

QUICK READ SYNOPSIS

Race, Politics, and Community Development in U.S. Cities

Special Editor: JAMES JENNINGS
Tufts University

Volume 594, July 2004

Prepared by Herb Fayer (Consultant) and Robert Pearson (Executive Editor)

Urban Planning, Community Participation, and the Roxbury Master Plan in Boston

James Jennings, Tufts University

Background

Case studies show, where there are strong community-based organizations, there is hope for the betterment of the neighborhood.

- In some instances, local governments are taking the lead in calling for community participation in decision making about physical development.
- The explosion of black political influence played a role in establishing the earlier schools of planning that emphasized equity.
- Community participation is currently considered an integral component of ideas like “smart growth” and “new urbanism.” Some questions arise:
 - How do planners and officials use community participation to help implement innovative planning ideas and propel progressive visions for economic development?
 - What is the implication on the modern antagonism between space for rational planning and economic accumulation and the use of space for everyday purposes?
 - Why does the antagonism intensify when it involves communities of color?
 - What is the balance between community participation and the adoption of progrowth economic development favoring downtown?
 - Is it in conflict with smart growth or new urbanism proposals?
 - Is community participation a panacea for neighborhood distress?

- Roxbury Master Plan* The Roxbury Master Plan is important because it serves as a lens by which to critique planning theories that call for community participation but ignore racial and class obstacles to participatory democracy at the local level.
- It is important not to allow ideas to be implemented in ways that ignore the distribution and use of power and resources based on race and class—they may be a cover for perpetuating structural inequities at the local level.
 - Planners should not only be cognizant of the consequences of planning on the inequitable distribution of political power and economic benefits but should seek to expand civic participation in determining the visions and well-being of neighborhoods and the city.
 - Residents and activists involved in Roxbury provided the leadership and major push for supporting a participatory planning framework by using frequent, open, and widely advertised meetings; encouraging resident feedback; and providing distribution of information.
- Smart Growth Network* The Smart Growth Network has established several key principles for smart growth, including
- Mixed land use
 - Compact building design
 - A range of housing opportunities and choices
 - Walkable neighborhoods
 - Attractive communities
 - Preservation of open space and critical environmental areas
 - Development aimed at existing communities
 - Predictable, fair, and cost-effective development decisions
 - Encouragement of community stakeholder collaboration
- The Roxbury Area* In spite of so many low-income people, Roxbury is home to enormous economic resources such as its having open space for development near Boston's downtown.
- The strategic position of Lower Roxbury has stimulated developers to push residents out, buttressed by city policies that raise property taxes, and increase the price of rental units.
 - The driving question about how to improve the quality of life is how to leverage the resources of Roxbury to increase social and economic opportunities for current residents—much different from an approach that sees the neighborhood as an opportunity for meeting the interests of big institutional and private sector developers.
- Political Power* The lack of political representation at the local level means that black empowerment is stifled. The structure of council representation and the prevailing political culture effectively limits black access to the levers of power in the city.
- Most of the big capital projects are pursued with relatively little participation on the part of the people of color in terms of business contracts or jobs.
 - Community activism has become the context for the initiation of the Roxbury Master Plan that can move the placement of power to the local level.
 - The Roxbury Neighborhood Council provided much leadership in working with the Boston Redevelopment Authority to organize community input.
 - The plan reflects the ideas of residents regarding relationships between zoning and physical space and strategies for enhancing the social and economic fabric and its connections with other city neighborhoods.

- Several themes emerged from community meetings:
 - Improving the image of Roxbury
 - Government accountability in the delivery of services
 - Stronger links to other neighborhoods
 - Expanded opportunities for youth
 - Better transportation
 - More activities that reflect generational connections between older and younger residents
 - Improving environmental conditions
 - Increasing cultural opportunities and historical preservation
 - Building affordable and mixed housing
 - Expanding economic opportunities that result in a stronger small business sector
 - Increased accountability on the part of bigger institutions including banks, hospitals, and universities
 - Using zoning to discourage ad hoc development that is inconsistent with local needs.
- The goal was to ensure that residents would not be displaced and the plan would be holistic in terms of linking economic development with housing, schools, and transportation needs.

The Plan Principles

The principles stated in the Roxbury Master Plan reflect a commitment to the participation of citizens and neighborhood organizations in the conceptualization, implementation, and evaluation of economic strategies.

- They also acknowledge the need for expanded government and legal efforts to eliminate racial and community discrimination in housing, banking, insurance, and real estate.
- A second important development was the adoption of the final governance plan for implementation of the principles and features of the plan—in the form of an oversight committee, made up of locals and city officials, to review changes, set benchmarks, and evaluate progress.

Community Questions

To assess and evaluate economic development proposals or the disposition of public land and its impact on local businesses and the neighborhood, residents and activists developed a set of criteria in the form of questions:

- Are small neighborhood businesses being utilized on capital projects and improvements including schools, transportation projects, and housing?
- How will the bonding capacity of small businesses improve?
- Are there opportunities to enhance the capacity of small businesses through linkages with city-level and regional development activities?
- Were locals included in the development of the plans?
- Was a local small business impact study completed by entities pursuing economic development plans?
- Is the proposal consistent with the workforce characteristics of the residents and surrounding neighborhoods?
- How will joint venturing be used to enhance the capacity of businesses?
- How will the construction of housing or infrastructure utilize local businesses?
- What is the projection of jobs over the life of the plan?
- How will information about the jobs be shared with community and faith-based organizations?

Conclusion

The Roxbury Master Plan highlighted the creativity that community participation can generate in designing strategies aimed at improving living conditions

in poor and working-class neighborhoods. The program highlights important observations for urban planners.

- These neighborhoods are not as deeply ensconced in social and economic crisis and apathy as is claimed.
- Community participation is important in the design of strategies and the use of local political power to help residents organize resources, including money, institutional prestige, government patronage, and the media.
- There needs to be a rich network of churches, health centers, community-based organizations, and neighborhood groups in development of strategies and visions.
- There needs to be a strategy to generate wealth through activities based on the assets and resources of the neighborhood, but not in ways that would displace residents or small businesses.
- Planning needs to be holistic, in that transportation would be linked to positive impacts for housing, economic development, workforce mobility, and connections to other parts of the city.

Newark, Decline and Avoidance, Renaissance and Desire: From Disinvestment to Reinvestment

Kathe Newman, Rutgers University

- Background* Cities see housing redevelopment as a key to drawing the middle class back.
- Home ownership is viewed as an equity, asset, or wealth-building strategy for low- and moderate-income residents.
 - The changes in cities may not be designed to benefit the above residents.
 - There are several reasons for the reinvestment in urban areas:
 - The booming economy of the nineties
 - Tight city housing markets
 - Efforts to reign in urban/suburban sprawl
 - A neoliberal policy agenda
 - Underfunding of activist groups
- Challenges* The transformation of the urban façade does not appear to address the underlying challenges. What are the real costs of urban revitalization?
- Some community people worry about their inability to control the pace and direction of change.
 - There is concern that haphazard redevelopment is consuming vacant land, leaving little for public use such as schools and parks.
 - Very little of the housing is for very-low-income people.
 - City governments want rapid removal of high-rise projects while locals want to revitalize them.
- Gentrification* In Newark, people are fighting the current redevelopment, but it may be a losing battle. The push by profit-seeking developers often is at the expense of low-income residents (gentrification).
- The current debate questions whether gentrification is a limited process in a few inner-city neighborhoods or a vast process tied to economic transformation and globalization.

- Gentrification is a product of uneven development, economic restructuring, and cultural preferences shaped by politics and public policy.
 - The affordable housing supply diminishes as the demand for upscale housing develops, which forces low-income families to move, live with multiple families in single-family residences, or become homeless.
- Displacing the Poor* The neoliberal shift in public policy provides resources for local government to support reinvestment in even the poorest neighborhoods.
- The aim is to reduce concentrated poverty but not necessarily to make the individuals less poor.
 - The poor have fewer protections than ever—welfare is gone, there is no requirement to replace low-income housing, and local governments have few resources for the poor.
 - Bringing the middle class back into Newark is the high priority.
 - New poor neighborhoods are springing up in the surrounding inner-ring suburbs of East Orange and Irvington—there is a need to develop metropolitan strategies to join suburban and urban shared interests.
- Limited Opposition* To deal with issues in Newark, the Essex County–area community created a new coalition called the Multi Family Housing Preservation Coalition (MHPC). The coalition is set up for the following activities:
- Brings together emergency service providers, housing attorneys, representatives from city and state community development corporation (CDC) coalitions, housing advocates, and individual CDC staff.
 - Seeks to identify the availability and quality of housing for people with low and very-low incomes.
 - Combines local preservation strategies with metropolitan solutions, building on the strengths of their many partners.
- NOTE: This is a unique endeavor in Newark that does not have a tradition of coalition building or activism of a city like Chicago.
- The Situation in the 2000s* In the early 2000s, Newark is awash with community organizations, but few vocally oppose the current revitalization strategies.
- These groups do have access to the federal funds that the Urban Coordinating Council was able to receive through the federal community action program—nonprofits now have to go through the city, which controls block grants.
 - Nonprofits do not challenge the development agenda because they are co-opted with side payments to their leaders.
 - Top CDCs get federal resources to do the work of government:
 - They function as minigovernments.
 - As they move from advocacy to service delivery, they lose their radical roots and they become bureaucratized.
 - Poor residents do not participate because they feel ineffectual.
- Conclusion* Activists recognize that downtown revitalization is not sufficient to transform cities. Therefore, the strategy has changed.
- Mayors use federal assistance to demolish high-rise projects and facilitate the development of new, mixed-income neighborhoods.
 - Deconcentrating poverty and attracting middle-income households are key revitalization elements used to improve competitive positions and relink poor residents who had limited access to opportunity.

- But mayors have little incentive to provide for low-income residents—instead, they are encouraged to de-concentrate them, often outside of the city.
- Community organizations are working to revitalize low-income areas, but they have few political or economic resources to challenge current development strategies.

NOTE: Initial indications point to a worsening housing crisis involving overcrowding and increasing poverty and crime.

Empowered Culture? New York City's Empowerment Zone and the Selling of El Barrio

Arlene Dávila, New York University

Background

The marketing of culture through cultural industries, be they museums, restaurants, or parades, is increasingly central to the operation of tourism—one of the most important industries in contemporary cities.

- It was expected that New York City's Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone (EZ) would provide a close alliance between culture and profit—the intent was to attract larger audiences, create jobs, and increase the economic benefits of “Heritage Tourism.”
- Blatantly tied to the logic of industry and business, the EZ initiative became a catalyst for ethnic and racial contests and an example of the close relationship between cultural initiatives and racial and ethnic inequalities.
- The goal was to make these tourism spaces safe, comfortable, and entertaining in the right ethnic package.
- The business-treatment of culture serves as a deterrent to ethnic and racial debates by making business decisions, not cultural ones—it represented a direct challenge to the dominant definitions and uses of culture in East Harlem, a Latino area with its own “El Barrio.”
- The EZ approach to culture as primarily a profit-making device did little to exempt it from particular ethnic and identity associations and was a catalyst for tensions with racial and cultural implications.
 - Lacking in cultural industries and entertainment, Upper Manhattan communities had only their culture and the ethnic and historical identification of their neighborhoods to market.
 - By limiting East Harlem's funding eligibility and imposing requirements that only institutionalized cultural industries could meet, EZ guaranteed that the big institutions would be featured and get the largest funding amounts.
 - The program exposed the intricate and tense relationship between culture as “industry” and culture as “ethnicity.”

Marketing East Harlem

East Harlem's past and present provide a key site in which to explore the ethnicity and marginality, particularly as a result of the multiple interests that are involved in both claims to physical space and to the shaping of the past, present, and future meanings of the area.

- Department stores, specialty shops, and Soho-like museums are coming to El Barrio, placing Latinos at the center of struggles around space, represen-

tation, and identity as they debate their future as “Latino” or as gentrified neighborhoods.

- Spurring this interest in El Barrio is an increasingly tight real estate market associated with rising rents that has attracted new residential and commercial tenants.
- Even the politics of multiculturalism have helped erode the borders that once maintained these areas as ethnic enclaves, rendering their once despised differences into potential ethnic or historical attractions.
- Against this context, the EZ’s stipulation that the community markets itself in business ways was bound to be contentious:
 - Residents had to prove their cultural initiatives could create jobs and monies.
 - These strategies have been accompanied by a disavowal of ethnicity in favor of culture as enterprise—race-neutral criteria such as tourist traffic, jobs, and leadership talents.

Obstacles

Obstacles in East Harlem were soon forthcoming.

- First was the problem of East Harlem’s recognition and assessment as a neighborhood:
 - There is a general association of the area with “urban decay” and lack of safety.
 - It lags behind Central and West Harlem in public recognition of the things that attract tourists.
 - Not only does it lack things like pretty brownstones, but its architectural deficit was worsened by urban renewal.
 - Its cultural institutions fall short of providing a “complete destination” for tourists.
- Residents were feeling vulnerable to interests that could determine the cultural definition of their neighborhood.
 - This led to an ethnic stance to remedy what Latinos saw as a failing organizational structure that was costing them power and representation.
 - Their goal was to groom more leaders and monitor elected officials to be accountable to El Barrio.
 - These residents lost no time listing numerous sites that spoke of El Barrio’s history and heritage, but they are at odds with the treatment of culture as a venue of entertainment and consumption located in identifiable structures and places ready to generate profit, employment, and visitors.

Contesting the EZ

In meetings among Harlem activists and residents, blacks and the black leadership were blamed by the Latinos for the lack of success of Puerto Rican projects and proposals in El Barrio.

- The EZ may have tried to underplay ethnicity in favor of industry, but ethnicity was openly in play and the subject of debate—no other topic was as charged as that of funding inequalities between the Harlems.
- There were debates over preference given to Harlem over East Harlem in media and promotional materials, plus lack of Latinos on the staff and board of EZ.
- Latinos recognized that they had little experience in writing proposals and corporate skills, which was hurting their power and progress.
- A big problem was that the largest economic loans and incentives were given to large corporations and developers, who were displacing local merchants.
 - The institutions that had done lots of good in the community were getting little money.

- Many activists felt disenfranchised.
- The charged environment left little room for awareness of the common problems affecting both East Harlem and Harlem.

The EZ Situation

The fact is that both blacks and Latinos were adversely affected by the EZ's lack of outreach and by impossible guidelines, excessive bureaucracy, and red tape.

- Latinos did not know how to prepare required business plans.
- They were also hurt by the lack of an EZ location in the area, Latino staff at EZ that could serve as local envoys, and materials in Spanish.
- Latinos felt demeaned by the attempts made to train them in corporate ways.
- The initiatives under the EZ strategy provided a negative communication to Latinos about the value of their culture and institutions.
- There were a variety of responses from Latinos:
 - Ignoring of the initiatives
 - Reapplying after rejection in a way that better fit the requirements—seen as giving in
- People gave voice to their resistance by condemning the initiatives and showing how the EZ's rejection of Puerto Rican proposals were examples of discrimination—the pressure made EZ recruit Latino members to the board and to solicit proposals from East Harlem.

The EZ Position

What the EZ told East Harlemites was that the future of tourism in the area was not likely to depend on its Puerto Rican and Latino roots but on the existence and development of nationally recognized institutions whose value is not doubted by politicians and powers that be.

- The EZ wanted locals to have “efficient” institutions along the lines of standardized art and nonprofit museums.
- They told people that high art and corporate projects would be the anchors for tourist and cultural initiatives that would produce tourists, jobs, income, and consumers.
- EZ demands for quality and business results were consistently challenged, and rejections were interpreted as a lack of respect for Latino initiatives—residents were skeptical of the business version of culture.
- Activists made their issues into “East Harlem” issues with a letter from East Harlem's community board to HUD.
 - They wanted an in-depth investigation into EZ's failures in East Harlem.
 - When HUD dismissed their request, they demanded investigations focused not on all of Harlem but on issues related to East Harlem.
 - They wanted cultural issues based on respect for racial and ethnic dynamics already present in the neighborhood.

Conclusion

The case at hand underscores that while culture is pivotal to urban economic development initiatives, not all types and manifestations of “culture” are equally profitable or economically viable.

- Issues of race, ethnicity, and identity affect the “rentability” of culture.
- El Barrio's marginalized identity is a hindrance to be overcome.
- Policies need to be reviewed for their effect on neighborhoods and economic development:
 - Insofar as these policies work to reassert the meaning of culture, ethnic-based claims are important and necessary.

- This represents a critical challenge to contemporary urban policies and politics that approach culture as a commodity and industry for reflecting dominant interests rather than the culture of neighborhoods and their residents.

National Politics and Charitable Choice as Urban Policy for Community Development

Georgia A. Persons, Georgia Institute of Technology

Charitable Choice and the Faith-Based Initiatives constitute an interesting blending of urban policy and social policy. While this policy set does not represent a restoration of a broad-vision urban policy, it does provide an important opportunity for African American community development. However, it must overcome challenges if this policy set is to have major impact in urban communities.

Urban Policy

With the de-funding of public housing in the mid-1980s, there has been little in the way of major or visionary urban policy and less still in regard to issues that bear on the plight of low-income, minority, urban populations and their communities.

- Cities have lost their place in the discourse of U.S. politics.
- This is not new. The policy agenda of urban America has been a dream more deferred than addressed because cities have always played primary host to the nation's less popular population groups.
- The Lyndon Johnson "Great Society" in the 1960s was a period of great hope, but it faded under later administrations.
- For both Republicans and Democrats, race was the key issue behind the abandonment of the needs of cities.
- Political realignment favored the Republican party and its strong constituency of mostly white suburban voters.
- The Democratic coalition was undermined by white backlash against the gains of the civil rights movement and was effectively dismantled by major population changes.

NOTE: Not only does major social change not occur in a linear fashion, sometimes it occurs with great irony.

- The erosion of the traditional Democratic base, which supported urban policy, has occurred simultaneous to the increased presence of African Americans in big cities of the North and simultaneous with the political empowerment of African Americans in those cities.
- All of this has occurred simultaneous with the Republican ascendancy, the shift of votes to the largely white suburbs, and the resulting marginalization of African American influence in the outcome of presidential elections and in the thrust and content of urban policy.
- Some analysts have announced that the days of urban policies occupying a significant place on the national policy agenda are over.

Clinton Era

- There was no revival of an urban policy agenda under President Bill Clinton.
- Part of the political strategy was to avoid advocating policies seen linked to the urban poor and/or African Americans.
 - This came from the idea that blacks would best benefit from policies with universal appeal rather than race-specific ones.
 - The strong Republican presence in Congress blocked revival of urban policy.
 - The strategy that came out of this context was called “stealth urban policy”—pursuing urban goals through “nonurban” initiatives that were not perceived as directing benefits toward cities but could indirectly help with cities’ needs.

FBCI

- The George W. Bush Faith-Based and Community Initiative (FBCI) is set in two parts:
 - The first is Charitable Choice, where the original objective was to level the playing field for faith-based organizations (FBOs) by making them eligible to compete for state and county contracts.
 - The second is the enhancing of the participation of local churches to provide delivery of services to the community and other activities that are government initiatives.
- Almost all African American churches share an impulse for social service activities, which, however, tend to be seasonal, ad hoc, and episodic in nature due to limited resources and manpower for activities outside their normal church functions.
 - They are not set up logistically to carry out community services.
 - African American churches are not linked to local networks of traditional service agencies.
 - The challenges are not insurmountable but are most likely to be overcome by the more entrepreneurial church leaders.
- The White House focus is to use FBCI for efforts on homeless, prisoners, at-risk youth, elders in need, and families moving from welfare to work.
 - The extent to which the FBCI expands to support projects with a direct economic development focus will significantly determine its impact on African American communities.
 - Frequently, economically distressed communities, and many middle-class African American neighborhoods as well, are bereft of basic commercial amenities that support the primary needs of families and that help to anchor and stabilize neighborhoods.
 - Since churches are ready mobilizations of diverse human capital, they are prime candidates for spurring and sustaining critical small- to medium-scale economic development projects.
- The Bush FBCI also has additional characteristics that will likely slow its widespread adoption at the state level and that are apparently impeding the adoption of additional faith-based legislative provisions by the Congress:
 - The FBCI has an almost purely partisan image. It is largely and widely perceived as a Republican policy initiative.
 - Democratic Party officials see little advantage in supporting it.
 - Many of the new legislative measures that would expand the program carry controversial provisions such as allowing federally funded faith-based service providers to hire and fire employees on the basis of religious beliefs.
 - Finally, Bush’s FBCI so far has the hallmark elements that have so profoundly circumscribed so much of urban policy over the years: that characteristic of being a temporary, administration-specific initiative.

- Conclusion* As both urban policy and social policy, the FBCI can be important for African American community development.
- The policy set provides a potentially broad definition of community development and may offer a particularly powerful tool for strengthening the social fabric of distressed communities.
 - The FBCI specifically offers a broad base of opportunities for a diverse collection of local congregations and other FBOs.
 - The potentially constraining dynamics of organizational capacity, which likely afflict a majority of African American churches, can be overcome for many that seek to participate.
 - Local congregations in particular must be provided with the incentives for exercising the will to develop such capacity.
 - This policy gives African American religious leaders a unique legitimacy as spokespersons for the diverse needs of the African American community.
-

Taking the Sanctuary to the Streets: Religion, Race, and Community Development in Columbus, Ohio

Yvette M. Alex-Assensoh, Indiana University, Bloomington

- Background* Copious empirical research has underscored the important roles that African American churches have played in the political quest for freedom.
- Such roles have included the church's overall involvement in
 - The abolitionist movement
 - The first and second phases of the civil rights movement
 - The increased presence of Black elected officials at all levels of government
 - This study looks at the roles the churches play in Columbus, Ohio.
 - Using a contextual theory of politics, this essay demonstrates the important role that environmental factors play in shaping the nature and extent of black urban church involvement in community development.
- NOTE: Most studies have been national, which obscures the social, economic, and political contexts of urban areas. There has also been a lack of attention to the differences in black churches, politically and geographically, which may cause errors in interpreting the political efficacy of black churches.
- Politics* Black churches remain abundant in inner-city neighborhoods, serving the dual purpose of buffering poor people against the effects of poverty while administering the gospel.
- Researchers have not much enlightened us about the political influences of urban churches in the development of their communities.
 - We need to know under what conditions they get involved and what contributions they make.
 - It is crucial to understand the urban church's context, coupled with the ways that the environment either facilitates or depresses political activity.

- Black churches have worked to
 - Affirm the black family and children
 - Link citizens to available jobs
 - Improve housing and economic opportunities
- Certain municipal governments are least capable of facilitating representation and democracy for all citizens:
 - Strong mayoral forms of government may have a lot more access to political actors and institutions than those in urban areas with council-manager and commissioner forms.
- Equally important as access to political institutions is access to political actors.
 - In general, people of color and low-income groups are likely to be concentrated in certain geographical areas, which are easily outvoted in at-large elections but may be better represented in district elections.
 - In an effort to be reelected, city council members in at-large districts are more likely to seek broad-scale interests that may alienate black churches and their members.
 - Black churches in cities with district elections have potentially more access to city officials as well as resources that include money, information, and networks.

*Opportunity
versus*

Socioeconomics

The low socioeconomic status of blacks in Columbus, Ohio, reveals a legacy of exclusion from mainstream social, economic, and political institutions.

- As a result of the residents' low levels of education, low income, and less meaningful employment, blacks tend to live in older housing areas with lower property values than nonblacks.
- Statistics for the areas paint a picture of black exclusion from viable social and economic resources and opportunities.
- With its mayor form of government coupled with the clearly less democratic at-large electoral system for council members, Columbus provides a mixed bag of opportunity for black church access to the political process.
- Despite the fact that blacks are almost 50 percent of the population, they have held no more than two simultaneous seats on the council.
 - It is not surprising that economic and social conditions have suffered politically and certainly in terms of receiving resources for their neighborhoods.

*Church
Involvement—
the BBPC*

While urban black churches in Columbus have had few opportunities to engage in the normal channels of city politics, they have joined forces and sought out alternative channels to address community development issues.

- One channel is the Black Baptist Pastor's Conference (BBPC).
 - They have grown to address housing and educational inequalities including lending discrimination.
 - They have used both traditional electoral strategies as well as more innovative tactics to improve economic empowerment among blacks.
 - The BBPC has met frequently with the mayor and other officials to address concerns of the community.
 - Some of their clout is real and some is perceived, but they have helped change the politics in Columbus for the better.
 - In 1999, they made, for the first time, an endorsement of Coleman for mayor, which led to an increase in their clout and direct access to government that brought about the creation of the Office of Community Affairs.

- Most important about the involvement of Columbus churches in community development issues is their collective efforts, which provided the resources, expertise, and social networks that allowed them to engage in more comprehensive and meaningful development

NOTE: Some of the components that facilitate the involvement of black churches in community development are social capital born of strong personal and spiritual networks, economic independence, community accountability, and comprehensive approaches that link services with education and economic activities.

*Office of
Community
Affairs*

The Mayor's Office of Community Affairs has set about bringing much needed changes to inner-city neighborhoods.

- Through a program called "Neighborhood Pride," the mayor has enlisted the services of park, sanitation, fire, and code departments as well as neighborhood groups to improve Columbus neighborhoods.
- Mayor Coleman has also facilitated grant and loan programs to provide funds for home improvements.

NOTE: The BBPC endorsement paid off in providing tangible benefits to black residents and is an example of a faith-based organization becoming a political player to help redirect resources to inner-city neighborhoods.

Conclusion

Overall, contextual factors in Columbus presented an environment of exclusion in which blacks were locked out of mainstream avenues of participation and representation.

- Black pastors accessed mainstream politics in three ways:
 - They articulated the views of the black masses to interested white officials.
 - They supported black candidates.
 - They shared information, resources, and expertise necessary to participate collectively in housing, welfare, and community banking issues.
- The findings are important because
 - They demonstrate the ways that black churches in urban areas can help in seemingly intractable inner-city problems.
 - They demonstrate the relevance of the black churches above and beyond issues of electoral politics and social movements.
 - They suggest that current efforts to transfer more social service deliveries to well-organized churches may prove useful in some cities.
- The findings further suggest that a contextual approach to the study of black church politics may be useful in underscoring the diverse ways in which they participate in politics and the extent to which political, socioeconomic, and structural factors either facilitate or depress involvement.
- The Columbus case provides some response to concerns of other authors in this *Annals* collection:
 - Clearly, local politics has much impact on the contours and possibilities of community development.
 - There is also a call for greater economic independence on the part of community-based organizations seeking social change. Faith-based organizations can fill this role.
 - If these efforts are based on churches and leadership that have accountability to the community, they can be one of the political actors providing key support to improve living conditions in neighborhoods.

Community Development in Chicago: From Harold Washington to Richard M. Daley

John J. Betancur and Douglas C. Gills,
University of Illinois at Chicago

- Background* The community empowerment approach in Chicago as of the 1960s included
- Community control
 - Democratic accountability in the allocation of social goods
 - Demands for material and social development for urban communities
- NOTE: In spite of the civil rights successes and the role Chicago played in it, the community development movement acted as a sort of “outsider force” in opposition to the racialists and antidemocratic practices of the local regime. Mayor Daley ran a tight machine that controlled neighborhoods through political patronage and an ethnically and racially queued hierarchy.
- Mayor Washington* In the mid-1980s, community development under Mayor Washington’s regime became more legitimate as a tool for local government. The framework included
- High priority on the cause of minorities and the poor
 - An open and consultative governance style inviting community participation
 - A balance between downtown and the neighborhoods and other forces within the city
 - Encouragement of partnerships with neighborhood groups and businesses, emphasizing local development
 - A reform-oriented political coalition of blacks, Latinos, and white liberals
- NOTE: At the core was the use of public power and resources for development through prioritizing jobs and business opportunities, job training and education and removal of racial barriers to participation in the public economy, and the continued working with willing partners in the growth coalition.
- Policy* At the core of Washington’s policy was the goal of balanced development between downtown and neighborhoods.
- Initiatives included technical assistance; employment of residents; subcontracting with minority and other community-based firms; and public assistance to the design, packaging, and financing of neighborhood-based projects.
 - Washington used the leverage of public power and subsidies to link projects to goals such as affirmative action, community development, human capacity enhancement, and jobs creation and retention.
 - Washington’s regime tried to change a culture of antidemocratic, patronage-based politics.
 - In education reform, he appointed a Parent Community Council led by a parent-teacher-community triad (this alliance was thwarted after his death).
- NOTE: Washington’s regime provided perhaps the deepest model of partnership between city hall and community development in the country.

- Youth* The state of youth inside the public schools was not the sole concern of community activists.
- The mayor was bent on controlling police abuse of young minorities.
 - He established the Chicago Intervention Network (CIN) stressing constructive, alternative activities for youth at risk.
 - It promoted better relations between street organizations, gangs, parents, and community groups through peer accountability.
 - Some CIN councils experimented with novel forms of community justice, people's courts, juvenile restoration boards, and things like midnight basketball.
- The Second Mayor Daley* The second Mayor Daley has developed the political capacity to co-opt community leaders, intimidate potential and actual opposition, and build a new machine of patronage—with a disdain for grassroots politics.
- By 1995, his administration had weakened or reversed some of the critical elements of community development.
 - His new machine is based on the middle-class sectors, developers, and downtown corporate interests and ignores the interests of low-income communities.
 - He has weakened the coalition of blacks, Latinos, and liberal whites.
 - He has constructed a middle-class coalition across races:
 - Targeted middle- and upper-class families for resettlement in the central city by providing major incentives.
 - Central to this was development of middle-class, gentrified neighborhoods; zero-tolerance policing; school reform; public housing displacement; and a treatment of poverty as pathology-based rather than inequality-based.
 - At the same time, he has sought to defuse any racial challenges by cultivating a sector of the black and Latino middle classes who receive some of his spoils.
- Reorganizing Government* Daley is focusing on reorganizing government around the priorities of a metropolis for the new forces of production controlling the services economy.
- He is carrying the vision of the central business district-based growth coalition at the expense of the poor, which includes
 - Large-scale high rises on the lakefront
 - Integrated museums for tourists
 - Support for middle- to upper-class residential development downtown
 - Development of a large entertainment district
 - Improvement of public transportation
 - Tourism, land use, and development for corporate interests and attraction of the middle classes have progressed in direct relation to displacement of working class and poor people.
 - The Daley administration has reflected a hostility to a range of community-based organizations raising issues regarding the distribution of public benefits.
 - The regime uses the elected alderman as a key political vehicle to support progrowth policies:
 - They are the distributors for local beneficiaries who pledge and act on loyalty to Daley.
 - Allocation of community funding requires the approval of the aldermen.

- In police reform, the Daley machine has been able to push zero-tolerance police practices; searches without cause; and the quick criminalization of the poor, especially people of color.
 - The homeless have been ruthlessly targeted and no longer have access to social workers as guardians.
- In school reform, the city did everything it could to undermine the parent authority and to establish a system of uncontested central control:
 - Progressive ideas like magnet schools have been changed to make room for the middle class.
 - Funding for private education has increased.

Conclusion

The transformation of community development in Chicago from a framework building on the struggle of the civil rights movement and social justice for the poor, to one where those who previously were challenged by community development can now benefit from it.

- The Daley regime has displaced race, especially its group claims, from politics:
 - Race-related poverty gets chronically racialized and legitimated.
 - The struggle against the factors that continue reproducing minority poverty are ignored.
- Community development still exists in neighborhood coalitions that continue to raise concerns about a vision of the city that prioritizes the needs of global and corporate interests over local needs.
- An important lesson emerging in examining changes between the Washington and Daley regimes is that community development cannot be totally dependent on the benevolence of City Hall for public funding or on corporate fund-raising:
 - Neighborhoods groups have to insist on an equitable distribution of the city's wealth and resources.
 - Community development has to be controlled by grassroots sectors that are not beholden to local administrations.
 - The most serious problems facing cities will continue to worsen under regimes like Daley's.
 - Given the fact that progressive community leadership has dissipated, any likely insurgency among grassroots forces will tend to be reactive, lacking a unifying focus.

Community Development Corporations, Participation, and Accountability: The Harlem Urban Development Corporation and the Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation

Kimberley Johnson, Barnard College,
Columbia University

- Background* Researchers are trying to understand the conditions that create successful community development corporations (CDCs). They are looking at
- Why some CDCs are successful in creating housing or stimulating economic development
 - How to replicate the successes
 - Understanding organization origins can help discover why some are successful:
 - The politics surrounding the creation of the organization shapes its set of supporters and its adversaries.
 - The context of an organization's early development may shape how it encourages (or not) community participation and how the organization defines accountability within and outside of the community.
- NOTE: Organizations can change, and many do. The important thing to change is people's perceptions.
- Why CDCs?* CDCs seemed to offer an ideal solution to the challenges of redevelopment as well as how to ensure community control.
- It was supposed to harness the community's scattered and limited assets and transform them into a tool for community empowerment.
 - Private sector was to be the source of resources, expertise, and energy.
 - CDCs could bridge the gap between public and private through their efficient, businesslike approaches to development.
 - The federal government needed a way to respond to demands for community control in areas of low-income persons.
 - There was a need to establish economic and business development programs for residents, housing, and manpower training programs.
- NOTE: It was virtually impossible for CDCs to engage in activities other than housing and some limited commercial activity because of lack of capital and the fact that government funding was mostly limited to housing programs.
- HUDC Problems* The Harlem Urban Development Corporation (HUDC) was focused on opposition to outsiders and mistrust of "downtown," and it was captured by the Harlem political machine, which led to two unfortunate outcomes:
- HUDC had little accountability within its own community and none outside of it.
 - The organization produced little in terms of housing or economic development.
- HUDC History* Black power and myriad political competition in Harlem all played a role in the creation of the HUDC.

- Its mandate was to provide planning, feasibility studies, design, financing, construction supervision, and technical assistance to Harlem.
- It was able to begin the development of a number of housing projects but was crippled by an emerging fiscal and political crisis that consumed the state's and city's leadership in the early seventies.
- The shift of attention to the HUDC allowed it to come under further control of the local political interests.
- By 1976, HUDC amended its bylaws to make the agency autonomous.
- As HUDC became identified with the Harlem political elite, it became, in many ways, politically untouchable.
- HUDC was able to accomplish some projects like weatherizing buildings and improving facades.

Bedford-Stuyvesant

In the Bedford-Stuyvesant area of Brooklyn, Robert Kennedy supported a comprehensive approach in attacking the ills of the community. Kennedy sought to deal with four critical issues:

- The slow and complicated bureaucracy that hindered community development
- The lack of financial autonomy that made local organizations overly responsive to the objectives of those outside the community
- The vast gulf between the white business world and poor communities
- Then urgent need to create jobs and economic self-sufficiency

NOTE: The responses to these issues were

- Kennedy and Javits introduced the Special Impact Program to address unemployment via construction projects, develop businesses, and create block grants for community organizations.
- Kennedy sought to create linkages between the private sector and the poor.
- A twin structure was created composed of a local organization, the Bedford Stuyvesant Renewal and Rehabilitation (R & R) and the city-controlled Brooklyn-Stuyvesant Development and Services Organization (D & S)

D & S

The D & S, an oversight organization to control the Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation (BSRC), wanted to establish the credibility of the BSRC with the community.

- The local community saw the D & S as a white establishment who set the goals and controlled the funding.
- In response to community concerns, Franklin Thomas, head of D & S, helped the BSRC model itself after corporations and eventually D & S moved to Brooklyn and merged with the BSRC.

BSRC Program

BSRC's initial program had five elements:

- Build upon the homeownership base of the area
- Reclaim the commercial heart of the area with the redevelopment of a milk bottling plant into a multiuse business center
- Physically restructure the community through development of "super blocks"
- Initiate an economic and industrial development plan
- Build human capital through job training and employment programs

NOTE: Despite visible success, the BSRC was not immune to criticism related to its accountability and its self-perpetuating board.

Conclusion

The experiences of both of these CDCs show that performance and success are tempered with political context and history. Black power and community control were critical in shaping each organization's early years.

- HUDC became largely known as a patronage machine whose major goal was projecting HUDC as a symbol of black autonomy. It became a source of political power for Harlem politicians.
 - Because of its political connections, it was allowed to save face as a source of “technical assistance.”
 - It continued to propose a series of grand but ultimately impractical plans for Harlem.
- The story of BSRC, although not as troubling as HUDC, is one that complicates an easy understanding of community, accountability, and performance.
 - By the numbers, the BSRC looks great but is lacking in terms of relationship with its community.
 - It was beholden to the federal government and private foundations.
 - Eventually the organization did change and went after state and city funding to aid in getting closer to the community.

NOTE: The early history of both organizations suggests that community development has to be grounded in community roots. There is also a challenge to become more accountable to the community.

Race and Representation in Detroit's Community Development Coalitions

Todd C. Shaw,
University of South Carolina at Columbia;
and Lester K. Spence,
Washington University in St. Louis

Background

Race presents the community development movement with a complex paradox:

- On one hand, the movement is dedicated to pluralistic community building.
 - Its advocates believe multiracial cooperation is achievable.
- On the other hand, racial fissures can arise among its advocates.
 - There are competing visions between whites and their fellow neighbors of color.
 - There are tensions between white community development staffers and constituencies they serve that happen to be represented by people of color.
- In Detroit, massive white flight in the 1960s and 1970s ensured neighborhoods had a black majority.
 - Yet a significant number of white community organizers remained, creating a source of communal strain.
 - A gap develops between rhetoric and practice of community organizers who spend far more time fighting city hall than fighting racism.
- Mayor Coleman Young was challenged on his community development proposals by groups such as Detroit Save Our Spirit (SOS), a majority white but progressive alliance.
 - Blacks admired Young's bold challenge to racial inequality.

- Yet his heavy-handed politics led him and his most ardent supporters to exploit Detroit's racial divide to demobilize potential black and white critics.
- Community development advocates experienced and overcame racial fissures to support community development in the 1980s and early 1990s.

Using Race as a Resource

Despite the racial pitfalls that community developers encounter in the advocacy process, they are quite aware of using race as a resource to understand structural inequalities and to build community capacity.

- To confront the underdevelopment emanating out of racial segregation and economic dislocation, African Americans and other minority communities have used a race-centered (often church-based) community development model as a means of self-help.
- Overall, this community development approach speaks to racial/ethnic self-determination.

Progressive Whites

Progressive, non-Hispanic whites have been among the instrumental allies and leaders of multiracial community development efforts.

- There are noteworthy examples of white progressives who help lead community-based development organizations (CBDOs) and advocacy groups where a majority of their staff members, board members, and constituents come from communities of color.
- Race still matters:
 - It matters because blacks or other constituents of color, who live racialized lives, have heightened expectations about a community developer possessing cultural competency, shared experiences, and feelings of linked fate.
 - It matters because the norm of descriptive representation presumes that to speak on behalf of a group, one must reflect the ethnic identity of that group.
- In Detroit, whites were so intricately involved that some whites and African Americans perceived them as being dominant.

NOTE: This industry experiences difficulties training and attracting the desired numbers of minorities, partially because those blacks that have had the opportunity to get education and training are out there trying to make some money and community advocacy jobs are low-paid positions.

Mayor Young

The Young administration complicated things by insisting upon its progrowth development objectives and using its considerable political and racial capital against the opposition.

- In politics, equating a defense of Young with a fight against racism became the principal rationale for support among core black constituencies and a rejection of the views of white and black critics.
- The Young administration invested scarce public resources and governmental subsidies into the retention of automobile plants and other large-scale economic development projects that may have had little benefit to low- and moderate-income citizens.
- Detroit has one of the weakest production systems because of a highly inefficient bureaucratic relationship between CBDOs and city coordinating agencies.
 - Young was disdainful of the city sharing community development resources with outspoken CDCs or CBDOs that were not subsidiaries of his development efforts.

- He did not like giving his cash to the poverty politicians and liberals supposedly concerned about housing and community development over and above job creation.

SOS

The most influential community group was a coalition comprised of community development and other neighborhood-based organizations called Save Our Spirit.

- The general purpose of SOS was to lobby the city council for adequate appropriations of block grant dollars to be allocated to all community organizations serving low-income needs.
- The racial composition was not reflective of the population of the city in SOS:
 - It was still a group where white community organizers, especially CBDO heads, predominated.
- SOS attempted to get around the collective action problem of mobilizing and solidifying disparate organizations by existing only on an ad hoc basis.
- Because the administration at times seemed to retaliate against SOS's outspokenness, many black groups were intimidated or did not want to be perceived as the opponents of a popular black mayor.
 - They were frustrated by the way the block grant program was handled and knew they needed help but were uncomfortable with saying bad things about the mayor.
- The loose, multiracial confederation approach worked in important ways:
 - SOS contributed to a united front by trying to ensure a multiracial leadership that also represented women and low-income advocacy groups.
 - It mobilized groups around a People's Budget—a document used to persuade the city council and the public of the need to shift a good number of community development block grant dollars away from the mayor's development priorities as well as away from the demolition of abandoned housing and instead to spend more funds for public services and housing rehabilitation.
 - One important way SOS defused any territoriality or competition among its affiliates (including racial competition) was to insist as part of its principles that a goal was to increase the overall budget for all their neighborhoods.

City Council

The city council became the political fulcrum for SOS's advocacy because the administration clearly intended to use most CDBG dollars for large-scale development, land clearance, and city staffing, which SOS felt should be used for CDBG low- and moderate-income benefits.

- Members of the council, even including some of Young's strongest backers, were seen and saw themselves as either more attentive to or more vulnerable to neighborhood demands than was the mayor:
 - They created the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund meant to preserve 10 percent of CDBG funds for revitalization of neighborhood residential and commercial properties.
 - Whereas the administration only allocated funding to about a third of the organizations that applied for Neighborhood Opportunity Fund/CDBG funding between the years 1985 and 1992, the council allocated funds to at least two-thirds of the groups that applied and sometimes nearly 90 percent in one council election year.

- Voters' Dichotomy* Despite the mayor's ability to wield racial politics as a catalyst to induce black electoral and policy support, the same voters who reelected him four times joined with white critics to reject ballot initiatives he backed.
- Conclusion* This review suggests that community development advocates not simply seek to neutralize race and racism but consider how race and racism are inextricably a part of the capacity-building problem.
- When black elected officials like Young resort to a crass, racial essentialism (as opposed to a cogent, antiracist analysis), this has a chilling effect upon Black and progressive politics.
 - If greater black representation at least enables groups like SOS to more directly confront race, they can more boldly make arguments about how their agendas benefit low-income African Americans and other communities of color in ways the agendas of black public officials like Young may not.
 - They can feel more comfortable contributing to the debate as to what constitutes the interests of African American communities and thus not have to deflect this discourse or concede the ground to myopic black or white leaders.
 - They can embrace a notion of political race where, as African Americans or as allies, the process of identifying with and advocating on behalf of blacks and other people of color is considered a point of common ground—not a particularistic or divisive issue.

Community Development and the Politics of Deracialization: The Case of Denver, Colorado, 1991-2003

Hermon George Jr.,
University of Northern Colorado, Greeley

- Background* Many candidates for mayor and many elected mayors seek to de-emphasize racial matters to blunt racist attacks and appeal to white voters.
- They seek to de-emphasize racial appeals or policies that address racial inequality to gain white votes.
 - They favor corporate interests over neighborhood concerns.
 - They cut social services and government oversight of the environment and job safety, and they are detached from the perceived special interests of urban political machines, small farmers, organized labor, and people of color.
 - There is a weakening of affirmative action and a focus on economic development that broadly defines social class issues instead of issues associated with racial equality and de-emphasizes racial desegregation in public schools in favor of neighborhood schools, charter schools, and voucher systems.
- Biracial Coalition* These mayors form a biracial coalition with elements of the larger, wealthier white population, especially its elite members. The coalition functions to
- Tout gradualism in racial matters
 - Provide financial support for acceptable black candidates
 - Moderate black demands for systemic change

- Guarantee a successful electoral voting bloc of the majority of black voters and a sizeable number of white voters
- Perpetuate and promote a social model based on powerful structures controlled by influential whites and a smaller number of blacks perceived as junior partners in such arrangements

In Denver, this framework was effective for Mayor Webb in the delivery of the majority of the black vote

<i>Deracialization in Denver</i>	<p>Changes related to unemployment, family income, poverty, school enrollment, and other factors provide some insight about who actually benefits from a local administration based on the de-racialization framework.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black unemployment is significantly higher than that of whites. • Black median family income has dropped. • The black poverty rate has consistently grown and in 1990 was almost three times the white rate. • Under Mayor Webb, there has been a considerable growth in the size of city employment, but this growth has not translated into greater black employment across the board in all nine basic city departments.
<i>Public Schools</i>	<p>In 1990, Mayor Webb asked for an immediate end to school busing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the disturbing national trend, Denver's schools have quickly resegregated. • White students have left the school system at a faster rate than before. • One local advocacy group argues that the mayor's lack of leadership has helped to solidify the Right's grasp of public policy on issues of privatization, vouchers, and high-stakes standardized testing.
<i>Police</i>	<p>The most serious weakness in Webb's tenure as mayor has been his handling of police matters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are accusations of racial profiling, many fatal shootings by police, and lack of discipline for errant cops. • The department has resisted internal reforms and citizen review and has created secret spy files on dissenters.
<i>Affordable Housing</i>	<p>While it is true that federal aid to cities declined during the eighties and early nineties, affordable housing in Denver all but disappeared and the number of homeless skyrocketed.</p>
<i>Progressive Urban Agenda</i>	<p>Mayor Webb has not pursued a progressive political agenda. He conjoined mere symbolism for people of color and working-class people with substantive policy victories for, and concessions to, Denver's powerful interests.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He has not been effective in the development of neighborhoods of the poor and working-class residents. • Webb's priorities and actions bear little resemblance to a social and economic progressive agenda that might include the following components: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support a living wage policy for all city employees 2. Affordable housing policy 3. Union-based city projects and contracts 4. Greater subsidization of city health clinics and hospitals 5. Shelter and beds for the homeless 6. Affirmative action for city departments and projects 7. Adequately funded schools supported by desegregation

8. Development tax on builders and taxes on suburbanites working in the city
9. Citizen police review board
10. Transportation policy for urban workers to get to suburban jobs
11. Environmental policy that places safety of people above developers' needs

Conclusion

These policy initiatives call for a broad-based power coalition that could win the mayor's office on the above kind of platform but also be capable of implementing it.

- It would mean a multiracial coalition organized against policies that maintain racial divisions and sacrifice the needs of neighborhoods and residents to downtown global corporate interests.
- The kind of de-racialized and technocratic diminished welfare state liberalism practiced by Webb will be less effective in disguising widening gaps of racial and social inequality.
- Decentralization is actually a strategy of racial accommodation and class-based policies that favor the wealthy.
- The problems that black America faces will not be solved through tokenism that is inherent in de-racialization.
- The politics of community development have to be based on the needs of poor and working-class people in communities of color, thereby actually socially and economically strengthening our cities.