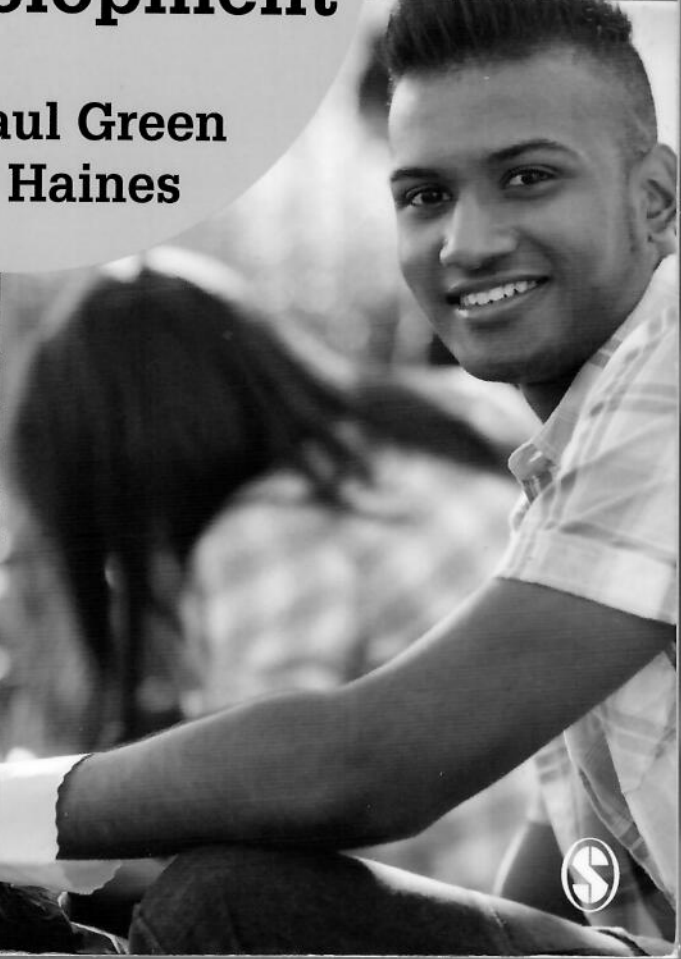
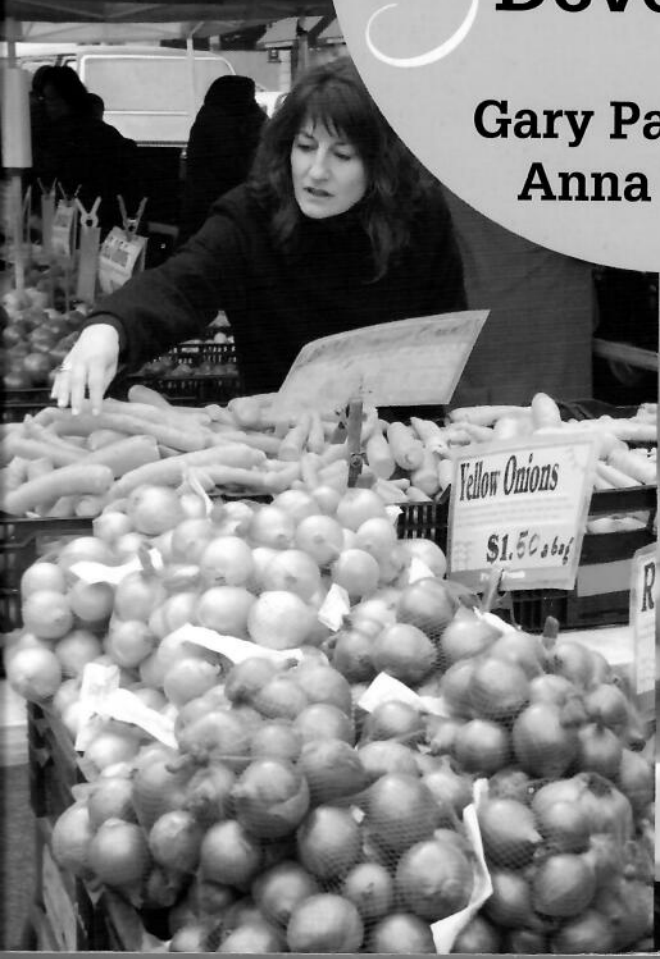




FOURTH
EDITION

Asset Building & Community Development

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A History of Community Development in America

Community development matured in the United States in the 1960s with the rise of place-based policies (mostly antipoverty programs), professional training programs and degrees, and formal organizations with community development as their primary mission. Many of the ideas behind community self-reliance, however, have their roots in earlier intellectual sources, such as those of John Dewey (1916). Some of the first intentional efforts at promoting community development occurred at the turn of the 20th century (Kanter, 1972).

In this chapter, we trace the evolution of community development in America. We begin our analysis at the turn of the century, with the Progressive Era and some of the efforts to construct community programs to address poverty and other social problems. We examine the programs of the New Deal and the Great Society, which placed the federal government in a central role in community development. Finally, we discuss contemporary efforts to promote development in poor and minority neighborhoods. This review of the evolution of community development is an important step in understanding how we approached these issues in the past and how a place-based approach to development has become so central to the federal government's role.

In this brief history, we point out several tensions and contradictions in the community development movement. One of the most critical tensions is the role of public participation in place-based development efforts. On one hand, it has been difficult to obtain public participation in local decision making. Residents have few experiences with and face numerous obstacles to participation. On the other hand, governmental officials and professionals often are threatened by public participation when it is successful. The result is a great deal of rhetoric about the importance of participation, which is seldom achieved in practice. Federal programs also have been contradictory. Although the federal government developed several programs to address the problems of localities, it has provided incentives through tax breaks and infrastructure to encourage suburban development. In doing so, the government has undermined many of the place-based policies that were established.

The Evolution of Community Development

Although there continues to be much debate about the best approach to promote community development, the public generally supports the ideas of local control and the importance of community in social life. The idea of community development has evolved considerably during this century. In this brief review, we identify the main currents of thought in the community development field in the past century.

The Progressive Era

The origins of the community development field can be traced to the Progressive Era, especially to the ideas of social scientists and reformers at the turn of the 20th century. The most distinguishing characteristic of the Progressives was their resistance to individualistic explanations of poverty and social disorganization (e.g., juvenile delinquency, crime, and the breakup of the family). Instead, they explained poverty and deviant behavior as results of social conditions in communities, as products of the subcultures of these neighborhoods. Progressives considered these subcultures to be obstacles to integration into the larger society. They argued that to improve local conditions, social intervention should have three important characteristics (O'Connor, 1999). First, social intervention should be comprehensive, focusing on the integration of education, social services, jobs, and physical conditions in a locality. Second, community intervention should promote collaboration between experts and citizens in addressing local problems. The growth of comprehensive city planning during the period is one example of this model. Finally, Progressives placed a great deal of emphasis on citizen participation. As we discuss in this chapter, later in the 1960s, this element of the community development program was highly controversial, especially during the War on Poverty.

One of the most infamous community development efforts in urban areas at the turn of the 20th century was the settlement house movement. The objective of the settlement house movement was to help immigrants adjust to their new environment. In many ways, those who were involved in the settlement movement saw themselves as class mediators between the working class and the wealthy. In addition to providing social services, they attempted to raise awareness about social conditions in poor communities. The settlement house movement provided adult education (especially English-language lessons), day care centers, libraries, recreational facilities, and other social services to help integrate residents into the larger society. Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr established probably the most famous of the settlement houses, Hull House, in Chicago. The clear intention was to reduce the impact of immigrants' native culture and introduce them to American society. The movement grew to more than 500 settlement houses across the United States.

Settlement houses.

The settlement house movement helped shape progressive legislation on child labor laws, occupational safety, compulsory education, and immigrant rights. They were also strong supporters of trade unions and women's suffrage. The system was reformist, however, because it did not attempt to address the fundamental causes of poverty or redistribute wealth.

Another important effort to address social conditions in urban America at the turn of the century was the **community center movement**. The first national conference on community centers was held in 1911 in Madison, Wisconsin. Josiah Strong was elected as the first president. The objective of the community center movement was to increase the use of public schools by the wider community. Proponents of the center movement saw use of public schools as an important exercise in democracy. In New York City, workers used 40 schools for shop meetings, dances, and even dinners in the corridors every night. This improved social interaction was seen as a mechanism to create more unity and consensus, as well as a means of organizing neighborhoods in a democratic manner. Although its stated objective was to build neighborhood self-help, it still relied heavily on professionals providing leadership to the programs.

Another important social movement during the Progressive Era was the **social unit plan**. Probably the most innovative experiment was the project established by Wilbur and Elsie Phillips in the Mowhawk-Brighton neighborhood of Cincinnati. The Phillips established citizens councils and occupational councils to determine needs and priorities for neighborhoods. The unit plan hired block workers in each of 31 blocks (with about 500 people per block). Thus, the unit plan provided for a more direct system of democracy. One of the first tasks of the Cincinnati Social Unit Plan was to develop programs improving children's health. It established a direct system of care for every household that had a baby.

* The Chicago School of Sociology, and especially Robert Park's (1915) work on urban development, provided much of the intellectual foundation for intervention in urban neighborhoods. These academics provided a stronger intellectual basis for community organizing than did the proponents of the settlement houses. Park insisted that the problems of cities, such as juvenile delinquency and crime, rather than being the result of social disorganization, reflected the gradual assimilation of immigrants into the mainstream society. Park claimed that there was more social order in these settings than observers recognized. Neighborhood disorganization was necessary because it meant that immigrants were shedding their cultural influences.

Park's work in Chicago led to a spatial theory of cities that suggested competition was the driving force behind the spatial form of cities. According to Park, competition creates more efficient land use patterns in cities. This meant that the poor tended to be located in neighborhoods that were physically separated from middle-class families. Social isolation, therefore, was one of the most difficult hurdles to promoting social integration. Park argued that this process was necessary for immigrants to eventually be integrated into the social life of cities. It was important, however, to provide

Community center
movement

Social unit plan.

stability at the neighborhood level—for example, through the provision of social services—to facilitate social integration.

Whereas the central issues in urban America at the time were poverty and social disorganization, the problems in rural areas were a bit different. The primary concerns in rural America were the lack of technical information on agricultural conditions, poor educational opportunities, monopolization of forestland, inadequate roads, poor health services, soil depletion, and the limited role of women. The major impetus to improving rural life at the time was President Theodore Roosevelt's 1908 *Country Life Commission*. One of the outcomes of this movement was the Cooperative Extension Service, which was established by the Smith-Lever Act of 1914. The *Cooperative Extension Service* provided an educator in each agricultural county who was responsible for educational programs related to the social, economic, and financial well-being of rural residents. The Cooperative Extension Service had the same emphasis as the Progressive movement in urban areas on collaboration between experts and citizens in solving local problems. The Cooperative Extension Service was able to draw on the research and expertise of the land grant system and built its program based on the involvement of local residents in identifying community needs. In many states, it also focused on comprehensive solutions that acknowledged the importance of recreation and social activities.

Community development practitioners during the Progressive Era emphasized community-level intervention that was intended to integrate residents into the larger society. The philosophy behind the movement was that together, professional expertise and participation by the poor could solve these problems. The goal was to help residents become full citizens by improving the services available to them and providing them with the scientific information they would need to improve their quality of life. There was very little concern at the time with the potential for dependency relations developing between the public and experts. In both rural and urban areas, there was an interest in helping residents develop their own organizations to more adequately serve their needs. Although there was a great deal of attention in these movements to the problems of poverty, there was no real attempt to address the root causes of poverty. Most of the Progressive Era programs did not involve government intervention or support but instead relied heavily on charitable giving and donations from wealthy families.

Assimilationist

The New Deal

President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs constructed a new approach to the problems of depressed communities during the Great Depression. Initiated in the 1930s, these programs dealt with a wide array of problems, including job creation, land ownership, housing, physical infrastructure, and social welfare. These programs provided federal support for community intervention and became the foundation for community development efforts for the next 30 years. One of the chief characteristics of community

development programs during this period was the strong role of the federal government in helping communities address their needs.

Probably the most influential piece of legislation directly affecting depressed communities during the New Deal was the Housing Act of 1937, which provided the basis for public housing. Like many of the other New Deal programs, the Housing Act of 1937 established a decentralized system of market subsidies and local control. Local authorities were responsible for issuing bonds, purchasing land, and contracting with local builders (O'Connor, 1999). The housing programs were used primarily for slum clearance, which was beneficial to the many real estate developers involved in opening up efforts to revitalize downtown areas. Local control also meant that almost all public housing built at the time was concentrated in central cities.

Many of the New Deal programs had objectives that worked against the goal of reducing urban poverty. The primary objective of the New Deal housing programs was to promote homeownership. There are several elements to these programs, but some of the most important are the home mortgage loans that were made available to middle- and working-class residents and the loan guarantees to private lenders. These programs provided incentives for people to move to the suburbs, leaving the central cities with a higher rate of unemployment, poverty, and social problems. The federal programs of the 1950s that built interstate highways also exacerbated many of these problems.

One of the central programs of the New Deal was the Works Progress Administration (WPA), which was established in 1935. The WPA provided jobs for the large number of unemployed workers during the Depression. The program provided more than \$11 billion, mostly for public projects such as highways, streets, utilities, libraries, bridges, dams, and recreation facilities. Workers were paid the prevailing wage in the region, and many localities benefited immensely from the development of their infrastructure. The program offered on-the-job training and courses through adult education, which gave many workers concrete skills and experience.

The New Deal programs made some important strides in aiding distressed communities. The programs, however, also faced other basic obstacles that have plagued community development programs over the years. In many instances, politics worked against successful implementation of these policies. For example, the programs that might have benefited tenant farmers and African Americans in the South were bitterly fought by Southern legislators and businesses. Many of the social assistance programs were administered through local welfare offices, where the local elite could influence access to and levels of support for the poor (Piven & Cloward, 1971). This was the trade-off that President Franklin Roosevelt made for getting the support of Southern Democrats for the New Deal programs. This tension between local control and federal support continued through several decades of programs related to community development. The New Deal, however, did represent a major shift in the role of the federal government in attempting to address the problems of poor communities.

Federal / local control

Urban Renewal and Area Redevelopment

During the 1940s and 1950s, population and employment decentralization contributed to the growth of suburbs and the rise in concentrated poverty and blight in central cities. The federal government's response to these problems was the **Housing Act of 1949**, which came to be known as **urban renewal**. The primary objective of urban renewal was to clear the slums in efforts to revitalize downtowns and attract middle-class residents back to cities. The Housing Act of 1949 permitted local redevelopment authorities to use eminent domain to reclaim land for commercial purposes. Urban renewal came to be known as "Negro removal" and was criticized for bulldozing low-income neighborhoods.

The Area Redevelopment Act (ARA) of 1961 focused on a different set of issues at the time—joblessness in areas affected by economic modernization. The program provided low-interest loans to businesses willing to locate or expand in the designated depressed areas. The ARA was eliminated after a relatively brief period (4 years). Among the major criticisms were that the ARA was recruiting nonunion businesses and that it was largely ineffective. The program was transformed into the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and focused on rural infrastructure and regional planning.

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The War on Poverty

Three programs during the mid-1960s provided the foundation for President Lyndon Johnson's **War on Poverty**: the **Community Action Program (CAP)**, **Model Cities**, and the **Special Impact Program (SIP)**. These programs were qualitatively different from the New Deal programs. They emphasized a commitment to local participation and control in the implementation of poverty programs.

CAP became one of the most controversial programs of the War on Poverty (Moynihan, 1969). Title II-A, Section 202 (a)(3) of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 authorized CAPs to be "developed, conducted and administered with the maximum feasible participation of residents of the areas and members of the groups served." There was considerable disagreement among activists, bureaucrats, and policy makers about the involvement of the poor in CAP policy making and program development. Some people thought of this requirement as simply involvement, not decision-making responsibility. Others interpreted it as requiring some form of social action among the poor.

CAP.

The most serious criticisms of the program were (1) that it contributed to the conflict and violence in the inner city during the 1960s, (2) the government adopted this idea without any understanding of community participation, (3) bureaucrats had perverted congressional intent of the program, and (4) the poor were not ready to assume power in their communities. Daniel Moynihan's (1969) principal concern was that the program led to rising expectations on

which it could not deliver. This, he argued, was the central reason for the riots in the major cities during the 1960s.

The requirement for public participation was a threat to many local politicians. City mayors were accustomed to working with established neighborhood organizations and leaders representing minority groups and the poor, not the emerging coalitions in these cities. CAPs were demanding changes in services and resources allocated to poor neighborhoods. In reality, however, most CAPs were never very representative of the poor. The boards did not have many poor people on them, and the CAPs were required to work through the system to achieve any results.

There is a consensus that most of the public participation programs of the 1960s were not very effective. Several factors worked against the efforts. The federal and local governments never really trusted the CAPs. As a result, many local government officials were able to minimize the level of real community control in the organizations. Resources for the War on Poverty were insufficient for dealing with the magnitude of the problems. The Vietnam War siphoned off money that could have been devoted to poverty programs. Thus, it is not clear whether the CAP was a failed idea, because it was never given the chance to demonstrate how effective it could have been.

The second major program directed at concentrations of poor and minority households was the Model Cities program. This program was established through the Demonstration and Metropolitan Development Act (1966). The act provided grants to city agencies to improve housing, the physical environment, and social services in low-income neighborhoods. In many respects, it was a diluted version of the CAP because it placed less emphasis on public participation. The major difference was that CAPs worked around local government officials, whereas Model Cities worked with them.

The third major program initiated during this period was the SIP. This program provided funds to community development corporations (CDCs) to finance comprehensive development strategies. SIP was an outcome of Senator Robert Kennedy's visit to Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood in 1965, which formed the nation's first CDC.

One of the most controversial issues of this era, and one that continues today, is the role of **eminent domain** in urban renewal. Eminent domain refers to the government condemnation of private property for public purposes. During the 1960s, the federal government condemned a large number of parcels and tore down buildings, leaving property vacant for development. In many cities, however, this property remained vacant or was sold to private developers. The concept of eminent domain remains controversial today, especially after the recent *Kelo v. City of New London* (2005) decision by the Supreme Court. This case supported the right of government to take private property for public use.

The community development programs of the 1960s placed considerably more emphasis on local control than had any previous federal attempts to address the problems of poor communities. Most assessments of the programs

Model Cities.

SIP.

Why do we have eminent domain? Is it a good thing?

have concluded that these efforts to increase the level of participation by the poor in decision making were relatively unsuccessful. These programs also emphasized the need for neighborhood organizations to address local problems. The continued growth of CDCs today suggests that this may have been one of the most successful long-term elements of these programs. We discuss some of the issues surrounding the effectiveness of community development corporations in Chapter 5.

President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty has been criticized for decades because it did not eliminate poverty in the United States. Some of the Johnson administration's effort to fight poverty was diluted by the financial resources required to fight the Vietnam War at the time. It should be pointed out, however, that the poverty rate would have been much higher during the past 50 years if it had not been for the War on Poverty. Some segments of the population had benefited immensely from these programs. For example, the development of Medicare has helped many elderly overcome the harsh burden of health care costs. Children in poor families have also benefited from Medicaid. Medicare and Medicaid were funded through the Social Security Act of 1965. Several other programs developed at the time are considered very successful. Among those programs, Head Start began in 1965 by providing early childhood education, nutrition, and health care programs to low-income families. There have been a vast number of evaluation studies of Head Start, and most of this research shows that the program is cost-effective and has a significant impact on children who participate in the program. Another successful Great Society program that remains in a different form is VISTA, which was restructured into the AmeriCorps program in 1993. VISTA offered employment for individuals willing to work in low-income neighborhoods to provide educational and training programs. In many ways, VISTA was designed as a domestic Peace Corps program. In addition, the War on Poverty established other important programs, such as the Food Stamp Program, which was permanently established in 1964.

In addition to these federal policies and programs during the 1960s, several social movements focused on grassroots community organizing. Two of the most notable were the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). The SNCC was founded in 1960 and included several key figures, such as John Lewis, Julian Bond, Ella Baker, and Stokely Carmichael. On a national level, the SNCC was actively involved in organizing the Freedom Ride and the March on Washington. At the local level, the SNCC helped organized local communities around issues related to civil rights. For example, in Lowndes County, Georgia, the SNCC organized a voter registration drive. Although the county was 80% African American, no minorities were registered to vote. Eventually, the majority of residents were registered and African Americans were elected to office. In Atlanta, Georgia, the SNCC organized neighborhoods around the need for affordable housing. And in Columbus, Ohio, the SNCC experimented with self-government among minority neighborhoods in the city. The SNCC eventually was split between

At what scale should anti-poverty initiatives be conducted? What are the tradeoffs?

those who wanted to push the organization in a more radical direction and those who wished to work within the existing system.

The SDS was founded by students at the University of Michigan and advertised itself as the "Northern Arm of the SNCC." Like the SNCC, the SDS was organized around a strong linkage between the larger social movement and grassroots efforts to promote social change. SDS activists were trained in community organizing strategies and lived in poor neighborhoods. They organized the communities around neighborhood improvements, such as housing, jobs, and transportation. The national organization, however, was loosely structured and did not survive.

The most significant aspect of both the SNCC and SDS was that they attempted to promote a strong linkage between a social movement and grassroots community development efforts. Social movements can provide strategic resources and support for local programs. Conversely, local organizing efforts can offer social movements political support on the ground, as well as concrete models for success. More contemporary efforts, such as the occupy movement, have been less successful in providing direction and support for local organizations.

Overall, the War on Poverty was probably the most important historical period in the rise of the community development field. While it established important programs to benefit the poor, it also recognized the role of place-based development efforts and participation in effectively addressing issues of poverty.

Retrenchment in the Nixon and Reagan Administrations

The Nixon administration's New Federalism restructured the role of the federal government in community development. The administration attempted to dismantle many of the programs that were created in the 1960s by granting states and localities more authority in influencing how public funds were spent. Probably the best example of this shift was the creation of Community Development Block Grants (CDBGs) in 1974, which replaced seven of the categorical grants to localities for specific purposes to address poverty. The Nixon administration substituted these categorical grants with a form of revenue sharing that gave localities much more autonomy in their decisions in how to spend these dollars.

The CDBGs have three major objectives: (1) to benefit low- and moderate-income families (defined as families earning no more than 80% of the area median income), (2) to eliminate or prevent slums, and (3) to meet urgent community needs. Communities must use at least 70% of the CDBG funds to benefit principally low- and moderate-income persons. The CDBG program is one of the largest of the federal grant programs. Over the past 40 years, the federal government has allocated almost \$100 billion to CDBGs.

Communities receiving funds directly from the federal government today are referred to as entitlement communities. These metropolitan cities and

*Social movements
and local mobilization*

New Federalism

urban counties (842 cities and 147 counties) receive direct grants that can be used to revitalize neighborhoods, expand affordable housing and economic development efforts, and improve community facilities and services. A separate CDBG program allocates funds to the states. States, in turn, provide grants to localities not covered under the entitlement funds, referred to as nonentitlement communities.

To receive its CDBG entitlement grant, a community must have a plan approved that describes how it will use its funds. Throughout most of the 1980s and 1990s, housing was the most important use of CDBGs in localities. There has been a gradual shift in priorities, however, toward other objectives, such as economic development activities. Jobs created through CDBG-funded programs must meet several tests for quality. A study by the Urban Institute, funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD, 1995), found that 96% of the jobs created through CDBG funds were full-time jobs, 89% of the jobs remained after 4 years, 90% paid more than minimum wage, and 32% were held by the businesses' neighborhood residents. CDBG funds are supposed to be targeted to needy communities through a formula allocation system that considers population size, poverty, overcrowded housing, and age of housing.

How do communities use their CDBG funds? Communities may acquire real property for public purposes, such as abandoned houses purchased for rehabilitation. Many localities have used the funds to build public facilities, such as streets, sidewalks, water and sewer systems, and recreational facilities. Increasingly, communities are using CDBG funds to help for-profit businesses by establishing revolving loan funds, assembling land for new industry, or helping existing businesses expand to hire low-income workers. Entitlement communities spend the largest share of their funding for housing and public facilities and improvements. The shift in how these funds were allocated, however, meant that federal funds were not being funneled into the most needy communities.

CASE STUDY 2.1 CDBG FUNDS: DIRECT ASSISTANCE TO LOW- AND MODERATE-INCOME HOMEBUYERS, WAUKESHA COUNTY, WISCONSIN

Waukesha County, located in the suburbs of Milwaukee, is one of the fastest growing areas in Wisconsin. Rapid growth and a high median family income mean that housing costs are out of range for most low- and moderate-income families, with only a few homes for sale under \$100,000. To respond to these needs, the county used CDBG funds to underwrite low- and moderate-income buyers in three new subdivisions to promote homeownership through innovative methods. The county is also using \$350,000 "float loan" financing for buyers' land write-downs in another development.

SOURCE: Gunther (2000).

Fundamental question: How do you direct resources and investment to places the market has not done so?

The Reagan administration changed the CDBG program to allow states to administer the grants to small cities. Governors maintained that they could direct the resources better to distressed communities than could the federal government. The evidence suggests that states and localities vary considerably in their capacity and will to target these funds to the most distressed communities (Rich, 1993). When states target the funds, they tend to distribute the funds to a broader set of communities and are less likely to target the most distressed communities.

Local officials like CDBG funds because they are a predictable source of funding for community development. In addition, the funds are relatively flexible, although there has been some controversy over the years regarding how flexible these funds should be. The funds also can be used to leverage private funds (and other public funds) for community projects.

Probably the most lasting impact of the Reagan administration on community development was the federal budget cuts throughout the 1980s. Most of the federal programs that supported community development programs, especially those through HUD, were cut severely. Ironically, these cuts may have strengthened many community-based organizations (CBOs), such as CDCs, which were forced to find new sources of funding, primarily through foundations and other private sources.

the shadow state

The Clinton Years

As Bill Clinton came into office, his thinking about poverty and community development was influenced significantly by the research and writing of the sociologist William Julius Wilson. Wilson's analysis suggested that the urban poor had become more socially isolated as manufacturing jobs left cities and the middle class followed the jobs in the 1970s and 1980s. The poor were much more likely to live in neighborhoods with a high concentration of poverty. As a result, the unemployment rate among Black males skyrocketed, and there was a rapid growth in the number of single head-of-households in poor neighborhoods. Youth in these neighborhoods had very few role models and often turned to crime because of the lack of job opportunities. Wilson argued that affirmative action and other race-based approaches would not be enough to alleviate the problems in concentrated poverty neighborhoods. Instead, he called for efforts to build job opportunities in the ghetto and build strategies that deconcentrate poverty.

The Clinton administration's efforts at community development focused primarily on the Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community (EZ/EC) initiative. The objective of this program was to stimulate economic opportunity in America's distressed communities. The program provided tax incentives and performance grants and loans to create jobs and business opportunities. It also focused on activities to support people looking for work, such as job training, child care, and transportation. Employers in the EZ were eligible for wage tax credits, worth \$3,000, for every employee hired who lived in the

EZ. EZ businesses also could write off the expense of the cost of depreciable, tangible property they purchased up to \$37,000. All of the communities were eligible to receive tax-exempt bond financing that offered lower rates than conventional financing to finance business property and land, renovations, or expansion.

To receive funds, communities were required to submit strategic plans developed with the active participation of low-income community residents, and only communities with high rates of poverty were eligible. In the first round, rural EZs received grants of \$40 million and rural ECs received about \$3 million from the Social Services Block Grant program. Urban EZs received \$100 million; urban ECs received the same amount as rural ECs. The first round of empowerment zones included Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, Kentucky Highlands, Mid-Delta Mississippi, and the Rio Grande Valley in Texas. There were 95 enterprise communities.

The effectiveness of these programs has been hotly debated. HUD reports that by 1998, almost 10,000 jobs were created or saved, 14,000 workers were trained, 25,000 youth were served, and 102 water or waste treatment systems were under construction. Most of the businesses would have located or stayed in these communities without the tax incentives, and these programs have had only a very limited impact on poverty in these areas. EZ/EC communities also face some of the same opposition by local government officials that the CAPs faced in the 1960s.

By the late 1990s, most states passed their own enterprise-zone legislation. States vary widely in what they offer businesses to locate in these zones, including tax incentives (e.g., property tax abatements, investment tax credits, employer and employee tax credits, and lender and investment deductions), financial assistance (e.g., low-interest loans and bond financing), and regulatory changes (e.g., environmental regulations, building permits).

What incentives can the government provide?

Another major Clinton administration initiative was an overhaul of the welfare system. In 1996, Congress passed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWOR), which ended the program known as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). This act had important implications for states and localities because CBOs became more involved in providing services to welfare recipients and designing programs that would facilitate their entrance into the labor force. These programs relied heavily on CBOs to coordinate many of the services and training programs that were available to workers. Other important facets of the program, however, had much more negative effects on the poor. Welfare reform emphasized "work first," which meant that immediate attachment to the labor market was the primary goal. It tended to deemphasize job training and education. Second, it placed time limits on how long individuals could receive financial support. Many of the elements of the reform were designed to address the criticism that welfare programs had developed a sense of dependency among the poor.

Welfare reform.

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998, one of the most ambitious and comprehensive workforce education and training programs ever passed by the U.S. Congress, emphasized community building to meet local workforce needs. This program requires local partnerships in designing training programs. The act also mandates participation of local businesses, government officials, and other local organizations in the program and policy development of workforce development boards. The Clinton administration benefited from the longest period of economic expansion since World War II. This economic growth meant that many regions suffered from labor shortages. As a result, there were many job openings for welfare recipients, and the tight labor market began to increase the wages for the lowest paid workers. Although many jobs were created, most former welfare recipients have not moved out of poverty. Additional training and support programs are needed to provide them with economic and social mobility.

Overall, the Clinton administration did not rebuild the federal support for community development programs that existed in the 1960s. Instead, the administration continued the trend begun by the Nixon and Reagan administrations to cut back the role of the federal government. It also continued to decentralize much of the decision making, giving the responsibility to local officials. Probably the best illustration of this trend has been the legislation that reformed the federal government's role in welfare programs. Foundations, such as the Ford Foundation and the Kellogg Foundation, picked up some of the slack that was left from the declining financial support for community development programs.

The Bush Administration

The Bush administration had planned to cut many of the remaining community development programs in the federal government but ultimately had little success. For example, in 2005, the administration proposed to eliminate HUD's CDBG program. The program, however, is highly valued in Congress and brings much-needed resources to many communities.

The major community development program under the Bush administration was its faith-based initiative, which is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. This initiative established a White House office to help faith-based organizations address problems of homelessness and drug abuse. Opposition to the initiative focused on its potential to erode the separation between church and state. The administration defended its program by arguing that it is putting faith-based organizations on a level playing field with other CBOs and is simply recognizing the critical role faith-based organizations play in addressing social needs.

The Bush administration's general approach toward community development was to emphasize the importance of private rather than public institutions as the appropriate mechanism to promote development. The administration's tendency was to focus on community issues as individual rather than social

problems. Of course, the larger culture tends to reinforce public policy. For example, a growing number of gated suburban communities have been established in response to urban poverty and crime (Blakely & Snyder, 1997). Combined with growing income inequality, restrictive land policies, and racial and economic segregation, these suburban migration patterns make it more difficult to address broader social problems.

Obama's Challenges

President Barack Obama came to office with considerable experience in community organizing. He worked in the mid-1980s as a community organizer with the Developing Communities Project (DCP), a church-based community organization on the South Side of Chicago. He worked with the Gamaliel Foundation as a consultant as well. These community roots provided President Obama with a rich understanding of the obstacles and challenges low-income residents face in their neighborhoods. The issue was whether these experiences would have any real impact on how the federal government approached poverty and community development.

The most immediate concern of the Obama administration in 2009 was the "Great Recession." The Great Recession began in December 2007 with the collapse or bailout of several major financial institutions (e.g., Lehman Brothers, Merrill Lynch, Fannie Mae, and Freddie Mac) and officially ended in June 2009. Over the past 75 years, the United States has experienced numerous recessions, but none have been as deep and long lasting as this one. Several factors contributed to the severity of this recession. A housing bubble, created by a growing use of subprime mortgages, led to a historic number of foreclosures and dramatic declines in real estate prices in many regions. Lax financial regulation contributed to speculative investment in real estate markets. When the housing bubble broke, credit became much tighter, and there were massive layoffs and business closings throughout the economy. One of the things that made the recession so devastating was that it consisted of simultaneous shocks to the housing, labor, and stock markets. Approximately 40% of American households were directly affected—by unemployment in the household, negative equity on their house, or arrears on house payment. Some neighborhoods were hit harder than others, especially those areas with a large percentage of high-risk mortgages, which have been referred to as subprime loans. Lending institutions targeted many of these neighborhoods, even though borrowers had less than ideal credit histories or collateral.

The Obama administration responded to the recession by proposing a large stimulus program. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 provided aid to cities and states in an attempt to provide a stimulus to the economy. Several components to the act focused on community development initiatives. The ARRA provided \$1.5 billion to fund regional transportation projects and \$8 billion to initiate high-speed rail systems in several states. (Many states ultimately rejected the funds for

transportation improvements because they feared it would ultimately require more state funds to maintain the systems.) In addition to the support for infrastructure projects, the ARRA provided funds for a clean energy project and injected capital for low-cost loans to banks that focus on funding development in lower-income communities. Clean energy projects focused on sustainability efforts and financing for retrofitting old residences and businesses. Funds were also directed at low-income neighborhoods that suffered high foreclosure rates as a result of the housing crisis. Although the ARRA was relatively large, critics charged that it was not sufficiently large enough to address the long-term unemployment and depressed housing markets in many urban areas.

Key features of the Obama administration's urban policy have been its emphasis on regionalism and sustainability. The new White House Office of Urban Affairs coordinates many of these programs. The 2010 budget contained several new initiatives. The Sustainable Communities Initiative provides grants to metropolitan areas where several municipalities come together to coordinate transportation, housing, and land use decisions.

The **Choice Neighborhoods Initiative** focuses on neighborhoods where rental housing is currently clustered. This program provides funding for housing redevelopment and other forms of neighborhood revitalization. The Choice Neighborhoods Initiative will replace HOPE VI, which was designed to replace public housing projects in concentrated neighborhoods.

The **Promise Zone Initiative** is modeled after a program in Harlem that provides a wide range of services that focus on the well-being of children. It goes beyond the tax incentive programs established by the Clinton administration. The Obama administration established Promise Zone initiatives in five locations (San Antonio, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, southeast Kentucky, and the Choctaw Nation in Oklahoma), as well as plans for another 20 locations. Each location has a plan for development that will be strongly supported with federal funds, tax breaks, AmeriCorps volunteers, and improved service provision. The program will be closely evaluated to assess the outcomes and impacts of various elements of the program.

One of the most significant pieces of legislation passed during the Obama administration has been the Affordable Health Care Act. In addition to the most controversial provisions, such as insurance mandates, the act has several important elements related to community development. Most low-income neighborhoods lack access to affordable health care. Health care centers serve more than 20 million patients each year, most tend to serve racial or ethnic minorities, and a large percentage of patients do not have health insurance. Thus, they have become an essential safety net system for primary and preventive health care. The Affordable Health Care Act established a fund of more than \$11 billion to support community health centers nationwide. Additional funds have been allocated to support use of electronic health records and outreach in community health centers. There are additional implications of the Affordable Health Care Act for nonprofit hospitals. To

continue their status as a 501(c)(3) organization, each hospital must conduct a community health needs assessment every 3 years. This provision has significant potential in moving health care providers beyond the walls of the hospital and being more accountable to the communities they are supposed to be serving.

Community development stands on firmer ground than it did 50 years ago. The number of CBOs and nonprofit organizations working in the area of poverty has increased. Although many of these organizations continue to struggle for financial support, they have developed many relatively successful programs. Similarly, the concept of public participation has become more institutionalized in federal and state programs. Elements of public participation are now included in environmental, health, transportation, housing, and economic development programs. Public participation is now considered an important element of good policy making.

Community Organizing

This discussion of the history of community development emphasizes the institutional evolution of the field, but it says little about the impact of organized labor and social unrest resulting from the New Deal and other social movements (civil rights, farm workers, and even environmental movements) on community development. Many of the programs we discussed were in response to social unrest or pressure from various civil society organizations. In their book *Regulating the Poor*, Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward (1971) documented how public assistance programs are linked to economic conditions and labor unrest. Their argument was that welfare programs function to regulate labor. Public assistance expands in times of high unemployment and social unrest and contracts when order is restored and the economy improves. Community development programs, especially the War on Poverty programs, were a large part of this response. Piven and Cloward concluded that these programs would not have emerged if the poor had been placid. They suggest, however, that many of the programs were symbolic and were rolled back once the unrest subsided and labor market conditions improved. Their analysis raises important questions of how community organizing can be more institutionalized so poor communities can build power that can be sustained over a long period of time.

Other social movements shaped the nature of community development in the 1960s and 1970s. In the mid-1960s, Cesar Chavez played a critical role in his unionization efforts of the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) and the United Farm Workers (UFW). Prior to his work with the NFWA, Chavez worked for a decade at a community service organization (CSO) in California that had an affiliation with Saul Alinsky's Industrial Areas Foundation (discussed in Chapter 11). The goal of the CSO was to improve services, especially those provided to Chicano communities. Chavez's experience with the organization led to his interest in organizing farm workers.

Chavez's unique contribution was that he organized farm workers using community-based strategies he learned from the CSO, rather than labor union tactics, which were used normally. He relied on some of the techniques used by the Industrial Areas Foundation, such as conducting house meetings with farm workers to understand their concerns and issues. Chavez also was successful in linking his movement to the civil rights movement and the poor people's movement of the 1960s.

Another key development in the 1970s was the community reinvestment movement. Using Alinsky-style tactics in Chicago, Gale Cincotta led a national collation of neighborhood groups to challenge the disinvestment activities of financial institutions in urban areas. This movement led to the Community Reinvestment Act (discussed in Chapter 9), which has successfully directed more than a billion dollars into depressed communities in the past few decades.

Social movements have played a critical role in shaping the community development field. Although some of the responses have been symbolic and short term, community development has become institutionalized in policies and programs today. One of the lessons learned, however, is that government officials' response to local needs is driven by the level of community organization. Recent attempts to eliminate some of the basic programs, such as the CDBG program, have not been successful. Politicians from a broad political spectrum can ideologically support community development, evidenced by political conservatives' opposition to cuts in basic programs. Even local elites view community development programs as legitimate and will defend them to the federal government.

Recurring Issues in Community Development

Throughout the history of the United States, several tensions and issues have plagued community development efforts. Among the most important are the role of participation and the importance of gender and race in shaping development efforts in poor communities.

Participation

Public participation in programs directed at low- and middle-income neighborhoods has been institutionalized since the 1960s. There continues to be debate over how effective this participation has been. At its worst, public participation has been used to simply legitimate the decisions of government officials. At its best, public participation has brought CBOs to the table in some cities, although it probably has not resulted in community control in most cases.

Unfortunately, most government programs look more like pseudo-participation rather than full participation (Pateman, 1970). That is, they

provide residents with an opportunity to participate, but these residents really have no power to make decisions. Government agencies frequently are required to include some form of public participation but are unwilling to leave the decision-making process to local residents. Instead, officials use the opportunity to gain legitimacy for their decisions. Similarly, efforts by the federal government to promote public participation have been fought by local government officials, who see these efforts as reducing their political patronage or support.

Decentralization of federal programs does not mean that poor residents will have more control over programs because, as is evident with many community development programs, decentralization leads to greater control by the local elite. Centralization of the programs, however, usually ensures that the poor will have very little control over programs.

One of the central issues in the debates over public participation is how much information and knowledge residents need to be effective. On one hand, advocates of public participation contend that residents hold the most relevant information about their community and that they should be the ones making decisions about issues affecting their locality. On the other hand, many of the issues affecting communities today are highly technical, and residents should rely on experts to help them make decisions or should be educated on the issues. There probably is no resolution to this problem, but in recent years, the community development field has emphasized the importance of the local knowledge of residents and the significance of their participation, even in highly technical decisions.

As the field of community development has matured, practitioners and community advocates have often viewed the issue of participation as secondary to the substantive issues facing communities. In many cases, the public participation element is simply a part of the process. Even among many CBOs, the concept of direct participation is seen as unwieldy and messy.

One of the key assumptions often made by policy makers and practitioners is that people have an inherent desire and ability to participate in community affairs. In many respects, these efforts to promote public participation fail because they do not recognize that participation needs to be learned through active engagement in institutions and organizations. Most institutions and organizations, however, tend to place more emphasis on hierarchy and bureaucracy as a means of promoting social order. Individuals spend most of their social life in large organizations, such as schools, that do not promote participatory decision making. Thus, it is difficult for most people to learn how to actively participate in communities and to develop confidence in their ability to work with others to find solutions to local issues.

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→ People are also politically marginalized.

Race

Another critique of community development programs is that they are race neutral, ignoring the role of racial discrimination in generating high

poverty rates in minority communities (Jennings, 2004). The high poverty rate among minorities, especially among African Americans, has been assumed to be a result of low levels of human capital, high rates of crime in poor neighborhoods (which deter businesses from locating there), and high levels of unemployment in metropolitan areas. Although these issues are certainly constraints to place-based policies, other factors that more directly focus on racial discrimination are seldom considered.

Racial discrimination is defined as involving actions that serve to limit the social, political, or economic opportunities of particular groups (Fredrickson & Knobel, 1982). Racial discrimination may take a variety of forms. Redlining by lending institutions and insurance companies may be directed at minority neighborhoods. Similarly, employer discrimination may focus on workers from specific neighborhoods or schools (Kirschenman & Neckerman, 1991).

Quadagno (1994) argued that racial discrimination played an important role in undermining the War on Poverty in the 1960s. She provided several examples in which community development programs failed because of White opposition and the unwillingness or inability of the federal government to overcome this opposition. When the CAPs were formed, many were quickly taken over by civil rights activists, who challenged many big-city mayors and political organizations. The Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) was sensitive to the criticism by local government officials that the CAPs had provided the spark for the urban riots of the 1960s. In 1973, President Nixon abolished the OEO.

Training programs devised during the War on Poverty also suffered some of the same problems. The goal of many of these programs was to increase the skills of workers from poor neighborhoods. Unions, which attempted to restrict the supply of labor to maintain a high level of demand, were opposed to these programs. In addition, the unions were unwilling to change their recruiting practices, which often discriminated against minorities. Eventually, training programs focused less on low-income and minority workers and became more acceptable to the larger public. Quadagno (1994) showed how attempts by the federal government to deal with racial segregation also created a backlash by local governments, developers, and others. Because most of the housing programs focused on rental subsidies for minorities, local governments frequently challenged them.

These three cases illustrate how race has played a critical role in affecting the success of community development programs. There continue to be debates over whether community development programs should directly confront the issue of racial discrimination. Critics of race-specific policies suggest that these programs need broad support and targeting race-based policies will cause programs to fail. In her analysis of the War on Poverty, Margaret Weir (1988) argued that "the racial targeting of the War on Poverty helped to create the conditions for a powerful backlash that would severely damage prospects for meaningful cooperation between Blacks and labor in

*But what about the role
of race in driving the
inequality in the first
place?*

support of employment programs” (p. 184). A better solution, according to Weir, would have been to develop strategies that would press for broader solutions, such as full employment.

Wilson (1978, 1987) probably has been the strongest critic of race-specific programs to address the problems of concentrated poverty. Wilson contended that concentrated poverty is the result of the decline of manufacturing jobs in cities (which paid good wages), the suburbanization of employment, and the rise of low-wage service sector jobs, which has reduced employment opportunities in most central cities. As a result, the number of communities with high levels of poverty (greater than 40%) has increased rapidly since the 1960s (although the number actually declined somewhat during the 1990s). Like Weir, Wilson believes that creating tight labor markets is, in the long run, the best way to address the problems of concentrated poverty. Race-specific programs, such as affirmative action, tend to benefit only a small proportion of minorities. Economic programs encouraging job creation are more likely to improve conditions for all minorities.

Critics, such as Massey and Denton (1993), claim that racial discrimination, primarily in the area of housing, continues to be the root cause of urban poverty. Massey and Denton argued that housing segregation results in higher concentrations of poverty and the deterioration of social and economic conditions in Black communities and that it ultimately leads to attitudes and behaviors that make it difficult for residents to obtain employment outside poor neighborhoods. They focus on better enforcement of the *Fair Housing Act of 1968* and other race-specific policies directed toward poor neighborhoods. Massey and Denton contend that social programs failing to focus on race are unable to address the fundamental problems in poor neighborhoods.

Race has been an underlying issue throughout the history of community development. Advocates continue their efforts for projects that focus on the importance of race, such as those that address lending, housing, and employment discrimination. Although most community development practitioners recognize the importance of these issues, they continue to debate the effects of these programs in helping the poor and gaining assistance from the larger society.

Gender

Women dominate most neighborhood and community organizations, but this fact is largely ignored in much of the literature on community development. Haeberle (1989) found that gender was the strongest predictor of community activists' perceptions of their neighborhood organization's success. Men and women approach their neighborhood organizations differently. Men are much more likely to define their neighborhoods in material terms, whereas women focus more on the social relationships and bonds. There also are gender differences in whether residents emphasize the process or outcomes of community development. Men tend to favor community development projects

that focus on physical improvement projects, such as new or better roads and recreational facilities. Women tend to emphasize the importance of organizational participation in the community development process.

There is very little literature on the role of women in community organizing and development. An exception is Naples's (1998) longitudinal study of women community workers hired in the CAPs during the War on Poverty. Naples found that the War on Poverty provided opportunities for women to receive pay for the work they performed on the behalf of communities. Although many of these women were pulled into other jobs, especially into professionalized social service agencies, they continued to work on behalf of their communities.

Like the debates over race-specific policies, there is a growing recognition that women, especially minority women, may have been disadvantaged by the structural changes in the economy over the past 30 years. In particular, there may be fewer job opportunities for women in central cities that provide a living wage. Thus, strategies for creating jobs in these poor neighborhoods need to recognize the special constraints that women face in the labor market (especially child care) and the role that gender segregation plays in the labor market.

Summary and Conclusions

Community development efforts during the past five decades have shared two key aspects. First, efforts have been place based, with a special emphasis on minority and low-income neighborhoods and communities. Second, community development programs have emphasized public participation and community control. Both of these elements continue to be controversial. Critics suggest that community development programs do not address the larger structural forces affecting poor neighborhoods. Looking at the evidence, we would have to agree that the outcomes of these programs have been limited. Many of the problems, however, are not due to the theory or practice of community development but to opposition by local officials or federal programs that undermined community development efforts.

This brief review of the evolution of community development also highlights the difficult role the federal government plays in promoting development in poor and minority neighborhoods. It is clear that the federal government can play an important role in funneling resources to local organizations. It is less clear, however, whether the federal government can actually build neighborhood organizations or create public participation. Similarly, there is concern that many of the federal initiatives constrain or limit grassroots activities too much. As we discuss in the chapter on CBOs, the federal government may not be able to overcome the many institutional obstacles that exist. Thus, the real hope for community development may rely on grassroots efforts initiated at the local level. But these local organizations are almost always hampered by their lack of resources and their fragmented approach to social problems.

Finally, the review of community development does suggest that building a stronger linkage between local efforts and broader social movements has several advantages. The linkages provide social movements with a stronger political base, as well as with concrete models for social change. Strong ties to social movements improve local access to resources, information, and assistance. The challenge is to balance local needs and issues with larger success of social movements.

KEY CONCEPTS

Choice Neighborhoods Initiative	Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act
Community Action Program (CAP)	Progressive Era
Community center movement	Racial discrimination
Community Development Block Grants (CDBGs)	Settlement house
Cooperative Extension Service	Social Security Act of 1965
Country Life Commission	Social unit plan
Eminent domain	Special Impact Program (SIP)
Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community (EZ/EC)	Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)
Fair Housing Act of 1968	Students for a Democratic Society (SDS)
Housing Act of 1937	Urban renewal
Housing Act of 1949	War on Poverty
Model Cities	Works Progress Administration
Occupy movement	

QUESTIONS

1. Describe the history of community development in America. What do you consider the most important trends in how community development has been approached in the United States?
2. Why was the Community Action Program so controversial? How did these controversies affect poverty programs in the late 1960s?
3. What have been the long-term effects of New Federalism on community development programs?
4. Discuss some of the strengths and weaknesses of the EZ/EC program.

5. What are the arguments for and against race-based programs in community development?
6. What is the appropriate relationship between social movements and community organizing? Can social movements be led from below? Why or why not?

EXERCISES

1. Interview a local government official in your community and assess how community development programs have affected residents in your area. How many people receive rent subsidies? How is the CDBG program used in your community? Try to obtain some historical information on how your community participated in previous programs to help poor neighborhoods. How has community development changed in the past 50 years in your community?
2. Contact a Fair Housing Association in your community. Meet with representatives of the organization to discuss their recent activities. In what types of projects is the organization involved? What is the primary source of complaints regarding fair housing in your community?
3. Identify a local agency responsible for community and/or economic development. Interview some of the officials in this agency about their efforts to promote public participation in their programs. Have these programs successfully created opportunities for minorities and women to participate in community development efforts? How could these programs be improved?
4. Examine how neighborhood organizations or associations are structured in a metropolitan area. What resources are available to neighborhoods? How effective are the organizations in promoting public participation? To what extent can neighborhood associations influence the development process?

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ADDITIONAL READINGS AND RESOURCES

Readings

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- Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)—www.hud.gov. This website provides information on HUD programs, especially related to housing.
- Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)—www.hud.gov/cpd/cpdalloc.html. This website provides data on the CDBG allocations—how much each entitlement community has received.

Videos

- Building Hope*—<http://vimeo.com/5977553>. This video, produced by the Pratt Center for Community Development, provides a history of the CDC movement.