feldman and Katherine Graham in Bargaining for Cities: Municipalities and Intergovernmental Relations, An Assessment, and in Peter G. Johnson's research on the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities are based on too narrow an interpretation of the activity of local government associations. This paper discusses their criticisms that local government associations are neither legitimate nor representative, that they act solely as agents of provincial governments, and that they allow themselves to be circumscribed by more senior levels of government.
A case study of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) provides an overview of the organizational structure of this local government association, which suggests that the UBCM is an interest group whose main activities include lobbying the provincial government and providing other services to its membership. The presentation of survey data addresses itself primarily to Feldman/Graham's and Johnson's criticisms of local government associations, and concludes that when a broader range of local government association activity is taken into account, these criticisms are largely ill-founded.
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Introduction

The literature concerning local government associations\(^1\) focusses on the intergovernmental bargaining process, and evaluates these associations on their performance in this area alone. There is little information on the other activities of these associations. The purpose of this paper is twofold: firstly, to look at the other kinds of activities local government associations engage in, and secondly, to argue that the intergovernmental aspect of these associations cannot be understood without taking into account a broadened range of local government association activity. Presently, there are only partial answers as to why these groups are formed, why local governments join them, and what these groups spend their time doing. The literature demonstrates that local government associations are formed to advance the policy interests of local government; that local governments join because there is supposed to be strength in numbers; and that associations spend their time pursuing government policies to advance local government interests.

Implicit in this simplified version of the purpose of local government associations is the notion that such a group is an interest group. Yet, analyses of local government associations are largely devoid of interest group theory. The assumption persists that lobbying for substantive government policy measures is the primary focus of local government associations. As a result, these associations are judged in terms of how successfully they articulate

\(^1\)The term local government association is used to denote an association which has as members municipal governments, as well as regional districts. Single purpose bodies such as school boards or parks boards, for example, are excluded from this definition. Every province in Canada has an association of local governments. Some provinces have two such groups, representing rural and urban local governments. Not all local governments are members of an association, though some associations boast full membership. Where the term municipal government association is used, it is because another author has chosen to do so, and the text refers to his or her research.
local government concerns, what kinds of access these associations have to more senior, particularly provincial, levels of government, and; ultimately, whether their efforts result in better policies for local governments. An understanding of the several activities of local government associations, and of the effect each activity has on the pursuit of other activities, suggests that it is inappropriate to judge local government associations solely on the basis of their intergovernmental relations record.

This study is divided into three chapters. Chapter One provides a theoretical outline of interest group activity. Because local government associations are defined as interest groups by the literature, it is useful to examine the nature of interest groups in general. Chapter One focusses on the pluralist and rational choice models of interest group behaviour, and builds a theory which links the lobbying activity of interest groups with the services and opportunities interest groups provide for their membership. Chapter Two consists of a review of the literature on local government associations. This review highlights some major criticisms of local government associations put forth in the current literature. The theory of interest group behaviour developed in Chapter One, however, suggests that these criticisms stem from an understanding of local government associations which is far too narrow.

Chapter Three presents an organizational description of and survey data on the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM). During July and August, 1987, I developed and distributed a mail questionnaire to every member of the UBCM\(^2\), under the sponsorship of the UBCM itself. I was also able to interview UBCM staff members, and make use of the UBCM library. In September,

\(^2\)Individual local governments make the decision to join a local government association. As a member, a local government is represented in the association by its own council members.
I attended the annual convention of the UBCM as their guest. The data collected from these sources, and presented in Chapter Three, suggest that the UBCM is both an active lobbyist and provider of other valued services to its membership. The provision of these services accounts in part for the strength of the UBCM and for the success of its lobbying activity. The data on the UBCM challenge some of the criticisms put forth in the literature on local government associations. It suggests an adequate understanding of local government association activity must take more than intergovernmental affairs into consideration.

**Questions to be Investigated in Chapter One**

1. Do interest groups pursue a common interest?

2. If not, what other kinds of activity do interest groups engage in?

3. How do these other activities affect the behaviour of interest groups in general?
Chapter One: A Review of Interest Group Literature

Introduction

"Municipal unions are a distinctive type of pressure group."¹ This chapter proceeds on the premise that the nature of local government associations is difficult to understand without an understanding of interest group behaviour in general. An analysis of the resources of interest groups suggests that these resources are employed both to realize the group's political objectives and to secure a stable group membership. Similarly, in performing the main functions of legitimation and communication, an interest group directs its efforts towards government and towards its membership. The investment of an interest group's resources and the pursuit of an interest group's major functions suggest that interest group behaviour is conditioned by both its political environment and by its membership's demands.

The pluralist approach to interest group behaviour argues that the membership of an interest group possess a common interest, and that the activity of an interest group focusses on pursuit of this common interest. The rational choice approach to interest group behaviour argues that there is no such thing as a common interest amongst members of an interest group. Rational choice theory posits that members possess a multitude of reasons for belonging to an interest group, one of which may be the pursuit of certain political objectives. Each of these approaches help to explain what motivates interest group behaviour. It

becomes apparent that interest groups cannot survive by their lobbying activity alone.

**An Interest Group's Resources: Knowledge, Mandate and Wealth**

If political effectiveness can be defined as the capacity of group elites to achieve their political goals and "political activism and effectiveness are essentially a function of resources" what are the resources of interest groups?² Paul Pross suggests that without knowledge, mandate, and wealth, interest groups could not perform any of their primary functions.³ Clearly, knowledge about the substance of policy and the policy process itself are key to engaging in meaningful communication both in interest group-government relations and in relations between the interest group and its members.

Mandate refers to the "express assignment of representative capacity to a group's leadership by its membership."⁴ If the membership finds value in a group, whether it be out of an identification with political objectives or out of a desire for other, nonpolitical, rewards, it extends a mandate to the interest group. A diversification of offerings appeals to a broad membership and serves to strengthen the interest group's mandate. A wide range of goals also improves upon the interest group's credibility at the governmental bargaining table. If the interest group has a position on several issues, and it is willing to trade success in one area for defeat in another, government receptivity is enhanced. If government is receptive to an interest group, the group is likely to

⁴Presthus, p. 191.
realize some of its goals. Presthus argues that interest group effectiveness is positively associated with the legitimacy government ascribes to the interest group.5

Interest group legitimacy in the eyes of government may result in a strengthened mandate, as the membership see that the interest group represents their political interests successfully.

"Wealth", typically obtained through membership dues and the sale of goods and services to the membership, is a third powerful resource. Firstly, wealth implies membership commitment to the group. This fact is important for the membership and the target government to recognize. Apart from the symbolic value of interest group wealth, there is the practical point that interest group activity costs money to engage in.6 If the interest group lacks wealth its chances of political success are limited. Pross, however, cautions that the sale of goods and services to members "essentially turns the group away from its primary thrust of serving its members and its secondary thrust of communicating with government."7 Yet, it is essential to realize that whatever the professed goals of an interest group are, it is vital to look at the mechanisms which control these activities. To the extent that the sale of goods and services either ties the membership to the group or provides a financial resource for the group, then it at least facilitates service to its membership and communication with government. Entrepreneurial functions support the fundamental internal and external functions of an interest group.

5Ibid., p. 245.
6Ibid., p. 133.
Legitimation and Communication

"Legitimation" refers, in part, to an interest group's ability to enhance the legitimacy of the prevailing government. David Kwavnick states that the mandate of an interest group "affords stability and predictability and helps stabilize relations between government and its environment." The stabilization of relations between government and its environment is achieved because interest groups are identifiable entities which conduct themselves in an organized manner. In recognizing the mandate of an interest group, government avails itself of a vital source of information. In so doing, government reinforces its own legitimacy as it ties that new interest to the system.

Communication figures prominently in the legitimation function of interest groups. Pross argues that the legitimation function is actually a by-product of the communications function.

Pressure groups partly transmit demands to government and also help government identify the interests of particular sectors of the community and so channel communications from government and offer a means through which government can test public opinion.

Thus, the information an interest group possesses supplements the work of government, enabling government to better meet its responsibilities. The flow of information between interest groups and government operates to legitimize the government. Government also utilizes this expanded range of information to neutralize interest group objections and even to engage support for the


The flow of information from government to interest group is equally as vital to the legitimacy of the interest group. One of the main reasons members join groups is for access to specialized information which they have no other means of obtaining. Terry Moe finds that "information is the organizational service most widely valued by members." As the interest group is the pipeline through which this information flows, those interested in this information must hook up to the pipeline. Access to information is an objective of the membership which exists apart from the political pursuits of an interest group. The communications function of an interest group is vital to the legitimation of the government and to the perceived legitimacy of the interest group by its membership.

If the exchange and manipulation of information is the ground on which interest groups and government meet, it is important to note that this is less a battleground than a playground. Pross characterizes the Canadian policy system as one of consensus-seeking techniques of political communication. He argues that the pressure group is likely to accept short term defeats in the interests of continuing favourable relations. As a result, interest groups are often agents of cooperation and cohesion, not of competition. To battle with government in an all-or-nothing fashion could jeopardize the interest group's role as communications link, resulting in a loss of its mandate.

The assumption throughout much of the preceding discussion is that at the most basic level "pressure groups are organizations whose members act

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10 Ibid.
together to influence public policy in order to promote their common interest."\(^{13}\)

Also, interest groups are considered to be homogenous units. Promoting the common interest and obtaining recognition by government is the raison d'être of interest groups. The pluralist tradition does not view the internal life of interest groups as being of critical importance in understanding interest group activity, perhaps because this tradition holds that the state is the focal point of interest group activity. The relationship between an interest group and the state is seen as the greatest determinant of interest group behaviour.\(^{14}\) Yet, the communication and legitimation functions of interest groups suggest a dynamic relationship between government, interest groups and interest group members. Pross does suggest that the character of an interest group "will be the product of interaction between the internal resources of the groups themselves and the political system in which they are found."\(^{15}\) Rational choice theorists would argue that even if the political system exerts a stronger influence than do the internal resources of an interest group, the latter must still be examined. What motivates members to maintain their membership in an interest group must have some bearing on the activity of the interest group and on its relationship to government.

**The Rational Choice Explanation for Interest Group Membership**

Groups try to gain as members everyone who is a part of the particular interest community. In order to maintain a strong and stable membership, the interest group must ensure that it is offering what members want. Mancur Olson's Theory of Collective Action suggests that by virtue of the

\(^{13}\)A. Paul Pross, 1986, p. 3.


fact that individuals have a particular interest in common, the collective good cannot be withheld from those who have not participated in its attainment. Therefore, logic dictates that the individual will not act in his or her own self interest in order to obtain an optimal amount of the collective good. The rational individual will opt to become a free rider, availing himself of the collective good without having to make any investment of personal resources. Olson argues, then, that were it not for special benefits other than public policy, the majority of prospective members of economic interest groups would not join the interest group:

If the members of a large group rationally seek to maximize their personal welfare, they will not act to advance their common or group objectives unless there is coercion to force them to do so, or unless some separate incentive, distinct from the achievement of the common or group interest, is offered to the members of the group individually on the condition that they help bear the costs or burdens involved in the achievement of the group objectives.  

According to Olson, "the larger the group, the farther it will fall short of providing an optimal amount of the collective good." Another kind of good must exist to attract members. Olson refutes the pluralist notion that in determining interest group priorities, group interests are paramount and individual interests matter little.

Essentially, members are attracted to interest groups by the benefits they offer. According to Olson, these benefits are either collective, benefitting the community at large, or selective, benefitting only those who are

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17 Ibid., p. 35.
members. Olson specifies, however, that for a large group, no incentive exists to act to obtain the collective good.\textsuperscript{18} The large group's capacity for action remains latent and can only be mobilized with the aid of selective incentives.\textsuperscript{19} The provision of selective incentives becomes a necessary condition of effective group organization and cohesion. The legitimacy of an interest group, according to Olson, is dependent on its ability to focus on areas other than the common interest. Government cannot be the sole target of interest group attentions.

Olson's theory focuses on an interest group's ability to provide member services, or selective incentives. As such, it undermines the pluralist link between common interests and collective action. Olson argues that an interest group which organizes solely for political purposes will be unable to induce members to join or to retain their membership in the group. The possible policy gains which the interest group offers would accrue to the individual regardless of whether he was a member of the interest group or not. Conversely, the organization which offers selective incentives can induce members to join or retain their membership because it offers a range of benefits which are not available to those outside the group.

Moe points out the disjunction between member goals and group goals implied by Olson’s theory, and suggests that members may not necessarily agree with group goals.\textsuperscript{20} If members belong to interest groups for reasons other than the pursuit of a collective interest, interest groups possess a great many more ways to perform the functions of communication and legitimation. In

\textsuperscript{18}Olson makes a distinction between large and small groups, arguing that in a small group, greater incentive exists to work for the collective good, as each member's share of the collective good will likely be greater than the effort required to obtain the collective good. In large groups, the cost of pursuing the collective good is likely to be greater than the incremental benefit gained for having done so.

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid., pp. 50-51.

\textsuperscript{20}Moe, p. 30.
addition to the source of information and legitimacy that government provides, interest groups can now be seen to possess an information source and a mandate independent of government. The mandate of an interest group stems partly from its proven track record with government, and partly from its provision of a tangible benefit which the membership could not otherwise obtain. By offering a range of selective benefits an interest group contributes to the stability of its membership.

Moe finds fault with Olson's theory because it assumes that individuals are rational, perfectly informed and economically self-interested. As a result, they are capable of conducting a calculus which demonstrates that to work for the collective good is too costly but that to work for one or several selective incentives is an optimal use of their resources. Moe asserts that the individual makes several estimates in calculating costs, benefits, and supply levels of a collective or selective good. Joining a group means that the individual has estimated that his contribution will make a difference in bringing about net personal gains. Moe argues that the individual would not join an interest group or retain his membership in one, if his estimate of the cost of membership exceeded the benefits he believed he stood to gain. But, however the individual assesses costs and benefits, Moe suggests that individuals act on imperfect information. Members may overestimate the benefits of membership.

Moe adds solidary and purposive incentives to the range of selective incentives suggested by Olson. Solidary incentives to join a group include rewards such as making friendships or valuable personal connections with other members. In other words, reasons apart from strictly economic or political goals exist to join a group. Purposive incentives are those "intangible benefits which accrue by virtue of a person's support of causes, value systems and
principles." Purposive incentives can reinforce pursuit of the collective good if the individual identifies in spirit with the political objectives of the interest group, regardless of how obtaining these objectives affects him. The collective good creates its own selective incentive, one which takes the form of participation. Solidary incentives can also contribute incrementally to the bargaining strength of the interest group. Membership funds acquired via the provision of solidary incentives, and loyalty to individuals in the group serve to strengthen the interest group, and therefore its bargaining effort. "Both common interests and socioemotional attachments have roles to play in understanding member involvement." Moe rejects Olson's view that selective incentives are entirely divorced from the collective good.

Moe finds that the most frequent reasons given for joining an interest group are: the provision of direct services, the lobbying effort of the group, and feelings of responsibility to join. Eighty per cent of the membership of the groups Moe surveyed would drop their membership if selective incentives were withdrawn, whereas none of them would retain their membership if the group's lobbying efforts ceased. Moe's data suggest that both the collective good and the provision of selective incentives are valued aspects of an interest group's business, but that selective incentives are responsible for the cohesiveness of the group.

Moe states that "the group is ... a social system whose maintenance, and, more generally, whose ability to endure stressful conditions, depend upon the extent of its internal cohesion." Olson and Moe argue that economic self-interest exerts a centrifugal force on the group, inhibiting the

21 Ibid., p. 117.
22 Ibid., p. 166.
24 Ibid., pp. 157-158.
internal politics of a group, and affecting the group's ability to lobby effectively and to set its priorities. Policy disputes can lead members to drop out, or to participate negatively in the determination of group goals. However, when nonmaterial incentives take on relevance, winning or losing on policy issues is less critical. Members motivated by nonmaterial incentives may also be more likely to cooperate with one another. The fact that members have been attracted to the group to satisfy a need for greater interpersonal contact or to offer moral support to a cause, suggests that nonmaterial incentives perform a cementing function.

Given that an interest group must survive if it is to perform any function at all, the importance of nonmaterial incentives is central to an understanding of the nature of interest groups. In his study of teachers' associations, Ronald Manzer points out that "automatic membership cannot control the internal cohesion of the group." Manzer seems to suggest that offering the kinds of incentives which will promote the strong union of the group must be a constant activity of an interest group. If nonmaterial incentives operate to maintain group cohesion, then an interest group must ensure that it offers its membership more than public policy rewards.

The pluralist tradition views the collective good as the primary thrust of interest group activity. Olson, on the other hand, views selective incentives as a primary focus of interest group activity. Moe rejects the pluralist view, arguing that it is remiss in pointing to common interests as the key to membership and in overlooking the distinction between collective and selective incentives. Although Moe's contribution alters pluralist assumptions...
about how and why a membership is formed, it does not affect how interest
groups are perceived by government. In fact, Moe's examination of the internal
life of interest groups serves to strengthen the argument for the linkage function
of interest groups in society, a theory advanced by the pluralist tradition. Moe
does demand that in attempting to understand the behaviour of interest groups,
selective incentives must be taken into account in addition to lobbying for a
collective good. Interest groups do not exist purely to advance a political
interest. Therefore, failure in this arena does not necessarily mean that the
interest group has failed to fulfill its mandate.
Summary

Interest groups pursue several commonly held interests of their membership. Whereas a portion of a group's membership may be interested in securing a collective good, others may be interested in acquiring a selective good which the group offers them. Examples of selective incentives are specialized information, interpersonal connections and an increased sense of moral worth for contributing to a cause. The most important effect selective incentives have on an interest group is that they operate to stabilize and strengthen a membership. Also, membership dues and the sale of goods and services generated by selective incentives, as well as the very nature of purposive and solidary incentives, operate to strengthen the interest group's pursuit of the collective good.

The lobbying activities of an interest group can only be properly understood in the context of its other major activities. Pursuit of the collective good must compete with the other aims of an interest group for the allocation of membership energies and funds. Failure to lobby government effectively cannot serve as an indictment of an interest group which pursues several ends. The fact that interest groups do pursue several ends attests to the strength of the group as it provides different benefits to different members.

Questions to be Investigated in Chapter Two

1. What does the literature on local government associations view the primary function of local government associations to be?

2. How does this view effect the literature's definition and evaluation of local government associations?

3. How does the application of the interest group literature affect the criticisms of local government associations reflected in the literature?
4. Does the literature provide enough information on the organizational characteristics of local government associations to provide an explanation for activities other than lobbying, which local government associations engage in?
Chapter Two: Local Government Associations

Introduction

There is not a large body of literature concerning local government associations in Canada. Two primary contributions, however, are Lionel Feldman and Katherine Graham's study *Bargaining for Cities: Municipalities and Intergovernmental Relations, An Assessment*, and Peter G. Johnson's study of the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities. Both Feldman/Graham and Johnson focus on the local government association as an interest group, whose focal point is the provincial government. Thus, there is agreement on the main function of a local government association. Feldman/Graham and Johnson describe the local government association in the context of its role as lobbyist. The criticisms of local government associations put forth by these authors are based on what they perceive to be the limitations of these associations in the intergovernmental arena. A review of the local government association literature in light of the theory of interest group behaviour developed in Chapter One suggests that to define and criticize local government associations on the basis of their ability to provide the collective good is inadequate. Even if Feldman/Graham's and Johnson's express purpose is to evaluate the intergovernmental performance of

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2 Neither Feldman and Graham nor Johnson investigate other activities of local government associations. Feldman and Graham explicitly state that their "...review of local government associations deals almost exclusively with...intergovernmental activities and does not attempt to examine their potential contribution in other areas of concern to municipalities," (p. 16) Johnson's two papers concern themselves with relations between the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities (UNSM) and the government of Nova Scotia, and with the UNSM as an interest group.
local government associations, such an evaluation must at least acknowledge the relationship between provision of the collective good and selective incentives.

This chapter will review three of Feldman and Graham's major criticisms of local government associations. These are that local government associations cannot claim to be legitimate or representative of their membership, that they act as agents of the provinces rather than of their member local governments, and that local government associations allow themselves to be circumscribed by provincial governments. The purpose of this review is to demonstrate that the narrowness of Feldman and Graham's view of local government associations results in a misunderstanding of local government association behaviour. Finally, this chapter will present the available information on the organizational aspect of local government associations, primarily to illustrate the need for more research on this aspect of local government association activity.

Local Government Associations as Interest Groups

Johnson cites the original goal of the UNSM to be "a body to achieve united action for the defense of an individual municipal interest." To this end,

...the Union had to persuade the government and the Legislature that it spoke for the municipal units... The Union could fulfill its objectives only by persuading the government to change laws and practices in a manner that the Union wished.

Johnson assumes that only by influencing the provincial government could the UNSM carry out its proper function. Feldman and Graham also argue that "local

\(^3\) Johnson, 1970. p. 6.
government associations play an important intergovernmental role," and that the provincial government is their chief reference point. Donald Higgins corroborates this pervasive view of local government associations:

Associations of municipalities, school boards and other kinds of local government units exist mainly to function as interest groups -- to represent collectively to the provincial government's actors the local points of view.

The definition of the role of local government associations as interest groups to represent local points of view predisposes Feldman/Graham and Johnson to define local government associations solely in terms of their lobbying activity.

The Context of Local Government Association Lobbying Activity

Feldman and Graham argue that "it is difficult to understand any contest, intergovernmental or otherwise, without some understanding of the basic rules of the game." They view the rules of the game as being determined by the constitutional, functional and historical environment in which local governments operate. Under Section 92 of the Constitution Act, provincial legislatures are responsible for municipal institutions. Feldman and Graham conclude that the province is in control, and hence, becomes the chief reference point for the lobbying efforts of a local government association. Feldman and Graham suggest that the constitutional subordination of municipal governments to provincial governments warrants the formation of local government associations. Feldman and Graham suggest various resources which municipal governments should employ "to offset...[their] constitutionally weak position." For example, local governments should advance policy positions which indicate a common

5Feldman and Graham, pp. 15, 17, 20.
7Feldman and Graham, p. 5.
8Ibid., p. 105.
interest between the municipal and provincial positions, and they should make
use of the local electorate for support.

Feldman and Graham argue that the functional linkages between the
local and provincial levels of government "create lines of intergovernmental
communication and loyalties which inhibit horizontal integration or coordination at
the municipal level." This functional explanation of the policy making
environment is intended to illustrate what stands in the way of the successful
coordination of local governments within one association. Feldman and Graham
assume that local governments join local government associations for policy
oriented reasons alone. There are additional reasons explaining why local
governments unite. The functional explanation for policy making has no bearing
on local governments who join forces to secure a particular service, for example.
Perhaps how policy is formed does inhibit horizontal integration. However, this
obstacle to integration does not operate if members have joined for reasons other
than substantive policy gains.

Feldman and Graham hold that historically, the perspective of local
governments "was that local government should remain essentially a local service
delivery corporation..." Accordingly, the business of local government has
never been highly politicized, nor have local governments been accustomed to

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9 Ibid., p. 6.
10 Feldman and Graham specifically state that their review of local government
associations primarily deals with intergovernmental activities. Feldman and
Graham appear to have chosen not to consider other reasons why local
governments join local government associations. However, as suggested by the
interest group literature, the contribution of local government associations to
other areas of concern to local governments has an impact on the association's
pursuit of favourable government policy. While it may not be Feldman and
Graham's central concern to investigate reasons for joining a local government
association which exist apart from that of public policy, it seems appropriate
that as these other reasons relate to the pursuit of policy goals, so they should
have been examined by Feldman and Graham.
11 Ibid., p. 8.
lobbying provincial governments. Because of their allegiance to this historical interpretation of the perspective of local governments, Feldman and Graham do not acknowledge the mandate which local government association members have, in fact, extended to their local government association. This mandate comes from the material and nonmaterial values the members derive from belonging to a local government association. Because of the strength they gain from their mandate, historical precedent may not inhibit local government associations.

Feldman and Graham's explanation of the rules of the game is limited in that it confines itself to the local government-provincial government relationship, and does not address the individual local government-local government association relationship. Feldman and Graham infer that the environment which shapes the attitude and behaviour of local governments is the same as that which shapes the behaviour of their associations. On the contrary, when they act within a local government association, local governments are less limited by what Feldman and Graham point to. This is because local governments join local government associations for a variety of reasons, and because the local government association, as an interest group, encompasses a wide range of interrelationships of which the local government-provincial government relationship is only one.

Are Local Government Associations Legitimate and Representative?

Feldman and Graham are not convinced that local government associations are legitimate or representative. Because these associations are not directly responsible to the voting public for their actions, Feldman and Graham raise the question of whose interest local government associations represent. If the only opportunity for the membership to guide the leadership is during the annual convention, what happens during the course of the year? Feldman and
Graham suggest that the association is subject to the "tyranny of a minority of activists," and as such, the interests of most member municipalities are left out.\(^\text{12}\) Feldman and Graham postulate that members "use the association to seek interests independent from those of their electorate."\(^\text{13}\)

If, as Olson states, members of an organization act to maximize their personal welfare, and there may be as many definitions of personal welfare as there are members, then members participate in an association for a variety of reasons. It should not be viewed as subversive if members have personal agendas. Feldman and Graham recognize that local government often serves as a training ground for politicians, and suggest that political careers may take precedence over consistently representing local government interests. This is reprehensible to them. The question could be asked, however: Without such aspiring individuals, would local interests be represented at all? It is vital to remember that a group's legitimacy depends upon membership support. A group that offers a wide range of incentives to join is more likely to attract and maintain a stable membership. The legitimacy of an interest group derives only partially from an interest group's representative function. The membership must be able to pursue the ends for which they joined in the first place.

Lack of a common interest is offered by Feldman and Graham as one explanation for the inability of a local government association to be representative. Feldman and Graham find that local government associations play a limited role precisely because they are unable to take a position for fear of alienating a significant portion of their membership. If a position is taken at all, it must appeal to the lowest common denominator. This position is necessarily of low impact and therefore, ineffectual. Feldman and Graham argue

\(^{12}\)Feldman and Graham, p. 22
\(^{13}\)Ibid., p. 26.
that "the important locus of initiation and response on intergovernmental matters should be the individual municipality...only in [this] way can the true interests of municipalities be articulated."\(^\text{*14*}\)

Johnson is equally as preoccupied with this notion of needing a common cause. He notes that at the genesis of the UNSM there was not a single shining issue around which the organization was formed and with which the members could evaluate the effectiveness of the body and the progress made toward the fulfillment of it.\(^\text{*15*}\)

This fixation with the common interest implies the pluralist based philosophy of Feldman/Graham's and Johnson's research on local government associations. According to Moe's interpretation of Bentley, "...group interests were everything, and individual interests were nothing. What mattered were the common interests of groups of people, not the losses and gains to single individuals."\(^\text{*16*}\) This paramountcy of the common interest seems to be true of the interpretation of local government associations examined here.

Feldman/Graham and Johnson link the legitimacy of a group to its capacity to be representative of a common interest. Yet, if there is no such thing as a common interest, or if the common interest can be redefined to mean that members have in common the desire to maintain the group, but that they each seek to sustain it for different reasons, then evaluating the legitimacy of an interest group on the basis of its ability to represent one interest is misguided. Moe's rational choice theory explains why members join interest groups in the absence of a common interest. His theory demands that interest groups not be judged solely by pursuit of a common interest, since this is why

\(^{14}\text{Ibid.}\)
\(^{15}\text{Johnson, p. 12.}\)
\(^{16}\text{Moe, p. 119.}\)
only some members have joined. Moe's theory suggests that failure in the intergovernmental arena, accompanied by stable membership and continuing group activities, points to the strength and cohesion of local government associations, rather than to their weakness.

If the aggregation and articulation of local government interests is to be improved, Feldman and Graham hypothesize that

party affiliation at the local level might improve the capacity of councils to deal with intergovernmental issues by fostering a more consistent and organized approach to the process of municipal initiation and/or response in the intergovernmental arena.¹⁷

Feldman and Graham suggest that the discipline and collective responsibility of the party system would encourage an increased focus on the real interests of local governments. Yet, if interest articulation is only a portion of what local government associations do, party affiliation to determine issue stances only addresses a portion of the local government association's activity. Assuming party politics would not jeopardize the association's relationship with the provincial government, it is possible that party politics would counteract the cementing function of selective incentives. If members have not joined for public policy rewards in the first place, they may be unwilling to suffer party politicking in order to secure other unrelated benefits of membership. Johnson's research indicates that because partisan political spirit was deeply held within the province of Nova Scotia, one of the main objectives of the UNSM was to defuse political sentiment and establish itself as a nonpartisan body. To inject party politics into the local government association arena could tear the association apart rather than refine the process of the aggregation and articulation of local government interests.

¹⁷ Feldman and Graham, p. 119.
Do Local Government Associations Act as Agents of the Provinces?

Feldman and Graham allege that local government associations and individual local governments act as agents of the provinces. Feldman and Graham find that the local government association is often "at the intergovernmental table as media through which information is transmitted rather than as legitimate municipal representatives who are present for a discussion."¹⁸ Feldman and Graham argue that the local government association role as articulator of local government interests has been supplanted by that of disseminator of information. Johnson concludes that "the UNSM shifted from a 'common' pressure group trying to influence the government to follow the wishes of its members to a quasi-administrative arm of the provincial government."¹⁹ He points out that the association had to maintain its link with the provincial government above all else, and that as such it tailored its activities to fit the requirements of the provincial administration.

Disseminating information about the provincial government, however, does not only serve the provincial government's ends. Access to this information serves as a powerful incentive to become a member of a local government association. In its capacity as conduit, the association provides access to otherwise privileged information. This access is a primary resource of the association for attracting and retaining members. Also, this access bolsters the legitimacy of the association by underscoring its link to the provincial government. Moe's data demonstrates that information is one of the main reasons members join groups. If the provision of information is viewed as important a function as lobbying, then the local government association's role as conduit for

the flow of information raises, rather than lowers, its stature in the eyes of both provincial and local levels of government.

Do Local Government Associations Allow Themselves to be Circumscribed by Provincial Governments?

Feldman and Graham are concerned with the willingness of local government associations to accept the status quo. They argue that the level of government responsible for a certain area is often equated with the general importance of this area, and suggest that local governments are responsible for the least important policy areas. Feldman and Graham suggest that local governments have conditioned themselves to be the underdogs in the intergovernmental process. This role reflects a "lack of municipal acknowledgement in substantive and/or organizational terms of the importance of policy development." Feldman and Graham equate the low key role of local government associations with the perceived underdog mentality of local governments. It could be argued, however, that the low key role of local government associations reveals not an ineffective lobby but an interest group which finds its interests to be best served by maintaining a low profile.

It is conventional knowledge that "both what local government does and how it does it are clearly much conditioned by the two senior levels of government, particularly the provincial." Feldman and Graham argue that as provincial governments exert increasing control over local governments, municipal governments have become "whipping boys in the intergovernmental process." Even by choosing to do nothing, provincial and federal governments exert a passive dominance over local governments. Feldman and Graham point out that

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20 Feldman and Graham, p. 3. See also Higgins, p. 93.
22 Feldman and Graham, p. 10.
the tri-level conferences which were experimented with in the 1970's failed because the provincial and federal governments had little to gain by this process. Also, where municipal governments have been successful in the intergovernmental arena, it has usually been because of federal or provincial action.23

The political system which local government associations are a part of dictates that the provincial level of government is the dominant player in intergovernmental relations.24 By accepting short term defeats on policy issues, the local government association gains a stronger foothold with the provincial government, and secures a long term relationship. Considering that local government associations engage in activities which do not involve negotiation with the provincial government, but which do require information from the provincial government, it is logical that local government associations act to maintain this link. The fact that the provision of both the collective good and some selective incentives is dependent on a working relationship with the provincial government suggests that local government associations are the subordinate player, but that this is a pragmatic approach.

The Organizational Characteristics of Local Government Associations

The literature provides very little information as to the organizational characteristics of local government associations. Johnson outlines four key methods by which the UNSM hoped to establish a close relationship with the Nova Scotia government:

23Johnson argues that while the UNSM succeeded in its effort to become a part of the provincial government's administrative system, it did so only because the Nova Scotia government allowed it to. The commanding position of the provincial government meant that the UNSM had to be content with this role within the administrative process, and remain outside the decision-making process. The UNSM was successfully coopted by the Nova Scotia government.

24It could also be that the adversary roles of these two levels of government is overemphasized.
...the UNSM must recruit a majority of municipal units as members; must appear as a nonpartisan body; must develop public opinion in support of the Union and its members; and must try to convince the provincial government that, since the municipalities were closest to the people, their spokesman represented the people.  

This tells us that local government associations must be concerned with membership, but not why prospective member municipal units should be concerned with local government associations. Johnson's research tells us little about the relationship between the UNSM and its membership.

Higgins explains that elected officials dominate these associations, and that the executive is elected from and by the membership which includes all elected officials from each member municipality. A small staff is employed to develop positions on matters affecting provincial-local relations, although the staff functions mainly as a secretariat. David Seigel adds that "annual conferences are the primary focus in most provinces, for the consultative process" between members and the association. The organizational imperatives and activities of local government associations, at least as reflected in the literature, centre on understanding member interests, formulating policy positions to articulate these interests, and getting in front of provincial governments to see that these interests are realized. Johnson, Higgins and Seigel all suggest that member interests are served by lobbying the provincial level of government.

Although lobbying provincial governments may indeed be of primary importance, the additional activities of these associations do have a bearing on lobbying activity. For example, as one mayor commented on attending the Annual Conference of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities:

26Higgins, p. 80.  
27Seigel, p. 314.
we go because we know that the cost/benefit, however hard to measure analytically, is all in our favour...the professional and personal contact, the sharing of ideas, interests, enthusiasm and cynicism are vital, if somewhat intangible, benefits of conference attendance.28

If the additional activities of local government associations are understood, then we will be in a better position to evaluate the role of local government associations, including the intergovernmental aspect of their activity.

Summary

The literature on local government associations views their primary function to be that of lobbying the provincial government for substantive policy gains. This perception within the literature conforms to Olson's definition of the collective good, whereby all local governments stand to benefit by this activity, regardless of whether they are association members or not. According to Olson, provision of the collective good is not enough to secure a stable membership. The operation of selective incentives must be considered in determining the major functions of an interest group, including its lobbying activity.

Feldman/Graham's and Johnson's criticisms of local government associations do not recognize the interplay between the collective good and selective incentives. By failing to make this connection, Feldman/Graham's and Johnson's conclusions present a distorted view of the nature of local government associations. These authors question the legitimacy of local government associations based on an absence of accountability to the membership. Yet, the opportunity for members to pursue personal goals, away from membership scrutiny, may partly explain the strength of these associations. Absence of a common interest also raises the question of whether a local government association can

claim to be representative. Feldman/Graham and Johnson assume that
representativeness derives from the presence of a single interest which the
membership wish their association to pursue. Olson and Moe would argue that
the closer an interest group comes to representing a single interest, the less
stable its membership is likely to become. A strong interest group represents
several interests.

Feldman/Graham and Johnson condemn local government associations
for acting as agents of the province by disseminating information for this level
of government. Were the importance of selective incentives recognized by these
authors, then passing information from the provincial to the local level of
government would be recognized as a benefit of membership, and a strength of
local government associations. Finally, Feldman/Graham and Johnson criticize
local government associations for allowing themselves to be circumscribed by
provincial governments. The authors advocate that these associations take a
more proactive stance in their relations with provincial governments, employing
public pressure if they have to. If, as Moe suggests, collective and selective
incentives operate together to ensure a stable membership, and if the provincial
government contributes to the ability of local government associations to provide
both these benefits, then local government associations must avoid confrontation
with the provincial government. More hangs in the balance than public policy
gains or losses.

The literature on local government associations provides scant
information about the organizational principles of these associations. What little
is available tends to focus on putting the local government association in a
position to lobby effectively. The other activities of a local government
association must be investigated, as they do have a bearing on the
Questions to be Investigated in Chapter Three

1. How is the UBCM organized in terms of membership, policy development, and other member services?

2. What do these aspects of the organization of the UBCM infer about the nature of the local government association, especially in terms of its main functions?

3. What questions raised by the literature on local government associations does the 1987 UBCM Membership Survey address?

4. How are the survey questions worded in order to obtain answers to these questions, and how was the data collected?

5. What do the survey results demonstrate about the activity of the UBCM?
Chapter Three: The Union of British Columbia Municipalities: Organizational Structure and the 1987 UBCM Membership Survey Data

Introduction

This chapter is divided into two parts. Part I presents information on the organizational structure of the UBCM. This material suggests that the UBCM is a legitimate interest group whose main activities include lobbying of the provincial government and the provision of information and group services to its membership. The provision of these services strengthens the mandate of the UBCM, and enables it to lobby the provincial government more effectively. Part II presents the 1987 UBCM Membership Survey data. The major objective of this survey is to test some of the questions raised by Feldman and Graham. Of particular interest are their criticisms concerning the legitimacy and representativeness of local government associations, whether these associations act as agents of the provinces, and whether they allow themselves to be circumscribed by the provincial level of government. The survey results tend to refute the conclusions drawn by Feldman and Graham. Where the research in Parts I and II confirm Feldman and Graham's findings, the limitations of the UBCM do not seem to be as debilitating to UBCM activity as Feldman and Graham suggest they are to local government associations in general.

Part I: The Organizational Structure of the UBCM

A brief description and analysis of three aspects of the UBCM organization contributes towards an understanding of the orientation of UBCM activity. This section investigates the composition of the UBCM membership, and the membership's relation to the UBCM Executive and staff; the annual convention
proceedings of the UBCM and how the resolutions process translates membership concerns into UBCM lobbying efforts; and the services other than lobbying activity which the UBCM provides.

**UBCM Membership, Executive and Staff**

The UBCM maintains 100% membership of all the province's municipalities and regional districts. It encompasses both urban and rural local governments within one association. The UBCM perceives its achievement of 100% membership as increasing the credibility and strength of the association.¹

Member local governments are represented by their council and mayor or electoral area director. The sixteen member UBCM Executive is comprised of local government representatives who are elected annually by the membership.² The Executive met six times in 1987, as well as meeting fifteen times for committee meetings.³ Committees are dedicated to policy development, member services and joint research efforts with the provincial government. The UBCM has eight full time staff members. Staff positions include those of Clerk, Secretary, Administrative Assistant, Research Officer, Member Services Coordinator, Policy Analyst, Local Government Advisor and Executive Director. Most of these positions are dedicated to policy development, although one position is specifically devoted to member services. The staff take direction from the UBCM Executive and from the resolutions endorsed at the annual convention. The staff is also accountable for its actions to the Executive, who are in turn accountable

²Executive positions include a President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer and three Directors at Large, as well as five Area Association Representatives, and one representative each for Villages, Electoral Areas, and the City of Vancouver.
³Each Executive member served on some of the following committees or task forces in 1987: Resolutions, Convention, Member Services, Awareness Week Implementation, Indian Policy Issues, Police Costs Committee, Industrial Assessment Task Force, Liability Task Force, and Provincial-Municipal Committee on Decentralization.
to the membership.\textsuperscript{4}

For the purpose of effective handling of member interests, the UBCM has divided the province into five sections each having an Area Association. These are the North Central Municipal Association (NCMA), the Okanagan Mainline Municipal Association (OMMA), the Association of Kootenay Boundary Municipalities (AKBM), the Lower Mainland Municipal Association (LMMA), and the Association of Vancouver Island Municipalities (AVIM). These associations deal with strictly local or regional issues, which the UBCM feels a regionally located association is better able to handle.\textsuperscript{5} The creation of Area Associations demonstrates that the UBCM strives to achieve the most effective means available for the representation of member concerns. While the cohesiveness of each Area Association varies, the UBCM constantly encourages the strengthening of this forum, so that the UBCM may concentrate on the more commonly held concerns of local governments, without neglecting the individual concerns of its members. Examples of Area Association initiatives are the forestry strategies developed by the AVIM and OMMA, and the promotion of economic development in conjunction with the Northern Development Council by the NCMA.\textsuperscript{6}

\textbf{Convention Proceedings and the Resolutions Process}

Historically, the annual convention of the UBCM has been the major focus of the year round activity of the association. While many other activities presently compete for Executive and staff attentions, the convention continues to be the focal point for much of the membership. In 1987, 1500 members and

\textsuperscript{4}Interview with Ken Vance, Policy Analyst, September 8, 1987.

\textsuperscript{5}Membership in Area Associations is optional and dues are paid separately from UBCM membership dues. Area Associations hold their own conventions, which the UBCM is represented at.

guests attended the convention in Vancouver. Two specific aspects of the convention proceedings, apart from the resolutions process, deserve attention. These are the relationship between the provincial government and the UBCM exhibited at the convention, and the forum for the exchange of information which the convention setting provided.

The recognition accorded the UBCM by the provincial government suggests that the province recognizes the mandate of the UBCM and is interested in maintaining a close relationship with the UBCM. The Premier, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and eight additional Members of Cabinet were present at the convention, and available for consultation. In her opening remarks, the Minister of Municipal Affairs commended the UBCM President and staff for their involvement and input in the province's municipal affairs. The Minister also referred to the UBCM as "one of the most important groups in B.C." The provincial government's strong showing at the convention indicates its appreciation of, and recognition of a need for, UBCM involvement in the intergovernmental arena.

Secondly, the convention setting facilitated both the formal and informal exchange of information. Both elected and staff representatives of the provincial government were available for consultation at set times. Conference attendees also opted out of some of the convention's formal sessions, in order to confer with one another in the outside corridors. At one point during the resolutions process, conversation in the hallways drowned out debate on the floor. Members take advantage of the annual convention to pursue both political

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7 The discussion on convention proceedings is based on my observations of the UBCM's 84th Annual Convention, held in Vancouver, B.C. from September 23-25, 1987.
8 Also an additional six Social Credit Party caucus members were present.
9 Gifts of thanks were exchanged between the UBCM President and the Minister of Municipal Affairs.
10 Honourable Rita Johnson, Minister of Municipal Affairs, 84th Annual Convention of the UBCM, September 23, 1987.
and personal objectives.

The resolutions process begins before the convention when members of the UBCM request that the UBCM take up certain issues. The Resolutions Committee accepts or rejects these requests, usually based on how commonly held each issue is perceived to be.\textsuperscript{11} In preparation for the convention, where the membership will vote on the resolutions, the Committee divides the resolutions it will consider into "A Resolutions" or "B Resolutions".\textsuperscript{12} The Committee makes a recommendation that the membership either endorse or reject each resolution. All "A Resolutions" are voted on by the membership. "B Resolutions" are only debated and voted on if they are raised from the floor. Otherwise, "B Resolutions" are endorsed or rejected according to the Committee's recommendation.

A brief comparison of Committee endorsement with membership endorsement reveals a strong correlation between the Committee's and the membership's sense of priorities. As a percentage of resolutions endorsed by the Committee since 1980, an average of 91% have been endorsed by the membership.\textsuperscript{13} As a percentage of those resolutions rejected by the Committee, the membership has only endorsed, that is reversed the Committee recommendation, for an average of 10% of the resolutions.\textsuperscript{14}

The UBCM has recorded recommendations on "B Resolutions" since

\textsuperscript{11}If a request is rejected by the Resolutions Committee, it is forwarded to the sponsor's Area Association for further action. Similarly, requests submitted to an Area Association which it feels the UBCM could handle more effectively, are forwarded from the Area Association to the UBCM.

\textsuperscript{12}"A Resolutions" are considered to be of a more general nature, and therefore of interest to the entire membership.

\textsuperscript{13}Records of Resolutions Committee recommendations have only been kept since 1978. As 1979 figures were unattainable, 1980 seemed an appropriate starting point for this comparison. 1980-1986 is the period these figures are taken from.

\textsuperscript{14}Since 1983, the membership has rejected all "A Resolutions" recommended for rejection by the Resolutions Committee.
1984. All "B Resolutions" raised from the convention floor since 1984 had been previously endorsed by the Committee. This fact suggests that "B Resolutions" which are recommended for rejection are not raised again within the UBCM. If they are to be pursued by their sponsor, it will be at the Area Association or local level. Since the "B Resolutions" debated had all been endorsed by the Committee, and raising them at the convention risks rejection by the membership, why would these issues be raised at all? The UBCM argues that it must provide a forum for its members to articulate their position, regardless of whether or not this position has already been heard and agreed with.\textsuperscript{15} Of all the "B Resolutions" raised from the floor since 1984, only one has been rejected by the membership. Again, the membership concur with the recommendations of the Resolutions Committee for the most part.

Those resolutions endorsed by the membership are taken up by the Executive and staff of the UBCM. A package on each resolution is prepared by the UBCM and sent to the Minister of Municipal Affairs for action. The Minister distributes this information to the appropriate Ministry. The appropriate Ministry replies back to the Minister of Municipal Affairs who replies back to the UBCM. This process can take the better part of a year in some cases. However, the UBCM may follow up on the status of its policy resolutions, through its contacts in the provincial government, before hearing from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.\textsuperscript{16} The UBCM is in frequent contact with the provincial government, to clarify positions and facilitate action on a resolution.

The resolutions process does not guarantee that the UBCM will represent every concern of every member, nor that the provincial government will look favourably on UBCM recommendations. However, by referring certain requests

\textsuperscript{15}Interview with Richard Taylor, Executive Director, UBCM.
\textsuperscript{16}Interview with Ken Vance, October 1, 1987.
to the Area Associations, and by encouraging involvement of these associations in handling local government concerns, the UBCM seeks to find the most effective means of providing solutions to local government concerns. The correlation between Resolution Committee endosration, and those resolutions endorsed by the membership indicates that the Executive and membership concur with one another as to UBCM priorities. Executive decisions on resolutions appear to be representative of membership values.

Additional Services Provided by the UBCM

A review of the UBCM's 1987 Annual Report gives an excellent perspective on the kinds of services the UBCM provides to its members. Under the heading "Accomplishments", twelve items are featured which are easily dichotomized into activities involving policy development, and activities involving consultative or members' services. Activities not falling within the ambit of policy development include: Communications, Training, Conferences and Seminars, Advisory and Information Services, Members' Services and Publications. With the exception of Members' Services, all of these services involve the exchange of specialized information. In some cases this information comes from the provincial government. In others, it is provided through the independent research of the UBCM.

The 1987 Annual Report distinguishes between Consultative Services which are provided to the entire membership out of dues revenue, and Members' Services which are available to the entire membership but which must be purchased from the UBCM. Neither service, however, is available to non-

18Consultative services include such things as legal opinions, information circulars, special publications, newsletters, survey data, and training seminars.
members. Members' services are of particular interest because they constitute an additional source of revenue for the UBCM. Four main services provided in 1987 include an employee group benefits plan, a tax notice service, a voter's list project and group purchasing.19 The Annual Report states that group purchasing was not pursued vigorously in 1987 due to other priorities. However, dog tags, lapel pins and a fuel purchasing program for retail pump purchases were opportunities which some of the UBCM membership took advantage of. According to the Annual Report, "these involvements are not 'big business' but they are a valued service to the members - and that's what UBCM members' services is all about."

Consultative and members' services are selective incentives provided to the UBCM membership. The UBCM argues that the provision of group services makes the association a more cohesive body as there are several reasons for a local government to retain membership.21 The provision of members' services saves member local governments money at the same time as it adds to UBCM revenues. This additional revenue source enhances the UBCM's lobbying activity.22 Consultative and members' services operate to secure a stable membership and to enhance the UBCM's ability to pursue the collective good.

Membership dues are based on the population size of each member local government, and accounted for 69% of the UBCM's total revenue for the fiscal year ending June, 1987.23 Revenue generated through the sale of

19 Participation in members' services as a percentage of the total UBCM membership is as follows: Group Benefits - 53%, Voter's List Project - 22%, Tax Notice Service - 21%. Figures for Group Purchasing are not available. See Annual Report and Resolutions, 1986-1987, pp. 12-13.
21 Interview with Ken Vance, September 8, 1987.
22 Ibid.
23 Membership Dues ($389,808) divided by Total Revenue ($562,258) = 69%. See
members' services accounted for 21% of the UBCM's total revenue for the same year. Taken together, these two sources constituted 90% of the UBCM's total revenue. Clearly, satisfying the membership's needs and providing group services are central to securing the wealth necessary for the UBCM to carry out its main functions.

24 Members' Services ($116,572) divided by Total Revenue ($562,258) = 21%. The remaining 10% of the total revenue is accounted for by investment income, administrative fees, and "other" income.
Summary

A review of some of the organizational aspects of the UBCM reveals that its main functions are to lobby the provincial government and to provide other services to its members. The 100% membership of the UBCM suggests that the association is regarded as legitimate in its pursuit of these twin objectives. The committee and staff positions created by the UBCM also reflect a concern for the provision of both the collective good and selective incentives. The creation of Area Associations demonstrates that the UBCM recognizes that it cannot represent the specific concerns of all its members, although it does consider this a part of its mandate. The UBCM has responded to this dilemma, which Feldman/Graham and Johnson point to as a weakness of local government associations, by supporting the strengthening of regional forums for action on some local government concerns. Area Associations facilitate a unity in diversity which strengthens the UBCM.

The convention proceedings demonstrate that the province recognizes the UBCM’s mandate, and values its input in intergovernmental affairs. The communications link between the UBCM and the province helps to legitimate the provincial government. The provision of information is also an important means of securing a stable membership, as the 1987 convention turnout and the formal and informal exchanges of information which dominated the proceedings demonstrate. Members’ services constitute another reason why members value the UBCM. The resolutions process, the role of information exchange and the provision of group services indicate that the collective good and selective incentives reinforce one another and contribute jointly to the internal cohesion of the UBCM.
Part II: The 1987 UBCM Membership Survey Data

The 1987 survey of the UBCM membership was designed and conducted jointly by me and the UBCM staff with the approval of the UBCM executive. Responses to some of the survey questions posed are not put to use in this study, although the UBCM has made use of them. For the purposes of this study, the survey sought to investigate some of Feldman and Graham's criticisms of local government associations. Of particular interest were their criticisms regarding the legitimacy and representativeness of local government associations, whether these associations act as agents of the provinces, and whether they allow themselves to be circumscribed by the provincial level of government. The survey was constructed with the intention of establishing whether or not pursuit of the collective good and selective incentives in a local government association operate as the interest group literature suggests they do.

A Discussion of the Questions

In order to determine whether the membership feel that the UBCM is a legitimate association, respondents were asked "Do you feel membership in the UBCM is valuable?" The question assumes that the legitimacy of a group is dependent on membership support. If members do not value the UBCM, they are unlikely to support its efforts. The legitimacy of an interest group is also connected to its ability to represent member interests. The question "Do you think a broad ranging organization like the UBCM can be responsive to the needs of all local governments?" taps the UBCM's ability to represent its members.

Neither question asks why members find the UBCM valuable or what interests of

25See Appendix 1, Question #16.
26See Appendix 1, Question #19.
theirs the UBCM represents. Respondents were further asked: "The most important functions of the UBCM are to represent local government in dealing with the provincial government and to provide services to its members. Which would you say is more important?" This question assumes that lobbying the provincial government and providing member services are the most important functions of the UBCM.

By asking "In general, how important do you think an association like the UBCM is?" the question of whether or not the UBCM acts exclusively as an agent of the provincial government is approached. The importance of the UBCM might derive from its stature before the provincial government. This general question is followed by a question which specifically addresses the UBCM's relationship to the provincial government. "Do you think the Ministry of Municipal Affairs is responsive to the UBCM?" determines whether the respondents feel that the province responds to the UBCM. If this is the case, then the UBCM does not always act as an agent of the province. A look at what respondents feel the priorities of the UBCM are, and of what respondents feel the priorities of the UBCM should be, demonstrates that acting as disseminator of information for the provincial government does not necessarily mean that the UBCM is strictly an agent of the province. Furthermore, to the extent that the UBCM is an agent of the province, the role is a positive rather than negative one.

The UBCM may well be circumscribed somewhat by the provincial

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27 See Appendix 1, Question #1.
28 See Appendix 1, Question #14. The importance imputed to the UBCM could also reflect the fact that the respondents find it important to them, regardless of the UBCM's relationship to the provincial government. However, were the UBCM regarded as unimportant by the provincial government, it is unlikely that the membership would regard it as an "important" association, even though it might be a valuable one to them.
29 See Appendix 1, Question #15.
government, as Feldman and Graham suggest local government associations are. However, the UBCM is only one of many channels available to local governments for contact with the province. The membership were asked "If you had a particular concern that affects only your local government, who would you be likely to contact first?" This question was followed by "If you had a concern about an issue that appeared to affect other local governments as well as your own, who would you be likely to contact first?" These two questions distinguish between concerns held by a single local government, and concerns which are perceived to be held by several local governments. The objective is to determine whether respondents perceive certain channels to be more effective than others for the resolution of these concerns. If local governments utilize these various avenues, circumscription by the provincial government may not be a major aspect of their self-perception.

Data Collection

The survey data have been collected from a sample of the membership of the UBCM. As the UBCM has 100% of British Columbia's local governments as members, questionnaires were sent to all 172 local governments in the province. For each local government the number of questionnaires sent corresponded to the number of elected officials (mayors, aldermen and electoral area directors). This group is the same as the membership of the UBCM. The total number of elected officials in the province is 1170, and of these 201 returned their completed questionnaires. The sample is limited in that although the entire population was contacted, the respondents are a self-selected group.31

30 See Appendix 1, Question #18 and #19. Respondents were given a choice of five available channels: the Minister affected, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, your MLA, your Area Association, and the UBCM.
31 The findings may be subject to some error as a result.
It is probably the case that members who responded are motivated individuals, keen to participate, regardless of whether their responses are positive or negative.

The sample is representative in that it possesses every major attribute of the total population in acceptable proportion. The breakdown of positions held, Area Association representation, and population representation indicate the representativeness of the sample. The method of data collection was by mail questionnaire. This facilitated access to the entire membership of the UBCM in an economical and expeditious manner. The questions were designed with simplicity in mind, and in most cases respondents were offered a range of possible answers. As a result, complex issues remain uninvestigated. The responses give a general indication of how the membership view the UBCM, and by this suggest future areas to explore.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position Held</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mayors</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aldermen</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral Area Directors</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Population</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>91%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The remaining 9% is accounted for by the administrative staff who filled the survey out themselves, instead of passing it on to the elected representatives.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area Association</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NCMA</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OMMA</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AKBM</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVIM</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LMMA</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Population</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also, 65% of the membership represent populations of less than 10,000, compared to 62% of the sample who represent populations of less than 10,000.
Survey Results

Is the UBCM Legitimate and Representative?

Ninety per cent of the respondents indicate that the UBCM is a valuable association. The membership derive some benefit from belonging to the UBCM, and therefore support its efforts. If membership support indicates legitimacy, it would appear that the UBCM is a legitimate association. Legitimacy also derives from the UBCM's ability to respond to member needs. Table 1 indicates that 76% of the respondents feel that the UBCM can be responsive to the needs of all member local governments.

Table 1: Can the UBCM Be Responsive to All Local Governments?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=201 100%

Considering the diversity of interests local governments apparently possess, this response implies that the UBCM offers different things to different local governments, and as such, is a representative association. If these responses indicate that the UBCM is legitimate and representative, then it is appropriate to ask what functions the UBCM performs.

Respondents were asked to select which is the more important function of the UBCM, its lobbying activity, its provision of member services, or
both. In this question, lobbying activity stands for the collective good, and provision of member services stands for the selective incentives offered by the UBCM.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Which is the More Important Function of the UBCM?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lobbying the Provincial Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing Member Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both Equally as Important</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 indicates that 40% of the respondents feel that lobbying the provincial government is the most important function of the UBCM. These members confirm pluralist explanations for interest group behaviour, and Feldman and Graham's argument for the paramountcy of intergovernmental bargaining by local government associations. However, 56% of the respondents indicate that both lobbying and the provision of services are equally important functions of the UBCM, which corroborates Moe's theory of the complementarity of collective and selective incentives in securing a membership. Considering that members' services account for over one-fifth of the UBCM's revenue, those members who feel pursuit of the collective good is the most important function of the UBCM are likely to support UBCM efforts to provide selective incentives. The provision of

33 See Appendix 1, Question #1.
34 The phrasing of this question may have had some impact on the responses given. The word "important" could be taken to mean which is the higher profile function? Lobbying the provincial government is certainly higher profile than providing member services, although both may be equally as important to the membership.
selective incentives supports the aims of those members who are primarily interested in policy gains. The legitimacy and representativeness of the UBCM is confirmed by the value and responsiveness respondents impute to the UBCM, and is ensured by the pursuit of both the collective good and the provision of selective incentives.

Is the UBCM an Agent of the Provincial Government?

Feldman and Graham argue that local government view themselves as underdogs in the intergovernmental process, and that as a result, local government associations act as agents of the province, exhibited primarily through their role as disseminator of information. The perceived importance of the UBCM gives a general indication as to whether UBCM members view themselves as underdogs. Eighty-six per cent of those surveyed stated that they felt an association like the UBCM was very important. As the survey confines itself to the areas of intergovernmental relations and member services, respondents are presumably replying within the context of UBCM activity in these two areas. If 86% of the respondents feel that the UBCM is very important, then respondents probably view the UBCM as effective in its pursuit of these two main functions. This response suggests that the UBCM is not strictly an agent of the provincial government.

In terms of provincial government responsiveness to the UBCM, 30% of those surveyed felt the Minister of Municipal Affairs was very responsive, and 64% felt the Minister was somewhat responsive, to UBCM demands. These answers suggest the possibility of a provincial government which responds, at least some of the time, to UBCM initiatives.

35 The remaining 14% responded that the UBCM was "relatively important". 36 Only 3% replied that the Minister was not responsive at all.
Feldman and Graham view the main role of local government associations to be that of disseminating information from the provincial level of government. They do not view this role as being of great importance. The survey data reveal that when asked to indicate what the priorities of the UBCM are, 74% of respondents answered that the UBCM attaches a high priority to providing information on provincial government actions. Feldman and Graham's criticism of local government associations for playing the role of disseminator of information seems irrelevant considering the high priority members attach to the provision of information about the provincial government. Table 3 depicts the top four functions of the UBCM, based on what the respondents feel the UBCM attaches a high priority to.

Table 3: Percentage of Respondents Who Feel the UBCM Attaches a High Priority to the Following Areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information on Provincial Government Actions</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication to the Membership via Newsletter</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing Provincial Legislation</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of Member Services</td>
<td>54 38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is truth to Feldman and Graham's assertion that local government associations disseminate information from the provincial level of government. Yet, if the provision of information is one of the most important selective incentives offered by the UBCM, then the UBCM must cultivate its relationship with the province for two reasons: to fulfill its mandate as provider of a collective good and as provider of exclusive information. Perhaps lobbying

37See Appendix 1, Question #22.
38These four functions are ranked the highest by respondents, in terms of UBCM priorities.
the provincial government is the highest priority of the UBCM, but in order to do this effectively it must also provide a communications service to the provincial government.

Respondents were also asked what they felt the priorities of the UBCM should be.39 The top three answers given were to lobby the provincial government, to provide information about provincial government actions, and to provide member services, in that order. These are the same three areas which respondents suggested the UBCM attaches a high priority to. There seems to be a congruence between membership objectives and the pursuit of these objectives by the UBCM. Furthermore, when asked to assess the UBCM's performance in pursuing these objectives, respondents find the UBCM to be effective.40

Table 4: Percentage of Respondents Who Feel the UBCM Performs Effectively in the Following Areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication to Membership via Newsletter</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information on Provincial Actions</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information on Local Governments</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of Member Services</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Means of Changing Provincial Legislation</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If it acted solely as an agent of the province, it is doubtful that the UBCM would receive such high marks for performance on a variety of fronts.

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39 See Appendix 1, Question #23.
40 See Appendix 1, Question #24.
Does the UBCM Allow Itself to be Circumscribed by the Provincial Government?

Feldman and Graham suggest that local governments allow themselves to be circumscribed by the provincial government, rendering their ability to lobby the provincial government ineffective. UBCM members were asked to state whom they contact first when they have a policy concern affecting only their local government. 41 40% stated that they would contact the Minister responsible first, followed by 29% who would contact their MLA first. Only 6% responded that they would contact the UBCM first. This response implies that an immediate and specific concern is best handled outside the UBCM. This suggests that the UBCM is not viewed as an association to handle, in the first instance at least, a matter which is exclusive to one local government. When asked to indicate whom they contact first when they have a concern affecting many local governments as well as their own, 40% of those surveyed stated that they would contact the UBCM first, followed by 22% who would contact the Minister responsible first. This suggests that local governments make use of their own ability to represent themselves, as well as the UBCM’s ability to do this, dependent on the nature of the issue.

The recognition by respondents of what kinds of issues the UBCM is best suited to handle implies that the UBCM is also effective in these areas. If this were not the case, respondents would be unlikely to draw a distinction between the handling of individual and common concerns. Part of the reason Feldman and Graham view local government associations as circumscribed by provincial governments is because they view these associations as though they were the only avenue available to local governments for achieving provincial government recognition of their concerns. The survey data indicate that local

41 See Appendix 1, Question #17.
governments also fend for themselves when it is most appropriate to do so. The survey data do suggest that local governments are more sophisticated in seeking solutions to their problems than Feldman and Graham give them credit for. The ability of local governments to act on their own, outside the UBCM, at least suggests an unwillingness to be circumscribed by the provincial government. It is the willingness to be circumscribed which Feldman and Graham criticize local governments for.

Also, lobbying the provincial government is not the only major activity of the UBCM. The UBCM's ability to provide information and member services, as previously discussed, greatly strengthens the association's mandate. This support for the UBCM by the membership is unlikely to disappear when the UBCM steps into the intergovernmental arena. Selective incentives reinforce the UBCM's ability to pursue the collective good.

Summary of Parts I and II

Feldman and Graham's criticisms of local government associations are not confirmed by the UBCM data. 100% membership and the value attached to the UBCM by its members attest to its legitimacy. The organization of the staff, Executive Committees and Area Associations indicate that the UBCM is concerned with representing local governments to the provincial government, as well as with providing information and other services to the membership. That 76% of those surveyed indicate that the UBCM is responsive to all local governments suggests that the UBCM's provision of the collective good and selective incentives serves to satisfy the needs of most of the membership. The UBCM is a representative association.
serve as disseminators of information for the provincial government seems to be true of the UBCM. That this is tantamount to acting as an agent of the province, however, is less clear. The 1987 convention proceedings indicate that the provincial government was present both to be heard by local governments and to listen to their concerns. The survey data indicate that the UBCM is considered an important association by its members and that the provincial government is responsive at least some of the time. The data also indicate that the UBCM spends most of its time providing information about provincial government actions. This is largely in response to membership demands, and is also a part of maintaining a working relationship with the provincial government, in order to protect the UBCM’s position in the intergovernmental arena. Whether local governments allow themselves to be circumscribed by the provincial government is not directly assessed by the survey, although the data suggest local government unwillingness to accept any such limitation. What the data demonstrate, however, is the UBCM’s ability to lobby the provincial government and to provide valued information and member services effectively. Those surveyed also indicate that these are the three most important reasons for belonging to the UBCM. The strength accrued to the UBCM by its ability to effectively provide the collective good and selective incentives must contribute to its confidence in dealing with the provincial government.
Conclusion

An understanding of the behaviour of a local government association is dependent on an understanding of the association's major objectives. Feldman/Graham's and Johnson's research focuses on the lobbying activity of local government associations. Their objective is fully justified, but their approach excludes consideration of other major aspects of local government association activity. The pluralist approach suggests that interest groups are formed primarily to pursue lobbying activity, which appears to vindicate Feldman/Graham's and Johnson's approach. However, neither study purposefully situates local government associations within the interest group literature although both maintain that local government associations are a type of interest group. By delving into interest group theory it becomes apparent that the criticisms of local government associations advanced by Feldman/Graham and Johnson, are perhaps less condemnatory when the focus of interest group activity is expanded beyond pursuit of the collective good.

Rational choice theorists argue that an interest group must provide selective incentives to its membership in order to achieve and sustain group cohesion. Pursuit of the collective good can only be undertaken once members are bound to the group through the operation of selective incentives. Rational choice theory suggests that Feldman/Graham and Johnson, who criticize local government associations for their ineffectual role in the intergovernmental arena, must consider the kinds of selective incentives these associations provide, before their criticisms are justified. Interest group priorities are divided between obtaining the collective good and providing selective incentives, and these twin objectives impact on one another. Therefore, an understanding of a local government association's role in the intergovernmental arena must at least
consider the impact of its complementary role as provider of selective incentives.

The UBCM data confirm the rational choice theorists' explanation of the priorities of an interest group. While many respondents are primarily interested in the UBCM's ability to lobby the provincial government, many are interested in its joint pursuit of collective and selective goods. The UBCM data also demonstrate that by providing selective incentives to its membership, the UBCM improves upon its ability to obtain the collective good.

The purpose of this study has been to examine the kinds of activity local government associations engage in, and to argue that the intergovernmental aspect of these associations cannot be understood without taking into account a broadened range of local government association activity. The study has revealed aspects of local government associations which were previously unavailable, such as the organizational structure of the UBCM, and group priorities other than that of lobbying the provincial government. The research on the UBCM also suggests that it is considered a legitimate and representative association. This view extends from the UBCM's effectiveness in securing favourable government policy and valuable membership services, as well as its ability to maintain unity in spite of local government diversity, by encouraging the use of corollary channels for the resolution of member concerns. Feldman/Graham and Johnson may have been correct in concluding that local government associations in the 1970's were ineffective in the intergovernmental bargaining process. However, because their methodology restricts itself to lobbying activity, it is difficult to establish the validity of their criticisms. The UBCM is effective in lobbying the provincial government, as well as in delivering other important goods to its members. The challenge now is to take this approach and apply it to several local government associations.
Bibliography


1. The most important functions of UBCM are to represent local government in dealing with the provincial government and to provide services to its members. Which would you say is more important? Please check one.

- a) represent local government
- b) provision of services
- c) both equally as important

2. Each year UBCM distributes a large number of circulars concerning recent provincial legislation, and other matters of interest to local government. Do you make a habit of reading this kind of information?

- a) most of the time
- b) sometimes
- c) seldom

If seldom, why? __________________________________________

3. UBCM is becoming more and more involved in conducting survey research, including financial surveys and general membership opinion. Do you support this type of research?

- a) yes
- b) no
- c) no opinion

4. Are you interested in the results of this research?

- a) yes
- b) no
- c) no opinion

5. Do you think UBCM efforts can be better spent in other areas?

- a) yes
- b) no
- c) no opinion
6. Information published by UBCM may not always reach the elected officials. Are you aware of the following publications of the UBCM?

   a) Local Government in British Columbia by Robert Bish
      \_
      very aware of \_
      have heard of \_
      unaware of

   b) Risk Management: Overview and Practical Suggestions
      \_
      very aware of \_
      have heard of \_
      unaware of

   c) UBCM Government Directory
      \_
      very aware of \_
      have heard of \_
      unaware of

   d) Local Government Liability
      \_
      very aware of \_
      have heard of \_
      unaware of

   e) Grants Manual
      \_
      very aware of \_
      have heard of \_
      unaware of

   f) UBCM Fact Sheets
      \_
      very aware of \_
      have heard of \_
      unaware of

7. Have you found time to read the following publications?

   a) Local Government in British Columbia by R. Bish
      \_
      yes \_
      only parts of \_
      no

   b) Risk Management: Overview and Practical Suggestions
      \_
      yes \_
      only parts of \_
      no

   c) UBCM Government Directory
      \_
      yes \_
      only parts of \_
      no

   d) Local Government Liability
      \_
      yes \_
      only parts of \_
      no

   e) Grants Manual
      \_
      yes \_
      only parts of \_
      no

   f) UBCM Fact Sheets
      \_
      yes \_
      only parts of \_
      no

8. UBCM also sponsors training courses for its membership. Are you aware of the following courses?

   a) Seminars for the Newly Elected
      \_
      yes \_
      no

   b) The Interpretation of Survey Data
      \_
      yes \_
      no

   c) Bylaw Enforcement Course
      \_
      yes \_
      no

   d) Risk Management Seminar
      \_
      yes \_
      no

   e) Dealing with Angry People Seminar
      \_
      yes \_
      no

   f) Indian Issues Forum
      \_
      yes \_
      no
9. Have you participated in these courses?
   a) Seminars for the Newly Elected  yes  no
   b) The Interpretation of Survey Data  yes  no
   c) Bylaw Enforcement Course  yes  no
   d) Risk Management Seminar  yes  no
   e) Dealing with Angry People Seminar  yes  no
   f) Indian Issues Forum  yes  no

10. UBCM also provides group services to its members. Which of the following programs are you aware of?
   a) Group Benefits Insurance  yes  no
   b) Tax Notice Service  yes  no
   c) Group Purchasing Service  yes  no
      (eg. gas, pins, dogtags)

11. Of these programs, which, if any, does your local government participate in?
   a) Group Benefits Insurance  yes  no
   b) Tax Notice Service  yes  no
   c) Group Purchasing Service  yes  no

12. Of these programs, which, if any, has your local government thought of participating in?
   a) Group Benefits Insurance  yes  no
   b) Tax Notice Service  yes  no
   c) Group Purchasing Service  yes  no

13. Do you support UBCM's involvement in the following areas?
   a) Group Benefits Insurance  yes  no
   b) Tax Notice Service  yes  no
   c) Group Purchasing Service  yes  no

4. In general, how important do you think an association like UBCM is?
   a) very important
   b) relatively important
   c) not very important

15. Do you think the Ministry of Municipal Affairs is responsive to the UBCM?
   a) very responsive
   b) somewhat responsive
   c) not responsive
   d) don't know
16. Do you feel membership in the UBCM is valuable, regardless of how effective UBCM may or may not be?
   a) yes
   b) no
   c) don't know

17. If you had a particular concern that affects only your local government, who would you be likely to contact first?
   a) the Minister affected
   b) Minister of Municipal Affairs
   c) our MLA
   d) our Area Association
   e) UBCM

18. If you had a concern about an issue that appeared to effect other local governments as well as your own, who would you be likely to contact first?
   a) the Minister affected
   b) Minister of Municipal Affairs
   c) our MLA
   d) our Area Association
   e) UBCM

19. Do you think a broad ranging organization like the UBCM can be responsive to the needs of all local governments?
   a) yes
   b) no
   c) don't know

20. Is your municipality a member of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities?
   a) yes
   b) no
   c) don't know

21. How would you rate UBCM's public image?
   a) very good
   b) about average
   c) poor
22. Members have different perceptions of what the UBCM's main functions are. Of the following, what do you think UBCM's priorities are.

a) research on local government
   ______ high    ______ medium    ______ low

b) information about local government activity
   ______ high    ______ medium    ______ low

c) communication to membership via newsletter and annual report
   ______ high    ______ medium    ______ low

d) training for membership
   ______ high    ______ medium    ______ low

e) legal advice
   ______ high    ______ medium    ______ low

f) provision of membership services like group insurance
   ______ high    ______ medium    ______ low

g) support for the area associations
   ______ high    ______ medium    ______ low

h) information about provincial actions
   ______ high    ______ medium    ______ low

i) means of changing provincial legislation
   ______ high    ______ medium    ______ low

j) means of influencing federal government
   ______ high    ______ medium    ______ low

23. What do you think UBCM priorities should be? (Please list in order of importance. Feel free to include services not on the list above.)

1. __________________________

2. __________________________

3. __________________________
24. How well do you think UBCM performs in the following areas?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Ineffective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) research on local government</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) information about local government activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) communication to membership via newsletter and annual report</td>
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<td>e) legal advice</td>
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<td>f) provision of membership services like group insurance</td>
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<td>g) information about provincial actions</td>
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<tr>
<td>h) means of changing provincial legislation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i) means of influencing federal government</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

25. Do you think you are getting value for your money from your membership in UBCM?

- a) yes
- b) no
- c) don't know

26. If the UBCM membership decides they want to see more effort directed toward changing provincial legislation or programs, how would you suggest this be achieved?

- a) by a modest increase in dues
- b) by shifting priorities away from other activities

27. If you suggest a shift in priorities, what activities would you recommend UBCM no longer be involved in?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

28. What are the top three concerns in your local government?

1. __________________________________________
2. __________________________________________
3. __________________________________________
29. UBCM has worked on the following policy areas. We are interested in knowing how these policy issues affect you.

   i) UBCM was responsible for encouraging the provincial government to pass legislation limiting municipal liability. What kind of impact has this had on your local government?

      a) favourable impact
      b) makes no difference
      c) I am not familiar with this issue.

   ii) Currently, UBCM is working on a self-insurance program. Do you anticipate that your local government will take advantage of this program?

      a) yes
      b) no
      c) don't know

   iii) UBCM was responsible for obtaining a fee from the provincial government for the delivery of criminal documents. This $10 fee is paid to local governments, to offset increased police costs. What impact has this had on your local government?

      a) favourable impact
      b) makes no difference
      c) I am not familiar with this issue.
      d) Comments: ____________________________

   iv) UBCM was involved in lobbying the federal government not to amend the regulations under the Radio Act, which granted local governments an exemption from proposed cost increases. What impact has this had on your local government?

      a) favourable impact
      b) makes no difference
      c) I am not familiar with this issue.

30. For the purposes of analysis, it would be most helpful if you would complete the following.

   Office held  
   a) Mayor  
   b) Alderman  
   c) Electoral Area Director  
   d) Other  

   Area  
   a) North Central Municipal Association  
   b) Okanagan Mainline Municipal Association  
   c) Association of Kootenay & Boundary Municipalities  
   d) Association of Vancouver Island Municipalities  
   e) Lower Mainland Municipal Association  

   Years in Office  

   Population of Area Represented  

- 7 -
31. Please feel free to add any additional comments.