

Community Building and Civic Capacity¹

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Introduction

Community building has been identified as a unifying theme in successful approaches to community development spanning many decades (McNeeley, 1999). The socially fragmenting pressures of global economic competition, immigration, and the devolution of what were formerly governmental responsibilities to local levels in the U.S. (Briggs, 2002) make the capacities associated with community building ever more important. Across a wide range of situations, a decentralized, market-driven environment requires citizens who can work together, identify their shared interests, and act collectively to achieve goals (Briggs, 2002). Marginalized communities are struggling with loss of manufacturing jobs, public and private disinvestment, racial discrimination, and an influx of people new to this country. Other kinds of tensions result when these communities gentrify. They especially need institutions, social networks, and individual skills that can help them enter and influence the public domains of the economy and government. The larger society also has a stake in community building initiatives if we are to succeed as a democracy.

In response to this logic, Community Building Initiatives flourished in recent years. As part of a larger Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change project, this paper draws on a review of the literature, consultation with community building experts², and a group meeting of experts³ to assess the strategies that are employed in building community and civic capacity, and the civic capacity outcomes that are achieved. Quotations through out the paper are drawn from the interviews, the meeting, and the literature.

Particular initiatives or demonstrations will provide examples of specific strategies, but the project of community building for civic capacity has a longer historical horizon. Thus an effort will be made to include relevant information that may precede a specific strategy, and to extend the examination of the strategy as far forward as information will allow. In framing the paper, the Aspen Institute Roundtable staff urged me to think about the community building lessons found in the decades long story of Tupelo, Mississippi (Grisham & Ruwitt, 1999). The examples given below will focus on particular moments in time but, as will be returned to in the conclusions, with an awareness that both the time period and the organizational strategy employed are somewhat artificially isolated from their longer histories and the complex social ecology of the community.

² These experts include Richard Barrera, Prudence Brown, Mary Dailey, Roberta Feldman, Marya Grambs, Mark Josephs, Nicole Marwell, Brother Ed Phelan, Victor Ruben, and Mark Warren

³ Those attending the meeting include Andrea Anderson, Pat Auspos, Lymari Benitez, Ben Butler, Lee Farrow, Tsai Shiou Hsieh, Anne Kubisch, Juan Sepulvida, Pat Simon, Gretchen Susi, Susan Saegert, Bill Traynor, Margaret Wilder, Eric Zachary.

Defining Community Building, Civic Capacity, and Social Capital

While civic capacity may one of the less tangible outcomes of community building, it may also be one of the most important. This paper takes up the challenge laid down by the Aspen Institute publication, *Voices from the Field, II* (Kubisch, Auspos, Brown, Chaskin, Fulbright-Anderson & Hamilton, 2002).

The enduring aspects of CCIs seem to be not the initiatives themselves, but the capacity for change that they build, the connections they forge among people and organizations, the broad strategic principles that they promote, and the opportunities for knowledge development that they provide. A better framework for community change would put those elements front and center. (p3, Kubisch et al., 2002)

Community Building, as the definitions below indicate, emerged as a way to engage residents of poor communities in solving their own problems. It describes an approach which emphasizes

- Communities working together to identify and solve their problems
- Cultivation of socially valuable relationships
- Support for leadership development and increased human capital
- Increased relational and organizational skills of residents and groups
- Sustained stakeholder engagement
- Development of a sense of common purpose and an action agenda
- Increased local institutional capacity

The local focus of community building and its historical emergence as a way to combat poverty and marginality pose a problem for the field. Communities defined by their lack of resources are expected to collectively marshal the wherewithal to overcome their poverty and marginality. Thus community relationships require also the ability to leverage resources and influence policy beyond the local level.

This consideration has led to an expansion of the concept of community building to include what Robert Chaskin (1999) has called community capacity:

“Community capacity is the interaction of human, organizational and social capital existing within a given community that can be leveraged to solve collective problems and improve or maintain the well-being of a given community. It may operate through informal social processes and/or organized efforts by individuals, organizations, and the networks of associations among them and between them and the broader systems of which the community is part.”

Thus relationships within a community not only serve as the basis for the community to solve its own problems, they also are used to obtain resources and influence public policies and the actions of the private sector that affect the quality of life in the community. Community building efforts seeking to improve low income and marginalized communities face two related but different tasks: building common purposes, useful relationships, and capacities **within the community** and connecting the community to **external** resources and influence.

Civic Capacity is a distinctive component of the broader idea of community capacity. Definitions of civic capacity vary from the more stringent criterion of requiring participants to consider what is good for the community as a whole (Stone, 2001) to the more frequent use of the term as effective engagement with the public realm (c.f. Williams, Shinn, Nishishiba, & Morgan, 2002). The more general definition of civic capacity does not imply a community consensus, but rather the ability to participate in public life with the result of more democratic governance at various scales. The looser definition blurs the line between community civic capacity, which refers to outcomes, and civic engagement, which describes activities.

Civic engagement can be a mainly individual, small group, or particular organizational concern. Community level civic capacity differs from lower levels of civic capacity but can result from different paths. The individuals, networks, organizations and institutions that make up a community may participate out of their own interests in civic activities and still collectively contribute to the ability of the community to exert power and influence and to leverage and use resource (c.f. Marwell, 2004). Or the community may work together to develop and pursue a common agenda with a coordinated action strategy (c.f. Warren, 2001). In between these poles, we find community building efforts that promote expanding islands of common purpose and collective action which in some instances may cohere into a unified effort and in others may be decided through democratic processes that, none the less, have winners and losers.

Community Building

“Community building is guided by two fundamental beliefs – that the community or neighborhood is the appropriate focus of revitalization efforts; and that enhancing the capacity of communities to engage and support residents is essential to success. Community building assumes that associations within a geographic area are important for the community well-being; that bringing together a broad spectrum of stakeholders will provide a better understanding of problems; that sustainable solutions are based in knowing facts, building on assets, and having a share vision of improvement; and that an independent community-based capacity for analysis, planning, and convening is essential for success.”Hyman, 2002.

“Community Building is... a new approach that is emerging to help address the problems and opportunities of both impoverished inner-city neighborhoods and rural areas. It works by building community in individual neighborhoods: neighbors learning to rely on each other, working together on concrete tasks that take advantage of new self awareness of their collective and individual assets and, in the process, creating human, family, and social capital that provides a new base for a more promising future and reconnection to America’s mainstream.”
McNeeley, 1999.

The definitions at the side illustrate the varied ways civic capacity is understood. For the purposes of this paper, civic capacity may include, but does not require, community consensus on an agenda. However, to qualify as civic capacity, there must be some demonstrable influence in the public realm which includes the economy as well as the state.

Thus civic capacity will be defined as including the following:

- Ability to engage with the public domain
- Capacity to influence the social agenda
- Capacity to access public and private sector resources
- Capacity to influence the physical and social environment

It involves a variety of disparate components including the formation of goals achievable through civic engagement, knowledge and skills required for civic action, relationships of both solidarity and power, and other social and economic resources needed to achieve goals. In practice, community building has focused most extensively on increasing the social networks of community based organizations and institutions, as well as community residents, for the purpose of developing collective agendas, accessing more resources, and increasing the control the community has over its destiny.

The theory and practice of both community building and civic capacity frequently draw on the idea of **social capital**, but in diverse and sometimes contradictory ways. Many authors and practitioners see social capital as a main component of both community building and effective civic capacity. Both concepts imply the need for social networks that connect people over time and promote their ability to identify and achieve shared, as well as individual, goals. Employing a functional view of social capital, Coleman used the concept to explain why lower income urban children who attended parochial schools fared better than their public school counterparts. He identified certain aspects of social networks that contributed to better educational achievement for parochial school children as including network closure (c.f. parents, teachers, and children all attended the same church and knew each other in different roles), good

Civic Capacity and Civic Engagement

“Civic capacity concerns the extent to which different sectors –business, parents, educators, state and local officeholders, non-profits and others- come together to act around matters of community-wide import.” (p. 596, Stone, 2001).

...we define “civic capacity” to mean the beliefs, knowledge, and skills necessary for individual citizens (including students), social organizations in the private and nonprofit sectors, and formal institutions of governance to work together in a way that enhances the collective ability of local communities to become more self-consciously directed in shaping their futures. (p.243, Williams, Shinn, Nishishiba, & Morgan, 2002).

“As examples of civic engagement (Putnam) cites voter turnout, reading the newspaper, participation in such public forums as PTAs, and in such private organizations as choral societies and bowling leagues. These examples suggest that, to qualify as civic engagement, behaviors neither have to involve others, be organized in any particular way, nor be directed at any particular action, goal, or outcome...Indeed, for Putnam, civic engagement may merely mean the kind of external activity that “gets people off the living room couch.” (p. 197), Hyman 2002

information flow, shared values and norms, and the ability to provide rewards and punishments for those who break the norms.

Putnam (1996, 2000) uses the idea of social capital to connect widespread membership in voluntary associations to well functioning democracies and markets because of the habits of civility, trust, and reciprocity that they promote.

While definitions of social capital share a common core, the social implications drawn from the concept vary considerably, and often contradict each other. Before sweeping the idea of social capital into an uncomplicated package with community building and civic capacity, it is important to note that Bourdieu's (1985) definition (below) of social capital contains the same essential components as those provided by Coleman and Putnam. However, he understands social capital as a mechanism for reproducing social class and unequal access to economic and cultural capital.

Recognition of the exclusionary, factional side of social capital leads some to question its role in the development of civic capacity. Even when networks cross boundaries of race and class, Clarence Stone (2001) sees social capital as working at a micro scale that is quite different than the relationships required for civic capacity. Social capital is in theory a broadly useful asset across a wide range of situations and increases with continued association. Stone suggests that civic capacity must address very contentious community problems and thus is more fragile and likely not to be self-replenishing. Repeated interactions among people of different ethnic and class backgrounds around these issues can well increase suspicion and distrust. Far from benefiting from embeddedness in everyday life, Stone believes civic capacity requires rising above the ordinary and developing institutionalized relationships that can sustain commitment to solving inherently conflict prone problems.

Other community activists and scholars recognize the intransigence of social injustices and the ways in which mainstream social capital is used to reinforce them. Yet they still see a role for social capital in promoting the civic capacity of disadvantaged communities. For example, Warren and his colleagues (Warren, 2001; Saegert, Thompson, & Warren, 2001) view social capital as a resource for negotiating conflicts based in deep historical divisions such as race and class.

This approach takes the ability to negotiate conflicts as a measure of the strength of social capital. Networks rich in social capital are a means for increasing mutual respect and the ability to act collectively. The social capital of networks facilitates the development of a common agenda and increases commitment of members to pursuing

Social Capital

“the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition.” Bourdieu. 1985.

Social capital is created when relations among people change in ways that facilitate action. Coleman, 1988.

Social capital refers to features of social organization such as networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. Putnam, 1995

All definitions as quoted in Hyman, 2002, p.197

that agenda. Therefore, networks with high social capital are able to take confrontational positions when their agenda encounters opposition.

To some extent, these different theoretical stances converge in practice. For example, Stone identifies El Paso, Texas as a community with high civic capacity. The Interreligious Sponsoring Organization especially contributed to the civic capacity of El Paso. It was formed by the Texas Industrial Areas Foundation presented by Warren (2001) as an exemplary model of the development and use of social capital to promote social justice.

In developing strategies to build community civic capacity, it is important to understand the different resources required for individuals, social groups or networks, organizations, and communities to possess civic capacity. While, at least in theory, all the resources of networks rich in social capital should contribute to collective civic capacity, factors unrelated to social capital are important in determining civic capacity at other levels of analysis.

Table One shows the factors that contribute to civic capacity at the levels relevant for community building: the individual, social networks, local organizations and institutions, and the community. The contributing factors listed in bold italics are those related to social capital. As the table illustrates, many other factors ranging from individual motives and skills through the strategic political or economic position of a community are also relevant.

Communities may develop civic capacity because of the assets for effective civic engagement at all levels, given that these assets include the ability to reach decisions and act effectively even when differences and conflicts emerge. Hyman (2002) has presented a model of how civic engagement at different scales can be woven together through community building into greater community civic capacity. The core elements include “resident engagement, agenda building, community organizing, community action, and communications and message development.” (p. 196). Community building uses these activities to increase social capital so as to harness energy and resources from disparate sources to the goal of sustained community social, economic, and physical development.

Table 1: Factors Contributing to Civic Capacity at Different Levels

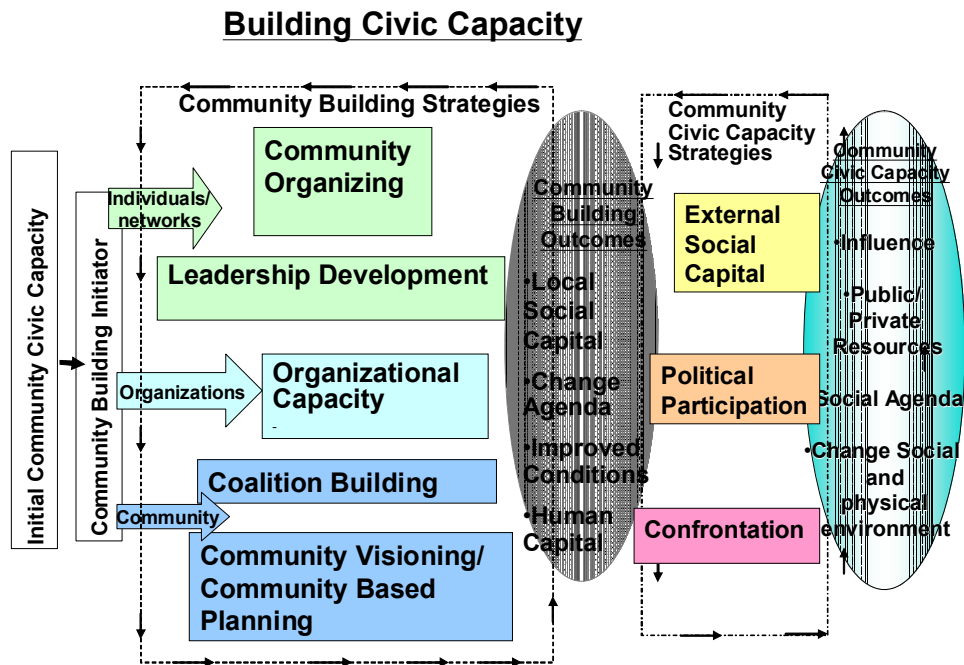
Individual Civic Capacity	Network Civic Capacity*	Organizational Civic Capacity	Community Civic Capacity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Individual skills/human capital -Individual motivations -Information -<i>Media access/personal image/reputation</i>* -Individual access to resources and influence -Perceived incentives for civic engagement -Participation costs -Social position -<i>Relationships</i>* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -<i>Size</i> -<i>Centrality/density of relationships</i> -<i>Network human capital</i> -<i>Norms of trust and reciprocity</i> -<i>Ability to impose sanctions</i> -<i>Strategic skills/leadership</i> -<i>Incentives for civic engagement</i> - <i>Shared agenda</i> -<i>Communication/ information flow</i> -<i>Public image/media influence</i> -<i>Command of resources</i> -<i>Access to political channels</i> -<i>Members' influence</i> -<i>Links to powerful institutions</i> -<i>Ease of mobilization</i> -<i>Collective efficacy</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Organizational efficacy -Mission -Incentives for civic engagement -Staff human capital -<i>Staff loyalty and turn over</i>* -Gatekeeper/speaker for issue or locale -Strategic skills/leadership -Organizational resources -<i>Public image/media influence</i>* -<i>Access to political channels</i>* -<i>Access to financial resources</i>* -<i>Relationships with clients</i>* -<i>Coalition membership/skills</i>* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Boundary definition -Members' community commitment -<i>Internal (local) social capital</i>* -Members' human capital -Community leaders -Incentives for civic engagement -<i>Ability to set collective agenda</i>* -<i>Flow of information/communication</i>* -<i>Public image/ media influence</i>* -Community strategic significance -<i>External networks of organizations and individuals (External Social Capital)</i>* -<i>Resident political, organizational and financial resources</i>* -<i>External networks access to resources</i>* -<i>Ease of mobilization</i>* -<i>Collective efficacy</i>*

Strategies for Community Building and Development of Community Civic Capacity

The diagram below presents a generic model of the relationship between community building strategies and civic capacity strategies. The model can be read as flowing from left to right or as a cycle. Community building initiators attempt to strengthen existing community civic capacity. Prior levels of community civic capacity feed into any current community and civic capacity building strategies which lead to outcomes that influence future strategies. The main components of community building strategies are drawn from Chaskin and his colleagues' (2001) analysis of the ways that community building occurs. Community building can target the community at different levels ranging from the individual and informal social networks, or one or more Community Based Organization (CBO) or other local organization or institution, or the community as a whole, defined as both individuals, informal groups, and formal organizations. For further discussion of the nature of these activities, see Chaskin, et al, (2001).

The diagram, however, makes a distinction between building local community capacity, the primary topic of the Chaskin et al analysis, and the development of civic capacity. The interviews with community builders and review of research on community building made it clear that to go beyond the development of local community to community civic capacity, specific strategies of civic engagement were needed.

Figure 1:



Because both the strategies employed and community and civic capacity outcomes are embedded in ongoing social relationships and processes, they are not

always clearly distinguished. However, in order to understand the effectiveness of strategies, they must be separated conceptually from outcomes.

Community building as a local activity has local outcomes. These include increased contact among community residents which in successful community building efforts leads to greater social capital at the local level. For example, residents get together to clean up vacant lots, to establish block watches etc.. They also help each other with personal problems, provide referral networks for jobs, housing openings, and schools, and in general work to achieve individual and collective goals by using their own resources. Increased social capital and community building activities in marginalized neighborhoods most often also lead to the emergence of one or more agendas for community change. When community building works, it leads to some concrete improvement in community conditions such as cleaner vacant lots or less crime. Finally, community building activities affect the human capital of the individuals it engages. Leadership development most explicitly supports the acquisition of skills and knowledge by community residents. But even less active participants may gain skills in group participation, knowledge of community resources, and specific skills associated with community building activities. These may be as wide ranging as increased gardening skills from community garden projects through expanded knowledge of how to research complex economic, environmental, or political issues affecting the community.

The literature on community building (c.f. McNeeley, 1999) tends to imply that community building itself will increase civic capacity. This tendency is reinforced by social capital theorists (c.f. Putnam, 1993, 2000) who see civic engagement as an incidental by-product of informal voluntary association participation. Indeed, increasing civic capacity by developing what is often called bridging social capital is often seen as part of community building. Yet the development of social capital rich networks that include more socially, politically, and economically powerful others most often results from intentional actions and strategies employed by community builders. One example is the inclusion of local private and public sector influentials as members of advisory boards, steering committees, or more targeted coalitions. Community builders in the field report engaging in particular activities with the goal of increasing civic capacity. Aside from efforts to develop external social capital, these activities range from lobbying government officials, to petitions, to voter drives, and to confrontation oriented “actions”. More external social capital and higher levels of involvement with electoral politics and government indicate higher levels of community civic capacity. The ability to use confrontational tactics when needed is also a mark of civic capacity.

Again, the outcomes of community civic engagement strategies can be defined as separate from the actions that lead to them. As one CBO leader stated, meetings with powerful stake holders, lobbying, petitions, and actions are the exercises that lead to civic capacity, but they are not civic capacity itself. Civic capacity exists when a community can influence important decisions made by external public and private sector actors, when the community can access economic and social resources to achieve its own agenda, and when it can also influence the content of the larger social agenda.

The final community civic capacity outcome is less obvious and was pointed out to me in an interview. Communities not only need to be able to achieve the civic capacity outcomes listed, they need to be able to operate effectively at the many scales involved in using resources and implementing policies, decisions, and agendas to actually improve the community. For example, if the community brings a court case and wins a favorable judgement, they need to be able to assure that the judgement gets implemented in a way that achieves the community's purposes and is not diverted by other agendas of the many actors involved in implementation (Feldman, personal communication). Taken together, increased community civic capacity encompasses both power over others and power to do for oneself with others.

Dimensions of Community and Civic Capacity Building Strategies

Community civic capacity has two overarching dimensions: social integration of community residents into the larger society and the accumulation of power, influence, and resources. The outcomes of community civic capacity may not track the amount of engagement either at the community level or in public life. Narrower, more focused organizations or coalitions can sometimes achieve more influence, increase access to resources and create more change in social and economic conditions. It is even possible, though less likely, that a narrow range of actors can exert more influence over a broad social agenda. However, narrower engagement can compromise the sustainability of community civic capacity, its democratic nature, and the real engagement of residents with mainstream society. The following four characteristics of community and civic capacity building efforts will be considered in the generic examples developed later in the paper:

- ***Breadth of Engagement***

The different elements of a community and civic capacity building strategy can be added together as measures of the extensiveness of community building in any particular effort. For example, a community building project that affects only organizational capacity of one or more CBO would be building less community capacity than one that also included coalition formation, community planning, or community organizing and leadership development.

- ***Efficiency***

However, in reality the success in carrying out each strategy may vary, so in some cases a narrowly focused strategy can increase community capacity outcomes more than a broader but weaker or more diffuse strategy.

- ***Centralized or Multiply Sourced Agendas***

Strategies that engage a wide variety of participants, both within the community and externally, have the potential for creating multiple agendas. Whether this occurs or not relates to both the breadth of engagement and the structure of collective decision making processes. When engagement is broad and centralization of decision making is weak, multiple agendas tend to emerge. Whereas when engagement is narrow or decision making is effectively centralized, agendas are more likely to speak with a single voice. Both approaches can lead to equally broad or narrow outcomes, depending on how they play out. Multiple agendas may increase the sources of positive change in a

community or they may dilute, interfere with, or defeat each other. Centralized agendas may enforce disciplined action leading to greater civic capacity or may alienate constituencies and be compromised or undermined by the activities of alienated groups and organizations.

- ***Democratic Processes***

Centralization is only one dimension of decision making. In addition, decision making processes may be more or less democratic. Decisions can be democratic because most people in the community have a chance to participate in goal setting and decision making, and to benefit from successes. Or they can be democratic because those who do participate debate goals and decisions extensively and work toward decisions that truly reflect the priorities of the community. Substantively democratic decision making requires both breadth of engagement and times and places for information gathering, discussion, reflection, collective action, and evaluation, and then the initiation of the cycle again.

The community and civic capacity building approaches discussed in this paper give examples of the processes that vary on all these characteristics. In addition to these dimensions, community and civic capacity building efforts vary in other significant ways.

Who is the Community?

As indicated in Figure 1, important difference among community building efforts occur in the strategic decision of who to involve first. The point of entry for community building can be individual residents and informal social networks, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), or local institutions such as schools or churches, or the community as a whole, defined as either individuals and informal groups, or formal organizations, or both. While points of entry differ, most community building efforts end up engaging all three levels, though to different extents and in different ways.

Cooperation vs. Political Competition and Confrontation

The second important distinction among approaches involves the way the community builder conceptualizes the process. Community building goes beyond neighborhood based programs for housing development, service delivery, employment etc. because residents act on their own behalf to determine the agenda and to solve problems. Community building involves a kind of community organizing. But it often differs from traditional community organizing framed around confrontation with the powers that be to demand and win a fairer share of society's resources. Both approaches emphasize building community solidarity, an agenda for change, and the capacity for collective action. They differ in the kind of strategies they see as necessary to promote community civic capacity. The two main approaches fall roughly into consensus/cooperation/self-help strategies versus confrontational/political strategies. They begin from different assumptions about the possibility of solving problems cooperatively. But rather than being polar opposites, each strategy attempts to deal with the tension between the goal of increasing marginalized communities' access to resources, opportunities, and power in mainstream society and needing to challenge business as usual to achieve that goal.

The first kind of community builder fits the mold most often identified with the term. These community builders work to increase social capital within the community and externally for the purpose of expanding resources and cooperation to achieve goals shared by all stakeholders. The identification of shared goals that cross boundaries of community, class, and levels of power are not seen as inherently problematic. The second approach emphasizes building and using power to achieve goals, primarily by winning resources and control of decisions from the public and private sector. This worldview sees the struggle for power in political terms and accepts conflict and competition as essential parts of the process.

In its focus on people solving problems together (c.f. McNeeley, 1999), much of the community building literature downplays issues of power, conflict, and competition. These discussions of community building emphasize consensus, community conversations, partnerships, and cooperation. Gittell and Vidal (1998) argue that community building is a new approach to community organizing that works by consensus rather than confrontation. Achievement of goals comes about through the development and use of social capital both within communities and across different sectors of society. Thus community civic capacity relies primarily on expanded social networks that include important private and public sector actors.

Other analyses of how to improve the situation for marginalized communities focus more on building power. They postulate a bigger role for confrontation and competition and emphasize community organizing more than community building. The most well known of such approaches have honed organizing methodologies and confrontational tactics deriving from Alinsky's theory of organizing. These national networks include the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), the Pacific Institute for Community Organizing (PICO), and the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN). There are also well known local and statewide organizations based on a similar approach to organizing, for example the North West Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition in New York and Massachusetts Fair Share.

Despite differences in methodology, the activities of both groups within the community are those Chaskin (1999) identified as the elements of community building. By including power-oriented community organizing in the analysis, the distinction between building local community capacity and building civic capacity becomes clearer. The social capital emphasis of consensus oriented methodologies tend to treat confrontation as an anomaly and political participation as an extension of good citizenship rather than a conflict oriented political strategy. When confrontation and political participation are included as explicit civic engagement strategies, the difference between the kind of social capital that conveys local capacity and that which engages the public realm also becomes more obvious.

The Goals of Community Change

Greenberg (in press) calls attention to two other differences among community building strategies that have a pervasive effect both on the activities undertaken and on

relationships with other local organizations and with external institutions and actors. One has to do with how the community building organization positions itself with regard to difference. Some organizations identify themselves as vehicles for empowering a particular ethnic or racial group. Others build solidarity on foundations of a geographic community, a community of faith, or a shared lack of power and privilege in the society that crosses ethnic boundaries.

The second important difference among community building strategies is the extent to which they challenge the status quo and advocate for a more radical redistribution of power and resources. Most community building efforts in low income and minority communities seek to improve access to resources and influence in the larger society. However, differences exist as to whether the goal is to increase the slice of the pie that goes to the community versus trying to affect the kind of pie. As with other distinctions, even the most radical community building efforts reveal some level of compromise and, given the disenfranchised status of locales in which community building occurs, the least radical usually involve implicit or explicit commitment to redistributive policies.

The following section draws on representative examples garnered from literature review and interviews with community building experts. The different community building strategies described vary along all dimensions described above. To understand how these different approaches work, cases have been selected that involve diverse points of entry and self-consciously start from either a consensus/cooperation model or a confrontational model. In practice, these strategies tend to branch out to include community building efforts at all levels, though to different degrees.

When communities desire to make changes around intransigent social divisions in society or to challenge mainstream consensus around economic and social policy, strategies involving both cooperation and confrontation usually emerge. When consensus-oriented initiatives in marginalized and minority communities gain momentum, they are often propelled into territories that elicit confrontation. Organizations built around confrontational tactics sometimes shy away from bids for radical changes in the status quo and are often in principle reluctant to identify with particular racial or ethnic groups. Similarly organizations based on racial or ethnic solidarity must choose their battles if they are to achieve their goals. Confrontational strategies always include moments of cooperation to realize the benefits of concessions, policies, and resources initially won through confrontation. Over time, successfully confrontational organizations broaden their networks of cooperation so that confrontation sometimes becomes less necessary.

Nonetheless, to the extent that community building has become a field with technical knowledge and practiced methods, it is useful to divide the strategies employed along the line of whether they draw primarily on consensual/cooperative rationales and methods or on rationales and methods grounded in the practice of confrontation.

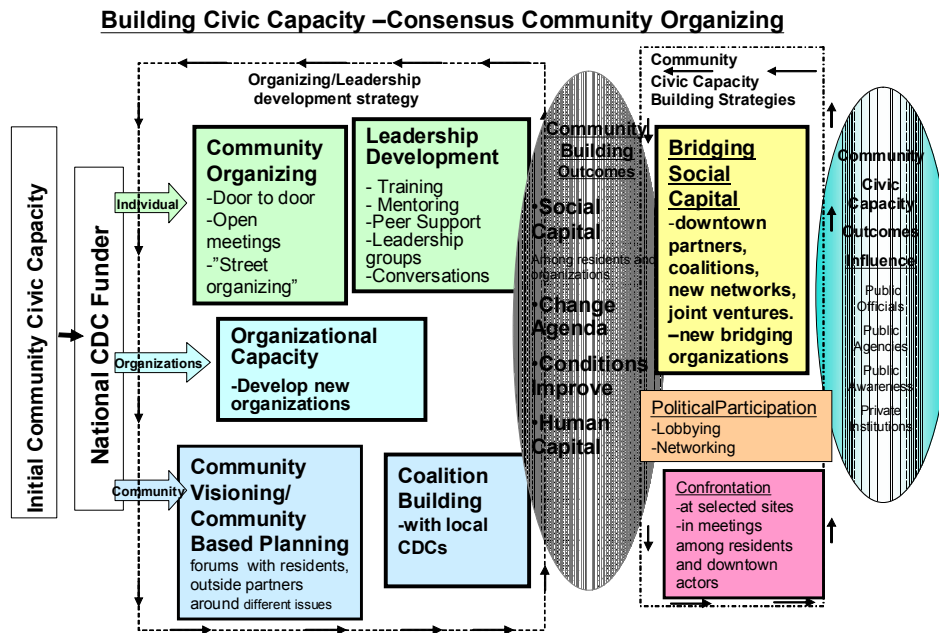
Consensus Strategies

Unlike more confrontational strategies, consensus organizing begins by identifying a problem that needs solving in a community and then trying to find collective means and cooperative partners with the needed resources, skills and connections to achieve a solution. Consensual approaches to community building appear always aimed at these concrete achievements. Investment strategies, business plans, and organizational development vie in importance with community building strategies and may be driven by external funders or limited sectors of the community. But since this paper concerns the relationship between community building and community civic capacity, community participation in accomplishing goals becomes more important than the specific goal.

Consensus Community Organizing Strategy

Consensus community organizing, especially the theory and practice of organizing identified with the Consensus Organizing Institute, places relationship building, social capital development and cooperative partnerships at the core of community building (Gittell & Vidal, 1998). Many community building initiatives draw on this theory. The Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) demonstration project to develop Community Development Corporations (CDCs) was one of these. Unlike the goals of many comprehensive community initiatives (see Kubisch et al 2002), LISC started with a relatively limited objective. The analysis extends the timeframe slightly beyond the demonstration phase in order to explicitly look at the extent to which the community itself, not the demonstration project, developed civic capacity.

Figure 2:



Gittell, R. & Vidal, A. 1998. *Community Organizing: Building social capital as a development strategy*. Sage Publications. And interviews

LISC initially identified cities where private and public sector (“downtown”) actors were interested enough in partnering with disadvantaged communities to raise half the money for the demonstration. LISC and downtown partners began with an almost exclusive interest in real estate development. In addition, LISC had the expectation that new CDCs would be formed in the target communities. However, the organizing theory of the initiative, at least in some sites, was to increase social capital by engaging community residents representing all sectors of the community and by bringing them together to partner with the “downtown” participants. As different groups of residents and partners coalesced around specific goals, a variety of collaborations would emerge.

Implementation of the initiative varied across sites. Initially outreach was limited to hand picked community residents judged to be relevant to real estate development projects. However, as organizers came on the scene, some sites engaged in much more intensive and comprehensive outreach. In Little Rock and Las Vegas, for example, a desire to overcome ethnic and class biases in resident engagement led to the adoption of Caesar Chavez’s small group house meeting process. In other sites, more limited outreach occurred, sometimes resulting in a drying up of the pool of community leaders as time went on.

Richard Barrera (Previous LISC Organizer, current President, Consensus Organizing Institute): The way people describe the consensus model can be troubling— people understand it based on what they want to see. I understand it as people in neighborhoods working together to create an agenda, and identifying people downtown who can support the agenda...but recognize that there will also be people who are in conflict...It is valid to start with the assumption that you can find partners to achieve goals, not with the view that downtown is the enemy.

Effective civic capacity requires both consensus and compromise and coalitions but also the ability to fight for your own interests. It is important not to harden lines of friends versus enemies. Ideologies can require always agreeing with or always opposing those with power and money. I work with the notion that *we* are okay and clear headed enough to know that *you* may be an effective partner in this case but not always down the line.

National organizing groups often describe power and privilege as hardened. Foundations and private sector leaders often see good neighborhood leaders as ones who make them comfortable.

From the point of view of building civic capacity, key outcomes included sustained involvement of residents from different groups in the communities, joint ventures in housing and economic development with downtown partners, and the formation of coalitions, as well as the formation of new CDCs. Hundreds of members of previously marginalized communities became actors in the public realm.

True to the social capital driven model, many of the achievements of the LISC demonstration came from the strengthening of social networks in communities and with

“downtown partners”. When moments of confrontation and conflict emerged during the demonstration in several sites, these can be seen as an indicator of increased civic capacity. For example, in one city, community residents engaged with the demonstration organized an alliance with city council members and private sector allies to win site control of a vacant housing authority property. The alliance had to show up in force at meetings of the housing authority board before it was able to acquire the property for affordable housing. In other cases, tensions arose between newly active community leaders who defined goals other than housing development as their priorities and the sponsoring agency (LISC) whose interest was in creating CDCs with the capacity to develop housing.

The use of grassroots community organizing and leadership development as well as the wide range of downtown partners involved meant that many different directions would develop. The capacity to pursue these different directions could be mustered, but by subsets of interested participants. This diversity of participants, goals, and capacities tilt such an initiative away from a unified agenda and increase the tensions between competing agendas even as these factors contribute to a broad base of community civic capacity. They also may be seen as an indicator that a high level of community building occurred, accompanied by increased community civic capacity.

Other comprehensive community initiatives employ many of the same strategic elements, although they may start from different positions. For example, the Annie E. Casey Foundation Rebuilding Communities Initiative and the Making Connections Initiative aimed to support children and families by strengthening communities using the strategies identified in the diagram. Resident engagement, leadership development, community organizing and CBO capacity building were key activities for all sites. In addition, coalitions of churches, businesses, schools, and residents were formed to tackle issues like school reform, improvement of child welfare services, and economic development.

The Neighborhood Partner’s Initiative (NPI) of the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation provides another example of a broad-based approach to community building. NPI’s success in engaging residents and nurturing their civic capacity led at several sites to tensions between the lead organization funded for NPI and the resident leadership groups that emerged. Three of the NPI site lead agencies went on to join a more confrontation oriented coalition, described later in this paper. Again, engagement in these conflicts might best be regarded as signs of success rather than as “flaws” in the model.

Organizational Collaboration Strategy

Not all consensus-oriented community building efforts employ strategies that directly involve individual residents in goal setting, social capital development, and

collective action. The diagram below charts the community building strategy followed in the North Lawndale community area of Chicago.⁴

Figure 3:



The Steans Family Foundation intervention in North Lawndale is widely recognized as having successfully channeled new resources into a previously marginalized inner city neighborhood through the formation of networks of local institutions and organizations. After carefully researching the needs and assets of several disadvantaged communities in Chicago, the Steans Family Foundation picked North Lawndale as their target. Guided by the geographic focus and commitments to relationship and capacity building, the Foundation took over a year to lay the groundwork for the initiative through a series of meetings with local influentials and representatives of local institutions.

Through its meetings with local leaders and other research efforts, the Foundation identified several key areas to be addressed, including education, employment, community leadership and asset-building. With the Foundation as convener, networks of local organizations were formed to design and implement strategies in each area. To address employment, the North Lawndale Employment Network was formed. To address education, the North Lawndale Learning Community was formed with a membership of elementary schools. To promote community action and leadership, the North Lawndale

⁴ I want to particularly thank Mark Josephs for his sharing of information and critique of an earlier draft of this section, as well as Prue Brown who provided useful background information and insights. Of course, the interpretation and any flaws in the factual base are my own responsibility.

Small Grants Committee was formed. Eventually made up completely of community residents, this committee solicited and selectively funded small grant proposals from local organizations. To address asset-building, the North Lawndale Individual Development Account Collaborative was formed. Besides these areas, there were also collaborative efforts in areas such as affordable housing, youth development, juvenile justice and the launch of a charter high school, North Lawndale College Prep.

The North Lawndale Employment Network (NLEN), in particular, provides an example of the creation of civic capacity through this community building approach. The foundation's commitment and connections beyond the community, combined with the astute leadership of the person chosen from a national search to lead NLEN, gave the Network independence and authority that was necessary to attract community partners and develop an agenda that took the interests of the broader community into account. NLEN has developed a membership of over 100 member organizations that have worked together to develop strategies to reduce local unemployment (North Lawndale Employment Network website) Through quarterly membership meetings, NLEN members have an opportunity to learn about and discuss key relevant policy issues. One of the exemplary successes in this area was to initiate and build a cooperative relationship with the Illinois Department of Corrections, which ultimately led to the state of Illinois successfully competing for federal funding for a comprehensive prisoner re-entry program to be piloted primarily in the North Lawndale neighborhood.

This strategy has advantages with regard to developing unified agendas and promoting community-wide cooperation among institutions and organizations. The strategy itself does little to engage residents directly and build their social capital, leadership, and civic capacity. Community institutions however gain skills, resources and broadened social networks that increase inter organizational social capital, as well as influence in the public sphere and increased access to resources. Participant organizations must be the conduit for implementing changes and for assuring that community residents benefit from these resources. Much of the community building and civic capacity outcomes of this approach depend on the capacity of local institutions and the commitment, integrity, and competence of the convening organization. Because of the key role of the Steans Foundation, questions exist about how sustainable the community capacity would be over time in the absence of the ability to call on the foundation's social capital and civic capacity. However, the pay-off from this community building strategy in terms of resources was high.

Many other examples of community building found in the literature, on websites, and in interviews center around coalition building, whether the organizations be educational institutions, local businesses, CBOs and other non-profits, public agencies, or some other group of institutions. Their achievements, though not always as impressive and not always targeted to one particular geographic area, tend to have the same focused quality as the North Lawndale example. The strategy of engaging local organizations that all have similar missions, goals and problems makes good use of participants time and limited resources and increases the chances that a shared agenda can be achieved. The pursuit of clearly defined goals also supports careful selection and cultivation of

external individuals and organizations that will be most productive. Since this model does not directly engage community residents, assuring a base of resident support for coalition agendas rests with convening and participating organizations.

Network Strategy

At the other end of the spectrum, Lawrence, Massachusetts provides one of the most unusual community building strategies to surface during this investigation. The brainchild of Bill Traynor, a highly knowledgeable community builder who has had a role as technical assistant, consultant, or evaluator in most widely known consensus-oriented community building initiatives, the network strategy is based on a strong commitment to the aspects of community building having to do with resident engagement, leadership development, and democratic community self-determination. Ultimately, according to Traynor, the objective is to create a choice/demand environment with lots of options for family asset building and collective action, where as many people as possible are connecting with each other and making choices to improve their lives and the community as a whole. It is the sum of those choices which determine what the 'network' looks like, cares about and seeks to change.

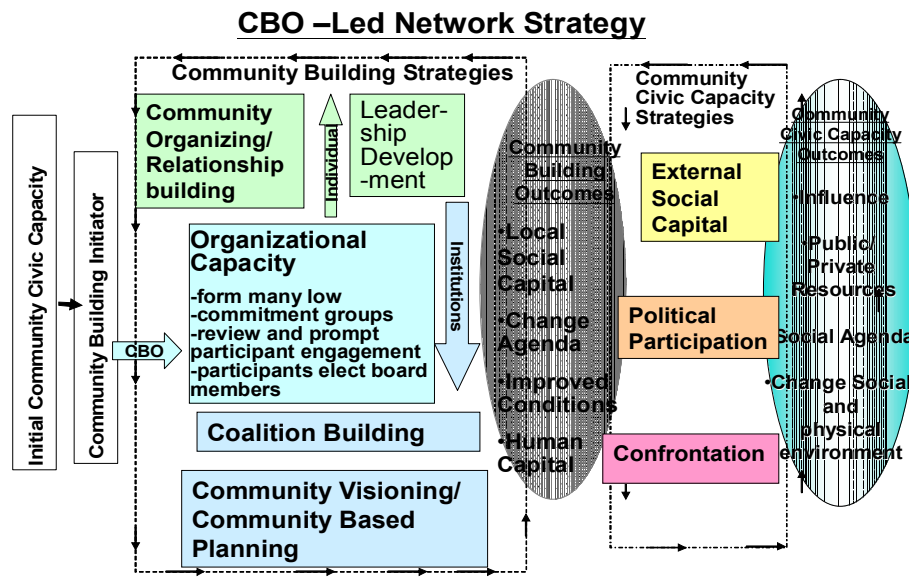
Bill Traynor: The thing I've learned about community building is based on this universal story that most people tell when you ask them "what is community?" "*When I was a kid,*" they say, "*If I was in another part of the neighborhood and got into trouble, I'd get it then and get it again when I got home because people would tell my parents what happened before I even got home.*" Being recognized by adults, and having those adults interact with each other, provided kids, even though they didn't like at the time, with a sense of security. Community building is about *adults* being engaged with each other. Community building is an explicit intentional strategy to create an environment whereby people seek and have access to relations of mutual benefit with a diverse set of others *and* can overcome their fear of engaging in public life.

The point of entry, the creation of a new CBO (Community Works), was not unusual, nor were the first steps. The unusual quality of the approach comes from its adherence to network theory and lack of centralization of an agenda once the community building activities are initiated. The activities of the CBO were to start a series of discussion dinners, after school programs, and educational and economic advancement programs that demanded very low commitment from participants to the overall community building project. The task of the CBO is to develop these different points of entry for community members and to help define, implement, and fund raise for the different programs.

Bill Traynor: I think that if you take... the assumption that what we've got to do is create a network of people who are touching each other 25 times per day. Not just those of us who are on the far left. Instead it is just those who care about how families end up. All you have to do is agree with that. Bump against people not doing the same thing as you. This will over time raise the level of accountability, control of public life, etc. I would say that we can create organizations that can do that. I think it can be done.

Beyond that, CBO staff track participants periodically in a case work fashion to think about how their needs could be better met and how they might be supported in becoming more involved in the community. Staff members also try to expand the network of ‘weavers’, those community leaders who see themselves, and the leadership role, as a function of connecting and enabling. Some participants are invited to join a six month long leadership development program with the expectation that they will increase commitment and community building activities over time. Unlike in most community building efforts, the Board Members of the CBO are elected by the community in a process modeled after union elections. CBO founder Traynor was surprised to learn that he didn’t know several of the community residents elected to the board in the last round of elections.

Figure 4:



Thus far, this approach to community building has involved 100s of previously disengaged, overwhelmingly Latino immigrant residents in the civic life of the community, including campaigns for zoning change, affordable housing investments, and challenging the mostly white “old guard” for civic leadership roles and political office.

Collective Ownership as a Community Building Strategy

The models described above tend to be initiated by organizations or funders who themselves do not suffer from the problems the initiative is designed to address. (Not uncommonly, these initiators come from backgrounds marked by similar deprivations and marginality, or are from families deeply rooted in the geographic locale. But they differ in important ways from the residents who are the targets of community building strategies.) Collective ownership strategies often emerge when residents or workers are confronted by a failure of the market or of the public sector management resulting in

threats to residents' homes or jobs (DeFilippis, 2004). The resident energy that drives successful conversions to collective ownership should not distract attention however from the importance of advocacy and technical assistance organizations in developing the legal, technical, and organizational models and assistance needed to support collective ownership.

Figure 5:
Collective Ownership



^a Saegert & Winkel, in press, *American Journal of Community Psychology*; ^b 1998, ^c 2002(& Swartz), *Housing Policy Debate*; ^d 1996, *American Journal of Community Psychology*

The diagram is based on the development of limited equity cooperatives in New York City's landlord abandoned buildings (Leavitt & Saegert, 1990; Rae, 1997; White & Saegert, 1996). It would look somewhat different if it were based on conversions to collective ownership initiated by a CBO or other institution, especially if that organization maintained control over governance.

I use this example in part because I am very familiar with its details, but also for other reasons: 1) Interviews and literature show this example to be very similar to other cases in which public housing residents organized first to improve their living conditions and then eventually to fight for control and collective ownership of their homes (Feldman & Stall, 2004 and interview with Roberta Feldman); 2) A convincing argument can be made that social capital translates into community development most readily when community residents collectively own economic assets that they can employ for their own use and can regulate investment and disinvestment (DeFillipis, 2001; 2004); 3) the

research on limited equity cooperatives in New York provides an example of the quantitative measurement of social capital and civic engagement, thus expanding the methodological base of evidence which is otherwise qualitative and anecdotal.

Surveys of 3,000 residents of landlord abandoned buildings in over 400 buildings in New York City revealed, that after controlling for resident characteristics, resident owned cooperatives were characterized by a higher level of social capital within the building than occurred when buildings were owned by private landlords, community based organizations, or the public sector (Saegert & Winkel, 1998). These higher levels of social capital were statistically associated with the better building conditions and lower levels of crime found in the cooperatives, using both survey and New York City Police Department data (Saegert & Winkel, 1998; Saegert, Winkel & Swartz, 2002). Coop residents, who were better organized at the building level, were also more likely than other comparably poor and minority residents, to participate in community organizations (Saegert & Winkel, in press).

Community building outcomes for residents were strongest within cooperatives with strong informal social relationships, membership in the residents association, and formal leadership activities. These relationships served as a training ground for the development of skills necessary for participating in and leading groups. The collective commitment to goals also motivated greater involvement with local organizations and institutions (Leavitt & Saegert, 1990; Saegert & Winkel, 1996; Saegert & Winkel, in press). Co-op leaders, with the help of technical assistance and advocacy groups, have formed city-wide and neighborhood based peer support networks, held conferences and workshops for prospective and existing limited equity cooperative residents, testified in public hearings, and successfully lobbied at the state and local level for tax caps, and other legislation supportive of limited equity cooperatives.

Chicago public housing residents followed a very similar path of organizing for ownership. Because of the size and political sensitivity of public housing in Chicago, it was necessary for different public housing developments to form a coalition to win first a fight to save their developments from demolition and then the right to ownership from the Chicago Public Housing Authority. While residents shied away from confrontation, they eventually sued the housing authority and won.

A coalition of public housing leaders in New York followed a similar organizing model though they did not attempt to become resident owners. They first successfully organized in their developments for ongoing improvements and to fight neglect and incursions on use by the housing authority, then to avoid the selling off and conversion of public housing in NYC (at least to date). The New York coalition not only enlisted allies and technical assistance groups in New York, but also found allies in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development at certain points. Because of their importance as a voting block, they also have considerable clout with some City Councilmen, State Assemblymen, and an influential Member of the United States House of Representatives.

Collective ownership as a strategy for community building puts the control of assets in the hands of groups of community residents. This responsibility and shared fate presses participants to develop their own social capital and the individual skills needed for cooperative decision making (including standing one's ground and disagreeing at times). Internal conflicts are common and sometimes bitter. But the stakes in overcoming them are high. Collective owners sometimes organize on their own and then find outside assistance. In other cases, a CBO, union, or another institution may promote collective ownership, but the potential owners must agree. When the balance tips too far toward outside origination, the risk of failure increases (Rohe 1995). Technical assistance is critical for preparing and assisting residents with the demands of collective ownership. The development of a support sector of technical assistants, housing and legal professionals and advocates is essential for collective ownership to work as a community building strategy.

Collective ownership promotes civic capacity through leadership development and by giving owners a stake in many public decisions and policies. However, for it to be a core strategy for building community civic capacity, issues of scale must be addressed. It is possible that the scale and history of large urban public housing authorities facilitates the emergence of civic capacity strategies as part of community building and cooperative ownership. Collective ownership could also be a part of community building undertaken by CDCs, when large numbers of subsidized units are threatened by abandonment or expiring use restrictions and in weak housing markets. Viewed from an alternative perspective, cooperative owners provide a pool of skills and commitments that can be an asset for other community and civic capacity strategies.

These four consensus oriented models presented above differ in many ways. They use different approaches to organizing, organizational development, and coalition building, involve different sectors of communities, and achieve different outcomes. They have in common a commitment to first trying to solve problems by cooperative strategies and collective problem solving. They use confrontation as a last resort. They all achieved significant community building and community civic capacity outcomes. These strategies often pioneered new organizing methods and organizational forms. In contrast, the models to be discussed below start from a confrontational or competitive stance toward power holders in the public and private sector and derive from community and political organizing techniques with long histories.

Community Building for Power

The strategies presented below were drawn from numerous accounts in the literature of confrontational organizing with a variety of roots, as well as from interviews with community builders. They fall into three general categories: 1) community building to establish a power base, which includes the national models driven by particular organizations like IAF, PICO, or ACORN, as well as local membership organizing approaches; 2) local coalitions tailored to particular challenges; and 3) building a political power base to generate resource for the community through engagement with mainstream politics.

National Network, Community Organizing for Power

Power-oriented community organizing as it is practiced today (c.f. Speer, Hughey, Gensheimer & Adams-Leavitt, 1995; Warren, 2001) views community organizing as a platform for the development of power, but also of shared identities, mutual respect, political will, and the capacity for collective action. In these ways, the approach is a community building strategy although participants use the term community organizing instead. The different label signifies that confrontation is central to the organizing model and is often used strategically. Yet over the long run, this community building strategy leads also to networks of social capital that include certain members of the power structure.

Figure 6:

Community Organizing for Power Strategy*



The specific case depicted in the diagram is drawn from Mark Warren's (2001) study of the Texas Industrial Areas Foundation. The case study is complex, multileveled, and thoroughly documented. Following the Alinsky tradition, the Texas IAF began each local organization at the invitation of a coalition of churches. The paid IAF organizer worked with priests and pastors to get to know a wide variety of congregants through one-on-ones, and to cultivate local leaders. Leaders were then trained in IAF methods. The organizing process, as well as coalition meetings, was used to identify important issues. After researching the problem and identifying possible solutions, allies and enemies, informal contacts began. When no solution was readily agreed upon, "actions" were held to disrupt "business as usual". Once the action got the attention of the opposition, other more productive negotiations were held. One frequently used technique

was the “accountability night” where local politicians or political candidates were invited to address a proposal put forward by the coalition. Hundreds to thousands of supporters would attend, and often commitments were obtained.

The accomplishments of the Texas IAF documented are too numerous to detail in full. They included the winning of significant improvement in public services and infrastructure in South San Antonio and other parts of the state, and the establishment of a widely lauded employment training model that improves wages as well as employment. After school programs and school reform initiatives were successful in many sites. IAF at the state level became an important player on issues of education and job training.

Warren (2001) uses the idea of social capital to describe both relationships among groups in IAF coalitions and between these coalitions and particular powerful private and public sector actors. He also emphasizes the socially integrative aspects of IAF work. For example, he gives a vivid and interesting picture of how the Fort Worth IAF dealt with racial tension, a topic often avoided by the IAF and other similar organizing groups. The social integration that is accomplished by community organizing has been stressed by those associated with other national, as well as independent, membership organizations using a similar model.

Mary Dailey, Head Organizer for the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition (NWBCCC): Although difficult to document we firmly believe that people of different backgrounds live together more peacefully in our neighborhoods because of the many relationships we have built across race and faith traditions. For example in the days following September 11th, we were able to quickly assemble interfaith gatherings in the neighborhood; this gave people the opportunity to mourn together and seek peace rather than vengeance. More mosques have joined the NWBCCC since because of the relationships we built at that time.

NBCCC is an independent community organizing coalition, well known and respected for having successfully mounted an anti arson campaign when the Bronx was burning, and for successfully retaining a stock of decent affordable housing in the area for 30 years.

Warren attributes much of the strength of the model not only to its ability to tap into the anger, energy and talent of disadvantaged populations, but also to openness to self reflection and solidarity around core values that comes from the faith-based nature of the coalitions. The biggest accomplishment of the TIAF, Warren argues, has been the engagement of large numbers of marginalized people, mostly Latinos and African Americans, in the democratic processes of a state that had successfully excluded them from influence and leadership for a very long time and in many places.

Speer and Hughey (1995; Speer, Hughey, Gensheimer & Adams-Leavitt, 1995) have studied the PICO model and their account of how it works is very similar. However, they stress the value of the one-on-ones and the collective reflection processes for the development of both individual and organizational civic capacity. The analytic and reflective approach of these organizing models has spawned collaborations with

academic researchers in which the academics provide useful information on the community and at the same time learn about the power dynamics of the situation through observing and documenting the actions of the organizing group and the outcomes (Shlay & Whitman, 2004; Speer, Ontkush, Schmitt, Padmasini, Jackson, Rengert, & Peterson, 2003). Such academic-community relationships and the sophisticated use of information by community groups are also signs of the civic capacity generated by organizing.

The next example shows how community organizing for power has been adapted to particular circumstances and used by organizations not affiliated with one of the national organizing groups.

Issue Specific Coalition Organizing for Power

The on line and published accounts of community organizing include many descriptions of coalitions formed around issues ranging from redlining to school reform (c.f. Shlay & Whitman, 2004; Chicago Parents and Youth Education Policy Collaborative Website, 2004). The case study for the model below is the “CC9 Coalition“, a coalition of six CBOs in Community District 9 in the Bronx. Eric Zachary working with the New York University Institute for Education and Social Policy has been the main organizer and coordinator for the coalition.

The tactics employed in different coalition strategies vary somewhat, especially in terms of what kind of organization convenes the coalition, but the activities described tend to be quite similar to the model described below.

Figure 7:



Based on Interviews and Mental Mapping Meeting Participation by Eric Zachary

Zachary began with six months of meetings with Executive Directors to build mutual knowledge as well as shared standards and expectations. Agreement was forged that parents would drive the agenda. The CBOs varied greatly in their orientation. Two groups had strong organizing traditions of the sort described in the prior model (Bronx ACORN and NWBCCC). Others were service organizations with little or no organizing experience. As the potential for confrontation became evident, at least one organization dropped out. At this point, there were no parents involved. This was an intentional decision to ensure buy-in from the top levels of the CBOs. Funding for CC9 was obtained and provided a parent organizer for each CBO.

Eric Zachary describing the challenge of working with service CBOs: (They have a) blurry sense of what organizing is. The school system is jello. Unless you cut it with a sharp knife, you get caught up in murkiness. Not just about the top stuff, but building organizing capacity and will at the neighborhood level. We have an organizing committee that meets every other week. We make all organizing decisions together. Initially, some Executive Directors felt uncomfortable with parents making the decisions about organizing strategy and tactics. That changed fairly quickly.

An Organizing Committee was formed which has mobilized 300 to 500 people for its actions. The parents became engaged through the organizing of each CBO. Their first action was a protest against budget cuts. The coalition began to build relationships with school personnel, with the Chancellor's Office, with the Mayor's office, and with the teacher's union. Zachary especially credits ACORN with providing critical entrée to cooperation with the teacher's union because of wins in their campaign against privatizing NYC public schools. CC9 eventually developed a proposal to improve instruction through a Lead Teacher program that was embraced by a key ally in the Chancellor's administration and by the teacher's union.

Several CBO staff involved with CC9 described the same event as symbolic of how far the coalition had come: the president of the powerful teachers union honored CC9 with a banquet to announce support for the "Lead Teacher" proposal. Food was served by union members. For parents and staff who had experienced so many early rebuffs, it was a moment to mark. Ultimately, CC9 succeeded in its Lead Teacher campaign. Chancellor Klein has committed \$1.6 million, the Unified Federation of Teacher (UFT) and the Department of Education completed negotiations on the position, and CC9 has raised more than \$200,000 to support implementation for September, 2004.

The power oriented coalition model has often been used successfully and is often the most promising strategy for marginalized communities to take on big issues. It requires careful nurturing, patience, determination, time, and tolerance for risk. As Stone (2001) documents, cooperation can erode quickly when controversial issues such as school reform are at stake. Successful coalitions require the building of many layers of

civic capacity...among organizations and their staff, among resident stakeholders, among local institutions, and in terms of relating to a complex array of power holders. The capacity gained by several members of CC9 from participating in previous community building initiatives has proved only a beginning for the organizing and political challenges facing the coalition. The disciplined organizing training and culture of membership community organizing groups appears helpful in such coalitions. Such organizations have been participants in both CC9 and Stone's one example among eight cities of highly developed civic capacity around school reform, El Paso, Texas.

Eric Zachary: When I think about community building, the fight for justice is what comes to mind... the need for power. To get power, you need large numbers of people building trust so that they can engage power structures. Relationships between people are critical... The stuff of community building is the dialectic between social and political capital, process and outcome. The organizers job is to work with the dialectic.

The problems such coalitions address are often long term and recalcitrant. From the point of view of civic capacity, the ability of marginalized and less powerful communities to engage with the problems, to have their voices heard, and in some cases to gain a seat at the table all count. Sometimes just keeping a problem in public view, often through changes in administration, increases community civic capacity. The ability to stay engaged with an issue through set backs and apparent victories that may not work out as expected, and to continue to participate, reflect, and act, mark the high level of community civic capacity that is often needed to improve conditions like low performing urban schools or physical blight in poor neighborhoods.

Political Organizing Strategies for Power

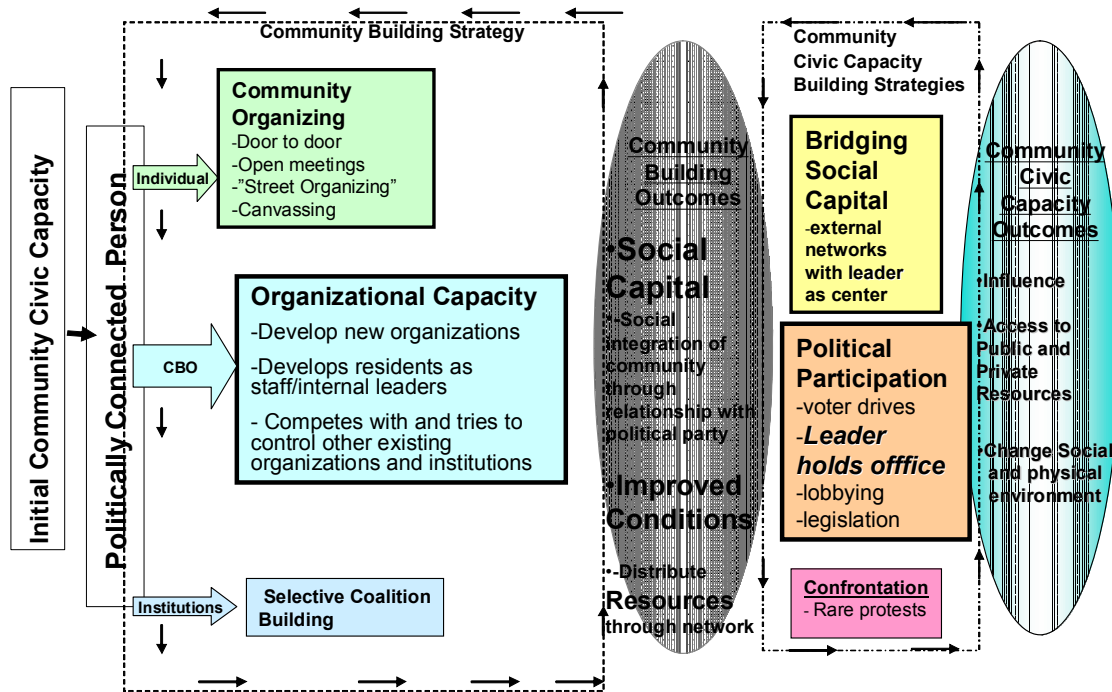
The final approach to community building to be presented locates the building of power in electoral politics. The case is in many ways a "thin" example of community building because it depends so exclusively on the election of a public official. Participation in electoral politics is a component of many of the strategies described above, especially the power oriented strategies. But this strategy alone has not been considered a form of community building. Indeed, Marwell (2004) contrasts this "machine politics" CBO with community building CBOs. Yet it is included here both to define the lower limits of community building that nonetheless achieves a measure of community civic capacity.

Marwell (2004) studied eight CBOs who provided services. Some treated residents purely as clients, but others engaged residents more deeply in reciprocal relationships. She distinguishes purely community-building CBOs who nurture community participants from CBOs who build power in electoral politics by cultivating organizational adherents. Community participants contribute to the community in diverse ways, involving multiple local organizational relationships. In contrast to the

community building emphasis on intra organizational cooperation, adherents confine their loyalty to a specific CBO to gain resources through participation in electoral politics. In the tradition of machine politics, CBOs who cultivate organizational adherents deliver services and jobs to residents through the contracts and other governmental resources they can direct toward their neighborhoods.

Figure 8:

Machine Politics CBO Strategy*



*Nicole Marwell (2004) Privatizing the Welfare State: Nonprofit Community Based Organizations as Political Actors. *American Sociological Review*.

The case study Marwell presents is of a Latino-based housing and social service provision CBO. The founder, a social worker by training with experience in city government, realized that the value of government housing and service contracts far exceeded the total resources he could expect from other sources. He set out to fill the vacuum left by an ineffective local political organization using as a base the clients of his CBO. He not only built an effective voting block but became a long term public office holder who had to be reckoned with in any political decision affecting the district. His senior citizen center served 400 to 500 residents a day; his meals on wheels program fed 2,200 (Marwell, 2004).

The CBO provides a large range of services that shift somewhat with the availability of funding streams, thus allowing it to employ 1,500 staff members, most of whom are local residents. Within the organization, it goes without saying that staff members are expected to participate in electoral politics through a closely allied political

club. They are extremely active in door to door and telephone campaigning. A smaller, allied Latino leadership organization is also especially visible during campaigns. The CBO and its shadow political club can reliably turn out about 3,000 votes in a district that usually has only about 5,000 voters in any particular election. In an era in which few organizations have the ability to mobilize a reliable voting block, and due to the strategic significance of the district, the political favors that flow in exchange for turning out the voting block are many. Over 90% of its more than seven million dollar annual budget comes from government contracts, not counting the unique volume of housing and supported care residences it has been able to obtain.

This machine politics CBO not only mobilizes the mostly Latino and economically disadvantaged local residents for elections, it also teaches them about how government operates. The large staff is especially involved in constant discussions about opportunities to gain resources for the community through political channels. The staff provides assistance to community residents in how to become eligible and successfully apply for government sponsored benefits such as housing and child care. The CBO and its political and leadership club allies sponsor presentations from politicians on important policy directions, as well as parties and other festivities.

Looking at the diagram of community building activities and outcomes, this model is particularly strong on delivering material improvements at the local level and influence at the city, state and sometimes federal level. It can also be argued that it plays a significant part in integrating the Latino population into mainstream society through political participation. The intense campaigning carried out by the CBO staff and clients also creates some modicum of social capital within the community, as does the CBO leader and elected official's many personal ties. The strategy of the CBO does not overtly challenge the status quo, but rather benefits by playing whatever system is in power. However, meeting the needs of the relatively poor Latino population is only compatible with political regimes and policies that have some redistributive potential.

The machine politics CBO version of community building may be extreme in many ways. Yet it exemplifies a strategy that communities NOT in need of building often follow. Greater incorporation of electoral politics into community building strategies could usefully augment existing practices. Access to the full repertoire for participation in politics appears to me to be one reasonable criterion for the extent of community and civic capacity building success.

Political scientist Margaret Wilder's reflections on community building presents this broad perspective on the integration of electoral politics with leadership development in CBOs:

Margaret Wilder, Professor of Urban Affairs and Public Policy, University of Delaware: The nature and impact of community building depends on who is doing the building and how broad or narrow their agenda becomes. Among the CBOs that I am familiar with, there is a subset that have a fully developed sense of community building that links organizational development and program design, to the cultivation of leadership among residents. ... This exceptional group of CBOs have created an explicit strategy in which they incorporate local residents into both their staff, and planning and project planning activities. Through this insider experience, community residents acquire a wide range of skills and a clear understanding of the role and potential of the CBOs in addressing community needs. Equally important, these individuals gain an understanding of the need to affect decision making processes that determine the flow of resources and opportunities for community residents. This model of leadership development has led community residents (some former staff members of the CBOs) to run successfully for local and state offices. These positions provide a critical link to external power structures and gives political legitimacy to both the community and the CBO. In this sense, the CBOs are enhancing their internal capacities, establishing solid links to community residents and gaining in a foothold in broader power arenas.

The confrontational/competitive strategies described above make two points meant to further our understanding of the contribution of community building to civic capacity: 1) Community civic capacity requires the ability to exercise power as well as the ability to work collaboratively within and outside of the community; 2) While the organizing strategies of consensus oriented and confrontation /competition oriented approaches differ, successful development of community civic capacity depends on using the right approach at the right time, in the right place, and with the right people. David Greenberg's (in press) study of a coalition of ten Community Development Corporations (CDCs) funded and trained to promote organizing illustrates the embeddedness of successful strategy selection.

This case study addresses the tension in community development efforts between the ability to marshal resources for development and the ability to challenge the status quo (Greenberg, in press). While community developers must have cooperative relationships with politicians, financial institutions, and many others who possess strong main stream economic and social capital, they are often confronted by mainstream efforts at development that undermine community goals. These efforts often direct resources away from the people who make up disadvantaged communities even while seeking economic advantages from developments within their geographic community space (Greenberg, in press; Stoeker, 2001).

Those who see CDC organizing as impossible in principle rely on a structuralist analysis that the resource dependencies of CDCs make it impossible for them to bring about the social transformations necessary if poor people and marginalized communities are to prosper (c.f. Stoeker, 2001). Structuralists usually conclude that most community development and housing based organizing efforts fail to be transformative (c.f. Marcuse, 1999). Proponents of CDC organizing most often use a consensus organizing model that downplays structural differences (c.f. Gittell and Vidal, 1998) and emphasize successes (Hertz, 2002).

The debate about whether CDCs can organize (Stoeker, 2001) belies the fact that many of the 3,600 CDCs in the US do organizing (60% in 1992, figures cited in Greenberg, in press). Greenberg's comparison finds that CDC organizing does what more confrontational approaches focus on: builds CDC power. However, the ways that is accomplished run the gamut in terms of strategies, and vary in the use of confrontational tactics and rhetoric. They all have in common efforts to mobilize community residents through some form of organizing. The roles of residents and the relationships with other community organizations and institutions varied and are part of the comparison.

Ricenne Hadrian Initiative for Community Organizing (RHICO): A joint program of the Massachusetts Association of CDCs and Boston's Local Initiatives Support Corporation, RHICO sponsors organizing by CDCs and provides technical assistance, peer learning opportunities, topical electives, and opportunities for reflection and documentation about the experience of CDC organizing. RHICO as a program defines organizing as systematic base-building, leadership development, and resident-driven campaign work for community and institutional change. (Greenberg, in press)

These 10 CDCs were located in sites representing a diversity of populations and organizational histories. RHICO began with five months of planning by CDC staff, technical assistants, and resident participants for initial campaigns. Early decisions to frame campaigns as conflictual or to work for more collaborative consensual strategies had multiple ramifications for the site. Greenberg views the decision about whether to emphasize difference, usually around ethnicity or race as the other key variable at each site. Strategies that evolved could be any of the four permutations of emphasizing difference and conflict. Not enough information was included to determine how the CDCs strategies varied on the dimensions of breadth, and democratic decision making. The inclusion of residents in decision making processes turned out to be one of the critical dimensions determining efficacy, thus linking these two strategy dimensions to each other.

Some CDC campaigns took a confrontational approach which pulled them into great tensions as they challenged real estate development proposals supported by funders and collaborators. Some CDCs made ethnic and racial differences critical to their campaigns and began by forming cultural associations to challenge racism and white power. In particular cases, oppositional stances around ethnic difference resonated with important other organizations in the community and increased resident involvement. In one such case, the CDC campaign also achieved a clear civic capacity gain by registering 1,500 new voters and increasing voter turn out 54% in a key election. However these achievements were not enough to alter city and statewide politics that limited the campaigns success. In another case, a CDC organized a successful campaign based on Asian identity to acquire a high profile site for affordable housing. The campaign was formulated around the theme of reparations to Boston's Chinatown. But its activities emphasized consensus building and cooperation in the community. The CDC defined its role as a convener of multiple stakeholders. Two CDCs chose an inclusive and consensual strategy which failed in one case but was successful in another case in mobilizing previously unaffiliated residents, overcoming long standing conflicts among

local organizations, and eventually gained the Mayor's support for the coalition's affordable housing proposal.

no one pattern of inter-organizational relations – extensive, extensive coalition work, sporadic engagement, or near-isolation – was identifiable with success or failure within organizing campaigns...

- 1) Campaign planning and strategization by CDCs and residents *develops identifiable orientations about their communities and the changes they wish to enact in them.* Within RHICO, the two most important components of these orientations involved claims about difference and conflict.
- 2) As campaigns progress, a CDC's orientation toward difference and conflict finds *confluence or dissonance with those held other groups.*
- 3) While the scope of a campaign's success or failure is suggested by this interaction, *the difference between success and failure within each interaction is determined by a CDCs' development of organizational power. I find this power to be highly associated with a CDC's ability to engage residents in governance and to coordinate work among departments.* (Greenberg, in press)

Greenberg uses his case studies to argue that the stance toward conflict and difference is less important than how other organizations respond and than how the CDC actually incorporates residents into its processes.

Both the prevalence of CDC organizing and the contributions it can make as demonstrated by some RHICO members suggest the gains may be worth the tensions inherent in combining real estate development with community organizing. Comparative studies like Greenberg's are particularly useful in contributing to knowledge about the trade-offs involved. When CDCs take this course, they go beyond using their own civic capacity as representatives of the community to building more widespread community civic capacity. The CDCs own civic capacity also expands in that it becomes a forum for community agenda setting and the development of social capital. Community participants gain skills in working with groups, understanding organizations, knowledge of political processes as well as substantive issues, and experience with political action. If the CDC provides an avenue for their engagement at higher levels, residents also increase their external social capital.

Greenberg's observations about the weakness of structural dependencies, or of the choice of consensus versus conflictual strategies as predictors of success, and the significance of organizational ecologies and internal organizational dynamics, have implications for understanding community building more generally.

Conclusions

The first thing that was apparent from the review of community building efforts and civic capacity is the variety of initiatives and their positive effects on community civic capacity. As any web search will show, the term community building is most associated with the large number of widely known Comprehensive Community Initiatives (CCIs) undertaken in the 1990s. All list resident empowerment, building community capacity, etc. as goals. CCIs and other well known demonstrations also share an emphasis on the usefulness of working collaboratively toward community goals. However, the identification of CCIs with community building unduly limits our understanding of how community building is achieved, what it accomplishes, and how it relates to community civic capacity. The range of strategies presented suggests that confrontational as well as consensus oriented approaches can increase social capital and community civic capacity.

Beyond Consensus versus Confrontation to Varieties of Civic Capacity

When community building and community organizing efforts are looked at closely, at different levels and over a longer time period, the emphasis on consensus versus confrontation appears mostly misleading. The attainment of civic capacity requires the ability to form distinct interests and goals, to develop shared agendas, and to act collectively. It requires cultivating strong and weak ties, recognizing allies and enemies, and changing the cast of characters as contingencies shift.

Civic capacity varies in other ways as well. A community's civic capacity can increase mainly through the efforts of local institutions, as in North Lawndale, or mainly at the smaller scale of individuals and small organizations, such as in the resident cooperative example, or both as has been achieved in more broad based and/or comprehensive community initiatives. Many adversarial community builders operate as affiliates of national organizations or as coalitions of local organizations. Which type of community building strategy is used affects whose civic capacity can be developed.

Three issues are especially important for the civic capacity outcomes of community building strategies: breadth of engagement, democratic processes, centralization of the change agenda, and results in terms of power and resource access. All the strategies reviewed above make trade-offs along these dimensions. Problems of exclusion, hierarchical decision making, and inefficacy occur in all models as well.

Many, perhaps most, strategies, target particular groups within a community such as Latinos, or lower-income residents, or particular sectors, such as churches, schools, or organizations concerned with employment. Community civic capacity should be broadly representative of all populations and sectors. However, power differentials may suggest that civic capacity needs to be built especially among marginalized groups. At the same time, starting with more marginal populations increases the difficulty and uncertainty of achieving effective civic capacity. Social capital approaches attempt to overcome this trade-off by developing cross sector, cross class, and cross race relationships. In very

different ways, confrontational and self-help strategies attempt to offset existing resource deficits with people power.

Since successful examples were chosen for the models described, their relative efficacy can not be compared.

Democratic processes occur at different scales in the different models. The community organizing/leadership development approaches increase the number of participants that can potentially influence decisions, but the structure of decision making determines whether this translates into democratic decisions. The same is true for agenda centralization versus multiple agendas.

The quality, quantity and time frame of documentation of different community building efforts varies considerably, so it is hard to compare the strategies described above on any of these dimensions.

Improving the evidence base

While the evidence is encouraging, its quality and detail often leave something to be desired. Much of the documentation of well known community building efforts emphasizes goals and processes but does not tie them to outcomes, even in terms of social capital and civic capacity (Kubisch et al, 2002). The almost exclusive reliance on qualitative evidence means that accessible narratives of community building are relatively abundant. However, in many cases they favor narrative clarity over detail (Warren's 2001 book being a notable exception). The weakness of qualitative studies concerns its distributional accuracy and the regularity of alleged associations between particular events and consequences. How many people had what kind of experiences? How often does "B" really follow from "A"?

The importance of interviewing community builders themselves for this paper testifies to the prominence of an oral tradition in the field. While first hand accounts of practitioners contribute much to any dynamic, practical field, an increase in well researched scholarly studies would be welcome. Limitations on research funds for scholarly studies of community building and civic capacity as well as the relatively few funded evaluations published in peer reviewed publications contribute to this shortage.

The Aspen Roundtables publication, *Voices from the Field, II* (Kubisch et al, 2002, p.76-77) details a number of strategies for improving the evidence base concerning comprehensive community initiatives that would be useful for understanding community building better. Several other ways to improve the evidence base suggest themselves. One would be to make better use of university resources for studying community building initiatives. Among the eight examples discussed, three (more than half of the examples based at all on scholarly publications) were documented in doctoral dissertations. The quality, analytic rigor, and public availability of these dissertations, plus the importance of training new researchers in the field, suggests the value of greater involvement of graduate students in the study of community building. Another

opportunity exists in the reams of quantitative data that community organizations, institutions, and coalitions are collecting as part of the move toward greater self monitoring of results and demands for accountability. Very good research instruments related to social capital and civic capacity are being developed by universities, consultant organizations, and some larger CBOs and CBO networks through out the United States. It would be useful to attempt to audit these resources and how they are being analyzed. In many cases, the information is simply tabulated with very little interpretation, or, in too many cases, not used at all except maybe in reports to funders. Partnering the groups gathering the data with interested researchers could vastly expand the knowledge base.

In addition to research limitations, other grounds for skepticism exist. Most people who are intimately familiar with community building know of as many or more failed or very partially successful examples. The tendency of the field to put the best face on projects plus the success bias in publications means that we have too little ability to make comparisons between successes and failures. Greenburg's (in press) research provides an example of how quantitative and qualitative analysis of degrees of community building activity and degrees of success can add to our knowledge of what processes are most useful in what contexts.

Community Building and Civic Capacity in Context

Most accounts of community building follow a well formed narrative pattern with a main protagonist and a beginning, middle, and end. These narratives often obscure the multiple actors and their perspectives, and the sweep of historical changes that they are caught up in. The organizational context of particular community building efforts has increasingly been acknowledged as a significant determinant of success or failure, especially the extent to which there are other community building organizations, and how different local institutions and CBOs goals and strategies relate to each other (c.f. Greenberg, in press; Warren, 2001). Two other questions also deserve consideration: 1) Do community building efforts at different scales and across multiple initiatives cumulatively build civic capacity? 2) How do large structural changes affect community building for civic capacity?

First, it would be useful to have a better picture of how community building at larger and smaller scales work together (or conflict) over time. Leaders from tenant owned cooperatives have been very active in local community based health and urban planning efforts. Some individual CBOs have participated in several community building initiatives, and later became members of coalitions. Particular geographic areas have been the target of numerous community building initiatives. At minimum, research on community building and civic capacity could explicitly address the history of community building at different scales and be alert for cumulative or oppositional effects. It would be a civic capacity outcome in itself if certain communities became more able over time to attract and use resources for community building.

Second, while accounts of community building (c.f. Chaskin, 1999, Warren, 2001) allude to particular conditions that have worked for and against a viable

community fabric in particular communities, I found no studies that systematically examined the impact of changes in immigration, regional or national job and housing markets, the strength of the economy etc. affected community building and/or civic capacity. Many plausible connections exist from the effect of immigration and resident turn over on civic engagement and social integration to how changes in the stock market affect funding for community building initiatives. More qualitatively, the political and social culture of particular areas may have an affect on participation in community building efforts and their outcomes (c.f. Duncan, 2001).

Taken together, these issues importantly influence the judgment of whether a particular community building effort increased community civic capacity. In some cases, the efficacy attributed to a particular community building initiative may just be the tip of the iceberg of prior community building efforts and investments. In other cases, the forces for social fragmentation and community civic incapacity may be so strong that much higher level investments are required for longer periods of time. Similarly, these prior conditions may affect the utility of different strategies in particular contexts. A next step in understanding contextual influences would be to go beyond a case by case assessment, to the development of a systematic framework for analysis.

In summary, the evidence that exists suggests that community building strategies lead to increased civic capacity by increasing the local social capital and contributing to a shared civic agenda. Different strategies increase the local civic engagement at different scales: individuals, CBOs or networks of institutions and organizations. The extent to which local community civic engagement increases depends on how many levels are engaged and the efficacy of specific strategies for civic engagement which include increased external social capital, political participation of various kinds, and, when necessary, confrontation with the powers that be. Over time, community building contributes to community civic capacity and vice versa. Even failures to achieve particular goals may lead to important learning and new strategies that do eventually succeed, and the learning itself is part of the development of community civic capacity.

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