

NEIGHBORHOOD NEEDS AND
ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES:
NEW LESSONS FROM DETROIT

by Barry Checkoway

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Neighborhood participation is more important than ever. Economic recession, changes in industry and employment, and reductions in federal and state expenditures have worsened conditions for many neighborhoods at a time when needs are increasing. Studies document the pattern of private institutions disinvesting from poor neighborhoods in favor of other locations, and of public agencies disinvesting by reducing the levels of services provided. This often results in a downgrading cycle of deteriorating infrastructure, inadequate services, and withdrawal of people and institutions, in which the lowest income neighborhoods face the worst conditions. Some of those left behind feel alienated from decisions affecting their neighborhoods, or retreat from participation in the community (Wilson, 1987).

Despite these conditions, some neighborhoods have organized to overcome decline. Their organizations have planned programs, developed services, and

advocated change at the neighborhood level. They vary in their origins and objectives, activities and accomplishments, internal characteristics and external relationships, but together they demonstrate that neighborhoods can take initiative and help themselves (Checkoway, 1984, 1985a, 1985b). In many areas, however, resources are scarce, knowledge is limited, and people are unsure how to proceed.

Studies of neighborhood participation tend not to emphasize organization as a factor in community change. Previous studies have examined the impact of ecological forces (Park et al., 1925), social preferences (Hoyt, 1939), cultural traditions (Firey, 1945), demographic variables (Hawley, 1950), community attachments (Bell & Boalt, 1957), social class and ethnic ties (Gans, 1962; Liebow, 1967), shared values (Suttles, 1972), historical and symbolic meanings (Hunter, 1974), and specific subcultures (Fisher, 1976). Other studies recognize that neighborhood organizations have increased in number and capacity (Boyte, 1980; Goering, 1979), that they have planned programs and produced results (Checkoway, 1985), and that there are measureable correlates of project success (Mayer, 1985). There are studies of areawide agencies that deconcentrate services to local subareas without transfer of power to them (Checkoway, 1984; Mudd, 1984), and of grassroots groups that employ innovative methods to promote public participation in neighborhoods (Checkoway, 1985; Cunningham & Kotler, 1983), but these are by no means typical in the field.

This paper reports on a research project designed to assess the scope and quality of participation in neighborhood organizations in Detroit. The analysis is based on data drawn from responses to a mail questionnaire sent to leaders of neighborhood organizations in all areas of the city. The project

focuses on Detroit as one of the most seriously distressed U.S. cities, but the aim is to develop knowledge and identify issues in terms of their wider significance.

METHODOLOGY

This paper reports on a research project designed to assess participation in neighborhood organizations in Detroit. Several studies document disinvestment and deterioration (Bukowczyk, 1986; Darden et al., 1987; Watkins, 1985), and reinvestment and revitalization (Chaffers, 1986; Conot, 1986; Goldstein, 1986; Luria, 1981; Thomas, 1985) in the city and its neighborhoods. Soup kitchens, housing shelters, and health clinics report increased requests for emergency services. City officials report that the infant mortality rate is rising to the level where some areas are approaching Third World levels in infant deaths per thousand. Black infant mortality is twice white infant mortality in medical wastelands where underserved residents lack access to affordable care.

The analysis is based on data drawn from responses to a mail questionnaire sent to leaders of neighborhood organizations in Detroit. The survey was designed to inventory the organizational origins and objectives, activities and accomplishments, facilitating and limiting factors, and resources needed to revitalize neighborhoods. The questionnaire was mailed in late 1988 to each of 113 organizations listed in the Detroit Neighborhood Handbook (1987). A response rate of 83 percent was achieved, with 93 questionnaires returned by respondents in all geographical areas of the city. Most questionnaires were completed by the president or other officer of the organization.

The questionnaire was designed in accordance with "participatory research" principles modified as follows: A city council member encouraged the research

and asked the author to facilitate the project. She designated staff liaison and formed a bipartisan advisory committee to participate in project planning, research design, questionnaire preparation, data analysis, and dissemination of the findings. Advisory committee members included leadership or management of a neighborhood development coalition, district business association, social action organization, and community resource and assistance center.

The Detroit Neighborhood Handbook is a comprehensive citywide listing of neighborhood organizations. It is sponsored and published by a local bank and compiled by a public interest research group from lists updated biannually by organizational resource centers, community leadership and coordinating councils, neighborhood network and social action coalitions. The handbook defines a neighborhood organization as "an ongoing, task oriented organization concerned with neighborhood revitalization, with a constituency above the block club level and based in a defined geographical territory." The handbook has legitimacy as a local listing of neighborhood organizations as defined and prepared by community participants themselves.

"Participatory research" is an approach in which "researchers" and "clients" cooperate as allies to define problems, analyze data, and create change. Brown (1986, p. 126) describes this as an approach which brings "researchers and local participants together in a process of inquiry, education, and action on problems of mutual interest. Ideally, all parties become learners; they share control over the research process; they commit themselves to constructive action rather than detachment; and their participation promotes empowerment as well as understanding." He continues that "researchers join with local participants to define problems, design data collection methods, analyze results, and utilize research outcomes. Outsiders

and locals together learn about the forces operating to create local problems, organize to take collective action, and examine alternative strategies for improving the situation. In this way, people become aware of common interests and mobilize other actors in planning processes and decisions that affect the local community."

The findings reported here should be considered in terms of their limitations. This study recognizes the possibilities of bias due to self-selection or self-reporting by nonrandom respondents inside the organization, of differences in views among community leaders and organizational staff, or of contrasting evaluations by or groups not listed in the handbook. Although bias is possible, studies suggest that neighborhood leaders tend to have high levels of information about community conditions and organizational resources (Bailey, 1980). This study also recognizes that Detroit is not necessarily typical of other cities, and that a systematic survey elsewhere might identify other issues. Nonetheless, these data are an available source of information on which to base preliminary conclusions.

FINDINGS

Neighborhood Leaders

The questionnaire was mailed to leaders of 113 neighborhood organizations in all areas of the city. In most cases the questionnaire was completed by the "president" (58%) or "other officer" (25%) of the organization. Less frequent respondents were the "executive director" (4%) or "other staff (11%) of the organization.

Neighborhood leaders were asked about their age, gender, race, and other information about themselves. Most of them were 30 to 40 (52%), 50 to 60 (33%), or 70 years or older (13%), and one respondent was 96 years old. The

mean average was 51 years of age, although this varied by race, gender, or other sociodemographic factors. A majority of the respondents were women (57%) and Black (52%).

Neighborhood leaders were asked about their highest year of school or college completed. Ninety-two percent of the respondents have completed at least 12 years of school, 71 percent have completed some college or graduate from college, and 28 percent have gone beyond college in their education. The respondents have completed more years of school than individuals in the general population.

Neighborhood leaders were asked about their involvement in the organization. Eight-six percent of the respondents were unpaid by the organization, thus suggesting that their involvement is motivated by nonmonetary factors. Seventy-five percent of the respondents have been active in the organization for five or more years, 45 percent for ten or more years, and 11 percent for thirty or more years. These thus are not paid professionals moving from one place to another, but voluntary participants who work without financial remuneration and give substantial time to the organization.

Neighborhood leaders were asked about their satisfaction with themselves, their organizations, and their neighborhoods. The data in Table 1 indicate that most respondents agreed that they were optimistic about the future (91%) and satisfied with their way of life (83%), with their work in the organization (88%), and with their organization (71%). However, fewer respondents agreed that they were satisfied with their neighborhood (47%).

Analysis of satisfaction by race and gender suggests that Black women are most optimistic about the future, whereas white men are least optimistic about

the future. This finding contrasts with traditional images of outlook by gender, and would benefit from more study. Analysis of data by geographical location suggests that neighborhood leaders are more satisfied or more optimistic in some areas of the city, a finding which also would benefit from more study.

Thus, the neighborhood leaders in this study are older in age and higher in education than the general population. A majority of them are Black and women. They are voluntary participants with years active in the organization. They work without financial remuneration and give substantial time to the organization. Most report that they are optimistic about the future, satisfied with their way of life, with their work in the organization, and with the organization itself. Fewer are satisfied with their neighborhood. Overall, they are generally stable and satisfied with themselves not but not with their neighborhood, a finding that contrasts with other studies of community leaders (Edelein, 1984) and of neighborhood practice (Lancourt, 1979). How do the personal predispositions of neighborhood leaders affect their work in the organization or community?

Neighborhood Organizations

Neighborhood leaders were asked about the age and membership of their organizations. They report that some organizations were founded as early as the 1920s and in every decade since. Thirty-one percent were founded between 1920 and 1960, 11 percent in the 1960s, 37 percent in the 1970s, and 22 percent in the 1980s. Fully 68 percent were ten or more years old, and 45 percent were eleven or more years old at the time of the survey. Thus these are neither organizational holdovers from the halcyon 1960s, nor ad hoc organizations which work for a short time and then disband. On the contrary,

only a fraction were founded in the 1960s, and most are old enough to have roots and results in their neighborhoods.

These are voluntary organizations with varying size memberships, boards of directors, and activist cores. Respondents report that 98 percent are formal membership organizations, of which 32 percent have under 100 members, 42 percent have 100-500 members, and 26 percent have more than 500 members. They report that 88 percent have boards of directors, and that most organizations have an activist core that is smaller than the number of reported members. Only 20 percent have paid staff, and only a fraction of these have more than a few full-time staff.

Neighborhood leaders were asked about the income level and racial group of most members of the organization. They report that 39 percent of the organizations have mostly low income members, 58 percent have mostly middle income members, and only 3 percent have mostly high income members. They also report that 62 percent of the organizations have mostly Black members, 23 percent have mostly white members, and the remaining 16 percent represent other racial or mixed racial groups.

Neighborhood leaders were asked about the size of their budget and source of their funding in the past year. These organizations vary in their budget and funding. They report that a proportion (16%) of them had no budget, most (62%) had budget under \$10,000, some (11%) had more than \$100,000, and one had grown to have a budget of \$1,500,000. All operate at the neighborhood level but the range of difference is substantial. Further analysis shows that the organizations which had no budget were most likely to have members who are Black and low income.

The organizations received their funding from a variety of sources. The

most frequent funding sources are the organizations and communities themselves. Sixty-seven percent get funds from membership dues and contributions, 35 percent from grassroots fund raisers or special events, and 35 percent from federal, state, or local public grants. Only 13 percent receive funds from private foundations or corporate donations. They thus are self dependent or dependent on public agencies, although most respondents perceive these resources as insufficient.

In sum, these are voluntary organizations with varying size memberships, boards of directors, and activist cores, working without remuneration and without full time paid staff. They tend to be older organizations, and most have Black and low or middle income memberships. They vary in their budget size budget and funding sources, the most frequent of which are public agencies or the organizations and communities themselves. Presumably, if they were unable to raise funds in their organizations or communities, or if public agencies were to reduce allocations, it could prove problematic in some areas of the city.

Problems in Neighborhoods

Neighborhood leaders were provided with a list of neighborhood problems and asked to indicate if each had been a problem in their neighborhood in the past year. This list was developed and pretested by advisory group members before its inclusion in the survey.

The data in Table 2 indicate that they perceived many various problems in neighborhoods. The most frequent problems perceived are crime (98%), drugs (91%), poor city services (88%), personal safety (85%), fear among residents (84%), and mistrust of government (84%). These data are consistent with images of Detroit as a "crime city" in which people feel fearful or unsafe and

identify city services and government officials as part of the problem (Darden et al., 1987).

Less frequent are problems like unemployment (70%), poverty (65%), substandard housing (52%), and poor health care (52%), although analysts often consider these closer to root causes rather than symptoms of problems in cities. Fewer than half of the neighborhood respondents list discrimination (46%), plant relocations (40%), and race relations (27%), although some Detroit politicians blame the city's problems on external economic conditions, plant closings, urban-suburban inequities, and racial discrimination (Darden et al., 1987).

It is not surprising that "local" respondents would perceive "cosmopolitan" issues as less important or beyond neighborhood reach, or would perceive race relations and discrimination as less problematic in a predominantly Black or residentially segregated city like Detroit. However, these perceptions--and their social, economic, and political implications--would benefit from additional study.

Further analysis of problems in neighborhoods shows differences by individual respondents, organizational characteristics, or community location. Females were more likely to perceive an item as problematic than were males; Blacks were more likely than were whites; respondents in organizations with mostly low income Black memberships were more likely than those in organizations with mostly middle income white memberships; and respondents in some geographical areas were more likely than those in other areas of the city.

For example, guns were identified as problematic by 82 percent of female respondents and 60 percent of male respondents; poverty by 76 percent of

female respondents and 54 percent of male respondents; and discrimination by 57 percent of females respondents and 35 percent of male respondents. Also, guns were identified as problematic by 84 percent of Black respondents and 61 percent of white respondents; poverty by 73 percent of Black respondents and 60 percent of white respondents; and discrimination by 63 percent of Black respondents and 36 percent of white respondents. What are the urban social policy implications of gender and race differences in perceptions of problems in neighborhoods? What do such differences imply for a neighborhood practice that is sensitive to gender and race? (Leavitt, 1986; Moser, 1989)

Neighborhood leaders were asked to indicate the biggest problems in their neighborhoods in the order of importance, with the result that crime and drugs were again at the top of the list. They thus share the external image of Detroit as a "crime city" and recognize the "drug crisis" which pervades the city. When considered with responses indicating "fear," "mistrust," and "powerlessness," there emerges an "urban crisis" image reminiscent of earlier decades.

Seventy-one percent of the neighborhood leaders agree that neighborhood problems are getting worse. This perception holds regardless of the gender, race, geographical area, or other characteristics of the respondents. It is worrisome to recall that scholars and practitioners discussed worsening social conditions in Detroit before the riots of the late 1960s, and to recognize that some of the same conditions may operate in the city today (Fine, 1989).

Many respondents provided additional comments such as the following:

We feel overwhelmed by problems which we cannot control.

Some members are afraid to leave their homes to come to meetings for fear of break-ins.

Organizing is a constant struggle to involve people, train leaders, and gain power and influence to effect change. Without support and constant vigilance, volunteer groups have a difficult time sustaining efforts and changing the systems that affect the neighborhoods. Community control hasn't worked in Detroit.

We have tried to fight a home on Woodhill and Harper with ten or more junk cars in the yard and other dangerous houses and junk cars for many years with no success.

I feel optimistic about the future of our neighborhood, and will do whatever I can. However, I feel no support from city government. I feel frustrated that the drug house hasn't been removed after months of work.

I have been a community activist for over thirty years, but city services are worse than ever and members ask if they are wasting their time.

With a mayor enacting his own secret plan and an ineffective city council to curb the mayor, neighborhoods are becoming more and more undesirable as places to live. This not only breeds more crime and blight, but generates mistrust of government and lack of hope for change.

Activities and Accomplishments

Neighborhood leaders report a wide range of activities of the organization in the past year, as shown in Table 3. Most frequent are activities that educate the neighborhood on an issue (98%), plan a neighborhood program (94%), contact public officials about neighborhood needs (94%), organize a group for action on an issue (90%), or form a coalition with other groups (90%). Less frequent are efforts at neighborhood advocacy with government or business (72%), or to testify in a public hearing (71%). Less than half develop social services (45%) or a community-based corporation (45%), or register or turn out voters (43%). Only a fraction report activities to mobilize a protest demonstration (25%) in the past year.

It is noteworthy that most frequently reported are activities to educate the neighborhood on an issue and plan a neighborhood program. Community organization has many approaches, each of which can be analyzed according to

its particular practice variables (Checkoway, 1987; Cox et al., 1987). Some analysts view "education" and "planning" as "soft" approaches that provide information and formulate ideas without transfer of power to the community (Arnstein, 1969). Neighborhood leaders also report that they contact public officials about neighborhood needs, but elsewhere they disagree that public officials are responsive and that the mayor has commitment to the neighborhood.

It also is noteworthy that less frequently reported are activities to testify in a public hearing, develop social services or a community-based corporation, or register or turn out voters. Public hearings and voter participation are among the most widespread forms of citizen participation in the United States (Checkoway, 1981), and alternative social services and community-based corporations have increased in importance in response to cutbacks in state and federal public funding (Peirce & Steinbach, 1987). These activities are reported by respondents, but they are less frequent than education and planning.

It also is noteworthy that least frequently reported are activities to mobilize a protest demonstration. There is discussion among analysts about the salience of mobilization or protest as means of empowerment in low or moderate income communities (Piven & Cloward, 1977). While the analysts debate, organizations in Detroit reportedly educate or plan more than they mobilize or protest. Does this indicate a strategic choice and, if so, is it the best fit with situation?

These organizations reportedly pursue a range of activities with various strategies, in contrast to those that select singular strategies. Some analysts differentiate organization according to strategies of social change (Checkoway, 1987), whereas others describe organizations that manage the

transformation from one strategy to another (Mott, 1984). The Detroit study confirms the emergence of community organizations that mix and phase strategies in the face of changing conditions.

Neighborhood leaders were asked about their organization's biggest accomplishments in the previous year. Despite the obstacles, they report a wide range of accomplishments. They have built and rehabilitated housing, generated capital development, operated health and human services, attracted new business and jobs, and formulated plans to boost the neighborhood economy. They have conducted community clean-up campaigns, established neighborhood watch clubs, planned programs for the elderly, sponsored youth employment and training, and provided food and shelter for the homeless. They have "watched out for each other," "survived despite feelings of helplessness," and "created a sense of neighborhood pride." There is no single accomplishment that typifies all organizations, but there is an impressive increasing record.

Neighborhood leaders were asked to assess their organization's present level of adequacy in various functions. The data presented in Table 4 indicate that they perceive high levels of adequacy in their organizational leadership (91%), goals and objectives (87%), organization structure (87%), and strategy (84%), and careful planning (85%). They perceive lower levels of adequacy in community involvement (81%), cooperation with others (81%), and project management (80%). They perceive the lowest levels of adequacy in political clout (63%) and resources in time or money (52%).

These respondents perceive high levels of adequacy in various organizational functions, but issues arise with additional analysis of the data. For example, they perceive high levels of adequacy in organizational

leadership but lower levels of community involvement and cooperation with others; high levels of organizational structure and strategy but lower levels of political clout and resources in time or money; high levels of careful planning but lower levels of project management. What is the significance when neighborhood leaders perceive high levels of organizational adequacy but also report worsening problems in neighborhoods?

Quality of Participation

Neighborhood leaders were asked about the extent to which the organization had influence or impact on individual, organizational, or community development. The data shown in Table 5 indicate that leaders gave a mixed response in assessing influence or impact. They agreed that the organization had raised public awareness of neighborhood issues (92%), increased pride in the neighborhood (90%), and strengthened confidence of residents in the neighborhood (83%), but were less certain about whether it had reduced social isolation (62%). They agreed that the organization had developed new neighborhood leadership (82%) and increased neighborhood power (80%), but fewer agreed that it had made government more responsive to neighborhood needs (82%), or blocked or delayed changes that the neighborhood opposed (65%), or had improved access to (65%) or the quality of (59%) services. Relatively few (12%) perceived that it had increased conflict and divisions in the neighborhood.

Although neighborhood leaders report that the organization has had influence or impact, data from other sections of the questionnaire raise questions about their responses. They report that the organization has increased pride in the neighborhood (90%), and strengthened the confidence of residents (83%), but also perceive personal safety (85%) and fear among

residents (84%) as problems in the neighborhood. They report that the organization has developed new neighborhood leadership (82%) and increased neighborhood power (80%), but also perceive feelings of powerlessness (76%), and lower levels of adequacy in political clout (63%) or resources in time or money (52%) as problems in the neighborhood. They disagree in the extent to which their organization has made government more responsive to neighborhood needs (72%), or improved access to (65%) and quality of (59%) services, but they agree that poor city services (88%) and mistrust of government (84%) are problems in the neighborhood, and that neighborhood problems are getting worse (90%), although fewer of them have developed social services (45%) or a community based corporation (45%) of their own. Most of them have contacted public officials about neighborhood needs (94%), but fewer agree that public officials are responsive to neighborhood needs (49%), and that the mayor has commitment to the neighborhood (25%).

Neighborhood residents have taken local initiative and formed community organizations which have activities and accomplishments. This study shows something about the scope of participation, but its quality or impact raises questions for further analysis.

Organizational and Community Characteristics

Neighborhood leaders were asked to identify some of the organizational or community characteristics which relate to the participation. The data shown in Table 6 indicate that most leaders perceive that residents are aware of neighborhood issues (86%), that the organization has solved major neighborhood problems (74%), and that the organization has influence in major decisions affecting the neighborhood (74%). These data extend the image of organizational accomplishment.

But neighborhood leaders also agree that there are many serious problems in the neighborhood, and that the problems are getting worse (77%). Despite increasing awareness and activities to the contrary, the problems are getting worse. Is this a function of individual participation, or of organizational developments or of the problems they face?

Neighborhood leaders raise questions about organizational and community capacity. Earlier they reported high levels of adequacy in organizational leadership, but here they divide in their perceptions that residents are well organized in the neighborhood (58%) or lack leadership (43%). Earlier they reported efforts to contact public officials about neighborhood needs, but here fewer than half perceive that public officials are responsive to neighborhood needs (49%) or that they mayor has commitment to the neighborhood (25%). These data complement earlier studies describing the difficulties of Detroit's community organizations in meeting neighborhood needs (Thomas, 1985), the responsiveness of public agencies (Bachelor, 1986; Bachelor & Jones, 1981) and private institutions (Bukowczyk, 1982; Fasenfest, 1986; Hill, 1978; Lewis, 1982; Warner, 1982) to the neighborhoods.

DISCUSSION

The residents of many neighborhoods are taking local initiative and organizing against decline. Their leaders tend to be older in age and higher in education than the general population; work without financial remuneration and commit substantial time to their community organizations; are optimistic about the future and satisfied with their way of life and work and their organizations but not with their neighborhoods. In contrast to a situation in

which residents retreat from the neighborhood, these leaders are anxious to participate.

These leaders participate in organizations that have diverse origins and a range of activities. They tend to vary in their scope and structure; work without full-time staff and engage a number of residents in their voluntary efforts; and operate in several substantive or functional fields with various strategies with emphasis on education and planning but not on mobilization or protest. They perceive that their organizations have high levels of adequacy in their functioning, but give them a mixed response in assessing their power or influence in the broader community. They are positive about themselves and their organizations, but not about their neighborhoods.

These leaders perceive many serious problems in their neighborhoods. They rank crime and drugs at the top of their list, identify personal safety and fear among residents, and target poor city services and government officials as part of the problem. Most agree that neighborhood problems are getting worse despite activities to the contrary.

This situation suggests a kind of incomplete empowerment in which individual participation and organizational development do not necessarily create community change. Empowerment can be defined as a process in which individuals increase the critical consciousness and interpersonal skills to improve their lives, develop the organization to act collectively with others, and mobilize resources to create change in the community or society (Gutierrez, 1988). The neighborhood leaders in this survey have consciousness and skills, organization and accomplishments, but these are not necessarily enough to reverse neighborhood decline.

Some scholars and practitioners emphasize the importance of individual

participation in social change. They view the individual as a key element in organizations and change, and discuss ways to increase personal capability and interpersonal skills for more effective practice (Burghardt, 1982). Others emphasize the importance of organizational development. They view the organization as a vehicle to mobilize individuals, to develop a common program, and to generate the power to carry out the program that is developed (Staples, 1985).

There is increasing interest in education and training designed to strengthen the quality of individual participation and organizational development at the local level. Some neighborhood leaders and community organizations receive assistance from institutions that provide resources to strengthen local activity. Foundations, churches, and governments are among the private and public institutions that support local initiatives. Other leaders and organizations benefit from national coalitions and support networks that help formulate strategies and provide assistance. Several groups facilitate information exchange and mutual support through newsletters and publications, or emphasize education to increase individual and organizational capacity (Checkoway, 1985b).

However, a lesson from Detroit is that individual participation and organizational development are not necessarily sufficient to create community change. Even exceptional individuals and organizations have difficulties influencing the larger community context in which they operate. Neighborhood problems often result from institutions and decisions that originate outside the community, and the consequences flow from that process. To alter the consequences, it would be necessary to alter the process.

New initiatives are needed to strengthen the quality of individual

participation and organizational development in neighborhoods of large cities like Detroit. But it would be as mistaken to expect individuals and organizations to solve problems which originate elsewhere, as it would be to shift the responsibility for solutions from the external institutions whose decisions contribute to decline.

CONCLUSION

This study finds that in response to problems in neighborhoods, people participate in organizations which have a range of activities and accomplishments. Despite their efforts, however, their leaders perceive that the problems are getting worse.

These findings do not suggest that participation does not serve important individual or organizational functions. There is evidence that participation provides opportunities for individuals to invest time and take part in ways which give them some satisfaction, and to work with others in organizations that conduct collective activities in the neighborhood.

However, these findings do suggest that the scope of individual participation or organizational development does not necessarily assure its quality or impact in the larger community. It is common to claim that because an organization forms and involves a number of people in a number of activities, that therefore participation must necessarily have taken place. But the number of activities or the number of people who take part in them is not an adequate measure of its quality. Yet the quality of neighborhood participation is neither well studied nor in serious question.

The lesson from Detroit is that the scope of neighborhood participation or organizational development is no assurance of its quality or impact in the larger community.

TABLE 1

LEVEL OF NEIGHBORHOOD, ORGANIZATIONAL, AND SELF SATISFACTION

Satisfaction	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
	Percentages ^a			
Satisfied with your neighborhood	13	34	31	22
Satisfied with your organization	31	40	22	8
Satisfied with your work in the organization	47	41	8	4
Satisfied with your way of life	51	32	11	7
Optimistic about the future	55	36	3	5

^aRounded to nearest whole number (N = 93).

TABLE 2
PROBLEMS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Problems	Percentage ^a
Crime	98
Drugs	91
Poor city services	88
Personal safety	85
Fear among residents	84
Mistrust of government	84
Abandoned property	83
Code enforcement	81
Regional economic decline	80
Inadequate education	79
Feelings of powerlessness	76
Guns	74
Unemployment	70
Poverty	65
Local business closings	64
Slum landlords	57
Mistrust of business	54
Substandard housing	52
Poor health care	52
Discrimination	46
Plant relocations	40
Race relations	27

^aRounded to nearest whole number (N = 93).

TABLE 3

ACTIVITIES OF NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS

Activity	Percentage ^a
Educate the neighborhood on an issue	98
Plan a neighborhood program	94
Contact public officials about neighborhood needs	94
Organize a group for action on an issue	90
Form a coalition with other groups	90
Publish a newsletter	82
Neighborhood advocacy with government or business	72
Testify in a public hearing	71
Develop social services	45
Develop a community-based corporation	45
Register or turn out voters	43
Mobilize a protest demonstration	25

^aRounded to nearest whole number (N = 93).

TABLE 4

LEVEL OF ORGANIZATIONAL ADEQUACY

Skill level	Very adequate	Somewhat adequate	Somewhat inadequate	Very inadequate
	Percentages ^a			
Organizational leadership	45	46	6	2
Staff skills and expertise	38	51	9	1
Clear goals and objectives	43	44	11	1
Organizational structure	32	52	13	2
Careful planning	40	45	14	1
Organizational strategy	32	52	13	2
Board-staff relations	48	35	12	5
Community involvement	42	39	13	6
Cooperation with others	46	35	17	1
Project management	38	42	17	3
Political clout	20	43	26	10
Resources in time or money	18	34	26	22

^aRounded to nearest whole number (N = 93).

TABLE 5

QUALITY OF NEIGHBORHOOD PARTICIPATION

Measures of Quality	Very Much	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all
	Percentages ^a			
Raised public awareness of neighborhood issues	51	41	7	1
Increased pride in the neighborhood	43	47	9	1
Strengthened the confidence of residents	28	55	14	2
Developed new neighborhood leadership	32	50	13	10
Increased neighborhood power	24	56	19	1
Made gov't more responsive to neighborhood needs	20	52	25	3
Reduced social isolation	28	40	26	6
Blocked or delayed changes that the neighborhood opposed	31	34	16	18
Improved access to services	18	47	27	10
Increased conflict and divisions in the neighborhood	4	8	27	61

^aRounded to nearest whole number (N = 93).

TABLE 6
ORGANIZATIONAL OR COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristic	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
	Percentages ^a			
Residents are aware of neighborhood issues	28	58	11	3
Your organization has solved major neighborhood problems	30	44	23	3
Your organization has influence in major decisions affecting the neighborhood	35	38	18	9
Neighborhood problems are getting worse	26	45	19	10
Residents are depressed	18	46	21	15
Residents are well organized in the neighborhood	13	44	34	8
Public officials are responsive to neighborhood needs	8	41	22	29
Outside groups dominate neighborhood planning	22	21	22	36
Residents lack leadership	8	34	37	21
Mayor lacks commitment	8	17	20	55

^aRounded to nearest whole number (N = 93).

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