

**Neighborhood Stabilization in Jamaica Plain:  
Patterns, Responses and Prospects**

by

Michael L. Feloney  
A.B., Harvard College  
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Submitted to the  
Department of Urban Studies and Planning  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master in City Planning

at the  
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Signature of Author

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Department of Urban Studies and Planning  
May 19, 1994

Certified by

\_\_\_\_\_  
Langley C. Keyes, Ford Professor  
Department of Urban Studies and Planning  
Thesis Supervisor

Accepted by

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Ralph Gakenheimer, Professor  
Department of Urban Studies and Planning  
Chairman, Master in City Planning Committee

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## **Abstract**

In 1970, the Hyde Square and Egleston Square sections of Jamaica Plain in Boston showed signs of deterioration common to many urban neighborhoods in decline. Within ten years, the neighborhood would face radically different problems of displacement and speculation. Hyde Square and Egleston Square have emerged from these distinct periods largely intact, to face a still different set of issues today.

This thesis seeks to answer two questions. The first pertains to how these sections of Jamaica Plain have managed to withstand various forms of destabilization -- in the form of disinvestment and decline, and later speculation and displacement -- over the last thirty years. I hypothesize that the presence of a rich network of organizations, institutions, and individuals has been a central force in preserving the viability of these areas.

The second question involves an exploration into why that network first emerged, and how the organizations in it have evolved and adapted over time to address changing issues in the community. I examine them in the context of three approaches to the subject of neighborhood development. Two of these models emphasize the physical and economic dimensions of neighborhood development. The third offers a major departure, in stressing the political nature of neighborhood development.

In answering these questions I identify three critical factors in the way Jamaica Plain has responded to issues of destabilization since the mid-1960s: a "culture of activism" that emerged in the neighborhood during the mid- to late 1960s; a tradition of heterogeneity and openness in the community; and the presence of a series of major events and issues which has served to both unify the neighborhood and galvanize it to action. Based on these factors, I elaborate on Cohen's political model of neighborhood development to suggest that under certain conditions, a multiplicity of organizations can co-exist on roughly equal terms to foster neighborhood development. In concluding, I analyze a recent effort in community development which indicates that Jamaica Plain's experience in neighborhood development can be adapted and applied elsewhere.

Thesis supervisor: Langley C. Keyes

Title: Ford Professor of Urban Studies and Planning

## Acknowledgments

Before acknowledging the many people who assisted me in this effort, I should mention three events which occurred over the past several months and provided important glimpses of reality and perspective during an occasionally warping process. The birth of my nephew, Timothy John Fazekas, is first among these. I hope that someday he will look back on his neighborhood with as much pride and fondness as I do mine. The engagement of two valued friends, Theresa Finn and Joseph Dever, served as another reminder of what is important. Finally, the passing of Anna O'Malley, who emigrated to Hyde Square from County Cavan, Ireland in 1925, warrants special mention. Her daughter-in-law and son, my aunt and uncle, are testament to her strength of will and fundamental decency -- qualities still in abundance in Jamaica Plain today.

The first people I should thank are those that generously met and spoke with me, some more than once, over the past six months. While I'm sure I did not get all in or all right, I hope my effort to do so is evident in what follows. Ron Hafer agreed to review a draft of several chapters, and offered many helpful comments.

I owe a special debt of thanks to my advisor, Langley Keyes, who has been a mentor over the past two years. On this project, he provided early encouragement, late conceptual insights, and much support and patience in between. As a reader Phil Clay was accessible and analytically clear in his thinking (if not his hand writing), two critical traits in a reader. He also managed to share some of his extensive knowledge of Jamaica Plain without becoming overbearing in the process.

I am thankful to many friends who put up with my tunnel vision, and others who have not heard from me at all and probably think I've left the country. (I plan to call you all this week.) Sophia Heller, one of the world's few truly selfless people, was a source of support and companionship throughout, for which I am deeply grateful. Finally, this thesis is dedicated to my parents, who have helped me in more ways than I could ever describe.

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## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

In 1970, the neighborhood of Jamaica Plain in Boston was headed, in the eyes of many of its residents and outside observers, down a path of decline and deterioration followed by dozens of other urban American neighborhoods before and since. Having lost a significant amount of its middle income population to the surrounding suburbs and most of its manufacturing and employment base in the wake of shifts in the national and international economy, Jamaica Plain was, in the words of one of its residents, in danger of "going down the tubes."<sup>1</sup>

This is not to suggest that all sections of Jamaica Plain were equally vulnerable to such decline. Some parts, like Moss Hill on the Brookline/Newton boundary and the "pond side" area bordering scenic Jamaica Pond, had long been stable, even affluent, areas and home to Boston's social, economic, and political elite. But in sections like Egleston Square to the east and Hyde Square to the north, the potential for urban decline was real and concrete.

Ten years later, the issues facing Jamaica Plain would be radically different. Rather than facing problems of decline and deterioration, by 1980 several organizations and community groups were voicing concerns over dramatic increases in real estate prices and the accompanying prospect of gentrification, speculation and displacement of the area's low and moderate income residents.<sup>2</sup> This shift is captured in the twentieth anniversary report of City Life/Vida Urbana, a community-based social action organization in Jamaica Plain. While City Life/Vida Urbana characterized the period spanning the 1960s to 1978

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Ronald Hafer, December 12, 1993.

<sup>2</sup> Ronald Hafer, *Community-oriented Residential Development of an Urban Neighborhood Site*, unpublished Master's thesis, MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning, September, 1985.

as one of "disinvestment and neglect", it described 1979 to 1988 as one of "speculation (and) condo conversion."<sup>3</sup>

Today, these once vulnerable areas of Jamaica Plain have to one extent or another survived. While it cannot be uniformly said that they have thrived or blossomed, they certainly have not experienced the kind of blight expected by many. Nor have they evolved exclusively into enclaves of privilege available only to upper income individuals or families. Rather, they have experienced a series of challenges from which they have emerged for the most part intact.

The primary goal of this thesis is to explore how Jamaica Plain has survived these various forms of neighborhood destabilization over the last thirty years. In doing so, I will examine the dynamics of neighborhood stability, as seen in Jamaica Plain, and how community responses to issues of neighborhood decline and development have evolved since the mid-1960s. Thus, this thesis begins at the point at which Jamaica Plain was seen by many to be a community on the brink of widespread deterioration and decline, and attempts to trace community responses to a set of dramatically shifting circumstances over the course of roughly a thirty year period.

As part of this effort I will explore several questions. What were the conditions and concerns facing the areas roughly encompassed by Egleston Square and Hyde Square in the mid-1960s? What were the organizations and forms of intervention that emerged in response to these problems? How have these issues changed over time, and how have (or have not) local organizations and institutions adapted to these changes? What are the issues facing the community today, and how are they similar or different from those of the early 1970s and 1980s?

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<sup>3</sup> *We Still Won't be Moved*, City Life/Vida Urbana twenty year report, October, 1993.

Underlying these questions are two main hypotheses. First is my sense that a singular feature of Jamaica Plain is the presence of a rich network of organizations, institutions and individuals that emerged during the mid- to late-1960s, and has since helped to preserve the viability of the sections on which I will focus. A second question therefore becomes: how and why did such a set of institutions emerge in Jamaica Plain, and how have these organizations evolved over time to address changing issues in the community?

This thesis is thus in part a consideration of how issues of neighborhood stability have changed over time, and more broadly an attempt to understand how a collection of institutions and individuals have responded to those changes. It is intended as an exploration of how institutions and individuals adapt to dramatically changing circumstances. As such, it is an attempt to understand a process -- what has happened in some vulnerable areas of Jamaica Plain, and how a network of institutions has emerged and responded to those challenges over time.

### *Summary and Conclusions*

In the course of my research, several factors have emerged as critical forces that have shaped the way Jamaica Plain has responded to issues of destabilization since the mid-1960s. At the heart of these efforts are three common factors.

1. First is what might be described as a "culture of activism" that emerged in the neighborhood during the mid- to late 1960s, and has survived and grown since.
2. Second is a tradition of heterogeneity and openness. This openness is meant only partly in a racial or ethnic sense. It also refers to a relatively high degree of tolerance between many different community organizations, and a history of cooperation between people born in the area and individuals who have moved to Jamaica Plain from other places.

3. Third is the presence of a series of major events and issues which have served to both unify the neighborhood and galvanize it to action at several points in time.

I will analyze these features, and more broadly Jamaica Plain's recent history of neighborhood decline, stability and development, in light of three theoretical perspectives on neighborhood change. The first, commonly associated with economist Anthony Downs and authors Roger Ahlbrandt and Paul Brophy, concentrated on the economic and physical dimensions of neighborhood decline and development. A second model, most frequently associated with Rolf Goetze, also stressed the importance of physical conditions and housing markets. Goetze differed from previous commentators in the emphasis he placed on demographic factors, and what he called issues of "neighborhood confidence", in neighborhood change.

In the late 1970s, planner Rick Cohen offered a very different approach toward neighborhood planning --- one that is especially relevant to the history of neighborhood development in Jamaica Plain. Cohen criticized previous models for their pre-occupation with economic and physical issues, and their emphasis on the process of decline rather than revitalization. Instead, he articulated a theory of neighborhood development as primarily a political, rather than economic, process. As an alternative to Downs and other theorists, he developed a five stage theory of neighborhood political development.

Based on my research in Hyde Square and Egleston Square, I believe that parts of all these approaches are useful in exploring issues of neighborhood change. Events in Jamaica Plain can be viewed as an intersection of these economic and political models. Market dynamics have changed over time and directly shaped the behavior of neighborhood organizations. In their efforts to promote neighborhood stability and development, meanwhile, those organizations have exhibited several of the features described by Cohen



and resemble his five stages of neighborhood development. The relationship of these factors, and the overall experience of Jamaica Plain over the last thirty years, make it possible to elaborate on several points in Cohen's model of neighborhood political development. Among them are the following:

- Jamaica Plain's culture of activism and history of openness have, along with a handful of galvanizing events, shaped the nature and course of the neighborhood's political development.
- Cohen assumes that a single civic or neighborhood group emerges during the political development process, and that this group thereafter leads efforts at neighborhood development. Jamaica Plain offers an example of how a multiplicity of organizations can simultaneously emerge, survive, and develop successful collaborations that foster, rather than undermine, neighborhood development. Keys to this success in Jamaica Plain have been connections between groups, both in terms of actual membership and shared visions, and a high level of resilience and flexibility.
- Cohen considers organizing to be a central dimension in neighborhood political development, and identifies a discrete role for "the organizer" in each of his five stages. In Jamaica Plain there has been no single organizing individual or entity, suggesting a more complex process than Cohen's. Just as there has been no single civic organization, there also have been different organizing entities at different points in time.

I will discuss Cohen's model and each of the other theories of neighborhood development more fully in my literature review, and subsequently will discuss them in each chapter in light of events as they unfolded over time. The content of individual chapters is described below.

### Outline

After reviewing the framework and methodology for this study and discussing the relevant literature in Chapter 2, in the ensuing three chapters I will explore the features discussed above in detail.

Chapter 3 will concentrate on circumstances in Jamaica Plain in the mid-1960s up to the late 1970s. This period is a critical one in the story of the area, as the origins of several important local institutions can be traced directly to this time. The issues facing Jamaica Plain during this period shaped many subsequent attempts to foster neighborhood stabilization and development. In this chapter, I will examine how these organizations emerged, the goals and approaches of the individuals involved, and some of the events which prompted their creation.

In Chapter 4, I will trace changes in the issues and concerns facing the community from the late 1970s through the late 1980s. Within a ten year period, Jamaica Plain had gone from being a neighborhood in decline to one that was seen as a center for gentrification, speculation, and displacement. After briefly describing some of the forces behind this shift, I will examine the way in which organizations first established to combat problems of decline subsequently altered their work in the face of new challenges. I will also continue to explore why Jamaica Plain was such a center for community activism, and how organizations with distinctly different approaches to issues of stabilization were able not only to co-exist, but in several cases move toward collaborative endeavors.

Chapter 5 examines issues of neighborhood stability from the late 1980s to the present. This is, once again, a period of shifting focus and concern, in which another set of issues -- some new, others revisited from the past -- have begun to emerge. I will also discuss several issues concerning the future of neighborhood stability in Jamaica Plain. In Chapter 6, I will examine the implications of Jamaica Plain's experience in neighborhood stabilization and development for other urban neighborhoods.

## CHAPTER 2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Background**

From early on in its history, Jamaica Plain has contained numerous and distinct sub-areas. The area was originally settled around the scenic Jamaica Pond during the mid-1700s as a "country-house community" for affluent Bostonians like John Hancock and the provincial governor of Massachusetts.<sup>4</sup> By the turn of the century, Jamaica Plain already was beginning to attract a middle-class population of artisans, bank tellers, and clerks who commuted into central Boston. During the 1860s and 1870s, the northern and eastern subdistricts of Hyde Square and Egleston Square developed and quickly become home to a growing working and middle class, immigrant population.

When a new water supply and railroad extensions were developed at the turn of the nineteenth century, Jamaica Plain grew as a local center for industry. Tanneries, breweries and assorted other businesses sprouted between Roxbury Crossing, beyond Jamaica Plain's northern border, and Forest Hills to the south along the path of the Stony Brook and the Boston and Providence railroad route. Among them was the Plant Shoe Factory in the heart of Hyde Square, which at its height employed 7,000 local residents and was said to be the largest women's shoe manufactory in the United States.<sup>5</sup> The emergence of such factories spurred further residential development to house employees, and also attracted people to the area in search of work.

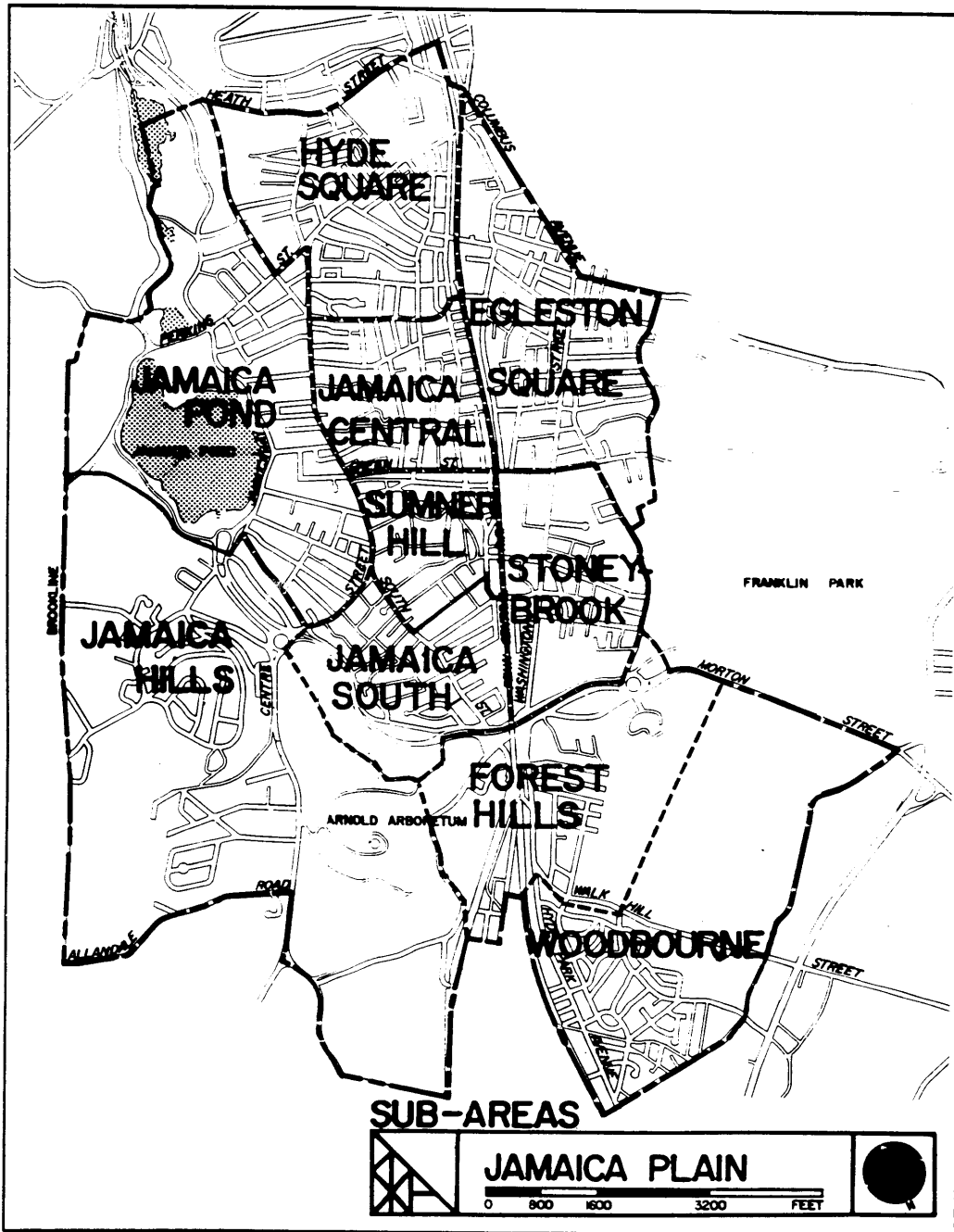
### **Egleston Square and Hyde Square**

While the ethnic composition of these subdistricts has changed with shifts in Boston's immigrant and migrant populations, Hyde Square and Egleston Square have

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<sup>4</sup> Alexander von Hoffman, *Local Attachments: the Making of an Urban Neighborhood, 1850 - 1920* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), pg. 7.

<sup>5</sup> von Hoffman, pg. 57.

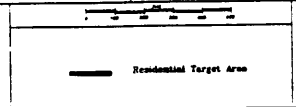


Source: Boston Redevelopment Authority, 1979-1991 District Profile, pg. 5.



**PFD**  
 Boston's Neighborhood Development Agency  
 Neighborhood Planning &  
 Program Development Division  
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**EGLESTON  
 SQUARE**



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 Research & Development Unit  
 15 Beacon St., Boston MA 02108

HYDE SQUARE



retained their character as working and middle class areas largely populated by first, second, and third generation immigrant groups. As such, they are more similar to some of Boston's other sub-neighborhoods than to the expansive mansions to the west and south in Jamaica Plain.

By 1950, Jamaica Plain's industrial base had waned, its housing stock was aging, and Hyde Square and Egleston Square seemed headed toward the decline experienced in some similar sections of Boston. In 1970, for instance, Hyde Square had the highest housing abandonment rate in Jamaica Plain, with Egleston Square second.<sup>6</sup> It is in part for these reasons that I have chosen these areas as the basis for a case study -- they are a case in which early patterns of abandonment and disinvestment were arrested. These two subdistricts are also logical areas on which to concentrate, since dating back to the mid-1960s they were the focus (not coincidentally) of many the efforts to be explored in this thesis.

This latter point stands in contrast to Jackson Square, a third subdistrict of Jamaica Plain, located directly between Hyde Square and Egleston Square.<sup>7</sup> From a planning perspective, Jackson Square has not always been considered a distinct sub-neighborhood. As recently as 1980, for instance, Boston Redevelopment Authority planning maps did not identify Jackson Square as a sub-neighborhood. While Jackson Square has received targeted public attention within the last ten years, in light of this study's time frame I have not attempted to distinguish its history from that of Hyde Square and Egleston Square.

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<sup>6</sup> Boston Redevelopment Authority, *District Profile and Proposed 1979-1981 Neighborhood Improvement Program Report*, pg. 8.

<sup>7</sup> The section of Egleston Square east of Columbus Avenue officially is part of Roxbury. For practical purposes though, it is generally thought of a single sub-district, and in this study will be treated as such.

## **Methodology**

The main source of information and data for this thesis was interviews with people directly involved with issues of neighborhood stability in Jamaica Plain and Egleston Square over the last thirty years. In total I interviewed 44 people, either in person or by telephone. Several of these interviews were supplemented by follow-up questions in subsequent telephone interviews. Twelve other individuals that I tried to contact, either in writing or by phone or both, proved to be unavailable for interviews.

Other important informational sources included reports and documents obtained from various organizations and agencies. While these documents and materials include information from public agencies active in Jamaica Plain during this period, the emphasis of this study is on community responses to issues of destabilization. Therefore, in discussing a community development corporation's efforts to acquire abandoned housing, for example, I focus on the strategy and efforts of the CDC, rather than specific sources of public subsidy for the project.

Most of my own background is in issues of housing and community development, and that background is reflected in the attention paid to issues of housing and, to a lesser degree, economic development. In exploring issues of neighborhood stability and change, however, I did try to reach people who have been involved in a range of issues in Jamaica Plain over the past thirty years. While this thesis is not intended to be a comprehensive account of issues relating to neighborhood stability, there are at least two areas not covered that warrant mention here.

The first involves the Bromley Heath public housing development, located directly between Hyde and Egleston Squares. As Boston's largest public housing development and one of the first tenant-managed developments in the country, Bromley Heath is an



unmistakably important physical and institutional presence in Jamaica Plain. Efforts to interview resident leaders at Bromley Heath were unsuccessful, and I therefore have not attempted to describe the history and dynamics of the development in the context of a broader analysis of neighborhood stability. Bromley Heath clearly warrants detailed and specific analysis in its own right; some of this important work is presently being done by Carolyn Brown, a class mate who is writing her thesis on Bromley Heath.

A second area not included in this study is an exploration of issues faced by Jamaica Plain's immigrant and post-immigrant community and, more generally, issues of race and ethnicity in Jamaica Plain. This is a critically important subject in Hyde Square especially, which contains the highest percentage of Latino immigrants in Boston. As with most important subjects, it is also a complex one. Hyde Square has not only been a consistent point of entry for immigrants and migrants over the last thirty years, it has experienced distinctly different kinds of immigration.

There have been at least three different sources of immigration and migration to Jamaica Plain during this period, beginning with a largely middle and upper income Cuban population in the early 1960s. Toward the middle and late 1960s Jamaica Plain's Puerto Rican population started to grow significantly, and has continued to increase over time. Most recently, immigrants from the Dominican Republic have also grown in number, along with several other Latino groups in somewhat smaller numbers.

The relationships between these groups, as well their relationship to the broader population in and around Jamaica Plain, are subtle issues that I was unable to penetrate in the course of my interviews. This was in part due to my ignorance of Spanish, which limited my interviews to people who were bi-lingual. Exact patterns of immigration are also difficult to trace via census data, which historically have not tracked different

countries of origin among Latino immigrants, and which often are aggregated only at the tract level. Issues of immigration and racial and ethnic change in Jamaica Plain would be rich sources for multiple theses, and hopefully will be explored in the near future.

Before beginning my own consideration of neighborhood stability and development in Jamaica Plain, I will provide a conceptual framework for my analysis by reviewing literature relevant to the topic.

### **Literature Review**

The literature on neighborhood decline, stability and development is voluminous. Interest in the subject was especially intense in the 1970s, peaking in 1979 with the creation of the National Commission on Neighborhoods, a presidential task force created to "investigate the causes of neighborhood decline, and to recommend changes in public policy so that the federal government becomes more supportive of neighborhood stability."<sup>8</sup> This literature review and thesis will focus on three distinct approaches toward neighborhood decline, stability, and development developed during this period. Below I will review the main features of each of these theories on neighborhood change.

#### **Anthony Downs and the Stages of Neighborhood Decline**

Much of the literature on neighborhood decline and development emerged out of the work of economist Anthony Downs, the person most often associated with the notion that neighborhoods move through discrete stages. The concept of neighborhood development as a succession of stages actually was first explicitly articulated in *The Dynamics of Neighborhood Change*, a report published in 1975 by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.<sup>9</sup> The report identified five stages of neighborhood development and

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<sup>8</sup> *People, Building Neighborhoods*, The National Commission on Neighborhoods, March 19, 1979, pg. vii.

<sup>9</sup> National Commission, pg. 69.

decline, in which neighborhoods were categorized as being healthy, experiencing incipient decline, clearly declining, in accelerated decline, or abandoned.

Downs (whose real estate consulting firm had prepared *The Dynamics of Neighborhood Change* report for HUD) elaborated on these stages several years later in his book *Neighborhoods and Urban Development*. He used only slightly different terms in his description of the five stages of neighborhood development:

1. Stage 1: stable and viable. This category includes healthy neighborhoods that are either "relatively new and thriving or relatively old and stable." No symptoms of decline are evident in such neighborhoods, and property values are increasing.
2. Stage 2: minor decline. Minor decline occurs most commonly in older areas populated by younger families with comparatively few resources. Minor physical deficiencies in the housing stock are present during this stage, but property values still are stable or increasing slightly.
3. Stage 3: clear decline. Neighborhoods in this phase are predominantly populated by renters in housing units controlled by absentee land lords, and minor physical deficiencies are "visible everywhere." Physical deficiencies in heavily deteriorated neighborhoods are severe and the housing stock is occupied by "the lowest socioeconomic groups."
4. Stage 4: heavily deteriorated. Housing in this stage is very deteriorated, and most buildings need major repairs. "Properties are marketable only to the lowest socioeconomic groups through contract sale", low income households predominate, and "pessimism about the area's future is widespread."
5. Stage 5: unhealthy and nonviable. In Downs' final stage, neighborhoods are "at a terminal point", and are marked by massive abandonment. Expectations of the area's future are virtually non-existent, and the neighborhood is "considered a place to move out of, not into."

Neighborhood stability according to Downs is most fundamentally a balance of inflows and outflows of residents, materials, and money. Thus, stability itself is dynamic, in that it, "requires constant inflows of people with certain characteristics and of investments in

money or in-kind services."<sup>10</sup> Neighborhood instability and decline occur when outflows begin to outweigh inflows. Changes in any one of the following five characteristics can cause that instability: population change, physical change, economic change, public service change, and attitudinal change.

The characteristics associated with the phases described above are the most important influences in determining a neighborhood's ability to attract households and maintain stability. Downs also identified several other factors important in attracting the inflows needed for stability:

- willingness of the local real estate profession to direct into the neighborhood households similar to the ones already living there. (This is based on Downs' analysis of the United States as a pervasively prejudiced society that cannot independently sustain diverse neighborhoods. In other works he has argued for fair housing laws and quotas to force integration.)
- availability of real estate financing.
- strength of particular (such as ethnic) ties to the neighborhood.
- strength of housing demand in the city or metropolitan area as a whole.<sup>11</sup>

Other authors have offered analyses similar to Downs. In *Neighborhood Revitalization*, Roger Ahlbrandt and Paul Brophy also stressed economic and housing market issues. They wrote that, "neighborhood stability depends to a great extent upon the ability of the housing submarket in question to attract and hold stable households."<sup>12</sup> Ahlbrandt and Brophy expanded on Downs work somewhat in describing a psychological dimension of neighborhood stability. "Neighborhood change" occurs, they wrote, "when the psychology of residents, investors, financial institutions, and local government concerning

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<sup>10</sup> Anthony Downs, *Neighborhoods and Urban Development* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1981), pg. 26

<sup>11</sup> Downs, pg. 36.

<sup>12</sup> Roger S. Ahlbrandt, Jr. and Paul C. Brophy, *Neighborhood Revitalization* (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1975), pg. 7.

the future viability of the neighborhood alter."<sup>13</sup> As discussed below, this notion was advanced further in the work of Rolf Goetze of the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

*Goetze: Demographic Forces and Neighborhood Confidence*

The versions of neighborhood change reviewed above suggest a consensus on the concept of neighborhood decline and development as a series of stages. Writing during the same period, Rolf Goetze of the Boston Redevelopment Authority offered what he called a "fresh approach to housing dynamics." Goetze's analysis grew out of his focus on the importance of the rate of population growth in the United States during the 1940's and 50's. According to Goetze, the baby boom cohort of the 1940's and 50's rendered past models of neighborhood change, development, and stability largely irrelevant. Problems of abandonment caused by a shrinking home-buying population and over-production during the 1960's would, he believed, largely disappear as a result of increased demand by the baby boom generation.

Goetze offered a dynamic model stressing the possibility for multi-directional change in urban neighborhoods, from disinvestment and abandonment on one end of the spectrum to speculation and disinvestment on the other. Within this context, he identified two factors as critical to the preservation of stable housing market situations and, by extension, stable neighborhoods. One is housing condition, the other market perception. Both relate to how existing and potential residents of a neighborhood view the area's present and future viability. The level of confidence in a neighborhood is, in Goetze's view, absolutely vital to its long term viability, and it is these two factors which influence confidence most heavily.

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<sup>13</sup> Ahlbrandt and Brophy, pg. 6.

Goetze developed several conceptual tools from this analysis intended to promote neighborhood stabilization. The first of these is his "housing policy law." The law as Goetze derived it states that, "the public welfare is best served when housing benefits and costs for all interested are maintained in a predictable relationship over the long term."<sup>14</sup> By this, Goetze meant it is critical that policy makers avoid policies that complicate and obscure market relationships. Instead, they should focus on preserving clear, stable, and predictable relationships in housing markets.

Complementing Goetze's housing policy law is his notion of a "golden mean" -- a balance between traditional disinvestment and the kind of speculation that he saw as the trend of the future. Stable neighborhoods are ones that have found and can sustain this state of equilibrium. If they have not, it is crucial for local governments to understand these different sources of destabilization and to respond accordingly. (In a 1977 report, *Stabilizing Neighborhoods*, he identified the promotion of stability as the primary task of urban policy makers.<sup>15</sup>) Policies therefore should be tailored and targeted to reflect the level of confidence in a given neighborhood, and should encourage or deflect excessive interest in certain neighborhoods depending on confidence in the neighborhood.

### Points of Agreement

While Goetze moved away from theories of neighborhood stages to instead stress the shifting and subtle nature of neighborhood change, he was still in basic agreement with existing theory in several important areas. Ahlbrandt and Brophy's description of the psychological dimensions of neighborhood change, for instance, is consistent with Goetze's notion of neighborhood confidence. And contrary to the assertions of some of

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<sup>14</sup> Rolf Goetze, *Understanding Neighborhood Change* (Cambridge, MA: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1979), pg. 77.

<sup>15</sup> Goetze, Kent Colton, Vincent O'Donnell, *Stabilizing Neighborhood: A Fresh Approach to Housing Dynamics and Perceptions*, 1977, pg. 55.

his critics, Downs did not intend his stages to be inextricably linked, with one stage of decline leading inexorably to the next. In *Neighborhoods and Urban Development*, he noted that, "*Neighborhoods can change in either direction along the continuum (and) neighborhoods at any stage can be stable, or improving, or declining*" (emphasis in original).<sup>16</sup>

Most fundamentally, however, Downs, Ahlbrandt and Brophy, and Goetze all focused on the viability of the housing market as the driving force in issues of neighborhood decline and development, and the physical condition of a neighborhood's housing stock as the single most important indicator of a neighborhood's status. In the late 1970s, planner Rick Cohen criticized this focus, and offered a dramatically different scheme of neighborhood development.

*Cohen: Neighborhood Development as a Political Process*

In a 1979 article for *Urban Affairs Quarterly*, Cohen offered an alternative notion of neighborhood decline, stability and development. Rather than focusing on economic issues, Cohen conceived of neighborhood development as primarily a political process. The root of Cohen's attack on Downs and other models stressing the physical and economic components of neighborhood decline is captured in the following excerpt from the article:

These models (Downs and others) of neighborhood change focus on economics: the character of the housing market, the incomes of residential households, the flow of capital and credit from banks and S and Ls. Yet economic solutions have been notoriously weak, except for the traditional techniques of replacing poor families with richer households...The movement for greater citizen participation and influence in the shape and direction of neighborhood preservation projects

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<sup>16</sup> Downs, pg. 64-65.

shifts the frame of reference from *economic solutions* to *political solutions*.<sup>17</sup>  
(emphasis in original)

Cohen further criticized the Downs approach as one based on "dynamics of decline, not revitalization."<sup>18</sup> Based on his own involvement with Pennsylvania's "Neighborhood Preservation Support System Program", Cohen developed an approach aimed at "the development of neighborhood political capacities."<sup>19</sup> The five stages of this neighborhood development process are summarized below:

1. Disorganized: At this stage of political development, "the community is without any organized group capable of providing leadership and action", and lacks any "basic organizational networks through which they could communicate concerns and consider actions with many other people." During this phase, the community's greatest need is for "an organizer or catalyst", often from outside the neighborhood. The task of the organizer is both to generate interest and connections in the community, and to promote "institution-building" through the creation of block clubs and other social groups. During this phase, the focus of such groups is necessarily small and concrete.
2. Primary institutional: The name of Cohen's second phase refers to "the significance of a few basic types of organizations in the neighborhood" such as churches, schools, and social clubs. While the work of such organizations is more vital than in the previous stage, two features still rank such neighborhoods low in political development. Organizations are fragmented, and their concerns focus largely on local and parochial issues. Several tasks face "the community organizer" during this phase, including the need to: strengthen linkages among families and institutions, change the orientation of residents and institutions from inward to outward; and identify local leadership capable of political action. The goal of such efforts is to "turn social groups into neighborhood organizations, church and club leaders into effective political actors."
3. Civic neighborhoods: In this phase neighborhoods begin to deal with issues that are "of interest and concern to the whole community." While neighborhoods at this point of development are more politically sophisticated than ones at the previous stage, they still do not "force interrelations among issues." Cohen describes the task of the organizer here as the need to, "fashion a more effective, more politicized group within the neighborhood." Likely problems in this effort are: groups competing for

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<sup>17</sup> Rick Cohen, "Neighborhood Planning and Political Capacity", *Urban Affairs Quarterly*, Vol. 14 No. 3, March 1979, 337-362.

<sup>18</sup> Cohen, pg. 346.

<sup>19</sup> Cohen, pg. 337.



neighborhood representation, single issue focus of organizations, and "possible jealousy of existing institutions toward the civic group."

4. Networked: At this point "the neighborhood...is a political entity of substance and real potential power." One of the main problems during this phase is the possibility for rivalries between the neighborhood and city authorities, who see such influence as a threat. Cohen states that the organizer in this phase needs to be "part negotiator and part strategist" to deal with such issues.
5. Mass communal: Cohen acknowledges that few large urban neighborhoods have reached this fifth stage of political development. It is characterized by involvement in the group just by virtue of residing in the neighborhood. The neighborhood organization in turn is "not only concerned with a wide range of issues, but actually delivers a variety of services and programs affecting all aspects of the neighborhoods social and political life." A problem common to this phase is how to sustain political mobilization once this phase is reached; Cohen suggests that efforts to do so may lead to "burn out" on the part of the organizer.

#### *Neighborhood Theory and Jamaica Plain*

Two undeveloped, and consequently ambiguous, features of Cohen's model of neighborhood development are evident in the summary provided above. While he repeatedly refers to specific tasks facing "the organizer" in the neighborhood development process, he does not provide any broader context on the overall role of the organizer, or the basic nature of the organizing process in neighborhood political development. In similar fashion, he abruptly moves from a discussion of multiple social organizations and institutions in the second, primary institutional, phase, to subsequent references to "the civic group", as the leading neighborhood force in later stages. How this transition is to occur, and whether there is an actual consolidation or other transference of authority to a single entity, is left unclear.

Both of these points are important in the context of Jamaica Plain, for they touch on two central features of the history of neighborhood development in Egleston Square and Hyde Square. The nature of early organizing efforts that took place there, and the plurality of

groups that have worked together on seemingly equal terms, both are distinctive and integral elements of neighborhood development in Jamaica Plain. I will explore each of these issues further in the ensuing chapters.

Overall, Cohen's approach is an important advancement beyond past physical and economic models of development. It is an exceptionally helpful lens through which to view neighborhood development in Jamaica Plain over the last thirty years, as many events in Jamaica Plain reflect important elements outlined by Cohen. The efforts that I will review in this thesis, however, did not take place in a vacuum. Rather, they were developed in response to specific market conditions.

In this sense, all three models of development shed light on events in Jamaica Plain. In concluding, Cohen described the need to conceptualize the neighborhood unit not as a, "physical territory or a housing market, but a political entity."<sup>20</sup> I believe it is most helpfully thought of as both. For perhaps above all, the history of decline, stability and development in Jamaica Plain during this period is a story of how a collection of organizations, institutions, and individuals adapted to specific market conditions to promote both the stability and development of the area. It is the way in which Jamaica Plain developed and sustained coalitions to deal with changing conditions that lessons for other urban neighborhoods may be found.

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<sup>20</sup> Cohen, pg. 361.

### CHAPTER 3. BEGINNINGS: 1965 - 1978

By the mid-1960s, the parts of Jamaica Plain under consideration in this thesis were clearly declining, physically and otherwise.<sup>21</sup> With a deteriorating housing stock and a declining population base, the neighborhood seemed to many to be headed toward the path of neighborhood deterioration described by Anthony Downs and others. Yet that process was interrupted and altered. Instead, a network of people and institutions emerged to address both immediate problems of physical blight, and also broader issues of housing, economic development, and education and training.

Together these early efforts would have a profound impact on the future course of Jamaica Plain as an urban neighborhood. In this chapter I will begin a discussion of three features that distinguish Jamaica Plain as a place where such a network of institutions could develop and grow. The first of these elements was the presence of people who had recently moved to the area. Though these individuals came independently, they shared a common vision of, and commitment to, urban issues. These people would not only help arrest an incipient pattern of decline, but would also help cultivate Jamaica Plain's reputation as a community open to a range of people, ideas, and interests.

The second and third factors to be discussed in this chapter are closely related to each other. First, while the work of several people who came to Jamaica Plain in the mid-1960s was critical, it would have been impossible without the involvement of many long-time community residents and existing neighborhood-based institutions. Together these people, and the institutions through which they worked, interacted in a way that

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<sup>21</sup> Alan Lupo, *Rites of Way*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971), pg. 30; interview with Helene Leary, long-time Jamaica Plain resident, March 30, 1994; "Profile of Jamaica Plain", *Boston Globe*, July 14, 1967, pg. 8-9; interview with Dr. Joseph O'Malley, long-time Jamaica Plain resident, April 10, 1994; interview with Richard Fowler, long-time realtor in Jamaica Plain, April 7, 1994.

supported, rather than undermined, the various efforts undertaken. In this and subsequent chapters, I will discuss some of the characteristics of Jamaica Plain that enabled such cooperative efforts to take root.

One of those characteristics is the third feature to be discussed in this chapter: the role of external events. In the mid-1960s, the prospect of a highway to be built through Jamaica Plain served as a rallying point around which various individuals and groups in the community coalesced. In ensuing years and decades, other events also served to bring various groups together, rather than tear them apart. While there has not been unanimity of opinion on issues of neighborhood development, there has been a general consistency of purpose among several organizations.

The purpose of this chapter, then, is to introduce several key institutions in Jamaica Plain whose roots lie in the mid-1960s. In tracing the beginnings of these institutions, I will begin to address the question of why Jamaica Plain has been able to develop and sustain such a solid and vibrant network of individuals and organizations over the last three decades. In the process of identifying and describing the origins of this activism, I will provide a context for further events that have unfolded in Jamaica Plain since the mid-1960s.

### **Early Efforts**

As mentioned above, a relatively small group of people were at the heart of efforts to prevent neighborhood decline in Jamaica Plain in the mid-1960s. A critical point of intersection for these people, and the focus of much of their efforts, was an organization called the Ecumenical Social Action Committee (ESAC). In the words of one long-time

resident of the area, ESAC was "the center for community activism" during this time,<sup>22</sup> and it is with ESAC's early work that I will begin the discussion.

Its own work aside, what is perhaps most distinctive about ESAC is the number of neighborhood institutions it spawned. Within its first ten years of existence, ESAC was partially responsible for the creation of three community organizations -- agencies which themselves have since become critically important institutions in Jamaica Plain and, in some cases, beyond. After introducing two of the key figures in the founding of ESAC and a brief look at the organization's beginnings, I will describe the organizations begun by ESAC to provide a sense of their present activities and the circumstances around their respective beginnings.

Such a review offers a natural starting point for a discussion of local organizations and institutional networks in Jamaica Plain for two reasons. First, ESAC itself is an institution central to the history of Jamaica Plain community activism. Second, a discussion of ESAC's formation offers several insights into how the foundation for its ensuing work was first laid. To understand how a handful of people could together help create an array of lasting neighborhood institutions, it is necessary to first trace the roots of ESAC itself.

### *The Ecumenical Social Action Committee*

On a rainy Saturday morning in the fall of 1966, Reverend Don Campbell of St. Andrew's Methodist Church woke up, looked out his window, and braced for disappointment. Reverend Campbell had been working with other local ministers to organize an effort to clear nearby Amory Street and a vacant lot along the Jamaica Plain/Roxbury border of a growing collection of abandoned cars, and this was the day he and the volunteers they had recruited were supposed to distribute flyers informing the neighborhood of their campaign.

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<sup>22</sup> Interview with Mark Levine, former ESAC executive director, April 1, 1994.

Thinking his first effort to begin to organize the neighborhood was about to fall victim to the weather, Campbell was surprised when a young mother showed up at his door ready to go, protecting herself with a rain slicker and her allotment of flyers with a plastic bag. Along with a small group of people who soon straggled in despite the elements, they headed out to undertake their assignments. Thus began one the first efforts of what was to become the Ecumenical Social Action Committee, one of the first community organizations in a neighborhood that now, almost thirty years later, seems full of them.

In the mid-1960s St. Andrew's Church was, like the community around it, in the midst of transition. For decades it had been a parish made up largely of German, Swedish, and Canadian immigrants and their off spring. By the mid-1960s, however, increasing numbers of St. Andrew's members were moving to Boston's suburbs and commuting in for services on Sunday.<sup>23</sup> In their place was a significant African-American population in and around Egleston Square, and a small but growing Latino population. Campbell decided soon after arriving that the mission of the church should not only be to serve its Sunday worshipers, but also to engage and welcome the neighborhood's residents.

Campbell met Father Tom Corrigan of St. Mary of the Angel's Parish for the first time at a public presentation given by staff of the Boston Redevelopment Authority. They had come to their respective positions with a common interest in what each refers to as the "urban church." Don Campbell had worked part-time in Jamaica Plain while a student at Harvard Divinity School. At Harvard, he had become engaged in much of "the ferment" at the Divinity School over the need for religious institutions to become more actively involved in issues faced by urban areas. After refusing an assignment "to one of the burghs" on metropolitan Boston's north shore, he accepted an invitation to become the full

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<sup>23</sup> Interview with Donald Campbell, March 31, 1994.

time pastor at St. Andrew's, on the corner of Atherton and Amory Streets in Jamaica Plain.

Tom Corrigan arrived at St. Mary of the Angels Church, located on Columbus Avenue just beyond the border of Jamaica Plain in Roxbury, directly out of the seminary in February of 1965. In the seminary, Corrigan had been exposed to a spirit of ecumenism at that time growing in the Roman Catholic church.<sup>24</sup> He also had become involved with Boston Urban Priests, a group of Catholic clergy working to increase the church's role in addressing urban issues. When approached by Don Campbell about forming an ecumenical group to address issues of neighborhood concern, the combination of "an ecumenical and activist sense" was, for Corrigan, a natural fit.<sup>25</sup>

ESAC's earliest efforts were purely voluntary, and initially involved four local churches working to resolve neighborhood issues of the kind mentioned above. Following the creation of a call-in center at St. Andrew's to report abandoned cars and other problems, the organization tried to address concerns of local residents regarding the expansion of a post card company, Color Pictures, into the neighborhood's residential section.

A third critical effort involved ESAC's work to get Egleston Square included in an area that in 1968 was soon to be designated a model neighborhood as part of the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Model Cities Program. When ESAC was successful in this campaign, it received for the first time funding to support its work and hire a paid staff. Through HUD's Section 235 low interest mortgage programs, a sub-committee focusing on housing began to obtain abandoned houses, rehabilitate them, and re-sell them. As Model Cities funding started to expire in the early 1970s, the sub-

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<sup>24</sup> Interview with Tom Corrigan, April 9, 1994.

<sup>25</sup> Tom Corrigan interview, April 9, 1994.

committee conducted its own informal planning process. The result was the creation of Urban Edge Housing Development Corporation.

*Urban Edge Housing Development Corporation, Inc.*

Today Urban Edge owns 475 units of rental housing in Jamaica Plain, the Egleston Square section of Roxbury, and parts of Dorchester. The CDC has developed over 100 more units of housing, including the acquisition, rehabilitation, and resale of smaller, one to six unit buildings, and the recent new construction of 50 units of cooperative housing at Stony Brook Gardens along Jamaica Plain's Southwest corridor. Urban Edge has also been involved with commercial ventures, such as the location of Fleet Bank and several non-profit agencies at 3134 Washington Street in Roxbury.

At the time of its founding in 1974, however, Urban Edge's activities and concerns were in areas other than multi-family housing or commercial development. In an effort to counter early signs of racial steering and block-busting in Jamaica Plain, Urban Edge became a licensed real estate company. Founded on the model of a non-profit real estate company based in Hartford, Urban Edge was both a non-profit service corporation and a real estate firm. As such, it had access to the multiple listings of the Boston real estate market and could market a range of homes to implement a vision of Jamaica Plain as a community open to a diverse range of people.

While Urban Edge's strategy was an innovative and bold form of intervention, it was also a subtle one. Richard Fowler, a real estate broker in Jamaica Plain for over fifty years, recalls that Urban Edge's office looked liked that of a conventional realtor -- except for the articles of non-profit incorporation hanging discretely on a side wall.<sup>26</sup> In other ways, though, Urban Edge's alternative intent and message were clear, as captured in an

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<sup>26</sup> Interview with Richard Fowler, April 7, 1994.



advertisement taken out in a Greater Boston Real Estate brochure. While most ads contained pictures of realtors' choice properties, Urban Edge instead ran a photo of its staff -- a racially and economically diverse group of men and women, some in shirt and tie, others in T-shirt and blue jeans.<sup>27</sup> While this strategy would later change as market conditions shifted, in 1974 it was a singular form of intervention in an otherwise depressed housing market.

### *Oficina Hispana*

Oficina Hispana is a non-profit agency specializing in employment and training services for Greater Boston's Hispanic population. Located just beyond the border of Jamaica Plain in Roxbury, it provides a range of educational, job training, and supportive services. These include basic skills in reading, writing and math, and vocational preparation to provide students with skills needed for the agency's skills training program. The skills training program includes specialties in accounting support, records management, and basic engineering technology. Supportive services, meanwhile, are available in vocational and housing counseling.

Oficina Hispana was established in 1973 through the work of several religious and lay people affiliated with ESAC, particularly a young Hispanic minister and a group of women active in St. Andrew's parish.<sup>28</sup> Concerned with the plight of the area's growing Hispanic immigrant population, Oficina's early focus was on training for entry into the construction industry. After encountering opposition from area trade unions, Oficina's area of concentration shifted to its present one of education and training for engineering assistance and office support positions.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Interview with Ron Hafer, April 5, 1994.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Pablo Calderon, first Oficina Hispana director, April 12, 1994.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Clementina Acevedo, Oficina Hispana Assistant Director, March 30, 1994.

### *The Neighborhood Development Corporation of Jamaica Plain (JP NDC)*

In the spring of 1974, a recent graduate of UCLA's urban planning department looking to come home to the Boston area noticed a small advertisement in the Boston Globe want ads his mother had sent him. Mark Levine sent a letter to the "multi-service agency" based in Jamaica Plain that had advertised for an executive director. He got the job, and upon starting as director of ESAC, learned that the first task on which he was to focus was the creation of a community development corporation to focus on issues of neighborhood stabilization in a deteriorated area along Jamaica Plain's Southwest corridor.

After overcoming the attempts of a local politician and ward boss to undermine its efforts, a group led by Levine formed the JP NDC in 1977. The NDC's early activities focused on gaining visibility in the community through Tradewinds, an apprentice carpentry program for unemployed teen-agers.<sup>30</sup> The NDC expanded on its early economic development work with the acquisition of the former Haffenreffer Brewery. Closed and abandoned for more than twenty years, the NDC purchased the building in 1983 with the dual goals of transforming a source of neighborhood blight and restoring jobs lost with the Brewery's closing.

### **Early Interventions in Jamaica Plain -- Principles and Legacies**

The information offered above is not intended as a comprehensive description of either Urban Edge, Oficina Hispana, or the Jamaica Plain NDC. (More information on each will come later.) Rather, it is meant to give a sense of the disparate work of each group, and also their common origins. With such common roots in mind, ESAC's significance as an early impetus for varied and enduring community activism begins to emerge.

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<sup>30</sup> *Building Our Community*, publication of Neighborhood Development Corporation of Jamaica Plain.

Given this significance, it is in turn important to explore the circumstances around ESAC's formation and early development, to discern how the organization managed to inspire the creation of such a wide range of institutions. Upon review, three elements of ESAC and the circumstances around its founding stand out: the shared vision of the people involved; the organizational structure of ESAC; and the presence of a galvanizing event which brought disparate elements of the community together toward the achievement of a common goal.

### *Shared Vision -- Theory, People, and Practice*

The mutual concerns that led Tom Corrigan and Don Campbell to Egleston Square and informed their work have already been described. Several other people in the area shared these interests and concerns, perhaps none more important than Ronald Hafer, one of ESAC's first paid employees.

A native of Illinois who came to Boston for seminary training and stayed as a civil rights activist, Hafer shared Corrigan and Campbell's vision of the "urban church" as a source for social action. His introduction to Jamaica Plain came in 1967, when he was hired by the Community Leadership Center (CLC), an organization funded through a three year Ford Foundation grant to the Education Fund of the League of Women Voters to bring the expertise and voluntarism of the League to bear on urban issues. Hafer soon moved to Jamaica Plain and became a volunteer in ESAC. After funding for the center expired in 1970, Hafer left for Mexico. When he received a telegram from Don Campbell that ESAC had obtained funding from Model Cities to support funded activities, however, Hafer quickly returned as an employee of ESAC. He would later be one of the founders of Urban Edge.

Shared convictions and visions, though important, can easily remain abstract notions far removed from action. In the case of ESAC, the implementation of these concepts was quite concrete. One example is found in Hafer's approach to ESAC's early housing work. Realizing that its work was to take place in a neighborhood becoming increasingly Hispanic, Hafer and Norma Moseley (another original staff member) sought to hire a Hispanic, bi-lingual person to work on their vacant home acquisition and resale project. When they could not find anyone with the necessary skills, they did not simply fill the position with someone else. Instead, they re-opened their search and eventually found Louis Beato, a native of the Dominican Republic then enrolled in a training program with Action for Boston Community Development. After hiring Beato, they trained him on-the-job until he was ready to take responsibility for the program.

A second example is again found in St. Andrew's Church, the focal point of much of ESAC's early work. As Egleston Square's Hispanic population grew during the 1960s and early 1970s, Don Campbell recognized the need for the church to reflect the changing ethnic composition of the neighborhood. When an initial search for a Latino co-pastor was unsuccessful, he sought and received permission from the New England Conference of Methodist Bishops to recruit a co-pastor from Puerto Rico. Reverend Hamed Nagron came to St. Andrew's in 1972, and was an important figure in ESAC for several years to come.<sup>31</sup>

### *Organization: Flexible and Flat*

ESAC's role as an informal incubator of other institutions becomes more understandable in the context of Don Campbell's original vision for the organization. Campbell described the structure as intentionally flexible and non-hierarchical, consisting of a series of committees that focused on distinct areas such as housing, youth, and the elderly. The

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<sup>31</sup> Don Campbell interview, March 31, 1994.

purpose of this structure was to foster an environment where people could focus on their work independently in a "series of nodes",<sup>32</sup> while ESAC provided a basic organizational structure for support. Thus the original intent was to enable members to focus on areas of specialization, and to use ESAC as a foundation for their work.<sup>33</sup>

This organizational structure was closely related to a second important feature of the organization. Campbell and other early collaborators consciously formed ESAC as an organization based on existing neighborhood institutions.<sup>34</sup> Rather than forming an organization unto itself, the intent instead was to build on the legitimacy of local churches as a base of support and organization. As a result, a coalition consisting of idealistic "outsiders", recent immigrants, and long-time residents emerged in Jamaica Plain. Such a convergence of people and interests may not have been possible, however, without the presence of a powerful threat that served to bring this diverse collection of institutions and individuals together toward a common goal.

#### *External Events and Foundations for Future Work*

The story of the fight to stop Interstate-95 from cutting through Jamaica Plain and several other Boston neighborhoods has been told elsewhere and need not be repeated here.<sup>35</sup> What is important is the fact that the struggle to stop I-95 offered an opportunity for intervention and collaboration among several individuals and groups, and served as the basis for a coalition on which future efforts would build. In *Rites of Way*, Alan Lupo described the efforts a group of individuals and organizations to build "an alliance of citizens...who by protest, planning, and politics would influence their government."<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Don Campbell interview, March 31, 1994.

<sup>33</sup> Don Campbell interview, March 31, 1994.

<sup>34</sup> Don Campbell interview, March 31, 1994.

<sup>35</sup> Alan Lupo's *Rites of Way* is the most well-known and complete account.

<sup>36</sup> Lupo, pg. 12.

Lupo wrote that in a neighborhood facing several problems, this group "saw the highway not only as a problem...but as an issue around which otherwise diverse interests could coalesce."<sup>37</sup> Not surprisingly, Don Campbell, Tom Corrigan, and Ron Hafer were central figures in this effort to defeat plans for the highway. But the involvement of such activists was only part of the story. In addition to people who had recently arrived in Jamaica Plain and brought strong ideals with them, another critical feature of this alliance was the work of individuals who had grown up in Jamaica Plain and had made a commitment to stay in the neighborhood.

People like Edwina (Winkie) Cloherty, who had grown up in Jamaica Plain, joined in the fight against the highway and became integral figures in its defeat.<sup>38</sup> Even more importantly, that initial involvement continued. Soon after the highway was defeated, Cloherty led an effort to fight red lining in Jamaica Plain. And in between waging two close but unsuccessful attempts to unseat a veteran state representative, she headed the Southwest Corridor Coalition, a group formed around concerns over development of the land which had been taken for the highway's construction.

Thus, the early collaborative efforts of individuals who joined together to stop the highway helped form links within the community, and a foundation for continued efforts. In the case of Campbell and Corrigan, their affiliation with existing religious institutions served as a bridge to many long-time residents of Jamaica Plain, while their work with ESAC and opposition to the highway fostered broader connections as well. Urban Edge took this work a step further in a sense, as it strove to ensure Jamaica Plain's status as a neighborhood open to a diversity of racial and ethnic groups. The way in which Urban

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<sup>37</sup> Lupo, pg. 30.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Edwina Cloherty, March 15, 1994. While virtually everyone I spoke with mentioned Winkie Cloherty as a central figure in both the highway fight and other efforts, she strongly emphasized the role of "church-based" individuals in first raising questions about the impact of the proposed highway.

Edge pursued this goal and simultaneously fostered a climate of activism and cooperation in Jamaica Plain is illuminated by looking at an example of Urban Edge's early efforts.

### *Developing a Network*

In 1976 Alvin Shiggs, an administrator in the Boston School Department, and his wife, attorney Maria Quiroga were living in Mattapan when they saw a television special on Jamaica Plain -- a show which in part featured the work of Urban Edge. Then working in health care, Shiggs spoke with Charlie Cloherty of Jamaica Plain's Brookside Community Health Center (husband of Winkie Cloherty and himself a native of Jamaica Plain) about the neighborhood. Cloherty and others put Shiggs in touch with Mark Levine, executive director of ESAC, who in turn referred Shiggs and his wife to Ron Hafer.

After learning more of Urban Edge's work and Jamaica Plain generally in a three hour meeting with Ron Hafer, the couple decided to move to Jamaica Plain. In the same meeting, Hafer asked Maria Quiroga to join Urban Edge's board. She has since also served on the Board of Oficina Hispana. Alvin Shiggs has, at various times, been a board member of ESAC, the Jamaica Plain NDC, the Brookside Community Health Center, and the Egleston Square Neighborhood Association (a group discussed in Chapter 5), a member of the Democratic Ward Committee that helped unseat a long-time incumbent opposed to many of ESAC's efforts, and a member of the Parish Council of St. Mary of the Angels Church.

In my interview with him, Shiggs (who is African-American) described Jamaica Plain as a place that has, over the last twenty years, has attracted many people like him and his wife, who are committed to issues of diversity and social change. Several other people I interviewed expressed similar views regarding their initial attraction to Jamaica Plain. I

will pursue this important theme, and some its deeper roots, further in the next chapter. Below I will first discuss these issues in the context of existing neighborhood theory.

### **Neighborhood Theory and Jamaica Plain**

Elements of Downs', Goetze's, and Cohen's views all were evident in Jamaica Plain in the mid-1960s and 1970s, and each approach is discussed individually below. Together, these elements demonstrate that in ways, the theories are complementary rather than contradictory. As I will describe below, early efforts at political development in Jamaica Plain grew directly out of an attempt to stem neighborhood decline and intervene in local market dynamics.

As discussed previously, indications of Downs' stages of incipient, and in some cases clear, decline were prominent issues in the mid-1960s. The early work of Urban Edge and JP NDC was expressly intended to improve the neighborhood through stabilization of the housing market. Some of these efforts involved unusual responses, given the factors that Downs identified as determinants of market inflows and factors in decline. While Downs identified a need for local real estate brokers to attract "similar" households, Urban Edge explicitly promoted Jamaica Plain as an integrated community as a way to attract buyers. Around the same time, Winkie Cloherty and others witnessed signs of red lining in Jamaica Plain and formed the Jamaica Plain Mortgage and Banking Committee to pressure banks to lend in the area through a "green lining" campaign. That effort helped address a second need in Downs classification of market inflows -- the availability of financing -- that was then lacking in the neighborhood.

Elements relevant to Goetze's views are also clearly discernible. The first executive director of the JP NDC explicitly described the creation of the Tradewinds program as an effort to restore neighborhood confidence in the neighborhood by employing local youth



to repair homes in the area.<sup>39</sup> The following chapter will further describe other confidence-building efforts in Jamaica Plain and their eventual impact. In 1979, Goetze offered a preview of later developments when he wrote of Jamaica Plain: "the basic neighborhood trend, disinvestment, has been transformed into potential displacement within six years."<sup>40</sup>

From the perspective of Cohen's approach, neighborhood conditions and early efforts to improve the area would have placed the Egleston and Hyde Square sections of Jamaica Plain somewhere between a Stage 1 neighborhood -- one in need of organization -- and Stage 2. In Jamaica Plain, external catalysts like Don Campbell and Tom Corrigan were integral to future efforts. As Cohen suggested, early efforts focused on concrete and discrete tasks, like cleaning up abandoned cars. Cohen also cited the role of controversy in early organizing efforts, and specifically mentioned opposition to things like a highway corridor as potential catalysts to action and neighborhood development.

Cohen underestimates, however, the full significance of early organizing efforts and the importance of their connection to existing institutions -- a feature central to early neighborhood development in Jamaica Plain. While he cites the needs for such connections, he says little about *how* to bridge the potential gap between external organizers and neighborhood institutions in the pursuit of political development. This gap was successfully bridged in Jamaica Plain, though not without challenges. The founding of the JP NDC illustrates some of the pit falls present in such efforts, and how such challenges were overcome in Jamaica Plain.

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<sup>39</sup> Interview with Michael Gondek, March 24, 1994.

<sup>40</sup> Goetze, *Neighborhood Change*, pg. 59.

In the process of founding the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation, ESAC and others involved with the effort encountered two major obstacles. The first arose when ESAC disbanded its own organizing staff in 1974. While Mark Levine, then director of ESAC, recalled that lay-offs were the product of a fiscal crisis, he also stressed that the move cleared the way for collaboration with the Southwest Corridor Coalition and other groups whose support was needed to help generate support for a new community development corporation. After first withstanding an organizing effort by the laid-off organizers against ESAC, Levine reported that he and others were consequently able to "tap the expertise" and other resources within the community in the forming the NDC.<sup>41</sup>

The experience above points to some of the delicate transitions faced as organizations and communities develop along Cohen's continuum -- a balance that he does not fully acknowledge. In Jamaica Plain, it seems that some of the initial ties forged between ESAC and the community-at-large helped to overcome and resolve early controversies without irreparably damaging ties within the community. This resilience was critical, as the NDC had yet to overcome a second major challenge before it had even incorporated as a CDC.

The second challenge came in the person of State Representative James Craven, a veteran legislator in the Massachusetts House of Representatives and an opponent of much of ESAC's work. Shortly before ESAC was to file papers with the Secretary of State to begin a CDC, a Craven associate temporarily undermined the effort by preemptively founding the "Jamaica Plain Community Development Corporation", the name the ESAC planned to use for its organization. Amidst a public uproar over the move, background investigations revealed connections between Craven and the CDC (in the form of office

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<sup>41</sup> Interview with Mark Levine, April 19, 1994.

space rented from a Craven-controlled real estate trust and paid for by a state-funded grant). The CDC soon folded in the wake of these allegations, and was followed by the formation of the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation.<sup>42</sup>

Events like these again illustrate some of the challenges and obstacles in making progress along Cohen's spectrum of development, and shows how such challenges were resolved in Jamaica Plain. Another undeveloped area in Cohen's analysis involves how initial connections for future work are made. In the case of Jamaica Plain, the early work of ESAC, as an institution rooted in existing neighborhood organizations, was critical to future connections that would develop.

### **Conclusion**

Thus, the early work of ESAC and connections and overlaps across organizations formed during this period helped create a resilient and flexible network of institutions and organizations from which many future efforts would grow. Together these efforts helped create a basis for, and legacy of, neighborhood activism in Jamaica Plain that has continued to grow over the past thirty years. In ensuing years, Egleston and Hyde Square would continue to develop, politically and otherwise. In the midst of dramatic market shifts, the organizations and institutions introduced in this chapter would display flexibility and resilience in dealing with those changing market dynamics.

These efforts, and the reasons why they initially emerged and subsequently survived in Jamaica Plain, are analyzed further in Chapter 4. In that chapter, I will demonstrate how several of the organizations established during this time adapted their efforts and shifted their focus during the 1980s. I will also describe another tradition of activism in the same neighborhood, something singularly possible in Jamaica Plain. The reasons why this was

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<sup>42</sup> Mark Levine interview, April 1, 1994.

possible will help further explain how and why such a diversity of efforts and organizations started -- and have been able to survive -- in Jamaica Plain.

## **CHAPTER 4. SHIFTING CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES: 1979 - 1988**

The previous chapter analyzed the circumstances leading to the formation of several organizations committed to issues of neighborhood stability and development during the mid- to late-1960s and early 1970s. At a time when concerns over neighborhood decline and displacement by government action (in the form of I-95) were paramount, the organizations and individuals discussed emerged to address these challenges in different, often complementary, ways.

Within ten years, the issues facing Jamaica Plain would shift dramatically, prompting several of these organizations to change as well. After briefly describing the nature of these changes, I will explore the ways in which those organizations adapted to them. A central part of this evolution is the way in which several groups that had independently developed strategies for coping with these changes developed sometimes surprising efforts at collaboration.

In this chapter I also will continue several of the themes and issues raised in Chapter 3. In addition to the work of organizations like Urban Edge and the Neighborhood Development Corporation, several other organizations also worked prominently on issues of speculation and displacement. The work of such groups, and some of the collaborative efforts that developed between new and relatively old groups alike, offer insights into Jamaica Plain's character as a community open to a diversity of people, approaches, and organizations. Finally, galvanizing events once again served to bring together various elements in the community, and forge ties that would continue until today.

## **Background**

For most of the 1980s, much of Jamaica Plain experienced a sharp increase in the demand for housing -- a situation that created a dramatically new set of problems compared to the issues of neighborhood decline and residential abandonment at hand in the late 1960s. A report issued by the Boston Redevelopment Authority in 1979 hinted at these changes, referring to Jamaica Plain as a "renewing residential neighborhood."<sup>43</sup> The report went on to describe an influx of new buyers into the area attracted by the physical amenities and relatively low crime rate of Jamaica Plain.

Several other forces also fostered new interest in the neighborhood. In the wake of I-95's defeat, the city and state undertook a major planning initiative for the land which had been taken in anticipation of the highway's construction. The main use for the land was the relocation of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's Orange Line, thus improving access to the city's central business district. An extensive linear park running parallel to the new rapid transit line created another source of open space for the area. Finally, the removal of the old, elevated trolley line which hovered over Washington Street as a major source of urban blight marked a third significant public improvement that enhanced the area's attractiveness to prospective residents and investors alike.

While these public improvements were being planned, the City of Boston undertook an effort to build interest and confidence in Jamaica Plain. The Boston Redevelopment Authority released "eye-catching" posters depicting the strengths of Jamaica Plain as a vibrant neighborhood.<sup>44</sup> Efforts like these were complemented by the airing of a prime

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<sup>43</sup> "District Profile and Proposed 1979-1981 Neighborhood Improvement Program", Boston Redevelopment Authority Neighborhood Planning Program, 1979.

<sup>44</sup> Goetze, *Neighborhood Change*, pg. 61.

time television special (the one viewed by Alvin Shiggs and Maria Quiroga) that focused on the experiences of satisfied Jamaica Plain residents.<sup>45</sup>

These physical improvements and public relations campaigns were accompanied by broader forces at work in both the local and national housing markets. The aging of the United States' baby boom population born between 1945 and 1957 brought a dramatic increase in demand for housing nationally. Goetze compared this development to a massive tidal wave of increased demand that would shift debate on housing policy from the subject of abandonment and blight to concerns over affordability and displacement.<sup>46</sup> These demographic shifts would be acutely felt in Jamaica Plain.

While the specific influence of each of these factors is difficult to discern, their cumulative impact in Jamaica Plain was strikingly evident. By the mid-1980s concerns over abandonment were overshadowed by issues of displacement of low-income residents, arson for profit, and speculative investment in the local housing market. In 1986, property prices were increasing at a rate of \$15,000 every 90 days. One 26-unit building purchased for \$7,500 in 1978 was on the market for \$1.2 million (and had received an offer of \$1 million).<sup>47</sup>

### **Transitions**

Within the context of such changes, it is important to survey the "institutional landscape" of Jamaica Plain as circumstances in the community changed. While some of the

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<sup>45</sup> While a single television show may seem too fleeting to warrant mention, its airing was important. See Goetze, *Understanding Neighborhood Change*, and William Wolpert Harris, *Television's Image of the City: the Jamaica Plain Case*, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, May, 1977. Several interview subjects also mentioned the special, including the first director of the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation, who learned of the neighborhood through the program. (Interview with Michael Gondek, March 24, 1994.)

<sup>46</sup> Goetze, *Stabilizing Neighborhoods*, pg. iii.

<sup>47</sup> David Bolger, *Does Someone Want to Burn Your Building Down?*, Jamaica Plain Arson Prevention Action Council, September, 1988, pg. 3.

organizations introduced in Chapter 3 changed their focus to address issues of speculation and gentrification confronting the community, not all did. Oficina Hispana and ESAC are two examples of neighborhood-based institutions which, for quite different reasons, did not focus on issues of speculation and displacement. Before exploring the responses to those issues, I will briefly describe the work of Oficina Hispana and ESAC during this period.

### *Oficina Hispana*

During the 1980s Oficina Hispana continued to build on its previous efforts to provide training, educational, and supportive services to Jamaica Plain's Latino population. Unlike some other organizations forced to adapt to changing circumstances, Oficina's role largely continued in its present form, but on an expanded level.<sup>48</sup>

This consistency of purpose reflects the steady need for the kind of services and training provided by Oficina Hispana. Throughout the 1980s, both Hyde Square and Egleston Square continued to grow as centers of Latino immigration and migration from Puerto Rico. Moreover, Oficina expanded its own service area to include not only the immediately surrounding area, but all of metropolitan Boston. Today the organization is one of the most important and widely known service and training centers in the Boston area for people of Hispanic backgrounds.

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<sup>48</sup> Interview with Pablo Calderon, April 12, 1994.



ESAC<sup>49</sup>

By the late 1970s, ESAC had evolved from being an entirely volunteer organization supporting a range of independent activities, to an established social service agency with a paid staff. Part of this evolution came as the organization obtained funding from government sources and private philanthropies (first Model Cities, later the United Way), a development that required a basic "organizational infrastructure" that likely limited some of the flexibility that had previously characterized the organization.<sup>50</sup>

A more important reason, however, may lie in the board's decision to eliminate the paid community organizing staff that had been hired by ESAC's first executive director. While accounts of the reasons for this decision differ,<sup>51</sup> one undisputed effect was a greater level of cooperation between ESAC and other area organizations -- cooperation that was critical to ESAC's efforts to form a community development corporation.<sup>52</sup> After starting the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation, ESAC's focus shifted toward the provision of counseling services for elderly home owners, youth counseling and education, and other supportive services.

This evolution is also attributable to turnover in several of the key people initially involved with ESAC. Feeling "burned out" by the fight against I-95 and his other work, Tom Corrigan left St. Mary of the Angels in 1967 for a parish in Cohasset, a small town on

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<sup>49</sup> In the course of research on ESAC, I interviewed seven people involved in the organization's first ten years. I was, however, unable to reach two other important sources. Norma Moseley, one of ESAC's first staff members and someone associated with the agency for most of the past two decades, declined multiple written and verbal requests for an interview. I also was unable to reach the organization's current director.

<sup>50</sup> Telephone interview with Mark Levine, former ESAC executive director, April 19, 1994. Mr. Levine noted that he was not the first director of ESAC, and that he could not be entirely sure of this assessment.

<sup>51</sup> As mentioned previously, Mark Levine attributes the decision to financial pressures. Julie Rawson, director of community-organizing, says that the decision was a political one stemming from the organizers' controversial, Alinsky-style approach.

<sup>52</sup> Mark Levine interviews, April 1, 1994 and April 19, 1994. Levine reported that several local organizations and residents had been alienated by some of the organizers' direct action tactics.

Boston's south shore.<sup>53</sup> (In planning to leave, Corrigan arranged to trade places with Bill Mullin, a priest who shared Corrigan's concern for urban issues and wished to work in an urban environment. Mullin continued much of Corrigan's early work at ESAC.) Don Campbell followed a few years later, leaving St. Andrew's for graduate school. Ron Hafer, Norma Moseley, and Luis Beato's activities remained focused on housing. In 1974, Hafer and Beato officially left to incorporate Urban Edge as a separate entity.

While ESAC would continue to provide sorely needed services in the community, it would shift from being an exceptionally fluid, volunteer-based entity (and generator of other organizations) to a somewhat more conventional service provider.<sup>54</sup> Unlike some neighborhoods, however, in Jamaica Plain there appears to have been no shortage of organizations to push for action on issues of pressing concern to the community -- in this instance the issue of real estate speculation and its accompanying effects. Over the next several years a series of efforts emerged, some of them independent, others collaborative in nature, to address the problems now facing the community.

### *Urban Edge*

On a Saturday morning in 1979, Ron Hafer stood before a group of forty or so neighborhood residents and presented findings of research he had been conducting for the past several months.<sup>55</sup> Hafer had just completed a study of housing price trends in Jamaica Plain over the past five years. Breaking Jamaica Plain down into twenty sub-neighborhoods, he found steady and dramatic price increases in several of Urban Edge's initial target areas. His presentation that Saturday would serve as an early step in the development of several forms of intervention undertaken by Urban Edge over the next few years.

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<sup>53</sup> Tom Corrigan interview, April 8, 1994.

<sup>54</sup> Don Campbell interview, March 31, 1994; Ron Hafer interview, May 5, 1994.

<sup>55</sup> Ron Hafer interview, April 5, 1994.

While Hafer's research documented a clear pattern of price increases in several sub-neighborhoods that only a few years before had been thought to be declining, the results were not a great surprise to the Urban Edge staff. Instead, they served to confirm previous observations made in the course of Urban Edge's brokering activities. By 1979, staff members already had begun to notice increased levels of interest. The human and economic implications of this shift were reflected in the people entering Urban Edge's office Centre Street office. Interested buyers increasingly included not just people seeking an integrated neighborhood, but also individuals and couples in search of a profitable investment.<sup>56</sup>

In the face of these shifting market conditions, Urban Edge in turn altered its practices in an effort to preserve Jamaica Plain as a community open to low and moderate income families. Urban Edge phased out its brokering practice in 1982, and started to undertake the acquisition, renovation, and rental of large, multi-unit properties, like the 54 unit Dimock-Bragdon Apartments on Columbus Avenue. Within the next few years Urban Edge would also acquire several large troubled and abandoned buildings owned by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Around the same time, Urban Edge undertook other measures aimed at preserving the economic diversity of Jamaica Plain and Egleston Square. Following an extended debate by its Board of Directors, Urban Edge strengthened re-sale restrictions on the smaller buildings it acquired.<sup>57</sup> Section 8 moderate rehabilitation projects also offered opportunities to develop housing for low income families, along with smaller cooperative efforts. In 1985, Urban Edge began planning for a larger cooperative to be built on a

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<sup>56</sup> Ron Hafer interview, December 7, 1993.

<sup>57</sup> Interview with Mossik Hacobian, December 13, 1993; interview with Jack Plunkett, Urban Edge Board member, April 20, 1994.

stretch of vacant land along the Southwest corridor. The project would be completed seven years later as Stony Brook Gardens, a 50 unit limited-equity cooperative.

### JP NDC

During the early to mid-1980s, the attention of the Jamaica Plain NDC's board was focused, quite literally, on the daunting prospect of rehabilitating the abandoned Haffrenreffer Brewery, which the NDC acquired in 1983.<sup>58</sup> In part for this reason, and perhaps also because of the small-scale housing stock of Jamaica Plain (as compared to parts of Egleston Square), the NDC did not undertake acquisition of multi-unit housing as a response to new market conditions.

The NDC was by no means, however, unaware or unresponsive to the shift. By 1982, the NDC had begun "to look at JP housing shortages and the pressure on low-income families trying to pay rapidly rising rents."<sup>59</sup> The NDC intervened, for example, to ensure that plans for the conversion of the Jamaica Plain High School on Sumner Hill included low and moderate income housing.

Like Urban Edge, the NDC also turned to cooperative ownership as a way to ensure future affordability and protect residents from the potential for speculation. In the mid-1980s the NDC was the first CDC in eastern Massachusetts to develop scattered site cooperative housing, with the renovation of 19 units in and around Hyde Square. Many of the NDC's other efforts involved collaborative work with other organizations, a subject discussed later in this chapter.

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<sup>58</sup> Interview with Henry Allen, former NDC Board member, April 5, 1994.

<sup>59</sup> "Building Our Community," NDC publication, 1994.

## **A Second Tradition of Activism -- City Life/Vida Urbana**

While the efforts of Urban Edge and the NDC were important forms of intervention to address problems of increasing housing prices and displacement, they were by no means the only ones. Yet another organization, City Life/Vida Urbana, undertook a range of direct action tactics to confront the same problems. As time passed, City Life/Vida Urbana's own strategies would in turn change, as it moved away from a self-consciously independent approach to one that involved sometimes surprising collaborations with other organizations in the community.

City Life's origins, its early work, and its eventual movement toward collaborative efforts with other organizations offer several insights into Jamaica Plain's nature as a community open to both different populations and different forms of activism. After discussing the origins and roots of City Life/Vida Urbana and its early efforts, I will examine the circumstances which paved the way for later collaborative efforts, and some of the distinctive characteristics of Jamaica Plain that made such efforts possible.

### **Origins**

As described in the previous chapter, the roots of the Ecumenical Social Action Committee lay in the efforts of a group of people who shared a mutual concern with urban issues, a common enemy in the threat of I-95, and a shared religious orientation and sense of ecumenism prevalent in several religious traditions in the 1960s. Five blocks from St. Andrew's church in a building on the corner of Lamartine and Green Streets, another small group with a shared vision started City Life in 1973. That vision, however, reflected a political orientation and support base quite different from ESAC's, and a political climate that had changed dramatically over the previous decade.

In addition to a commitment to Civil Rights (a concern of ESAC's as well), City Life also was a product of the Women's movement and the anti-war movement of the late 1960s.<sup>60</sup> While focusing on housing (City Life actually was founded as a tenants rights group, the Jamaica Plain Tenants' Action Group), City Life had a broader agenda as a socialist collective committed to fundamental social change. Based on this agenda, City Life's early organizers adopted strategies of direct action during a period they described as one of "disinvestment and neglect."<sup>61</sup> Early tactics included organizing, rent strikes and pickets at neglected buildings in Jamaica Plain.

With the turn of the real estate market in the early 1980s, City Life began to focus its efforts in several new directions. In 1985 it declared an area extending several blocks on both sides of the Southwest corridor an "eviction-free zone", and worked to prevent evictions stemming from real estate speculation. A second prominent example of the organization's work involved the Bowditch School on Green Street. City Life orchestrated an extended protest to the city's plan to sell the school for conversion to luxury condominiums. In the wake of extended legal challenges to the proposed conversion (and a week-long sit-in at the building which included visits from over 1,000 supporters), the city eventually agreed to sell the building to a non-profit developer for use as low-income single room occupancy housing.

### **A Change in Approach: Finding Common Ground**

As described, City Life was formed as an anti-capitalist collective committed to fundamental social change. During its early years, members and supporters largely eschewed the tactics of other groups in Jamaica Plain in favor of various forms of direct action against land lords and conventional city politics.<sup>62</sup> Fifteen years later, the

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<sup>60</sup> City Life/Vida Urbana, twentieth anniversary report, 1993.

<sup>61</sup> City Life/Vida Urbana, twentieth anniversary report.

<sup>62</sup> Interview with Ken Tangvik, City Life member, April 15, 1994.

organization would participate in a range of collaborative efforts, with members and clergy from Blessed Sacrament Church on Centre Street among others, concerning issues of displacement and speculation.

Thus, in the years between 1973 and the mid-1980s City Life evolved from a stridently independent, even isolationist, institution to one that worked with a range of individuals and organizations to achieve its goals. The coalition mentioned above was, in fact, one of many that emerged in Jamaica Plain during the 1980s. Among the other organizations involved were the NDC and the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council. Together these activities helped preserve the community's character as a mixed income neighborhood. Below I will explore the circumstances around City Life's change in strategy, and will describe some of these efforts in more detail.

### *A turning point*

Ken Tangvik, a veteran member of City Life, points to Boston's 1983 mayoral election as a critical juncture in the organization's history, and one which opened doors for collaborative efforts through the 1980s and beyond.<sup>63</sup>

As mayoral candidate Mel King's Jamaica Plain coordinator (and a Jamaica Plain resident and City Life supporter) Tangvik approached City Life to seek its support for King's candidacy. An endorsement of a political candidate represented a major decision for the organization. In the past, City Life had dismissed municipal elections as irrelevant to the organization's vision of fundamental social change. After extensive internal discussions, however, City Life agreed to endorse King and worked actively for his election.

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<sup>63</sup> I acknowledge that the following analysis relies heavily on Tangvik's views. However, he was cited by many people as a key figure in City Life during this period, is a knowledgeable source of information, and was the only person from that period available to interview.

In Tangvik's view, the decision to support the King campaign opened the door for collaborative efforts that would continue to unfold. As head of the Jamaica Plain chapter of Boston's Rainbow Coalition after the election, Tangvik was able to build on the foundation formed during the mayoral race to continue organizing efforts around issues of speculation and displacement. Four years later in 1987, the groups would collaborate again to run a slate of candidates for the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council (JPNC), one of sixteen neighborhood bodies created throughout Boston (and initially appointed) by the Flynn administration in 1983 to foster neighborhood input on issues of housing and neighborhood planning.

Henry Allen, a City Life supporter and member of the JPNC between 1985 and 1992, described these kinds of efforts as an attempt "to seize neighborhood institutions, or create our own."<sup>64</sup> Allen regards these efforts as critical to several subsequent successes in ensuing years, in which the JPNC and City Life worked toward common goals and priorities regarding the preservation and creation of affordable housing in Jamaica Plain. A look at the membership of both organizations during this time supports this assertion: the 1988 chair of the Council was Tom Kieffer, a central figure in much of City Life's work, while Tangvik was chair of JPNC's housing committee.

Allen also noted that City Life's affiliation with the Neighborhood Council in a way served to "legitimize" City Life in Jamaica Plain. With the neighborhood council there "as something in between City Life and the Moss Hill crowd", City Life's agenda was often also the agenda of Jamaica Plain's main planning body. Even if City Life and other more traditional organizations in Jamaica Plain could not always agree, it seems that over time room for accommodation between the groups grew.

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<sup>64</sup> Interview with Henry Allen, April 5, 1994.



### Coalitions grow

City Life's initial collaboration with the King campaign also preceded the development of a close working relationship with the Neighborhood Development Corporation. The most prominent example of this collaborative work may be the organizations' complementary efforts around the organizing and conversion of the Forest Glen Cooperative at 93 Forest Hills Street -- another instance of a unifying event that served to strengthen bonds between organizations.

Foreclosed in the wake of its acquisition by a speculative investor, 93 Forest Hills Street was in severe financial and social distress when the residents approached City Life in March, 1989 for assistance. After deterring potential bidders with a protest at the foreclosure auction, the tenants and City Life worked to rid the building of drug dealers. They eventually sought JP NDC's assistance in acquiring the building. In 1990, it was incorporated as the NDC's second cooperative effort.

Another joint effort that emerged during the 1980s, involving City Life, the NDC, and several other local institutions, focused on arson as a component of broader problems of speculation. By 1985, arson had become a major problem in Hyde Square especially. After five businesses and one triple decker were destroyed in a single night in March of that year, several organizations once again came together-- this time to form the Jamaica Plain Arson Prevention Council (JAMPAC). Oficina Hispana, City/Life Vida Urbana, JP NDC and Urban Edge shared supervisory responsibilities of the council's staff on a rotating basis. Through training, organizing, and identification of vulnerable buildings, the council was able to virtually eliminate suspicious fires in Jamaica Plain.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Interview with Frank Cloherty, April 12, 1994.

## **Why Jamaica Plain?**

The early work of City Life and some of its ideologically charged actions did little to endear the organization to some residents and groups in Jamaica Plain who disagreed with City Life's openly radical politics and confrontational approach. Yet the group was able to survive and, as discussed, eventually grow into a more collaborative relationship with several organizations in the area. The reasons for the group's formation in Jamaica Plain and its ability to survive there yield important insights, both about City Life itself and Jamaica Plain as a community open to a range of groups and populations. Two important factors behind these developments -- the emergence of Jamaica Plain as a center of community activism, and its history as a heterogeneous community largely free of conflict -- are discussed below.

### *An Emerging Community and Roots of Heterogeneity*

Part of City Life's survival and success relates to Jamaica Plain's nick name as "the Cambridge of Boston", a reference to the neighborhood's reputation as a center for progressive politics. While this is a claim difficult to document in concrete terms, it is generally agreed that beginning roughly twenty five years ago students and other young, progressive people began to move into Jamaica Plain in significant numbers. In its twentieth anniversary report, City Life offered this description of Jamaica Plain at the time the group was formed : "1973 was a time of great change in Jamaica Plain for many reasons. The birth of City Life coincided with the ferment of large numbers of young people and people of color moving into the neighborhood, cementing JP's identity as a diverse community."<sup>66</sup>

The quote above uses the word "cement" rather than "establish", a choice of words that is significant. For Jamaica Plain's reputation as a heterogeneous community extends further

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<sup>66</sup> City Life twentieth anniversary report, pg. 5.

back than the work of City Life, Urban Edge, and other organizations founded in part to develop and promote Jamaica Plain as a racially and ethnically diverse community. Unlike several neighborhoods of Boston, Jamaica Plain was never associated with one dominant ethnic group.<sup>67</sup> Within its several sub-neighborhoods were significant pockets of German, Canadian, Swedish, Latvian, and Lithuanian immigrants, as well as larger numbers of the Irish and Italian population more commonly associated with Boston.

In a recently published history of Jamaica Plain, Alexander von Hoffman described this heterogeneity, and an accompanying lack of conflict between the various groups, as long-standing and important traditions in the neighborhood. "In many ways", Von Hoffman wrote, "Jamaica Plain's unique qualities distinguished it from other neighborhoods...(it) managed to escape many of the bitter conflicts and ethnic hostility that disturbed other districts."<sup>68</sup>

The reasons for this relative heterogeneity in Jamaica Plain are not fully known. One likely factor was the presence of several breweries (located near the Stony Brook water source), which attracted German immigrants and others skilled in the brewing industry.<sup>69</sup> Whatever the other reasons, several sources gave similar accounts of the influence of this early diversity. Von Hoffman argued that it was precisely the lack of domination by any one group that helped to foster an attachment to Jamaica Plain -- as a neighborhood -- that transcended ethnic loyalties:

The place that emerged from the process of urban development did not conform to a homogeneous band...Instead Jamaica Plain became an extensive and distinctly heterogeneous neighborhood. As the neighborhood incorporated disparate subdistricts, tens of thousands of people of diverse backgrounds and circumstances came to think of Jamaica Plain as their home...The diverse peoples of the

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<sup>67</sup> von Hoffman, *Local Attachments*, pg. xxi.

<sup>68</sup> von Hoffman, *Local Attachments*, pg. xxi.

<sup>69</sup> von Hoffman, *Local Attachments*, pg. 62.

neighborhood, wherever they lived and whatever their station in life, all belonged to a place called Jamaica Plain.<sup>70</sup>

Several long-time residents of Jamaica Plain echoed this sentiment. Winkie Cloherty and Helene Leary, both natives of Jamaica Plain who temporarily moved away as young adults, described Jamaica Plain's relative openness to outsiders and different ethnic groups as a distinctive part of life in Jamaica Plain for as long as they can remember. Juan Lopez, former City Hall liaison to Boston's Hispanic community and a life-long resident of Hyde Square, had similar recollections of growing up in that neighborhood. Lopez described how people of different backgrounds thought of themselves as much as "Plainsmen" as members of a racial or ethnic group.<sup>71</sup>

A consonance between this long-standing (if often unspoken) history of ethnic diversity and tolerance, and Jamaica Plain's attractiveness to a young, progressive population was evident in several interviews. Numerous people who arrived in Jamaica Plain in the mid-to late-1970s and have been active in organizations like City Life, Urban Edge, and JP NDC, shared the views of Joseph Vallely, a Board member of the NDC who described his initial impression of Jamaica Plain as an open community where there was "the potential for change."<sup>72</sup>

City Life's anniversary report mentions another factor, also cited by several other people, as an important component in the group's early development. In addition to attracting a core group of young progressives, City Life developed institutions of its own which served as a base of support and a mechanism for strengthening ties within Jamaica Plain's emerging progressive community. Just as ESAC had its own sources of support from

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<sup>70</sup> von Hoffman, *Local Attachments*, pg. 63.

<sup>71</sup> Interview with Juan Lopez, March 29, 1994.

<sup>72</sup> Interview with Joseph Vallely, April 4, 1994.

which to grow (in the form of member churches and their common concerns), City Life had an analogous set of institutions in a food co-op and community newspaper. City Life's twentieth anniversary report described the role and significance of these entities:

The JP-Roxbury Food Coop, a storefront on Amory Street, and the JP CommUnity News, which City Life published for 15 years, were important institutions which arose and helped these diverse newcomers to come together, and to join some long-time JP residents, to create an active progressive political culture.<sup>73</sup>

The discussion above offers several reasons why a group like City Life was able to emerge and survive in Jamaica Plain. A second question relates to why the organization eventually reached some level of accommodation with other groups in the neighborhood. Beyond the significance of the King campaign in 1983, interviews with secondary sources suggest at least two more reasons.

One is turnover in the individuals involved. More recent members of City Life seem to have been more amenable to cooperative efforts than some of the collective's original members. In a similar vein, several of the recent members adopted a distinctly pragmatic approach to the organization's work. Ken Tangvik clearly took a very strategic approach to City Life's work, and was ready and willing to work with others to further the goals of the organization. Tangvik and others were able to work with community leaders like Father Frank Cloherty, a native of Jamaica Plain then assigned to Blessed Sacrament, on several collaborative efforts. Present staff member Kathy Brown put it another way, attributing the organization's longevity in part to City Life's pursuit of its ideals in a "non-rhetorical way".<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> City Life twentieth anniversary report, 1973, pg. 5.

<sup>74</sup> Interview with Kathy Brown, April 14, 1994.

While some of City Life's tactics changed over time, the members also influenced other organizations. The most prominent example of such efforts was the election of a slate of City Life members and other activists to the revamped Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council in 1987. City Life by no means simply adopted the agenda of "mainstream" organizations -- it also worked to change other organizations to advance its own agenda.

### **Shared Vision (Again), and Shared Members**

Thus, while there are distinctly different strains of activism in Jamaica Plain, they have been able to grow independently, co-exist, and in some cases coalesce. Together they have helped the community as a whole to survive varying destabilizing forces stemming from shifting market forces. With such an array of organizations active in a single community at the same time, it is worth further examining the roots of their collaborative efforts, to see how they managed to work toward mutual goals rather than at cross-purposes. Underlying many of the collaborative efforts in Jamaica Plain during this period were important connections between these groups, in the form of common agendas and, sometimes, overlapping membership.

City Life, the JP NDC, and clergy and others affiliated with Blessed Sacrament Church are a good example of such overlaps. While the organizations possessed distinct histories and perspectives, all shared a concern with issues of speculation and displacement. With this common concern and individuals to connect the groups, they managed to confront the issue in complementary ways.

While City Life had the capacity to organize against speculation and oppose several attempts at condominium conversion, the NDC had the expertise to develop properties like 93 Forest Hills Street. Clergy from Blessed Sacrament Church, meanwhile, had the authority and stature to be heard -- and listened to -- on such issues. Frank Cloherty

(brother-in-law of Winkie and another example of someone from Jamaica Plain open to working with a wide range of organizations) explained a standing offer he made to City Life to appear in support of them at several public hearings during the 1980s: "have collar, have mouth, will travel."<sup>75</sup> Ken Tangvik described such assistance as an important factor in several of City Life's efforts regarding disposition of buildings.

This openness to collaboration, and the common vision of people like Cloherty and Tangvik, were critical parts of the struggle for neighborhood stability during a time of intense speculation and upheaval. The examples offered above, it is important to note, are not unusual in Jamaica Plain. Numerous other people became active in both institutions during this time, and have remained active since. Joseph Valley, Sister Virginia Mulhern, and Bill Allan are examples of parishioners at Blessed Sacrament also involved with City Life activities during the 1980s. Moreover, all have continued their involvement in community affairs in various forms today (a subject I will explore further in the next chapter), and describe their work as an outgrowth of their vision of the church's mission in the community.

Finally, such efforts are further illuminated by comparison with another that faltered. In 1987, Frank Cloherty and Joe Valley helped form the Catholic Community Concerned about the Corridor (CCCC), a coalition of Catholic parishes from Forest Hills to the South End, to examine the potential impact of the corridor's development. By their own account, aside from several informational meetings the group did not have a lasting significance. As an attempt to span parishes with a common religious bond across neighborhoods, CCCC offers a telling contrast to the success of disparate groups within Jamaica Plain to cooperate effectively. While Cloherty and Valley experienced much frustration in their work with the Catholic Community Concerned about the Corridor, they

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<sup>75</sup> Interview with Frank Cloherty, April 12, 1994.

both found common cause in the work of City Life and the Jamaica Plain Arson Prevention Committee, as they joined and worked with both organizations on several efforts.

### **Neighborhood Theory and Jamaica Plain in the 1980s**

In the context of the Downs and Goetze models of neighborhood change, the 1980s clearly was a period of both revitalization and instability. As discussed, this shift was due to both general shifts in population and specific developments in Jamaica Plain -- as well as previous community efforts to stem decline and foster neighborhood confidence. During this period of renewal, organizations and institutions again intervened in response to specific market circumstances. Unlike the 1970s, however, they now intervened to temper and control excessive enthusiasm, rather than further build neighborhood confidence.

From Cohen's perspective on neighborhood development, the neighborhood showed signs of both a stage three, "civic neighborhood" and a stage four, "networked" community. Connections within the neighborhood grew during this time, and organizations clearly collaborated in important ways. City Life's confrontation with the city over development of the Bowditch School, meanwhile, can be seen as an example of the kind of disputes Cohen described as typical of relations between a wary city administration and a networked neighborhood challenging the city's authority.

The limitations of Cohen's ambiguous ideas regarding organizing and the emergence of a single neighborhood or civic group, however, are once again evident. While Cohen described claims regarding the "representativeness" of his civic organization as a major issue for neighborhoods moving from being "civic" to "networked", this does not seem to have been the case in Jamaica Plain. Rather than one group vying for preeminence, it



appears that several worked collaboratively with distinct and complementary functions. This pattern, and the presence of multiple collaborations between disparate groups in Jamaica Plain, was once again evident in the case of "JP 80", a broad-based effort to gain control of Jamaica Plain's two political wards.

JP 80 focused (once again) on the work of Representative James Craven, who by 1980 was the senior representative in the Massachusetts House of Representatives. Natives of Jamaica Plain like Winkie Cloherty and Jack Plunkett (Plunkett actually is from Mission Hill just north of Hyde Square, but has been a JP resident all his adult life) joined with people like Alvin Shiggs and Henry Allen to wrest control of the ward committees from Craven's control. In the process, JP 80 helped to further erode a shrinking base of support for Craven, a trend that culminated in his defeat in 1985 by John McDonough, the present representative and a strong supporter of progressive organizations in Jamaica Plain.

### **Conclusion**

JP 80 and the other examples of collaboration discussed in this chapter recall Don Campbell's description of ESAC in its infancy. In a sense Jamaica Plain is analogous to ESAC's early organization, in that it contains a series nodes, informally linked, with distinct bases of support. This is in sharp contrast to the notion of a single group (or organizing individual or entity) primarily responsible for neighborhood development. The examples included in this chapter also demonstrate Jamaica Plain's distinctive nature as a community open to such a multiplicity of interests and groups -- groups that for the most part have been able to co-exist and cooperate.

In stressing this cooperation, I do not mean to imply that competition or conflict among groups and individuals has been totally absent. Certainly the repeated election victories of James Craven suggest at least one basic division. Overall, however, stories of conflict

between activist organizations with generally common goals were virtually absent from interviews -- even upon explicit inquiry. While it seems likely Urban Edge and the NDC at some point needed to work out areas of geographic and programmatic concentration, no one I interviewed spoke of this process with acrimony. Stories of collaboration, by contrast, were common and notable. This pattern continues in the next chapter, in which I will consider issues and responses regarding neighborhood stability and development that have emerged in the past several years.

## **CHAPTER 5. RECENT TRENDS, CURRENT PROSPECTS: 1989 - 1994**

Chapter 4 described the major shifts in issues of community concern in Jamaica Plain during the 1980s, and the responses to those concerns by several local organizations. Most important was the shift in Jamaica Plain from a neighborhood in decline to one experiencing renewal. This change was manifested in the form of real estate activity and prices, both of which escalated dramatically for most of the 1980s. At the core of the organizational response to this change was the capacity to adapt to market shifts, and in many cases to form mutually supportive and collaborative efforts to address new issues as they emerged.

Neighborhoods are, by definition, dynamic and changing entities, and circumstances in Jamaica Plain continue to evolve today. Nonetheless, it is possible to identify several areas of concentration that have emerged within the last few years: foreclosed and other distressed residential properties; continued (and increased) involvement in issues of economic development; and youth-related issues. The emerging responses to these issues, constitute the same kind of collaborative efforts and alliances that have characterized Jamaica Plain over the previous thirty years.

In this chapter, I will examine how these efforts have continued to evolve in response to recent developments in Jamaica Plain. In doing so, I will also discuss ways in which these efforts have become more formalized, larger in scale, and more sophisticated over time. This trend is particularly evident in three areas: the response to financially distressed housing, the increased capacity of CDCs in economic development, and the increasing prominence of youth-related issues.

### **The Market Turns: Distressed Housing**

By 1989, the booming real estate market that had characterized Boston and Jamaica Plain for most of the 1980s was coming to a sharp end. The causes and nature of the severe down turn that started around this time obviously are beyond the scope of this study; what is relevant is the impact of the down turn on Jamaica Plain. Where displacement due to speculation and condominium conversion had been issues of paramount concern just two years before, the implications of a depressed market were now being felt.

Between 1991 and 1993, there were 221 bank foreclosures in Jamaica Plain, representing close to 30% of total sales for the neighborhood.<sup>76</sup> This activity was particularly concentrated in eastern Jamaica Plain, including Hyde Square and Egleston Square.<sup>77</sup> The impact of foreclosures on a neighborhood can be severe and varied. They include physical deterioration of the properties involved, displacement of the occupants (both tenants and owners), prevalence of illicit activity in the abandoned buildings, and opportunities for acquisition for speculative purposes.<sup>78</sup>

Because the scope and specifics of foreclosures in Jamaica Plain are still unfolding, their full significance is not yet known. The state representative for much of Jamaica Plain, however, has forcefully attested to their impact on the neighborhood. John McDonough, a resident of Jamaica Plain since 1976 and state representative since 1985, starkly described this shift in issues facing his district: "Gentrification is over; (Jamaica Plain) is facing critical foreclosure and neighborhood stability issues."<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> "Terms of Foreclosure", *Banker & Tradesman*, August 4, 1993, pg. 1.

<sup>77</sup> "Foreclosed in Boston", unpublished report prepared by the Boston Public Facilities Department, July, 1993.

<sup>78</sup> Sara Barcan and Michael Feloney, Neighborhood Stabilization Project Report, unpublished report for the Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation, October, 1993, pg. 8.

<sup>79</sup> Interview with Representative John McDonough, April 5, 1994.

Two organizations that earlier had forged a partnership in combating displacement issues in the 1980s are now jointly trying to address the problems associated with foreclosures and other distressed housing. After describing the early independent work of City Life and JP NDC in this area, I will describe their collaborative efforts to address the problem.

### City Life/Vida Urbana

During 1989, new staff member Kathy Brown of City Life and several other members started to track real estate foreclosure listings in *Banker and Tradesman* newspaper. Brown does not recall exactly when they started this practice, or what initially prompted City Life to undertake it. It was at least partly in response to reports of tenants being evicted with little notice in the wake of foreclosures. More generally, City Life's initial investigations were a function of being based in Jamaica Plain, and having an almost intuitive sense of the nascent turn in market conditions.<sup>80</sup>

City Life's initial response to this trend was to organize tenants in foreclosed buildings to inform them of their rights. A second result was the establishment of a "community-controlled" housing zone. In the words of City Life's twentieth anniversary report, the purpose of the zone is, "to fight speculation and absentee ownership, targeting distressed and bank-owned properties to promote ownership that puts people before profit: first-time home buying, respect for tenants' rights, non-profit housing, and responsible bank behavior."<sup>81</sup>

City Life's recent efforts suggest several important points regarding the organization's continued evolution. With the establishment of its community-controlled housing zone, City Life moved beyond a predominantly reactive strategy -- stopping evictions -- to a

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<sup>80</sup> Interview with Kathy Brown, City Life staff member, April 14, 1994.

<sup>81</sup> City Life/Vida Urbana twentieth anniversary report, 1993.

pro-active one involving a strategic decision to target buildings that are the most likely candidates for acquisition by the Neighborhood Development Corporation.<sup>82</sup> At the same time, these efforts illustrate a continued trend toward collaboration with other neighborhood-based institutions. Their closest work has been with the Neighborhood Development Corporation, and is described further below.

### *JP NDC*

In response to the growing presence of bank-held and other publicly-held properties in and around Hyde Square, in 1993 the NDC initiated a "distressed housing project". Through this initiative, the NDC plans to acquire roughly a dozen vacant and abandoned buildings over the next several years. The NDC plans to rehabilitate the buildings, and re-sell them to first time home buyers.

The NDC and City Life have worked closely in developing this strategy. Kathy Brown of City Life is both a member of the JP NDC board and a member of the housing sub-committee of the Hyde Square Partnership, a formal agreement established in the summer of 1993 between several local organizations and the City of Boston. (The partnership also includes Jackson Square in Jamaica Plain.)

The Hyde Square Partnership is representative of the kind of formal arrangements emerging in recent years. The thirty one signatory organizations to the agreement met in sub-committee and general meetings over a ten month period to develop specific goals in five categories: housing preservation, economic development, open space, public safety and youth. While the actual impact of the partnership is as yet undetermined, the attempt to target resources to specific neighborhoods in a formal and coordinated manner is an

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<sup>82</sup> Interview with Kathy Brown, April 14, 1994.

important development, and will be discussed further in this chapter's treatment of neighborhood theory.

The partnership was the product of previous collaborative work involving the NDC and City Life (and other groups) during development of the NDC's Hyde Square cooperative project, a 41 unit limited equity cooperative developed on formerly vacant lots in Hyde Square. The NDC started to explore the need for, and feasibility of, a distressed housing initiative during planning for the Coop, when they noticed that an increasing number of foreclosures were starting to appear in the area.<sup>83</sup> The coop project itself was developed through an extensive door-knocking campaign in which City Life and NDC staff contacted virtually every household, business, and institution in Hyde Square in an effort to develop a consensus on the scope and nature of the project.

### **Economic Development**

A second area of focus within the past five years is as much a reflection of the increased capacity of several local organizations than a shift in need. While the need for inner-city economic development has been present for decades, recent progress in that area demonstrates an increased capacity and heightened sophistication on the part of community organizations, most notably on the part of CDCs. Some prominent examples of this progress are described below.

#### **Urban Edge and JP NDC**

Recent economic development in Jamaica Plain includes the location of Fleet Bank in Egleston Square, and the development of office space for several local non-profit agencies in the same space at 3134 Washington Street. Urban Edge is presently planning to expand on this work through the development of Egleston Center, a commercial building planned

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<sup>83</sup> Interview with John Vogel, former executive director, JP NDC, December 10, 1994.

for the site of the former Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) facility at the corner of Washington and Seaver Streets in Egleston Square.<sup>84</sup> Urban Edge is also one of seven members of the Jackson Square Development Collaborative (JSDC), an organization formed to develop a light industrial facility on another MBTA-owned lot in the neighborhood.

The Egleston Square Merchants Association (an organization formed by the Egleston Square Neighborhood Association, which itself was started by Pablo Calderon and Ron Hafer), Urban Edge, and several other organizations, meanwhile, have also signed a partnership agreement with the Public Facilities Department similar to the one in Hyde Square. In a publication for a major fundraising drive Urban Edge is currently undertaking, the CDC alluded to the challenges and significance of such formal partnerships:

Urban Edge has been active in various coalitions and collaboratives. While most people agree that cooperation with others is critical to successful community-building and to maximizing service delivery, few appreciate the scope and extent of effort required to carry out such cooperative efforts and to build coalitions. It takes a certain level of maturity and self-confidence for organizations to come together and to truly collaborate.<sup>85</sup>

This maturity is evident in similar partnerships to promote economic development in Hyde Square. The NDC is a limited partner in the development of a five acre site which has been vacant since the former Plant Shoe Factory burned to the ground over twenty years ago. The development will include a Purity Supreme super market, a community health center, a day care facility and community space. Prior to that, the NDC played a

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<sup>84</sup> *Blueprint for a Transforming CDC*, Urban Edge fundraising campaign document, February, 1994, pg. 3.

<sup>85</sup> *Blue Print for a Transforming CDC*, Urban Edge fundraising campaign document, February, 1994, pg. 5.



supportive role in the development of JP Plaza, an urban mini-mall in Hyde Square that includes a full service, bi-lingual-staffed bank and pharmacy.<sup>86</sup>

Efforts like these reflect both an increased level of sophistication and expanded influence in the local CDC world. John Vogel, former director of the JP NDC, and Urban Edge Executive Director Mossik Hacobian both stressed this development.<sup>87</sup> All of the projects mentioned above are being financed in part through assistance of the City's Public Facilities Department -- a sharp contrast to the days of the founding of the NDC when, as the first executive director put it, "we couldn't get shit from the city."<sup>88</sup>

This increased capacity, sophistication, and influence of local community development corporations is not exclusive to Jamaica Plain. In Boston and elsewhere the importance of CDCs has increased steadily in recent years. This was perhaps captured most clearly in Boston this fall, when newly elected Boston Mayor Thomas Menino named as his chief of staff the executive director of a Dorchester-based CDC. The NDC and Urban Edge have both followed similar trajectories. Mossik Hacobian, director of Urban Edge, contrasted his ability to attract experienced and highly trained employees to fifteen years ago, when Urban Edge found it difficult to find and retain such workers.

These trends are obviously relevant to Cohen's notion of neighborhood development, and will be discussed later in this context. First, however, it is important to review a new area of concern that has risen in importance in Jamaica Plain -- the problem of youth-related violence.

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<sup>86</sup> Hyde Square has experienced significant other private economic development. In 1990, a private developer acquired and renovated an entire commercial block at the western edge of Hyde Square, bringing three new businesses to the area.

<sup>87</sup> John Vogel interview, December 10, 1993; Mossik Hacobian interview, December 13, 1993.

<sup>88</sup> Interview with Michael Gondek, March 24, 1994.

### **A Third Priority Emerges**

The topic of inner-city violence, particularly youth-related violence, is an exceptionally sensitive one for several reasons. Numerous organizations and commentators have suggested that the media and others tend to focus on problems of violence and gang activity in urban areas, while ignoring positive developments.<sup>89</sup>

In light of such sentiments, it is particularly important to note that concern over youth and youth violence is not new to Jamaica Plain or Boston. Authors like Alan Lupo, and Hillel Levine and Lawrence Harmon have catalogued ongoing rivalries between groups of young people in Boston dating back a half century and more.<sup>90</sup> A 1967 profile of Jamaica Plain in *The Boston Globe* citing "teen-agers in trouble" as a major source of concern illustrates more recent attention paid to the problem. Indeed, such concern was reflected in ESAC's work during that period: the establishment of several youth centers in church basements and other recreational activities was a major part of ESAC's early work.

Yet even though concerns over youth issues are not new, many people who have grown up in or have worked in the Hyde Square and Egleston Square areas for decades remarked in interviews that the nature of the problems today appears different in some ways.<sup>91</sup> These comments usually focused on the availability of guns as a critical factor affecting the security and safety of Jamaica Plain and Boston generally. Following the pattern of

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<sup>89</sup> Peter Medoff and Holly Sklar, *Streets of Hope: the Fall and Rise of an Urban Neighborhood*, (Boston: South End Press), 1994, chapter 8; Edwin Melendez, "The Real Latino Story", *The Boston Globe*, editorial, April 17, 1994.

<sup>90</sup> Alan Lupo, *Liberty's Chosen Home: The Politics of Violence in Boston*, (Boston: Beacon Press), 1977; Hillel Levine and Lawrence Harmon, *The Death of an American Jewish Community*, (New York: The Free Press), 1992.

<sup>91</sup> Jack Plunkett interview, March 8, 1994; Bill Allan interview, March 17, 1994; Juan Lopez interview, March 29, 1994; Helene Leary interview, March 30, 1994; Clementina Acevedo interview, March 30, 1994; Mary Thomson interview, March 31, 1994; Mark Levine interview, April 1, 1994; Frank Cloherty interview; April 12, 1994; Robert Martinez interview, April 21, 1994.

flexibility and adaptation seen earlier in Jamaica Plain though, a dense array of organizations has begun to undertake efforts intended to address the issue.

### Existing Organizations

In recent years, City Life has begun to focus on issues of youth violence and youth issues generally. In 1990, City Life founded Vision Crew, a multiracial youth group formed to "learn self-expression, skills and leadership through producing videos on community issues."<sup>92</sup> City Life formed Vision Crew in response to the work of a planning committee that identified the need for further youth services and activities in the neighborhood.

Urban Edge also has expanded services directed toward youth. In addition to a teen drop-in center, Urban Edge also oversees an after-school program two days a week to provide a positive learning environment to school age children. In 1989, Urban Edge started a six-week summer camp. The camp is intended to develop cooperation skills, as well as to provide a recreational outlet through day trips and other activities.<sup>93</sup> In addition to these new efforts, new organizations focusing on youth issues have also emerged in the last several years.

### New Alliances

The partnership agreement between the Public Facilities Department, community leaders, and elected officials in Hyde Square and Jackson Square in August 1993 is one example. As its first goal, the Partnership called for, "coordinating city and local resources to stem a growing trend of violence in the two adjoining neighborhoods."<sup>94</sup> In Egleston Square, a coalition of twenty two neighborhood organizations created the Egleston Square Coalition in 1992 as part of the Healthy Boston Initiative. (Healthy Boston is a city-wide effort that

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<sup>92</sup> City Life/Vida Urbana twentieth anniversary report.

<sup>93</sup> "A Summer Oasis for City Kids", *Jamaica Plain Gazette*, August 19, 1993, pg. 1.

<sup>94</sup> "Unique Partnership", *Jamaica Plain Gazette*, August 27, 1993, pg. 1.

focuses on health issues in several neighborhoods.) A major activity of the coalition was to "bring new resources to Egleston in the form of a federal Youth Opportunity Unlimited (YOU) grant, which funded the establishment of an alternative high school program, based at ESAC."<sup>95</sup>

Recent efforts in Egleston and Hyde Square contain important parallels beyond the formation of partnership agreements. In both sub-districts, many of the efforts are, once again, the product of specific events. The Egleston Square Neighborhood Association<sup>96</sup> was initially founded in 1984, with a focus on security issues and revitalization of Egleston Square's commercial district.<sup>97</sup> Following the shooting death of a neighborhood youth by police in 1989, however, attention turned to issues concerning youth needs in the area.<sup>98</sup> A direct product of this was development of the Egleston Y youth center, opened in January, 1992 at 3134 Washington Street.

A similar tragedy in Hyde Square in 1991, in which a woman was hit by a stray bullet and paralyzed, prompted renewed attention to the problem of youth violence in that neighborhood. Bill Allan, founder of the non-profit Hyde Square Task Force, Inc., and others rallied awareness and community response through the organization of a fund raiser for the woman. The Task Force has since followed up on this work with several permanent efforts, including an evening center for local young people, a tutorial program, and the hiring of a community organizer to focus on youth issues.

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<sup>95</sup> *Egleston Square Coalition*, Healthy Boston Initiative, Winter, 1993, pg. 1.

<sup>96</sup> If information on the efforts of the Egleston Square Neighborhood Coalition is inaccurate or lacking, it is in part due to the fact that the present director of ESNA did not show up for a scheduled meeting, and did not respond to subsequent attempts to reschedule.

<sup>97</sup> Interview with Pablo Calderon, April 12, 1994

<sup>98</sup> Pablo Calderon interview, April 12, 1994; interview with Alvin Shiggs, April 22, 1994.

Another common element of youth-related efforts in both Egleston and Hyde Squares is the role of parish-based religious organizations. In Egleston Square, staff at St. Mary of the Angels parish have been exceptionally active in youth-related activities for several years, extending back to the tenure of Father Jack Roussin, a popular community-oriented pastor assigned to St. Mary's during the 1980s. More recently, Sisters Mary Cahill and Katherine McGrath have focused on issues of youth.<sup>99</sup>

Similar efforts have taken place in Hyde Square, where people affiliated (or formerly affiliated) with Blessed Sacrament have been integral members in efforts to develop youth services. Virginia Mulhern, Sister of Notre Dame and veteran City Life activist, also works part-time for the Hyde Square Task Force in its tutorial program. Former City Life leader Ken Tangvik, meanwhile, has become actively involved with Virginia Mulhern and Bill Allan in the Task Force's educational work.

Such efforts further demonstrate the consistent and continued capacity of a diverse array of individuals and organizations to adjust and re-align their efforts, in response to the neighborhood's shifting needs. As in previous chapters, I will examine these efforts within the context of existing neighborhood theory.

### **Neighborhood Theory and Jamaica Plain Today**

As seen in previous chapters, the focus of neighborhood activism and development efforts in Jamaica Plain has repeatedly shifted in response to changing market dynamics. Recent community efforts like City Life's community-controlled housing zone and the NDC's distressed housing initiative are the latest response to market shifts.

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<sup>99</sup> As in the mid-1960s, people concerned with issues of the urban church continue to be attracted to St. Mary's. The individuals mentioned here are three such examples. Interview with Sister Mary Cahill, April 15, 1994.

While market conditions have fluctuated from a dynamic of decline, to one of renewal, to the depressed market of the 1980s, the neighborhood's political development has not fluctuated in kind. Rather, several developments suggest continued progress along Cohen's continuum. The continued ties between existing organizations and emergence of formal partnerships with the city indicate further movement toward Cohen's ideal of the "mass communal" neighborhood.

This last stage is marked above all by a decentralization of political power to the neighborhood level. Cohen offers a "taxonomy" to conceptualize roles during this period, several of which are evident in Jamaica Plain. One such role is "participative-program creation" in which "neighborhood groups are partners in developing some of the programs to be administered in the area."<sup>100</sup> The Neighborhood Partnerships formed in Hyde Square and Egleston Square are clear examples of such creations. The same is true of Cohen's "participative-program implementation", in which efforts like the PFD-funded distressed housing initiative are implemented by a neighborhood organization.

On another level though, Cohen's last stage of political development is not fully attainable without significant changes external to the neighborhood -- changes which have not yet occurred in Boston. "Political decentralization," Cohen writes, "is the devolution of the power of governance and decision-making, rather than merely responsibility for service delivery, to the neighborhood level."<sup>101</sup> For his final phase to be reached, it is therefore necessary for neighborhood planners to "begin to see themselves as...architects of new political forms."

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<sup>100</sup> Cohen, pg. 359

<sup>101</sup> Cohen, pg. 358.

Professors Marie Kennedy and Chris Tilly discussed the fundamental -- in their term "transformative" -- nature of this kind of change in a 1990 article entitled "Transformative Populism." Kennedy and Tilly argued that redistribution of political power, particularly in the power to control land use, is a necessary element of genuine community development. Writing specifically about Boston, they also correctly identified the difficulty of this task: "Redistributive populists (a term they coined to distinguish conventional populism from people advocating transformative change) have proven unwilling to encourage a movement that challenges the local government as well as supports its progressive initiatives."<sup>102</sup>

Kennedy, Tilly and Cohen all acknowledge that the forms of development they advocate have been rarely realized. One example of successful transformative or mass communal development may be found in the right of eminent domain obtained by the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, in Roxbury's Dudley neighborhood. The 1983 mayoral campaign of Mel King -- which is the focus of Kennedy and Tilly's article -- was a more general effort to bring transformative populism to power in Boston.

In describing that effort, Kennedy and Tilly display a greater appreciation than Cohen for the implications of such change. It not only involve Cohen's call for planners to "turn their conceptual world on its head"; such change also involves a fundamental transfer of authority and control that requires a basic change in the way municipal government and politics are conventionally practiced. This is not intended to dismiss Cohen's concept of the mass communal neighborhood. Rather, it is meant to suggest that such development would not only mandate continued development within a given neighborhood, but broader changes beyond it as well.

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<sup>102</sup> Marie Kennedy and Chris Tilly, "Transformative Populism and the Development of a Community of Color" in *Dilemmas of Activism: Class, Community and the Politics of Local Mobilization*, ed. Kling and Posner (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), pg. 315.

Before concluding this chapter, it is important to put recent developments, concerns, and responses in Jamaica Plain into perspective by examining the prospects for continued neighborhood development in Egleston and Hyde Square.

### **Prospects**

While the market dynamics of housing and economic development have shifted several times in Jamaica Plain, they are by now generally familiar issues to several community groups well-equipped to deal with them. Urban Edge, JP NDC, and several other organizations continue to make progress on such issues. With this progress though, there also is the potential for division within the community. Several people in interviews mentioned that in a depressed real estate market, local home owners are concerned with competition from new developments by the NDC and Urban Edge that have recently come on line.

A less familiar area involves guns and youth violence. In addition to the toll urban violence takes on the community itself, a concern expressed by several people in interviews was the impact of such violence on the neighborhood's ability to keep and attract households. Not surprisingly, this was the main significance Rolf Goetze assigned to the issue. In an interview, Goetze lamented the frequently unbalanced portrayals of contemporary urban life by the media, but also emphasized their potential influence.<sup>103</sup> This view was echoed by Diane Quiroga, a housing counselor at ESAC who cited violence and drugs as raising basic questions about the neighborhood's ability to keep households.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Interview with Rolf Goetze, April 22, 1994.

<sup>104</sup> Interview with Diane Quiroga, March 30, 1994.



A final issue integrally related to issues of stability and development involves Egleston and Hyde Squares' continued growth as centers for Boston's Latino community. While this subject has not been examined here for reasons discussed in Chapter 2, the need for public and private neighborhood development efforts to reflect the neighborhood's ethnic and cultural composition (and the concerns of the Latino community (or communities) in general), is clear. Efforts in this regard have already been undertaken, by City Life among others, and Jamaica Plain's emerging experience in this area is a rich one for further exploration. With such challenges still facing Jamaica Plain acknowledged, in the final chapter I will explore how Jamaica Plain's successes to date might apply to other urban neighborhoods.

## **CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

This thesis started with two questions. The first pertained to how the Hyde Square and Egleston Square sections of Jamaica Plain have managed to withstand various forms of destabilization -- in the form of disinvestment and decline, and later speculation and displacement -- over the last thirty years. I hypothesized that the presence of a rich network of organizations, institutions, and individuals has been a central force in preserving the viability of these areas.

The second question involved an exploration into why that network first emerged, and how the organizations in it have evolved and adapted in response over time to address changing issues in the community. In exploring these issues, I examined them in the context of three approaches to the subject of neighborhood development. Two of these models of development emphasized the physical and economic dimensions of neighborhood development. The third offered a major departure, and in ways an advancement over the other models, in stressing the political nature of neighborhood development.

In the last three chapters I have demonstrated how several singular features of Jamaica Plain helped account for the emergence and survival of this network. In the process, I also offered several points of elaboration on Rick Cohen's political model of neighborhood development. The experience of Jamaica Plain suggests that Cohen's notion of a dominant civic group, and a single organizing entity in the community, do not hold true for all cases. Jamaica Plain's pattern of development instead suggests that under certain conditions, a multiplicity of organizations can co-exist on roughly equal terms.

In concluding this study, I will focus on an additional question: whether the circumstances behind Jamaica Plain's "survival" are so singular that they are irrelevant for most communities facing issues of neighborhood destabilization. The short answer to this question is 'no.' Many of the issues discussed in this thesis, while specific to Jamaica Plain, are not so unusual as to make Jamaica Plain's experience an anomaly. I will end by discussing a current movement in the field of community development that shares many characteristics with Jamaica Plain's early neighborhood development history. Parallels between the Organizing and Training Leadership Center and ESAC suggest that the lessons of Jamaica Plain may serve as a model for neighborhood development elsewhere.

### **Jamaica Plain and Neighborhood Development**

In the first chapter of this thesis, I identified three characteristics critical to early neighborhood stabilization efforts and consequent development in Jamaica Plain. The first of these was a "culture of activism" that emerged in the mid- to-late 1960s. The second was an unusual level of openness in the community, in both an ethnic and political sense. The last factor involved the presence of events and issues that served to unify the neighborhood and galvanize it to action at several important junctures. While the specifics of these issues are in ways singular to Jamaica Plain, in some ways each is "generalizable."

#### **A Culture of Activism**

The culture of activism described in Chapter 3 undoubtedly was part of a distinct period in American history. The 1960s were a period of intense social action, and several of the efforts that emerged in Jamaica Plain reflected that era. More specifically, urban issues were an area of intense interest to several religious traditions represented in ESAC at that time. In a sense, the circumstances around much of ESAC's, and also City Life's, early work were unique.

While some of the features of these groups distinguish them part of a distinct political culture, the notion of a "culture of activism" itself is by no means unique to Jamaica Plain or the 1960s. In *Streets of Hope*, a recently published book on the work of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, Peter Medoff and Holly Sklar described a political culture that emerged in the Dudley area of Roxbury and north Dorchester during the 1980s -- a time otherwise marked by the conservative imprint of the presidency of Ronald Reagan.<sup>105</sup>

The work of planner John McKnight is instructive in this regard. McKnight would argue that in "mapping the capacity" of a community, certain strengths can be identified and used as the basis for future development.<sup>106</sup> While a certain form of activism has worked in Jamaica Plain, other neighborhoods with their own distinct histories and strengths can apply them toward their own political development.

### *A History of Openness*

Chapter 4 described Jamaica Plain's distinctive history as an ethnically heterogeneous neighborhood open to a diversity of people and groups. This tradition distinguishes Jamaica Plain from many of Boston's' neighborhoods, but it does not make it unique. In 1968, Langley Keyes made comparable observations in his analysis of the South End during urban renewal.<sup>107</sup> Like Juan Lopez's recollection of different groups' common identity as Plainsmen, many residents of the South End identified themselves above all as "South Enders."

Nonetheless, the significance of this feature should not be underestimated. The openness and flexibility which shaped and characterized neighborhood development in Jamaica Plain

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<sup>105</sup> Medoff and Sklar, Chapter 2.

<sup>106</sup> Quoted in Medoff and Sklar, pg. 124.

<sup>107</sup> Langley C. Keyes, Jr., *The Rehabilitation Planning Game*, (Cambridge: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1969), pg. 38-40.

is by no means possible in all neighborhoods. This points less to a limit on Cohen's concept (or my revisions to it), however, than to definitional issues. While many neighborhoods, urban and otherwise, are both closed and politically sophisticated, I doubt that Cohen would consider such neighborhoods developed in the meaning he intended.

### External Events

This issue is in one sense deceptively straightforward, for virtually all neighborhoods face concrete issues and threats. Some of those that have confronted Jamaica Plain -- the highway, displacement, youth violence -- are indeed all too common. It is important to note, however, that some issues are easier to organize around than others. In *Death of an American Jewish Community*, Levine and Harmon recounted in wrenching detail how extensive damage from an aggressive mortgage lending program was already done by the time it was identified as a force behind of the block-busting that destabilized much of Dorchester and Mattapan in the late 1960s. The history of school busing in Boston, meanwhile, offers further cautionary evidence of the potential for unification around issues antithetical to Cohen's notion of neighborhood development.

The difference in Jamaica Plain is found in the response to the threats facing the community. Diverse sources, including Mary Thomson of the Jamaica Plain Area Planning Action Council based in Bromley Heath and Juan Lopez agreed that, "on the big issues", people in Jamaica Plain cooperate and come together.<sup>108</sup> In cases where this was not the case -- such as efforts to undermine the JP NDC at the time it was started -- progressive coalitions and institutions were strong and resilient enough to overcome the threat of splintering. In this regard, the ability of organizations in Jamaica Plain to build on connections with, and between, existing institutions is perhaps most important. An emerging effort to promote community development contains several parallels to the work

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<sup>108</sup> Interview with Mary Thomson, March 31, 1994.

undertaken by ESAC in the mid-1960s -- and suggest that the experience of Jamaica Plain contains lessons for other neighborhoods as well.

### *The Organizing and Leadership Training Center*

There are several parallels between the early efforts of ESAC and efforts at "congregation-based community development" being undertaken by Lew Finfer and others through the Organizing and Leadership Training Center (OLTC), a Boston-based non-profit organization. The mission statement of the center hints at some of the commonalities between the approaches:

OLTC focuses on organizing and assisting congregation based community organizations. These are coalitions of institutions, usually churches and synagogues, that act on their faith values to do something concrete about injustices facing congregation members and communities such as crime, housing, jobs, education, and immigration.<sup>109</sup>

Several other elements shared by both groups are present in a description of what OLTC sees as "different and important" about its efforts. Most important these is its nature as an inter-faith, multi-issue, multi-racial, and multi-class organization. The organization's work in fact represents an elaboration on ESAC's early work, in the sense that it attempts to be "citywide or larger so we are not divided by neighborhood in dealing with officials."

Discussion of an approach reminiscent of ESAC's early work is a fitting note on which to end this study. Perhaps above all, ESAC set a tone for future neighborhood development in Jamaica Plain, and helped form a foundation on which future efforts could build. The resilience of organizations and institutions in Jamaica Plain today is in large part attributable to the strength of that early work and vision, and the people it helped attract to foster the growth of like-minded organizations and efforts.

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<sup>109</sup> Informational packet prepared by Organization and Leadership Traing Center.

These accomplishments are testament to the effectiveness of an approach toward neighborhood stability and development that initially builds on existing institutions, and uses those institutions to foster further connections and collaborative efforts over time. In Jamaica Plain, a diverse array of people and organizations were willing to join in those efforts in a cooperative, rather than stifling, spirit. While the preceding chapters illustrate several qualities of that Jamaica Plain shaped its particular course of development, the recent work discussed here offers hope that, with comparable commitment and energy, similar opportunities lie elsewhere.

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## **List of Interviews**

Clementina Acevedo, Oficina Hispana

Bill Allan, Hyde Square Task Force, Inc.

Henry Allen, former member of Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council, JP NDC

John Avault, Boston Redevelopment Authority

Kathy Brown, City Life/Vida Urbana

Brian Byrnes, City of Boston Public Facilities Department

Sister Mary Cahill, St. Mary's of the Angels Church

Pablo Calderon, EDIC, Egleston Square resident

Don Campbell, National Multi-family Housing Council

Len Charney, former staff member, Urban Edge Housing  
Development Corporation

Edwina Cloherty, multiple organizations

Rev. Frank Cloherty, former Jamaica Plain resident

Tom Corrigan, early ESAC member and activist

Lew Finfer, Organization and Leadership Training Center

Ada Focer, financial journalist, former executive director  
Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation

Stavros Frantzis, Jamaica Plain developer and resident

Rolf Goetze, Boston Redevelopment Authority

Michael Gondek, CEDAC, co-founder JPND

Rev. Michael Groden, Executive Director Planning Office, Urban Affairs,

Ron Hafer, co-founder and former executive director, Urban Edge Housing Development  
Corporation

Mossik Hacobian, Executive Director, Urban Edge Housing Development Corporation

Ricanne Hadrian, former staff member, Neighborhood Development Corporation of Jamaica Plain

Tom Kieffer, City Life/Vida Urbana (incomplete interview)

Rev. William Kremmell, formerly of Our Lady of Lourdes Church, ESAC member

Sandra Lambert, MIT Center for Real Estate

Mark Levine, former ESAC Executive Director

Helene Leary, area resident, ESAC employee, former Urban Edge staff member

Juan Lopez, former Mayor's liaison to Boston Hispanic community

Robert Martinez, Jamaica Plain resident

John McDonough, State Representative

Sister Virginia Mulhern, City Life, formerly of Blessed Sacrament parish

Rev. William Mullin, formerly of St. Mary of the Angels Church, ESAC member

Joseph O'Malley, former Jamaica Plain resident

Thomas O'Malley, Boston Redevelopment Authority; former Urban Edge staff member

Eva Osorio, Assistant to Executive Director, Urban Edge, Egleston Square resident

Jack Plunkett, Board member, Urban Edge

Julie Rawson, former Director, Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Coalition

Alvin Shiggs, multiple organizations

John Spears, former Jamaica Plain Little City Hall Manager

Ken Tangvik, multiple organizations

Mary Thomson, JPAPAC

Joseph Vallely, Board member, Neighborhood Development Corporation of Jamaica Plain

Jose Vincenty, Chairman, Hyde Square Business Association

John Vogel, former Executive Director, Neighborhood Development Corporation  
of Jamaica Plain