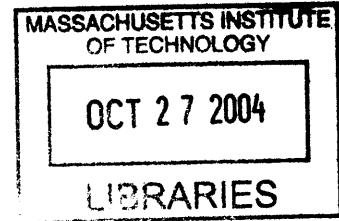Ways of Contending:
Community Organizing and Development in Neighborhood Context

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Ways of Contending:
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Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Urban and Regional Planning

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores community organizing by Community Development Corporations (CDCs), the different outcomes achieved by organizing campaigns, and the factors that contribute to their successes and failures. Among organizing outcomes, I focus not only on policy victories and physical or economic improvements to communities, but also on the ways that collective action produces changes in local political institutions. Using rich qualitative and extensive quantitative data from organizing campaigns by ten CDCs, I show how claims about the role of racial and ethnic difference in community, and about the need for conflict in creating community change, find acceptance or resistance from political institutions. While institutional resistance to a campaign's claims about community makes it more difficult for campaigns to succeed, this resistance also indicates the possibility that successful organizing will enact changes to local institutions. I find that CDCs won campaigns (and with success, enacted some type of impact on political institutions) by coordinating mobilization throughout their activities and departments, and by including activists in governance and decision-making.

Thesis supervisor: Langley C. Keyes
Ford Professor of Urban Planning

Acknowledgments

The title, "Ways of Contending" describes the diversity of struggle that may occur in communities. It also refers to Ulysses's epithet in the first lines of the Odyssey. While about contention, that poem is also about family. My mother has often taught me what it means to strive, and to be engaged in feeling and substance with struggle. My father's love of cities and travel laid foundations for my interest in planning and urban research; these pages seek to emulate his respect for truth, his impatience with absolutes, his selfless and efficacious orientation toward work, and his humility toward what work may accomplish.

At nineteen months, Aaron Jonah Greenberg can hear how much I love and will always love him; his fierce, light, and loving presence inspires me to do work of which he might be proud.

Sarit is the strongest, most beautiful, the clearest and most perfect of soul; my good is and will ever be bound up in hers. All my work aspires to meet her, in our home.

Ways of Contending:
Community Organizing and Development in Neighborhood Context

Introduction and Question

Community organizing can make a difference in poor people's lives. It can

develop indigenous leaders, shift power toward the disenfranchised and toward persons

of color (Delgado 1986, Osterman 2002, Fainstein and Fainstein 1974), create social

capital and community cohesion (Warren 2001, Gitell and Vidal 1998, Saegert 2001) and

direct additional resources to distressed areas (Rubin 1992, Hartmann 1984, Greenstone

and Peterson 1973). As veterans of collective action understand, organizing does not

always accomplish these important and potentially transformative goals, although this

fact is often neglected both by writers on organizing and by scholars of movement

activity generally (Giugni 1998; for an important exception, see Gamson 1990). While

much writing on organizing focuses on its successes (Herz 2002, Medoff and Sklar

1994), many efforts stumble or are defeated (Castells 1983, Marcuse 1999, Stone 2001).

Some campaigns may build power for the organization without achieving immediate

goals. Others may achieve their immediate objectives but not affect broader social or

political dynamics. In some rare cases, campaigns may both succeed and also alter power

dynamics within a neighborhood or policy field. Organizers and residents also know that

there are different types of failed campaigns. Some campaigns may dissolve with little

impact; others may achieve limited but relatively unimportant successes. Others may be

struck down by effective countermobilization.

This thesis's central concern is to ask what dynamics lead to these different types of outcomes. In it, I explore community organizing by Community Development Corporations (CDCs), the different outcomes achieved by organizing campaigns, and the factors that contribute to their successes and failures. Among organizing outcomes, I focus not only on policy victories, and physical or economic improvements to communities, but also on the ways that collective action produces changes in local political institutions[1]. That is, community organizing attempts not only to realize specific, resident-defined objectives – creating a park, enacting legislation, seizing land or generating resources for affordable housing – but also seeks to achieve change within political institutions. By winning a campaign, residents and activists demonstrate to other groups and to political actors that their organization and its demands should be taken seriously. I focus especially on two aspects of political institutions. The first aspect examines ways that community organizations interact with each other. As writers on community structure have understood since analysis of inter-organizational networks in the 1970s (Lauman 1977, 1978), power within neighborhood systems is greatly influenced by the structure of relationships among local groups. Although organizing creates relationships among individuals, by bringing individuals into an organization, it also may change the balance of power among existing community groups, or change the *terms* of interaction among them – affecting local dynamics of cooperation or contention. The second aspect of institutions encompasses rules, policies or practices on the part of state actors that affect the neighborhood. I especially focus on changes in the openness of agencies to political participation by organized constituents, because these are changes

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[1] Because of the place-based nature of the organizing, and the scale of activities, changes to these institutions were often seen on the local level. However, in chapter four, dynamics particular to the small cities described set the ambitions of campaigns toward citywide institutions.

most likely to benefit CDC constituents in a sustainable way. In the case of CDCs

organizing, which often focuses often on housing or economic development, these

practices are mostly likely to be seen among agencies or policies that influence local

development activities and outcomes. In these areas, what can CDC organizing achieve,

and what leads to different types of organizing outcomes? What types of successes can

campaigns experience, when do campaigns fail, and what makes the difference between

success and failure?

Two questions sidestepped

Can CDCs organize?

The basic question of this thesis – asking what CDC organizing can accomplish –

evokes controversy within policy debate around organizing practice; for many organizers,

the statement that CDCs can in fact organize effectively is a non-starter. Randy Stoeker's

(1997) analysis of Community Development Corporations and their ability to organize

(2001) holds that it is almost impossible for them to challenge power and deliver

meaningful benefits to their communities (see also M. Gittell 1999). Because community

development involves the manipulation of existing institutional arrangements, Stoeker

argues, CDCs cannot succeed in changing the terms of debate and in leveraging

substantial gains for poor communities (1997). Stoeker writes that most efforts on the

part of CDCs to organize will fail, even though CDCs *not* organizing will consign them

to powerlessness and irrelevance (2001).

While strongly stated, Stoeker and Gittell's perspective on CDCs does in fact draw on significant aspects of the proliferation of the CDC form. Devolution of urban policy since the Nixon Administration, and powerful successes in rebuilding many distressed neighborhoods, have made CDCs a prominent instrument of governmental and social objectives. Supported by public and private sources, CDCs counsel businesses, engage in community planning activities, and provide job training, day care and other social services (Vidal 1996, 1986, 1995). As developers of housing and real estate, CDCs must form close relations with banks, foundations, funding intermediaries, and city zoning and planning committees (Keyes 1996). These relations enable them to produce a significant amount of affordable housing, to manage property, and to develop commercial real estate. According to Walker and Weinheimer (1998), CDCs produced 90,000 units of affordable housing between 1991 and 1997, more than that directly subsidized by the federal government. During the 1990s, CDCs and CDC support systems worked to systematize gains in proliferation and production made during the 1970s and 1980s, when the number of CDCs grew from the hundreds to the thousands across the country (Stoutland 1998). This relationship-building and financial support was in part accomplished through the National Community Development Initiative (NCDI), a 23-city program that pooled over $200 million from public and foundation sources to strengthen ties among CDCs, between CDCs and financial institutions, and with City Hall (Walker and Weinheimer 1998). Stoeker and others argue that this public support and the institutionalized connections that come with it make CDCs unable to challenge power.

On the other side of the "can CDCs organize?" question, there are few proponents of CDC organizing as a practice, although there are many defenders of CDCs (cf Bratt

1997, Vidal 1997, and Keyes 1996, although their work is much more nuanced and more

critical also of failure within the industry form). These writers often espouse a strategy of

leveraging formal networks in community development. Although I explore this issue

more in my conclusion, at the moment I note that the dichotomously-posed debate about

CDCs and CDC organizing emphasizes a world view where structural forces – in this

case, the presence of networks and the power of resources – dominate analyses of

community action and its impacts. Those who say that CDCs cannot achieve meaningful

changes rely on terms that privilege structural forces over the ability of individuals or

organizations to overcome or alter them. Similarly, those who champion CDCs at broad

levels believe that accessing monetary resources and formal networks is the most critical

strategy in creating community change. Both these views represent a form of structural

determinism, or what Margaret Archer calls "downward conflationism" (1988) for its

belief that individual and group behavior is determined by forces above them. Neither is a

theoretical position consistent with the organizer's professed belief that change from

below is possible[2]. In contrast, this thesis seeks to explore, by actually examining CDC

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[2] Archer's argument is as follows: there are three types of logical errors that theorists who articulate a relationship between structure and agency make. The first is a "downward conflationism," with which she associates many Marxist writers. Downward conflationists write that structural forces, or those "above" the realm of individual and collective agency, help constitute the practices of those actors. The second is an "upward conflationism," held by microsociologists or rational choice proponents, who see larger cultural practices to be determined from the actions of individuals and groups from "below." The third error is a "medium conflationalism;" where writers such as Giddens (1984) and Bourdieu (1977) argue that structure and agency by definition constitute each other. Archer's point is that this last stance grants too much power to both categories of structure and agency at every historical moment; one cannot, therefore, draw insights about the periods in which either structural or agentic forces hold sway, and so cannot suggest how major periods of change or stasis develop. Instead, she writes that theories describing change and stability must conceive of structure and agency to be distinct, so as to draw more clearly the ways that they interact with each other, and to describe how actors' attempts to transform structure sometimes fail and sometimes succeed. My thesis draws on this analytical dualism for several reasons. First, an agentic framework toward community change requires the analysis of campaign planning and action distinct from the cultural and political settings in which it occurs. In doing so, I do not purport that work occurred independent of their settings; instead, I explore how campaigns impact community structure in different ways, sometimes succeeding and sometimes failing to change or to reinforce them. Broadly, while debates about structure and agency occur on very theoretical levels, I have been able to employ some of these concepts about

organizing practice, the ways that CDC's institutional relationships, and their reliance on

public and private resources, may in fact bring with them ties that make it difficult for

them to mount successful or meaningful challenges to government or economic actors.

This thesis attempts to move beyond reliance on broad theories that provide dichotomous

answers to difficult questions, and asks instead "how much," and "under what

circumstances" do these forces undermine a CDC's ability to challenge.

Is consensus or conflict organizing more effective?

Closely related to the debate around whether CDCs can organize is question of

whether conflict or consensus organizing is more effective. Stoeker (2001) argues that

CDCs cannot organize because community developers do not see the world in its truest

terms: full of conflict and self-interest. In this way, Stoeker's position about CDC

organizing reflects the stance that consensus organizing, a recently-developed offshoot of

organizing practice, is less effective than other models articulated in the United States

since the 1950s. Although purposive attempts to change urban neighborhoods and

government through collective action at the grass roots are probably as old as cities and

states themselves (Castells 1983; Tilly 1978), discourse about community organizing

within the United States draws extensively on the institutional history of a practice

developed from Saul Alinsky's work in the Chicago's Back of the Yards neighborhood.

Alinsky emphasized contentious tactics and confrontation to provoke positive action

toward communities by powerful actors. In recent years, a different approach to

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structure and agency in an empirical study with the goal of illuminating what types of dynamics lead to change, and which fail to do so.

organizing emerged in reaction to organizing's tendency to emphasize conflict. For

Michael Eichler, founder of the Consensus Organizing Institute, the confrontation model

often results in failure because it refuses to create issues of mutual self-interest that can

bring together broad constituencies:

> The organizer who sees the world in terms of absolutes is doomed. Most people, regardless of income, realize how complicated the world has become. Just ask any parent. We can no longer afford to oversimplify. Instead, we have to admit how complicated and contradictory the world has become....We need to teach people how to analyze the self-interest of potential partners and have the ideological flexibility to mix and match partners. (1998)

Of special relevance to CDCs, Eichler directed a demonstration project for the

Local Initiatives Support Corporation to test principles of consensus organizing. This

program used a consensus-organizing model to bring together stakeholders (including

neighborhood associations, service groups, banks, and elected officials) in the

Monongahela Valley region, Phoenix, and other areas, so they could come together to

form new CDCs. For proponents of consensus organizing – prominently, Ross Gittell and

Avis Vidal (1998), whose book describes the LISC demonstration project – this

organizing for CDC formation proves that more confrontational organizing is

counterproductive. Certainly, the cases Gittell and Vidal study demonstrate that

consensus organizing may effectively advance the goal of building nonprofit housing

delivery capacity, especially in areas without a strong tradition of CDCs. However,

because organizing in the LISC demonstration project did not involve more typical,

challenge-oriented models, thereby making comparison difficult, the claims Gittell and

Vidal make about the superiority of consensus to challenge-oriented models do not

entirely fit their data.

In avoiding the dichotomously-posed question, "Can CDCs organize," I argued briefly that skeptics of CDCs and CDC organizing hold theoretical positions that privilege structural forces over agentic ones. In contrast, both proponents and detractors of conflict and consensus organizing privilege agency – namely, people's cognitive ability to frame action and interpret reality – over structural forces. Those who hold that mobilization on either model is more effective believe that people's collective capacity to analyze community structure is one of the most important factors that determines whether or not they will be able to create change. That is, they argue that seeing the world in terms of powerful conflicts, on the one hand, or seeing the world in potential allies on the other (and adopting the tactics that stem from either analysis) will result in more effective work.

In the conclusion to this thesis, I argue that this position is analogous to what Archer (1988) calls "upward conflationism" – the theoretical stance that practices on the part of individuals and groups from below create larger structural patterns. The following chapters explore ways that political structures are complex and difficult to influence, no matter how they are understood. The CDCs I study take very different approaches to collective action – some avoid conflict, and some embrace it. CDCs also analyze issues of racial and ethnic difference in varied ways, also with substantial implications for the development of campaigns and their reception by political institutions. Instead of exploring the universal efficacy of conflict or consensus organizing, this thesis explores the possibility *that in different contexts, conflict organizing or consensus organizing might create different types of responses from local and state actors*. It also explores the

possibility that success is dependent on factors other than the orientation of a CDC

toward challenge or toward consensus.

My overall objective, then, is to move toward a more nuanced theoretical account

of CDC organizing outcomes, and, secondarily, of community action by community and

service organizations. In my view, this account would both avoid the dichotomously-

posed debates around CDCs and organizing, and also depict the phenomenon of

organizing in a way that describes the role of *both* human agency and social structure.

My analysis tries to illustrate the interaction between the two broad categories of agency

and structure – at least as collective action and movement activity at the neighborhood

level illuminates them[3]. As is suggested by the title of my thesis, I explore *ways* of

contending – understanding that there is not just one form that struggle can take. I also

explore the *specific context* in which these struggles occur – understanding that practices

effective in one neighborhood might provoke a different response in others.

Going beyond theoretical dichotomies to ask what happens

Although proponents and opponents of CDCs, conflict organizing , and consensus

organizing make broad claims, there have been few studies of the actual experiences of

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[3] Throughout this thesis, I attempt to enter into conversations about social movement dynamics, both to draw on their insights about collective action on a neighborhood level, and to convey the implications of this research for wider audiences. This study, with the work of many involved in describing social movements, highlights purposive efforts to involve ordinary people in collective activities that attempt change. This does not mean that the fit between these literatures and the phenomenon of CDC organizing is exact. Movement studies encompass varied issues, from animal rights efforts, to the work of gay men and lesbians for equality, to environmental activism, to urban riots. Furthermore, as those within and outside the Community Development field will often stress, as an organizational form, CDCs do not constitute a movement in themselves, although their growth has often been supported by movement activity. The uneasy fit between CDCs and movements is in itself a provocative question for the policy field, and is one that organizers within CDCs also address as they attempt to make campaigns work.

CDCs who engage in organizing and challenge. Stoeker's analysis of CDC organizing has largely focused upon the different institutional logics represented by organizing and development activities, and the certainty that these logics will result in failure. Gittell-Vidal's accounts of organizing for CDC formation, while detailed, do not describe the experiences of CDCs after they are formed, and so do not address Stoeker's critiques of pressures caused by the CDC form. As might be expected when such a strongly-stated positions as Stoeker's or Gittell-Vidal's are held to scrutiny and broader testing, the experiences of CDCs who organize are much more complex, in the same way that CDCs as a whole are not so easily characterized. On the one hand, practitioners within the cases I study readily acknowledge that CDCs are a difficult vehicle through which communities may organize. As groups possessed of heavy resource dependencies, consensual obligations to government and economic actors, and professional processes that often militate against community involvement, many find it difficult to develop leadership and mount campaigns aimed at community change. At the same time, many CDCs took root in communities that joined to fight urban renewal or otherwise improve their neighborhoods, and retain their identities as activist, resident-driven organizations. For others, especially those formed primarily around housing or economic development missions, organizing is an activity that must be incorporated into other modes of community practice – they must learn how to do it, and sometimes *do* learn how, often through difficult experience.

Instead of asking whether or not CDCs can organize, I describe what happens when they try to do so. By focusing on the *range* of outcomes associated with CDC organizing, the factors that contribute to their attempts to create change, this thesis avoids

essentialist claims about what CDCs are, what they do, and what they represent within

cities. I do not attempt to champion CDCs as an organizational form, or claim that their

organizing represents a vanguard within attempts at urban political change. However,

CDCs are a significant presence in many of the US's largest cities, and the CDC field

needs to be seen understood productively in relationship to organizing and urban

movement re-building. The sheer number of CDCs (estimated near 3,600 by their trade

association, the National Congress on Community Economic Development) and their

role in affordable housing production, community reinvestment advocacy, and service

delivery, makes CDCs' ability to learn organizing important.

Methodology

Data sources

My thesis draws its data from the Ricanne Hadrian Initiative for Community

Organizing (RHICO), a funding and learning program that supports organizing by CDCs.

These data represent an extraordinary window into the process of collective action by

community organizations, and a way to explore the impacts of CDC organizing. While

sharing a broader political and economic context, RHICO CDCs take part in different

local dynamics, and have different internal organizational characteristics. I worked with

the ten CDCs funded through the RHICO program as multi-year grantees, each of whom

developed their own organizing campaigns to attempt local change. These CDCs

operated in very different neighborhoods of Boston: 1) Chinatown, 2) the working-class

and Latino (but rapidly gentrifying) community of Jamaica Plain, 3) the African-

American and African-Caribbean neighborhood of Codman Square in Dorchester, 4) the

progressive, largely-white neighborhood of the Fenway, and 5) the multi-ethnic

neighborhoods of Allston and Brighton. Within Greater Boston, sites included 6) a city-

wide CDC in the diverse working-class suburb of Somerville, and 7) a CDC in a largely

Dominican Salem neighborhood called the Point. Outside of Boston, there was 8) a CDC

in a predominantly Puerto Rican part of Holyoke in Western Massachusetts, 9) one in the

historic mill town of Lawrence on the Merrimack River, and 10) one serving the former

mill towns of Fitchburg and Leominster in Central Massachusetts.

Campaign goals for each CDC varied, but were focused generally on issues of

affordable housing creation, community control of development and land use, or resource

generation for specific projects of importance to the neighborhood. This focus on

development by CDC campaigns was in part a natural extension of CDC's regular

programmatic interests, and in part a feature of the RHICO program design. RHICO

mandated that participants propose a campaign that in some way engaged the overall

work of the CDC, so as to spark conversation within the organization as to the role of

community organizing in carrying out development objectives, and to promote more

inclusive development practices among them. For example, the Jamaica Plain NDC was

engaged in a multi-faceted "Campaign of Conscience," whose goal was to gain control of

publicly-owned vacant lots for affordable housing uses, and to build electoral power for

anti-gentrification policy measures. The Twin Cities CDC had a local legislative

campaign against family displacement and for multi-family housing development. The

Asian CDC worked to coordinate resident efforts to gain control of a parcel of land

opened up by Boston's Central Artery and Tunnel Project (or "Big Dig"), the nation's largest public infrastructure program, for affordable housing construction.

Campaigns that had multiple goals tended also to be concerned with affordable housing. This was the case with the Allston Brighton CDC, where housing inflation sparked by Harvard University's move into the neighborhood forced activist engagement with the planning process designed to shape this expansion. Other campaigns were concerned more broadly with projecting a progressive vision for local development. For example, community planning and organizing in the Norfolk Triangle area of Codman Square in Dorchester, carried out by the Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation, hoped to address the problem of vacant lots by finding ways to replace them with development of the community's design and choosing. In Holyoke, Nuestras Raices hoped to force institutionalization of a city policy to let neighborhood residents decide the best use of city-owned vacant lots. In Boston, the Fenway CDC worked to implement the community's "Urban Village Plan," which would transform a strip Boylston Street from a 'sea of gas stations' into a green, pedestrian-friendly, multi-use and mixed-income neighborhood.

Figure 1: Organizing Campaigns

CDC	Location	Campaign
Asian CDC	Boston's Chinatown	Organize community to take control of scarce land opened up by Central Artery/Tunnel (Big Dig) project
Allston-Brighton CDC	Northwestern, residential Boston neighborhoods	Form organization of Latinos, attempt to influence planning process around Harvard University's expansion into the neighborhood
Codman Square NDC	Low-income, African-American and African-Carribean Boston neighborhood of Dorchester	Organize vision for land use and development within a concentrated subarea of the neighborhood, the Norfolk Triangle
Fenway CDC	Progressive, student/gentrified Boston neighborhood	Develop and implement "urban village plan" – pedestrian-friendly vision for affordable housing, educational opportunities, senior services, "green" building, community economic development
Jamaica Plain NDC	Progressive, diverse working class neighborhood in Boston	"Campaign of Conscience" to build 5,000 affordable homes, preserve existing affordable housing; open up city-owned land for affordable housing development; coalition to educate mobilize and vote, legislative action
Lawrence CommunityWorks	Former mill town on the Merrimac River	Develop network of leaders, flexible structures for interaction and power-building; outcomes in physical change, economic development, and policy change
Nuestras Raíces	Former mill town of Holyoke in Western Mass	Organize CDC's base of urban gardeners, and other community residents, around new plan for community-controlled vacant lot disposition
Salem Harbor CDC	Former mill and port town, largely Dominican neighborhood	Win community center from the city and develop it according to neighborhood vision
Somerville Community Corp.	Diverse working class suburb of Boston	Organize diverse neighborhood association in the Union Square Neighborhood, concentrating on civic and quality-of-life issues
Twin Cities CDC	Former mill towns of Fitchburg, Leominster in north central MA	"Taking Action Committee" running anti-displacement campaign aimed at local and statewide policy; "Plymouth Street Initiative" aimed at community revitalization in Cleghorn neighborhood of Fitchburg.

Although not itself the focus of my research, the RHICO program deserves presentation both as an important endeavor and as the setting for this research. A joint initiative of the Massachusetts Association of CDCs (MACDC) and Boston's Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), RHICO funds organizing by CDCs and provides technical assistance, peer learning opportunities, topical electives, and opportunities for reflection and documentation about the experience of CDC organizing (MACDC 2004). Named after a CDC organizer and project director who worked both for progressive CDCs and for MACDC, RHICO emanated from an analysis that the community development industry in Massachusetts, while achieving many powerful goals, had left behind its roots in activism. RHICO's supporters among CDCs – in steering committee and leaders – drew from staff and executive directors at the most progressive, activist CDCs in the trade association, who believed that principles of community organizing must integrated more broadly into the work of Massachusetts CDCs. This message from activists in the CDC field about the importance of community organizing found resonance – although not uncomplicated reception – with funders and intermediaries the community development as a whole. Funders and intermediaries embraced RHICO as a reformist vision of what CDCs should be, as a tool believed to result in more effective statewide advocacy efforts during an era of budgetary shortfalls and recession, and as a statement of ideological purpose in itself. One condensed evocation of these multiple goals can be seen in the speech of Joe Kriesberg, CEO of MACDC, to activists assembled at a RHICO "leadership summit" in the Spring of 2003. In his words to those gathered, Kriesberg cites a normative commitment to organizing, a vision of what 'a

return to the grass roots' should constitute, and an analysis of what will be effective in

enforcing MACDC's legislative advocacy efforts:

> About ten years ago, we [within leadership positions at CDCs] realized that we weren't doing what we needed to do to really make the change that we wanted to make in our communities, and that you wanted to make in your communities. And that we were focused on the buildings, and the money, and on the deals, that we had begun to lose sight of what really drove our whole movement, which was people, like those who are in this room. The leaders and the community people who make the changes that make things better….If [people in power] think about me, if they think about two executive directors, they're not gong to respond. They don't care about one or two people. But if there's thousands of people out there asking them the same thing…we think we can make a lot more change than we have in the past. And that's a tall order, because we've done quite a bit in the past. (RHICO peer leadership summit 5/03)

Participatory, longitudinal data collection: showing paths campaigns take over time

The primary methodology for data collection was participatory. My engagement

with CDC staff and activists aimed to facilitate and observe site-driven problem

definition, analysis, action, and evaluation – both drawing from and furthering insights

that naturally develop over the course of community organizing. As RHICO "learning

historian," I developed processes for reflection and communication among the ten sites

funded for multi-year organizing grants, was primarily responsible for implementing

them, and wrote reports for the initiative on the work of its participants. By prior

agreement with the program, and through prior and ongoing arrangement with the sites,

data I collected for this report-writing could also be used for thesis writing and

publication. My work with CDCs meant supporting staff and leaders' efforts to identify

significant challenges within their organizing, and to elaborate the strategies they

employed to overcome these challenges. Working with groups in the context of early

campaign planning, and through a site-visit process that emphasized critical thinking

around campaign strategy, 'challenges' were defined as issues that were both *difficult*,

and also *necessary* to achieve success – within their organizations, their communities,

and their campaigns. These 'challenges' became the focus of interviews with staff at

different positions, which occurred from April of 2002 until January of 2004. During this

period, I interviewed staff at each CDC about every other month.

In addition to these interviews, I also attended and sometimes facilitated

workplanning and/or technical assistance sessions for each CDC, where CDC staff came

together to strategize about their work. In lieu of traditional site visits, I supported and

recorded two reflective sessions for each CDC, where staff, board, and leaders came

together to discuss challenges and successes in their campaigns, and observed program-

sponsored peer learning sessions. I also observed multiple public meetings and actions at

each CDC, so as to collect other confirming or contradictory data on participants' own

accounts of their actions, and to witness other dynamics sparked by them.

Complementing the detailed insights produced about each campaign, the longitudinal

nature of my encounters with CDCs and activists over an eighteen-month period

illuminates important *temporal* aspects to organizing – the place of the unexpected, the

ways that potential successes and setbacks emerge to participants of collective action

over time, and the factors that played into campaign successes at critical junctures for

each CDC.[4]

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[4] From a more traditional research perspective, extensive data collection from multiple perspectives within each agency allows for hypothesis development, and also hypothesis testing, using both qualitative and quantitative methods. These processes occurred through coding and analysis of the interviews, group discussions, and written materials provided by sites; through collection and analysis of supplemental written accounts in local and regional newspapers; and through interviews with knowledgeable informants outside the campaigns. I assessed the validity of my qualitative analyses through extensive feedback loops with participants, and through presentation of initial findings to the RHICO committee, where my initial coding – presented as 'themes' from the field – was discussed.

Figure 2: Qualitative Data Collection

CDC	Individual interviews/reflective sessions	Collective strategy sessions observed and/or facilitated	Meetings or actions observed	Additional materials reviewed
Asian CDC	9	3	3	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
Allston-Brighton CDC	9	5	5	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
Codman Square NDC	11	3	1	1,2,3,4,7
Fenway CDC	5	2	3	1,2,3,4,5,6
Jamaica Plain NDC	5	4	4	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8
Lawrence CommunityWorks	10	3	1	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8
Nuestras Raíces	4	3	0	1,2,3,4,5,6
Salem Harbor CDC	6	4	3	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8
Somerville Community Corp.	4	3	2	1,2,3,4,5,6
Twin Cities CDC	10	2	4	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8
TOTAL	73	32	26	N/A

Additional Materials Key
1) Proposal
2) TA notes
3) Workplan
4) End of year report
5) Newsletter
6) End of year written documentation and survey
7) Newspaper Accounts
8) Video/other documentation

This approach to data collection has surfaced a primary finding of my thesis: namely, that organizers could not always predict what would happen if they won their campaign – how winning might build community or organizational power, change internal community dynamics, or result in sustainable changes for their neighborhood. As I write in the next three chapters, the ambitions of campaigns became clear only over the course of interaction with other community organizations, and with branches of state and city government. Drawing from grounded theory techniques, *each of these chapters illustrates a path taken by CDC organizing, where it appeared to actors involved in the campaign that its success would also produce a similar effect on local political cultures and institutions.* In each of the chapters I describe two cases of CDC organizing where the *potential* outcomes of the campaign emerged as similar, according to actors involved in the campaign and reliable observers of them – that is, where organizing activated similar dynamics among other community organizations and with local government. Although the relatively small number of cases, and significant differences in CDC strategy, organization, and neighborhood context hinder claims at broad generalizability, the richness of data in these chapters lets me draw out causal arguments about the relationship among these factors as they contribute to different types of organizing outcomes. This theory-building endeavor is consistent with approaches to qualitative research, where attempts to give complete accounts of the phenomenon at hand also may hold implications for similar processes (Strauss 1998).

Figure 3: Paths that campaigns take

Type of impact that successful organizing may have on local institutions	Brief Definition	CDCs where the chance to achieve it emerged	Shared organizational or structural factors[5]
Continuity	Winning the campaign may preserve or sustain the direction of community mobilization and neighborhood civic life	Codman Square NDC, Jamaica Plain NDC	Large CDCs, located in Boston (a large and organizationally-dense city with advanced CDC system); both focus on lower-income portions of neighborhoods
Growth	Winning the campaign may adjust – but not fundamentally alter – the ways that local organizations interact with each other and their constituents.	Somerville Community Corporation, Asian CDC	Small CDCs new to organizing; mixed-income neighborhoods with groups of varied political orientation
Change	Winning may substantially change political institutions and with it, power relations between the community and the state.	Nuestras Raices, Lawrence CommunityWorks	Economically-depressed mill towns with remnants of political machine; poor neighborhoods with Latinos as primary constituents.

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[5] These shared contexts and characteristics are fortuitous because they allow comparison between campaigns with different ultimate outcomes. But they also raise the possibility that CDCs with similar organizational characteristics and operating in similar neighborhood and political structures will see similar impacts if their work is successful. My analysis strategy does not allow me to say authoritatively what impact these shared factors have on the course of all CDC campaigns.

Comparative qualitative analysis strategies

While the thesis follows the paths that CDC campaigns take – understanding how participants understand the stakes of their campaigns as they proceed – I also care about illuminating the factors that contribute to the ultimate success and failure of campaigns. To answer the question of what helps some campaigns succeed, and what makes others fail, the following three chapters also employ a comparative methodology (Ragin and Becker 1992). Therefore, chapters two through four not only describe two cases of CDC organizing whose paths were similar (ie, which evoked similar community dynamics, and where organizing, if successful, would produce a similar impact on local institutions); they also describe two campaigns where one failed and one succeeded to realize the ambitions they surfaced over time. In each chapter, CDCs are similar in organizational characteristics (size, financial resources, age of the organization, experience in organizing, and overall programmatic activities), and are also in analytically comparable settings (in neighborhood economic, demographic, and political structure. These similarities let me better understand strategies and organizational dynamics that are most conducive to success throughout the CDC context. Setting aside those structural factors not in the control of organizers within CDCs (such as where the CDC is located and its resource flow), this type of comparison lets me examine what other organizational characteristics and organizing strategies are associated with successful work.

Quantitative analysis – linking governance and development practices to outcomes

The second data set I rely upon to explore CDC organizing outcomes is quantitative. To further comparability among sites, and to explore the possibility of correlational analysis, I helped develop questions that were administered online to practitioners in RHICO about organizing efforts and impacts. This instrument developed from an extensive, year-long process I helped facilitate from the summer of 2001 until the summer of 2002, where practitioners attempted to quantify organizing impacts and indicators they believed to be associated with the development of organizational power by CDCs. These were administered to organizing directors about their work during the summer of 2002 and 2003. This instrument is particularly important, as it lets me operationalize this study's dependent variable of "organizing success" across varied sites and neighborhoods. In my concluding chapter, I use analysis of the survey to raise broad thematic issues about the importance of networks in organizing. In my second analysis chapter and in my conclusion, I employ quantitative analysis to supplement analysis of qualitative data. Using different operationalizations of the "dependent variable" of organizing success – 1) leaders engaged in campaigns, 2) active membership associated with campaigns, and 3) resident-driven policy wins – with independent variables associated with internal characteristics of governance and development-related mobilization, I fit these to linear and non-parametric regression models. Although the small-n of the cases raises issues about the replicability of statistical findings[6], the strength of the associations provide additional evidence as to the importance of certain

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[6] For statistical techniques using small sample sizes, see Sheskin 2004.

internal organizational characteristics in winning campaigns and changing political

institutions.

Chapter 2: The Hope for Continuity

In the following three chapters, I move beyond generalizations about the impacts of CDC organizing, and describe in rich detail the choices that six CDCs made as they planned what their campaigns would address, the strategies they employed to try to enact change, the responses of local political institutions to CDC campaigns, and the successes or failures they experienced. Because I am concerned not just with tangible community improvements gained through organizing, but also the effect of CDC organizing on local political institutions, in each chapter I analyze two campaigns in two communities which evoked similar dynamics with other community organizations and state actors. Each chapter describes a specific *path* that CDC organizing takes over time, where two CDCs experiencing resistance (or acceptance) to the campaign, and developed a similar sense of how winning might influence local institutions, either by reinforcing existing dynamics or by changing them in some way.

However, I care not only about paths that campaigns take, and the potential impact of organizing on local institutions, but also about whether or not this impact was actually achieved. Therefore, these chapters not only describe a shared path experienced by CDCs as they organize, but also contrast cases of successful and failed organizing. Using a traditional comparative case methodology (Ragin and Becker, 1980) I chose to bring together in each chapter CDCs that share important structural characteristics – of organization and of neighborhood setting. This analytic strategy therefore will emphasize the importance of differences other than these structural ones, and will explore and

assess factors associated with successful organizing that are more within the realm of individual and collective agency.[7]

Overview of CDC organizing path: "The hope for continuity"

In this chapter, I describe two cases where actors realize that winning the campaign will also help preserve the current direction of community mobilization and neighborhood civic life. I call this campaign path, which becomes apparent to organizers and activists over time, "the hope for continuity." In both instances, actors come to believe that success may not only achieve important resident-defined objectives, but also support desirable existing patterns of inter-organizational cooperation or conflict, and the political institutions that shape these dynamics. I explore the emergence of this path for organizing through the work of the Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation and the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation. In both cases, each CDC's orientation toward organizing found *resonance* with those held by other local actors. JPNDC's organizing, like those of most other community organizations, emphasized both conflict and racial and ethnic difference in its campaign framing and its organizing tactics. CSNDC's orientation toward community, and its vision for community change, also found confluence with local homeowners associations, in emphasizing inter-group conflict, but in downplaying the role of racial difference in this conflict. In both cases, these resonances of vision held out the chance to strengthen existing community systems, and to reinforce local political institutions according to

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[7] i.e., those strategies or organizational characteristics which community organizers and leaders CDCs have a real chance of influencing , and not other issues, such as a CDC's overall monetary resources or its location.

values held by the CDC and its members. As organizing emerged around land use and development of vacant lots in an extremely poor part of Boston's Codman Square, organizers and activists at the Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation (CSNDC) realized that successful creation and implementation of a community plan for development also could strengthen existing ties among local homeowner groups. Similarly, JPNDC's organizing also surfaced the opportunity to strengthen ties among community organizations, by giving them the chance to enact their shared vision for progressive and culturally-conscious community control over development.

As noted above, the second ambition of the chapter is to contrast successful and failed organizing, among CDCs that are similar to each other in certain, largely structural, organizational and neighborhood characteristics – in overall size and resources, in the number of organizing staff, and in the amount and type of non-organizing (ie, development or service) activities. JPNDC and CSNDC are located in the city of Boston, and so participate in a climate generally favorable to neighborhood and CDC interests (Dreier 1996). Both work in low-income neighborhoods inhabited by people of color, although Codman Square has many more African-Americans than does Jamaica Plain, which has more Latinos. Both focus their organizing on yet-ungentrified sections of the neighborhood. In organizational characteristics, both are large CDCs who produce a significant amount of affordable housing, and have relatively large organizing departments – a director and at least two organizers working with him. Both had been conducting community organizing for several years before the campaigns I studied began.

Finding the Hope for Continuity in Codman Square

Context

Codman Square, Dorchester is one of the poorest neighborhoods in Boston. Its

predominantly African-American, and newer, African-Carribean populations have

experienced many aspects of institutionalized racism over time[8]. Like many black

communities that formed during the 1960s in northern US cities, the area between

Washington Street and Blue Hill Avenue was 85% Jewish in 1950, but by the end of the

1960s whites almost entirely left the neighborhood (Gamm 1999). In recent years,

although gentrification has affected the development of Codman Square east of

Washington Street, the still-ungentrified area west of Washington Street still possesses

has many abandoned buildings and vacant lots, with attendant concerns about crime and

safety (Millenium Plan 2000).

Although there are many volunteer, community and civic organizations west of

Washington – including several black fraternal organizations from a more prosperous era

for Boston's African-American middle class[9] – local organizational life is significantly

shaped by the largest and most powerful of these professionally-staffed groups: the

Codman Square Health Center, and the Codman Square Neighborhood Development

Corporation (CSNDC) (site visit 2002). During the late 1990s, these two organizations

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[8] For a history of the neighborhood, changes that occurred in it, and the role of banks and other institutions
in fostering these changes, see Gerald Gamm (1999), *Why the Jews left Boston and the Catholics Stayed.*
[9] In the local Syria Temple, Masonic murals depict the order's medieval traditions, and also evoke a
different era of black middle-class life in Boston – by a curved scimitar appears the legend "oasis of
Boston, desert of Massachusetts."

partnered to create a "millennium plan," bringing together community members and staff at local organizations to identify areas of local concern. This plan identified the area west of Washington Street and bordered by Norfolk and Talbot streets as an area where vacant lots were rife, and where affordable housing development might make a positive contribution to neighborhood revitalization. Emerging from this development goal and from the Millenium planning process (Lattimore, site visit 2003), CSNDC's RHICO initiative proposed a program for community organizing around land use in what they called the "Norfolk Triangle" area.

Planning a partisan-advocate campaign

Although community planning is sometimes characterized by consensus-building and broad participation (Healey 1997), CSNDC initially conducted community planning in a way that emphasized conflict – illuminating tensions between resident interests and other groups, identifying targets for challenge, and considering the use of contentious tactics. This orientation emerged from staff's analysis of conditions in the Norfolk Triangle, from the biographies of organizing participants, and was re-enforced by internal organizational dynamics. For Carlos Rosales, the NDC's lead organizer in the Norfolk Triangle[10], experiences as a tenant organizer suggested a mode of organizing that identified viable targets for challenge. Defeating these targets would help build power and credibility for the NDC and for residents of local groups who worked with it (interview 6.02). In other ways, NDC staff analysis of community dynamics also informed the campaign's emphasis on conflict and its de-emphasis of racial difference.

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[10] Respect for Rosales within the RHICO program was reflected by his inclusion in the program's steering committee.

Although practitioners believed that racism shaped disparities between Codman Square and the rest of Boston, *within* the community, CSNDC staff often viewed struggles to be self-promoting, parochial, and economically-self serving. For example, a frustration of the NDC's then-development director, Lisa Davis, was that the CDC was challenged to "stay out" of a portion of the neighborhood, in part because the president of a resident association claiming moral turf in that section was a for-profit developer whom she believed might benefit personally from their absence (RHICO peer session 4.02). As a result, development staff sought to counterbalance what they perceived to be the self-interest of homeowners groups who often spoke out against new affordable housing development, by working with residents who could support the NDC's vision and about the need for affordable rental housing (site visit 2002)[11].

For the NDC's director of organizing, Marcos Beleche, the campaign and the community's de-emphasis of race was the product of organization-building by white professionals and activists. Although interested in having organizing address issues of race, he observed with frustration that it was difficult to voice these claims given the nature of local political and service system dynamics. Speaking of one community organization in particular, he said:

> It's very interesting. It's one white male who really controls it. The president is West Indian, but that's not where the power lies. It's kind of like in the Valley in Texas, where you have all these Latino Mayors, and it's a white City Manager [who really was in charge]. Some of us our more attuned to it, in part because of our own experiences: you decide when you can fight it, and when you can't and what have you. [In Codman Square] there's a dynamic of white people doing for black people and black people benefiting. (interview 1.04)

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[11] As suggested by the homeowner/renter divide, while class issues among blacks in the Norfolk Triangle and elsewhere within Codman Square may have been an important creator of factionalism, the NDC's organizing did not try to make class an important category of analysis, either.

Strategy: Mobilizing Organizing against Development

Although the impetus for CSNDC's campaign – community organizing around issues of neighborhood development that the CDC could assist and carry out – predicated collaboration between organizing and development staff, this collaboration did not occur during the early months of the campaign. Over the first few months of his work, Rosales often felt pitted against development department objectives, in a way that assumed little possibility for shared ground between them. In discussing early campaign challenges, Rosales first suggested that the major one was 'internal,' in that he needed to overcome as an organizer what he perceived to be the history of skepticism around the NDC's development within the neighborhood: "Even though we say we work with the neighborhood, the challenge is that it doesn't really happen. It's not enough just to say that…we want a way to show that what we're saying is true." (interview 7.02)

Early in the campaign, some organizers voiced the view that it was impossible to be an affordable housing developer and also "for the community" at the same time, a feeling that its new director of organizing, Marcos Beleche, attributed in part to the organizing department's sense of relative esteem within the organization (Beleche interview 12.02). In part because of this perception of internal power imbalances, Rosales and other staff assumed in the first months of the campaign that there was little chance for them to directly influence the NDC's development agenda. For example, during campaign planning, organizing staff identified as the most crucial issue to them, "How will we manage tensions when development seizes opportunities that may conflict with organizing work?," a question whose very framing assumed (at the time) that this pre-emptive action by development would in fact occur. By the end of six months of

organizing, Beleche reflected on ongoing challenges of bringing together the work of the

two departments:

> The most challenging aspects to resident involvement in development activities include the external timelines within which development opportunities arise that require our CDC to respond. Added to this is the lack of access and influence on the part of organizing and development to the processes that determine these time frames. Related to this is the lack of an internal "process" that can be superimposed on any external time frame to effectively and efficiently identify resident roles within any development activity. Residents too lack the type of relationship with the external powers that be to effectively influence time frames and policies that create such development opportunities. (End of year reflections 2002)

Ambitions for the Campaign Emerge

A major early concern for CSNDC was that previously-organized residents would

oppose the goals of any new group, undermining its claims at legitimacy. Staff at

different positions within the NDC were particularly concerned that residents affiliated

with ACORN's local chapter (whose organizers had previously charged that the NDC

was an unresponsive property owner of vacant lots) would mobilize against any efforts to

move into ACORN's territory. During the early months of the campaign, Rosales said

that he feared ACORN's earlier targeting of the NDC would make it more difficult for

him to help residents target inspectional services around vacant lots.

These concerns turned out to be less important than initially imagined. Over time,

staff spoke significantly less about inter-organizational conflict. Instead, Rosales found

himself supporting the agendas of local resident associations, with whom organizing

found strong connections. After sporadic attendance by Norfolk Triangle residents at

monthly meetings, Rosales spoke in an interview of having developed a "new model for

organizing within the Norfolk Triangle," (8.1.02), sparked by the recent attendance of

members of the adjoining Torey Street and Thetford Street Resident Association. Seeing that these groups were oriented toward contesting local development (for example, the expansion of an auto body repair shop in the neighborhood), an objective that he also supported, Rosales did outreach on behalf of these groups around street repair issues, around the proposed expansion of an autobody repair shop, and around other issues such as mailbox drop locations in and around the Norfolk Triangle.

Over time, Rosales and others felt that working with these organizations would re-invigorate existing structures of community civic engagement. Early in the campaign, Rosales noted that the most powerful one of these, the West of Washington association, had strong and acknowledged leadership, but was sometimes unable to turn residents out to attend meetings with public officials. Although the scaffolding for interorganizational collaboration was already present – Codman Square had a Council of Neighborhood Organizations – Rosales felt that making the Council's member associations more engaged, more open, and more active would help fuel positive coalition work by the council. Other staff and board members shared this view of the potential benefits of organizing. During a site visit, a board member spoke of the Council as a group that "would like to do organizing, but they've never felt like they have any human capital to bring to bear." (10.03). In the same forum, Davis referred to the "gatekeeping" function of many neighborhood groups, and with it ways that organizing could overcome this among local groups through inspiration and example, while still retaining local structures for participation such as the Council.

What happened – the early campaign regroups

Seeing the need to "win" not only externally but within the organization, Rosales hoped to make housing development strategies more directly influenced by resident participation. To build the power and influence of organized residents within the CDC, in a strategy that partly mirrored the conflict-oriented stance of its organizing in the neighborhood, Rosales attempted to create moments where the NDC's development activities *itself* became a target and point of engagement for neighborhood outreach. In this strategy, Rosales would flyer the neighborhood announcing that the NDC was planning to develop projects in the neighborhood, and invited comment from neighbors. Rosales's hope was that local residents would come out for or against these proposals, and would continue to be engaged afterward. For Rosales, the substance of the proposal was less important than the fact of participation. At the same time, Rosales hoped to have the executive director make public commitments as to the role residents would play in Norfolk Triangle development, to expand the focus of organizing work to areas outside the Triangle, and to include the need for green space and parks in the NDC's traditional development.

But an a priori commitment to resident control of NDC development was difficult for the its executive or development director to make, given the fact that neither the NDC nor other local groups had successfully done so in the past, and the fact that there was not a substantial number of residents working with the NDC to lend enough legitimacy to their voice. In efforts to influence the NDC's internal processes, Rosales was not helped by the fact that neither the NDC, nor other community organizations around the Norfolk Triangle, had yet a strong enough membership base to overcome opposition within contentious and sometimes-personalized neighborhood forums. As a result of this history,

internal changes occurred slowly within the NDC, which in turn frustrated organizers, who felt unable to promise residents influence in the organization[12].

During the early months of the campaign, the NDC struggled to define the scope and meaning of its work with members of the resident associations around Norfolk Triangle Development, even though resident leaders remained interested in collaboration. For example, at one meeting I attended, a leader from the West of Washington group (which was not directly engaged with Norfolk Triangle organizing) asked directly what the new organization the NDC was trying to form "was," a question Rosales was unable to answer. This hesitation appeared to stem from feeling unable to promise residents that their voice would hold sway over neighborhood development as practiced by the NDC. During the early months of the campaign, only a few residents attended, leading Beleche to cancel the November meeting. Also during this time, development staff voiced frustration over the lack of development opportunities or other concrete neighborhood improvements that sprung from organizing (Davis was interested also in any other type of housing-related work, such as a code-enforcement campaign).

During this time, Beleche attempted to change the tone of organizing, to de-emphasize the development of short-term targets for winnable action (as he put it, always asking "who is the bad guy, who is the evil guy" (site visit 2003), for several reasons. First, he believed that CDCs who organized needed to do both development-oriented and also more "reflective" campaigns. Arguing that "organizing within the CDC context means seeing more than one side to the coin" (interview 12.02), he felt that the NDC should be open about its interest in affordable housing development, and interact with

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[12] In my second analysis chapter (six), I note that the NDC made internal improvements in the area of interdepartmental coordination, with very positive effects for the course of the campaign.

residents with the knowledge that "it could be us [what residents control or advocate through the CDC's activities] or it could be something else" that occurs in their neighborhood. Second, Beleche thought that Rosales's orientation toward conflict, which also worked to make the NDC's development a target, was not an effective organizational change strategy. Beleche reported that Rosales often focused on a lack of commitment from development toward organizing and resident control, but that Beleche also assessed that the organizing department as a whole may not have pushed back enough during ordinary interactions with the development department – a strategy which might have achieved greater success.

Instead, the mode of asking development to propose projects "simply for the purpose of organizing against it, to stir things up" (interview 12.02) by forming an independent power base in the neighborhood was no substitute for encountering differences within the agency on a staff level. In part, Beleche traced this strategy of building an external base to a sense of powerlessness within the organizing department, saying, "If you don't believe [change] can happen, it's going to be hard" (interview 12.02). Beleche was also concerned that the willingness of the small cadre of local leaders associated with the other neighborhood groups to work with the NDC may have made it more attractive to continue that inter-organizational work than pursuing extensive basebuilding and leadership development outside of this group. This lack of new leadership and participation led the NDC to retool and reassess its basebuilding and outreach strategy during the summer of 2003, and to rethink the relationship between organizing and development in ways that could prove to be more successful for the campaign it undertook.

Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation: Achieving Continuity

Context

Located on the other side of Boston's Franklin Park from Codman Square, Jamaica Plain is, like many parts of Dorchester, a dense, traditionally working class neighborhood. Spanning from Olmstead's Jamaica Pond on the west to Franklin Park on the east, the census reports that one quarter of JP households are Latino, whose poverty nearly doubles that of local whites, at nearly 28% (BRA 2000). Latinos have been especially pressured rising rents, and by the conversion of triple-deckers to luxury cooperatives and condos. Like Codman Square, JP is home to many neighborhood and civic organizations, but these groups tend to be more mobilized generally, and contribute to JP's deserved reputation as a bastion of progressive life in Boston.

Formed in 1977 by residents combating the creation of a Southwest expressway through Jamaica Plain and Roxbury, JPNDC has retained this activist orientation toward issues of economic disenfranchisement, racism, and residential displacement, even as its program areas have expanded over time to include economic development through job training and placement, support to small business owners, and assistance to child care providers. In 1998, JPNDC partnered with the membership organization City Life/Vida Urbana to initiate the "Campaign of Conscience," a multi-pronged attempt to address gentrification in Jamaica Plain. Seeing home and rental prices rise dramatically after the end of Boston's rent control in 1995, followed by the economic boom of the late 1990s, JPNDC's membership and board believed that they needed to reach beyond traditional

affordable housing development activities and use additional tools and resources to fight

gentrification through organizing. Said Joe Allen, a JPNDC board member about the

origins of the campaign:

> While we're able to develop some units, still we see people leaving every day who live in this community, particularly in the Latino community who have been supportive of these efforts and are victims of our successes in previous years – in developing the orange line [the MBTA rail that replaced the Southwest Expressway takings], and in other activities. And so out of frustration, almost, we needed to create some place to gather to discuss these issues…to invite people into this (site visit 2002).

The Campaign of Conscience involved tenant organizing, the formation of

resident-owned cooperatives, mobilization to designate city and state-owned vacant land

for affordable housing, and organizing to preserve expiring-use properties. During the

period during which I observed JPNDC's organizing, its coalition work shifted to de-

emphasize formal structures of the Campaign of Conscience, and to emphasize legislative

and electoral work through the Coalition to Educate, Mobilize and Vote (CEMV). This

coalition involved not only City Life/Vida Urbana, but also several other local

organizations, including the Hyde Square Taskforce and the Bromley-Heath tenants

association. The CEMV campaign developed candidate forums, built relationships with

potential voters over time and conducted targeted outreach on the day of elections,

practiced political education about issues impacted by local voting, and otherwise

mobilized in support of progressive educational and affordable housing policies on the

city and state level.

Planning an "agonistic, pluralistic" campaign[13]

JPNDC's initial planning for the Campaign of Conscience emphasized protest and challenge-oriented strategies, as well as its broader framing around racial and economic justice. Consistent both with the NDC's founding in mobilized action against freeway construction, and with current patterns of neighborhood organizational engagement, the NDC continued to employ contentious tactics that also emphasized disparities experienced by Latinos in Jamaica Plain during the period I observed. These underlying values inform strategies of JPNDC's organizing, and also become an especially important part of the NDC's identity as it interacts with other local groups. Although its coalition partners and their constituents differ in some aspects of orientation toward neighborhood intervention[14], they work within broad terms of agreement about the sources and solutions to the urban crisis – believing it to be rooted in structural inequalities and addressed through political action for working class people of color, through the creation and preservation of affordable housing, and by fostering community-owned and culturally diverse economic ventures.

The early months of the Campaign of Conscience established this pattern of visible protest and disruptive action, when NDC staff and leaders moved against real estate offices they identified as accomplices to housing speculation, interrupting office activity until some members were arrested for trespassing. They also organized protests outside the homes and businesses of landlords identified as unscrupulous, to highlight the need for affordable housing and to create a sense urgency around JP's affordable housing

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[13] See chapter 6 for more on this term.
[14] For example, the Hyde Square Taskforce has criticized affordable housing development without associated resident services (Smith interview 6.03).

crisis. Both staff and activists valued these early actions for what they accomplished.

Reflected Harry Smith, JPNDC's organizing director, about the early successes of the

campaign, "partly through targeting realtors and other speculators, we feel we've created

the expectation that outright speculation will be met with protest. We may show up at

your house (Smith 8.02)." At a site visit in late 2002 (six months into the organizing I

observed), a board member reflected positively on the ways that these protests were

joyous and affirming to the organization and the nascent campaign, speaking of creative

chants and the impression they made on his young son[15] (site visit 2002). As a result of

its own assessment of successful practice, and strengthened by its continued coalition

work with agencies of similar ideological cast, JPNDC continued to plan and execute

confrontational events.

I observed these strategies emerge most often in the area of electoral and

legislative organizing, where JPNDC staff and residents sought to define culturally-

resonant targets over the course of its policy work and voter outreach. For example, in

2002, the elimination of bilingual education was on the state ballot, an issue around

which they mobilized hundreds of members in a visible demonstration before the vote

(which passed resoundingly statewide, disheartening local activists). Similarly, in the

early months of the campaign, re-establishing legislation around rent protections was a

goal for coalition members. During a planning session for a candidate's forum, I

observed a resident leader argue successfully for the most forceful delivery of questions

to candidates that they could deliver: "When we ask questions, we should be explicit

about what we want and what we should expect to hear." As he continued, he said "we

should give them real challenges, so that if they don't answer it right, we won't be

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[15] "Austin O'Connor, Where's Your Honor" and "Austin O'Connor, Don't be a Piranha."

interested in voting for them," and suggested that instead of asking whether they generally supported rent control, that they ask the pointed question, "what features should rent control have." (8.21.02) During this candidates session and other events with elected officials, JPNDC and coalition partners pressed local legislators to be more forceful in advocating for policies within City Council and State House leadership, and in doing so often interrupted hesitating or obtuse answers from their elected officials. At one event in April 2003, residents booed their council member for his opposition to rent control legislation, as Richard Thal, the NDC's executive director, chastised local elected officials in front of more than two hundred people, saying to them that "we're here to say not how tough the times are, but to see what we as a community can do," and that CEMV aims to "challenge each person [ie, legislator] in this room, not to be spectators, but to see what we in this room can do" (April 2003).

Strategy: Extensive collaboration between CDC departments, openness and activism of CDC governance

Much of JPNDC's organizing aimed to control vacant lots for affordable housing development, or to form limited-equity cooperative housing for tenants of distressed properties. These areas might naturally involve real estate staff in campaign work. However, as was witnessed by CSNDC's organizing, these collaborations do not always occur successfully. In contrast, JPNDC coordinated extensively between organizing and development departments. After eight months of organizing, Smith reflected:

> Organizing has continued to play a leading role in all of JPNDC's development projects. Organizers and real estate staff coordinate on every existing and proposed project, developing joint strategies and carrying out community outreach together. Our strong community presence gives us a competitive

advantage over other developers when we compete for public land. (end of year report 2002).

The NDC attributes the success of *all* its housing development and preservation activities to organizing that demands disposition of vacant lots, pushes zoning and permitting bodies to accommodate new affordable housing projects, and strategizes with tenants around co-operative housing formation. Within the NDC, collaborative work is made easier by biographical and ideological affinities between real estate and organizing departments – all of JPNDC's real estate development staff were community organizers earlier in their careers. However, while shared convictions and experiences in successful collaboration formed the basis for interdepartmental coordination, staff and leaders also attempted to achieve new levels of accountability in both development processes and the governance activities that controlled them. Claiming some value for sparking conflict within the agency, Smith said that "Our strategy is to force the issue," for example, making the argument to board and development that "Domingo [a mono-lingual Spanish speaker and new board member] is coming along next. How will you deal with language *and* vocabulary issues with him?" (interview 8.21.02) For example, during the time period I studied, the NDC's development and organizing departments worked to include non-board leaders in development committees, and pushed development meetings not just to adopt bilingual meetings but also by establishing non-technical development jargon for those new to its specific vocabulary. During the time I observed the NDC, organizers also worked with economic development staff to increase community ownership and control over job training programs, worked with childcare providers to develop a campaign for housing in which they could also practice their business, engaged

graduates of homebuyer classes in local advocacy around land disposition, and involved

small business owners in policy and campaign work.

For many reasons, including a perception that organizing does in fact "deliver"

affordable housing to the neighborhood, strategies to coordination mobilization and

development have found substantial support within JPNDC's board of directors, and re-

enforces their own disposition to adopt more inclusive development practices.

Furthermore, many board members became active in the NDC through involvement in

the Campaign of Conscience. During an early site visit, German Tejada, a board member,

commented on the tangible gains that can be attributed to organizing, and the ways that

this fostered an identity of participation within the agency as a whole:

> Rockvale Terrace (a 15-unit development) is happening in large measure because
> people organize. So, for us, as an agency, recognizing that yes we're about
> development, about job creation, but really, the bedrock of what we do is about
> reaching out to the community.....developing new leadership. That's what CDCs
> are about from our standpoint. (site visit 2002).

This board and organization-wide commitment to mobilization also helped JPNDC's

executive director, Richard Thal, take visible stands on difficult and contested issues.

During the time period I observed, Thal spoke at several public meetings, including

several in which local public officials were sharply challenged and criticized. Harry

Smith, JPNDC's organizing director, found this to be a very important component of

organizational credibility. Captured in my field notes, Smith said:

> Richard is involved in the campaign – he speaks and is involved. Says that a
> director's presence is needed to make it central – and he also lets them develop
> enemies; they've protested realtors, city hall, investors, which can be "dangerous
> work" – the whole organization needs to be engaged – they can't do it half way.
> (8.21.02)

Ambitions for the Campaign Emerge

Over the period I observed of NDC organizing, many of the formal coordinating

structures of the Campaign of Conscience dissolved. While the NDC continued

organizing activities formerly done under the umbrella of the Campaign of Conscience,[16]

it took additional interest in legislative policy and electoral work. Smith articulated the

need for policy work with the analysis, "the problem of gentrification didn't start here

and it won't end here," (8.21.02) seeing the need for city and statewide policies that could

help move the fight beyond building-by-building organizing and development strategies

to affect neighborhood patterns of neighborhood development as a whole. Significantly,

the *way* JPNDC proceeded with this goal made the NDC even more deeply embedded in

coalition work, even as it de-emphasized formal coalition work during the Campaign of

Conscience. During the summer and fall of 2002, it expanded coalition activity to interact

more extensively with the Hyde Square Task Force and the Bromley-Heath Tenants

Council in the formation of the Coalition to Educate, Mobilize, and Vote. Wrote Smith at

the end of 2002:

> Our campaigns around 1,000 Affordable Homes and Voter Mobilization have
> strengthened existing relationship with organizations in the neighborhood. Our
> voter mobilization work has built on the already strong relationship between Hyde
> Square Task Force, City Life and JPNDC and taken it to a new level. Staff and
> leaders of the three organizations meet on a regular basis to discuss the campaign.
> We held a planning retreat of staff from the three organizations in December to
> plan 2003 activities around voter mobilization and education. In addition we
> were able to develop closer relationships with other JP groups, most notably
> Bromley-Heath TMC, which coordinated their voter outreach activities with ours.
> (End of year report 2002).

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[16] This included tenant organizing, work around public land and vacant lot disposition, and tenant
organizing around coop formation.

Building coalition capacity to mobilize around racial and economic justice

became an especially important goal for JPNDC, given the ways that gentrification

threatened to change both the constituency of local organizations, and form new ones to

challenge affordable housing development, tenant organizing, and other policies or

actions the NDC valued. Over the course of time I observed its work, JPNDC organizers

found growing resistance to affordable development, even in areas where its base was the

strongest:

> This year saw an increase in the participation of organized groups of neighbors in
> community planning meetings opposing the creation of affordable housing. As JP
> continues to become gentrified we anticipate more battles with neighbors around
> the siting of affordable housing. Although we were victorious in most of the
> neighborhood battles, our experience this year only reinforces the need for a
> deeper pool of homebuyers and tenants who are prepared to participate in
> community planning processes (end of year 2002).

On several occasions, organizers remarked to me that streets were becoming very

different as new residents moved in, and that the neighborhood they knew was changing.

*What happened – Successes build JP's local political and inter-organizational
institutions*

In the area of affordable housing development, the NDC's organizing through its

organizing and development subcommittees were able to help the NDC overcome abutter

resistance in local projects, become the designee for affordable housing development in

Jackson Square, a large area of public land. Residents held a community meeting for

affordable housing around city-sponsored planning, and celebrated the formation of

cooperative housing. The same organizing committees that had worked on these

campaigns also did significant work with CEMV. For example, for the 2002 primary

election, they placed more than 4,000 informational flyers in the hands of individuals,

phoned 1,500 registered voters in the Hyde-Jackson Square area, and contributed to an

increased voter turnout of 54% over 1998 elections in the seven precincts targeted.

During the same period, the coalition held several highly-successful candidates' forums

that pressed commitments around education and affordable housing from every

individual running for state representative. For the general election, according to Smith,

the NDC:

> distributed 8,000 informational flyers and phoned 2,500 registered voters in
> thirteen precincts in Hyde/Jackson/Egleston Squares. We covered eight polling
> stations on election day. In all more than 75 volunteers participated in the effort.
> Voter turnout increased 34% over 1998 elections in targeted precincts, with 59%
> turnout (end of year report 2002).

In 2002 on the policy front, the only state legislators who filed rent control

legislation (backing the abortive attempt to enact a home rule petition stemming from

Boston) were from Jamaica Plain, although these legislators were unable to push the

legislation forward. Smith reflected that JP was helping produce "a little machine" for

affordable housing, one that was able to challenge once comfortable elected officials

around policy needs:

> The dramatic increases in voter turnout in our targeted areas have caused tensions
> with elected officials who now face a higher level of unpredictability when
> seeking reelection. Many elected officials have been openly supportive of our
> efforts but we have also detected nervousness and defensiveness on the part of
> some political leaders. One example of this tension is the vote that City
> Councilor John Tobin cast against the Mayor's proposed rent stabilization bill,
> which was strongly supported by JPNDC and City Life. In the days leading up to
> the vote we mobilized more than 200 residents to call his office in support of the
> legislation. When he voted against, many residents called to complain. We also
> printed a letter to the editor signed by 10 groups criticizing his vote. This
> aggressive campaign has caused some tension, but it has also sent a strong signal
> to Councilor Tobin that the affordable housing issue has broad community
> support. (end of year report 2002).

In the summer 2003, also around CEMV, JPNDC did outreach and mobilization for the

Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council race, doubling voter turnout and resulting in

significant turnover, the election of many people of color, and the election of several

youth leaders to that body (which is charged with advising the city on development

decisions). Over 30 individuals ran for 20 slots, and of the thirteen new candidates who

ran, all were elected. Although the NDC did not support specific candidates, it did

encourage many to run, and as a result of mobilization, Smith felt "A lot of the old guard

woke up this morning and aren't on the neighborhood council" (interview 6.03). Later

that year, in Boston's city elections, targeted outreach increased voter turnout by 56%

compared to a city-wide increase of only 13% (end of year report 2003). These efforts

were particularly significant, as they contributed to the first year in which turnout from

Boston's more progressive neighborhoods outstripped voting in conservative South

Boston, a fact that contributed to at-large the re-election of Felix Arroyo (Boston's first

Latino councilman) and Maura Hennigan, another progressive councilmember-at-large

During this time, CEMV activity reinforced the ability of local progressive

organizations to coordinate complex campaign work. Smith reflected that this dynamic

was helped in part by the ways that each group respected the strengths and constituencies

of its coalition partners. Said Smith:

> I think that we are fortunate to operate in the environment we're operating in, and
> we've had a role in creating the environment we're operating in. JP has the
> reputation, well-deserved, for having progressive views in a lot of
> issues…Certainly that makes it easier for us, because one of the reasons the NDC
> has been success is that we don't bully our way into things that we're not the
> primary group doing it. We don't go and hire youth workers, just because we need
> a youth worker…In JP, you can't do that – it's hard to collaborate with groups
> you're competing with. We don't directly step on each other's toes. There's that

understanding and relationships have been built over the years. You look at successful collaborations, and it's not like, let's re-invent the wheel. (1.04)

In these ways, CEMV not only helped deepen each organization's constituencies as they worked with residents to build relationships around voting and political empowerment, but also helped reinforce the structure of neighborhood organizational life, as it extended these relationships along the lines of each group's traditional programmatic activities.

Review and preliminary analysis

How "the hope for continuity" emerged

Chapters two through four of the thesis have two aims. First, they illustrate a path that CDC organizing may take, by looking at two campaigns which sparked parallel community dynamics. These dynamics helped actors involved in both campaigns to develop a similar sense of the impact campaigns might have on local political institutions. As both JPNDC and CSNDC's campaigns progressed, actors saw an opportunity to win community improvements, while also strengthening local political institutions – to achieve desirable "continuity" in civic life. As it started its campaign, the Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation was concerned that other community organizations and homeowners groups would move to disrupt their attempts at leadership development and mobilization. In practice, they found the opposite to be true: that residents in other neighborhood organizations shared fundamental values with CSNDC, especially in their contentious orientation toward development projects, and in the ways

that they tended to down-play issues of racial and ethnic difference in issues of community politics. The NDC's organizer, Carlos Rosales, sought to help homeowner groups contest unwanted development around an autobody repair shop. At the same time that he supported the agenda of these groups, he also hoped that activists would support his own contentious agenda: to challenge the NDC's own development department to become more responsive to community concerns.

Because of these shared interests, as the NDC explored in practice what local organizing meant, it discovered that successful work could help build local political institutions that allowed for coalition work around the control of development projects. That is, by strengthening the capacity of local organizations, it hoped to strengthen the Codman Square Council of Neighborhood organizations to operate on the same model. In these ways, similarly-held views by the CDC and other community organizations meant that "winning" the campaign – successfully implementation of a vision for planning and development in the Norfolk Triangle – would create desirable *continuity* in political institutions and in inter-group patterns of interaction (as I describe below, they were unable to attain this goal at first).

Like CSNDC, the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation's organizing vision found wide resonance among other community organizations. JPNDC's orientation toward organizing emphasized the ways that gentrification affects low-income Latinos, by challenging in direct and contentious ways the embodiment of these market forces. For example, projecting and enacting this vision for community meant that NDC staff and leaders targeted realtors for direct action, when they believed their practices encouraged housing speculation in the neighborhood, and involved other actions. City

Life/Vida Urbana, the Hyde Square Taskforce, and Bromley-Heath collaborate with

JPNDC in part because they share this radical vision for community, even if the bulk of

the work they do in involves more traditional service delivery activities.

Even when the rationale for its initial coalition with City Life/Vida Urbana

dissolved, these ties helped JPNDC expand its collaborative work with other community

organizations. Through the coalition work that emerged from these shared values, they

formed the Campaign to Educate, Mobilize, and Vote, which in turn enhanced the ability

of community organizations in JP to collaborate and to "divide labor" among ongoing

projects. In these ways, organizing in JP also surfaced "the hope for continuity" – a

chance to strengthen ties among local groups, while also using those ties to make Jamaica

Plain's local elected officials and its political institutions (such as the neighborhood

development council) even more responsive to residents in this vision of racial justice.

What made the difference between success and failure

The second ambition of the chapter is to begin to describe organizational

characteristics and strategies that helped make the difference between success and failure

in CDC organizing. As I argue throughout these chapters, success in campaigns has a

secondary impact upon political institutions, by strengthening existing patterns of conflict

or co-operation, or by changing in some way the terms by which groups interact with

each other. Although both CSNDC and JPNDC saw over time that winning might

strengthen existing local institutions, only JPNDC's campaign was successful. That is,

although both JPNDC's and CSNDC's organizing was set on a similar *path,* only

JPNDC's campaign realized its ambition to strengthen local institutions, thereby achieving "the hope for continuity."

Both CDCs were possessed of similar organizational characteristics – in terms of overall CDC size, resources, and the shared political context of Boston[17]. Significant differences, however, emerged in the ways that CDCs were able to coordinate between departments, use community development activities to mobilize constituents, coordinate between organizing and development departments, and bring activists into the very workings of the CDC. For example, although the organizing department entered the Norfolk Triangle in part because development opportunities existed there, Rosales felt cautious about engaging residents in development processes that they might not in fact control. He also felt demoralized by what he believed to be internal power imbalances between CSNDC's organizing and development. As a result of this sense of division within the agency, he adopted a strategy of using potential development plans as "targets" for community protest and engagement, which was somewhat confusing to residents and also did not foster internal organizational change. CSNDC's lack of coordination between organizing and development departments was counterproductive, as the CDC attempted to implement a campaign around planning and development goals.

For JPNDC, in contrast, collaboration between organizing and development departments promoted resident control and shaped the direction of development opportunities. In direct ways – bringing the resources and technical capacities of the development department to organizing-defined projects, and also bringing articulate and committed residents to local fights around control and preservation of properties – it

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[17] For more detailed consideration of alternative explanations about the difference between success and failure, see chapter six.

helped it create co-operative housing, control vacant lots for new development, and preserve affordability in expiring use buildings. In part because all of the NDC's staff had been organizers at former points in their careers, they were especially concerned in creating opportunities for residents to become involved and development-related components of their campaigns. Development staff spoke Spanish, were able to conceptualize campaigns with organizers, and provided tactical advice to committees around development-related campaigns. Organizers and developers worked also together to create within board and decision-making processes greater opportunities for community control of development, and to inspire activist participation and leadership development through regular committee processes.

In addition to providing a large and committed base of members and leaders for JPNDC's political and electoral organizing, this activism within JPNDC's governance helped the CDC work in coalition with other activist membership organizations in Jamaica Plain, and to bring many dedicated and competent community leaders to the coalitions in which they participated. Although CEMV in itself represented a risk for the community organizations involved, because it put to the test the efficacy of their shared commitments to racial and economic justice, the successful electoral organizing it conducted strengthened the ties these groups had with each other, and advanced their ability to do strategic work within the JP community.

Chapter 3: The Chance for Growth

Overview of "the chance for growth"

This chapter illustrates the campaign path I call *growth*, where winning the campaign may adjust – but not fundamentally alter – the ways that local organizations interact with each other and their constituents. As staff and residents encounter other community groups and state actors, they experience fierce resistance to the claims associated with the CDC's organizing. Although this resistance poses challenges to organizing, actors realize that this resistance also signals an opportunity. As CDC staff and activists interact with other community organizations and with government agencies, they realize that political institutions are threatened by the campaign, its demands, and the ways that these demands are framed. As this occurs, CDCs also understand that winning the campaign creates the opportunity to adjust the terms of local discourse. Either sparked by an appreciation of the CDC's power and efficacy, or forced directly by the CDC, other political and community actors may change their practices and the ways they relate to each other.

At the same time, in this chapter – and in contrast with the next – CDCs realize that even if they were to win the campaign, they would not be able to fundamentally adjust the practices of other groups and the terms of local interaction. In my first analysis chapter (five), I trace the origin of the path that the campaign takes, and with it its opportunity to change local political institutions, *to the CDC's shifting orientation toward community*. In "the chance for growth," a CDC's broad vision about community, the

campaign that flowed from this vision, and that tactics that resulted from its orientation toward community are initially very dissonant with those held and embodied in practice by other community organizations, elected officials, and administrative agencies. As a result of this dissonance, CDCs encountered significant opposition during the campaign. However, because both CDCs also adjusted their *own* tactics as a result of opposition, they did not persist in demanding that these institutions be completely restructured – that groups completely change existing practices and patterns of inter-group interaction, or that state actors fundamentally change patterns of participation. Instead, they saw the chance to force important shifts in these areas, even if they could not be completely changed.

Because I am not merely interested in the potential that a campaign has to enact change, but also the factors that lead to successful attainment of these ambitions, in this chapter I again compare a successful and a failed case of organizing. In this goal, the Asian CDC and the Somerville Community Corporation are fruitfully paired for several reasons. Both CDCs were new to community organizing, although staff sometimes held significant experience in it. In geographic and programmatic focus, both CDCs had citywide mandates, although they concentrated on a single neighborhood. In governance, both boards of directors drew largely from well-regarded social service and policy professionals. And while Chinatown is different in demography and culture than Union Square, in terms of local political institutions, both Boston and Somerville had progressive mayors at the head of a 'strong-mayor' system of government. In ways that related directly to dynamics in the campaigns, however, the scope both mayor's progressivism was limited by structural weaknesses in city finance and by ties to business

interests. Finally, both organizations were possessed of highly-reflective and strategically-minded staff – a virtue that allowed both to adjust their campaigns when they encountered significant resistance from elected officials and from other community organizations.

Somerville Community Corporation: Seeing the Chance for Growth

Context

Somerville is a city of approximately 77,000 (Census 2000). It is bordered by the wealthier city of Cambridge to the south, by Boston's Charlestown to the east, and by the working-class suburbs of Arlington and Medford to the west and north. Largely developed in the 1920s, Somerville is the most densely-populated city in New England – a distinction achieved not by prevalence of high-rise development but instead by its lack of parks and open space (EPA 2000). In most Somerville neighborhoods, triple-deckers, single-family homes, and small multi-family rental units stand side by side on small lots. The end of rent control in Cambridge and housing inflation in the Boston metropolitan area increased rents and housing values dramatically in the late 1990s and early 2000s. For example, Somerville experienced a 20% increase for single family homes from 2001-2002 alone (CHAPA 2004).

Although recent gentrification has fueled demographic shifts in some neighborhoods, the city remains home to many recent immigrants employed in low-wage service industries. Successive immigrant waves – Irish and Portuguese families, and later,

Brazilian, Haitian, Latino, and South Asians – have made Somerville an especially

diverse city. According to the 2000 census, approximately 52,000 residents were born in

the United States or its territories, while 23,000 were born elsewhere. In many ways,

immigrant groups experienced the brunt of impacts brought on by contrasts of rent

inflation over service wages. In 2000, the census-calculated poverty rate for immigrants

in Somerville was 14%, compared to 11% for non-immigrants and 6% for the entire

Boston metropolitan area. Most poor immigrants were non-naturalized and ineligible for

public benefits (Census 2000).

Somerville has often attempted to incorporate immigrant groups by supporting

community and ethnic organizations, a process made easier by its strong-mayor system of

government and the vestiges of a machine political culture[18]. At the time that SCC started

organizing, Dorothy Kelly Gay, a progressive Democrat, leader within the Massachusetts

Democratic Party and former candidate for Lieutenant Governor, had been serving her

second full 2-year term as Mayor. Kelly Gay presided over a regime with deep ties to

progressive community and ethnic organizations, but which had also been unsettled by

strong conflicts with them. One directory search lists over 250 nonprofits in Somerville,

many of which share and coordinate work with a city hall "captured" by their issues. For

example, in environmental issues, City and membership organizations advocated jointly

for the expansion of its bike path; its Human Rights Initiative advances in collaboration

and in broad support from many local groups. At the same time, economic development

priorities fueled by the Somerville's lack of commercial tax base set the ground for

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[18] In the neighborhood in which SCC organized, one symbol of this public support as extended to new groups over time is in a large display for Somerville's Community Access Television, a smaller one for the Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers, and an even smaller, newer sign for a South Asian Community Center.

conflict with progressive local organizations, most fiercely around proposed

redevelopment at Assembly Square, a strip mall scenically located by the Mystic River

and close to public transportation.

The Somerville Community Corporation took part in this fabric of cooperation

and contention, even as its staff and board believed that community organizing could

eventual reshape the terms of these interactions. In 2001, as the board hired Danny

LeBlanc as executive director. a 25-year veteran of community organizing and affordable

housing advocacy. LeBlanc argued that Somerville had no group that practiced

systematic organizing, and that its absence was a crucial gap in city life that needed to be

filled. Although a relative newcomer to CDCs, LeBlanc's rapid rise within the

Massachusetts Association of CDCs to Board Chair reflected widespread respect for his

competence and vision. As SCC felt it had established a generally successful presence in

the Union Square neighborhood, under RHICO the CDC decided to concentrate on

expanding its base within Union Square. For reasons I explore in greater detail below,

SCC proposed to RHICO that it would form a neighborhood association representing all

of Union Square (and not just the blocks surrounding their housing developments) around

quality-of-life issues, as an organizing strategy they felt could be replicated in other

Somerville neighborhoods.

Planning a diverse and inclusive campaign

Civic and neighborhood associations are often perceived by other community

organizations to be inherently conservative, and focused primarily on increasing property

values, controlling development, and advocating for local businesses (Rabrenovic 1996).

However, as I argue throughout these case studies, the *meaning* of SCC's campaign to

form a neighborhood association in Union Square was embedded in a particular

community context, and emanated from an analysis of the types of changes it felt were

both possible and meaningful to enact in it. Over the course of the campaign, local groups

and local residents responded not just to the fact that SCC was attempting to create a

neighborhood association, but also to the ways that it constructed and advanced the

project as representing a particular vision for neighborhood change. From the beginning

of its campaign, the CDC brought issues of *racial and ethnic difference* to the foreground

of campaign planning and practice. Also from the beginning of the campaign, SCC chose

not to engage in immediate contention with local groups and with city hall. It de-

emphasized conflictual tactics for strategic reasons, even though it believed that its

organizing could over time develop the ability to challenge power in a way that led to

sustainable change for the city of Somerville.

The orientation of the campaign toward diversity had both strategic and

ideological motivations. LeBlanc, as an organizer and also a decades-long resident of

East Somerville, believed that Somerville's community organizations were generally

dominated by white, older neighborhood activists, a fact that sometimes gave them

substantially less power and legitimacy. This issue of selective representation among

leadership was especially salient when groups were supported by city staff or resources,

were affiliated with formal planning processes or neighborhood organizations, or

otherwise held leadership appointed by the city. SCC's analysis of the 'natural tendency'

of community organizations to be driven by white activists was borne out by the group

SCC helped form around the Linden Street development, which had a potentially diverse base but leadership that was mostly white.

Said LeBlanc at a campaign planning session, the "default" mode of any new groups that formed was be without leadership by people of color, and argued that "the lesson I draw is that we have to work harder and in a more targeted way, so that immigrant groups and non-English speakers have more of a comfort zone" (session 6.02). Both SCC's organizing director, Malika Bey, and its organizer shared this vision of building an inclusive neighborhood organization in Union Square, and spoke extensively about the challenge of culturally-competent organizing as the most important issue for their campaign.

In Union Square, the strategy that emerged from this vision for change was to hold several separate meetings targeting each racial and ethnic group, and then to bring participants from these meetings together into the larger organization after they had built enough confidence and cohesion. Working primarily through existing community and ethnic organizations, organizers made presentations at the local Sikh temple, talked to the Brazilian outreach worker at the Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers, and spoke to representatives at the incipient South Asian Center. In some cases, these presentations occurred in what they called "double billing" (8.02) with outreach associated with the group's affirmative marketing for its Linden Street development. Although outreach around both organizing and rental applications occurred at the same time, SCC's quality-of-life organizing and its affordable housing development activities remained separate topics for the neighborhood both conceptually and practically. During these presentations, the opportunities for engagement offered to residents for the two

remained of very different types – on the one hand, asking them to apply to the housing project, and on the other, asking them to take leadership in a neighborhood-wide and action-oriented group.

Staff believed that a membership organization comprised of people from different ethnic groups could represent a significant step forward for Somerville's political and organizational life. However, for pragmatic reasons, staff also decided that they were unable to make this group an overtly challenging one, at least at first. Primarily, SCC reached this decision because they felt they would be unable to prevail in meaningful conflicts without first building a substantial base. SCC organizers concentrated first on relationship-building around less contentious issues, in part because they believed that elected officials in Somerville were extraordinarily sensitive to challenge. Previous to Union Square organizing, Bey was involved in a campaign through SCC to try to preserve the affordability of a large expiring-use development in East Somerville, and encouraged residents to write what she considered to be fairly respectful letters urging their Congressperson to "do what he could" to save the project. This action, which she believed to be fairly innocuous, provoked what she considered to be significant backlash from the Congressperson, who considered it to question his efforts on behalf of the project (interview 8.02).

The complex rationale that used less contentious, quality-of-life organizing as a stepping-stone to greater political change with people of color was illustrated in an exchange between SCC's Technical Assistance provider, Steve Meachum[19], and LeBlanc during an internal SCC strategy session. After hearing about the importance of diversity

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[19] Meachum was a staff member at City Life/Vida Urbana, a membership organization in Boston that emphasized both issues of race and also contentious actions to build power for Latinos.

to Somerville and the lack of an effective voice for people of color within political

institutions, Meachum asked staff how a neighborhood association spoke to the CDCs'

larger mission of building power and mounting challenge. Meachum probed about why

organizers shouldn't talk about issues of concern to immigrants and to bring them into the

campaign, if this was in fact the mission of SCC, ending with the challenge, "Why not

just say what you want to do?" In response, LeBlanc answered, "I've been part of

[racially and culturally] conscious groups. As a CDC who's new at this, I would be afraid

of getting caught up in grandiosity. Internally, I'm not shy about saying it, but externally

I am." That is, while workplace discrimination, status issues, and exclusion from

Somerville's political life might be the first concerns of new immigrants in Somerville

(site visit 10.03), staff believed that they could not address these issues without first

building strong membership within an organization. During this session, staff articulated

that Somerville's Latino Coalition was frustrated by this similar gap between ambition

and the feasibility of change they wanted to enact, given their lack of active membership

and organizational power. In sum, these factors contributed to SCC's emphasis on issues

of racial and ethnic difference, but their avoidance of conflict and contentious tactics.

Separating Organizing and Development

Another important early decision by SCC was that the group that formed through

organizing should not be tied to SCC's development or service activities. Instead of

engaging residents around a development project they would determine and help enact, as

did some other CDCs in RHICO, SCC decided to embark on an organizing process of

identifying issues with residents without preconditions, outside of the quality-of-life

focus. Writing about this decision in their RFP to RHICO, LeBlanc argued that "If we

are successful, our next development project will be identified and grow out of the

concerns of the neighborhood association, rather than the other way around, as happened

with the Linden Street Development." (RFP). In essence, SCC hoped that the local group

would continue to act independently of SCC after organizing was completed, so that the

CDC might move to another area and start the process again. Also in its program

application, SCC wrote of the risks and benefits to building this "independent" group, as

opposed to membership and leadership that could become part of the CDC's own

governance processes:

> SCC very much understands that there is a degree of risk involved in having SCC
> invest in the organizing and development of a neighborhood group that by
> definition will have substantial autonomy. Issues or projects may arise that are not
> easily connected to the rest of what SCC is doing. Expectations of neighborhood
> residents may outstrip SCC's capacity to deliver. Conflicts may arise with City
> government or other entities that put SCC in an awkward position. But we believe
> that our role in organizing a neighborhood group will put us in the best position
> for a strong and positive relationship. We believe that the positives derived by the
> development of new community- leaders – for SCC, the neighborhood, and
> Somerville – are worth the risks. (RFP)

Ambitions for the Campaign Emerge

Over the course of the campaign, the character of SCC's claims about diversity

and inclusion elicited challenge from other community organizations and from local

elected officials. This resistance was important for the campaign, both because it made

the work of activists and organizers more difficult, and also because it illuminated to the

CDC the ways that its organizing posed threats to community institutions. SCC's

organizers embraced these conflicts to a certain extent because they saw the opportunity to alter existing community dynamics, especially as these dynamics related to patterns of incorporation among community and ethnic organizations. Organizers realized that the framing the organizing around issues of inclusiveness and diversity questioned who truly "spoke for" people of color in Somerville, and whether or not other organizations and elected officials held substantial ties to members and constituents. SCC also realized that the CDC had the chance to build its own power, as defined by its ability to mobilize residents around a vision for development and local change.

A particularly important moment for the campaign occurred at a summer meeting targeting Latino residents of Union Square. As six residents listened to organizers and spoke about their neighborhood, three staff members from another community organization arrived and challenged SCC's organizers about the project, asking why they were attempting to build an independent body for Somerville Latinos when one already existed, and claiming the assembled group was "duplicative at best." (interview 9.02) In reflecting on their disrupted meeting, SCC felt that the unanticipated conflict had some potentially positive implications. Bey observed during planning sessions and interviews that organizations who were not practicing leadership development or outreach to members and constituents were likely to feel that organizing by the CDC encroached on their "turf," saying, "If we're doing our job well, some people are going to feel upset." (interview 9.02)

To Bey, Somerville's ethnic service or advocacy groups were sensitive to the emergence of a new group for several reasons. First, these groups were often formed by activists who demanded recognition by city hall and funding for services targeted to their

population but sometimes participated in what she called a "quick degeneration of leadership," where activists who were able to establish a recognized group could say, "I've made it – and then provide services," without conducting further organizing with residents in membership expansion and leadership development (field notes from interview 9.02). Second, SCC's orientation toward diverse participation contrasted strongly with the more conflict-oriented claims of the Latino Coalition, which in its emergence had demanded recognition and funding for Latino issues, charging institutional racism in the city of Somerville (Fishman 2000).[20] In this light, the group might have feared that its claims would be undercut by a group with a more conciliatory stance toward power, however strategic that stance might be.

SCC quickly moved to resolve tensions that stemmed from the community meeting, as LeBlanc met with the agency director where the staff served. At the same time, organizing staff felt that "gate-keepers" (field notes from 9.02) among local organizations might be challenged to assess their stances toward power and their practices to foster local participation, as they competed with SCC's efforts, were inspired by it, or as their own constituents demanded changes of them. Said Bey of this dynamic:

> What we need to do with [the organization]…we're not going to be able to change it, but if, we do our jobs right, the community will demand [the change]…people will feel empowered to become involved, to participate in other things where they will begin to impact other groups, and demand what they need. (field notes 9.02).

Even in the early months of the campaign, SCC saw this type of influence emerge indirectly among other community groups with whom it interacted. Partly inspired by

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[20] The Boston Globe reported on the Coalition's initial meeting, quoting a resident who attacked the City's police department, saying "On 911 calls, police don't respond when they hear that the caller is Latino…I'm concerned because the streets where I live are not well lit. Enough racism."

SCC's organizing, the neighborhood's South Asian Center started to do more extensive outreach to its own population, and conducted a "barn-raising" event at their new center in a more membership-driven mode.

The early campaign dissolves

The community tensions evoked by SCC's campaign arose in the first full meeting, during a rainy night at the end of November, 2002. Twenty people came out to the meeting, which LeBlanc opened by introducing the concept of creating a "union" of Union Square. While he noted that many groups were working on Union Square issues, LeBlanc said that what SCC cared about most was "interface *between* groups," and spent time distinguishing the development activities of the CDC and the group it was trying to form. Noting that SCC had a role as a property owner at both ends of Union Square, he said that its interests in Union Square were instead driven by a new type of concern – to create a lasting association of residents who could work together. Saying to the group, "We're not in this effort so that the group can support our next proposal. We're not looking to skip town, but build an organization you can be part of," LeBlanc also echoed SCC's inclusive approach to organizing by saying that the group "is not about forming a political power base...[but] working with any group to get things done " and to create "a sense of shared accountability." (field notes 10.02)

Unfortunately, the meeting was dominated and somewhat disrupted by representatives from other neighborhood groups, especially ones that were currently inactive. LeBlanc's introduction was interrupted by a question about the sources of

SCC's funding, and several other times by activists who spoke either about their multiple efforts in Union Square, or who warned SCC of the many demands on time. One challenged the organizers directly, saying that this group "shouldn't reinvent the wheel," and threatened "if this is going to be a waste of my time, I want to go right now." The meeting was attended by only one person of color, a man who appeared conscious of the fact that he was a representative of South Asians in a room of whites. In speaking about the potential participation of South Asians and the South Asian Center in the emerging group, "You give us something to do, and we do it. You don't give us something to do, we're very quiet," while pulling his hands back and sitting down (field notes 10.02).

Although a second meeting was scheduled – with some difficulty, given the number of evening activities to which participants were already committed – organizers canceled the next meeting. Some weeks after the first meeting, the local alderperson and Mayor Kelly Gay asked SCC to withdraw from organizing in Union Square, and to concentrate instead on East Somerville, where gang activity and resistance to a hastily-passed city gang ordinance had brought out demands for attention and services. Organizers had from early planning stages of the campaign believed that it would be easier to focus on East Somerville, as more issues might appear that could galvanize the whole neighborhood. Since East Somerville was, compared to Union Square, poorer and in greater need of organizing, SCC was persuaded by the substance of the argument to shift neighborhoods. Still, the elected officials' move against SCC's power-building attempts was dispiriting to staff and to LeBlanc. The opposition of these officials was effective in part because the CDC had no base of support within the neighborhood. As a result, SCC strategized, over the course of its move to East Somerville, about the types of

organizational practices that could better mobilize community, and also give the CDC

legitimacy to do work in the neighborhood. I describe the results of this shift in

organizational strategy – one which involved greater coordination between departments –

in chapter six.

Asian CDC: Achieving Growth

Context

Boston's Chinatown borders its downtown and financial district[21]. Among large

institutions – South Station, Tufts University and New England Medical Center – low-

rise 4-5 story 19th and early 20th century apartment buildings house approximately 6000

residents (Chinatown Master Plan 2000). While the neighborhood is fairly small, its

economic and cultural importance for Chinese residents throughout New England

remains powerful, as it remains a destination for shopping, eating, and gathering; Asian

CDC's board chair observed that Chinese people from Maine to Hartford consider

themselves Bostonians (site visit 10.02). Downtown real estate investment during the

1980s and 1990s helped transform the borders of Chinatown – what used to be known as

the "Combat Zone," for its violence and pornographic businesses – but with this

economic revitalization, a host of other pressures emerged for its residents. Rents during

the late 1990s increased significantly, as several new luxury high-rise developments rose

above existing low-hanging structures.

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[21] In its location near valuable downtown office and residential space, Boston's Chinatown is like San Francisco, New York, and many other major cities, and shares similar market pressures as a result.

While these external market pressures make Chinatown's working class particularly vulnerable to displacement, its powerful internal divisions represent another source of pressure on community life. Far from monolithic, Chinatown is diverse in language and ethnicity. Residents speak Cantonese, Mandarin, and Toisanese. During the 1950s, Chinatown was also home to Syrian and Lebanese immigrants who retain affiliations with the neighborhood. While the neighborhood is poorer than most in Boston, many better-off professionals with an appreciation for the neighborhood's culture and convenience also reside there. Although its population is over 90% Chinese, and largely composed of immigrants, neighbors arrived at different moments of world history and different institutions of US immigration policy (Chinatown Masterplan). These factors had consequences for the orientation of civic engagement within the neighborhood.

Of particular importance to Chinatown's neighborhood politics is conflict among organizations founded during different periods of national and local politics. During the 1950s and 1960s, Chinese family associations formed with a strong pro-business and anti-Communist orientations. These groups were significantly incorporated into Boston's urban political institutions; at the beginning of my study, the Chinatown Neighborhood Council maintained strong authority in local planning and development decisions, even though many of its members lived elsewhere. Forming more recently in Chinatown, progressive associations formed to address disparities and discrimination suffered by new immigrants, and with tactics that involved challenge and confrontation. Disputes among these progressive and conservative groups were particularly divisive in the area of downtown real estate and commercial development. During the time of my study, conflict

around one development – Liberty Place, a high-rise development that violated both the letter of zoning and the spirit of Chinatown's master plan – pitted the Chinese Progressive Association (CPA) and the Chinese Residents Association (CRA) against the CNC. In settling the CRA's law suit against the development, the city and the developer announced very modest affordable housing set-asides for the community, but conceded that CRA was to gain a major representative role in the neighborhood development advisory board.

The Asian CDC (ACDC) was founded in 1987 as an affordable housing developer, and as a developer of low-income units found itself over time in the middle of this spectrum; siding, for example, with the radical resident groups in contesting unwanted development, and yet needing to partner with the city on other development-related issues. ACDC's campaign was to take control of land that would be opened up by the construction of an on-ramp to the Central Artery and Tunnel Project (Boston's "Big Dig." While this area, Parcel 24, was designated for housing by the Turnpike Authority, there was no guarantee that it would be used for affordable housing. Like SCC's campaign, one impetus for ACDC's work around the campaign emerged from analysis of recent housing development activities. Around another public land known as Parcel C, ACDC worked with a private developer to create both affordable and market-rate housing. However, both ACDC staff and some other community organizations believed that the CDC did not fight effectively for a greater proportion of affordable units. ACDC staff felt that effective organizing would convince the CDC's board that they had the legitimacy and community support to negotiate more from the city in the next project, and also would be better able to influence other community organizations to support

affordable housing development. Said Marilyn Lee-Tom, ACDC's director at the beginning of the campaign, "in this community, they haven't seen development done right. We have to prove to them that this is where we have to go. In this community, they haven't seen it." (strategy session 7.02)

Developing a consensus-pluralist campaign

Through its campaign to build affordable housing on Parcel 24, ACDC's staff and leaders strove to articulate and enact a credible vision of one community acting in concert for its betterment. Initially de-emphasizing conflict between community residents, the mayor, and other local organizations, it convened an extraordinarily transparent organizing process aimed at bringing together long antagonistic local organizations to support resident-controlled development.

This orientation toward conflict and toward different was consistently held by staff of different positions through the early stages of the campaign, although it was often articulated with different justifications. For ACDC's housing development director, Sam Yoon, an orientation toward consensus was necessary because a neighborhood with high market values meant building alliances with for profit developers – a practice which they had adopted in the development of the Metropolitan on Parcel C, and which they sought out early in the campaign timeframe around another BRA-owned parcel. Yoon, who often talked about the pressures of the market during interviews, said during early stages of organizing, when staff was considering partnering with another developer to build mixed-income housing on a separate parcel of land:

> Strategic alliances with downtown interests are a necessary evil – you'd like it to
> be from the grass roots up, but for us, in a dense neighborhood right by a high
> market location, you need to come at it from all angles. (interview 8.02)

For Yoon, consensus-oriented coalition work was also a way of rising above what he

considered to be patterns of factionalism and partisanship in Chinatown. Although some

of these struggles had ideological roots and real implications for the citizens of

Chinatown, Yoon believed that many lines of struggle were drawn for purely "personal"

reasons, and used the tongue-in-cheek metaphor that "complementing your cooking"

could go a long way in cementing alliances between developers and community leaders

(interview 8.02).

Jeremy Liu, ACDC's director of community services, articulated the campaign's

early emphasis on consensus as a pragmatic one. Liu believed that bringing together all

groups will "create a better project."

> There are clearly some things about Parcel C (the Metropolitan) that could have
> been much better had we had a really strong network from the community, if we
> had felt that we had the agency and the power to change some things about the
> process, and the way that project happened, but we didn't, so we made certain
> decisions along the way that ended up making it not quite as good a project as it
> could have been. (site visit 2002)

On another occasion, Liu noted that inclusiveness made it difficult for excluded groups to

play a "spoiler role" for any project they felt excluded from, as development institutions.

He assessed, "If you're on the downward slope of power [as may be some groups], you

can stay on the outside and make it not happen." (interview 7.03)

The practical implication of this framing was to approach every organization in

Chinatown, especially around early efforts to win passage in the State Legislature of a

bill that would designate the parcel for affordable housing development. This orientation

toward community, and the tactics that followed this orientation, are best summarized by

ACDC's executive director, Doug Ling, as he reflected in writing on the achieved goals

of the early months of the campaign (from June to December, 2002):

1. To build a coalition that truly represents all facets of the community, regardless of history, political inclinations, or existing relationship with ACDC.
2. To secure buy-in from as many community partners as possible on the three points of the proposed legislation. (The three points were kept as simple as possible.)
3. To solidify the coalition by consulting and involving as many organizations as feasible, in planning meetings, legislative visits, and public appearances
4. To ensure that all parties are well informed of progresses of the Campaign at all phases of the campaign (end of year reporting 2002).

Strategy: Enact Changes in Governance Structure and Development Practice

Like SCC, ACDC's campaign emerged during a period of staff change. Unlike

SCC, staff and residents used aspects of ACDC's campaign, also to enact changes in the

organization's governance and development practices. While some of these changes,

which involved extensive coordination between organizing and development

departments, were made easier by the fact that housing development was the immediate

goal of the campaign, not every CDC within RHICO whose campaign involved potential

coordination was able to enact it. As such, ACDC's work in this regard was both

difficult and significant in the ways that it helped realize the campaign's objectives and

contributed to changes in community dynamics.

Organizing also helped ACDC's staff and board renegotiate the way that they

interacted with each other. ACDC started organizing during a period of considerable

tension between staff and board. At the earliest point of early campaign planning,

ACDC's staff saw organizing as a way to build independence from its board of directors,

which with whom generational, ideological differences were somewhat mirrored. At a

campaign strategy session, ACDC's then-executive director, Marilyn Lee-Tom, described

organizing as a way of enacting staff independence:

> to 'wean' staff of the board. Because the organization was small in the past, the
> board has been very 'hands on.' They need a high level of information to feel
> comfortable and in the past were even project managers. We've been trying to
> move away from that model. (strategy session 6.02)

Tensions between staff and board peaked with the resignation of Lee-Tom during the

summer of 2002. During the period of board-staff reconciliation, staff found new reasons

to engage with their board through organizing – particularly as current and former

residents with significant moral legitimacy around the organizing campaign campaign.

For example, at a RHICO site visit, Jay Wong, the director of ACDC's board

talked about the ways that organizing acting both as a point of rapprochement and

ongoing challenge to staff:

> A lot of the board is associated with the community and has grown up in the
> community. And of course if they agree with what the staff is doing, and they
> actually need to work together, it makes a common bond more strong. Maybe the
> bond isn't there at times, but the fact that the idea that they have to do some of the
> legwork in the community, I think that gives a chance for the board and staff to
> work closely together. (site visit 2002)

For staff who was sometimes frustrated at what they perceived to be arbitrariness of its

own board's decision-making processes, organizing served as a "process guide." Wrote

Liu:

> For ACDC, Community Organizing has served several roles in managing or
> inflecting tensions between staff and board. Community Organizing is "Base
> Building" for the staff as we "target" the board as a body of the community that
> we need to influence. Community Organizing is "Surrogate Community

Credibility" for the staff to "head off" the board's tendency to second guess staff decisions. These two roles frame the relationship between board and staff as oppositional. Community Organizing is also a "Process Guide" for the organization as a constant reminder of the way we need to operate. This role frames the relationship between the board and staff as aligned, fundamentally. (end of year report 2002)

While sometimes set in terms of board-staff struggle, the engagement sparked from this conflict meant that ACDC coordinated its campaign extensively with the board, even as they worked to create new structures for community engagement within the board. For example, early in the campaign, ACDC staff worked with its Community Planning and Advocacy Committee (CPAC) to make it the community *organizing*, planning and advocacy committee, and to create a mission statement that emphasized leadership development. The new CPAC and which included non-board residents of Chinatown for the first time. ACDC also worked to coordinate campaign activities among departments, especially between housing development and other community programs. For example, staff came together to use ACDC's annual meeting to highlight parcel 24, and to use this as a forum to bring principles of community organizing to an ordinary CDC function. Sparking further coordination around organizing, in late 2002, the CDC had a staff-wide retreat addressing the question of what organizing meant for the mission and activities of the entire agency. Finally, throughout the campaign, organizing and development coordinated to make ordinary pre-development activities especially amendable to community involvement and community control. These events are described in part below.

Ambitions for the campaign as it emerged

Like SCC's campaign, ACDC's organizing was met by unexpected resistance from other local organizations, in part because other groups possessed more conflictual organizing models. Over time, ACDC realized that its organizing could win its goal of seizing Parcel 24, while also contributing to a shift in dynamics among community organizations. While no staff or resident believed that they had the power to significantly change the practices of other groups – as other groups had too much staked on these identities – they saw that winning the campaign also laid out a template for a different type of work in Chinatown, one where fragmented groups could come together for a common good.

One of ACDC's monthly campaign meetings that I attended, described by staff as fairly typical in the early stages of the campaign, evoked some of these tensions. Its written agenda proposed a debrief on the meeting with the transportation chair of the state legislature, a sign-up for community outreach, discussion of a community-wide design forum, and, as a last item, a discussion of the "preparatory group's" composition and the language in which it conducted business. This agenda was quickly disrupted. One resident and one staff member at a local organization asked that the language issue be put up front; ACDC staff, who facilitated these meetings, accommodated the request. The next forty-five minutes was spent in discussion that the preparatory group meeting was discriminatory because it did not have translators. Staff from another community organization also insinuated that ACDC had already received money from the City for Parcel 24.

These dynamics, while representing their own constant challenge to coalition-building, also led ACDC staff and board to consider how their efforts might challenge groups to move beyond their traditional political practices. For example, after the meeting described above, ACDC realized that organizers at other groups did little work with residents before or outside coalition meetings, and instead used the coalition project as a forum for leadership development by encouraging residents to challenge ACDC. During an early conversation with the RHICO program, Liu realized that ACDC's organizing might pose a different paradigm for local collective action, asking out loud, "How can we not do machine-style organizing? Having a small staff, we need to partner with other people to make an impact. [but] how can we take a legitimate leadership role in a community campaign, and how can the 'well-oiled machine' not take over?" (site visit 2002). By referring to a "machine," Liu referred both to the classic definition of political machines (and its adherents in Chinatown), but also to the system of that emerged in response to it. While these protests were primarily successful in stopping development projects, they had not yet exerted control over a community-initiated and resident-supported project.

Ling agreed with Liu's assessment, adding, "In a way, if we do it right, and we find the best way to get community involved, other groups can use this model that we're talking about, that would be a great accomplishment; it's not always an adversarial role that they can take…it would take away from a zero-sum mindset" (site visit 2002). In writing about the possibility of moving beyond a conflict-oriented "zero-sum mindset" at the end of six months of organizing, Ling wrote:

> ACDC's established image of a neutral organization helped make our leadership role in the campaign more effective. We actually became convinced that

regardless of outcome of the Campaign, the solidarity of all the agencies would at least signal that broad-based collaboration among more than two or three Chinatown organizations is indeed possible. (end of year report 2002)

What happened – ACDC holds the coalition together

In October 2002, seventy ACDC members attended the Annual Meeting of ACDC in an auditorium of an elementary school across from the CDC. In contrast with other meetings, the event emphasized participation and relationship-building among attendees. Standing at the front of the room, Yoon said, "We'll ask you to tell us who you are, and your hopes and your vision for Chinatown." Although staff led most of the event, community residents also spoke. A new board member testified about the pleasures of living in Chinatown – convenience to downtown, easy access to Chinese food and market vegetables – and also spoke of what challenges lay ahead in to the community. Residents raised their hands if they previously lived on Hudson Street, the part of Chinatown that was destroyed by the Artery, and staff played a well-designed video in which board members and former residents spoke about the devastating effects of displacement on the community. After the event, people signed their names on dollars, in English and in Chinese, and placed them on the type of use they thought best for the parcel of land: market rate rental, affordable rental, homeownership, parks and open space.

These events and similar ones throughout propelled the group's campaign forward at different strategic moments. At first, public events helped push legislation forward in the Massachusetts Statehouse to turn Parcel 24 over to a community organization, with a bill filed in December of 2002. Because the BRA and MTA claimed that the bill for community control of Parcel 24 would set a dangerous precedent as planning over the

Artery progressed, they were forced to respond to the bill filing, first by adopting similar goals for the disposition of the parcel, and later by incorporating the design vision of the coalition into the structure of its RFP. According to Liu, the bill "forced the MTA and the BRA to the table to discuss its goals," put the MTA on "on record stating that the most likely and appropriate use of Parcel 24 is affordable housing," and, most significantly, pressed Mayor Menino to announce in August of 2003 that he supported the principle of a land give-away for $1.

After Menino's support was made public, it became much easier to work with the BRA and the MTA around a community vision for the site. But arriving at a vision still required extensive community design processes, and coalition committee work around affordability and development standards. Even after Menino's public support of disposition of Parcel 24 for $1, the BRA was still charged with adopting (for the Turnpike Authority) criteria for its formal disposition, to be incorporated into an RFP. Starting community conversations about the specifics of what residents wanted for the site, in August, 2003, approximately fifty Chinatown residents came together to articulate different design visions for the parcel – using, for example, blocks to shape height and massing as appropriate to zoning restrictions and community context. On the basis of the community design forum, coalition partners had a basis of understanding by which they could set forth specific standards that they wanted to see in the RFP. This was particularly important for the campaign, as the BRA and the MTA had been pushing residents and organizations to define exactly what they wanted from the parcel; one might speculate that they believed this hurdle to be particularly high for Chinatown, given the historic discord around development. ACDC continued work with several other

community groups – including those who had engaged in some conflict with each other in the past.

Nonetheless, tensions continued to emerge with coalition partners that threatened to disrupt campaign work. For example, at one point, a radical neighborhood association approached the bill's sponsor independently to change its proposed language, a move that confused its supporters and delayed filing (Liu 3.03). At another, a more conservative group asked to be removed from Coalition letterhead. Despite these continued challenges, ACDC was able to hold the coalition together: a process that was never easy, but was greatly assisted by staff's work around ACDC's governance and development practices. ACDC staff built credibility for the CDC among its coalition partners, by working with ACDC's board to produce a statement that Parcel 24 was important enough for Chinatown, that it would support development on Parcel 24 even if the CDC were not to be the developer (site visit 2003). By incorporating board members and new residents into the CDC, ACDC was able to "push back" on other groups at strategic moments, and create opportunities for real discourse among coalition members. And by creating visible and effective events around normal stages in design and development, ACDC moved the campaign forward and gave ordinary residents a reason to remain part of the effort.

These successes have given the CDC, its board, and its resident leaders increased visibility and credibility in working with other community groups, and posed opportunities for local interagency coordination and coalition work, where few existed before in Chinatown. At the beginning of ACDC's campaign, staff at other agencies challenged the CDC to desist from resident organizing on the basis that it competed with their efforts. Toward the end of ACDC's campaign, the group was asking for support in

their own work with tenants around safety issues, and worked with ACDC staff and

leaders around city-wide campaigns. Toward the culmination of the campaign, in another

indication of altered community dynamics, staff and leaders from both business and

resident-oriented community organizations stood together to demand in very detailed

terms what they wanted to see on the parcel. This final demand (aimed at shaping the

RFP for disposition of the parcel) stipulated that *both* the more conservative Chinatown

Neighborhood Council and the more radical Chinatown Residents Association would

need to approve the designation of a developer for the parcel. At the community forum

with the BRA later that evening, in the presence of over 100 community residents,

representatives from both conservative and radical groups (previously engaged in heated

public exchanges and litigation) exchanged cordial words about the proposed plan for 24.

The BRA told the group that their proposal would likely be adopted.

Review and preliminary analysis

How "the chance for growth" emerged

ACDC and SCC's campaigns were shaped both by the resistance they

experienced , and by the accommodations that both groups made to political and

community actors. For both SCC and ACDC, organizers and activists realized that the

resistance they faced from community and state actors also represented an opportunity to

adjust, but not fundamentally alter, local dynamics. In my first analysis chapter (five), I

describe how this shared path developed as each CDC articulated a somewhat different

vision about what it meant to be part of their community, and what it meant to change

their community for the better. I will describe in greater detail the most salient

components of this vision of community and community change in chapter five.

However, as I have now described four CDC campaigns, it will be increasingly familiar

to the reader that 1) issues of racial and ethnic difference, and 2) orientations toward

conflict, are very important terms of inter-organizational cooperation and contention.

In Somerville's Union Square neighborhood, the CDC's emphasis on diversity,

and its strategic avoidance of early conflict with political actors, was met with challenge

on both sides of Union Square's political spectrum. The CDC speculated that for white-

led community groups and white local activists, raising the challenge of diversity

threatened organizational legitimacy. The meeting dynamics I observed supported their

observations. For Latino staff members of a local community organization, and leaders of

a more militant effort to bring the claims of immigrants to the city, SCC believed that the

campaign's emphasis on more cautious relationship-building undermined their claims to

represent Latinos across the city along a more exclusively conflict-oriented model of

protest. These observations also have support in the descriptions of meetings of the

Latino coalition, that were described in local newspapers. Partly as a result of their

divergent values, staff and residents at local associations moved to disrupt organizing by

the CDC at the meetings they held. Although their challenges made organizing more

difficult, SCC staff realized that success in their work – creating a racially-inclusive

community organization that had a productive understanding of what it took to create

change– would encourage both ethnic organizations and white homeowners groups to

become more participatory. In several ways, including the fundamental decision to shift

organizing to East Somerville after request by local political actors, SCC also moved to accommodate local actors, and with this accommodation mitigated the challenges that their organizing represented to these groups.

Similarly, ACDC framed its organizing to seize public land for affordable housing as an attempt at consensus-building and collaborative community planning. This orientation evoked unexpected and significant resistance from community groups on both sides of Chinatown's political spectrum, making the campaign much more challenging as it proceeded. For example, seemingly simple tasks, like setting a meeting agenda, became very difficult. Groups threatened to leave the coalition at several points. For both radical and conservative community organizations (groups which formed in opposition to each other and which had been locked into strategic conflict for several years), consensus-oriented work was misguided at best and fundamentally challenged the terms of discourse, and the strategies, that each had evolved to advance the agenda of its constituents. During the course of ACDC's interaction with other community organizations, the CDC adjusted the orientation of its organizing, making issues of both contention and race more central to its claims and strategies, thus allowing coalition work to occur more easily with the radical neighborhood association. However, ACDCs underlying emphasis on consensus and collaboration continued to be at odds with beliefs and tactics held by other local groups. With this dissonance, organizing developed the ability introduce a new concept for the neighborhood – that more broad-based, pro-active coalition work was in fact possible to build and maintain, even if individual groups continued to hold antagonisms toward each other.

What made the difference between success and failure

Both ACDC and SCC's campaigns were met with resistance from other actors. Both campaigns also worked to reduce, to a certain degree, the dissonance that they evoked within local political institutions. Over the course of organizing, actors realized that success might not only win their specific campaign goals, but also adjust community dynamics – to achieve the outcome I call "growth." However, only ACDC was initially successful[22] in its attempts to do so. In reviewing the cases, I start to trace the difference between success and failure to two related organizational strategies: 1) the CDC's ability to coordinate between departments, thereby mobilizing community *through* and around development process, and 2) the CDC's ability to engage activists in governance.

In the early months of the campaign, SCC was significantly handicapped by its principled decision to form a "fire wall" between the CDCs regular development structures and processes, and the neighborhood association it was trying to form. Starting a community organization from scratch – as SCC attempted in building a completely independent organization in Union Square – became exceptionally difficult. Because SCC believed that organizing and development activities needed to be separated so as to gain credibility among community stakeholders, it could not use its housing development or its regular governance activities as a way to build leadership and foster engagement. Although, over the early months of the campaign, SCC sponsored workshops on immigration as a way of building trust with immigrant groups, it did not find a way at these sessions for attendees to become involved with the CDC. As a result, few

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[22] SCC achieved success later in the campaign, in ways that also highlighted the importance of the organizational strategies below.

community leaders were involved enough in the CDC and its organizing efforts to stand up to the challenge posed by local and political actors.

In contrast to SCC's early work, ACDC's ability to *enact* the ambitions that emerged over the course of the campaign was largely due to internal organizational change, and especially its re-orientation of governance and development processes to encourage mobilization and community control. By changing the focus and tenor of their annual meeting to emphasize the campaign and the need for organizing, by working with a board subcommittee to change its mandate to include organizing and leadership development, and through the efforts of the board to state support for community control of Parcel 24 even were the CDC not the developer, ACDC created opportunities for deliberation and community control that helped them maintain coalition power and win concessions from the city and the turnpike authority. As a result of these efforts, Boston's Mayor Thomas Menino announced support for the $1 land give-away to the neighborhood. With this victory ACDC produced a tentative template by which local groups could interact with each other on less divisive terms.

Chapter 4: The Ambition for Change

In this chapter, I illustrate the campaign path I call *change* by describing the organizing of Nuestras Raices in Holyoke and Lawrence CommunityWorks in Lawrence, and also by contrasting the outcome of their efforts. In both cases, fierce resistance to the demands of CDC organizing from local institutions signals to staff and activists that successful campaigns, over time, may significantly alter local political institutions, making them more participatory and more responsive to neighborhood concerns. In both cases, actors quickly developed the sense that their orientations toward community and community change were in significant dissonance with those held by political institutions. In contrast with organizing described in the previous chapter, both Nuestras Raices and LCW strove to sustain this dissonance, and even worked to make it more salient within the campaign and among its constituents. Interestingly, both a culturally-conscious, conflict-oriented approach to organizing (in the case of Nuestras Raíces), and a community-building, consensus-oriented approach to organizing developed friction with local political cultures[23]. As a result of this friction, these campaigns also evoked the most ambitious prospects for institutional change, even though this ambition only became apparent to actors over time. In both cases, CDCs valued this friction, and maintained it in the face of pressure, because they realized that developing power meant not just exacting concessions around policy or resources, but also to change the terms by which city hall and local groups interacted with each other.

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[23] I speculate that in cities dominated by cultures of 'machine' politics, which often emphasize partisan conflict but stress the ability of ethnic groups to become incorporated into political process, both consensus-oriented work and racially-conscious organizing may meet resistance.

Lawrence CommunityWorks both succeeded in its basic ambitions of community improvement, and also has enacted significant changes in the orientation of local development institutions that control development processes. Nuestras Raíces failed to achieve the ambitious goal that its organizing surfaced. It is legitimate to compare these CDCs, as they share aspects of political, geographic, and economic contexts. Both operate in low-income former mill towns with substantial Latino populations, where machine politics have not incorporated these groups into civic life. In terms of organization, both are relatively new CDCs that hold extensive relationships with residents, formed not just through community organizing but also over the course of other service and economic development activities. But in other important structural characteristics of the organization – financial resources, staff size, and access to professional institutions, Lawrence CommunityWorks is much better-advantaged. This fact makes it much more difficult to isolate specific strategies that make the difference between success and failure in the two cases.[24] Therefore, in the comparative study and in my second analysis chapter (six), I emphasize ways that each group's extensive relationships with community residents were developed and employed differently during campaign work, a fact that was very significant for the ultimate success of the campaign.

Developing the ambition for change: Nuestras Raíces

Context

Holyoke lies along the Connecticut River in western Massachusetts. Like many other former mill towns in New England, it retains some of its manufacturing base, but at

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[24] In previous chapters, the analytic strategy was to compare groups similar in overall features, to emphasize those aspects of strategy (as opposed to structure) that made the difference between success and failuure. For greater discussion of the role of resources in organizing success, see chapter seven.

a far reduced capacity; many of these looming and iconic red structures (some

comparable to skyscrapers in square footage) lie empty along the city's downtown and

riverfront. The census-determined poverty rate for individuals in Holyoke was 26.4% in

1999, compared to 9.3% for Massachusetts as a whole and 5.9% in neighboring,

suburban South Hadley. Starting in the 1950s and 1960s, Holyoke became home to one

of the largest Puerto Rican populations of US cities. In its service area in downtown

Holyoke, over 82% of constituents are Latino. In the city as a whole, 41% of residents are

Latino. Over 88% of Latinos are Puerto Rican (US Census 2000). Only two city council

members are Latino; one member of Nuestras Raíces reported overt racism during

encounters with City Hall in the previous mayor's administration (site visit 2002).

Nuestras Raíces[25] is a small CDC which engages in community gardening and

youth services programming, and recently created an in-house food service business

incubator to complement their greenhouse and nursery. A relatively young organization

with only four permanent staff during the period I observed them, they nonetheless

possessed substantial volunteer and semi-permanent staff, including over 10 Americorps

members working with youth and with gardeners (Colon interview 8.03). In the period

between 1992 and 2004 (during most of this time working with unpaid volunteers)

Nuestras Raíces helped residents found ten community gardens in and around downtown

Holyoke, through fairly extensive community processes (RHICO application). During the

period I observed them, its founding executive director, Daniel Ross, was very concerned

with building financial resources for the CDC.

During the 1980s and 1990s, economic change, arson, and the demolition of low-

income housing left Holyoke's downtown area with an extraordinary number of vacant

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[25] "Our roots."

lots. These lots fill with trash, weeds, and vermin, and sometimes become focal points for drug activity. Although the City of Holyoke owns many of them, no single, cohesive, city-level strategy had been employed to address problems associated with them. Instead, Holyoke's mayor holds a great deal of discretion in the disposition of vacant lots, and many Holyoke residents feel that lots have historically been transferred to a small circle of beneficiaries, including factory owners and other powerful economic actors. Although though some lots have been sold for factory expansion and other uses with enormous local impacts, until recently, there has been little public input into the future of these vacant lots. While many vacant lots have been used for industrial development, most lie unused (site visit 11.02).

As one of the founding members of Holyoke's Food Security Coalition, during 2001, Nuestras Raíces advocated for the city to adopt a vacant lots policy that gave community residents the opportunity to decide how these properties should best be developed or transformed. As vacant lots are costly to many different Holyoke city agencies – from the Health Department to the Legal Department – once these departments were brought together, the city was willing to adopt a pilot process for vacant lot disposition in the neighborhood of South Holyoke. This 9-step process brought together local stakeholders to decide on land use priorities for the lots. The CDC's campaign attempted to institutionalize this policy and expand it to other areas of the city (workplanning session 6.02).

Planning an 'agonistic pluralist' campaign

As an environmental justice organization with strong "roots" (as its name suggested) in Puerto Rican culture, Nuestras Raíces sees its economic development, youth services, and organizing work to be bound up in the struggle of migrants to the city for self-betterment and political self-determination. This deep concern for culture comes in part from early efforts of community gardening to preserve Puerto Rican traditions in a new land:

> The majority of the residents of inner-city Holyoke are Puerto Rican (75%), and many grew up on the farms of rural Puerto Rico. Many of the older residents first came to this area as migrant farm workers. Most of our members have lifetimes of experience in agriculture and are proud to use their knowledge to improve the community and to teach to a younger generation. (RHICO proposal).

During early months of the campaign, working to expand the pilot plan for community-controlled disposition of vacant lot continued to draw on these frames of racial and economic justice, and fostered a sense of strong opposition to dominant political institutions. The ways that Luis Saez, Nuestras Raíces ' organizer during the early months of the campaign, identified early challenges to organizing, reflected these framing choice about conflict and racial difference:

- How do we change the city's economic development policies to a more flexible, community-driven paradigm, when powerful (and often white-controlled) interests in city government and industry are lined up against it?
- How do we engage Puerto Ricans in this effort when there is a history of wariness and exclusion about planning and development processes?

Similarly, for Ross, political work in Holyoke meant addressing "the underlying issue that Nuestras Raíces deals with each and every day – of our community and the whole world. Racism, powerful, corporate interests controlling everything, especially to the

detriment of low-income people and people of color. That's our number one issue"
(interview 8.03).

For Ross, as for other staff, this anti-racist, culturally-conscious orientation
toward the vacant lots campaign was continuous with the way they framed and
approached gardening formation. In response to questions from RHICO steering
committee members about the transition of the group's activities from community
gardening to policy advocacy, he replied that both gardening and policy work stemmed
from a similar analysis of local politics and economics, and that members would see the
similarities: "I don't see them as necessarily different. Our environment is the product of
land use policies made by the city, which is a function of how much power the people
have" (site visit 11.02).

In its daily interactions with residents around gardening and youth services,
Nuestras Raíces both helped cultivate, and also drew upon, a persistant sense of
opposition to city leaders and profound frustration with the exclusion and poverty
experienced by he city's Latinos. This sense of opposition was deeply held, to the extent
that some members eschewed what they considered to be efforts of incorporation by
normal political processes. For example, one board member said that she was once
approached to run for office, but that "when you sit in that chair, you have to serve
everybody" (11.03) instead of being an advocate for low-income people of color from the
neighborhood.

Strategy developed (but not acted upon): engage gardeners and youth members in campaign work

In practical terms, the strategy that emerged from this vision and framing of opposition meant that Nuestras Raíces would build on the cultural and political understandings that it had already formed with community gardening and youth members about the structure of political action in Holyoke, and to amplify these concerns through political participation. According to their RHICO work plan and also interviews with Saez, organizers hoped to identify potential leaders from their base of community gardeners in different neighborhoods, especially in South Holyoke, where it had several gardens. In other words, for Saez, the strategy was to spend time "hanging out in the gardens" (interview 6.02) before doing outreach and doorknocking with residents who were at work there. On encouragement from RHICO technical assistance, they also attempted to raise the issue of the pilot disposition plan at the CDC's annual meeting.

Ambitions for the campaign emerge

Staff at Nuestras Raíces soon realized the stakes of the vacant lot disposition issue for Holyoke political institutions. As Holyoke had few resources to encourage economic development, it saw that a central component of rewarding its remaining industries was through disposition of lots for business use, or for groups with other ties to the political regime. In part, Nuestras Raíces 's sense of the stakes of land disposition emerged as the city attempted to violate the content of the plan on behalf of politically-connected actors; a business owner whose representative was a former Mayor of the city

was granted a lot across the street from Nuestras Raíces , in contravention of the plan

(Colon 8.03). The second factor helping them understand the stakes of the campaign was

the ways that political agencies responding to their framing of community participation in

terms of race. When the CDC felt unable to engage leaders around the issue of lot

disposition itself, they attempted to help residents understand the vacant lots issue in

relationship to another pressing health concern – the high rates of neighborhood asthma –

and invited local EPA officials for what they called a "listening session" on the effects of

industrial location policy on neighborhood health. They received response from the

Mayor's office was that they were "playing the race card," a term which suggested to

organizers the sensitivity of their mobilization. From my field notes, Ross talked both

about learning about the city's sensitivities around lot disposition policy, and also how he

embraced the resulting conflict for what it could yield his constituents:

> Says Office of Economic and Industrial Development has a lot of power within
> the city; feels that private developers are given carte blanche, throw in vacant lots
> and "the store." That they're not focused on the cumulative impact of this – "If we
> keep adding industry, we keep adding negative impacts on the community in
> terms of health, safety, poor quality of life – we want much more of a balance
> with green space, parks, recreation, and small, locally-owned businesses."

The lots campaign is defeated

During the early months of the campaign, Saez was frustrated by internal resource

demands which made it difficult for to employing these existing relationships (see above)

he had intended to access for political work. Feeling isolated even within a small agency,

Saez had some time taken up by writing a grant to the EPA, and felt he had no "help" for

the campaign within the board or members of Nuestras Raíces . Similarly, he complained

that youth leaders were the only people with whom he might work on the campaign, but that these leaders preferred to "play basketball" than do work writing flyers, translating, or organizing a meeting. Saez left Nuestras Raíces during the summer of 2002, and although a replacement organizer, Hilda Colon, was hired from within, there was a long period in which Colon continued to run other service activities – such as running the women's group for gardeners – without attempting organizing. While these activities placed Colon in a very visible community role, this role meant that she interacted with residents mostly about gardening and not on the campaign itself. By the time that the winter came in 2002, when the CDC no longer saw gardeners in the gardens, the campaign had very little base.

This lack of base forced staff into a reactive role around the vacant lots planning process. As they tried to push for the expansion of the planning policy to the neighborhoods of Churchill and The Flats, NRI was not helped by the fact that they were mobilizing to defend a plan that had already formed without significant resident direction in the first place. Not only did the Mayor of Holyoke refuse to commit to the institutionalization of the plan or back its spread into other neighborhoods, but also was the content of the plan itself was violated on several occasions. Staff at Nuestras Raíces first fought to keep a used car dealership off the property directly across the street from it, to uphold the principle of the community-driven process that yielded the plan. They were not able to do so successfully. Compounding problems for the campaign, in December of 2002, the city planner who helped spearhead the pilot process in South Holyoke was fired, leaving the CDC without an ally within city government. After a second, successful attempt on the part of the city's economic development office to violate the content of the

vacant lots plan by placing a gas station and car wash on a parcel designated for another use – on the lot on the *other* side of Nuestras Raíces – the agency decided that it needed to concentrate its efforts on an issue that was more widely understood by community residents[26]. In the fall of 2003, the CDC voluntarily dropped out of the RHICO program. In sum, because the CDC was unable to coordinate existing gardening activities as a way to mobilize residents, its campaign faltered.

Lawrence CommunityWorks: Achieving Change

Context

The City of Lawrence was founded by mill owners in 1847, who also received charters to develop lands around mill properties, and planned the surrounding city's development extensively (Lawrence Historical Society 2004). Home to the famous "Bread and Roses" textile strike in 1912, mills remained a prominent component of Lawrence's physical and economic fabric, although, as in Holyoke, mill-based industries have declined since the second world war and many currently lie vacant. Starting in the 19th century, Lawrence saw the arrival of Irish, Italian, and Jewish immigrants. In the 1960s, Latinos of different ethnicities came to the city. During the 1980s, large numbers of immigrants from South East Asia, including many Cambodians, moved to Lawrence. During this period, many mill-based industries continued their decline. According to the 2000 census, the city's poverty rate was 24%, compared to 9.3% for the rest of

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[26] At the same time, on learning at 10 or 11 in the morning that a hearing was scheduled for the afternoon on disposition of the property, Hilda Colon mobilized ten residents she knew from gardening to appear at the meeting, a presence which convinced a hearing officer to encourage the developer to work with residents on some design issues.

Massachusetts. Within Lawrence, more affluent neighborhoods lie south of the Merrimac river. In the neighborhoods of the North Common where CommunityWorks focuses its organizing and services, median household income was one quarter of that of the rest of the city (LCW 2003).

Bill Traynor, a native of Lawrence, former Executive Director of a CDC in Lowell, and experienced consultant on organizing and community building to several national foundations, became involved in the late 1990's with what was then the Lawrence CDC. In working with a local resident group, the North Common Neighborhood Association (NCNA), he found that residents were frustrated with the level of community involvement in CDC decision-making, and, together with the NCNA and the CDC's board of directors, shifted the group's leadership and direction. In 1999, the CDC became Lawrence CommunityWorks, and Traynor became the new executive director. At the same time, the group of MIT planning students who worked with him assumed staff positions in the fledgling agency (MIT case study 2001). Now located in a former mill building on Island Street in the Merrimack river, Lawrence CommunityWorks promotes local revitalization through physical projects in affordable housing development, conducts family asset-building with Individual Development Accounts, provides youth programming services, and conducts community organizing.

RHICO supported LCW to organize "Neighbor Circles," resident-facilitated house meetings over dinner that focused primarily on relationship building and, in some cases, concrete, jointly-defined actions that emerged from these dinner meetings. Because LCW helped residents who met through these circles become involved with ongoing campaigns, this work also spilled over into other areas of collective action, among them:

1) a campaign for zoning change, for the construction of "Our House," 2) a design and technology center for youth, and 3) the Reviviendo Gateway Initiative, a revitalization project aimed downtown and inclusive of mill owners, artists, small business owners, and other residents of the North Common.

Planning a Consensus-Pluralist Campaign

Several months into the Neighbor Circle campaign, Kristen Harol, LCW's deputy director, noted that the proposal for neighbors to come together for dinner discussions may have been received at the time as somewhat surprising and unambitious, coming from an organization with many active organizing campaigns, and with deeply transformative ambitions for community. But the Neighbor Circles strategy was consistent with the organization's analysis of Lawrence and its overall orientation toward work, which emphasized collaboration, networking, and community building, and which also de-emphasized issues of discrimination and racial difference, at least in framing and in claims made publicly over the course of campaigns.

Fundamentally, staff and leaders at LCW saw Lawrence's political culture as both riven by partisan conflict and division, and also unable to resolve in practice or in public discourse the issues stemming from disparities suffered by Latino residents. It also saw Lawrence as weak in civic capacity of the type normally associated with governing regimes in larger cities – where business or community interests worked with political leaders to get large projects accomplished. Bill Traynor, LCW's executive director, articulated this view at an early stage in the Neighbor Circles campaign:

> If you look at the kind of forces that would normally be pulling the levers in a town like this, you might look at the bankers or the business community, some prominent attorneys, the guy who runs the hospital, the guy who runs all the mills, the two biggest employers, you would expect that there was a room where all those guys get together and talk about something, and find a way to get it done, whether it's direct or indirect – the publisher of the newspaper, all right? That doesn't happen, ok? Not only does it not happen, but you build an alliance with [an executive] at the hospital, then eight others are already suspicious of you. (site visit 2002)

Traynor continued to speak about the perils of choosing sides and developing allies or opponents in such an environment:

> You decide you're going to ride the Mayor's train to power, you've made a big mistake, because 9 councilors all of which are going to oppose it just because. In other words, power, if kind of graphically illustrated, would be one of those ancient dishes with all the cracks going a different way here? There's no path, no alliances, no regime. Ok. And not even a remnant of one or pieces of one. Sometimes in a community you can identify three kind of parallel or intersecting power regimes, right? There isn't anything that comes close to that here. And believe me, we've been looking for it. Because it could make our lives a whole lot easier if we there were. (site visit 2002)

For LCW, this power vacuum was also deeply embedded in an orientation toward race and ethnicity by both whites and Latinos, where groups remained suspicious of action conducted by the other, and where neither was able to dominate local political life in real terms. Armand Hyatt, then-board president, described this dynamic as a political culture of fearfulness and mistrust: "I remember Lawrence being describe as a city of jugular politics. It doesn't matter what position you hold, it matters whose side you're on, and whether or not it's yours or somebody else. Some of that jugular feeling. That type of politics can result in pettiness, sometimes" (site visit 2002). During the same conversation, Liz Guttierez, then-planner with the Revivendo Gateway Initiative,

suggested that these perceptions about the other group's political hegemony were illusory

and contributed to a culture where it was difficult to accomplish things:

> Because there's this perception, that it's the white man that's developed power,
> and others say, no, it's some Latino leaders that have developed power in this
> town, and it's race, it's class, it's all kind of things, but so much of this is
> perception of who has the power (site visit 2002).

Traynor continued, "It's totally fragmented, and its fragmented for everybody.

That's both a bad thing, and it's an opportunity, from some group, for some network, to

get its stuff together and start a movement to take this place and do something." (site visit

2002)

LCW staff and leaders widely shared this belief, that the proper framing for

organizing should avoid claims about racial and ethnic difference, and also that strategies

for collective action needed to be consensus-driven, transparent, and collaborative in

orientation. As will be noted below, while staff and residents held sometimes strong

beliefs about the ways that structures of inequality were intertwined with race, and staff

and residents often came to the conclusion that challenge and confrontation was

necessary, they persistently avoided these frames and strategies because they held them

to be counterproductive[27]. For example, in response to my questions about what was

yielded in avoiding race in the framing of local action, Alma Couverthie, LCW's director

of organizing told a story of how, on the level of individual engagement, she found it

effective not to challenge racist beliefs directly, but instead to challenge to become more

engaged and involved in community action broadly:

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[27] On practical terms, some other staff felt that the heterogeneity of Latinos also made it difficult to invoke culture over the course of organizing. Nelson Butten, a community organizer and long-term resident of Lawrence, noted that "The minute you say Casa Dominicana [another community organization], automatically Puerto Ricans aren't going to be part of that. " (2.10.04)

> For me personally, [race] is an issue that I try always to be very very careful about. Because everything can be discrimination and everything can be race...I am not that sure that those claims are true, taking things separately, not in general. And two, I sometimes question the productivity of actually framing issues that way. Just to give you an example...Our House in its infancy....we actually ventured out into (the neighborhood). I was with Tamar, and she was talking to this old Italian guy about the project, and he started out lashing against the Latinos...that neighborhood went to hell because look at these neighbors, and Tamar was about to jump down his throat and say. don't say that...So I said, it's a problem when people don't get involved and do things. What do you do? Sometimes I feel I am not here to resolve the race issue, but to open opportunities of people to work together, focusing on action and goals, and the hope is that through that, people are going to reflect on their position and change. And if at some point we need to confront race face to face, we will do that, but it has to be a very clear and blunt example, not the notion that...the reason that whites don't want more development is that they want to keep the Latinos out...And that may be true, but do you solve anything by pointing it out like that? (3.24.04)

Kristen Harol, LCW's deputy director, echoed the belief that de-emphasis of race was a very important part of their efforts to enact change in Lawrence, as it contrasted with political institutions that emphasized division, and held out the chance to impress and inspire change within these institution. From my field notes:

> This is a core part of our analysis: there are people who think about traditional urban political analysis: older white ethnics taking power, and of course that's happening, that there's a tremendous amount of racism. But those guys aren't functioning, and we're pretty sure about that. That the more we're in it, it's a question of all of us getting together – because in an environment like that, you don't need a lot of power to stop things from happening, but to bring people together to do things is in itself a revolutionary act – the big things look miraculous; but they're impressed with the small things. (1.26.04)

As an alternative to frames of contention or racial inequality, LCW tends to frame (and also emphasize within internal governance practices, see below) vocabularies of organization-building and community building, or what Traynor more accurately described as "anti-organization-building" (site visit 2002) – an organizational culture that emphasized "networks", "relationships," "fluidity," and "adaptability." In part, this

approach stemmed from an early analysis of limitations of work with the North Common

Neighborhood Association, where LCW eventually found some leadership to be more

concerned with organizational maintenance than with expanding their base and their

goals. In these ways, both to challenge dominant frames of action within Lawrence, and

to promote principles of effective organization, it concentrates on a relationship-building

culture in its organizing work.

Strategy: "Integrate organizing into everything that we do"

Since the formation of LCW "anew" in 1999, staff and board involved in the

transition proceeded with a highly-defined sense of what community development

practices should entail. At a site visit, Traynor defined subsequent efforts in the following

way:

> Not to "do" organizing but to integrate organizing into everything we do. In fact, to build an organization that does organizing in the context of community development...We do have an organizing director, an organizing program. We have events and issues, things you might typically find elsewhere. More importantly, we try to have an organization that tries to find organizing legs in everything it does. When we do development, family asset building, neighborhood planning, the question we're always asking ourselves are how do we do this in a way that's building power?...[it's a difficult thing to do], and a more difficult thing to sustain. (Site visit 2004)

In practical terms, these efforts to make organizing part of community development

activities have taken several directions. All of its efforts – planning for gateway

revitalization, programming for economic development and youth service programs – are

driven by membership committees who suggest content, recruit members, and who

participate not just in those initiatives but in other organizational activities. Affordable

housing development proceeds with direction from neighborhood committees called PICs (property improvement committees), often guided by community planning. Harol noted the ways that this integration was sustained not just by coordination, but by developing a sense of interchangeability of roles among staff:

> I sit at staff meetings, and hear from development about community gardeners, and from neighborhood planner about need for affordable housing…if you didn't know whose job title was who, you would really say that she is the director of development, and the director of development was the organizer. So, as a team, we're really thinking in each other's places. (site visit 2002)

Coordination and flow among departments also assists members come together to support specific housing projects. For example, early during the period of organizing I observed, in September 2002, during a City Council hearing about an affordable housing development opportunity for the CDC, LCW members packed the hall with people affiliated with different parts of the organization. Said Harol of that moment, "The turnout was interesting, because it was like jury duty or something [in that people from all walks of life come and meet at the same place]" She continued, "People who didn't know they were part of the same organization but who had different interests in seeing that property happen for us" all came out to the council to support it.

Third, over the course of the time I witnessed their work, LCW adopted a more formal approach toward "network-building" among residents, emphasizing the flows of residents between departments and CDC activities and with each other. In doing so, they faced challenges inherent not only in the work itself, but also ones posed by in the rapid growth of their own organization. In March of 2003, Couverthie described this dynamic as stemming from natural pressures of CDC and staff specialization into program areas:

> I think that in order for network to work as we envision it, we have to make a lot of changes internally; we have taken big steps toward. The problem came from, [when] LCW started – the new face of it in 1999; we were just around 7 or 8 in the staff. Things were a lot more integrated; we depended a lot more on each other. As we started growing more quickly, the need to kind of specialize became evident. That's when things started to split more into departments and things like that. Now the call is somewhat to go back to the way that things were, when things were more integrated.

LCW found that one major component to building integration was emphasizing cultures of openness and communication among staff. LCW conducted a staff-wide retreat on communication in April, 2003; Harol described the goals that emerged as developing "the type of culture where you're responsible to your coworkers to be extremely honest with them…where you have a problem with somebody, you speak to them." (interview 5.03)

In addition to furthering informal practices of communication among staff, LCW developed a formal "Network Coordinator," hiring Marianna Levy-Spournis in the summer of 2003. In addition to conducting new member orientations, building information systems for tracking, and helping facilitate communications generally among departments, Levy-Spournis and others were especially interested in creating bridging relationships with staff and participants at LCW's Family Asset Building, or FAB program. Although directed by a resident committee that also recruited potential participants in Individual Development Accounts and related services, as of March, 2003, Couverthie contrasted FAB's relations with the rest of the agency with those of the organizing and planning department:

> I think it's very safe to say that in terms of organizing and development, that has not been a challenge. I think that project-wise it's very well-integrated; I think that's a focus of LCW development work as a whole. The challenge is that…it's more present with FAB – because FAB came later, it came later with the process

> of us being more specific about our work and independence. So now, it goes form
> the organizing side and FAB and other areas of the organizing, we needed to
> bring those 2 together and do work together. (6.24.03)

Levy-Spirnous described her efforts with FAB as particularly important, given the large

people with whom they come into contact. From my field notes:

> The first thing we're trying to do is talk to the instructors because they're the first
> point of contact for a lot of these FAB class members – to talk to them about their
> role as network weavers...and then how do they facilitate these connections: and
> that this is about relationship building – (interview 2.10.04)

Staff saw benefits to internal coordination in both membership development and

in political mobilization. During an interview, Nelson Butten, LCW's organizer, told a

story about "flow" through different parts of the agency, and how it contributed to

membership-building for LCW. He described his recent encounter with a woman they

met through a Neighbor Circle, originally from Panama, who had recently brought her

daughters to Lawrence from New York. Although both were professionals in Panama,

they were unable to get jobs in their craft in Lawrence because of certification and

language barriers. The daughter expressed interest in Lawrence's PODER Leadership

Institute (see below), but, as she hadn't yet done committee work within LCW or

otherwise possessed relationships with community members, staff deemed that

connection inappropriate. Instead, they connected the daughter to the FAB program,

where she became an active participant in that program. Another daughter was involved

in marketing and commercial design, and was connected to LCW's youth program, where

she volunteered to teach classes to participants (2.10.04).

In addition to membership and relationship-building produced by this "flow"

through the agency, these networks were often employed for rapid mobilization around

critical community events. For example, early during the period I followed LCW' work,

the city's Community Development Block Grant plan eliminated the CDC's allocation,

even though the city referenced LCW extensively in their planning materials. Over the

course of only two hours, even though no organized committee existed around CDBG

allocation, almost sixty members came to the evening hearing, including women with

their children who had taken off time from work to voice support for the organization; as

a result funding was restored.

Ambitions for campaigns emerge

As organizing proceeded in the Neighbor Circles Campaign, in the campaign for

zoning change, in work around the Revivendo Initiative and in other organizing projects,

the CDC encountered real resistance from state actors who opposed not only the goals of

the project, but also the terms on which they sought to achieve them. In more subtle

ways, LCW also faced resistance in work with their own constituents, as the CDC sought

to promote alternative cultures of community and relationship-building among leaders,

and to avoid nascent groups' being incorporated into what they viewed as dysfunctional

community dynamics. While part of the resistance on both fronts stemmed from natural

opposition to complex and difficult campaigns, in other ways, it came from suspicion

about LCW's collaborative orientation toward organizing. Over time, these encounters

re-enforced staff and leaders' conviction that continued success would also help alter

patterns of relationships between city hall and neighborhood groups (including but not

limited to LCW) – making political and civic institutions more inclusive, more participatory, and more effective.

These moments of resistance emerged in dramatic and in small ways. For example, at the first meeting of residents involved with the campaign to create a zoning overlay district for the downtown area, mill owners, artists, and other local residents stood before the planning board and made an extensive presentation about their vision for downtown development. Andre LeRoux, LCW's community planner, reported that the format of the proposal was met with profound skepticism from the zoning board. As captured in my field notes, LeRoux reported:

> At the first planning board meeting, I was in attendance, it was interesting because we had this whole RGI group, 5 artists, 4 residents, 4 mill owners, and they all spoke about why this was such a good thing for the district – a pretty powerful display – and the response was, "Who's making money out of this? CommunityWorks, mill owners, who's making money out of this?" (3.24.04)

After "backtracking" with the planning board to make sure they felt included in the process (and in doing so, in LeRoux's assessment, "empowering them"), the proposal moved to the City Council's ordinance committee. There, it was met with similar skepticism. LeRoux described the committee as involved "the toughest, most eclectic counselors," who resisted LCW's attempts to share information beforehand about the proposal, charging that they were "trying to do backchannels." After residents made their formal presentation to the ordinance committee, one counselor who was particularly antagonistic to city officials and agencies seized upon the CDC's claims that it had the support of the Administration and charged LCW with what seemed at the time like an impossible demand, paraphrased by LeRoux: "next time, I want to see back here the mayor, the planning director and all of the administration department heads answering

our questions, doing a build-out analysis of what this zoning would look like, and the

effect it would have on services and development. All of the department heads. It was a

fairly dark day."

While this major external challenge reinforced LCW's sense of the tensions

produced by its campaigns, in other ways, they felt that they faced another, related

challenge: in a community where leadership has traditionally meant enacting contentious

action, building an alternative culture of leadership meant confronting basic expectations

about what it means to be political. In the very first Neighbor Circle, residents started to

talk about escalating rents in the city, and then wanted to plan initiate a campaign for rent

control legislation. Although, on other occasions, LCW staff had considered such

campaigns to be perhaps winnable on the local level, they worked hard to encourage

leaders to consider both the issue itself and also what types of things they needed to see

in place before embarking on one. Couverthie described how the conversation finally

ended:

> They realized that it is a very complex issue; and that there were things that they
> didn't have in place to succeed in the campaign. One of them was simple as
> getting to know your neighbor – we don't have relationship with the people across
> the street. So what they started to do is activities around building sense of
> community around the area; local street-by-street issues; building momentum so
> that at some point in the future, if it is the right time and the stars are lined up –
> they're going ot call the right people – and then they're going to work it. (6.24.03)

As a result of these types of transitional conversations, Couverthie both saw a way that

LCW might work to change leadership cultures within the CDC, and also (as will be

described below) saw the terms around which they hoped to engage leaders when they

did in fact decide on a campaign.

In smaller ways, LCW staff and members' orientation toward fostering mutual

self-help also encountered resistance from city agencies who worked to discourage it.

Some LCW members who met through a Neighbor Circle members self-organized a day

of clean up around a vacant lot, bagged the trash, and expected the city to pick them up

over the course of normal trash collection. Instead, an inspector arrived from the city to

LCW offices, seeking to fine the CDC and also looking for residents to fine for their

work. Couverthie reflected that encounters like these were particularly important for

residents to see. When community leaders saw "how something that seems good to do is

turning into this whole political issue" (AC 3.24.04), they also developed the analysis that

broader change was necessary.

> I would say that almost every single time that an issue….that seems not
> threatening or simple [like cleaning up a vacant lot], arises, and gets people in the
> community talking and saying this is going to be threatening to the city – unless
> the way the city is run changes. What I envision happening is that some of the
> leaders that are going to come out of these efforts are going to be the ones to up
> the ante, and say we're going to run the show, and they're going to start looking at
> the city as a source of power to effect change – that's a long term goal, 5 or 10
> years from now. It's started to happen now, little by little…[people are asking,]
> What about the historic commissions? What about the city councils? Oh it's the
> mayor who appoints them – how's that? And many leaders are seriously thinking
> about running for office. We are trying to tell them not to be alone when they do
> that – there's actually a strategy and a back-up, that they're not the only voice of
> reason among incompetencies (sic). (3.24.04)

What happened – success starts to spark changes in political institutions

In this section, I describe the evolution of the Neighbor Circles and other areas of

LCW collective action, and how successful campaigns not only drew major resources to

Lawrence, but also set examples for a more participatory, conciliatory, and engaged

political culture, what staff and leaders sometimes described as "a new way of doing business in Lawrence."

LCW conducted over thirty Neighbor Circle sessions during the period I followed their work. Over time the Circles became self-generating, as resident facilitators trained other participants to conduct meetings on their own. These sessions significantly increased LCW's membership, and in turn helped generate constituency and direction for other areas of collective action. The Circles themselves were often seen, however, as a creating small victories in both achievements and in process. For example, some leaders of the North Common Neighborhood Association (the group that was deeply involved in LCW's transformation in 1999, but which LCW now perceived as somewhat anti-participatory) became interested in joining Neighbor Circles. As a result of their engagement with other Circle members, they started to work to maintain a local park and find ways to keep gang members out of it. Couverthie described the process in this way:

> Some from NCNA [North Common Neighborhood Association] were eager to know other people from the circles and get to join them. So that was an incentive to get to join them. Out of that meeting, people joined the committee [to maintain the park], they have a great plan, they were able to get the police engaged with the plan. But it was done in a way that people were attracted to come together by an issue, not by a form….The focus is the park, the focus is the neighborhood. That's one reason that keeping it fluid was an asset, because it let them really focus on what they were going to do, instead of is this something they should be doing, and who should be – that was beside the point. (6.24.03)

Over the course of the Neighbor Circles, staff worked to ensure both that promising potential leaders got to know each other, and also different aspects of the organization. Even when Circles did not yield a concrete project (such as an alley clean up or organizing playground maintenance). Organizer Nelson Butten described the trajectory of one circle conducted on Orchard Street, where residents decided not to

pursue an action around code enforcement for personal reasons, including some fears of

immigration action. While the energy around that circle dissipated, Butten described how

one leader became very active in the Our House Committee (see the footnote below),

spoke often during member orientations, and eventually took part in the PODER

leadership training institute. As conveyed in my field notes, Butten said, "every time we

need somebody to cook [an essential component of house and evening meetings] or be

part of a meeting, she is really involved." (2.10.04)

Also during this time, the Circles started to build a constituency, not just for

potential leaders within the organization, but for leadership *training* of a certain type. As

described above in the case of the happily-avoided rent control campaign of the first

Circle meeting, sessions sometimes surfaced difficult problems that required complicated

and far-reaching responses. While LCW encouraged leaders to stay away from these

ambitious campaigns until sufficient local relationships had been built, facilitators were

in fact interested in developing the skills that could that eventually enact important

changes. In part as a result of the evolution of their leaders' sense of what constituted

political action, PODER, a leadership training institute, started to take shape. Said

Couverthie:

> The idea of having kind of a cadre of well-prepared leaders is not new for us,
> we've been tossing this idea around for quite awhile. It wasn't just cooking – and
> how are we going to do this, and how are we going to do this – it wasn't until we
> start to do Neighbor Circles that facilitators started to flag that they needed that.
> That they were being thrown very complex issues, and that sometimes they felt
> they weren't ready to tackle these issues and have productive conversations,
> because they were too complex, too large, or they didn't have enough information
> to deal with them. And staff was at a place where they couldn't take over the
> meetings; they were saying they needed to think more about economic analysis
> and power analysis, they know that they didn't need to know everything, but they
> should know something. (6.24.03)

PODER emphasized collaborative leadership skills, political and economic analysis, self-knowledge, trust-building, and tools of political action (including, Couverthie described, the often over-looked skill of "asking a question" (3.24.04). The first class of the Institute invited public officials to answer questions about Lawrence, and in doing so used the space created by the "classes" to develop and formulate a campaign.

At the same time, leaders involved in PODER and in Circles became part of LCW's other organizing projects, helping fuel those campaigns. While there are many that might be described here, [28] I focus especially on the campaign for zoning change, as it both evoked institutional resistance, inspired some changes in political culture, and will allow for significant redevelopment of the area around the Merrimack according to community visioning. After the "dark day" in which a councilmember seized on LCW's claims at collaboration with the city, to insist that the mayor and every city department head testify about its budgetary impacts, the campaign regrouped, according to LeRoux. Although leaders made the decision that they could have "railed against it, or brought 200 residents out," they decided instead to address what they analyzed was the "underlying issue," which came not from opposition to the substance of the overlay, but instead sought to "send a message to the city" about responsiveness to the Council and to policy changes generally. Instead, committee members worked to get the Mayor's support to have city departments prepare statements to the Council, and LCW staff helped these departments conduct analyses in cases that they had not done so before.

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[28] For example, around the Our House Center for Design and Technology, one of LCW's first projects, and an extensive one with diverse community support, the city had promised money to demolish part of the building, but said that they were unable to provide these funds after LCW acquired the building. 50 residents confronted the Mayor and the city Planning Director as they sat in the center of a circle and were forced to answer questions about their support of the project. When they suggested that they meet privately with a select group after the meeting, residents asked that they all attend, and the subsequent meeting had even more people. Funding was restored. The example is also significant in that LCW residents showed themselves ready to embrace conflictual tactics when necessary.

While coordinating with the city, members had five public meetings and seventy five speakers in favor of the zoning overlay, even as they responded to requests for information and analysis in what they considered to be a transparent way. In the end, several city department heads came to the council meeting, and while they were not able to answer every question the council had for them, their attendance convinced the committee that they took the overlay proposal seriously. At a late stage in the Council hearings, the campaign also dealt effectively with opposition from a South Lawrence councilmember, to the proposal's inclusionary zoning requirements. This issue was particularly important to the structure, although it was also one that challenged the coalition's own constituency. While they did not oppose the inclusionary zoning requirements, and took part in the coalition processes that proposed them, many mill owners did not fervently support them on their own. By emphasizing to the council that this was a diverse coalition that supported a plan that would preserve the neighborhood's own economic diversity, they were able to overcome opposition and move to full council.

LeRoux described the subsequent victory, and its impact in the often-divided council:

> Once we had [the support of the ordinance committee], we had more supporters on the full council, and it was pretty routine there. We got a unanimous vote. All their concerns had been resolved, all the amendments had been incorporated…at the end of it, they all supported it and they all – of them – made beautiful comments about the process and the result, and they were all really complementary to everybody, said they had never seen such a committed open process for an issue like that. By the end of it they were really invested in it, they were really invested in it (and said) Why didn't you guys expand this to other parts of the city? That's part of what we try to do in the city, we try to model how good development could happen. We learned a lot about how to conduct a pulbic campaign and eleveate the level of discouse in the city, and we did a lot of good in terms of educating public officials…I think we changed their thinking quite a bit. (3.24.04)

The success of the campaign built not only optimism within the council for an "elevated level of discourse," but also, said Leroux, further built constituencies of LCW within the city's economic actors, who now approach both LCW and community in a different way:

> Over the last few months I've noticed a sea change over the people I work with..mostly in the private sector....Whereas before these mill owners were all afraid to be the first ones to redevelop their buildings...now it seems that they're racing, and they're afraid to be the last ones. They're all very anxious about who's doing what, and they're putting together serious proposals, and have a time frame of 18 months. They're also looking at residential, and this is all because of the zoning overlay district. It changed it for the public officials and the mill owners too.... I think that the private sector has caught on to the value added that's being generated by RGI. It contrasts significantly with the response they get from the office of planning and development, which is not responsive, not positive, and not forthcoming about information...not tied into the community. (3.24.04)

Setbacks and continuing challenges

While LCW experienced success these many areas, campaigns were not always successful. In what Couverthie called "one of our most, I would say harder defeats," attempts to renovate a Holy Rosary for afterschool programs. Unfortunately, Couverthie described the level of animosity between the school department and the city council as such that the council said, in effect, "you haven't proven to me that you really want it," and denied funding for the project. From my notes:

> I think that the miscalculation was that we thought it was going to be an easy thing to do – that we didn't need a lot of organizing around it – we were just going to renovate the building that the city owned, that we had the support of the school department to do...why would you say no? Well, politics can screw everything, and in this case, it was a delusion that things were going to go smoothly – a lot of the project wasn't under our control, it was under the school department's control...they didn't do the quality of work to convince the city council that it was a good thing to do (3.24.04).

Harol noted that this fight was one opportunity in which it was particularly difficult not to

analyze resistance in terms of racial discrimination, and to emphasize this in the course of

the struggle. LCW refused to do so, believing that this strategy would be ultimately

counterproductive. From my field notes:

> The city is riven by racial issues and a lot of discourse get framed this way here,
> and it can be very ugly – and it's hard to resist it because it's there. We had a huge
> fight [with Holy Rosary] because we kept the focus on feasibility, finding the
> money, it's free – and the only good explanation for why you wouldn't want to do
> this has a lot to do with race. But calling it that gets you nowhere, it wouldn't get
> what you want. (interview 1.24.04)

Review and Preliminary Analysis

How the "ambition for change" emerged

Like the campaigns described in "the chance for growth," LCW and Nuestras

Raices's campaigns were met with fierce opposition from state actors[29]. This opposition

stemmed not simply from the specific demands of the campaigns, but also from the ways

that these campaigns were identifiably associated with a particular orientation toward

community and community change. As I describe more extensively in the next chapter,

the most salient components of this orientation toward community and community action

involved stances 1) toward racial and ethnic difference, and 2) toward conflict and the

adoption of contentious tactics. In contrast with the cases of ACDC and SCC, however,

CDCs did not try to adjust their own orientation toward difference and toward conflict to

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[29] In contrast with the cities of Somerville and Boston, Holyoke and Lawrence are more relatively sparsely-
populated in terms of organization. Partly because of this, the friction that both campaigns evoked with
political institutions was more directly experienced with state actors.

accommodate political institutions; rather, they actively sought out opportunities to distinguish their practices and demands from those of other groups.

In fact, LCW decided that the absence of an effective oppositional structure within city government meant that they needed to build an alternative base of power, whose members would hold values that contrasted with those the CDC found applied in dysfunctional ways within city government. That meant that even though staff and activists were possessed of deeply-held beliefs about the role of race in community, and even though the CDC was on occasion willing to adopt contentious tactics, that it generally espoused beliefs about community that emphasized consensus-building and which de-emphasized racial difference. This contrast between the CDC's own style of organization and leadership, and what LCW considers to be the traditionally partisan and divided conditions of organizational life in Lawrence, has sparked conflict with political institutions. resulted in powerful inter-group conflict. For example, LCW's claims to work co-operatively with the city (and with all potential partners) to enact zoning change sparked both suspicion and procedural obstacles within the city council, as council members who were suspicious of the Mayor's office mobilized against the campaign. As a result of this type of opposition, LCW realized that success would both involve and contribute to a change in the orientation of fundamental values of discourse; with this change in the terms of interaction they hoped

Similarly, resistance to Nuestras Raices's vacant lots campaign turned out to be unexpectedly fierce, involving constant challenges from City Hall, including charges that the CDC was 'playing the race card' by emphasizing the cultural aspects of their campaign in a city that was heavily Puerto Rican, but had only two Latino

representatives. Nuestras Raices's readiness to see its work in terms of conflict and difference – its belief in the exclusion of Puerto Ricans from political and economic strata, its "roots" in gardening and environmental justice as an alternative order to the industrial and its adoption of conflictual stances toward power -- led it to embrace the implications of these escalating conflicts, one which would represent a dramatic change in policy and in the way that government interacted with Latino neighborhoods.

What made the difference between success and failure

As I noted in my introduction, my analysis strategy throughout these chapters has paired CDCs that were comparable in structural aspects of organization and neighborhood setting, but which differed in aspects of organizing strategy, interdepartmental coordination, and governance that CDC organizers and activists might reasonably be able to change or implement. LCW and Nuestras Raices work in similar political, economic, and demographic environments; however, LCW has significantly greater financial resources and a much larger staff (although if one were to include Nuestras Raices's Americorps volunteers, this disparity would be substantially less). In chapter six, I explore this analytic problem in greater detail. For now, I note that my comparative strategies in this chapter do not eliminate the possibility that resources make no difference at all in mounting successful challenges. However, this comparative chapter also reveals the ways that the extensive relationships that each CDC had with local residents were employed very differently over the course of organizing. While Nuestras Raices segmented its organizing from the activities of the rest of the organization, LCW

worked hard to make sure that relationships developed through one aspect of the CDC's

development activities could be drawn upon for collective action, a process that required

extensive interdepartmental coordination and "network-building" within the organization.

For Nuestras Raices, during the months between June 2002 and November 2003,

residents were largely not asked to become involved in the public policy debate, or to

take part in campaign planning. Instead, staff's reluctance to meet gardeners outside of

the terms of engagement they had helped establish meant that the campaign had little

base, put the campaign into a reactive role, and meant that no momentum was generated

to compensate for the CDC's advocate's departure from the city planning office. Even as

Colon took over the position, staff continued to interact with gardeners in the fields or in

the CDC's greenhouse almost exclusively around gardening activities, as opposed to in

their homes around political participation, and they still mostly worked with youth

members around recreation and service activities. In other words, while Nuestras Raices

had developed extensive relationships with community residents, organizational

processes were not set into motion so that these relationships could be employed for

organizing purposes.

In contrast, while relationship-building at Lawrence CommunityWorks also

stemmed from other, broadly community-oriented activities (such as family asset

building, educational training for youth, or neighborhood circles), the agency was much

more strategic about the ways that it helped members interact with each other around

different aspects of the organization's activities. As a result, political mobilization was

facilitated by relationships formed over the course of program development. These

programs had not only community involvement but also active committee control, and

helped residents learn that membership in the organization could mean participation in various different campaigns and committees. The CDC's hiring of a "network coordinator" helped formalize the organizational processes by which relationships were facilitated and engaged in mobilized work.

These networks, while facilitated by staff activity to re-orient service projects, would also not have been possible had residents not themselves controlled the content of the programs through active committee work. LCW has active and compettive elections for board positions, and vigorous committees who engage leaders outside of the board's formal structure. All in all, as members moved in and out of opportunities for collective action in the Reviviendo Gateway Initiative, in the zoning change campaign, and around the Our House project, the CDC's campaign was able to weather conflict and skepticism provoked by the CDC's orientation toward work, and in winning these campaigns, to lay out the template for a "new way of doing business" in Lawrence.

Chapter 5: Analysis – How Campaign Ambitions Emerge

The previous three chapters described in detail the organizing campaigns of six

CDCs. Starting with their early planning stages, I examined the strategies CDC staff and

activists employed both within their own organization and in interaction with

neighborhood residents and local targets. I assessed the response of local organizations

and other state actors to the campaign, the successes and failures of campaigns as they

attempted to affect the local physical and policy landscape, and the ability or inability of

campaigns to alter local political institutions. Each chapter described a shared path that

two campaigns took. As campaigns developed, it became apparent to actors in both

CDCs that successful organizing might impact local political institutions in a particular

way. Each of the three chapters also started to analyze the ways that the campaign either

succeeded – thereby enacting the ambition that surfaced through collective action – or

failed – and in failing neither altering nor reinforcing existing political institutions. This

analysis chapter, however, focuses exclusively on the *emergence* of campaign paths, and

the formation of ambitions either to alter or reinforce local political institutions.

Secondarily, this chapter also starts to locate my findings within discussions about social

movement framing processes, and about the role of race in community action.

Ways of contending

What determined whether mobilization could be incorporated into existing

political systems, or if it instead threatened local institutions? In each of the campaigns I

studied, campaigns evoked a specific, contextual claim about their community, and about

proper way to change it. That is, in addition to winning concrete goals – building schools,

enacting legislation, or exacting resources from corporations or city hall – organizing

articulates a vision about community itself. In public statements to government, in

conversation between organizers and activists, and in informal interaction among

residents, organizing makes claims about the ways that its resources are (and should) be

allocated within communities, and about the ways that groups and individuals do and

should interact with each other. I described the formation of these claims in the "planning

a campaign" section of each of the six cases. From the perspective of actors involved in

the organizing, the specificity of this claim about community was important for several

reasons. As I described in each section, ideological, biographical, strategic, and

contextual factors all motivated a CDC's claims toward community action. Organizers

decided to frame based on what they thought would best "work" – what would appeal to

the identity and self-interest of individuals they wished to engage and mobilize. In other

cases, they made claims about community based on the actions that could stem from this

vision – assessing whether these actions would be winnable and important. In other cases,

claims about community were adopted because they were rooted in deeply-held beliefs

about justice. *As I describe below, these claims also helped determine the response of*

local political institutions to the organizing.

The richness of my data allows me to be more specific about the components of a

campaign's claims about community, at least as they surfaced in explicit terms for

organizers and other groups over the course of campaigns[30]. These specific components

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[30] For studies of the importance of claims not raised, see, for example Peter Bachrach and Morton S.
Baratz, "Two Faces of Power," American Political Science Review 56 (1962). For example, in only one
two of the campaigns I studied did class become an explicit issue; in none did gender become an explicit
component of campaign framing. Castells (1983) understands the refusal to adopt claims related to class

are important to explore because they illustrate some widely-held underpinnings to community action and political challenge. Within my cases, there were two important components to a CDC's vision of community and community change, as articulated by the campaign and its interaction with local residents. These were claims about 1) the importance of racial and ethnic <u>difference</u> in community, and 2) about the necessity of <u>conflict</u> in organizing tactics. As campaigns were planned and developed, CDC leaders made decisions about whether to emphasize or de-emphasize these issues of difference and conflict: whether to make racial and ethnic identity an important part of a campaign's attempts to inspire and challenge, and whether to employ contentious tactics in carrying out its objectives. As I describe throughout the cases, these decisions were often conscious and deliberate, and made for strategic reasons. Of course, many campaigns stemmed in fact from these existing orientations toward race and community, even as strategization made *conscious* the reasons behind these framing choices.

Below, I build a typology of CDC claims about community and change, as evoked by organizing campaigns by describing two dimensions, and four types, of claims and tactics. The first dimension of claims about community and community change I describe involve claims about difference. The majority of CDCs I studied work in communities of color, or have diverse constituencies. Either explicitly, through inclusion, or implicitly, through de-emphasis, CDC campaigns made representations about race-based patterns of political and economic exclusion impacting their neighborhoods. Campaigns that made racial or ethnic difference an important issue for their campaigns often formed cultural associations, framed their campaigns as making inroads into white institutions, or understood opposition to be based in institutional racism. Although these

structure as an endemic issue to urban mobilization in the US.

claims about difference were themselves articulated within a particular set of community demands – a campaign goal – and so may be substantially distinguished from nationalist, separatist, or identity politics, I draw on language employed by democratic theorists (Benhabib 2001, Marion Young 2001) to describe a campaign's reliance on difference as *the extent to which campaigns involve the articulation of fundamental distinctions among community constituencies, which are not easily accommodated or erased within the existing social systems, and therefore require change.* These distinctions most often involved race and ethnicity, but in other situations involved differences found in other social categories, such as class[31]. In contrast, CDCs who de-emphasized difference framed action as community power-building in more general terms, without explicit reference to the racial, ethnic, or class composition of their constituencies, even when constituencies were primarily poor people of color.

The second important dimension for organizing frames addressed an understanding of the necessity and desirability of conflict in community change. Within my cases, a campaign's evocation of conflict was *the extent to which a CDC held that successful achievement of goals requires it to challenge existing relationships, subject them to extensive tensions, and employ coercive means to do so*[32]. These sometimes involved the use of contentious mobilization or disruptive tactics. [33] In contrast, if a

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[31]Although many participants understood gender to be an important social dynamic, it did not emerge as a category of interest over the course of early campaign development. Class was also a more implicit understanding within CDC campaigns.

[32] This definition is consistent with normative, theoretical literature on democratic deliberative theory (see Mouff 2001), and also on social movement studies of the institutionalization of protest (Tarrow 1998, Piven and Cloward 1972, 1977),

[33] Again, these dimensions of conflict may be seen as relative to the politics as practiced among community organizations. Compared to some other spheres of organizing practice, there were probably fewer genuinely disruptive "actions" within RHICO. However, within the spectrum of political mobilization generally, I believe RHICO's level of non-institutionalized and disruptive repertoire to be fairly typical; see Goodwin 1998 on the institutionalization of protest in New York City. Within Boston, to compare

campaign's course de-emphasized conflict, it did not make issues of contention salient in framing or tactics.[34] Varied factors were important for a sites' decision to make conflict an important part of their activity. These included an explicit or tacit assessment of a CDC's power to accomplish what it needed through disruptive means without suffering disabling retribution; an orientation toward a CDC's past dependencies to government, banks, or community groups; a projection of what would mobilize and energize its constituencies; and a sense by leaders and staff as to the level of tensions they were able to endure personally.[35]

These two dimensions of framing were separable from each other, as illustrated by the diagram and elaborated in the descriptive paragraphs below.

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contentious tactics, the Boston Greater Boston Interfaith Organization (GBIO), the local IAF group, used primarily the "accountability session" as its large scale action, and did not attempt public or visible acts of civil disobedience.

[34] Although I use a typology of high and low levels of conflict within a campaigns' claims about change, I do not suggest that sites with low levels of conflict practiced what is known as "consensus organizing" Within considerations of organizing practice, consensus organizing has formed in somewhat polemical relationship to traditional models of "conflict," "challenge," or "power-building" organizing. All participants in RHICO worked in some version of conflict organizing – establishing targets, defining a campaign with them, engaging in actions and meetings that aimed to win them.

[35] For example, in a case not described above, the Allston-Brighton CDCs' campaign was to influence a planning process co-sponsored by the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) around Harvard University's expansion into the neighborhood. In the early months of their campaign, the CDC experienced powerful tensions about "insider" vs. "outsider" strategies in organizing, due in part to the dependencies created by Harvard's support of a CDC affordable housing development project, and due to the BRA's role in permitting the same development. In asking, "How do we challenge Harvard University and other powerful institutions to be more responsive to residents, especially when previous wins have forced us somewhat into an "insider's" game with them," they were explicitly weighing their own power with Harvard, understanding the possibility that they might lose the affordable housing development promised to them, and seeing whether their board had an appetite to take on such a powerful university.

Figure 4: Two dimensions, and four types of CDC claims about change

	Low evocation of Difference	High evocation of Difference
Low evocation of Conflict	Consensus-pluralist	Diverse-inclusive
High evocation of conflict	Partisan-advocate	Agonistic-pluralist

First, campaigns I characterize being "diverse-inclusive" in orientation toward community structure and change may emphasize difference, but believe that groups may be incorporated into neighborhood and civic life without excessive conflict. For example, organizing by the Somerville Community Corporation strove to engage immigrants in its neighborhood association, but sought to build relationships before attempting more contentious action.

Second, "consensus-pluralist" claims about community and community change emphasize a stakeholder-convening approach. These may involve attempts to build broad and inclusive coalitions emphasizing shared values, build openness in communication

among partners and with those the campaign seeks to influence, or articulate a vision of

"one community" acting in concert for self-betterment. The Asian Community

Development Corporation first adopted this approach, in organizing around affordable

housing development within Chinatown. Similarly, Lawrence Community Works

adopted this strategic approach toward community building within the city, even though

it remained highly conscious of local power dynamics and exerted pressure when needed.

Third, "Partisan-advocate" claims understand the basis for inter-group interaction

within neighborhoods or cities as based on particularist agendas, where ideology, race,

class, or other social groupings suggest little about the need for systemic change, but

where personal history and organizational affiliation dominate agendas. For example,

The Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation read that community

politics was dominated by small homeowners' and business associations that are thinly

representative of their constituencies, and saw little cohesion in activity or coordination

among them. It also saw the politics of development as dominated by private agendas and

abutter-driven contentiousness, and so acted to capitalize on these dynamics in their

campaign[36].

Fourth, claims that emphasize both difference and conflict I call "agonistic-

pluralist," borrowing the term from writers about democratic deliberation (Mouffe 2000,

Benhabib 2001). Bonnie Honig's articulation of "agonism" characterizes this stance well:

"to take difference – and not just identity – seriously in democratic theory is to affirm the

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[36] I also note that certain orientations of ethnic mobilization may be characterized as "partisan-advocate,"
even if the basis of their claims about change are in the exclusion of an ethnic group. That is, where
representatives of an ethnic group believe that exclusions can be accommodated within existing patterns of
group incorporation – for example, the way the Dominican constituency of Salem Harbor's Point
neighborhood demands similar resources from a city as did French-Canadian and Central European
immigrants a generation or two ago – one may also see "partisan-advocate" orientation toward change.

inescapability of conflict and the ineradicability of resistance to the political and moral projects of ordering subjects, institutions, and values….it is to give up on the dream of a place called home…free of power, conflict, and struggle." (Honig 2001: 186). In my cases, The Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation adopts this stance, as does Nuestras Raices, in that both utilize contentious tactics or seek out areas of conflict while promoting solidarity and cultural consciousness among Latino residents.

The importance of context – how ambitions emerge in interaction

Why do these claims matter for political change? As I noted above, biographical and strategic factors are important components of understanding the choices that actors make as their claims make. But the specificity of these claims are also important for understanding the impact that a campaign could have on local political institutions. This is because the claims evoked by organizing not only appeal to group and indvidual identities in organizing campaigns, but also because local institutions form complementary (or competing) claims to those advanced by the organizing. Throughout the "campaign ambitions emerge" section for each case, I noted how local political institutions were very much bound up in their own particular articulation about race and conflict within community. What I call the potential impact of campaigns (the hope for continuity, the chance for growth, and the ambition for change) emerges as organizing finds *resonance* or *dissonance* with those associated with local political institutions. In other words, the stakes that successful organizing might have on local political institutions became clearer to organizers and activists as they interacted with

neighborhood groups, elected officials, and governmental agencies about broad and potentially issues within community life[37].

As CDC leaders interacted with staff and members of other groups, other organizations quickly recognized the character of a CDC's claims toward race and toward conflict, how it related to their own efforts, and whether it was complementary or dissonant with their own. That is, while the specific demands of CDC campaigns were themselves seen to be significant by other groups, equally important were the ways that these demands were viewed as an extension of broad claims about race and about conflict within community. As participants in organizing themselves develop a collective understanding of community, and as contests over this representation emerge, actors come to understand what change becomes possible through organizing. Where agreement formed, or where tensions stemming from divergent views about race and about conflict were quickly accommodated, collective action tended to build on previous successes, or continue general setbacks within that neighborhood[38]. Where dissonance formed between groups about the orientation of organizing work, campaigns sparked more friction within the community, and between residents and government. While this friction presented challenges for organizing, making it more difficult to "win", it also held out the potential

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[37] This finding, enabled by longitudinal methodologies, surfaced a particularly important aspect of organizing. Although community organizing aspires to enact broad changes in political institutions, when actors who attempt it are probed about their work over time, it becomes clear that they cannot always predict the impact that their work may have on local political institutions. Even when experienced community organizers, committed resident leaders, sophisticated development professionals, and competent executive directors take part in organizing efforts, a campaign's ambitions in this area became clear to participants and targets only as staff and leaders actually carry out its work. That is, by holding meetings with residents, pushing agendas with members of other community organizations, carrying out actions and demonstrations, and interacting with governmental agencies and elected officials, CDCs learned whether their efforts might be incorporated into existing community dynamics, or if they posed a more radical threat to political institutions.
[38] Although I use the word "agreement," because I find that organizing creates spaces to contest and to deliberate values, I recognize that challenge to institutional arrangements (or their acceptance) often involves coercion and non-deliberative processes.

to reshape relationships among community groups and to change power dynamics between neighborhoods and city hall. A brief review of resonance and dissonance in my cases illustrates this general point.

The hope for continuity – claims find resonance with local institutions

In chapter two, I described how the Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation's organizer discovered, contrary to his initial expectations, that residents in other neighborhood organizations shared its contentious orientation toward development projects. As they explored what successful implementation of a vision for planning in the Norfolk Triangle would mean, they found that successful organizing would help build local political institutions that allowed for coalition work around the control of development projects. Similarly, the Jamaica Plain NDC's orientation toward organizing emphasizes the ways that gentrification affects low-income Latinos, by challenging in direct and contentious ways the embodiment of these market forces. For example, projecting and enacting this vision for community has meant that NDC staff and leaders targeted realtors for direct action, when they believed their practices encouraged housing speculation in the neighborhood, and involved other actions. The NDC's organizing vision holds wide resonance among the neighborhood's other progressive and membership-rich community organizations, allowing them to do substantial coalition work which held the potential to reinforce strong agreement among groups. In both cases,

frame resonance among community organizations could yield desirable *continuity* in

political institutions and in inter-group patterns of interaction[39].

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[39] The fact that local institutions played a role in shaping the ambitions of their work is born out by the dissonance – and substantially greater challenges – that JPNDC experienced as they moved to other, more conservative areas of Boston. At the same time that electoral and legislative work was an area of excitement and success for JPNDC, its organizing through CEMV also made staff and residents realize that the broader political institutions its organizing addressed were very resistant to fundamental change. To be sure, part of this resistance stemmed from the high ambitions of several policy and legislative goals, and from the power disparities between community organizations and broader economic and political structures. But as the NDC engaged with state and city political structures, staff felt that the impact of their work was often circumscribed within Jamaica Plain, and that, in some more subtle ways, they participated (albeit successfully) within systems for community action that circumscribed political involvement within Boston to discrete neighborhoods. Although Boston's governing regime is largely progressive, its centralized political structure allows for other forces -- conservative council members from other neighborhoods, and downtown economic interests – to hold considerable sway and to make broader institutions more resistant to the radical claims that they advance. At public events I witnessed, the neighborhood's generally sympathetic elected officials would complain that they were isolated voices in the Council or the Legislature; while the NDC's constituents refused to accept these responses at face value, they too acknowledged that suburban and conservative legislators held more power in those institutions. Smith reflected on this dynamic in January, 2004:

> In Boston, our most common response [from legislators] is, 'We're with you, we're with you, but the suburbs are killing us.' They'll vote for us, but it's an uphill battle. And along with that comes [the argument that], 'The governor is who the governor is, and the president is who the president is. And you can't expect us to do that much.' Our biggest challenge is getting legislators to take real leadership, and risk relationships with colleagues to push their agenda. And that's a hard thing to do given the structure of our legislature, with a literally all-powerful speaker of the house who has a history of acting out against ..big and small.

During and around the time of organizing I witnessed, JPNDC found itself on the losing side of policy or advocacy initiatives it supported through coalition work. Two citywide campaigns in which the NDC participated, aimed at generating tools to combat gentrification (one attempting to reinstate tenant protections, and another creating a property tax surcharge for affordable housing creation) were defeated in 2001 and 2002. Additionally, at the end of the 2002 budget session, in which both social services and affordable housing saw major cutbacks, JPNDC found itself frustrated by the limitations of organizing around JP's budgetary and legislative priorities. In response to the disheartening fate of progressive policy advocacy during this period, the NDC understandably shifted focus to building neighborhood institutions such as the Neighborhood Council, and to strengthen and expand existing inter-organizational relationships in ways that increased civic and voter participation. Kalila Barnett, who coordinated much of JPNDC's policy and electoral mobilization work, also spoke of the ways that broader institutional change and policy victories were difficult to achieve, but that tying electoral work to local leadership development was very important:

> I mean [the limits of policy work are] incredibly frustrating, and we haven't completely figured it out. But in doing an evaluation of our voter mobilization work, one of the things that we've found out is that you can do it in a couple of different ways. You can just mobilize voters and use the sort of database we have, that has 20 thousand or 40 thousand people in JP, or you can try to make it a little more meaningful. And we've tried to do that, and we've focused the work on our membership base, and developing leaders within our membership base – so the way it becomes less frustrating is that it's building a local campaign around a citywide policy issue…you're developing leaders among groups of people you're very familiar with. Even if you don't win that campaign, it's a worthwhile experience, because it still furthers along the local community. (interview 4.04).

Still, upholding Jamaica Plain's political traditions may be very significant for Boston over time. For the first time in Boston's history, turnout in the progressive neighborhoods of Jamaican Plain and Roslindale

"Growth:" dissonance that is not maintained over time

In contrast to JPNDC and CSNDC, in Somerville's Union Square neighborhood, the CDC's emphasis on civic engagement, trust-building, and a gradual power-building with Latinos was *dissonant* with the ways that staff at another local organization emphasized conflict and challenge for immigrant rights, and with the ways that largely-white community associations downplayed issues of race altogether. Partly as a result of this conflict, staff and residents at local associations moved to disrupt organizing by the CDC, either because the CDC's organizing 'competed' with their attempts to represent ethnic constituencies (and did so on different terms than they hoped), or because claims about race undermined the legitimacy of the white groups. Although this conflict made organizing more difficult, SCC staff realized that building a racially-inclusive community organization would encourage both ethnic organizations and white homeowners groups to become more participatory and more engaged with their own constituents.

Similarly, ACDC first framed its organizing to seize public land for affordable housing as an attempt at consensus-building and collaborative community planning. This framing evoked unexpected and significant resistance from community groups on both sides of Chinatown's political spectrum, and made the organizing much more challenging as it proceeded. During the course of ACDC's interaction with other community organizations, the CDC adjusted the orientation of its organizing, making issues of both

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outstripped turnout in South Boston for council elections, helping spur the election of a more radical councilmember at large, Felix Arroyo.

contention and race more central to its claims and strategies. However, its underlying emphasis on consensus and collaboration continued to be at odds with beliefs and tactics held by other local groups. Over time, staff and residents in both cases realized that the conflict sparked by this dissonance not only made organizing more difficult, but also held out the promise to adjust patterns of interaction among Chinatown's community organizations. Because this dissonance was not strongly maintained by groups over time (both CDCs were flexible in the way they framed the campaign), while success in both cases would suggest to local groups a different way of interacting with each other, the fluidity of the CDCs' orientation was less likely to yield thorough-going disruptions or changes to local systems. Based on my analysis of these cases, I speculate that this fluidity of framing, when associated with successful organizing, is most likely to lead to *growth* – to adjustments in the way that local groups and the state interact with each other and with their constituents.

"Change" – dissonance is maintained over time

Finally, in both Lawrence and Holyoke, *persistently-held* dissonance of claims held out the opportunity to change political institutions in the most dramatic ways. It is noteworthy that one of these approaches was conflict-oriented and one consensus-oriented. In Lawrence, through extensive deliberation and community analysis with leaders, LCW decided that the absence of an effective oppositional structure within city government meant that they needed to "build an alternative base of power," whose terms are instead identified with network-formation, effectiveness, and consensus-building. As

Kristin Harol, its deputy director said, this 'consensus-pluralist' vision (as part of the

typology above) was:

> in part based about philosophy of the work, but also based in the reality of
> Lawrence…in Lawrence's case we don't have a choice about being connected,
> because we don't have a chance to get projects done without some clear vision,
> consensus, or planning….in a city like Boston where the CDCs are more mature,
> there's a reason they could drift apart. It really doesn't work here. (interview 5.03)

This consensus-building orientation has made the organization generally de-emphasize

contentious tactics, and instead build both relationships and practices until local

institutions will emulate or adopt its more effective modes of community practice.

However, this dissonance in orientation between its efforts at consensus-building and the

partisan climate political life in Lawrence has made campaigns much more difficult to

succeed; at the same time, in moving (and prevailing) in significant conflicts, it has

sparked a magnitude of community improvements and has also started to alter major

development institutions, especially those around planning and economic development.

In the case of Nuestras Raices, the CDC's persistently-held opposition to

dominant institutions also evoked ambitious prospects for change. When the CDC

embarked on its campaign, it was aware that community control over vacant lots was

threatening to the local political regime, but it believed the campaign to be broadly

winnable. Instead, resistance to its vacant lots campaign turned out to be unexpectedly

fierce, involving constant challenges from City Hall, including charges that the CDC was

acting in a racially-divisive way. But Nuestras Raices embraced the implications of this

conflict. Its belief in the exclusion of Puerto Ricans from political and economic life, its

"roots" in culturally-oriented gardening and environmental justice, and its adoption of

conflictual stances toward power made it persist in the campaign, because it understood
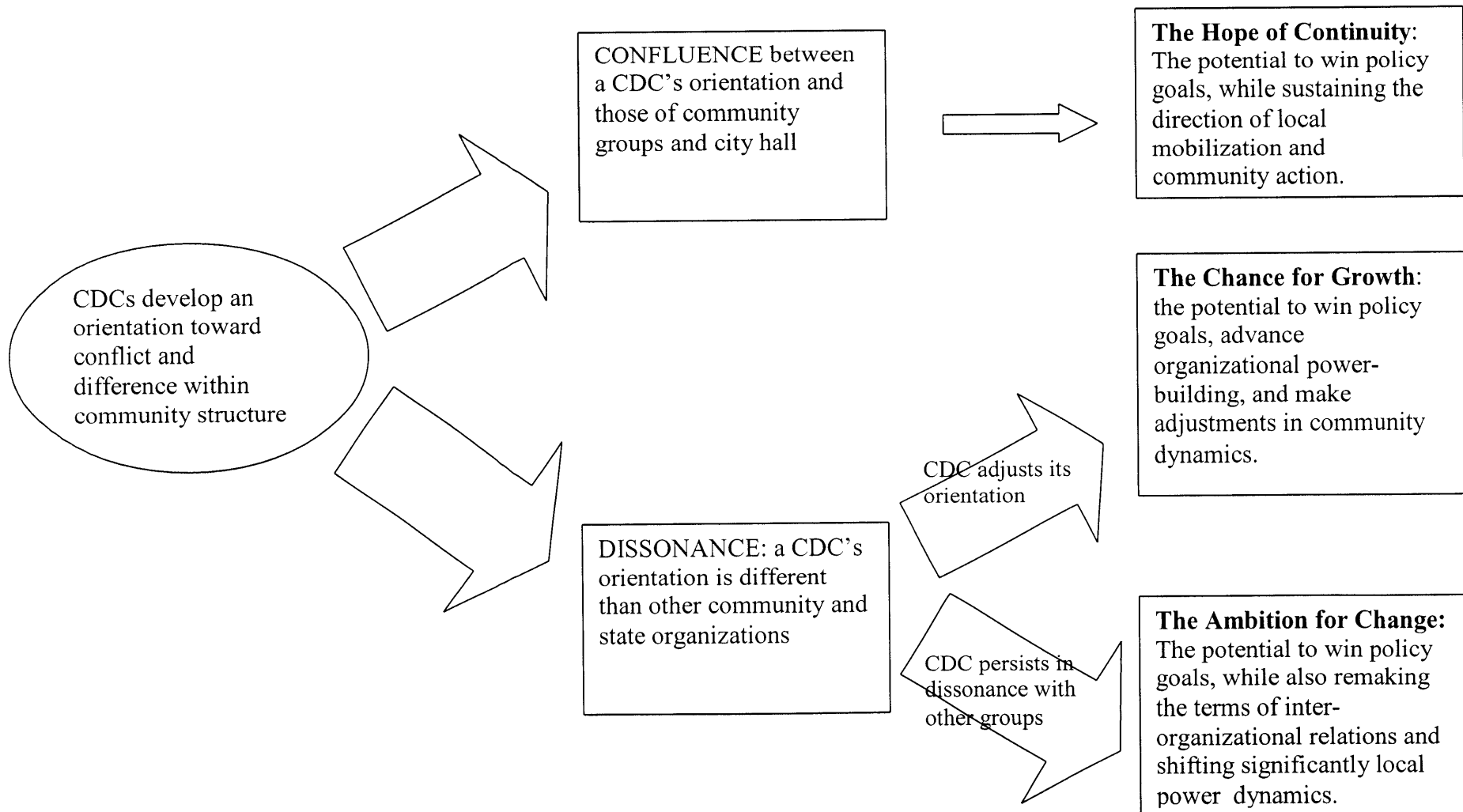
even more clearly that winning would represent both a dramatic change in policy and a shift in the way that government interacted with Latino neighborhoods.

The figure below depicts how ambitions for campaigns emerge over time. In the simplest schematic terms, during the early phases of campaigns, staff and residents develop an orientation toward community and decide upon tactics to achieve community change. As actors emerge from dinner tables, CDC offices, and community meeting rooms in which these visions and strategies for change emerge, they discover whether or not other political actors also hold the underlying values associated with campaign demands. When these claims are shared, actors learn that success will strengthen local political institutions and organizational ties (raising what I call "the hope for continuity"). When dissonance emerges with other actors, but this dissonance is not persistently maintained, actors see that winning the campaign will be more difficult, but also holds open the chance to prove to other groups that some adjustment in their own practices may be desirable, or, alternatively, to force some shift among them. I call this potential outcome "the chance for growth." In cases when dissonance between a CDC's orientation and those held by other actors is persistently maintained, political institutions are more deeply challenged by campaigns, whose success may start to alter the structure of ties between community organizations and city hall. I call this "the ambition for change."

Orientation
toward conflict
and difference

Results in dynamic path
within organizing
campaign

Forms a potential
organizing outcome

CDCs develop an
orientation toward
conflict and
difference within
community structure

CONFLUENCE between
a CDC's orientation and
those of community
groups and city hall

The Hope of Continuity:
The potential to win policy
goals, while sustaining the
direction of local
mobilization and
community action.

DISSONANCE: a CDC's
orientation is different
than other community and
state organizations

CDC adjusts its
orientation

The Chance for Growth:
the potential to win policy
goals, advance
organizational power-
building, and make
adjustments in community
dynamics.

CDC persists in
dissonance with
other groups

The Ambition for Change:
The potential to win policy
goals, while also remaking
the terms of inter-
organizational relations and
shifting significantly local
power dynamics.

Discussion

Although the data primarily illuminate dynamics within CDC organizing, the issues I describe as important in the emergence of campaign ambitions very closely parallel broader debates within political sociology. In this section, I locate this chapter's findings within 1) discussions about social movement framing processes, and 2) about the role of race in community action. Because of the orientation of the thesis is toward public policy and community practice, I save consideration of those topics (for example, debate on whether or not CDCs can organize, and whether conflict or consensus organizing is more effective) for my concluding chapter.

Framing processes

Above, I refer to a CDC's orientation toward community as embodying "claims," because they emerged as active demands by residents and CDCs upon neighborhood organizations and state actors. But within social movement studies, these orientations toward mobilization are sometimes referred to as "frames," drawing from Goffman's work on frame analysis (1994). Much the literature on framing, as it relates to movement outcomes, stresses the importance of frame resonance between movement organizers and potential constituents of the campaign (Benford and Snow 2000). Within these studies, the assumption is that successful mobilization finds good "fits" between organizers' world views and those of potential constituents. When organizers articulate the world on the same terms as supporters, mobilization is seen to be more successful.

My work contrasts with this assumption about frame resonance in two important ways. First, I find that the mere articulation of a stance toward race and conflict by a CDC is not enough to attract these leaders and let them enact local changes. Each chapter showed how frames could resonate with potential supporters, and yet fail in their ability to win campaigns. In the next analysis chapter I highlight issues of organizational process as being more important to general success, even if its terms are shaped by frame resonance or dissonance. Second, in contrast to those who emphasize frame resonance in movement success, I note the importance of frame *dissonance.* especially between challengers and political institutions. The potential to change political institutions occurred only when collective put forward a different frame from that of local organizations and state actors. (Although, as I note in the next chapter and also in the cases of the Somerville Community Corporation and Nuestras Raices, frame dissonance is merely a necessary – but not sufficient – condition to change local institutions.)

Race, conflict, and community action

The model above articulates ways that frames about race and about conflict are crucial components to community action. Although its closest theoretical framework may be found in the literature on difference within democratic deliberation (Mouffe 2000, Benhabib 2001), this analysis is supported by several aspects of the literature on race and political action. First, the fact that different frames for morality and justice exist among different groups is supported by writings on cultural differences between whites and non-whites. For example, Michelle Lamont (1997) found that white and non-white workers

held different beliefs about morality, and about the role of race in determining social and political outcomes. Second, I find that challenges to authority are bound up in collective articulations about race. While it may not be surprising that a variety of frames may be held about the importance of race within communities, my analysis illustrates the ways that framing processes around race become an essential component to inter-group challenge. This analysis finds support in the literature on Community Action's impact on urban politics. In their extensive account of the program, Greenstone and Peterson (1972) write that community groups' mobilization of African-Americans around issues of discrimination was an important part of the challenge they posed to urban political systems[40].

My research complements these findings and provides additional evidence that claims about race not only structure relationships between the state and local community organizations, but also that these claims provide the basis for interaction between community organizations and residents. I speculate that the ways that community organizations formed in relationship to urban political challenge during the 1960s and 1970s makes their roots deeply touched by issues of race, as they were formed during a period of dramatic challenge and contention. These data suggest that in the forty years after Community Action, questions of race remain an extremely important component to local political challenges. For this reason, I hypothesize that the history of urban challenge and disruption during the 1960s, much of it predicated on protests based on race, makes community organizations and political institutions intensely aware of issues

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[40] For other accounts of the ways that issues of race structure relationshiops between community organizations and urban politics, see Mollenkopf's (1994) account of patronage through CBOs in the Bronx, Stone's (1989) account of race and economics in Atlanta, and Gregory (1998) about community organizations and race in Queens.

of conflict, and whether or not racial claims were activated in self-consciously

challenging ways or in ways that did not espouse challenge and disruption.

The absence of a universal frame for effective collective action

In their book, *The Miner's Canary,* Guinier and Torres (2002) advocate an

understanding of race that is "diagnostic" because it allows one to understand social,

political, and economic outcomes, and which also mobilizes groups toward political

action: they call this construct "political race." This thesis supports their broad argument,

in finding that questions of race are in fact intrinsic to public policy discourse in the

United States, and that choices to exclude or include race are very significant for the

paths that organizing may take. In contrast with Guinier and Torres, however, and also in

contrast to other writers who advocate universally-effective frames for political action[41], I

do not find that a single frame for action as it relates to race was, in itself, associated with

institutional change, policy victories, or the scale of local mobilization. For example, the

most powerful and mobilized CDCs I studied– the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood

Development Corporation, and Lawrence CommunityWorks – worked through

diametrically opposed frames for action. JPNDC emphasized conflict and culture, and

LCW de-emphasized it.

Both JPNDC and LCW predicated their framing and organizing on an

understanding of local political institutions. In the case of Jamaica Plain, activists in the

highly-mobilized community have little incentive to adopt a different frame about race

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[41] See Osterman (2002) for the argument that community power-building should espouse more traditional, conservative moralities and also avoid claims that lead to racial division; also writers on conflict and consensus organizing, as I elaborate in the final chapter.

and conflict, as this frame has been the one associated with community victories and improvements. In LCW, a lack of effective redistributive measures was associated with a partisan and political culture where questions of race were diagnostically accurate but not effective in creating redistributive change; that is, it was (in LCW's view) correct to say that racism had shaped the city, but they believed that highlighting issues of racism was counterproductive.

In other words, political institutions and community organizational systems may encourage participation and economic justice, or they may discourage it. In the cases I studied, staff at community organizations interact with residents in ways that are predicated by these orientations toward conflict and toward difference – by engaging them in collaborative work or in contentious action; by heightening an awareness of cultural difference or by helping them affiliate more broadly with a neighborhood area. Similarly, political institutions – from the neighborhood development councils in Boston to the City Council in Lawrence and Holyoke – also involve residents and shape policies that are influenced by an understanding of race and conflict. Whatever the terms of local participation, both civic engagement and its absence occurs on terms that are associated with specific articulations about difference and about conflict.

For these reasons, *changes in the way that local organizations and state actors frame community action are also associated with changes in the level of local resident participation.* For example, at the Asian CDC, greater community-wide mobilization occurred as the CDC itself adopted a more conflict-oriented stance toward work, and as other organizations also shifted their stance toward conflict to practice more coalition activity. Because community organizations help incorporate local residents into larger

urban political systems on terms suggested by these frames about race and conflict, local actors are very sensitive to them, as success achieved under a different mantle than the prevailing one may signal substantive political changes. In Lawrence, a persistently-held, consensus-oriented stance had broad implications for political institutional change and for broader participation in civic life. In these ways, challenging other community organizations and city agencies about the ways they act on issues of race and contention holds out the possibility of making anti-participatory political and organizational systems more participatory. This point supports Guinier and Torres's contention that effectively changing the terms of policy discourse in the country as a whole – which now resists frames of race in considering injustice – would likely result in more redistributive policy changes than those changes which occur only within frameworks for discourse.

In sum, my research finds that dynamics of collective action are highly contextual. Neighborhoods are different from each other, and so community organizing takes different courses in different settings. I did not find that certain types of claims were more effective than others, but rather that they evoked specific dynamics based on the political institutions in which they were located. This finding challenges proponents of both conflict and consensus organizing, as it understands the use of conflict or its absence (as well as the evocation of race or its suppression from discourse) to evoke responses that were dependent on the local political institutions where CDCs were located. More broadly, this finding is in consonance with streams of planning and policy discourse since the 1970s that emphasize local, institutional analysis. It is in dissonance with those who study interventions from greater distance, or who hold essential characteristics of either action or social structure to determine the outcomes of

intervention (Alinsky 1973, Harvey 1973, Logan and Molotch 1987) – that organizing

has universally applicable "rules" for shifting power, or that political forces generalizable

to all cities hold absolute sway. Instead, I argue that one must understand different "ways

of contending" for the impact they may have in different contexts.

Chapter 6: Analysis – How Ambitions are Achieved

In the previous chapter, I argued that CDC organizing makes claims about community, and that these claims spark response from local political institutions. With this response, an ambition for influencing these institutions emerges. I find that actors learn what impacts successful organizing may have on political institutions over time, as they find whether their vision of community and change has resonance or dissonance with those held by other community and state actors. Throughout the three comparative studies, I also argued that successful organizing not only achieved its policy objectives or won community improvements, but also impacted local political institutions, according to the resonance or dissonance of CDC's claims with those articulated by local institutions. In contrast, failed organizing neither achieved community improvements, nor influenced local institutions. But what lets CDCs win campaigns and achieve these ambitions, helping reinforce or restructure political institutions?

Although each CDC campaign had its unique turning-points, two broad strategies were common to successful campaigns. *First, CDCs won campaigns by coordinating community mobilization throughout the CDCs' development and service activities. Second, they won by developing resident leadership and membership through inclusive governance.* Campaigns were winnable when CDCs built sufficient organizational power through everyday practice and through governance. While these practices and organizational characteristics were often very difficult to enact, and sometimes involved fundamental changes for CDCs, they helped CDCs attract leaders and build strength so they could win their campaigns – even as the impact of winning on political institutions was informed by the paths on which the campaigns had embarked.

Below, I illustrate the importance of these two strategies through analysis of the comparative case studies, suggesting how in each the ability to adopt these two practices made the difference between success and failure. In doing so, I also consider alternative explanations for the difference between success and failure, and describe (in the cases of Somerville and Codman Square) how greater coordination among departments, and more effective mobilization through CDC governance, led to improved outcomes later in the course of the campaigns.

Achieving Continuity: Internal ties yield external ones

As both JPNDC and CSNDC's campaigns developed, actors saw an opportunity to win community improvements, while also strengthening local political institutions. JPNDC was able to accomplish this goal, while CSNDC was not. Those familiar with Boston may observe that the level of civic engagement in Jamaica Plain is higher than in the western parts of Codman Square, making it easier for organizers to find residents with deep experiences in neighborhood organizing. Similarly, histories of political participation in Jamaica Plain also allow the NDC to work with other powerfully participatory organizations. Both these claims are true; even to the extent that organizing in Dorchester held the opportunity to strengthen local neighborhood institutions, actors realized that these institutions were not very participatory.

But these differences in neighborhood context do not alone account for the different outcomes of CDC organizing. While political participation is higher in Jamaica

Plain, in a neighborhood where resident direction of organizational affairs is viewed as a

prerequisite to legitimacy, and where statements of good (or similar) intentions are not

sufficient to spur collaboration among groups, JPNDC is held to very high standards

about development and campaign process by its coalition partners. Jamaica Plain is a

neighborhood in which skepticism around CDCs is very high, witnessed by me both in

exchanges with resident activists about my research project (activists were generally

critical of CDCs), and in public friction between Jackson Square activists and a large

community development corporation charged with planning and development on the

border of Jamaica Plain and Roxbury. For JPNDC, collaboration between organizing and

development departments to promote resident control and direction of development

opportunities not only helps it create co-operative housing, control vacant lots for new

development, and preserve affordability in expiring use buildings; it is also a significant

factor in allowing coalition work to occur in the first place. Toward the end of my

observations of the group, Harry Smith, JPNDC's organizing director, reflected on the

relationship between neighborhood context and internal organizational factors in the

following way:

> First, you have to have a City Life on your flank pushing you and making you
> accountable, But they also see us as a group working for the community; if they
> see it differently, that has the power to effect us differently. Most CDCs don't
> have that dynamic organizing group to partner with. But in our own right, we've
> always had a commitment to organizing beyond our constituency beyond the
> things we've build. (We) don't just look at the neighborhoods, we look at our
> constituency as the larger neighborhood. We're a neighborhood based
> organization, and we have committees…that's a starting point. You have to have
> that, that's what led us to this process, to be able to do this (organizing) – and to
> do it in a way that said it's not just to get the CDC support to build more housing.
> There are certain (organizational) prerequisites that have to be in place. (1.06.04)

As a result of JPNDC's credibility with activists and other organizations, which stems from its board and from its development practices, the NDC may work together with them on projects like the Coalition to Educate, Mobilize, and Vote to present a formidable voice with elected officials. This collective voice has not yet successfully been contested by other emergent, more conservative organizations.

In contrast, organizing through the Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation did not initially strengthen local resident associations in the Norfolk Triangle, or the institutions in which they took part in Codman Square. To be sure, some problems associated with early organizing problems were "technical," including a lack of basic outreach and follow-up with leaders, and relationship-building outside of pre-existing leadership. But these problems were significantly rooted in unresolved internal tensions between CSNDC's organizing and development departments. Although the organizing department entered the Norfolk Triangle in part because development opportunities existed there, Rosales felt wary of engaging residents in development processes that they might not in fact control, and felt somewhat demoralized by what he believed to be internal power imbalances between CSNDC's organizing and development. As a result of this sense of division within the agency, he adopted a strategy of using potential development plans as "targets" for community protest and engagement, which was somewhat confusing to residents and also did not foster internal organizational change.

Over time, CSNDC achieved greater coordination between departments. This was associated with more successful organizing, supporting the analysis that interdepartmental coordination is critical to organizing success. Over the first six months

of his tenure as organizing director, Marcos Beleche attempted successfully to bring

organizing and development processes closer together. He found support in this project

from the development director, Lisa Davis, and from a newly-hired developer, Chagatai

Ozgul. Part of Beleche's strategy was to encourage a sense of professional confidence

and practices within the organizing department, to parallel professional institutions within

development departments, and to de-mystify and reinterpret technical processes and

vocabularies of the development department. Believing that "until we learn to think like

each other, we're always going to be watchdogs" of the other department's behavior

(Beleche 12.02), Beleche and Davis worked to open a community meeting around an

NDC development proposal at the Latin Academy Apartments, a significant 'bridging'

event. Said Davis:

> With Marcos on board we've developed a more fluid sense of how [organizing
> and development can work together.] With Latin Academy, we learned that
> there's a give and take, an exchange in how that happened. We make decisions
> about how to work together. (site visit 2003)

Similarly, in the summer of 2003, students and staff created a charrette process

addressing a corner of the Norfolk Triangle for a design competition. Although attended

in limited ways by community residents, the charette started to develop a way that the

two departments could work together.[42] Said Beleche:

> We seized the opportunity as a way again to get people come out and participate,
> as a way of saying what do you want to see in your neighborhood. We had been
> thinking for awhile that we had been doing a charette, had some decent response
> to it, folks participated, we as a team was able to get graduate students to do as
> much of their work here…residents that participated enjoyed it, and what ended
> up as the final product was this plan we had for one of the corners in the Norfolk
> Triangle. So we had this product, ideas, residents who had participated, did a
> check-in and the ideas were good. (interview 1.04)

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[42] The plan won CHAPA's annual competition around affordable housing development and planning.

Even though organizing projects emerging in the Norfolk Triangle area were not focused on affordable housing development, these seeds of coordination between organizing and development were energizing for both departments. They also helping in some instrumental ways as Norfolk residents explored options to contest unwanted development at the Brush Hill garage. Said Beleche:

> Since during the time of the site visit, we were, we were feeling very excited about what was happening in the triangle; both departments were excited – the neighborhood was taking a more active role in determining the potential uses for vacant lots and underutilized buildings, taking on the owner of the Brushhill garage – and that motivated both departments. I think we are seen as a resource by the Norfolk Triangle residents group. (1.03)

In sum, as CSNDC achieved greater coordination between organizing and development, its campaign became more successful and it became better able to enact its ambition of supporting local political institutions.

Achieving Growth: starting from scratch vs. building on structure

After organizing in Union Square shifted to East Somerville, Somerville Community Corporation staff analyzed the failure to attract immigrants as a problem in part caused by a disconnect between the issues of a neighborhood association and the pressing concerns of Latinos. This analysis is echoed by other accounts of organizing with immigrants around place-based issues[43]. However, drawing both on other accounts of organizing with Latinos (Castells 1983, Warren 2001) and on other cases within RHICO, community organizing with immigrants to address neighborhood issues is not necessarily an impossible proposition.

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[43] See Jones Correa (2001) on political participation of Latinos within New York City politics.

Instead, as I highlighted in comparison to Asian CDC, a more pressing problem

for SCC and its ability to attract people of color was the absence of an existing

organizational structure with which residents could find a means to participate in

community life. Starting a community organization from scratch – as SCC attempted in

building a completely independent organization in Union Square – is exceptionally

difficult. While creating a new community organization outside of the CDC may achieve

long-term change, these results were difficult to enact within the short timeframe of

campaigns I studied. Instead, CDCs in RHICO that succeeded in the early months of

campaigning often did so by bringing on new members to the CDC's own organizational

structure: to its board or board subcommittees, or as members empowered to shape or

control CDC activities. Because SCC believed that organizing and development activities

needed to be separated so as to gain credibility among community stakeholders, it could

not use its housing development or its regular governance activities as a way to build

leadership and foster engagement. Although, over the early months of the campaign, SCC

sponsored workshops on immigration as a way of building trust with immigrant groups, it

did not find a way at these sessions for attendees to become involved with the CDC.

In fact, SCC's very successes in the fall of 2003 in East Somerville speak to the

importance of hanging community engagement around an existing "scaffolding" of

governance structure or existing program, while also transforming the structure or

activity so as to facilitate participation and mobilization. Although SCC's organizing in

East Somerville still valued diversity and promoted deliberation over immediate

contentious action, SCC drew on an *existing* service and mediation program – the

Somerville "conversations project," which had previously engaged community leaders in

dialogues about race and neighborhood. Speaking prospectively about this strategy in September 2003, LeBlanc observed that "Conversations has that history – they give us permission to be there doing that type of building and community building." (site visit 2003).

During that period, the CDC's new organizing team expanded on the "conversations" program, by changing the model to be more intensive in its engagement of potential leaders who had not previously been engaged in community action. Led by new organizers Meridith Levy and Tito Meza, this expansion of "conversations" involved more extensive doorknocking, multiple follow-ups and one-on-ones with new identified leaders, and over twenty three house meetings with neighbors before joining groups together. After a large and successful meeting in December, 2003, LeBlanc assessed the victory in these terms:

> The conversations model has been around Somerville since the mid 1990s, but I would say easily that half or more of the people who actually participated [on December 4th] never would have on their own, without the work that these guys did. And that's critical because the type of people who would come to a general meeting – it's very much a self-selecting group…and you don't get the regular average residents to come out of the woodwork without the work that these guys did. (interview 12.03)

In contrast to SCC's early work (and parallel to SCC's later work), ACDC's ability to *enact* the ambitions that emerged over the course of the campaign was largely due to internal organizational change,[and especially its re-orientation of governance and development processes to encourage mobilization and community control. By changing the focus and tenor of their annual meeting to emphasize the campaign and the need for organizing, by working with a board subcommittee to change its mandate to include

organizing and leadership development, and through the efforts of the board to state its support for community control of Parcel 24 even were they not the developer, ACDC created opportunities for deliberation and community control that helped them maintain coalition power and win concessions from the city and the turnpike authority. As a result of these efforts, Boston's Mayor Thomas Menino announced support for the $1 land give-away to the neighborhood. With this victory ACDC produced a tentative template by which local groups could interact with each other on less divisive terms.

Achieving change: employing networks formed in service provision

While staff at Nuestras Raices understood how changing Holyoke's vacant lot policies would greatly increase Puerto Rican political power, and shift advantages away from economic actors to its own constituents, it was unable to find ways to address opposition from Holyoke's political establishment to this vision of local control. In particular, staff and leaders were unable to overcome an initial deficit of resident participation in the staff-driven development of the pilot plan for land disposition. Particularly significant was the CDC's reluctance to alter its own extensive relationships with community gardeners and youth leaders, to encourage campaign participation and strategization, even though control of vacant lots was a potentially important issue for gardeners and youth interested in recreational space.

CDC staff and board members spoke of broad failures to participate in terms of the 'hyphenated' identity of Holyoke's Puerto Ricans (some of whom were interested in

returning to the island), and a deep-seated mistrust of political processes. From my field notes:

> [RHICO program director] asks what's up in the the next 3-6 months? Any challenges you see? Hilda says that it is "to educate people" The Puerto Rican community lives here but doesn't feel part of it – we need to approach them, teach them about benefits and responsibilities to living here. Even if you move on, we need to be asking, "in the 10 years you live here, you can make a difference in your community." "They have an identity problem." But says that "you could benefit your kids – you are their voice"…she does environmental education, currently, and to help people see the connections between local work and what happens. Julia said that language is also an issue in participation: some people say, "I don't speak English, I don't want to be here." (site visit 2002)

While political disenfranchisement and apathy may be a pervasive force in Holyoke, the CDC's ability to draw on relationships quickly to mobilize for a land use hearing suggests that its constituents were in fact willing to do local political work when asked to do so. But during the months between June 2002 and November 2003, residents were not asked to become part of the public policy process. Staff was reluctant to meet gardeners outside of the terms of engagement they had helped establish, and which had provided the CDC with legitimacy in the eyes of its constituents. This meant that the campaign had a large potential base, but few actual supporters. Because they could not move the campaign forward, the CDC was put into a reactive role, forced to defend the encroachments upon the community plan as they occurred. Even as Colon took over the position, staff continued to interact with gardeners in the fields or in the CDC's greenhouse almost exclusively around gardening or economic development activities, and did not reach people in their homes around topics of community control of development through public policy change. In other words, while Nuestras Raices had developed

extensive relationships with community residents, organizational processes were not set into motion so that these relationships could become fruitful for community mobilization.

In contrast, while relationship-building at Lawrence CommunityWorks also was facilitated by the CDC's activities outside of formal organizing, the CDC adopted a much more strategic approach to translating programmatic participation into community mobilization. For LCW, both formal and informal coordination around its "network" helped members flow from one part of the organization into the CDC' many campaigns. These networks, while facilitated by staff activity to re-orient service projects, were also assisted by the fact that residents controlled the content of the programs through active committee work; LCW's Family Asset Building and housing development activities not only mobilized many people but also were controlled by active committees. This committee control further helped residents become part of the organization, and to learn that membership in LCW also meant participation in various different campaigns and committees. LCW has active and competitive elections for board positions, and vigorous committees who engage leaders outside of the board's formal structure. All in all, as members moved in and out of opportunities for collective action in the Reviviendo Gateway Initiative, in the zoning change campaign, and around the Our House project, the CDC's campaign was able to weather conflict and skepticism provoked by the CDC's orientation toward work, and in winning these campaigns, to lay out the template for a "new way of doing business" in Lawrence.

Further supporting evidence: Quantitative associations between governance, interdepartmental coordination, and policy victories

In addition to qualitative evidence from the case studies, strong associations emerged in the annual survey to support the importance of interdepartmental coordination and inclusive governance. While the small number of cases raises questions about traditional quantitative analysis, measures of CDC governance and of interdepartmental coordination were so strongly correlated with leadership development and policy victories that they are worth reporting.

Capturing organizing success in quantitative terms

In the survey, quantitative indicators that help describe the success of a CDC's organizing as related to effective mobilization, and also to the change of political institutions, were of two types. First, I asked CDCs the number of resident leaders engaged with its organizing campaign. Leadership development is a central part of organizing work (Delgado 1986; Osterman 2002). The survey defines leaders as "Residents who play key role in your campaign or project (for example, chairing subcommittees, inspiring participation, or take on speaking, training, strategizing)." Second, I also look at the number of "wins" in an organizing campaign. Survey questions address "external institutional changes" gained from organizing. These ask about meetings and actions by the CDC that resulted in policy or practice changes by decision-makers, and shifts in power toward community residents. They also ask, for each of these major events, the number of residents and leaders involved with planning, facilitating, or carrying them out. Since these data were reported by the CDCs, the definition of a "key victory" ranged in impact. Still, organizers make defining and celebrating "wins" as an

important process for community power-building at all levels, and as such the counting of

wins remains a valid construct for deciding upon organizing success.

For each CDC, I count the number of changes brought about by actions or

meetings where community residents played a role in planning or facilitating the

encounter. This means that entirely staff-driven advocacy, while potentially representing

important policy gains for a CDC's neighborhood or constituents, did not count as an

organizing "win." This measure is consistent with the definition of organizing as

resident-driven change, and also corrects somewhat for victories that might be related to

staff efforts at politically-connected organizations. Across the ten CDCs, some of these

countable "wins" from actions or meetings included:

- Mass resident participation in community rezoning meetings, that helped push through campaign proposals aimed at neighborhood revitalization;
- A large community meeting where the Mayor and the Chief of Police were pressured to add a patrol to an underserved neighborhood;
- An action against a bank that resulted not only in the delay of eviction for tenants in a bank-owned property, but also directed payments toward the tenants;
- The disruption of public meetings on a mayoral-appointed taskforce around neighborhood redevelopment, that put pressure on it to include more local residents;
- A research action that called in Inspectional Services to properties that housed gang and drug activity;
- An action targeting the city, that resulted in a policy shift away from homeownership and toward rental units in local redevelopment work, reflecting the strong priority of the community.

Governance, board structures, and organizing success

The case studies strongly suggest that CDC boards of directors and committees

play important roles in mobilization and campaign work, and that a CDC's legitimacy

and power stems from its ability to represent broadly its neighborhood and its

constituencies. Professionalization and institutionalization of all sorts, particularly around

development processes, make it difficult to maintain this resident involvement, and many boards may make decisions that exclude organized residents or make it more difficult for them to become part of the CDC. In contrast, boards that are more inclusive of community activists have greater legitimacy and can develop more leaders.

To explore this inclusivity in quantitative terms, I created a measure describing the "openness" of boards of directors. This measure was derived from three questions – the frequency (defined on a 5-point scale, from "never" to "always") that boards consulted leaders before making major decisions, that major issues were brought to the board by campaign leaders, and that boards actively encouraged residents to attend meetings. I defined a CDC's "openness" index as the average of these three frequencies.

I assessed the relationship between this independent measures and the dependent measures of CDC success[44] through bivariate correlation. Given the small sample size (ten CDCs), I used non-parametric statistics (Spearman rank correlations) in the event of correlations with marginal significance. Strikingly, even with ten organizations, strong relationships emerged. There were strong and significant associations between independent variables (board activism and board openness) with both leadership development and policy victories affected by organizing.

First, board openness was strongly and significantly associated with a CDC's ability to generate more leaders in their campaign ($r=.8$, $p=.01$). This high correlation does not appear to be definitional; although campaign leaders may also be board leaders, not all board leaders are campaign leaders, and organizations reporting many campaign leaders draw them from circles outside of the board. In other words, more open boards appeared able sustain and encourage mobilization by community members, and to attract,

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[44] Leaders in a campaign, membership, and resident-defined policy victories.

and train, resident leaders to do campaign work. Greater board openness was also associated with greater numbers of organizing wins (r=.71, p= .046).

Second, I also created a measure to define *activism* of governance – describing the ways that boards help develop new leadership. In the case studies, the ways that board members and board structures were able to engage with emerging leaders was very important. This measure was defined as the sum of three questions: whether boards of directors went door-knocking on campaigns (1=yes and 2=no); whether boards of directors held competitive elections (1=yes and 2=no); and the percentage of boards who could be identified as active leaders of a campaign or project. Board activism was also strongly associated with the number of leaders in a campaign (r=.91, p=.002). There were also very strong associations between board activism and the number of significant changes brought about by CDC organizing (ρ=.71, p=.05).

These data strongly support qualitative assessment of the ways that the board contributes (or may hinder) leadership development, as they may act as either training grounds for new members and leaders, or gatekeepers that may in some instances make it more difficult for the CDC to attract them. [45]

Interdepartmental coordination

My qualitative analysis describes the importance of interdepartmental coordination as a major issue of daily practice within CDCs. As organizations that focus primarily on physical or economic development, and not on leadership development,

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[45] Although not the primary focus of this analysis, board openness was also associated with the number of residents involved in the campaign, at just above the .05 significance level (p= .066).

providing opportunities within those and other core CDC functions for leaders to make decisions and shape internal policies is an important task for CDCs who attempt to organize. I created a measure to assess the degree of coordination between organizing and development departments. Proceeding from the assumption (supported in the case studies) that CDCs whose overall housing development occurs in consultation and coordination with organizers and residents, are also those who make these activities attractive to residents, I define coordination as the proportion of new construction, rehabilitation projects, and preserved expiring use units influenced by CDC organizing departments.

Even among ten CDCs, this measure was strongly associated with different indicators of successful organizing. When organizing departments, development departments, and resident leaders worked together to create and preserve affordable housing, the CDC attracted more active members (r=.69, p<.05), developed more leaders (r=79; p<.05,) and won more policy victories for neighborhoods (r=.68, p<.05). The strength of these associations provides additional evidence of the association between coordination and mobilization through CDC development activities, and general measures of organizing success.

Review and discussion

My argument about the importance of organizational process and characteristics in determining whether a campaign succeeds or fails parallels other efforts to understand the nonprofit sector through the lens of organizational studies (cf Powell and 1986), and also to understand social movement outcomes in terms of organizational characteristics

(cf Zald and McCarthy 1987; Ganz 2000). The two strategies associated with "winning" described above – the coordination of mobilization throughout a CDC's practices, and the adoption of inclusive governance – are drawn from data about the experience of CDC organizing and so primarily relate to that organizational field. At the same time, because I found such substantial variation in a CDC's ability to mobilize and involve constituents, I find it more helpful to locate these strategies within the broader discourse about community groups and formal organizations. As has been consistent with my efforts to avoid unhelpful generalizations about the CDC form, this brief discussion locates effectiveness, not within the CDC field itself, but within characteristics of *organizations*. Although my findings relate primarily to CDCs, theoretical and empirical work within organizational studies supports the contention that interdepartmental coordination and democratic inclusiveness are aspects of effective work.

First, the finding that coordination between departments leads to effective work is supported by accounts of network forms of organization and the development of "heterarchy." These theoretical literatures on organizational change explore how certain organizational practices may allow fluidity, by exploring and exploiting functional differences within aspects of the organization and avoiding the phenomenon of activity "silos" (Brown 2001, Grabher 2001). "Integrating organizing and development," as RHICO practitioners sometimes call it, means that CDCs must confront divisions within their organizations about the role that residents play in the work of economic and real estate development. When these divisions have been addressed, regular development activities have the opportunity to mobilize residents around campaign events, and give them control and ownership over the direction of development projects.

Second, the importance of inclusive governance echoes Milofsky's fundamental insight about the "organizing problem" of community groups, which he defined as:

> difficulties attracting a public following which identifies with the organization and from whose numbers people can be recruited to carry out necessary work or to make donations of resources. These are the ingredients essential for building and keeping up the momentum necessary for a social movement or an organization to persist through time. (1988: 185)

Similarly, I found that CDCs need skilled and dedicated activists to be associated with the organization and with the campaign. Community leaders and grass-roots supporters not only do the work of the campaigns (speaking to other residents, conducting meetings, writing letters, building relationships with stakeholders, challenging public officials, coordinating with media, and creating public events) but lend them legitimacy and credibility. Without the involvement of these activists, campaign work falls solely on staff, who do not have the resources of time or credibility to wrest meaningful changes on their own. Although this chapter emphasizes two strategies that CDCs use to make campaigns "work," the overall finding is that resident involvement and control over organizational practices gives CDCs the legitimacy and the power to win campaigns[46].

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[46] Clearly, there is a strategic component to inclusive decision-making and mobilization. As organizing practitioners well understand, the idea of one 'community" is a construct which serves strategic ends, but which masks differences within neighborhoods among individuals and classes of people. If identifying leadership is to resulting further networking and mobilization, it is important to target people for inclusion who have – in the words of Alinsky, who have "followers." Although my data do not illuminate choices that CDCs made in identifying who to include in community processes, I note that the residents I saw were visible to and respected by their neighbors.

Chapter 7: CDC organizing and development in neighborhood context

This chapter assesses implications for theory and practice by returning to the two policy questions I describe in the introductory chapter: 1) whether or not CDCs can organize effectively, and 2) whether conflict or consensus organizing is more effective. By examining the paths that CDC organizing may takes, and the range of impacts that it may have on political institutions, I have attempted in this thesis to bring a richer and more complex understanding of what may happen when CDCs attempt to organize, and also how different "ways of contending" provoke different types of responses in different contexts. Nonetheless, these two questions retain great currency for practitioners in the fields of community organizing and community development. In this chapter I attempt to reframe these questions with reference to their underlying beliefs about community structure and the ability of community actors to affect change. Broadly, I argue that the first question privileges issues of community structure over human agency, and that the second question privileges human agency over issues of community structure.

In contrast, the model of understanding local action I developed in this thesis parallels other attempts to create holistic accounts of social change, [47] from the viewpoint of the actor involved in these activities. One project of contemporary theory has been to link "micro" and "macro" dynamics; "structure" and "agency;" "action" and "environment" (Archer 1988, Alexander 1988, Emirbayer 1999). The model I develop parallels insights from these theoretical writers by characterizing how different CDC organizing outcomes are achieved in different contexts, thereby attempting to articulate generalizable dynamics about the interplay between community structure and community

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[47] See, for example, Doug McAdam's (1980) articulation of the Political Process Model.

action. In contrast to the claim that "place matters" – one often advanced defensively by planners and other advocates of place-based intervention – I show how different groups may develop different readings and orientations toward place, and that these forms of contextual analysis *themselves* matter, as the action attempted through these orientations provokes response from elements of community structure. At the same time that I argue this interaction matters for the paths that organizing takes, I also show that another aspect of agency – creating effective mechanisms for community mobilization and representation – allows CDCs to enact community improvements and to influence local political structure.

The structuralist question, "Can CDC's organize?"

The broadly-posed, dichotomous question of whether or not CDCs can organize evokes two central themes in the study of communities and community action, and the analysis of political organizations and movements over time. First, it reflects views about the importance of resource exchanges that occur through institutionalization. Second, it reflects views about the role of networks in community action and community life. Both these views represent structuralist interpretations of community and community action. I argue that advocates on either side of the question of whether or not CDCs can organize privilege these structuralist concerns over agentic ones, even as they appear to espouse the belief that collective action may shape or reshape community structure. In contrast, my data suggest a different perspective. Both resources and relationships are very important for CDC organizing, but these structural factors are in dynamic interplay with

framing choices and organizational power-building. In this section, I reframe the debate

on CDCs and organizing with reference to structuralist theories, and to my thesis data:

elaborating the issue of resource exchanges posed through institutionalization ("selling

out,") and the effect of network embeddedness (or "buying in"). I show that these

structuralist accounts of community action only *partially* explain outcomes within CDC

organizing.

Resource dependencies and the institutionalization of protest

CDCs derive much of their funding from public sources. Many believe that this

fact makes protest by them impossible[48]. This charge of "selling out" evokes an important

theme in the study of political movements. Namely, Weber's analysis of modern states

and economies stresses the need for bureaucratization, and traces the implications of this

dynamic within organizational systems (1968). Michels elaborated this argument by

observing that goal-oriented political movements, once they achieve formal status, tend

to become more conservative over time. For Michels, the "Iron Law of Oligarchy"

described the process by which groups supplant purposive goals with procedural ones,

and concentrate more on organizational maintenance than goal attainment (Michels

1962) . In both 'street-level' interpretations of 'selling out' and in the scholarly literature

around movements over time, institutionalization is seen as a disabling, and yet

unavoidable fate. According to these Weberian insights, movements lose momentum

when their agendas become adopted into political institutions, bringing once-innovative

organizations closer to regular political processes. As organizations benefit from,

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[48] For proponents of CDCs, in contrast, garnering resources for distressed communities from multiple sources is a principle advantage of the organizational form (Keyes 1997).

monitor, or maintain movement gains, their ability to sustain high levels of grass-roots mobilization becomes circumscribed. Piven and Cloward's argument that movements and organizations cannot coexist is one extension of this logic (1977), as they shun *any* type of formal establishment as inimical to the mass disruptions they believe necessary to evoke real change.

For many reasons, CDCs do not fit this larger story of protest and cooptation, in part because the development of the industry has more complex roots. Many CDCs formed first as community organizations who opposed urban renewal, only to seek out other tactics for local change and betterment (Keyes 1997). Others, in contrast, formed primarily as economic development organizations, supported by early resources from the Office of Economic Opportunity or the Ford Foundation – resources that in part were constructed to develop an alternative to the model of violent protest. In the 1980s and 1990s, the number of CDCs doubled nationwide (Stoutland 1998), encouraged by new funding streams for affordable housing development through nonprofits, and by the drying up of federal resources (Goetz 1990). In this climate, local government tended to rely more on nonprofit housing developers, and many community service or civic organizations took advantage of the opportunity to take on these additional responsibilities by becoming CDCs.

At the same time, as Goetz argues (1990), the proliferation of advanced community development systems formed most often in places where movement and protest demanded them. These places – San Francisco, Cleveland, Chicago, New York, and Boston – are also cities where housing activism flourished, and where activists around housing and homelessness successfully wrested resources from local government

(Hartmann 1984, Keyes et al 1996, Herz 2001, Dreier 1996). While some CDCs also took part in these mobilizations, the "sell-out" charge about the CDC field speaks to many writers and practitioners of the failure of CDCs to continue these broad legacies of urban protest and power-building.

A central component of the 'institutionalization of protest' thesis is the establishment of regularized dynamics between movement organization and state through the exchange of resources. In the view of many of these writers, these encounters are *necessarily* co-opting, as they create internal contradictions about the larger purpose of the organization that are impossible to overcome. Although seen on a small scale, this thesis finds that resources and relationships formed through the institutionalization of the CDC industry, while posing contradictions in abundance, are not *always* disabling contradictions. Some CDCs found creative strategies to respond to explicit or implicit threats around resource dependencies, and achieved – in the short timeframe I studied – significant organizing results: in policy changes enacted, in furthering substantive representation of underrepresented groups, or in fostering resource shifts to low-income people of color. Some will dismiss these results of CDC organizing as insignificant compared to the changes envisioned through or promised by other vehicles for organizing. But in the absence of evidence that these transformative goals have been widely attained throughout the US, organizing impacts should be appreciated for the real and significant changes they accomplish, even as they stem from small community organizations fighting broader social forces: housing disinvestment, wage and wealth-driven stratification, gentrification, and institutional racism.

Over two years in Jamaica Plain, CDC activists nearly doubled local participation in local elections, created or preserved hundreds of units of affordable housing, and in related activity, changed dramatically the constitution of an important elected development-decision body. In Lawrence, organizing changed local land use policy, and worked to implement and re-orient a federal highway infrastructure project to emphasize community development. In Chinatown, mobilization took valuable, downtown land away from normal bidding processes and gave it to the community for $1, even in face of initial opposition by the State's Turnpike Authority and the Mayor's office. My central finding– that variation exists within CDC organizing outcomes – provides additional counter-evidence to theses that resource exchanges between nonprofits and government *necessarily* disable movement activity (for other accounts of movement revitalization and success by professionalized actors within the social movement literature, see Minkoff 1990, Staggenborg 1991, and Burstein 1998).

This central finding – that institutionalization and resource exchanges do not necessarily disempower CDC organizing – does not discount the importance of resource dependencies as a consideration within CDC organizing. Dependencies were identified as a major issue in the work of several CDCs – an issue that practitioners often referred to as 'biting the hand that feeds you.' For example, the Allston Brighton CDC's attempts to influence a planning process co-sponsored by the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) around Harvard's expansion into the neighborhood was complicated by this issue. As the CDC was attempting to insert community demands for more affordable housing into the planning process, it was also in the midst of developing a major housing project that required both resources from Harvard and favorable permitting decisions from the

BRA. Similarly, although this encounter did not occur during the time frame I studied the campaigns, staff at the Fenway CDC told the story of being threatened with Mayoral withdrawal of support for an assisted living project for low-income seniors, were the CDC to challenge a zoning process designed to give *carte blanche* to the Red Sox's proposal to rebuild their stadium deeper into the Fenway neighborhood. Within the comparative cases described in chapters two through four, resource dependencies were significant issues for each of the failed campaigns. These were most explicitly evident in SCC's initial acquiescing to city demands to shift organizing venues, but also occurred in more subtle ways. Namely, within CSNDC, power disparities between organizing and development within the agency may have been associated with the greater resources brought to the agency by affordable housing development. Nuestras Raices's pre-occupation with service activities over mobilization and leadership development was associated with a desire to support the fledgling organization and keep it afloat.

While the issue of 'biting the hand' is critical for both CDCs and for other nonprofits who attempt to organize constituents, the way that resource issues play into organizing is considerably more complex. One way of illustrating this point empirically is to assess the relationship of policy victories through organizing, and the amount of money a CDC spends on organizing. If financial resources determined a CDC's ability to challenge, and with it the outcomes of its organizing, more resources devoted to organizing should result in greater organizing successes. In contrast, evidence from RHICO depicts virtually no correlation between resources spent on organizing, and organizing success. Complementing my qualitative data, the on-line questionnaire administered to RHICO CDCs asked how much money a CDC devoted to organizing,

above that which the program was providing. It also asked the number of "major meetings" and "major actions" accomplished by CDCs over the course of the year, where community leaders or board members played a significant part in planning, strategizing, or executing the sessions that lead the concessions these events stirred[49].

Resources devoted to organizing were not correlated with the number of CDC policy victories. While claims about conformity and resource dependencies posed broad issues for CDCs I studied, the relationship of these resource to the outcomes they were able to achieve through organizing was far from deterministic. If any curve were to be drawn, it would be "u-shaped," with the u lying on its side in a way that confounds correlation, as depicted graphically below:

Figure 6:

Resources and policy victories

Resources devoted to organizing ($K)
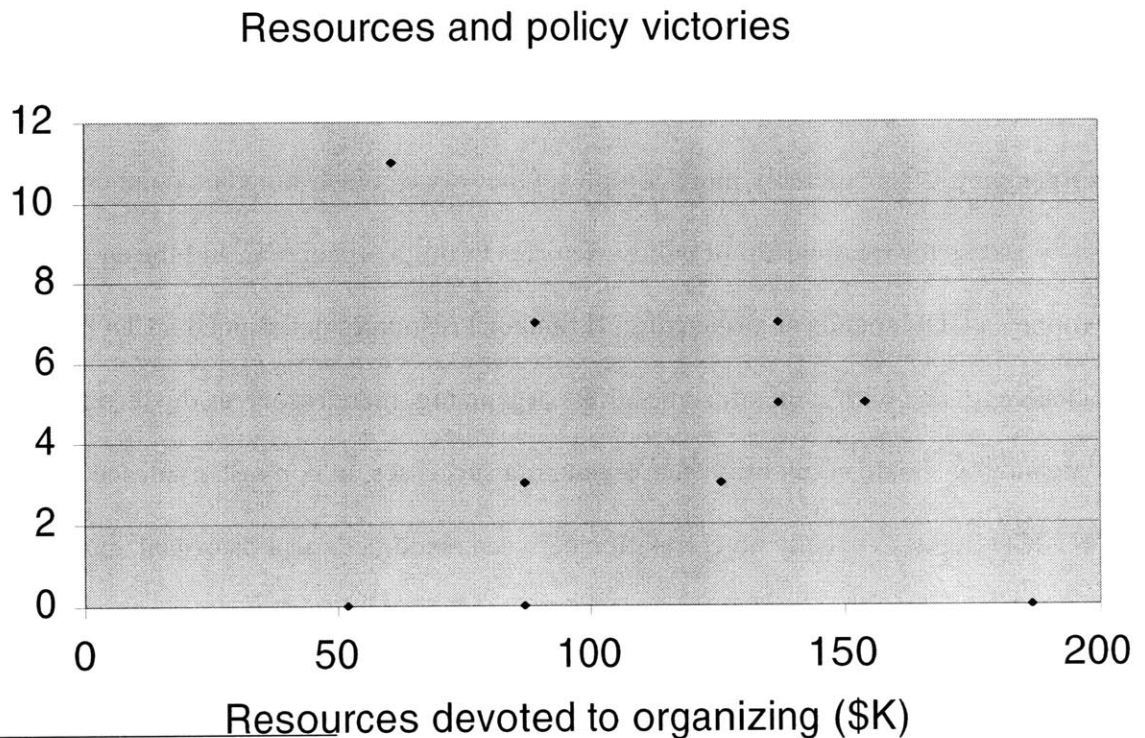
[49] See chapter six for justification of this measure.

For many reasons, any easy association between resources and "co-optation" is difficult

to assess. In part, financial resources are sometimes the result of *successful* organizing, as

city or state government accede to demands to build housing, community centers, or

provide certain types of services or investments. I illustrate this throughout my thesis in

JPNDC's successful housing development work, which continues to mobilize activists

even as it redirects funds to the NDC; through the ways that ACDC's attempt to build on

Parcel 24 (a public resource) not only succeeded but also adjusted local political

dynamics in doing so; and in the way that LCW's work both built power and shifted

resources to poor Lawrencians. In other words, even in attaining resource-related goals,

many CDCs continue to be powerful because they continue to mobilize communities so

that further concerns may be addressed. Simply put, while the flow of resource structures

is important, *agency* – seen in a CDC's ability to mobilize community through

governance, organizing, and development – helps determine the *ways* that resources

matter.

CDCs, Networks, and Community Structure

Paralleling the "sell-out" criticism of CDCs, is that they have "bought in" to

existing systems of development. Because of their ongoing, consensual relationships with

banks or intermediary foundations, with city agencies, and with elected offices, this

critique claims that CDCs are unable to change relational structures (Stoeker 1997). As

an attack on CDCs, this view also implies a view of community structure and community action that privileges the impact of formal networks[50]. Since "community power" studies of the 1950s and 60s, local networks have been seen to predict both attributions of power by community actors, and actual influence in policy decisions. From the 1960s and 1970s, this form of community analysis has especially focused on inter-organizational linkages as structuring neighborhood relations (Laumann et al 1977, 1978). Studies of inter-organizational networks hold that both network position, and distinct structures of relationships among groups, have powerful implications for the mobilization of resources and the outcomes of policy disputes (Marsden 1986, Knoke 1990a, Knoke 1990b, Laumann and Knoke 1987). This structuralist interpretation of decision-making outcomes and the resolution of political controversy has found proponents not only in community studies, but also in accounts of national policy domains (Knoke and Pappi 1991) and social movement dynamics (Gould 1999).

There are acknowledged limitations of inter-organizational network analysis: that many studies do not occur in racially-diverse settings, and that others, based on studies of elite reputational or decision-making networks, do not capture the process of insurgent organizing (Knoke 1990). Furthermore, most accounts of inter-organizational community networks do not show processes or causes by which relationship structures change over time (Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994). As structural change is a central goal of organizing, its absence is a theoretical and empirical gap for network analysis. Nonetheless, "networking" as a coalition-building strategy in organizing has many proponents. While relationship-building among individuals – bringing individual leaders into organizing campaigns – was highly associated with organizing success, on the inter-

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[50] Similarly, proponents of CDCs often make the

organizational level, networking as an explicit strategy was not associated with success or failure.

How, then, did networks play into the organizing outcomes I described above? Proponents of the 'sell-out' thesis might argue that deeper embeddedness with other community organizations can impede effective community action; conversely, advocates of social capital-building or 'networking' might argue that more ties should lead to more victories. As I have written throughout this thesis, inter-organizational networks were crucial for organizing, but *the presence or absence of network ties alone did not predict organizing success.* No one pattern of inter-organizational relations – extensive coalition work, sporadic engagement, or near-isolation – was identifiable with success or failure within organizing campaigns, or with the types of outcomes they produced. Major theses about the import of networks and networking in policy mobilization did not explain variance within RHICO organizing outcomes. For example, neither a CDC's centrality (as defined by the number of inter-organizational coalition partners possessed by recipients), nor its mobilization of diverse cliques (as defined by the different types of organizations with which CDCs interacted) was associated with leadership development by CDCs, the number of campaign wins, the degree of physical or economic changes, or the scope of relational changes in power toward communities. To illustrate this flat correlation between ties and success, the RHICO organization working with the most leaders (Lawrence CommunityWorks) consciously avoided inter-organizational work completely; the second most successful in leadership development (JPNDC) worked with

several community partners in a deeply collaborative fashion[51]. Again, note the sideways-u of the curve:

Figure 7

Coalition partners and victories

Coalition partners
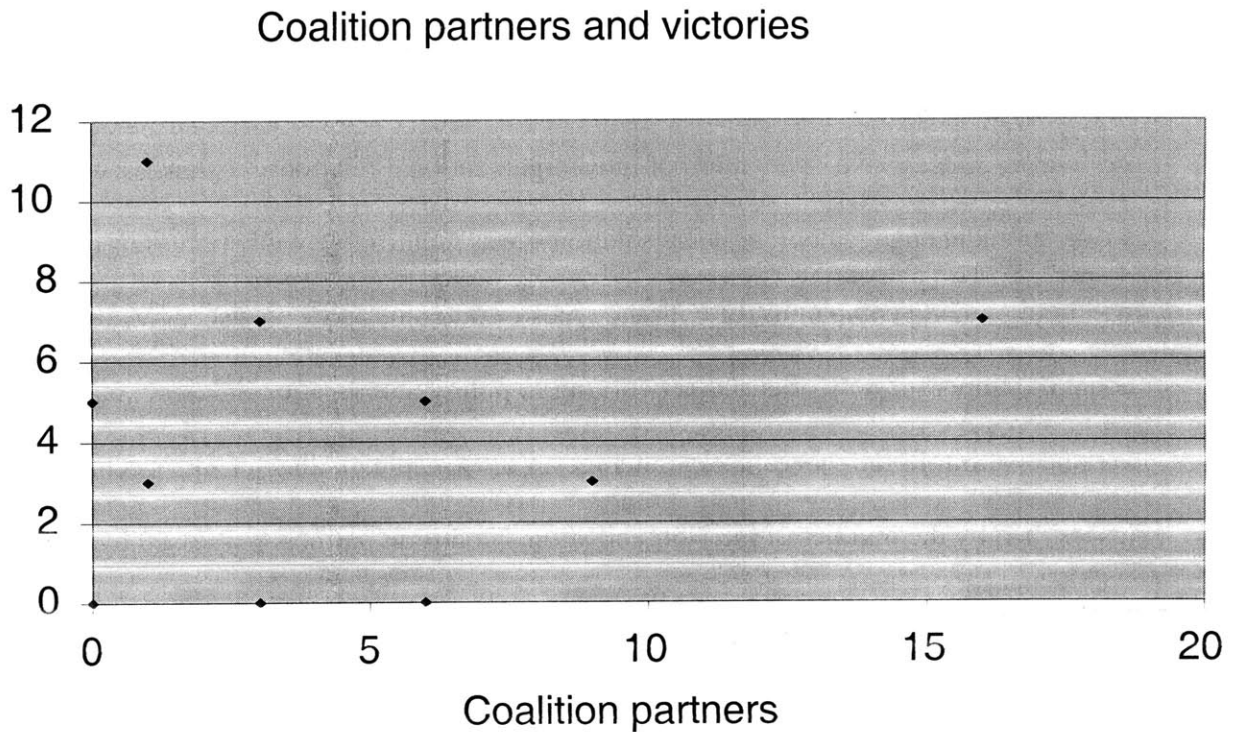
The failure of these structuralist perspectives on network dynamics to predict outcomes speaks to the presence of ten different environments for community action, where a CDC's *orientation* toward local networks, and the different changes they demand of them, play a large role in influencing organizing outcomes. Inter-organizational

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[51] My cases do not represent a rebuttal to structuralist network accounts of community life, both because my methodology did not parallel theirs, and because the number of sites do not yield sufficient statistical power to generalize findings to an organizational field.

dynamics were in fact crucial for community action, as network resistance or acceptance

of a CDC's organizing agenda shaped the ambitions of the campaign. (This is an

important point for many writers about organizing, who often describe organizing

campaigns as if they occurred in a vacuum of social or community space[52].) Because

organizing confronted the ties that connect residents and these groups, as well as the ties

of these groups to each other, the ways that CDCs addressed and interacted with other

community organizations was a critical component to campaign planning and outcomes.

In other words, while structural problems posed by resource dependencies were powerful,

but could be overcome by mobilization through governance and coordination, the impact

of networks was influenced by the orientation of local groups toward them.

The agentic question, "Is conflict or consensus organizing more effective?"

Those who claim that an orientation toward conflict or toward consensus is itself

more likely to enact change do not find support within my data. Throughout the cases I

studied, no one model of organizing was more effective – in fact, the groups with the

most divergent organizing styles, JPNDC's and Lawrence's, also had the most leaders

working with them and in many ways were the most powerful organizations. Chapters

five and six of the thesis addressed more explicitly how different "ways of contending"

could all help create institutional change, depending on the setting of the organizing.

Contrary to debate about conflict vs. consensus organizing, and to the more theoretical

literature about framing in social movements (which tends to overstate the power of

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[52] See Delgado (1984) on the ACORN model, which as classically formulated avoids inter-organizational work.

frame resonance), the orientation of a group toward conflict or toward racial difference alone does not provoke institutional change.

This observation is true for three reasons. First, what might be a radical orientation toward difference and conflict in one setting, proves to be accepted and easily-incorporated by another community. This was the case for Jamaica Plain NDC. Although its claims about race and its ability to embrace conflict holds out some hope for enacting change within Boston as a whole, its orientation toward race and toward conflict strove over time not to change neighborhood institutions but to maintain them. Second, even tentative evocations of the role of difference and conflict in certain neighborhoods (or, in contrast, the role of collaboration) are met with fierce resistance, enact dynamics of contention and challenge, and carry the potential to introduce new policies and discourses as a result. One can be consensus-oriented, as Lawrence, and yet still pose a radical threat to thinly-representative and "dysfunctional" community dynamics.

Third, and perhaps more importantly, although developing a specific orientation toward community – a frame for local action – is one way to attempt to capture 'hearts and minds' of residents over the course of organizing (as the literature on social movement framing suggests), the power to *enact* community changes does not come through rhetorical appeal alone or through more passive appeal to identity. Instead, a second aspect of agency, organizational power-building, helps allows the articulation and realization of these frames about community. One can also be conflict-oriented (as was Nuestras Raices) or consensus-oriented (as was the Somerville Community Corporation) and with a clear vision of what institutional change might constitute, and yet be unable to carry it out this vision effectively. My findings suggest that framing processes cannot be

understood in a vacuum – they react to specific neighborhood conditions, and, at the same time, they do not alone change neighborhoods. In these ways, I find that the conflict vs. consensus organizing debate privileges agency but ignores the structure from which these views of community emerges, and assumes that cognition alone can enact change, absent organization-building and effective mobilization. In more reductionist lay terms, how angry a handful of residents are, how sensitive they are to race, how inclusive and cooperative they are, or how color-blind they imagine themselves to be, does not alone effect change. Instead, residents must learn to build effective organizations.

Bringing Together Structure and Agency, Community and Community Action

In these ways, my thesis finds that resources and relationships, while important, do not in themselves determine organizing outcomes. Public or private funds sometimes (but do not always) re-direct challenge; networks sometimes help, and sometimes work against change attempts. Instead, as I argued above, two important aspects in control of community actors helps predict the ways that these structures will play into organizing: 1) framing – the orientation of a CDC toward community and community change – and 2) community mobilization and power-building (in the case of CDCs, facilitated through governance and ordinary development practices). This model attempts to provide a more holistic picture about community organizing and its impacts by telling a story about both structure and agency – about both context and choice.

Choices are important from the beginning of this account, because campaigns emerge from a conscious identification of community problems, and a sense of how to

change neighborhoods for the better. But context also matters, as choices about framing – the ways that a campaign attempts to win the hearts and minds of local residents – do not work alone to produce change. Instead, they develop in a specific neighborhood settings, where campaign frames – their appeal to values of contention and racial and ethnic difference – find resonance or dissonance among other local groups, activating *potential* outcomes for the organizing. Visions about race and about conflict, and the tactics that follow them, matter for the local dynamics they set into motion, contributing to the paths I call continuity, growth, and change.

This point is another way of saying that agency – choices about framing and organizational identity – "matter" broadly for organizing, but that these choices do not alone determine the success or failure of CDC campaigns. In each of the dynamics that organizing sets into motion, winning basic and essential community improvements is possible when facilitated by activist governance and effective mobilizing practices. This point is particularly important, because many CDCs – as place-based organizations – may be bound to contexts that make it very difficult for them to change patterns of local or citywide political participation. For example, as discussed at length in footnote in chapter five, JPNDC is not in a position (of physical or political space) to influence institutional change within the city of Boston as a whole; nor is it interested in challenging already-participatory and progressive structures within that neighborhood. In other words, while the *scope* of winning or losing may be determined by neighborhood and political dynamics both within and outside the realm of individual or group choice, whether or not a CDC wins its campaign is highly associated with its ability to coordinate among development and organizing departments, and its ability to include a broader

circle of community residents in decision-making. Although organizational change to facilitate community mobilization is difficult, as many theoretical and empirical perspectives on organizational change emphasize,[53] many of the CDCs I studied were in fact able to change so as to better represent and mobilize local residents through organizing.

For organizers, community developers, and social service practitioners engaged in attempts to change neighborhoods for the better – while also questioning and expanding what they can accomplish through traditional means – the model developed in this thesis creates a way of thinking about community action and local change. Although the strength of this model is in its ability to describe campaigns and campaign outcomes within my cases, for other studies of community intervention and planning practice, it suggests a way to conceptualize the potential impact of different approaches to local action, given the contexts in which they are actually practiced. Its framework emphasizes not just the fact that neighborhoods are different from each other, but also how different visions *about* neighborhood play important roles in community action. In this way, the process of identifying local problems and conditions, and strategizing about them – 'planning' with a small p – becomes important not only in itself, but for the community dynamics evoked by this visioning. At the same that the thesis places emphasis on these important community dynamics, it recognizes that winning and losing is based not on visioning alone but on the ability of residents and staff to enact this vision. As an effort of analysis, this thesis has hoped to parallel the necessary work of reflection and self-assessment practiced by participants in movements -- allowing greater understanding of

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[53] See for example Stinchcombe's "liability of newness" hypothesis. (1965). For counterevidence on the possibility of organizational change in nonprofits and movement organizations, see Argyris and Schon (1987), Jenkins (1977), Greenwood and Hinings (1986) and Sewell (1998).

the terms of contingency and choice, freedom and consequence, while advancing the territory where agency may take hold.

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