Evaluating Community Organizations: A Tactics-Based Approach

A thesis presented

by

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Abstract

How do community organizations work to develop the areas in which they are located, and how do these different tactics affect the outcomes of their work? This case study aims to show that the tactics an organization uses will impact its ability to achieve its development goals. The thesis explores four community organizations in Battle Creek, Michigan: the Joint-religious Organizing Network for Action and Hope (JONAH), congregation-based organizing; Post-Franklin Neighbors Creating Change (PFNCC), neighborhood-based organizing; Neighborhoods, Inc., a community development corporation; and the Neighborhood Planning Councils (NPCs), government-sponsored neighborhood groups. Distinct types of groups will work differently with the community and with government, drawing either from insider or outsider tactics. Though these groups do not stem from the same theoretical traditions or forms, they are comparable because they all seek economic, physical, social, and political revitalization of the community and must work within the neighborhood and local government to do so. The evidence shows that groups able to use a variety of insider and outsider tactics, mixing cooperation and conflict, are most effective at reaching their goals and producing concrete outcomes for the community.

Preface and Acknowledgements

I became interested in community organizing after reading President Barack Obama's book *Dreams from My Father*, and attended "Camp Obama" in the summer of 2007, where we met Mike Kruglik and I was exposed to organizing principles. My first real experience in community work, though, came in the winter semester of 2008, when I enrolled in Professor Gregory Markus's community organizing class. In this class, I worked with a community-based organizing group in Detroit. It was here that I first saw how much of an impact organizing can have, in terms of concrete outcomes and personal change. Our group worked to tear down dangerous vacant houses and empower residents, and I made personal connections with a number of members. The following summer, I worked at a community development corporation in Detroit, and saw how different their approach was. What really struck me was how even though these groups saw each other as fundamentally different, their goals were essentially the same. They both worked in the community to develop residents and the neighborhood as a whole, socially, politically, and economically.

I found some scholarly work that compared organizing approaches to the work of CDCs, but did not really find anything that attempted a systematic, academic, and empirical comparison of tactics across type. My research, then, attempts to fill this gap. My work has been guided by the question: how can we best work to improve our communities? This question, of course, is far too large to answer in an undergraduate thesis, but was the motivation behind my search.

It is important that I thank my advisor, Professor Markus, for starting me on this path and for guiding my work. Professor Andrei Markovits has also been invaluable in honing my often wandering ideas. Teresa Durham, executive director of the Nonprofit Alliance, helped me in the beginning stages of my original research and provided an invaluable connection to the world of

Battle Creek community organizations. There were many people willing to talk candidly to me about their work, which is often a deeply personal mission as well as one that leaves people without much free time. I have kept their names anonymous, but I would like to thank each of them for speaking with me. This was the core of my work, and I would not have been able to do any of this without their cooperation.

Finally, it is my parents and the members of my church who instilled in me the drive to work for social justice and equality, for everyone to have the sort of opportunities made available to me. They taught me to question and to think critically, and to always ask why and how. They have loved and supported me in all my endeavors, including this one.

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By Valerie Bieberich

CHAPTER 1: **Introduction**

How do community organizations work to develop the areas in which they are located, and how do these different tactics affect the outcomes of their work? Much of the scholarly work on neighborhood development organizations addresses this question only in relation to one type of group, comparing across similar tactics. These works explore only how well certain strategies are executed. My research, however, in a case study of four groups in Battle Creek, Michigan, seeks to explore tactics across organizational type, comparing a variety of tactics to explore how these affect a group's relationship to the community in which it works and to local government, and how this relationship affects whether these groups are able to meet their goals of community development.

Battle Creek is a mid-sized city on the western side of Michigan, home to Kellogg, Post, and Ralston cereal companies. Like many Midwestern communities, its economy is largely manufacturing-based and has experienced an ever-sharper decline in recent years. As the economy has worsened, the government has become increasingly unable to meet the growing need for city services. In this void, community groups have appeared to advocate for the development of their neighborhoods through political, policy, and institutional change. I will be studying the Joint-religious Organizing Network for Action and Hope (JONAH), Post-Franklin Neighbors Creating Change (PFNCC)—both community-based organizing (CBO) groups— Neighborhoods, Inc., a community development corporation (CDC), and the Neighborhood Planning Councils (NPCs), government-sponsored organizations. Battle Creek's numerous

community organizations have had varying levels of success and use different methods to meet their goals.

I define community organizations as formal groups that work within a community, delineated both spatially and by shared interest and purpose, for the area's social, political, and economic development. These organizations are comparable across type because they all share the goal of community development and must work within the political process to achieve this. The second chapter will survey the literature on community work. Previous studies have shown that tactics are important to the effectiveness of a group when lobbying for benefits from government (Hammer and Green 1996 and Mesch and Schwirian 1996), and comparing across organizational types will allow a more comprehensive evaluation of methods than has been generally attempted, making it more likely that I will find the most effective tactics. CBO tactics rely on creating conflict between residents and targets and building power for the community to 'win' against this other party. This method is more likely to work when CBOs build enough power to convince government that it is in their interest to concede to them (Swarts 2008), but not if officials see the group only as antagonistic and radical (Steggert 1975). CDCs seek to build consensus between community needs and governmental power and expertise, and usually focus on the physical and economic development of a neighborhood (Shragge 1993). Finally, government-sponsored neighborhood organizations will be more inclined to work within the established bureaucracy, requesting action from the relevant parties (Steggert 1975). One study has shown that government is more likely to want to work with groups that use insider tactics, but it does not explore whether their 'requests' will be answered (Steggert 1975).

The third chapter outlines my research design and methodology. My thesis seeks to examine how the tactics used by these groups affect their relations with the government, so I will

hold constant location (the city of Battle Creek) and other structural factors such as resources

available to the groups, issues and benefits sought, and organizational factors, though this last

will be more difficult given that I am studying four different groups. This comparative analysis

is qualitative and holistic, considering the context of each organization and where they began and

ended on the issue. I first explore the group's major campaigns—what the organization sought

to gain for their community, how they went about doing it, and if their efforts were successful.

Then I look at the group's relationship with government and how this connection was used to

lobby for the benefits. I have examined local media to gain knowledge of organizational

campaigns and history and conducted interviews with key figures such as organizational leaders,

community members, and governmental officials.[1]

Chapters Four through Eight outline my research findings on the four organizations.

JONAH is a congregation-based community organization and part of the Gamaliel Foundation, a

national network connecting faith-based grassroots organizing groups. They work on a variety

of social justice issues, seeking to improve neighborhood conditions and empower residents.

PFNCC uses neighborhood-based organizing to work for change in the Post Addition and

Franklin neighborhoods. Creating Change recently completed a successful campaign geared at

forcing city government to clean up and maintain a local park by making public demands on

local officials. Neighborhoods, Inc. works to develop communities through improved housing,

low cost loans and mortgages, beautification projects, education of residents, and sponsorship of

neighborhood associations. The Neighborhood Planning Councils (NPCs) are government-

sponsored groups of concerned citizens who meet to discuss neighborhood issues. They hold

weekly meetings aimed at connecting citizens to the city, and NPC 4 was recently involved in

the modification of a plan for downtown transformation. These groups interact differently with

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[1] See Appendix A, attached, for interview questions.

government and the community, and I am interested in how the tactics they use impact their success in meeting their goals of neighborhood development.

The end result of my research will lead to a better understanding of what makes a community organization effective in its work with the government, and what role varying tactics play in shaping a community group's relationship with government. In Chapter Nine, my conclusion, I find that tactics do matter, and that groups able to use a mixture of confrontation and cooperation will be most successful. Though the organizations I will be studying are dissimilar types of organizations, with sometimes divergent missions, they all seek to revitalize decaying communities. These groups have made a real difference in the lives of Battle Creek residents, and a greater ability to evaluate their activities will allow them to do even more. Some scholarly work has begun to explore how organizations can incorporate tactics used by other organizational types into their own work, but more research must be done into how different aspects of the groups and their tactics are alike and can be combined into the most effective organization possible. My thesis will provide an initial step in this direction.

CHAPTER 2: Theory: *What are community organizations and why do they matter?*

Community organizations work within a specific local area, generally one neighborhood, to make that community better through policy change or the attainment of some public benefit from a powerful figure (usually the government). This development can be physical, economic, political, or social reform, and many groups work for the improvement of all these aspects. Though their specific goals and primary objectives are different, all community organizations—at least under my definition—work for these general development goals. My research will study the progress of community-based organizing, community development corporations, and government-sponsored neighborhood organizations towards neighborhood and resident development. Although all of these groups work to inspire change from the grassroots, they work towards this shared goal in different ways, and I will explore how their strategies and tactics affect the outcomes of their various campaigns. The existing literature on community organizations evaluates these groups separately, so I will be combining a variety of sources to build the theoretical basis on which I may compare them.

The success of organizational tactics will be measured by the results of campaigns undertaken by these groups with respect to the government and the community. An in-depth case study will compare the different strategies employed by community organizations to develop specific neighborhoods and their residents. These strategies will then be linked to campaign outcomes, especially as they relate to William Gamson's measures of acceptance of the group by government and the group's ability to gain new advantages for the community. An understanding of how these groups generally operate, and a detailing of their 'ideal' types, will help me to evaluate them in specific cases.

Community organizations can be differentiated in three main ways: by their organizational characteristics, their goals and targets of change, and the programs and activities they carry out (Steggert 1975). My work does not explore the first question, of organizational type, except as it relates to a group's goals and how they work to achieve them. I attempt to hold the second characteristic constant by looking at campaigns where these groups have identified the government as their target, asking officials to change or maintain a specific neighborhood condition. I also hold a number of important external factors constant, especially the location, political context, and demographics (Wood 2002). These variables will be controlled because I conduct my research within a specific time period in one city—Battle Creek, Michigan—and mostly in similar neighborhoods of the city. It is more difficult to hold the group's resources and issues constant, but I believe that because Battle Creek is a smaller city, organizations have access to the same pool of financial and technical assistance, and face many of the same problems. This allows my research to focus on the final characteristic: a group's programs and activities, and their interactions with the local government and the community in which they work. How a community organization works in a community and with the government, and the way in which these tactics form, shape, and utilize its relationships to these entities, affect its success in gaining the benefits for which it lobbies.

Community organizations seek to economically, socially, and politically develop the neighborhoods in which they work. Towards this end, they build upon social, human, physical, and political capital. These neighborhood resources include things such as jobs, housing stock, and education, as well as less tangible concepts such as social networks, democratic skills, individual power and capacity for future work. Not all groups hold these goals to be equal, and so the specific focus of their work will be different. Even though they measure it in different

ways, they all work towards building power in the community. In its pursuit to better the community, the organization goes to local government, the traditional seat of power in the area, and asks them for specific, tangible benefits such as housing development or tear-down, trash pick-up, or more local jobs. Though these benefits may not be at the core of what the organization ultimately seeks for residents (namely, empowerment and enfranchisement), they represent an important intermediate and immediate step towards these larger goals. Successfully winning these services, in addition to tangibly improving the lives of residents, changes the way the organization is viewed by the community as well as the standing of both the group and the community at large with the government.

Most of these groups identify social capital as one of the most important elements in community development. Social capital, as conceptualized by Robert Putnam, refers to the trust and relationships present between residents, and the extent to which this resource can be utilized to build and demonstrate the power present within the community (Wood 2002). Organizations work to foster this by connecting residents to one another and bringing them together to solve shared problems. This creates social bonds within the community, strengthening personal relationships. However, Putnam's conception of social capital has often been challenged. James DeFilippis charges that Putnam does not take into account the power differentials present in disadvantaged communities or the connection between social and traditional economic capital (2003). Because of this, DeFilippis says that the connection Putnam posits between his social capital and the community's economic development is unclear and uncertain. Paul Osterman argues that the activities of some organizing groups go beyond this traditional idea of social capital to fundamentally alter the balance of power and correct inequalities (2002). I question, though, how far most organizations can go towards fixing systemic and historical problems.

Margit Mayer also stresses that the sheer existence of social capital does not necessarily lead to community development, and says the concept must be adapted to individual groups and consciously used to empower and include the community (2001). These criticisms should be recognized, but the concept of social capital remains central to measuring community assets.

Another important dimension of a neighborhood's power is political capacity, the ability to negotiate and develop strong relations with the political or economic power holders in the area who make decisions that affect individual lives (Orr 2007, Glickman and Servon 2003). These relationships are measured in terms of access to political authorities, political clout, and politically active residents, among other things (Glickman and Servon 2003). It follows logically that political capacity will be significant in determining how successful organizations are in interacting with the government. This is directly related to the concept of democratic capability, or the skills residents possess to work in established political channels (Wood 2002). This is important even for those groups that operate strictly outside conventional methods, because they must know how others will work against them and against what they are rebelling. When studying the effects of community work that develops one or more of these forms of power, one must determine which concepts are involved in the goals of each group and decide how to measure them before and after organizational efforts.

These economic, physical, and political neighborhood benefits, however, are not the only goals of these organizations. These organizations also work to develop the community in less definable ways, especially in the empowerment of individuals. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, to empower is "to promote the self-actualization or influence of."[2] This definition implies that one who empowers helps another person to realize their full potential and somehow gives them more agency; what this agency is over is left undefined. This basic

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[2] As taken from the official Merriam-Webster website, February 2, 2010, the third definition.

definition has been contested in the field of community work. Debates rage over what it means, how to achieve it, and how to ethically work for and with others. To practitioners, empowerment generally means to shift social, economic, and political power from traditional stakeholders to the community, which is composed of the historically disenfranchised. This is an inherently loaded work, then, which attempts to cross long-standing systemic boundaries. It is a social and humanistic work because it develops out of personal relationships and teaches residents that they can exercise control over their lives and change neighborhood conditions. Empowerment can also refer to specific political or social skills, such as democratic participation or leadership. All these aspects of community work are important to measure and represent a real change for individual residents. Each of the community organizations I study uses these concepts to define the purpose of their work.

Community-based organizing has a rich history in the United States as a way to empower the residents of some of the country's poorest and least advantaged areas. These organizations are based in the community and seek political power, but are also connected to a greater social and historical context (Fisher 1994). Organizers unite and organize people, cultivate leaders, educate members, and foster a consciously ideological practice (Fisher 1994). Organizations act on issues relevant to the community, focusing on confrontations with "targets," or "the person or people the organization must influence in order to make change" (Orr 2007: 6). The ultimate goal is not the tangible results from these efforts, but the power built through the process of action and its long-term results—organized people and money (Jacobsen 2001). Organizing at its finest enables ordinary people to better their world and themselves (Jacobsen 2001). Individual empowerment, however, is almost impossible to measure without some background in sociology or psychology and years of practice.

The concrete economic and physical benefits gained from successful organizing—
'wins'—are not what drives organizers and do not take into account its capacity to build power
in residents.   However, they are representative of an organization's ability to gain benefits
successfully from the local holders of power, who are, unsurprisingly, often unwilling to cede
their power. They are also important to the legitimacy of the group and to its image with
residents and local stakeholders. Additionally, they do lead to measurable improvements for the
neighborhood as a whole and in the daily lives of individuals. These intermediate victories
sustain and expand the power of an organization through the struggle to get them and the
physical, social or economic good they bring to the community. This means that these tangible
benefits will often be indicative of how much power the organization has built and of its
relationship to the government. A group could, for example, petition the city to tear down an
abandoned and dangerous house. If the city does so, members will feel that they have gained in
power because they were able to influence the city's decisions on issues that affect their lives.
The most important part of this win is not the demolition of a house but the city's concession and
the subsequent shift in power to residents.

Community-based organizing draws from the form and tactics laid out by Saul Alinsky,
who is generally recognized as the 'father of organizing.' There are other forms of organizing,
but they have largely built off of this tradition. Organizers build solidarity and the grounds for
collaboration through one-on-ones, interviews that attempt to connect a person to their self-
interest—what motivates them to work for change—and build a trusting relationship between the
organizer and the community (Jacobsen 2001). Once this relationship has been established,
organizers may then agitate members to collective action, which often takes the form of publicly
challenging political or business leaders to hold them accountable to the community (Wood

2002). These confrontational tactics of organizing work outside conventional methods of change in an attempt to shift the source of power in a neighborhood from traditional stakeholders to the community and its residents. In practice, however, not all organizing groups are so aggressive and confrontational. Frank Steggert's review of various community groups and their relationship to local government observed that officials "found suspect those citizen groups that did not or would not use established vehicles for contacting them" (1975: 53). Research will show whether that holds true for community organizing groups, and what that reaction means in terms of shifting power and gaining tangible benefits.

There are two main types of community organizing: institution-based and neighborhood-based. As suggested by their names, one seeks to organize institutions and the people within these existing groups, and the other organizes individuals that live in a certain area. These different strategies lead to different organizational cultures and tactics within the broad frame of community organizing. Heidi Swarts describes how organizing based in congregations can draw on religious traditions to bring members closer together and create a shared identity (2008). Participants are able to bring highly personal faith values to public life, instilling their work with a deeper meaning (Freedman 1993), and joining "love [with] power in the interests of justice" (Jacobsen 2001: 12). They go beyond strict Alinksy-style tactics, combining "religious traditions and power politics into a theology of organizing" (Warren 2001: 42). This shared religious identity and relationship motivates members to work for justice. Neighborhood-based organizing focuses more on action and on results than on an overarching vision. They work not only to achieve tangible outcomes, but also to shift power to the community and to make government more accountable to the people (Swarts 2008). One study shows that these neighborhood groups more often engage explicitly in the political process and experiment with a

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greater variety of tactics, including both outsider and insider strategies (Swarts 2008). Because these two types of community-based organizing use slightly different tactics, it is likely that government and the neighborhood will respond differently to them. This is why I am studying both JONAH, a congregation-based group, and Creating Change, which is neighborhood-based.

The community development corporation (CDC) emerged in the 1970s as an institution that sought to revive and redevelop the community with "a comprehensive strategy of business, social and physical development, designed to generate both human and financial capital" (Bruyn and Meehan 1987:113). CDCs emerged in neighborhoods that "organized themselves either to oppose threats to their physical integrity...or to take advantage of new federal programs" (Gittell and Vidal 1998: 33). A well-functioning CDC should work to meet the identified social, political and economic needs of the community through investment and development of resources and select programming and service provision (Bruyn and Meehan 1987). To move toward sustainable growth, CDCs focus on building a consensus to gain improvements that will benefit all (Fisher and Shragge 196). Community development in this way may allow comprehensive discussion and planning of policy, impacting government priorities and leading to "holistic programs to address [the] neighborhood's complex needs" (Smock 2004:221). CDCs have the potential to open up and bring the market to those who were previously excluded, ignored, and disadvantaged by traditional structures.

CDCs, in their fundamental mission, seek not only to attract outside resources but to develop both human and physical capital within the community (Bruyn and Meehan 1987). Programming often includes "housing development, commercial revitalization…job training and placement, social service delivery [and] cultural activities" (Bruyn and Meehan 1987:115). A CDC may take on a variety of roles, depending on its conception of the local economy and

community as well as its primary goals and strategy (Boothroyd and Davis 1993). Like many other neighborhood development organizations, it seeks to gain benefits such as equitable access to housing, jobs, and redevelopment in less advantaged areas. A CDC works mainly to develop a community economically and physically, but through this and separately from this, works to develop the skills of the community's residents and to improve their lives. In practice, however, many CDCs focus only on physical development and on building houses rather than on the holistic development of an entire community and its residents. Unlike organizing, receiving tangible benefits and service provision are often more important than the process to get them.

The tactics of a CDC are based less in the mobilization of a community against a targeted power and focused more on building up the community to become self-sufficient. CDCs develop the internal power and resources available to a neighborhood. They attempt to correct power imbalances not by winning power from external sources but by creating a similar model of power within the community. The neighborhood is transformed to look and function more like communities traditionally considered powerful. This means that the interactions between the CDC, the community, and the government are expected to be less antagonistic and more directed towards finding how to benefit all parties. CDCs generally work to achieve this by working through bureaucratic processes. Steggert found that governmental officials saw cooperative groups as more effective than conflict-oriented ones (1975). It makes sense that government would prefer to work with groups that work through traditional channels instead of challenging them from outside, and Steggert confirms this (1975). He does not, however, discuss these groups' relation to the community, or about actual benefits gained through these interactions. I will explore this in my research of Neighborhoods, Inc., a CDC in Battle Creek.

Government-sponsored neighborhood organizations are locally initiated groups that may have been started by government or become linked to it later in their organizational life. Many of them started in the 1960s or 70s and so may have died off or transformed into something entirely different since then. The degree to which they are a part of government varies widely. The group may simply be named as connected to government, have a staff member assigned to the group, or be part of a government department. These forms differ according to how members are chosen, if these members also include permanent staff, the powers they are given, and how they report to and interact with government and the community (Berry et al. 1993). These organizations are intended to act as gatekeepers, connecting residents to government through an official channel that takes into account the needs of the neighborhood (Crenson 1974). These groups seek to create more knowledgeable, engaged citizens by training them in democratic skills and bringing them to established political processes (Crenson 1974). Citizens then have a greater voice in shaping government's priorities and may advise officials on what their community most needs and how to go about providing that (Steggert 1975). Berry, Portney, and Thomson describe a decentralized, neighborhood-based government as a way to approach the ideal of true participatory democracy (1993).

These organizations are based in a specific geographic area and so represent a visible and often physical presence of the government in the community. They are generally composed of citizens who joined voluntarily or were appointed by the community or local government (Berry et al. 1993). They hold meetings to discuss neighborhood priorities and may invite resident input. This information is then relayed through political and bureaucratic channels to the part of the government responsible for that group. This work is motivated by the desire to include a citizen voice in the established political process in order to better meet the needs of 'ordinary'

people. It gives community interests an official representation in government and makes

residents active and informed citizens (Steggert 1975). They may also increase citizen

"confidence in government and sense of community" (Berry et al. 1993). When citizens feel as

though they play a role in the decision-making that affects their lives, they will likely be happier

with the outcomes. The community may also feel, however, as though opportunities for

participation are not broad or significant enough to truly incorporate community opinion (Berry

et al. 1993).

The relationship of these groups to government is different than the other organizations I

am studying, since they are part of government. This could either make neighborhood

organizations more influential, because they are a part of the traditional power structure, or less

powerful, because they are controlled by it. Most of these groups will still have to work with

other parts of government to meet the community's needs. Steggert's predictions indicate that,

because these groups work through the government, they will be accepted as legitimate and

viewed favorably (1975). A study by Matthew Crenson in 1974 found that government-

sponsored citizen groups did not feel that they had to refrain from making demands or restrain

their behavior. Additionally, government showed an "apparent receptivity to [government-

sponsored] citizen organizations and their demands" (Crenson 1974: 375). I will study whether

or not this holds true for Battle Creek's Neighborhood Planning Councils, managed by the

Neighborhood Services department, and how it shapes their ability to gain benefits for the

community.

To compare these disparate groups on how their tactics impact the outcomes of their

campaigns, it is necessary to define a successful organization and campaign. Perhaps the most

definitive voice on this subject is William Gamson, who studied and coded a large number of

social movements in order to measure their outcomes (1975). He measured success on two dimensions: whether a group is accepted "by its antagonists as a valid spokesman for a legitimate set of interests" (1975: 28), and whether the group gains new advantages for its beneficiary "during the challenge and its aftermath" (1975: 29). Acceptance is signified if formal powers consult, negotiate with, formally recognize, or include the group in their activities, and as stated above, see the group as a representative for the community in which it works. This outcome has to do with the organizational success of the group, especially as related to the power it challenges. New advantages, or the benefits accrued through the campaigns, are measured by the goals and outlook of the group itself. Gamson acknowledges that it may be debatable whether these objectives are significant in terms of difficulty to achieve or in whether they make a real difference to the community but says that, since this is highly subjective, the 'starting point' for evaluation should be the group's agenda as they describe it. This is how I evaluate the success of specific campaigns in my own research.

These two broad outcomes—acceptance by government and new advantages earned for the neighborhood—are a good base for my own study, especially in analyzing the power balance between the government, the organization, and the community. I am hoping, however, in my case study, to flesh out some of the nuances of these aspects and provide a more holistic view of success across organizational type and tactics. On the governmental side, I will explore how a government incorporates the organization and the community's needs in the policy-making process and distribution of benefits. Community benefits, or new advantages, may be defined as wins gained from government but also as citizen participation in the organization's campaigns. Disparate successes, then, from a variety of campaigns and organizations, must be compared and

ranked according to the measures of acceptance and new advantages. Other studies may provide a guide to classifying these outcomes.

The group's relationship to the government can be judged by the tone of their interactions and whether policymakers take into account the group's demands and requests. Gamson's criteria of acceptance are helpful to illustrate the group's access to authority, and may be extended to describe the relationship between the two entities in the long term. Gamson outlined some broad ways in which the government may engage with the group, but it is also important to measure how seriously government considers the goals of the group. These organizations are seeking some action from the government on the issues of concern to them, so this is an important aspect of their overall success. A study by Berry, Portney, and Thomson suggests that government response may be measured by the group's agenda-setting ability and by actual steps taken by government towards the group's requests (Berry et al. 1993).

Governmental action and the organizational campaigns are closely linked to community outcomes, since residents are engaged in the process of getting benefits and are the beneficiaries of any new advantages gained. I detailed earlier how organizations may act in the community to develop social and political capital, empower residents, and improve economic, social, and physical conditions. My research will attempt to measure both the tangible benefits granted to the community by government as well as less definable things such as empowerment, social capital, and democratic skills. One aspect of this relies on how the community views the organization's interactions with the government (Berry et al. 1993). Do residents see the outcomes of specific campaigns as wins? Do these new advantages improve residents' lives? How do they compare to benefits gained from other groups? These questions and the intangible

outcomes they measure are important to gauge the shift in power from the government to the community and the overall improvement to citizen's lives.

Most studies that assess the work of community organizations focus on only one or two of the organizational types I will study, not on comparing across all of them. Frank Steggert's 1975 study is one of the few that, like mine, does compare different types of community organizations. However, the process of evaluating an organization remains somewhat the same even if its structure, goals and tactics are slightly different. I pull from sources that consider these types of community organizations separately to combine them into a framework applicable to each group's neighborhood development efforts. Unlike many of these studies, I am less concerned with organizational form and culture than with their strategies, with the tactics used to achieve their goals, and with campaign outcomes, so I will be focusing on these aspects of evaluation. My final research design must take into account each organization's goals, the work they do in service of them, and the progress they make towards neighborhood development in a way that allows me to compare across organizations.

In the mid- to late-1990s, the Aspen Institute published two volumes of a work intended to outline a new way to evaluate comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs). CCIs work to better all aspects of a community and thereby improve conditions for the neighborhood as an institution and for its individual residents. As with my organizations, assessing these CCIs is difficult because they are extremely complex and changeable, they are so dependent on their specific context and community, and they work for a great variety of outcomes (Connell et. al 1995). In the first volume of this series, Carol Hirschon Weiss outlines an evaluation based on a CCI's 'theory of change.' Weiss says that "social programs are based on explicit or implicit theories about how and why the program will work" (1995: 66). These theories outline the final

goal of an organization as well as smaller steps to get there. Assumptions underlie each of these steps, explaining how they will lead to the ultimate change. The theory of change, once made explicit, can be used to track an organization's work. A group's activities should follow this theory and the actions it prescribes. To evaluate a group's effectiveness, one can compare its actual progress and activities to the theoretical outcomes.

In this theory of change, it is important to specify both long-term and intermediate outcomes (Fulbright-Anderson et. al 1998). Joan Lancourt, in her study of Alinsky-style 'citizen action' organizations, describes these as terminal and process goals (1979). Terminal goals describe an organization's long-term vision, and their achievement "signal[s] one's arrival at a point at which reality is congruent with one's ideology" (Lancourt 1979: 35). They include ideals such as economic stability, participatory democracy, or social justice. Process goals are more intermediate or short-term and, "in effect, constitute the incremental strategy for the achievement of the terminal goals" (Lancourt 1979: 35). These can be goals for mid-range outcomes like organizational development or community representation, or shorter-term victory on specific issues like tearing down an abandoned house or getting more police in the area.

Lisa Ranghelli, who recently outlined a strategy to measure the impact of advocacy and community organizing in a more concrete way, recognizes that this work will have both quantifiable and non-quantifiable impacts, even when groups achieve a clear victory on an issue (2009). For example, policy wins on wages, housing, or education were counted as quantifiable, and wins on civil rights or health issues were non-quantifiable (Ranghelli 2009). This may make impact harder to measure, but both these categories must be considered to get a full picture of a group's work. My study will also look at partial wins and ancillary outcomes, such as when an organization does not achieve its stated goal in a campaign but still gains members or limited

concessions from the government. These can be significant for its future work and bring immediate benefits. These intermediate goals constitute the group's theory of change, by outlining the desired end of its work and the steps it will take to achieve it.

Other case studies of community organizations have roughly followed the Aspen Institute's theory of change approach, in less formal ways. The W. K. Kellogg Foundation recently commissioned an evaluation of its *Yes we can!* campaign (Foster-Fishman and Long 2009). This CCI sought to improve educational and economic conditions in Battle Creek, where the Kellogg Foundation is based, through organizing, neighborhood mini-grants, networking, and organizational development (Foster-Fishman and Long 2009). In the overview of the program, the evaluators explicitly trace its theory of change. This model identified the program's primary outcomes, the ones to target for assessment. Surveys and interviews conducted with residents and the organizations attempted to measure various aspects of these goals. The report found that though there were changes in the neighborhood, their scale was limited. My own research will find much of the same information, but will use it in different ways. Also, I will be conducting more in-depth interviews, and no surveys, to get a more complete picture of how each of these groups functions.

As noted by the Aspen Institute study, community organizations are complex in ways that make them hard to evaluate in an objective or comparable way. Comprehensive case studies may be used to take into account all of the various work community organizations do and its widespread effects. Heidi Swarts conducted a study, mentioned earlier, that compared two congregation-based community organizing groups to two ACORN groups, a national neighborhood-based organizing network (2008). She was most concerned about how their forms shaped organizational culture and how they were linked to campaign outcomes. Richard Wood

conducted a similar study, comparing faith-based and multiracial organizing to explore their

potential for democratic renewal (2002). Wood's case study explores how these groups build

social and political capital and teach citizens to participate in democracy. These studies

illuminate the ways in which these organizations change the lives of individual residents as well

as the community as a whole, and that is why I will be conducting a case study.

Previous studies have shown that political and organizational tactics are important to the

effectiveness of a group when lobbying for benefits such as those mentioned above (Hammer

and Green 1996, Mesch and Schwirian 1996). Comparing across organizational types, as I will

be doing, will allow a more comprehensive evaluation of methods than has been generally

attempted, making it more likely that I will find the most effective tactics. These organizations

are comparable across type because they all share the goal of community development and must

work within the political process to achieve this end. Their differing tactics may be compared to

their relationships with the community and government as well as their successes on gaining

benefits for the community in which they work. These tactics are expected to split along the

lines of outsider confrontation and insider cooperation, as predicted by the literature.

Congregation-based organizing and neighborhood-based organizing tend towards

outsider tactics. Organizers often work outside of the power structure, viewing it even as a

hostile enemy, building up power from within the community and using confrontation to get

what they want. Organizing assumes that if given the choice, government will continue to ignore

and exclude disadvantaged areas, and so it is necessary to use aggressive and confrontational

action to force them to address the needs of the people. If organizers are successful in creating a

credible threat from the community, government learns that it must pay attention to these groups

and will grant them the benefits for which they lobby. The conflict in this relationship is at the

core of organizing's attempt to build power in the community. Struggle and tension are what develop leadership and vision and force a community to organize. Most groups, however, do not use aggressive tactics at all times, and are willing to work with stakeholders. Organizing has had success in urban areas, empowering citizens and bringing tangible improvements to their lives. As backed by literature, oppositional, 'outsider' tactics are more likely to work if they build enough power to convince government that it is in their interest to concede (Swarts 2008), but not if officials see the group only as antagonistic and radical (Steggert 1975).

Community development corporations and government-sponsored organizations are expected to use mostly insider tactics. If an organization is trying to work with the government, negotiating and finding comprehensive solutions together, it will have stronger connections within the traditional power structure. The members of these groups and select community residents will have a friendly and, in the best case scenario, reciprocal relationship with traditional stakeholders. These groups work with power-holders to address a community's needs with the ultimate goal of bringing the area and its residents into the political sphere. By establishing a collaborative relationship with local government, the organizations believe they will gain the government's respect for the neighborhoods in which they are based and may build upon this to show why it is in the government's interest to award benefits to these communities. For them to be most effective and bring about improvement, it is necessary to work with traditional sources of power and attempt to extend them to or replicate them within the community. Steggert's study shows that the government will prefer and be more likely to work with these organizations, but does not indicate whether they will respond to their requests.

These organizations use different tactics to gain benefits for the communities within which they work, and because of these varying methods, have different relationships with the

local government, which holds power and the ability to grant necessary resources to the community. Popular characterizations see CDCs and government-sponsored organizations as too friendly with the government, and as having 'no teeth,' and see organizers as too conflict-driven and oppositional. The literature begins to explain this by connecting these relationships to the way the groups lobby for benefits. Organizations that are co-opted by the government run the danger of becoming irrelevant to the community because they stop listening to its needs and priorities. The government may then no longer listen to them since they pose no threat and have lost their connection to the community in which they were originally based. They may neglect to bring benefits back to the community or offer up the wrong ones, becoming useless or even detrimental to the neighborhood in which they began. Groups that work entirely outside the government in a purely oppositional power can also be ineffective if they do not garner enough power to grab the attention of the government or if they are viewed as too dangerous or radical. In reality, however, most CBO is not completely oppositional or militantly aggressive, and most insider groups have not been fully co-opted by government.

I hypothesize, then, that the success of these groups in gaining acceptance and new advantages for their community from government will be affected by the tactics they employ to achieve these goals. Furthermore, I conjecture that groups able to mediate between the two extremes of radical, antagonistic outsider tactics and complacent, powerless insider tactics will be most successful in their goal of neighborhood development. If a community organization establishes credibility through a working, reciprocal relationship while staying rooted in community needs and power, it will be most successful in getting benefits from the government. This will require a mix of the tactics described above and would entail the ability to bargain with the government over policy and maintain a working relationship with power-holders through

problem-solving and negotiating tactics while also remaining a part of the community, responsive principally to their needs and maintaining credibility through methods such as persuasion, rewards and coercion.

Alternatively, though, organizations employing mixed tactics could be successful for reasons other than the development of a 'middle ground' relationship with the government and community. The main danger of my hypothesis lies in conflating differences between the four types of organizations with differences in their tactics. Organizational type may impact outcomes quite separately from tactics. For example, governmental officials could simply prefer to work with CDCs, perhaps because they have prior experience with similar organizations or because the organizational type is more familiar. The fact that the CDC uses a moderate, community-based approach to its work might simply correlate with type, the true cause of the group's success. This may be difficult to confirm or deny, but I must watch for this explanatory variable in my interviews because it could lead to false conclusions. It may also be that the structure and goals of organizers, CDCs, and government-sponsored organizations are too dissimilar to be compared, and so analyzing results and methods across the two will not yield meaningful conclusions. For the reasons stated above, however, I believe both that the groups are comparable, because of their shared goals, and that tactics do matter independently of type. Therefore my primary hypothesis holds the strongest explanatory power.

CHAPTER 3: Research Design and Methodology

To explore how tactics are related to campaign outcomes, I will conduct a case study of four community organizations in Battle Creek, Michigan: JONAH, congregation-based community organizing; Creating Change, neighborhood-based organizing; Neighborhoods, Inc., a community development corporation; and the Neighborhood Planning Councils, government-sponsored organizations. These four organizations stem from different theoretical traditions and so presumably use different tactics to reach their shared goal of neighborhood development. I will try to hold constant location and other structural factors such as resources available to the groups, types of issues and benefits sought, as well as organizational factors, though this last will be more difficult given that I am studying four different groups. Because I am studying one time period, in the same city, the historical and political context will be equivalent. This comparative analysis will be qualitative and holistic, considering the context of each organization and where they began and ended on the campaign or issue in question, in relation to achieving their stated development goals.

I have chosen to conduct a case study because community organizations perform a wide variety of functions in a community, many of which are difficult to capture at a macro level. Concepts such as empowerment or democratic skills may be measured best through individual, nuanced conversation because they are both hard to define and deeply personal. Each organization will occupy a slightly different place in the community and act in ways that are unofficial and not reported in the media or in surveys. I am attempting to trace a process, isolating one element (strategy and tactics) that differs between four organizations and exploring how this shapes the outcome of their work. Only a detailed exploration will allow me to capture

all the various elements of what these organizations do, of how they go about it, and of what happens after they act.

In an evaluation of community organizations, the researcher must be trusted by the members of and citizens targeted by these groups in order to conduct interviews. It is also necessary for the evaluator to have extensive background knowledge of the communities in which the organizations operate, because their work is so context specific. It is easier to conduct an evaluation when the researcher is considered at least a marginal insider. This is part of the reason I have chosen to do my research in Battle Creek, where I grew up. I have connections to most of these groups and was introduced to the organizational leaders and governmental officials by someone they trust, giving me credibility. I am still enough of an outsider to appear unbiased, though, because I have not worked with any of the groups I am researching. Apart from this, Battle Creek represents a typical Midwestern city, roughly demographically average with a manufacturing-based economy. An analysis conducted here will be representative of organizations in similar cities.

I chose to study JONAH, PFNCC, NIBC, and the NPCs because they are the strongest and most well-known examples of each chosen organizational type. 'Strongest,' however, does not mean that the groups win every campaign. It simply means that they are comparable to each other in organizational strength and they conduct enough campaigns to constitute a case study. 'Well-known' refers to the fact that most governmental figures know of these groups and the work they do, and they are at least occasionally covered by the local media. These media reports are important to provide an objective report of community activity. Furthermore, these groups are clear examples of their organizational type—not chosen by tactics, but by structure. JONAH and PFNCC are younger than NIBC and the NPCs, so I have restricted my study to the years

from about 2006, when JONAH and PFNCC began their work, until the groups' most recently-completed campaign as of when I began my study in late 2009.

I researched these four groups through interviews with key activists such as the leaders of the organizations and instrumental members, interviews with politicians involved in the campaigns, and publicly available reports in the media. My research from the local newspaper, the Battle Creek Enquirer, and other reports focused my research on specific campaigns and verified my interviews. I conducted in-depth interviews with the heads of these organizations to gather information on citizen campaigns they have conducted in the past. My interview questions were guided by the work discussed in my literature review, especially Heidi Swarts's book (2008), which included her own interview questions.[3] These initial interviews identified other key members who were willing to talk to me. To find the governmental subjects, whether elected officials or bureaucrats, I first targeted those who I knew were involved in the campaign, from the media or historical record, and then asked the interviewed people if they thought there was anyone else with whom I should speak.

This is a qualitative comparative analysis. I first explore the campaign—what the organization sought to gain for their community, how they went about doing it, and if they received what they asked. Then I look at the organization's relationship with government and other official bureaucracies, and how this connection was used to lobby for the benefits. Finally, I explore how the organization engaged the community in which it works and what benefits were conferred to it. The organization's relationship to citizens reveals its effects on the community as a whole and on individuals. The questions asked vary slightly according to the person interviewed, but all explored the above process. One problem with collecting the information in this way is that the organization involved is not an objective third party. I have tried to be this

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[3] See Appendix A for the list of my interview questions.

third party and filter the information. I have also made an attempt to verify information from interviews against news reports, if available.

To judge effectiveness, it is necessary to define it. In the most basic definition, a successful organization is one that achieves its goals as laid out by the organization itself. As Gamson suggests, these goals may be viewed in terms of acceptance by the group's target—in this case, the government—and new advantages earned towards neighborhood development. Acceptance is indicated by negotiation, recognition, inclusion, or acceptance as a representative for the community, as well as by the group's agenda-setting power and influence over the government's actions. The new advantages earned may be determined by the organization's goals and outcomes sought in its theory of change, those things such as the demolition of vacant houses, the implementation of a jobs program, citizen empowerment, or the development of democratic skills. Each organization, however, may (and probably will) have slightly different goals in service of community development. I must also make an attempt, then, to gauge the significance of these outcomes in terms of the difference they make in the community and in how difficult they are to achieve. This makes potentially disparate successes more comparable.

If I see that effective organizations were those that maintained power within the community as well as beneficial and mutual connections to the government and used a mix of insider and outsider tactics, this will support my hypothesis. I expect to see that local government will come closest to meeting the needs of the organization with which it has a respectful, but somewhat distanced, relationship; they may work together to find solutions to the community's problems, but the group is still able to use citizen and organizational pressure against the government when necessary. If I see instead that an organization which uses more 'extreme' (and traditionally conceived) tactics—that is, they work exclusively with government,

in a collaborative manner, or against, in conflict—succeeds in gaining benefits, this will lend

strong support to the disproval of my hypothesis.

CHAPTER 4: Battle Creek: A Brief Introduction

Battle Creek is a city of over 50,000 people[4] located in southwest Michigan's Calhoun County. It was officially founded in 1831, and became a city in 1859. Its name came from a brief skirmish by a creek between two surveyors and the Native Americans who lived on the land. In 1876, Dr. John Harvey Kellogg took control of the Western Health Reform Institute, changing Battle Creek's history forever. He expanded the institute and renamed it the Battle Creek Sanitarium. The Sanitarium became a leader of health in the early 1900s and was known for the beauty and extravagance of its experience as well as its ground breaking health practices, including high-fiber and vegetarian nutrition, exercise, and abstinence from addictive substances. 'The San' hosted many famous patients, including C.W. Post. (Sesquicentennial Book Committee 1980)

Post stayed at the San from 1891 until 1894, after Dr. Kellogg and his brother, William Keith (W.K.) Kellogg accidentally invented the flaked cereal that was the ancestor of our modern cereal. Though Post was not cured of his illness, he realized the genius and commercial value of Kellogg's breakfast flakes and became the first large-scale cereal producer in 1895. The industry boomed almost immediately and there were over 40 cereal companies in Battle Creek by 1902. W.K. Kellogg, who was much more business-minded than his brother, left the San in 1906 and started the Battle Creek Toasted Cornflake Company (which is today known as Kellogg's). The different varieties of cereal they served to their patients were produced and heavily marketed by W.K. Kellogg. Post and Kellogg remained the two largest cereal producers and played a large part in Battle Creek's development, building homes, schools, hotels, ball parks, commercial buildings, an arboretum, and an airport, among other things. (Thornton 2004) W.K. Kellogg

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[4] The American Community Survey puts a 2008 estimate of the population at 52,624.

also began a foundation in 1930, which is today one of the largest in the world and still invests heavily in Battle Creek.

Battle Creek's economy today reflects this history. Kellogg's has maintained its headquarters in Battle Creek and continues to employ thousands of local workers. The company recently announced that it would be building a food and nutrition research facility downtown, bringing more high-tech jobs to the city. Post maintains a plant in Battle Creek but has moved its headquarters out of the state. Ralcorp, one of the largest makers of generic cereals and the new owner of Post Cereals, still has some operations in Battle Creek. The federal government is also an important source of jobs for the city, with the Battle Creek Federal Center (located in the old Sanitarium building), and Fort Custer, which houses an army national guard base, training facilities, a recreational area, and an industrial site. Its heavily industrial and manufacturing base has caused Battle Creek to suffer with the rest of the state as these jobs have re-located elsewhere. Strategic moves by the city and the loyalty of the Kellogg Company, however, have led the city to be in a much better position, economically, than many similar areas.

Demographically, Battle Creek is fairly comparable to other mid-sized industrial Midwest cities.[5] As of December 2009, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) put Battle Creek's unemployment rate at 8.5%. By BLS measurements, Michigan as a whole had an unemployment rate of 14.6%. The BLS places Battle Creek's three largest fields of employment as manufacturing, at 11.4%, government, at 10.9%, and education and health services, with 9.9%. The poverty rate, as estimated in 2008, stood at 11.6% for all families. The percentage of all Michigan families below the poverty level was at 10.5%. The city is roughly 85% white, 10% black or African American, 1.7% Asian, and the next largest group after that is American Indian. This percentage is more white and less black than the rest of Michigan, by about ten and two

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[5] All statistics are taken from the 2008 American Community Survey unless otherwise noted.

percentage points, consecutively. The percentage of owner- to renter-occupied housing was about 70% to 30%. As of 2008, 13.4% of Battle Creek's housing units were vacant, or 8,134 homes, but numbers cited to me during my research were much higher.

Battle Creek is run by a nine-person city commission as well as a professional city manager. The commission is elected to two-year terms, with five ward candidates elected from specific geographic areas of the city and four at-large candidates. The commission makes all policy decisions, considering input from various departments and residents who attend meetings. The commissioners elect a mayor and a vice-mayor to one-year terms. The mayor runs commission meetings and may convene and staff special committees, but is still considered one of the commissioners in terms of the amount of power he or she holds. The city manager is appointed by the commission and runs the day-to-day operations of the city, making recommendations to the city on policy and financial issues. He is an employee of the city and supervises all other city staff.

For my purposes, it is also important to describe the Neighborhood Services Department. The department sponsors a number of programs, including the Neighborhood Resource Center, the Beautiful Battle Creek awards, various neighborhood associations, the Neighborhood Watch Program, and officially houses the Neighborhood Planning Councils. Until this year, they also employed two community organizers who have been instrumental in many of the city's grassroots actions, including some of those my thesis will explore. However, the commission eliminated these positions in February, citing budget constraints. The commission had been in tension with the city organizers for a while, and had previously tried to get rid of these positions. When residents have a problem that they believe the city can address, or if they want help to mobilize independently of the city, they go to the Neighborhood Services department. The

department works with the resident to analyze his or her specific needs as well as the needs of

the community and to find a solution. This could be simply offering them technical support such

as access to computers or neighborhood information, connecting them to the correct city

department, or helping them to start an organizing initiative. They know the communities of

Battle Creek and the resources that are available to individuals and groups.

Battle Creek is a fair representation of other Midwest towns, with a manufacturing-based

economy and roughly average demographics. The power of the city government is based in its

nine-person commission, and the city does have an official arm that deals with the community, in

the Neighborhood Services Department. Most of the city's citizen efforts have developed with

the help of this department and funding from the Kellogg Foundation.

CHAPTER 5: Joint-religious Organizing Network for Action & Hope

> "JONAH is a community of people living out our faith and values to collaboratively transform our society and bring about justice locally, regionally and nationally. JONAH exists to help form congregations and strategic partners that empower ordinary people to effectively participate in the political, environmental, social and economic decisions affecting their lives."[6]

The Joint-religious Organizing Network for Action & Hope (JONAH) is a congregation-based community organizing group. They interact with organizations that contain people rather than directly with individuals. Residents cannot independently become members; they must be part of a member organization. The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF) first granted JONAH's work in January 2005, providing First Congregational Church $20,000 to fund training and related missions through 2006. JONAH's second grant from WKKF was given to Maple Methodist Church for over ten times the first amount, and was to be used to organize for neighborhood, city, and county improvement. It is through its 15 member congregations and 12 strategic partners, including service organizations, charity missions, and other community organizations, that JONAH attempts to reach out to citizens and to the community, which it defines as all of Battle Creek. JONAH works to ultimately achieve social justice, and believes that it may do this by empowering residents to take action on issues important to them. They identify actionable community issues as intermediate goals on the way to justice. Social justice, then, may be achieved through neighborhood development, the improvement of conditions in order to extend opportunity to disadvantaged communities.

JONAH is associated with the Gamaliel Foundation, a national network that connects and supports faith-based organizing groups from across the country.[7] Gamaliel seeks to transform society by improving the economic, political, environmental and social conditions that affect

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[6] Mission is taken from the JONAH website at http://www.jonahbc.org, accessed February 26, 2010.
[7] Information is taken from the Gamaliel website, at http://www.gamaliel.org, accessed February 26, 2010.

people's lives. This systemic change is both a spiritual and political mission. Their platform

seeks to act on healthcare reform, comprehensive immigration reform, equal opportunity

housing, transportation, jobs and economic development. Gamaliel-affiliated organizations are

often guided by the national model and its values as well as its training workshops; however,

they are independent, grassroots organizations. JONAH makes use of these leader and organizer

trainings, regularly sending its most involved members to these conferences and duplicating

them in Battle Creek. Their mission is heavily influenced by Gamaliel's vision, echoing their

effort to effect political, environmental, social and economic change in people's lives. JONAH's

connection to a national structure also gives them the ability to take on—or attempt to take action

on—larger issues at a state and national level.

JONAH's work is influenced by the faith communities in which it is based, not only in

the expression of individual members but in its organizational rhetoric as a whole. Underneath

the vision statement on the group's website, JONAH lists its core beliefs, each backed up by a

verse in the Bible. Their collective and individual faith is what drives them to do this work. Its

members are united, then, by something deeply personal, but these common beliefs are expressed

through public and communal action. They are performing God's work in acting to improve

worldly conditions and working towards justice for all people. It is not required for membership

in JONAH to be part of one specific faith community or even to be religious, but they do expect

that members share the values of faith and social justice.

JONAH's member churches began their work by conducting listening campaigns, where

they met with over 1,000 residents in the Battle Creek area to identify the community's biggest

problems. These interviews ensured that their work would be grounded in real needs. From

these, JONAH held an Issues Convention in May to select the areas on which they would focus

and eventually take action. They formed three taskforces around structural racism, youth and family, and the local economy. Under the Gamaliel framework, these taskforces were intended to last for 1-2 years, at which time JONAH would reevaluate community needs, cut and define issues, and form new committees to act on them. One member described JONAH's work as less action-based and more focused on finding community issues, calling attention to them, and only then working to address them. On October 15, 2006, JONAH had their convening event, what the Enquirer described as a "coming-out party." It combined speeches from ecumenical and lay leaders, singing and praying, and a public report of their activities so far. With around 600 attendees, the meeting was a way to inform and involve the community and excite their members to action.

The structural racism taskforce worked with the NAACP to mobilize voters against Michigan's Proposition 2, which was on the ballot of the 2006 election and proposed to ban affirmative action. With JONAH's urging, a variety of politicians at the city, state, and federal level committed to oppose Prop 2. The measure, however, passed. On the economy, JONAH worked with other area groups to implement a Bridges out of Poverty program, helping link people in poverty to jobs. The program had some success in training workers and providing jobs and even spurred the creation of a new business. Finally, the youth and family taskforce worked with Kellogg Community College (KCC) on the expansion of their Legacy Scholars program, which gives exemplary students in the Battle Creek and Lakeview school systems two year scholarships to KCC and helps to prepare the students for college. JONAH hoped to extend the program to other area school districts and increase the length of the scholarship, but was unable to do so.

In JONAH's second year of action they held their Faith Zones campaign. Each congregation went door to door in the neighborhoods surrounding their church to survey residents about their community, asking what they liked and what they would want to improve. JONAH then worked with the churches to solve these neighborhood issues. They shut down a drug house and got a traffic study done. They found that inadequate lighting was an issue in a few areas, and so made this a unified action. They worked with the city manager and Consumers Energy to address a list of about 60 streetlights that were either inoperative or obscured by trees. The Enquirer's story of October 18, 2007, on the Faith Zones quoted a resident as saying the city had been "very helpful." A member also said the campaign was intended to bring the churches and neighborhoods closer and learn how they may benefit each other. The walks and the choice of issues involved a lot of strategizing and activities done in fellowship, with the group as a whole. JONAH used this to build relationships between the group, the community, and government. In terms of achieving stated goals and accruing new advantages, these campaigns were more successful than some of the previous taskforces.

In 2008, JONAH chose new issues. Their current taskforces span transportation, immigration, health care, and the economy. The last issue, the economy, is a renewal of the previous committee and will continue to focus on jobs and poverty, but will have to cut a new issue on which to work. They view immigration as a civil rights and justice issue and successfully focused on providing English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for Battle Creek's Burmese population and worked with the police to reform protocol with the Hispanic community. On health care, JONAH decided to tackle federal policy, tying into the national Gamaliel network. They led the recruitment for a bus to take Michigan Gamaliel affiliates to Washington, D.C. to lobby for healthcare reform. This was a transformative experience for those

members who traveled to D.C., as they learned how to interact with their federal representatives and make their voices heard on a national level. It did not, however, win them any new members or money on a local level.

The transportation taskforce got involved in the city's decisions on transit funding. Their leaders have engaged commissioners and the city's transportation director through public and private meetings. The city had recently paid for an outside study to be conducted of the transit system, and it showed that the system did have some problems. JONAH surveyed residents who use public transportation and held a transportation forum in 2009, where bus users talked about how transit affects their lives. JONAH felt that the problems found by the study were apparent in the community. The taskforce went to the director and held him accountable for the results of the study by making them public and confronting the department with community needs. JONAH also backed residents along one route whose service was going to be cut. These residents' involvement led to continued coverage of their route. One member said that it was because they "held [city officials'] feet to the fire" that government addressed transit service as a community issue and as one of equity, followed through with improvements such as increased service to some routes, and made public announcements about them. Out of this agitation, the department went from 'blowing off' the taskforce to returning their calls. The taskforce leader is still contacted about new transportation issues. By taking on a local issue and using confrontation with government, this taskforce achieved concrete wins as well as some government responsiveness.

An important aspect of JONAH's work is their leadership trainings, which members have described as 'life-changing.' One resident told me that the experience changed her social, professional, and personal life. These trainings utilize congregation-based organizing's core

principles to connect attendees to their own self-interest, 'organizing' them, and giving them the tools to organize in their own communities. Many members of JONAH are used to doing service work through their churches but are unused to concepts of power as a force for change, working in one's self-interest, or agitating others to action. These organizing tactics are taught to members and are used on them, and in this way, utilize Gamaliel's core principles to empower. The trainings, then, are a key part of fulfilling JONAH's mission and teach their members essential leadership skills.

JONAH often targets government in a public manner, going to the city commission rather than working with the city manager or departments. There are a few city officials who are JONAH members, but other than that, there is a lot of tension between government and JONAH. I heard from many people that they are seen as the most agitational group. I was told by one city official that other parts of government saw the organizing groups (both JONAH and PFNCC) as a threat. Another official said that JONAH is almost always in opposition to the city because they work for policy change and demand that the city takes certain actions. The same official described how he sees specific commissioners and city employees shut down when JONAH is mentioned, before members even say a word. This person believed that both JONAH and the city government have formed certain opinions of each other and do not listen as much as they should. For better or for worse, JONAH has a reputation that precedes its work. This last point was confirmed by a JONAH member who told me that the city officials she has worked with expect that she will not be satisfied with what they can give her. This relationship has led to differential outcomes—concessions on some issues and refusals to cooperate in others. In all cases, however, city officials did become aware of JONAH's views and the views of the residents that spoke with the organization.

One of the JONAH members who was also in city government thought that this tension was linked to the Gamaliel model, which he described as more 'in your face,' and which attempts to make broad statements on policy change in the interests of the poor. This goes against the standing power dynamic which has benefited those currently in power, including city officials. This focus on systemic issues, then, plays a large part in the conflict between the groups. A JONAH member told me that during the Faith Zones campaign, they had a positive relationship to the government. The city was already working on some of these issues of neighborhood improvement and so they worked together to address them. On other issues, however, such as on an issue where the city was considering waiving the prevailing wage to attract a new company, the group was opposed because they saw this as an issue of equity, and this led to tension.

When JONAH attempts to act on issues that touch on deeply embedded power dynamics, they view themselves as inherently in conflict with the government. They believe that they have to fight to get a win. This is the other part of the greater tension between JONAH and the government—some JONAH members, as part of their worldview or their theology of action, believe that they have to confront government. These two factors, action on systemic issues and confrontational rhetoric, are expressed in the group's tactics and explain why city officials perceive JONAH as the most confrontational organizing group. JONAH, unlike other community groups, does not always consider working with government first before they try working against them.

Because JONAH is sometimes seen as a confrontational organization, their relationship with the community has been somewhat rocky. One member told me that JONAH had trouble getting support from member churches for any action seen as controversial. This made it hard to

find one clear mission that was supported by all of JONAH's member organizations, let alone all the individuals involved. This same member thought they were not very successful at organizing people or money because they alienated more communities and organizations than any of the other groups. This has also led to a crisis of fundraising, and staff has had to scramble to find ways to support their activities. A leader in JONAH told me that they are now focused on identifying leaders who are committed to their vision, to the Gamaliel model, and to their way of action. They are working towards social change and have no room for 'dead weight' anymore. These goals are less concrete than other groups which work for visible, immediate physical improvement, and so JONAH is often seen by government and by the community as less effective. Additionally, a few members told me they thought JONAH needed to work harder to find issues that the community is passionate about.

JONAH is very good, however, at changing the lives of individuals by empowering them. All of the members I spoke with said that they not only had more skills for political and organizational action, but that the way they view themselves and their world had changed. These residents felt like they could make a difference in their communities and on the conditions that impact their lives. Even if the members I spoke with exhibited a selection bias because they were leaders, their lives had sincerely been changed because of JONAH's work. A JONAH organizer spoke of connecting people to their passions and self-interest, making person-to-person connections on the basis of this deep-seated driving force. This almost exactly echoes Jacobsen's book on faith-based organizing (2001), showing that these leaders have internalized the Gamaliel model and begun to reproduce it in their work, becoming empowered under the organization's definition of the term. Another leader in JONAH told me that more residents are coming to understand JONAH's work as they learn about the principles of social justice. This

member thought that JONAH was just more honest and open about things such as agitation, conflict, and unequal power dynamics, and though other people deal with these concepts in their everyday life, identifying them and calling them to the forefront of one's work is threatening to many people.

In their work towards social justice, JONAH took action on a variety of issues, including neighborhood conditions, jobs and poverty, structural racism, youth and family, education, health care, and immigration. To achieve wins on these goals, they used more outsider, confrontational tactics. These did succeed in attaining the desired outcomes some of the time, especially on more local issues, but also led to a perception of JONAH as aggressive and agitational. The results of their campaigns, then, have been mixed. They have empowered some members to successfully work for change, but have not gained all of their policy goals or any large measure of social justice.

CHAPTER 6: Post-Franklin Neighbors Creating Change

> "We improve the quality of life in our neighborhood by lighting the sidewalks, improving the properties, promoting positive youth development, assessing and responding to community issues, increasing educational opportunities that lead to economic self-sufficiency, taking back our streets, and developing a sense of pride, trust, respect, and honor among our neighbors, local businesses, local organizations, and city government."

Post-Franklin Neighbors Creating Change (PFNCC) is a community organizing group based in the Post-Franklin neighborhood of Battle Creek. Membership is individually-based, revolving around a shared interest in revitalizing residents' community, which consists of the Post and Franklin neighborhoods. The Post Addition was a subdivision built by C.W. Post to provide housing for his employees. The homes were billed as affordable and could be paid for out of workers' paychecks. The Franklin neighborhood borders the Post Addition, near the Post cereal factory. These neighborhoods are socially, politically, and economically similar. As the factory lost business and moved operations out of town, neighborhood conditions deteriorated. These downtown areas were neglected as development moved outward into the suburbs, away from the old industries. PFNCC was created when neighbors gathered together in response to serious economic, social, and physical concerns.

The organization utilizes Alinsky-style action-based organizing to work toward neighborhood development. Saul Alinsky was known for being pragmatic, and this is echoed in PFNCC's mission statement. Alinsky and his followers chose campaigns based on immediate resident needs, actionable issues on which groups could achieve 'wins,' or succeed in getting their demands met. These issues must also be something that residents feel they benefit from, to build excitement in the community and credibility for the organization. Unlike JONAH, a congregation-based organizing group with national ties, PFNCC does not say it works for broad, over-arching values and ideals. Instead, they name visible neighborhood goals such as

streetlights, property, and education, focusing on community- and city-level change. The group's organizers have been trained in traditional organizing techniques, and this is evident in their work and the issues they choose to take on. They do still work for more intangible results such as pride and trust, but are not primarily motivated by abstract ideals apart from a shift in power to the traditionally disadvantaged. Their end goals, then, may be defined as empowerment and a revitalized, healthy community.

PFNCC was founded in the summer of 2005, when Trinity Lutheran Church received its first grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. This grant was intended to fund a resident association that would work to improve the neighborhood's quality of life. Trinity Lutheran joined with Post Elementary School and the Women's Co-op to form Post-Franklin Neighbors for Creating Change. The church hired their first paid organizer in the fall of that year, and this organizer began building Creating Change as an organization and strengthening community relationships. As the Battle Creek Enquirer reported on June 18, 2006, PFNCC began holding a series of community conversations. These meetings were vital to establish a base in the Post-Franklin neighborhood and to learn about residents' concerns, which become the foundation for their future work. They also disseminated information about the group and began to form a network between residents. Finally, these discussions identified neighborhood activists and potential leaders. The conversations were modeled after the organizing tool of 'one-on-ones,' interviews that attempt to connect a person with his or her self-interest and build a relationship that can be used to spur that person to action.

In 2005 and 2006, PFNCC started organizing stealth rallies. A stealth rally is a "surprise street party" (according to this same article in the Enquirer) where residents gather to show criminals that they refuse to give up their neighborhood and that they will stand as a group

against crime and blight. These stealth rallies were incorporated into the Crime Watch program, supported in part by PFNCC. The neighborhood's relationship to the police improved with the help of the city's Neighborhood Services department and PFNCC's work, and they are now better able to work together to solve problems. In these early years, Creating Change also held block parties and neighborhood clean-ups to collect trash from around the neighborhood. The block parties helped to build a relationship with the community, between the group and residents and between individuals. A resident told me that the parties and clean-ups helped to build neighborhood engagement by creating interpersonal connections and opportunities for service. The clean ups showed residents they could make a difference in their community by working together.

PFNCC received their second grant from the Kellogg Foundation and hired a new organizer in the summer and fall of 2007. This second grant was given specifically to Creating Change (through Trinity Lutheran) and was to be used for organizational development, indicating that they had begun to be recognized as legitimate. Almost immediately after the new organizer was hired, PFNCC began their first big campaign against the closing of Post Elementary School. The Post neighborhood was given very little notice about the planned closing, but the principal of the school called Creating Change immediately after he heard, and they were able to mobilize about 30 people to attend a school board meeting. In the next month, PFNCC built relationships with parents and held strategy meetings to plan future actions and map out their goals. They brought 70-80 residents to the next school board meeting to ask for more time and public input into any decision about Post's future. If the board had met this demand, the campaign could have been considered an outright success. Their effort, however, was not enough, and the board voted unanimously to close the schools. Additionally, the

superintendent was upset that PFNCC had gone straight to the school board meeting instead of going to the principal and leaving it to him to go up the chain of command. Creating Change did get the board to agree to send a member of the school board to attend future meetings of the Post-Franklin Neighborhood Planning Council, but this did not happen.

The PFNCC organizer said they did not gain a 'win' on this issue because they had not built up enough of a relationship with the school board or with the school system's administration. Under the organizer's understanding, the school board takes their cues from the administration of Battle Creek Public Schools, and from the superintendent. They did not listen to the community because they did not have a relationship with them that would allow resident input to override or even counter the views of the school system. Even those 70-80 community voices were not stronger than the administrative voice. From this, PFNCC learned that they had to build allies on the school board. It does not seem, however, that PFNCC feels they should not have gone to the public meeting and should have gone to the principal and up through proper channels, just that they should have had more allies within the system first. After the Post school closed, leading to PFNCC's first loss, many of the parents became disengaged again. The organizer acknowledged that to keep them involved, they needed to generate that win.

Creating Change's next big action came in the fall of 2008, when they decided to work to improve the condition of the Post and Hamilton Parks, the only parks in the neighborhood since the school closed. This issue was brought up by a member who lives in the Post Addition. Hamilton Park, which was in the center of the neighborhood, was chosen to be the focus of the campaign. Hamilton is one of the oldest parks in the city and, as one member told me, was decayed to the point that it was essentially a vacant lot. After internal planning, they worked with the parks and recreation director to get information on why the parks were in such bad

condition and what could be done about it. The director walked them through the process, helped them make a plan, and agreed to make the park the number one priority in the city's capital improvements plan, but he was skeptical that the city would take action and refused to ensure any specific outcomes. As reported in the Enquirer on October 31, 2008, the director's biggest concern was where the money for these improvements would be found.

Creating Change began petitioning the council once the budget process started, in April, telling them about the bad conditions of Hamilton Park. Leaders continued to speak with the commissioners individually and attend meetings, bringing up to 50-60 residents and showing them pictures of the park. By the end of the budget process, though, in late May to early June, they only had the support of one commissioner. In order to get the attention of the commission and extract an agreement to their demands, PFNCC decided to stage an action. To illustrate how dangerous the park's condition was, they bubble-wrapped the playground equipment and put up caution tape, and had someone dress up as a doctor and pretend to give tetanus shots to children. Three commissioners came to the meeting: the two whose wards were geographically closest to the parks, and the mayor. One member said that these governmental officials had not before seen the 'plight' of the parks and said they were 'astounded,' realizing that the park was a safety issue and a liability for the city. The leaders of PFNCC then made a demand on the commissioners. 'Demand' is an organizing term that indicates that these leaders pose a request for specific action to their targets and force them to answer in a yes or no manner, with no waffling and no qualifications. One commissioner and the mayor gave outright yeses, indicating their support for updating the equipment. The last commissioner was unsure but eventually agreed once the other two did. Before the budget decision, the two commissioners with whom they had not met were the only ones who had not given their support to PFNCC.

Creating Change members showed up to the council meeting on the budget with caution tape worn around their arms or foreheads to 'show solidarity' with the community, as one resident put it. The commission offered the group a compromise and asked them to agree to a three phase plan with each phase funded separately and at different times, and the leaders accepted. Some of the departments PFNCC had been working with were surprised the group had gotten even this much action on their goals. Money allocation to the first phase, which would take care of the grounds work and new equipment, was supposed to take 6-8 weeks. Instead, it took 2-3 months, but funding was eventually approved and the park was updated. The city's parks master plan was approved on January 20, 2009, as the Enquirer reported, and this broad, long-term plan included Hamilton Park. It did not, however, allocate money to the project. One of Creating Change's members is doubtful the funding will be found for these last two phases, and another said that it would be up to Creating Change to fundraise for the last two phases.

The difference between the Post school campaign and the parks campaign is large, and not only because of the longer time frame for the parks issue. PFNCC's strategy and tactics evolved as leaders learned from the failure to get a clear win on Post. One important change was the recognition of the necessity of mapping out a plan, not only within the group (which was done in the Post campaign), but with the targets (the school board or commissioners). It is crucial to form relationships with those in power and to gain their support before the public action. This relationship is what leads the commissioners to respect the group and the community it stands for, and to even consider their demands. It is strategically important to gain this concession before the action so that the group does not fail publicly and may plan its responses to the targets' actions. The public nature of the demand, with the presence of the community and the media, is also important to pressure officials and hold them accountable.

One member told me that without these elements, the group would not be successful. The group also became more daring, as shown by their action in the park itself. Though residents were nervous to stage the tetanus shot demonstration that some called 'tacky,' they realized that taking the risk was necessary to gain concessions, and power, from the commission. The parks campaign was considered a win for Creating Change as an organization and for the community.

PFNCC's relationship to the government has changed over the course of its work and continues to evolve, often on an issue-by-issue basis. One member told me that it is crucial for the community to always attend government meetings and invite officials to their own events because government holds power. They must involve government in their work, whether in a positive or negative way. Unlike JONAH, PFNCC members did not address so explicitly the inequality of the power dynamic between government and the community. They were also more likely to cooperate with government, or at least to try a cooperative strategy first. As previously stated, they attempted to build positive relationships with city figures on their later campaigns. They did not however, have a 'close' relationship with government as characterized by multiple city officials, probably because their involvement changes according to the issue. They work directly with departments on some campaigns and target the commission on others. One city official thought residents stand in opposition to the council when they want to make sure government understands the importance of their stance on certain issues. This suggests this official sees confrontation as a position that is not open to compromise. Overall, city government is now more likely to 'return phone calls' of PFNCC members than they were when the group first started, indicating that they have gained respect for their work.

Most governmental officials told me they thought Creating Change was the group that had accomplished the most, or at least had the most 'bang for the buck.' They cited not only the

more tangible results that PFNCC brought to their community such as reducing crime and cleaning up the neighborhood, but the way the organization allowed neighbors to take control of their own community and make change independently. Creating Change was seen as representative of the Post-Franklin community and was respected for its on-the-ground organizing. They are an active organization in an area that was traditionally disenfranchised, disillusioned, and not politically engaged. One elected official told me he was "heartened" to see the change in the neighborhood and that PFNCC had been more successful than any previous organizing efforts. He said PFNCC is creating a sense of belonging and ownership over the neighborhood that had not existed before. They are exciting their membership with tangible and attainable wins that are literally 'right around the corner.'

These concrete wins are seen as necessary to keep members involved, and all the residents I spoke with said that neighborhood engagement has increased substantially. These benefits are emphasized over an overarching philosophy such as social justice or equality, though these values may be driving forces individually. PFNCC does not spend as much time as JONAH in teaching its message, but demonstrates its value through concrete change for the neighborhood and for individuals. One leader told me that his training was 'on-the-job,' and he learned the tactics through issue campaigns. PFNCC does conduct regular trainings, though, where members learn instrumental tactics such as one-on-ones, power analysis, how to conduct meetings, and other leadership tools. These skills are more important than abstract principles, and residents use them to enact further change.

As with JONAH, there was some community backlash to PFNCC's confrontational actions, especially the staged tetanus shots. I was told that community members were scared by its militancy, but most of the leaders came around after they saw the effectiveness of the action.

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Other communities in Battle Creek were also upset, again over the park campaign. The city's decision allocated funds to Hamilton Park, on the poorer side of town, and residents on the other side of town were upset that commissioners were not meeting their needs, especially since they pay more in taxes. The organization's leadership, though, has come to understand the organizing model and appreciate its results as they improve conditions. By taking these bold actions to gain wins from powerful figures, residents have seen that they can make a difference in their own lives and shape the future of their neighborhood.

By most measures, PFNCC is progressing toward their end goal of neighborhood development. Through a mix of confrontation and cooperation, they have achieved wins on their intermediate goals. Their successes are somewhat limited and smaller than other organizations because they are within the borders of the Post-Franklin neighborhood, but both government and the community recognize the good they have done thus far.

CHAPTER 7: **Neighborhoods, Inc. of Battle Creek**

"The mission of Neighborhoods Inc. is to help neighbors achieve healthy neighborhoods by identifying leadership, resources, and effective strategies that bring about long term change. NIBC considers a healthy neighborhood: Safe, Clean, Diverse, Free of crime & drugs, Economically healthy, Caring & involved neighbors, Well maintained properties."

Neighborhoods, Inc. of Battle Creek (NIBC) is a non-profit community housing development organization that was formed in the early 1980s by a coalition of Neighborhood Planning Councils. Functionally, it falls under the umbrella of a community development corporation. The Kellogg Foundation's website only tracks grants back to 1990, but since then, they have granted NIBC over $16.8 million. NIBC sees the community it works to support as all of Battle Creek, but acknowledges that most of its work is done in the poorer neighborhoods on the north side of the city. NIBC focuses on the development of entire neighborhoods, not just homes. This means they strategically target areas with community assets, and often work to coordinate efforts with the city. They attempt to concentrate on one neighborhood at a time and then move on, continuing services in the previous area but transferring focus to the next community. Similarly to PFNCC, NIBC's ultimate goal is healthy neighborhoods. Their mission statement details the intermediate goals which they believe will contribute to this, and on which they take action.

NIBC is a chartered member of NeighborWorks America, a national network that provides technical and financial support as well as training and informational resources for local community-based organizations. NeighborWorks was created by Congress in 1978, and their network includes over 230 local and national organizations. Their programs focus on homeownership, community organizing, real estate, foreclosure prevention, and training in community development practices. According to their website, NeighborWorks "creates opportunities for people to live in affordable homes, improve their lives and strengthen their

communities." [8] They value community, effectiveness, integrity and results. Its goals and programming, then, are very similar to NIBC in that they both work broadly to strengthen a community through both economic and physical development and through resident development. NIBC, however, does have a few more specific, carefully detailed goals. Unlike JONAH, which operates under the national Gamaliel network, NIBC seems to derive less directly from the NeighborWorks model and instead uses it as a resource from which they may draw upon as needed.

Neighborhoods, Inc. focuses its work around a few "lines of business," as they were called by one leader. Broadly, their services are education and counseling, mortgage lending, home ownership opportunities, and community outreach, with staff designated to supervise each section. Within these general categories, they offer foreclosure mitigation, loans for purchasing and remodeling, mortgages, a home and rental portfolio, financial and homeownership training, and community organizing and community houses. NIBC is run by a board of directors which their website says is "selected from…community leaders" and "represents a cross section of the Battle Creek community." The board did seem to be made up of people of prominence in Battle Creek, including city staff and commissioners. NIBC is guided by the vision of the board and it is a professional organization, but one that works with and for the community. Staff members go out into the community and get to know its residents and homes, sometimes attending NPC meetings. Their work is more focused on providing services than community organizing is, but it also seeks to give residents the skills to improve their own lives and their community as a whole, financially, economically, physically, and socially. One member told me they go "deeper than community development" because their work preserves home values, attracts new residents, retains a student and tax base, and promotes an overall healthy environment for residents.

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[8] The NeighborWorks website is http://www.nw.org, accessed February 26, 2010.

Most of the housing and financial services that NIBC provides focus on mortgages, loans, and counseling or education. They also own a number of houses that they sell or rent to low-income families. They work with the city to gain ownership of abandoned houses and rehabilitate them with Community Development Block Grant money. NIBC first works to get clients to homeownership. They counsel residents on buying a home, the responsibility of owning a home, and after they buy the house, they teach residents about weatherization and improvements, for which they offer loans. They focus on lending to clients whose needs are not met by banks—those residents who are often targeted by predatory lenders. Their requirements are less stringent than banks and they have low interest rates, no lending fees, and work with the person taking out the loan to ensure they understand the terms and how to meet payments. Their portfolio includes almost 600 loans. If clients do not qualify for homeownership, they offer a rent-to own program. The rent goes towards loan payments, and the resident's rent is used to establish credit history. They are usually able to purchase the home after a year or two.

NIBC's biggest campaign in recent years began in November 2007, when they coordinated with NeighborWorks on the National Foreclosure Mitigation Campaign, receiving federal funding. The recent wave of foreclosures and abandonment has been devastating for local and national markets, not only physically and economically, but in terms of crime and social order. This campaign worked to develop and stabilize neighborhoods nationally, and NIBC extended these benefits to Battle Creek neighborhoods. They advertised the program through community agencies and worked with residents to mitigate their loans. The first priority for clients was to work out a plan so that residents would not lose their homes. Once they collected financial information from residents, they worked with a lender to figure out an affordable plan. The lender sent documents back to NIBC, who worked with the clients to

explain them, making sure they understood all the information and that the plan was in their best interests. They followed up with counseling intended to give residents the financial tools to continue to manage their loans. NIBC monitored the loans for 3-6 months before they became permanent. In the city of Battle Creek, they have helped many homeowners to stay in their homes, and with much more affordable terms on their loans.

The main way NIBC does community outreach is by working with residents to form neighborhood associations. They pay for and maintain four community houses, providing a physical space for these groups, which may then do the organizing. They offer training for residents locally and through NeighborWorks. National trainings focus on financial and economic subjects as well as on community engagement, and have brought nationally prominent organizers to past trainings. The neighborhood associations work on a smaller level than NIBC as a whole, and are more closely tailored to residents' specific and local needs. One example of a program the associations have started in their communities is summer lunch. Many students in these neighborhoods are on public assistance food programs at school, and so the community houses have come together to provide food for these children in the summer, when school is out. NIBC works to create connections between the leaders of these organizations so they may collaborate and, when appropriate, combine efforts. They have also worked with local police to foster a closer relationship with these associations and have helped residents install more streetlights, reducing crime in the area.

Each year, NIBC participates in National NeighborWorks Week. This is a celebration of all the work the organization and residents have done over the year, showcasing past efforts and energizing participants for the future. It is held in a neighborhood park—a different one from year to year—so that the event is open to any neighbor who wants to come by. This also

increases NIBC's visibility. The event is primarily a service project which mobilizes residents

from across the city to take part. In the past this has focused on painting, cleaning up

playgrounds, and last year, community gardening. They invite the police and other city officials

to join them and have a free barbeque and games. It is more than just a block party, but is a day

of fun and community fellowship that helps to strengthen community bonds.

NIBC is generally well-liked by the city and has many political allies. A few city

officials told me that they see their relationship as a partnership, where each can support the

other. One emphasized that NIBC works '*with*' various departments and the manager to solve

problems, rather than targeting these departments or even working independently from them.

This relationship, the official continued, is "historical and contractual." As with the NPCs,

NIBC staff follow an established process in their interactions with the city. In three separate

interviews, however, their partnership was defined and measured in relation to the government

money used to support NIBC's activities, indicating that this relationship is largely instrumental

and negotiated in terms of NIBC's usefulness to the city. It is important that the city sees

NIBC's goals for these neighborhoods as aligned with their own. Abandoned and deteriorating

housing is a concrete and well-established problem that the city realizes is necessary for it to

address. Everyone I spoke with—competing organizations included—recognized and

appreciated NIBC's work in this area. It is because of this that the city sees it as "their role," as

one city staff member put it, to support NIBC.

Some city officials, however, had a different perception of NIBC, related to the group's

efforts on more traditionally conceived 'community' work. NIBC received money from

government to organize residents, but their community outreach, as one official put it, was

'unclear' and 'late to the game.' The city voted in early 2010 not to continue funding NIBC's

organizing efforts because their work in this field was viewed as 'largely ineffective, and not fulfilling their assigned responsibility,' according to one elected official. The commissioners seemed to change their opinion of NIBC in part by reference to the other groups I have mentioned. In my conversations with government officials, they cited Creating Change as a group that has made a concrete impact on the conditions of the Post-Franklin neighborhood, but in a more 'cost-effective' way. NIBC has also struggled organizationally in the past year or so, and has had trouble finding consistent leadership. This has played a large role in the city's current perception of them. Interviews did reveal, however, that people could still look past this to acknowledge their past and then-current work, as previously detailed.

NIBC engages with the community in a variety of ways. Some of its outreach is service provision, but its other efforts do include financial education and organizing trainings. The organization's community impacts, then, go beyond just developing a neighborhood's physical structures to also develop the individual residents, seeking to teach them economic and social skills and helping them to make a difference in their community. Physical improvements can also have a greater impact by increasing resident confidence and pride. NIBC has allowed residents to stay in their homes and has made an impact on the blight in these neighborhoods, even if they have not completely stopped deterioration. Through their foreclosure mitigation initiative, they have helped between 400 and 500 community members, allowing many of these residents to remain in their homes. They not only helped people to meet their mortgage payments, though, they helped to lower their costs and train residents on financial responsibility, getting to the root of the problem.

As noted, however, NIBC's ability to truly impact the lives of community members was questioned and, ultimately, not economically supported by the city. NIBC did not use strict

organizing methods and their community mobilizing and empowerment efforts were not viewed as on the same level as the organizing groups. They did, however, support the efforts of residents to mobilize and make changes in their community. They sponsored multiple neighborhood associations and brought residents together, sparking conversations between and within neighborhoods. They have taught residents how to organize their community and how to find funding for their projects. They are no longer able to financially support this aspect of their work, but continue to act as a resource for citizens. Ultimately, their physical and financial development work was more successful than their social services, as has been recognized by both the community and government.

NIBC has made progress towards its terminal goal of healthy neighborhoods through the process goals defined in their mission statement and implemented in their services. Their work has been broader than other groups, reaching more residents from across the city. They have not, however, done as much to empower residents. Their tactics of cooperation and partnership with the city have worked to gain the service benefits they seek, but only when local government sees NIBC's goals as aligned with its own.

CHAPTER 8: Neighborhood Planning Councils

> "The purpose of this NPC is to provide a forum to inform and discuss with neighborhood residents and representatives of the city staff and City Commissioners issues and concerns of that neighborhood. This organization is advisory only in nature….[but] is permitted and expected to reflect the collective citizen interest of its membership and neighbors, including petitioning the City Commission with requests for action and providing the City Commission as well as other city governmental decision making bodies with recommendations."[9]

The neighborhood planning councils (NPCs) were formed in 1979 under Battle Creek's resolution 423 and expanded to their current form in 1983. There are 8 planning councils housed under the city's Neighborhood Services Department, each based in a different geographic area as determined by elementary schools. The 15-35 members of the planning councils are formally appointed by the city commission to a term of three years, but the monthly meetings are open to all. To be an official member, a person must have a "demonstrable and substantial interest" in the area, generally defined as living or owning property in the designated neighborhood. The councils serve as a forum where neighbors may express their concerns. They voice neighborhood opinion on things such as infrastructure, crime, and business or residential developments, especially on issues of planning and code. The end goal of these councils is to incorporate a citizen voice into government decision-making. They work to do this through meetings and community outreach.

I spoke with members of three planning councils: NPC 1, in Post-Franklin, NPC 4, in the Fremont/Verona/McKinley area, and NPC 11, in Minges Brook/Riverside. The Post-Franklin neighborhood has already been described in the section on PFNCC. Fremont and Verona elementary schools are also downtown and part of the Battle Creek Public School District. McKinley Elementary was in the same area but closed in the mid-2000s. Fremont is in the heart of Battle Creek, near the hospital and the community college, and 5 minutes from the central

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[9] This is taken from NPC #4's bylaws, under Article II, Roles and Purpose, Section 1.

downtown district. Verona is a residential area that is a little farther out. NPC 1 and NPC 4

cover the area where the other groups I am studying generally do most of their work because

they are considered more 'disadvantaged' areas. The Minges Brook and Riverside elementary

schools are in the Lakeview school district, on the south side of town. This is a more affluent

area, and this council was recommended to me by government officials as an example of how the

NPCs should be run.

Meetings, the core of NPC action, are held once every month and are run formally, by

Robert's Rules of Order. The councils build off of a 'stock' agenda, and each covers the same

issues. The most important items on the agenda are the reports from city staff and NPC

committees.   City officials, including a representative from the police department, someone

from the city's planning, code, or neighborhood services department, city or county

commissioners, and someone from the local school district, give reports and hear concerns. Each

council also has internal committees. These may vary, but usually include a membership

committee, one that gives the Beautiful Battle Creek Award, an action committee, and additional

committees on land use, schools, and programs. The NPCs are, theoretically and often in

practice, the first group commissioners and other city staff will go to for community input or to

disseminate information to the community. The presence of these officials at the meeting gives

residents the opportunity for face-to-face interaction with their representatives.

I attended a meeting of the 'model' council (NPC 11), and it did follow, more or less, the

agenda as described above. There was not a strict application to Robert's Rules of Order,

though, so it did not feel as formal as it may have. These rules governed the meeting, but people

were allowed to speak up if needed and add items to the agenda later on. The police report and

subsequent questions focused on crime trends in the area. A representative from the code

department gave a report on the Neighborhood Stabilization Program money that had been given to the Calhoun County Land Bank, even though the NPC 11 area would not be getting these low-income targeted funds. The commissioners spoke about the budget process and Battle Creek's huge shortfall—$700,000 for the rest of this fiscal year and $2 million for the next year's budget. One commissioner announced that they would be holding budget workshops and seemed to be preparing the group for the service cuts to come. There was also a report from a county commissioner, who spoke about their budget and possible ways to save money. The internal committees seemed not to have very much to report apart from standard operational concerns.

It was under 'old business' where the most vigorous discussion occurred. Nothing had been on the agenda for this subject, but one member who also sits on the citywide planning commission brought an issue to the NPC's attention. They had previously voted to not support the redevelopment of a local residence into a funeral home, chapel, and crematorium. For this to occur, the city would have to grant the owner a Special Use permit. The owner had apparently presented the proposal for this permit to the planning commission in the time between the NPC's last meeting and this one. The NPC, though they had already voted on the matter, had not been informed of this meeting, and may not have heard about it if they had not had a shared member. The planning commission (in large part due to this member) decided to postpone a decision on the property, but not explicitly because of the NPC's previous vote. It did not sound like the commission had even taken this vote into account, though they may have and just not shared it. The residents in the vicinity of the property were informed of the issue largely because of the unofficial actions of another resident, not because of any direct action by the city or even the NPC as a whole. The NPC had gone through the established process to express their disapproval

to the planning department, but this did not gain much of a government response, and did not seem to impact the desired outcome.

Some of the NPCs try to go beyond the stock format of the meetings to involve a greater number of issues and residents. A few, especially NPC 4, hold monthly 'programs' intended to highlight neighborhood problems and potential solutions. These are an attempt to encourage positive, constructive thinking about broader problems rather than solely individual concerns. Recently, an informational speaker came from the Substance Abuse Council and spoke about what residents could do to prevent underage drinking. They focused on gang activity as an extended initiative, and concluded with a community forum that included neighborhood outreach and government collaboration. Some organizing-minded members have done community outreach and attempted to hold collective actions. The previous Creating Change organizer knocked on doors and conducted a survey on neighborhood conditions in relation to NPC 1. Another Creating Change member organized a neighborhood cleanup through his NPC two years in a row. The first cleanup, funded by the Battle Creek Community Foundation, was very successful, but the turnout at the second was not very good. These actions had limited success and were conducted largely without government involvement.

One of the biggest actions that came out of NPC 4 revolved around the city's plan for downtown redevelopment and transformation. This NPC borders the downtown, as previously stated, so they were concerned about the plan's direct effects on their community, especially in its proposed housing and business developments. When the city first presented its plan in the spring of 2008, developed in conjunction with Battle Creek Unlimited (BCU), an economic development organization, little to no community input had been incorporated. The NPC 4 chair encouraged council members to come out to the workshop and push back on the proposals,

asking the city and BCU to consider neighborhood opinion. The chair said he was trying to be 'non-supportive,' but in a positive, constructive way. BCU later asked to come speak to the NPC, even though they knew residents might make negative comments about the plan.

In October, resulting from this backlash, the city did step back and hold a series of three community meetings. They used the original framework of the plan but were open to residents' thoughts and concerns. Between each of the public meetings, they incorporated this feedback and presented a revised plan at the subsequent discussion. The NPC felt that they had received what they asked for—an opportunity for neighborhood input. The final plan put out by BCU included some substantial changes in direct response to resident concerns. One leader told me that BCU, an economic development firm, had been more open to citizen input than the city. On this effort, the NPC went outside of conventional processes to express discontent and achieved a win, unlike in some previous campaigns. This change to more confrontational outsider tactics impacted the outcome.

The NPCs are technically part of city government, so their relationship to the rest of government can be complex. They do not necessarily have the power to effect change in their neighborhoods without other officials. They follow a long-standing process to contact the proper city departments and there is a history of relationship between the two entities. Often, it is only if this process fails that they choose to go directly to the commission. One NPC leader told me that they believe this long-term relationship is more effective than more radical organizing. This person believed that what he called the strategy of "yelling loud enough" worked in the short term, but that government eventually just tunes it out. The NPC's relationship to government, though, has been "up and down," as one city staff member told me. This same person told me that the NPCs are 'subordinate' to the city, rather than being completely independent from it or

being a partner to it. Another elected official who regularly attends at least one of the NPCs told

me that commissioner involvement in the NPCs has been irregular. They have not always

attended meetings in the past, and though the new commissioners have been going to meetings

so far, the official conjectured that this was due to a 'honeymoon period' after the most recent

election. The other city departments that are supposed to report to the NPCs do not always send

representatives, either.

A somewhat more pessimistic NPC member who is also involved in some community

organizing efforts told me that the NPCs were a way to keep people busy doing nothing. In this

resident's view, the NPCs are, or at least have been, a perfunctory way for the government to say

that they have citizen input to city decisions. He believes officials are not truly open to

community decision-making. It is true, according to most people I interviewed, that there has

been some hostility from the city towards broad citizen involvement, and specifically towards the

NPCs. An NPC leader theorized that this is because the councils were federally mandated and

the city accepted them only because they were required to do so. This was especially true if the

councils 'made waves,' and tried to do more than just hold meetings. The NPCs have worked to

develop a positive relationship with the city over time, not only between the organization and

government but also with the community. Members want government to engage the community

and respond to their concerns—this is the purpose of their work. The NPCs believe they can

play a role in improving the relationship between government and the community, by getting the

city to understand neighborhood concerns and showing residents that government is not all

negative by giving them an opportunity for positive participation.

One of the biggest questions about the NPCs is whether they truly are representative of

the neighborhoods in which they are situated. Every person with whom I spoke about the NPCs

reported dissatisfaction with the low resident turnout to the meetings, and said that these groups would come closer to fulfilling their purpose if there were higher attendance. One NPC member who is also an organizer brought neighbors to the meeting who had never before been to one. I was told that they found it boring and inaccessible, and that the procedural rules superseded the real concerns of these residents. Additionally, many people told me that the meetings are often used mainly as a space for members to complain. At the meeting I attended, there were a lot of pointed comments about specific residents. One elected official expressed concern about how effective the NPCs really are in relating neighborhood concerns to the city, and in how well these groups disseminate information from the city to the neighborhood. Often important updates from the government are relayed only to "a select few," as this official put it. Other government staff noted that how widely the information is spread depends on the leaders. Everyone interviewed said that information channels between government, the NPCs, and residents could be improved.

NPC leaders were conscious of these criticisms and told me they were working hard to address them, doing more community outreach and trying to act positively to solve problems once they have been identified. They did want to improve their information-sharing function and their relationship to government, but leaders thought it was most important to strengthen their connection to the community. Empowering the community can also help to make their voices heard by government. One way NPC 4 is attempting to do this is by reaching out to other neighborhood associations, improving their relationship to them and acting as a channel to government. All NPC leaders I spoke with wanted to do more community outreach. One member observed that in their original design, the planning councils were more oriented toward information-sharing purposes than towards action. People have tried, though, with some success,

to mobilize action campaigns out of them. The goal of some leaders is to become a stronger model for the way government should act, by actively engaging and mobilizing the community and truly addressing and resolving their concerns.

The NPCs have had limited success in bringing neighborhood opinion into governmental decision making. They have established themselves as a legitimate or 'official' channel to reach residents, in the eyes of government, but their community engagement efforts have been infrequent and largely unsuccessful. The exception to this was NPC 4's involvement in changes to the city's plan for downtown transformation. Though citizens often view the councils as useful only for information sharing or networking, dedicated NPC members have shown that they can contribute to neighborhood development by connecting residents to the political process.

CHAPTER 9: Conclusion

Battle Creek's community organizations have made concrete changes in the areas they work to develop. JONAH, by drawing on faith traditions and using confrontational methods, has empowered residents and achieved some measurable goals. However, they have been largely unable to gain the concessions they seek from government, leading to limited policy change. Creating Change has effectively used pragmatic organizing techniques to gain concrete wins, shift power, and increase community engagement, but these successes have been restricted to the Post-Franklin neighborhood.   Neighborhoods, Inc. has built a partnership with government that has enabled them to make broad change. They have been more successful in physical and economic development, however, than in empowering residents. The NPCs have been used mainly to network, and though they worked through established channels, members were often ignored by government. A few dedicated leaders have been able to make real change through the NPCs, but only by combining their inside access with community force.

The research findings show that Creating Change and Neighborhoods Inc. are viewed as the most effective groups by the majority of the community and government, and have come closest to reaching their goals. These organizations achieve favorable outcomes in large part due to the tactics they use. Such a conclusion supports my hypothesis that more moderate groups which are able to both cooperate with and confront government—as Creating Change does—will have the most success. NIBC does not use as many outsider actions, but they are respected by government as a partner and have established credibility through their past actions. Steggert's previous finding that city governments will prefer to work with those groups that use cooperative, or insider, tactics was confirmed. City officials did state that they prefer to work with NIBC and the NPCs. However, they were not as responsive to these groups as to the

confrontational, outsider groups. All city officials admitted to me that PFNCC had done a great deal for the Post-Franklin neighborhood, especially considering they held fewer resources. The city was more reactive even to JONAH, with whom they least wanted to work, than to the NPCs.

In conversation with those interviewed, I found that the strategies and tactics of these groups did matter more than their organizational type. Most people with whom I spoke did not take note of the type of organization, and when they did mention the organizational form, it was in explanation of tactics, or how it shaped the actions of individuals. One other important factor was the issue that a group worked for, and if the city saw this work as congruent with its own. I had hoped to hold this constant, and I did restrict my study to similar campaigns. Many times, though, the focus of these groups differed, leading their major campaigns to differ as well. Their campaign goals affected how they were viewed by both the community and the government. The issues which the organizations chose to tackle, however, reflect their strategy toward neighborhood development. Additionally, even when these groups did seek the same benefits, they achieved differential results because of the tactics they used. For example, JONAH and PFNCC both attempted to influence city plans, on transportation and on parks, but PFNCC was more successful because they were able to mix aggressive action with individual relationships to council members. They effectively worked with city departments and not only against them, as JONAH did.

Creating Change and JONAH worked largely outside of political institutions and used confrontational tactics. As one city official recognized, organizing produces results and changes perspectives, empowering the disenfranchised. Organizing, however, runs up against the status quo and so is politically unpopular. Organizers seek to shift a larger share of resources and power to the historically disenfranchised, those who generally do not pay as much in taxes or

give to campaigns. This means that they will work, at least sometimes, in opposition to those

with power. PFNCC and JONAH work in different ways and so produce different outcomes.

Even though PFNCC uses more confrontational tactics, such as the tetanus shot event, JONAH is

viewed as the more agitational group, and the government has a less positive relationship with

JONAH than with PFNCC. PFNCC is more likely to use a mix of cooperation and

confrontation, evaluating each step as a function of the specific situation. Even though their

actions can be more extreme, this conflict is tempered by a willingness to cooperate since their

strategies are based in Alinky's pragmatism, regarding no party as either a permanent ally or a

permanent enemy. JONAH, on the other hand, almost always views the government as in

opposition to its cause, assuming that power will never concede without a fight. Their tactics are

not as radical, but their confrontations are not mixed with collaboration. PFNCC, then, is viewed

as more moderate and thus more effective, affirming my hypothesis.

NIBC and NPC used insider tactics almost exclusively, opting to cooperate and work

within established processes. They worked with government to achieve their goals of

neighborhood development. NIBC, however, was regarded as a partner while the NPCs were

viewed as 'subordinate.' These differing relationships were shaped by the tactics each group

used and affected the benefits they were able to win from the city. Officials emphasized that

NIBC worked in partnership with the government and that they supported each other in their

efforts to revitalize targeted neighborhoods. They generally work within an established mode of

communication, though I was told that NIBC staff would occasionally go outside this mode if

they were not receiving what they needed. The NPCs also follow an historical process in their

interaction with government, and they rarely diverge from this strategy. My research showed

that government regarded the NPCs as important means of community engagement, but did not

respond to their demands unless they worked outside of this process. Even though government stated that they much preferred to work with the NPCs, an insider group, than with JONAH, an outsider group, they were more likely to meet JONAH's demands and recognize their authority over that of the NPCs. NIBC was able to achieve more in terms of community development than the NPCs because it used more diverse tactics.

Government prefers to work with organizations that use cooperative, insider tactics, but is most responsive to those organizations which mix these tactics with confrontational, outsider tactics. Campaign outcomes are important to gauge the success of a group and may be measured in the framework of Gamson's acceptance and new advantages. The groups who did gain acceptance by government and the community as a legitimate voice for the neighborhood maintained a base in the community as well as a collaborative relationship with the city by using a mix of tactics. To gain new advantages for the community from government, it was again best for organizations to combine insider and outsider tactics. They had to demonstrate their usefulness and their strength to government through both cooperation and conflict.

I have been able to show what sort of tactics are most effective according to Gamson's measures of success, but have been unable to go beyond this to compare the significance of different outcomes. Each organization works for acceptance and new advantages, and for similar community development goals, but has achieved varied outcomes according to their strengths. NIBC, for example, has extended benefits to the greatest number of residents but has not reached them in the same way as JONAH, who has deeply changed the lives of a few members. PFNCC has been able to do some of both—bringing physical and social change—but has been limited to a specific neighborhood. The NPCs have not made a large change in many lives, but do provide

a vital information channel between the city and its citizens. Further study should explore how difficult these outcomes are to achieve and how deeply they impact the lives of residents.

My research, then, suggests that tactics matter for the effectiveness of a community organization, even across organizational type. As a case study, Battle Creek community organizations may inform the work of neighborhood development groups in similar cities. This study shows that, in order to reach development goals, groups should balance both confrontation and cooperation, using a mix of tactics tailored to the situation being addressed. It is also important to make the city recognize that the goals of the organization are in the interest of the city. An accord may be established either through understanding and cooperation, through fear and confrontation, or through a combination of the two. It is important for community organizations to examine tactics across organizational type and style so they may then pull from a greater repertoire of work to use the most effective strategies and methods. My study is one of only a few which has viewed the work of these varying organizations as similar enough to compare tactics across type, and so may impact the field of community development by contributing to this small body of research.

This study, however, has not been able to compare these groups as fully as is necessary because of time and resource constraints. I originally set out to compare these groups on the basis of all their work, on their community impact and relationship, and on their relationship to government. Though my interviews have given me enough information to draw conclusions about the organizations' relationships with government and progress towards their development goals, I have not truly been able to measure community impact. These groups do create slightly different types of change as they focus more on physical or economic aspects of development or on political or social aspects. This change and their goals are not fundamentally different, as is

often assumed, but they are different enough that I have not been able to capture their impact on

the lives of residents. This thesis represents only a first step towards broader examinations of

community groups and the outcomes of their work, as influenced by their strategies and tactics.

Interview Questions

At the outset, I introduce myself and my purpose for the interview and have the interviewee sign an informed consent form.

We will be discussing your organization's most significant campaigns in the past few years, from 2006 to the present. This will include efforts that you think have been the most important and that have been indicated by the group's leadership to be central to the organization's mission.

1. What is the first significant campaign you were involved with in this time period? When did it begin and end? What was the primary goal of the campaign?
2. Why was this chosen as an issue? Who chose it? If this is a community problem, how many people does it directly affect?
3. What city, county, or other officials have you either targeted or worked with?
4. Can you walk me through this campaign, describing what tactics were used, actions taken, and groups involved in your work to get [the goal]?
5. How were area residents involved, in terms of numbers and the work they did?
6. What was the result of this campaign? Is the achievement still in effect today?
7. What did the outcome of the campaign mean for your organization and for the community?
8. When and how did you make contact with governmental officials during the course of the campaign?
9. How did the government respond?
10. How would you briefly characterize your relationship with the government throughout your interaction? Did it stay the same over time and action, or did it change?
11. What other campaigns or issues have you been involved with that required your organization to work with the government?
12. Do you think the organization's strategy and tactics used were the same or different from in this first campaign?
13. What were the outcomes of these other campaigns?
14. Can you describe a few others of what you think are the most important campaigns? (If they say they've been involved in multiple.)
15. How do you define the 'community' within which you work? How has it changed as a result of these campaigns?
16. How has your relationship with the government changed over time?

If an organizational leader:

17. How is community empowerment a part of your mission? Broadly, how is this accomplished through specific programming and activities? How do you asses your progress on this goal?
18. How and when are community members engaged in your organization's activities? In choosing issues? Doing research? Public speaking? Chairing meetings? Strategizing? Anything else?

19. Do you see your job as a leader as setting goals and helping lead people to accomplish those goals? Or do you see your job as facilitating a discussion where everyone has input on the goals? Explain: why do you see your leadership that way?
20. What residents were most active in these campaigns, if you feel comfortable naming them, and do you think they would be willing to talk to me about their work?

If a community member:

21. Before you got involved with (name of organization), how did you feel about your ability to make a difference in the issues that affect you?
22. Since you have gotten involved with (name of organization), how do you feel about your ability to make a difference in the issues that affect you?
23. What have you learned from (name of organization)?
24. Has (name of organization) taught you any new skills? Explain.

At end, for all:

25. Were there any other questions you think I should have asked you?

Interview Questions – Governmental Officials

At the outset, I introduce myself and my purpose for the interview and have the interviewee sign an informed consent form.

We will be discussing the City of Battle Creek's interactions with its community organizations in the past few years, from 2006 to the present, focusing on four groups: JONAH, Creating Change, Neighborhoods, Inc., and the Neighborhood Planning Councils. This will include interactions with the groups' leadership and members during their normal operations and when they made special requests of government.

1. When did you first become aware of these organizations? Was it during a specific campaign? If so, what was the primary goal of the campaign?
2. Were you contacted during the course of this campaign? If so, how and when? Who were you contacted by (i.e. leaders, members, citizens)? What other city, county, or other officials have they either targeted or worked with?
3. How did the government respond (this can mean you or other parts of government)?
4. Do you know what the result was of this campaign? Is the achievement still in effect today?
5. How would you briefly characterize your relationship with the organizations throughout your interactions? Did it stay the same over time and action, or did it change?
6. What other campaigns or issues have you been involved with that required you, in your governmental capacity, to work with these organizations?
7. Do you think the organization's strategy and tactics used were the same or different from in this first campaign?
8. What were the outcomes of these other campaigns?
9. How do you define the 'community' within which you work? How has it changed as a result of these campaigns?
10. Do you think these groups are representative of the communities in which they work?
11. Which of these organizations do you prefer to work with?
12. Do you think some are more effective than others, in terms of good done for the community? How do you define this effectiveness?
13. What other governmental officials interacted most often with these groups, and do you feel comfortable referring me to them for an interview?
14. Were there any other questions you think I should have asked you?

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