

Community Revitalization

Written Component of Ph.D. General Examination

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Submitted to Professor Ceasar McDowell
March 21, 2000

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Introduction

There have been a variety of efforts to revitalize distressed communities in America. The earliest efforts date back to the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century with the introduction of settlement houses, welfare through patronage, and formalized social service agencies. These attempts at strengthening communities were the precursors for more elaborate programs during 1960's and 1970's such as the Ford Foundation's Gray Areas program, the Office of Economic Opportunity's (OEO) Community Action program, the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Model Cities program, and the Ann E. Casey Foundation's New Futures program. Recent years have witnessed the advent of community revitalization initiatives that have endeavored to leverage the strengths of past programs and learn from their failures, including Community Development Corporations (CDCs) and Empowerment Zones/Enterprises Communities (EZ/EC).

As community revitalization has evolved and matured over time, all of the aforementioned efforts have incorporated varying elements of the three primary approaches to change: community organizing, community development, and community building (or asset-based community development). Some attempts have emphasized a single approach exclusively, while others have attempted to combine and integrate various aspects of some or all of these approaches.

This paper describes what distinguishes an asset-based approach to community organizing (or community organizing combined with community building) from an asset-based approach to community development (or community development combined with community building), and how differences between the two might be ameliorated by other approaches to community revitalization.

First, an overview is provided of community organizing, community development, and community building (or asset-based community development). This is followed by an examination of these approaches along six bases, or dimensions, for community revitalization. Then, community organizing and community building are compared, contrasted, and highlighted for the strengths and weaknesses associated with a combined approach. A similar analysis is then performed for community development and community building. Finally, I present a vision for how the differences between the two might be ameliorated by other approaches to community revitalization, namely, Comprehensive Community Initiatives (CCIs) and Community Organizing Initiatives (COIs).

Community Revitalization

The following is an overview of community organizing, community development, and community building. This is followed by an examination of these approaches along six bases, or dimensions, for community revitalization.

Community Organizing

Community organizing is an approach to community revitalization that enlists residents to take on powerful institutions in their community through direct, public confrontation and action (Alinsky, 1971; Delgado, 1986, 1994; Khan, 1991; Hess, 1999). Community organizing has its roots in the populist movements of the nineteenth century, and has been advanced by respected figures such as Saul Alinsky and Cesar Chavez, and noted organizations such as the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), the National People's Action, the Center for Third World Organizing, the Center for Community Change, and the Gamliel Foundation.

Hess (1999) has identified five characteristic features of community organizing:

- *Local, democratic control* - The involvement of local residents in determining goals and objectives (not necessarily the implementation thereof) in a participatory manner is a defining feature of community organizing.
- *Power is based on participation of mass-based constituency* - Success is predicated on widespread participation as a means to establish power and exert influence. As a result, community organizing often relies on the media and public information channels to develop broad involvement.
- *Leadership development is central* - Ongoing development of skilled and effective leaders fosters widespread participation, and serves as a mechanism for exercising democratic control.
- *Permanence and growth of the organization is paramount* - Without a sustained base of participants, as well as ongoing efforts to develop and grow the organization, the long-term sustainability of community organizing is severely hampered.
- *Contestation at the institutional level* - Community organizing seeks to challenge, confront, and ultimately change the societal institutions, systems, and norms, that are not responsive to the interests and needs of the community.

Community organizing seeks either greater control of institutions by placing people in decision-making roles or greater responsiveness of institutions to the needs of the community by restructuring decision-making processes. Community organizing often addresses multiple issues, simultaneously, that affect the community at-large. Some examples of community organizing efforts include resistance to the planned demolition of buildings or parks, voter registration, bringing an end to "redlining" or loan/mortgage discrimination by banks, and improving the conditions at schools. However, the goal of community organizing is not just to win a certain issue or "a change, but to win it as an organized group in short, an organized community" (Hess, 1999). Furthermore, once a community organizing effort has been won it can result in the creation of new institutions (e.g., a Community Development Corporation (CDC), a charter school, etc.) or new decision making mechanisms (e.g., reforming election laws, restructuring election districts, etc.). While the implementation of these programs is usually best served by others, they can be leveraged by community organizers for even greater success in the future (Hess, 1999).

A classic example of a community organizing effort is the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) in Boston, Massachusetts. Hess (199) writes:

"DSNI, for its part, is also very different from other projects... DSNI started at the resident level and rejected the collaborative design which foundations wished to impose on the community in the beginning (Tullos, 1996). The original design of the board, which... was to be a mix of various outsiders outnumbering residents, was aggressively rejected by the community. Instead a board with majority community control was instituted and DSNI began a project of... organizing (using door-to-door member recruitment) to gain eminent domain authority of a large part of decaying property in their neighborhood (Medoff and Sklar, 1994)."

Schorr (1997) adds:

"DSNI developed a comprehensive community revitalization plan that was adopted by the City of Boston as its official plan for the neighborhood. It received a \$2 million loan from the Ford Foundation to buy vacant land for redevelopment. DSNI leaders used the momentum of its land triumph to launch other initiatives... new traffic lights and better mass transit... a human services collaborative, after school programs and summer camps, built gardens and playgrounds and a neighborhood park."

Later, I will continue this discussion with an analysis of community organizing against the six bases for community revitalization.

Community Development

Community development is an approach to community revitalization whereby freestanding, non-profit, community-based organizations coordinate the construction and rehabilitation of a discrete geographic area's physical infrastructure (Schorr, 1997). Typically, community development is solely focused on the production of affordable housing. The most recognized model for community development is the Community Development Corporation (CDC). The history of CDCs can be traced back to Robert F. Kennedy's 1966 visit to the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of New York and the ensuing Special Impact Amendment to the Economic Opportunity Act (Bratt, 1989). In 1970, there were approximately 100 CDCs, but by 1995, there were more than 2,000 CDCs nationwide (Schorr, 1997). CDCs that are consistently noted in the literature include the Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation (the prototype CDC), the New Community Corporation in Newark, New Jersey, the Urban Edge Corporation in Boston, Massachusetts, and the Whittier Alliance in Minneapolis, Minnesota (Briggs, Mueller & Sullivan, 1997).

Stoeker (1996) has identified three characteristics of community development:

- *Bottom-up, comprehensive redevelopment* - Community development endeavors to help the community determine how to conduct redevelopment and to produce more homes and businesses owned by community members.
- *Empower whole communities through comprehensive treatment of social and physical conditions* (Marquez, 1993) - Community developers measure success in terms of both physical redevelopment and community regeneration, participation, and empowerment (Rubin, 1994)
- *An acceptance of supply-side economic models and "free"-market philosophy*- Community development attempts to address three market inefficiencies and, in doing so, supplement the supply-side of the market equation: 1) the inability of investors to see opportunities in neighborhoods, 2) the improbability of socially conscious investing due to the prevailing stance toward profit maximization, and 3) the barriers created by social and legal restrictions on investment such as zoning laws (Stoeker, 1996).

The tension that is inherent to community development is the dilemma of "capital vs. community" or "exchange vs. use." Those that are charged with managing capital seek opportunities to convert neighborhood space into "exchange values," or to maximize the profitability of that space for its owner(s). Those that are concerned with serving the community seek opportunities to preserve neighborhood space as a "use value," or to maximize the benefit of that space for residents. Tension arises due the fact that in order to conduct large-scale community development someone must mediate the interests of capitalists, and their focus on profit, with interests of community residents, and their focus on benefits. This tension manifests itself in three forms: scale, control and disorganization.

Scale

Housing rehabilitation and construction at a scale that can actually impact a residential area can only be achieved with access to significant capital resources and skilled professionals. Research has shown that larger CDCs are generally more successful at the production of housing than smaller CDCs. For example, Kelly (1977) found that two-thirds of the most successful CDCs had budgets above \$2 million, but only one-quarter of the least and moderately successful had that much. Similarly, Briggs, Mueller, & Sullivan (1997) found in their study of CDCs that positive outcomes were gained primarily where substantial resources were invested. However, the only way to ensure a true community focus in community development is to enlist residents as leaders and establish comparatively small, neighborhood-based organizations.

On one hand, it is difficult for a small community-based entity to amass enough capital to conduct meaningful community development. Furthermore, it is also a challenge to identify and/or train residents to handle many of the complexities associated with community development projects. On the other hand,

it is difficult for a large community development entity to ensure that their efforts are tailored to local conditions, while at the same time implemented efficiently across multiple sites.

Control

Entities that conduct community development are often tantamount to landlords interested in profit (Bratt, 1989). Residents involved with community development are often relegated to the role of tenants interested in affordability (Bratt, 1994; Rubin, 1994). Control or ownership of housing by entities outside of the community, such as financiers, is a constant threat to residents due to the lack of community-controlled capital. Control or ownership of housing by community members, or a non-profit tenants association, is a constant challenge to residents because it can be very expensive.

For example, resident-led organizations that seek to own housing are often required by financiers to include a certain number of government subsidized units. This is due to the fact that it lowers the risk on the investment should residents prove incapable of managing the property effectively. Subsidized housing cannot be owned by its occupants. Furthermore, subsidies are usually coupled with an upper limit on resident's income, which residents are, logically, opposed to. Conversely, a lower proportion of subsidized units increases the rent for unsubsidized units, which residents are also opposed to. Finally, even when community-based organizations are successful in owning and operating housing developments, it is often individuals that live outside of the community that sit on the boards of the governing bodies. The first Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation board was "dominated by U.S. senator Jacob Javits, Ethel Kennedy, the chairman of Mobil Oil, and the president of Citibank" (Berndt, 1977). As a result of these and other examples, many argue that community development is "based in communities, but not community-based" (Medoff and Sklar, 1994). Stated differently, community developers "are enmeshed in the very networks that caused the problems to begin with" (Stoeker, 1999).

Disorganization

Community developers can often purport to represent the interests of the community whereas, in reality, they are emphasizing the physical and economic aspects of community revitalization over the social aspects. Taub (1990) found that such a strategy might actually increase turnover, displacement, and disorganize a community. For example, community developers often compete with community organizers or social service agencies for funding. Community developers can also cause community-based organizations to appear more militant given their access to, and association with powerful institutions. Community developers are often prevented from taking part in risky neighborhood improvement initiatives that have the potential to transform their communities, given the nature and the source of their funding. Not to mention, even when involved in these activities, community developers ultimately cave under financial or political pressures to focus solely on housing instead of social issues or concerns (Gittell, 1980; Kolodny, 1985; Hamilton, 1992; Blakely and Aparicio, 1990; Rubin, 1996; Stoeker, 1995a).

As mentioned earlier, the New Community Corporation (NCC) in Newark, New Jersey, is a modern example of a successful community development effort. Kingsley, McNeely, and Gibson (1999) write:

"NCC began with a focus on housing production. It partnered with outside institutions to raise initial capital, and planned its first project by a truly bottom-up process. A number of the intended occupants of the new project (public housing families) met one Saturday each month for over two years to learn about the process of developing housing and establish a sense of what they wanted in physical/functional terms; their conclusions became key determinants of the eventual design.

Before construction, however, they faced a battle. The estimated cost of the 120-unit project exceeded state standards for assisted housing (one state official said the design "looked too good for poor people"). NCC decided to fight for the original design even though doing so would surely delay development. In the process, they learned a great deal about how to "keep the pressure on" and, eventually, were allowed to proceed as they had planned. The project opened in 1975 and, with the skills and experience NCC

had developed, it was able to compile five additional affordable housing projects (829 more units) over the next five years."

Later, I will continue this discussion with an analysis of community development against the six bases for community revitalization.

Community Building

Community building or asset-based community development is an approach to community revitalization that is focused on "strengthening the capacity of residents, associations, and organizations to work, individually and collectively, to foster and sustain positive neighborhood change" (Aspen Roundtable, 1997). Community building seeks to leverage the resources within a community by mapping these assets and then mobilizing them to facilitate productive and meaningful connections.

Hess (1997) believes that the genesis of community building can be found in three sources. First, the critiques of traditional advocacy and social service delivery by self-help reformists such as Thomas Dewar. These critics believed that true community improvement could never be achieved by systems based on dependence and a flawed model of professionals "serving" clients. Second, the writings of Kretzmann and McKnight at Northwestern University's Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) Institute, popularized in their book *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets* (1993). ABCD is a process for identifying a community's assets and mobilizing these assets to address community-defined issues and solve community-defined problems. Third, the emphasis by feminist organizers on the infinite power that can be achieved through building relationships within small informal groups, in contrast with past techniques that targeted widespread participation and were grounded in conflict and confrontation (Bradshaw, Soifer & Guterrez, 1994; O'Donnell & Schumer, 1996; Stall & Stoeker, 1997). Feminist organizing advocates a voluntary, communal response to community problems and places professionals in the redefined role of coach or co-learner. I would like to add that a fourth contributing factor to the community building movement is the epistemological concepts of "learning webs" and "communities of learners" espoused by innovative educators such as Ivan Illich. These models for self-motivated learning focused on a restructuring of the student-teacher relationship by providing the learner with "new links to [their community] and the world" (Illich, 1970).

Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) have identified three characteristics of community building or asset-based community development:

- *Asset-based* - Community building begins with what is present in the community, as opposed to what is absent or problematic in the community. It is focused on indigenous assets as opposed to perceived needs. An asset-based approach involves community residents, associations, businesses, and institutions (e.g., libraries, schools, etc.)
- *Internally focused* - Community building calls upon community members to identify their interests and build upon their capacity to solve problems. One of the distinguishing characteristics of community building is its heavily emphasis on leveraging that which is in the community *first*, before looking to outside entities and/or resources.
- *Relationship driven* - Community building has also been defined as "any identifiable set of activities pursued by a community in order to increase the social capacity of its members" (Mattesich & Monsey, 1997). This requires the ongoing establishment of productive relationships among community members, as well as the associated trust and norms necessary to maintain and strengthen these relationships.

Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) have also identified five steps toward whole community mobilization:

- Mapping completely the capacities and assets of individuals, citizens' associations and local institutions.

- Building relationships among local assets for mutually beneficial problem solving within the community.
- Mobilizing the community's assets fully for economic development and information sharing purposes
- Convening as broadly representative a group as possible for the purposes of building a community vision and plan.
- Leveraging activities, investments and resources from outside the community to support asset-based, locally defined development.

An asset-based approach to community revitalization could involve mapping and mobilizing local business assets to create a job-matching network (Kretzmann, McKnight, & Puntenney, 1996), mapping and mobilizing the economic capacities of local residents to create a cooperative buying arrangement (Kretzmann, McKnight, & Puntenney, 1996), mapping and mobilizing consumer expenditures to identify opportunities for local entrepreneurship (Kretzmann, McKnight, & Puntenney, 1996), mapping and mobilizing the associations in a local neighborhood to establish a "council of associations" (Kretzmann, McKnight, & Turner, 1999), or creating a neighborhood information exchange that connects local skills and knowledge (Kretzmann, McKnight, & Puntenney, 1998).

The Family Support Network (FSN) in Seattle, Washington, is an example of successful community building that has been cited by Kretzmann, McKnight (1997), they write:

"The Family Support Network (FSN) is made up of families whose focus is to promote connections for the purpose of resource sharing, advocacy, and mutual support. They are located in the Seattle area, and their membership currently includes 150 families. FSN uses volunteers from among the membership to conduct an individual capacity inventory, to maintain a databank of the capacities of local families, and to facilitate an exchange of resources among its members. The organization was originally started by a working mother who realized that just as she herself needed help to keep up with the routine demands of daily life, so did other families."

In the following section, I will continue this discussion with an analysis of community building against the six bases for community revitalization.

Bases for Community Revitalization

To better understand the distinctions between community organizing, community development, and community building, it is useful to compare and contrast them against the six bases for community revitalization (note that I have added an additional base, theoretical foundation, to the five identified by Hess (1999) and others): *theoretical foundation, primary value of the practice, conception of public interest in a community, power, nature of social capital, and nature of civic engagement*. Table I summarizes community organizing, community development, and community building against the six bases for community revitalization (Hess, 1999).

Theoretical Foundation

Each approach is rooted in different theories of how to fight poverty and transform neighborhood. In the context of this analysis, I have identified three possible theoretical foundations: *political, economic, and social*. A *political* theoretical foundation argues that there are powerful institutions working against poor neighborhoods, and it is only by mobilizing residents as a unified political voice that these forces can be counterattacked. An *economic* theoretical foundation believes that urban renewal can only be advanced by improving the physical infrastructure of a community, including public and private housing, commercial and industrial real estate, as well as through small business development and entrepreneurship. A *social* theoretical foundation believes that community improvement is predicated on the capacity of local residents, associations, and organizations to work together effectively and solve their own problems by building relationships and brokering connections between these constituencies.

Community organizing is grounded in a political theoretical foundation. Community organizers believe that by mobilizing residents as a collective political force, the institutions that serve the community can become more responsive to its needs. To a lesser extent, community organizing is also grounded in a social theoretical foundation and embraces the need for solid working relationships among participants. Community development is grounded in an economic theoretical foundation. Community developers argue that by improving the community's landscape, primarily housing, the overall of the health of the community will be advanced. Community development is also partially grounded in a social theoretical foundation to the extent that these efforts often require the coordination of various actors and players including residents, businesses, organizations, and government. Finally, community building is grounded in a social theoretical foundation. Community builders believe that social connections and relationships among community members represent the basic building blocks for strengthening distressed neighborhoods.

Bases	Community Organizing	Community Development	Community Building
Theoretical Foundation	Political (Social)	Economic (Social)	Social
Primary Value	Participation (Leadership)	Expertise	Leadership (Participation)
Conception of Public Interest	Conflicting	Singular	Communal
Power	Agenda Setting	Pluralist	Agenda Planning
Nature of Social Capital	Political (Internal, Collaborative)	Collaborative (Internal)	Internal
Nature of Civic Engagement	Political Activism (Engaged Citizenry)	Policy Making	Engaged Citizenry

Table I: Community Organizing, Development and Building Against the Bases for Community Revitalization

Primary Value of the Practice

Each approach upholds a primary value in its relationship towards governance, the number of people involved, and the qualities that are cultivated amongst these individuals. Gilbert, Specht, and Terrell (1993) identify three primary values: *participation, leadership, and expertise*. *Participation* "is a value that extols the virtue of each and every person joining meaningfully and directly in decisions that affect their welfare" (p. 223). *Leadership* is a value that endeavors to promote and cultivate a group of individuals that will "undertake tasks which others have not or will not," but need to be done (Hess, 1997). *Expertise* values the involvement of experts and the "refinement of professional skills, experimentation, coordination, and the attainment of improved methods of executive intervention" (p. 224).

Participation is the primary value of community organizing given its heavy reliance on establishing a broad base of participants from which to obtain power and exert influence. Leadership is a secondary value for community organizing, both as a means for promoting democracy and for enlisting the involvement of new members. Leadership is the primary value of community building. Successful community building initiatives are typically led by a relatively small group of committed individuals that serve the larger community. Clearly, then, participation acts as a secondary value of community building given its focus on building relationships and connections within the community. Finally, expertise is the primary value of community development. Community developers must manage budgets, negotiate

contracts, assemble project plans, and tactfully coordinate the interests of various constituencies such as residents, funders, financiers, businesspeople, and representatives of government and non-profit organizations.

Conception of Public Interest in a Community

The interests of the community can be perceived and interpreted through three distinct lenses identified by Gilbert et al. (1993): *singular, communal, and conflicting*. A *singular* conception sees the voice of the community as monolithic. This conception is based on the assumption that the community's interests can be identified and addressed through careful analysis. A *communal* conception sees the community as a set of individuals working together on common interests. This conception is based on the assumption that the community can define and address its own interests. A *conflicting* conception sees the community as a subset of groups with interests that are in opposition to each other. This conception is based on the assumption that the only way to address the community's interests is to resolve this tension.

Community organizing conceives the public interest in a community as conflicting and uses this tension not only to exert pressure on the institutions that are resistant to change, and to also catalyze public attention to issues that will hopefully enlist greater participation. Community development conceives the public interest in a community as singular and, in doing so, attempts to quantify and qualify the community's needs as a means toward meeting these needs. Finally, community building conceives the public interest in a community as communal, which results in an avoidance of conflict or analysis, and an emphasis on voluntary action that will coalesce around important issues.

Power

Power refers to the ability of community members to exercise decision-making authority over the community's agenda. Lukes (1974) and Gaventa (1980) identify three types of power: *pluralist, agenda setting, and agenda planning*. A *pluralist* form of power assumes there is equal access to the decision-making table. It results in forums and meetings where issues can be raised and discussed amongst concerned community members. An *agenda setting* form of power recognizes that only certain items will make it on the community's agenda due to limited resources, politics, and inherent biases. It advocates exerting influence to place items deemed important by the community on the agenda's of others. An *agenda planning* form of power seeks to empower others to establish their own agenda, rather than seeking to alter existing agendas. It promotes the identification of agenda items that genuinely reflect the community's interests and needs.

Community organizing adheres to an agenda setting form of power and serves to mobilize residents to exert control over the agenda of others, as well as the decision-making processes that affect the community. Community development adheres to a pluralist form of power and attempts to bring multiple partners to the decision-making table to collaborate and provide their input to the agenda. Finally, community building adheres to an agenda planning form of power and encourages residents to develop their own vision for the community that can be translated into an agenda that reflects their interests.

Nature of Social Capital

Social capital refers to the "features of social life—networks, norms, and trust—that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives" (Putnam, 1995). Hess (1999) identified three aspects of social capital a community practice most frequently influences: *internal, collaborative, and political*. A focus on *internal* social capital is a focus on the relations within the community. A focus on *collaborative* or bridging social capital is a focus on the relations across communities. A focus on *political* social capital is a focus on increasing the social capital of one network, which has an (often negative) impact on the social capital of another network.

Community organizing focuses on the political nature of social capital in its attempts to obtain power and influence institutions and processes. However, community organizing also has both the internal nature social capital as a sub-focus given its need for widespread participation and leadership, and the

collaborative nature of social capital as a sub-focus given its need for bridging relations across interest groups. Community development focuses on the collaborative nature of social capital, particularly given the fact that, as mentioned earlier, most community development efforts require the involvement of multiple constituencies including residents, funders, financiers, businesspeople, and representatives of government and non-profit organizations. A number of community development efforts are also focused on the internal nature of social capital sponsoring, for example, training programs for residents in needed areas of expertise. Finally, community building is clearly and solely focused on the internal nature of social capital with its emphasis on building relationships among community members and increasing their capacity to work together effectively.

Nature of Civic Engagement

The nature of civic engagement describes the relationship of a community-based initiative to the community residents. Sviridoff and Ryan (1996) identified four styles of engagement between residents and a community-based initiative: *client*, *political activist*, *policy maker*, and *engaged citizenry*. As a *client* residents are seen as the passive recipient of services. As a *political activist*, residents attempt to "redress social and economic injustice by organizing... as a political force" (p. 20). As *policy makers*, residents "are attached as advisors or planners, usually on a board or council" (p. 21). As *engaged citizens*, residents are enlisted in wide numbers in a broad set of roles in building "networks, contacts, trust, and standards all essential to a community's problem-solving capacity" (p. 22).

The nature of civic engagement among residents involved in community organizing is that of political activist. Residents are organized as a political force first, and second, as engaged citizens such that the relationships among organizational members and leaders also shapes an initiative's success. The nature of civic engagement among residents involved in community development is that of policy maker. Residents are typically employed as members of the governing boards of community development organizations such as CDCs. Finally, the nature of civic engagement among residents involved in community building is that of engaged citizenry. Residents are directly involved in establishing social ties to each other, as well as other community members including associations, businesses, and institutions.

Community Organizing and Community Building

Prior to a discussion on the strengths and weaknesses of community organizing and community building, I will compare and contrast these approaches to community revitalization.

There are two distinct tensions between community organizing and community building. First is their inward and outward orientation, respectively. This is reflected by community organizing's focus on the political nature of social capital and engaging external institutions, versus community building's focus on the internal nature of social capital and building local relationships. For example, community organizers would organize a rally to publicize a pressing issue, while community builders would sponsor a social event where residents could meet each other. Second is their orientation toward working collectively or working in conflict with other constituencies, respectively. This is reflected by community organizing's conflicting conception of public interest, versus community building's communal conception of public interest. For example, community organizers would mobilize local resources to clean up a park, community organizers would pressure local government to do it for them (Hess, 1999).

Given these tensions it is intuitively obvious that community builders criticize community organizers for relying on external supports as opposed to relying on resources that already exist in the community. Community builders go on to argue that oftentimes these external entities, such as government, do not, in fact, have the resources to address the concerns of community organizers, especially in times of conservative leadership (Fisher, 1995; Smock, 1997). Finally, community builders have also characterized community organizing as a top-down and manipulative endeavor, with goal and objectives that are largely defined by political agendas rather than the needs of the community as defined by actual residents (Stall and Stoeker, 1997; Bradshaw, Soifer & Guitierrez, 1994)

At the same time, it is not surprising that community organizers criticize community builders for ignoring the benefits that can be accrued from linkages to external actors. They argue that community building can be used to "legitimate the withdrawal of external support for the community," rendering poor communities as having to pull themselves up by their "bootstraps" (Cohen, 1999; David, 1999). Smock (1997) adds that "many of the problems faced by local communities were not created by the community and cannot be solved through local action." Finally, community organizers assert that the consensus building activities of community builders can often obscure or avoid issues that are actually conflicting and require confrontation to resolve.

Strengths of an Asset-Based Approach to Community Organizing

Community building and community organizing can be seen as mutually supportive with respect to their primary values, their treatment of power, and their nature of civic engagement. Both community building and community organizing involve participation and leadership as either their primary or secondary value. In that regard, there is already synergy between the two approaches in that both community organizing and community building seek to develop relationships among their membership and leaders within their ranks. There are five additional ways that an asset-based approach to community development could support community organizing:

- *Reducing Reliance on External Actors* As implied by its name, and as mentioned earlier, asset-based community development is inherently "asset-based" and draws upon resources that are indigenous to the community. As such, an asset-based approach to community development would reduce the often-skewed dependence of community organizing on external actors. This would allow a community organizing initiative to be more effective in its utilization of resources that are community-controlled. This would, in turn, serve to increase the likelihood of success by making available certain ends that otherwise would not have been possible.
- *Connecting with the Interests of Residents* Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) were previously cited as referencing asset-based community development as "internally focused." In being so, it is centered on identifying the interests of needs of residents as defined by residents. One of community organizing's shortcomings is its agenda setting engagement with power that seeks to exert influence on somebody else's agenda. An asset-based approach to community development would leverage community building's agenda planning engagement with power as a means toward establishing an agenda that truly connects with the interests of residents.
- *Strengthening Resident Involvement* As mentioned earlier, Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) describe asset-based community development as "relationship driven." Consequently, an asset-based approach to community organizing would have at its disposal a very strong base of relationships among participants as a means toward strengthening its power base. This would also serve as a mechanism for sustaining and increasing resident involvement, given this ongoing source of social capital to draw upon.
- *Creating Appropriable Social Organization* Coleman (1988) writes that the one of the social structures that facilitates social capital is appropriable social organization. This refers to entities such as voluntary associations and local organizations that can be appropriated for purposes other than their original intent. For example, the PTA could be used as a mechanism for a voter registration drive. This structure represents one of the core elements of a successful community building initiative. An asset-based approach to community organizing could benefit from and leverage the social capital embedded in this structure, thus increasing the likelihood of widespread participation for broad-based initiatives.
- *Fostering the Creation of "Weak Ties"* Granovetter (1978) points to the "strength of weak ties" by arguing that a preponderance of strong ties "breeds local cohesion, leading to overall fragmentation" and cliques within a community, whereas a plethora of weak ties (e.g., through formal organizations and work settings) are "indispensable to individuals integration into communities." Granovetter gives

an example from the Italian community of Boston's West End that was unable to organize due to a lack of formal organizations and work settings where residents could establish weak ties. An asset-based approach to community organizing could benefit from the weak ties that are formed as a result of asset mobilization. These weak ties could then be leveraged as a means toward more efficient and effective community organizing.

Weaknesses of an Asset-Based Approach to Community Organizing

Earlier we identified two of the tensions between community organizing and community building: their inward and outward orientation, respectively, and their orientation toward working collectively or working in conflict with other constituencies, respectively.

The inward-outward orientations, when combined, become mutually supportive. As mentioned in the previous section, an asset-based approach to community organizing can leverage the internal social capital of community building to enhance the political agenda of community organizing. However, the collective-conflict orientations, when combined, become mutually destructive.

One of the basic tenets of community building is to foster connections and productive relationships between community constituencies, including community institutions such as libraries, schools, parks and government. This is diametrically opposed to one of the basic tenets of community organizing that is to force these institutions to change by working against them. Therefore, the single, but perhaps glaring weakness of an asset-based approach to community organizing lies in the fact that community residents and institutions that have been mobilized through in a communal manner cannot be re-engaged in a conflicting manner. The unresolved question surrounding an asset-based approach to community organizing is whether community institutions should be removed from the asset-mapping process, and subtly treated as if they are always non responsive to the community's needs, or whether they should be fully incorporated into the process as collaborators with the community, thus eliminating the leverage that is achieved via conflict. In the final section of this paper, I will discuss how this shortcoming can be ameliorated by other approaches to community revitalization.

Community Development and Community Building

Prior to a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of community development and community building, I will compare and contrast these approaches to community revitalization.

There is very little tension between community development and community building. In fact, these two approaches fit together quite nicely which will be discussed in greater detail in the following section. The only subtle tension between these approaches is found in their primary values. Whereas community development values expertise, community building values leadership and participation. Community developers criticize community builders for lacking the technical expertise to handle large-scale projects. Community builders criticize community developers for looking and acting like government agencies in their delivery of professionalized services that are devoid of resident participation.

Strengths of an Asset-Based Approach to Community Development

An asset-based approach to community development is, in fact, recognized today as a Comprehensive Community Initiative (CCI). CCIs are neighborhood-based efforts that seek to improve the lives of individual and families (people), as well as the conditions of the neighborhoods which they reside (place). In fact, CCIs are lauded by community leaders as encompassing the best practices of community building, which is primarily a people-based strategy, and community development, which is primarily a place-based strategy. Hereafter, I will refer to an asset-based approach to community development and CCIs interchangeably.

Table II summarizes community organizing, community development, community building, and comprehensive community initiatives against the six bases for community revitalization (Hess, 1999).

Bases	Community Organizing	Community Development	Community Building	CCI
Theoretical Foundation	Political (Social)	Economic (Social)	Social	Social and Economic
Primary Value	Participation (Leadership)	Expertise	Leadership (Participation)	Expertise and Leadership (Participation)
Conception of Public Interest	Conflicting	Singular	Communal	Communal and Singular
Power	Agenda Setting	Pluralist	Agenda Planning	Pluralist and Agenda Planning
Nature of Social Capital	Political (Internal, Collaborative)	Collaborative (Internal)	Internal	Collaborative (Internal)
Nature of Civic Engagement	Political Activism (Engaged Citizenry)	Policy Making	Engaged Citizenry	Policy Making (Engaged Citizenry)

Table II: Community Organizing, Development and Building and Comprehensive Community Initiatives (CCIs) Against the Bases for Community Revitalization (Hess, 1999)

The following is an analysis of the strengths of CCIs along each of the six bases for community revitalization:

- *Theoretical Foundation* An asset-based approach to community development, or a CCI, has a social and economic theoretical foundation. This brings a focus on increasing social capital as well as the physical infrastructure of a community simultaneously. As mentioned earlier, this strategy combines a focus on people with a focus on place.
- *Primary Value* The primary value of an asset-based approach to community development is expertise and leadership. Expertise comes in the form of both project management, vis-à-vis CDCs, as well as research to identify current best-practices and conduct program evaluation. Participation in CCIs is relatively low when compared to traditional community building, but at the same time, residents are involved in the operations of CCIs to a much greater extent than traditional community development.
- *Conception of Public Interest* An asset-based approach to community development conceives the public interest as communal (identified through consensus) and singular (identified through research). This is accomplished by establishing new organizations to manage these initiatives intermediaries that broker relationships down into the local community through programs and planning, as well as up out of the community to various institutions such as funders, financiers, corporations, and government bodies (Hess, 1999).
- *Power* CCIs engagement with power is characterized as pluralist and agenda planning. Pluralist engagement is accomplished in the tradition of community building through "focus groups, surveys, resident task forces and community meetings to discover relationships and resources present in the neighborhoods that can be further developed" (Hess, 1999). Agenda planning engagement is accomplished in the tradition of community development by working closely with external actors to inform decision-making.
- *Nature of Social Capital* The nature of social capital in an asset-based approach to community development is collaborative, and to a lesser extent, internal. The collaborative nature of social capital comes from the community development roots of CCIs in bringing together internal and

external community members. The internal nature of social capital results from the community building roots of CCIs in fostering relationships among (internal and external) participants to address local problems.

- *Nature of Civic Engagement* The nature of civic engagement in CCIs is primarily policy making, followed by engaged citizenry. The policy making nature of civic engagement stems, once again, from the influence of community development practices that enlisted residents as members of their governing boards. The engaged citizenry nature of civic engagement is more of an approximation to that which is observed in authentic community building. Given the large number of residents often served by CCIs, engaged citizenry, at best, takes the form of regular, public meetings, asset surveys, task forces, and other volunteer efforts that often better handled on a much smaller scale.

Weaknesses of an Asset-Based Approach to Community Development

The weaknesses of an asset-based approach to community development fall into four categories:

- *Insufficient Power* - Due to the fact that CCIs endeavor to collaborate with large, often powerful institutions, they lack the political leverage to influence these institutions in the manner that community organizers traditionally have (Hess, 1999).
- *Avoiding Conflict* Closely related to the previous weakness is the realization that because CCIs work together with large institutions that don't always have the community's best interests in mind, there is a tendency to avoid conflict that could actually benefit the community if confronted and resolved (Hess, 1999).
- *Localism* - Just as community organizers criticize community builders for ignoring regional and national issues, they similarly criticize CCIs for their failure to do so (Hess, 1999).
- *Independence Before Interdependence* Because CCIs emphasize collaboration at the onset, they limit the community's ability to establish its own vision, before attempting to identify whether or not their vision stands in support, or opposition, to the visions of the various external players seated at the decision-making table.

A Vision for Community Revitalization

Comprehensive Community Initiatives (CCIs) represent the current best practice of community revitalization. The central principles of CCIs are comprehensiveness and community building (Aspen Roundtable, 1997). According to the Aspen Roundtable (1997), the principle of comprehensiveness includes social services, education and training, economic development, physical improvement, and quality-of-life activities. The principle of community building involves "strengthening the capacity of neighborhood residents, associations, and organizations to work, individually and collectively, to foster and sustain positive neighborhood change."

CCIs incorporate the best aspects of community development and community building. Interestingly, CCIs exclude many of the characteristics of community organizing, namely, a political theoretical foundation, a conflicting conception of the public interest, an agenda setting engagement with power, a political nature of social capital, and a political activist nature of civic engagement. In summary, CCIs favor collaboration with external community agents over conflict, and the involvement of residents in a social and participatory context, rather than a political context.

If we construe CCIs as an asset-based approach to community development, then when contrasted with an asset-based approach to community organizing we can identify two potential shortcomings in the latter. First, an asset-based approach to community organizing ignores the economic aspects of community revitalization such as housing and physical improvement. Second, with its focus on confrontation and politics, an asset-based approach to community organizing is grounded in the belief

that community improvement can only take place when conflict serves as the locus for community organization.

Leveraging the Strengths of Community Organizing, Development and Building

As mentioned earlier, the unresolved question surrounding an asset-based approach to community organizing is whether community institutions should be removed from the asset-mapping process or whether they should be fully incorporated into the process. This fundamental tension between an asset-based approach to community organizing and an asset-based approach to community development can only be ameliorated by moving toward a more collaborative process that brings these institutions to the table with community-based entities that have sufficient power to hold them accountable. In light of the fact that few CCIs have achieved this degree of scale, and the fact that CCIs operate in a collaborative rather than conflicting mode, I believe there is one missing element to the CCI model for community revitalization.

As authors such as Stoeker (1996) have argued, I concur that community organizing plays an important and necessary role in the community balance of power. CCIs as they exist in theory and practice, should maintain their current configuration. What is needed is the proliferation and growth of publicly- and privately-funded multi-local, community-based organizing institutions, *along the same scale as CCIs*, which are focused solely on the political, conflicting, and confrontational aspects of community revitalization. I refer to these entities as Community Organizing Institutions (COIs).

While CCIs combine a people-based strategy with a place-based strategy, they also integrate an inside-orientation with an outside-orientation. Similarly, the combination of CCIs and COIs resolves the tension between capital and community. Whereas CCIs are focused on managing capital, COIs are focused solely on improving the community. The combination of CCIs and COIs also separates the aims of conflict from the aims of collaboration. As separate entities, COIs have the latitude and leverage to challenge community institutions that are not responsive to the community's needs, while CCIs can endeavor to work with those same institutions in a more collaborative manner. Finally, the introduction of COIs directly addresses the three weaknesses of the CCI model of insufficient power, avoiding conflict, and localism.

Just as CCIs have emerged over time, a number of community-based organizations have also emerged that are consistent with this vision, including the following: Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) in Boston, Massachusetts, the Project Area Committee in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS) in San Antonio, Texas. The long-term challenge will be to identify ways that existing monies, public and private, can be redirected and coalesced to support the expansion of neighborhood-based organizing entities into more viable and powerful Community Organizing Institutions (COIs).

Conclusion

In this paper, I have described what distinguishes an asset-based approach to community organizing (or community organizing combined with community building) from an asset-based approach to community development (or community development combined with community building), and how differences between the two might be ameliorated by other approaches to community revitalization, namely, Comprehensive Community Initiatives (CCIs) and Community Organizing Institutions (COIs).

To address the shortcomings of these approaches I am proposing two entities: 1) high-capacity, multi-local, comprehensive community-based institutions (CCIs), and 2) publicly- and privately-funded, multi-local, community-based organizing institutions (COIs). This combines the best practices of community development and community building in entities that are solely focused on the social and economic aspects of community revitalization (CCIs), with the best practices of community organizing in entities that are solely focused on the social and political aspects of community revitalization (COIs).

In summary, such a strategy combines a people-based strategy with a place-based strategy, and an inside-orientation with an outside-orientation, while separating the capital-community tension and the conflict-collaboration conception. It synthesizes and operationalizes much of what has been learned in the areas of community organizing, community development, and community building, as a means toward strengthening individuals, families, neighborhoods, and communities, to rebuild America.