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Michigan State University PH.D. 1983

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THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF A NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION: AN ANALYSIS OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD MOVEMENT

By

Linda Elaine Easley

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
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Department of Anthropology

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ABSTRACT

THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF A NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION:
AN ANALYSIS OF THE
NEIGHBORHOOD MOVEMENT

By

Linda Elaine Easley

This research describes the major organizational changes experienced by an urban neighborhood association during the first seven years of its history. The focus is on the Eastown Community Association which serves approximately 7,000 residents located in an inner city area of Grand Rapids, Michigan. This organization has played a critical role in the general revitalization of the neighborhood.

Four distinctive phases in the internal development of the Eastown Community Association are delineated. Each phase was formed as the organization focused its efforts on responding to one general problem area (e.g. creating an ideology, developing a political base, designing democratic internal structures, obtaining financial support) during specific time periods. Transitions to new phases were marked by internal tensions and the mechanisms the organization utilized to resolve such conflicts are examined. The study also discusses the various ways in

which the Association responded to more specific organizational problems (e.g. the use of protest strategies; encouraging community participation in its activities; obtaining funding from foundations).

Research data are drawn primarily from ethnographic fieldwork which was conducted with the Eastown Community Association from 1975 to 1981. Supplementary information was obtained from the records of the Association; research previously conducted in the Eastown Community, and social science research literature. One chapter compares fieldwork conducted in "foreign" cultures with the relatively rare experience of fieldwork research with "one's own kind." It also examines the effects that this fieldwork process has had on the researcher herself.

Comparisons with other neighborhood organizations are made throughout the study in an effort to generally assess the role that the neighborhood movement is playing in cultural changes throughout this country. Given that present cultural institutions are not effectively addressing critical problems of poverty, powerlessness, and alienation, new social forms are called for. It is suggested that the local organizations involved in the neighborhood movement may represent the incipient stages of such new institutions. In concluding, the Eastown Community Association is evaluated in terms of its response to the problems of poverty, powerlessness, and alienation in the Eastown neighborhood.

DEDICATION

To my mother, Evelyn Peterson Easley, and to the memory of my father, Andrew C. Easley, for nurturing my curiosity, encouraging me to pursue an education, and for steadfastly supporting me throughout my lengthy academic endeavors.

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I also wish to thank members of the Women's Collective at Michigan State University (Jane Haney, Ron Hart, Soheir Morsy, and Brenna Murphy) for their inspiration and support during our early graduate training. I am particularly indebted to Soheir Morsy, whose friendship and loyalty continue to be very special to me.

Friends have been extremely important to me throughout this process. I would especially like to thank Diane Casey, Linda Grigg, Patti Gunn, Charly Ipcar, Barbara Sedlecky, Kitty Venus-Madden, and Kip Waldo for often reaffirming my belief that this research was worthwhile doing. We have given up many hours of socializing with each other because of my dissertation work. Barbara and Ronald Horvath gently nourished me throughout my graduate work. I have gleaned many important ideas about organizing and organizations from my discussions with Anabel Dwyer. Wayne Appleyard's

warmth and patience has soothed me through the rough times and he has been genuinely willing to help me celebrate my little steps of progress along the way. I shall always cherish his friendship.

I want to express my deep gratitude to the Eastowners who shared so much of their lives with me during my six-year stay. A special thanks must be given to Tom and Barbara Edison who opened their house and their hearts to me when I first arrived. I am appreciative of the sense of fairness and justness which Johnny Wagner taught me. The many hours Mary Milito patiently listened, trying to understand me, have also been appreciated. I am grateful to Jim Johnson for providing me with information on Eastown through his own research on the area. Working together with Tom Edison, Sister James Rau, and Mike Williams on the EASTOWN book helped sharpen my insights on life in Eastown. Lee Weber's willingness to share her ideas and her informing me of events after I left Eastown has been very important to me.

I also want to thank my sister, Janeen Easley, along with my aunts, uncles, and cousins who have kindly forgiven my many absences during holiday times because of dissertation work.

Finally, I would like to thank Noelle Smith for typing this dissertation. She was firm, but gentle, in asking me to meet deadlines and enthusiastic about my study.

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CHAPTER I

GENERAL DIMENSIONS OF THE RESEARCH

GENERAL DIMENSIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Collections of Streets or Viable Neighborhoods

Neither social scientists, planners, nor policy makers have been able to create a commonly accepted definition of what a neighborhood is (Hojnacki 1979: 47). Suzanne Keller found the term neighborhood was used quite ambiguously in her 1968 review of sociological studies on neighborhoods. She found that there was general agreement that neighborhoods consisted of two basic sets of elements: geographical and social, but beyond these broad generalizations neighborhood attributes become confused or even contradictory (Keller 1968: 4).

In a more recent study, Shoenberg and Rosenbaum make a useful distinction between areas which are merely collections of streets with no associational ties and a neighborhood in which

> a common bounded territory is named and identified by residents, at least one institution is identified in the area, and at least one common tie is shared. This common tie may be shared commercial facilities, public space, or social networks (1980: 5).

They further distinguish between a neighborhood and a viable neighborhood in which

> residents can control the local social order, are able to set the goals for collective neighborhood life and can implement programs to accomplish these goals (1980: 6).

Transforming local areas from collections of streets and neighborhoods into viable neighborhoods is a goal of the neighborhood movement which has been growing in this country during the last fifteen years. Voluntary associations based on self-defined neighborhoods sprung up and grew throughout the period which may have characterized it as "the me decade" (Davis, 1980); (Alperovitz and Faux 1979: 22). A 1977 Christian Science Monitor Poll of communities with populations over 50,000 found one third of the participants claiming to have already taken part in some kind of neighborhood improvement effort and a majority declared their willingness to take some sort of direct action in defense of their neighborhood in the future (McBride 1977). Such groups have formed regional and national coalitions in their efforts to effectively influence state and federal decisions (e.g. anti-redlining legislation). Terms such as "neighborhood revitalization" and "gentrification" (i.e. migration of higher income residents into areas previously occupied by low income families) are frequently used in the media. And there is some evidence that similar developments are occurring in other industrialized countries (Pierce 1977; Coit 1978).

The Research Focus

This dissertation focuses on the neighborhood organization that transformed a square mile area of 7000 residents in Grand Rapids Michigan into a viable neighborhood. By the late 1960's Federal Housing Administration policies and white flight combined to change this area from a white, middle-class community with a prosperous commercial and medical establishment into a territory consisting of an increasing number of blacks (from .1% in 1960 to 20% in 1970) (Johnson 1980: 6,78) and low income residents, "House for Sale" signs and empty storefronts. In 1971 the Eastown Community Association was formed and provided an organizational structure in which both the older and the newer residents worked together to bring about the revitalization of the area. Today, this Association is seen as one of the strongest of its kind in the state.

This research examines four stages which this neighborhood association moved through during the first seven years of its history. These phases were shaped by the organization's focus on one primary problem area (e.g. creating an ideology, developing a political base, designing formal internal structures, and financing its activities) during each separate time period. The study looks at the ways in which the organization resolved the conflicts which accompanied each move to a new stage. It also examines the answers the Association developed for more specific problems

such as the choice of strategies to use (e.g. protest, service delivery, electoral participation); encouraging participation in the organization; and developing co-operative relationships with a local college.

The dissertation contains a chapter comparing this relatively unique field experience; an anthropologist working in her own culture, with that of fieldworkers who conduct research in "foreign" cultures. It includes a description of the growth which the researcher personally experienced as a result of conducting this fieldwork.

Comparisons are made throughout the study between the Eastown Community Association and other neighborhood organizations throughout the country. The importance of these organizations becomes more apparent when one considers the inability of present institutions to address the problems of poverty, powerlessness, and alienation. Thus, new social institutions are called forand neighborhood organizations may be viewed as structures which are emerging to fill this need. At the same time, external economic, political, and social conditions have encouraged the development of these neighborhood organizations. Although the neighborhood movement shares some similarities with other social movements (e.g. labor, women's liberation, peace movement), important differences between them are also delineated.

The Eastown Community Association is specifically evaluated in terms of its ability to address the problems

of poverty, powerlessness, and alienation in the Eastown neighborhood and an attempt is made to generally assess both the limitations and the potential the larger neighborhood movement has for tackling these issues at local levels.

Methodology

The data for this research were obtained primarily with the use of participant-observation techniques which were used during 6 years of fieldwork conducted with the Eastown Community Association from January 1975 until January 1981. Participant observation can be seen as a process

> in which the observer's presence in a social situation is maintained for the purpose of scientific investigation. The observer is in a face-to-face relationship with the observed, and by participating with them in their natural life-setting, gathers data...it makes use of more than one data-collection technique...such as direct observation, informant interviewing, document analysis, and direct participation (Bailey 1974: 13).

This was supplemented with records and newsletters of the Eastown Community Association. Information was also selected from two previous studies conducted in the area (Tillman and Edison 1972; Lewis 1974). I also utilized material from three other research projects which I assisted in to complete the study (Edison 1977; Johnson 1980; Rau 1978). Informal interviews with participants in the neighborhood movement that I met at regional and national conferences concerning neighborhoods also supplied

me with information. Publications by organizations in the neighborhood movement and social science literature were also reviewed for this study.

Additional information about the specific roles I played and the methods I used will be given in Chapter five, "Elements of the Fieldwork Process."

Financial support for my fieldwork was obtained primarily through various part time teaching positions which I held in five area colleges and extensive loans arranged by my mother, Evelyn Easley.

Changing Topics

While in graduate school in the early 1970's I was involved in social movement activities on the Michigan State University campus (i.e. peace movement, women's liberation movement, student movement). I became curious about the kinds of political activities and strategies which other women, like myself, were engaged in throughout this country. I wanted to design a research proposal which would help me look at efforts on the part of women to engage in non-partisan political activities which would directly affect them. Thus, I chose to focus on the political processes which would be involved when a group of women worked together to set up a child care center in a community. Tom Edison, an acquaintance of mine and a member of the Geography faculty at Aquinas College, was actively involved in the Eastown Community Association in

Grand Rapids, Michigan, and indicated that the women in the neighborhood were about ready to tackle such a project. Thus, I came to select the Eastown area as my field site.

The group's first project was to set up babysitting cooperatives on a block level in two different areas of Eastown. Shortly after we became involved in these efforts, I became quite ill and was unable to be active for about a month. During that time, little work was done on the project. I then realized that I had become a key leader in the political processes I had come to study and felt uneasy about pursuing that role. The childcare efforts were dropped until about five years later when another neighborhood group successfully revitalized the idea and set up a viable babysitting cooperative; this time organized around a friendship network instead of geography.

In the meantime, I decided to change my research project and focus on the activities of the local neighborhood association. I noted that few women actively participated in the decision-making meetings of the Association. I reasoned that this could be due to the lack of inexpensive and adequate child care. Interviews with neighborhood women confirmed this idea and I published an article concerning this problem entitled, "Community Organizations and Child-care Arrangements" (Easley 1976)

However, I eventually noticed that these same women were able to make arrangements for child care for other evening activities. I then began to look closer at what

happened when they did come to the meetings. In other words, was it really worth it for them to pay a babysitter or arrange for child care to come to Eastown activities? I found that their comments were often not taken seriously and that they were frequently interrupted. I then began to notice that this also happened to some of the men who were present and I started to look closer at the general organizational structure of the Association. I learned that what was happening in the Eastown area was also occurring in other areas throughout the United States as part of a larger neighborhood movement.

Previously, I had participated in several social movements in which the local groups were torn apart with internal conflict. The emotional pain which I and others experienced as a result of these occurrences also prompted my interest in examining internal organizational structures and conflict resolving mechanisms. Gradually, then, the formal and informal dynamics of the Eastown Community Association itself became the focus of my research project.

Relevance of the Work

Understanding Organizational Change

Many of the studies concerning neighborhoods have focused on the physical dimensions of their deterioration (e.g. housing business districts). In contrast, this research emphasizes the key role that a neighorhood organization can play in the revitalization process. It is unique

in that it describes the actual changes which occurred inside the organization itself as it transformed the neighborhood it served. In a 1974 review of the scholarly literature concerning similar organizations which utilize methods developed by Saul Alinsky, the father of community organizing, Richard Bailey found that during the past quarter of a century, there was not a single article in the major political science or sociology journals on the Alinsky phenomenon (Bailey 1974: 3). Although there is a body of literature which examines organizational structures most of it looks at organizations at only one point of time and is concerned with profit making systems or governmental bureaucracies. There has been little research done on the organization life cycles of non-profit voluntary associations (Kimberly 1980; Rounds 1979).

Mapping Out New Fields for Anthropological Work

Anthropologists have only recently applied their perspectives and participant observation techniques to studies of life amongst working and middle class Americans. Perhaps this is because so many anthropologists originate from this strata and consider life there as boringly "normal." They are attracted to "deviant cultures" at home (e.g. "culture of poverty" studies, "ethnicity research") or "exotica and erotica" abroad. This study compares various dimensions of fieldwork amongst one's own kind (e.g. culture shock, roles, reciprocity) with the more usual field experiences of anthropologists. In

contrast to only mentioning the ways in which the anthropologist might have influenced the human interaction she was studying, this report also considers the changes which occurred in the researcher as a result of completing this field work.

Examining New Democratic Social Structures

Eric Wolf has stated that the "dominant intellectual issue of the present is the nature of public power and its exercise, wise or unwise, responsible or irresponsible." He accuses anthropologists of being confused and uncertain in the face of this issue--retreating into an emphasis on techniques instead of critically examining the political and economic processes they are participating in (Wolf 1969: 252). He has observed that

> the formal framework of economic and political power exists alongside or intermingled with various other kinds of informal structures which are interstitial, supplementary, parallel to it... the anthropologist has a professional license to study such interstitial, supplementary, and parallel structures in complex society and to expose their relation to the major strategies, overarching institutions (Wolf 1966: 2).

The neighborhood movement claims to be creating an alternative to the existing social, political, and economic arrangements which exist in this country. At the same time, it must interact closely with these same structures. This research considers the ways in which one neighborhood association has dealt with public power within its own

organization; looks at the relationships it has had with external institutions; and draws some generalizations about the democratic trends which exist in the neighborhood movement.

Organization of the Dissertation

Chapter Two, "The Context," will present economic and political data about Grand Rapids and then describe the decline brought about in the Eastown area during the late 1960's as a result of Federal Housing Administration policies and white flight. It then looks at the subsequent revitalization which occured mainly as a result of the activities of the Eastown Community Association during the 1970's.

After noting the paucity of information about the political organization aspects of the neighborhood revitalization processes and the lack of longitudinal research studies on organizational behavior, Chapter Three, "Organizational Phases of the Eastown Community Association," suggests that an organization can be seen as proceeding through distinctive stages as it focuses its major efforts on one general problem area at a specific point in time. It is important for the organization to create means for dealing with the conflicts which often develop as the organization moves from one phase into another. This model is then used to specifically analyze developments within the Eastown Community Association, portraying the

organization as having moved through four phases (i.e. Creating an Eastown Identity; Becoming a Power to be Reckoned With; Tinkering with the Internal Organization; Solving Financial Problems) during the first seven years of its history.

Chapter Four, "Responses Developed by The Eastown Community Association," takes a closer look at how the Eastown Community Association addressed specific problems it has encountered throughout its history. For example, it looks at the ways in which E.C.A. encouraged residents to identify with the area and to participate in the organization's activities. It also reviews the various political strategies the Association has utilized and offers various explanations for their decreasing use of protest as a method. The chapter also considers various reasons for the changing relationship the Association has experienced with Aquinas College and the advantages and disadvantages of various fund raising activities the organization has undertaken.

Chapter Five, "Elements of the Fieldwork Process," looks at the reasons behind the culture shock I experienced when I entered the field; the various roles I played while conducting my research (e.g. College Instructor, Volunteer, Single Woman) and the special forms that reciprocity took in this field project. After discussing some of the practical implications that this type of work has for the social movements studied and for changes in

graduate school training for anthropologists, reflections are given on the specific influence that this fieldwork had on my own personal growth.

Chapter Six, "The Emergence of The Neighborhood Movement," places organizations like the Eastown Community Association within a broader context. It suggests that these organizations might be able to tackle social problems such as poverty, powerlessness, and alienation more effectively than the present structures we have created to address them (e.g. global corporations, federal governmental programs, city services). It then briefly surveys the external conditions (economic, political, and ideological) which have led to the growth of organizations like E.C.A. during the past fifteen years and compares this social movement with other movements for social reform (e.g. labor movement, women's movement). The chapter closes by describing three different strands within the neighborhood movement--those who view the neighborhood as a power base, a political community, or a social community.

We are taken back to the Eastown Community Association in Chapter Seven, "Neighborhood Associations: Potentials and Limitations." In light of the previous chapter, the Eastown Community Association and other neighborhood organizations are looked at in terms of their capability to deal with poverty in their immediate areas, to empower neighborhood residents, and to create a community

identification. It discusses in depth the importance of developing formal, in contrast to informal, organizational structures and the current efforts by some neighborhood organizations to "reclaim America" by participating in electoral processes. The dissertation concludes with a general assessment of the role the neighborhood movement could play in creating future structural changes in the United States.

(Note: Female pronouns will be used in a generic sense throughout the dissertation.)

CHAPTER II

THE CONTEXT

THE CONTEXT

This chapter begins with a short overview of the major economic and political characteristics of the Grand Rapids area, whith specific focus on data which elicit information concerning poverty and powerlessness in the city. It also examines the ways in which recent urban migratory trends have affected this urban community. The second section utilizes previous research which has been conducted in the Eastown area to give a detailed picture of the changes which have occurred as the neighborhood has experienced a decline and then revitalization during the last two decades. The chapter concludes by examining the major reasons behind these changes and indicates that the Eastown Community Association has played a key role in the recovery of the area.

The Grand Rapids Metropolitan Area

Michigan's second largest city, with a population in 1975 of 564,000, serves as the major urban center for the western Michigan region (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1977). However, it would be seen as an "out of the way" place when one considers the general patterns of population movement throughout the Upper Midwest (Edison, 1977: 1). It's relatively isolated geographic location makes it unnecessary for many to pass through Grand Rapids on the way to

other major cities (e.g. Lansing, Detroit, Chicago.) (See Figure 1). No major college or university attracts large numbers of students to the region, although there are several small, mainly church-affiliated institutions of higher education in the area.

Economic Characteristics

Grand Rapids still has the reputation of being a "furniture city," although cheaper labor supplies in the South have drawn much of the quantity production away from the city. The economy of Grand Rapids began to diversify in 1936 with the opening of the first of three General Motors plants in the area. Presently, General Motors is the largest employer in the area with 7,025 employees. This firm brought with it unionization and increased wages which created the kind of healthy labor pool that in turn attracted other industries (Sherill 1974: 86). Today, "this is the most diversified area in Michigan" according to Anthony R. Jarrett, former economic development director for the area's Chamber of Commerce (Grand Rapids Press, August 14, 1980).

About 200 local companies are involved in exporting and about 8% of the jobs can be attributed to overseas business. One of the largest of these firms is the Amway Corporation which employs about 5,000 persons to manufacture personal and home care products. Amway's annual sales for 1980 are expected to reach about one billion dollars and the two founders of the corporation are considered

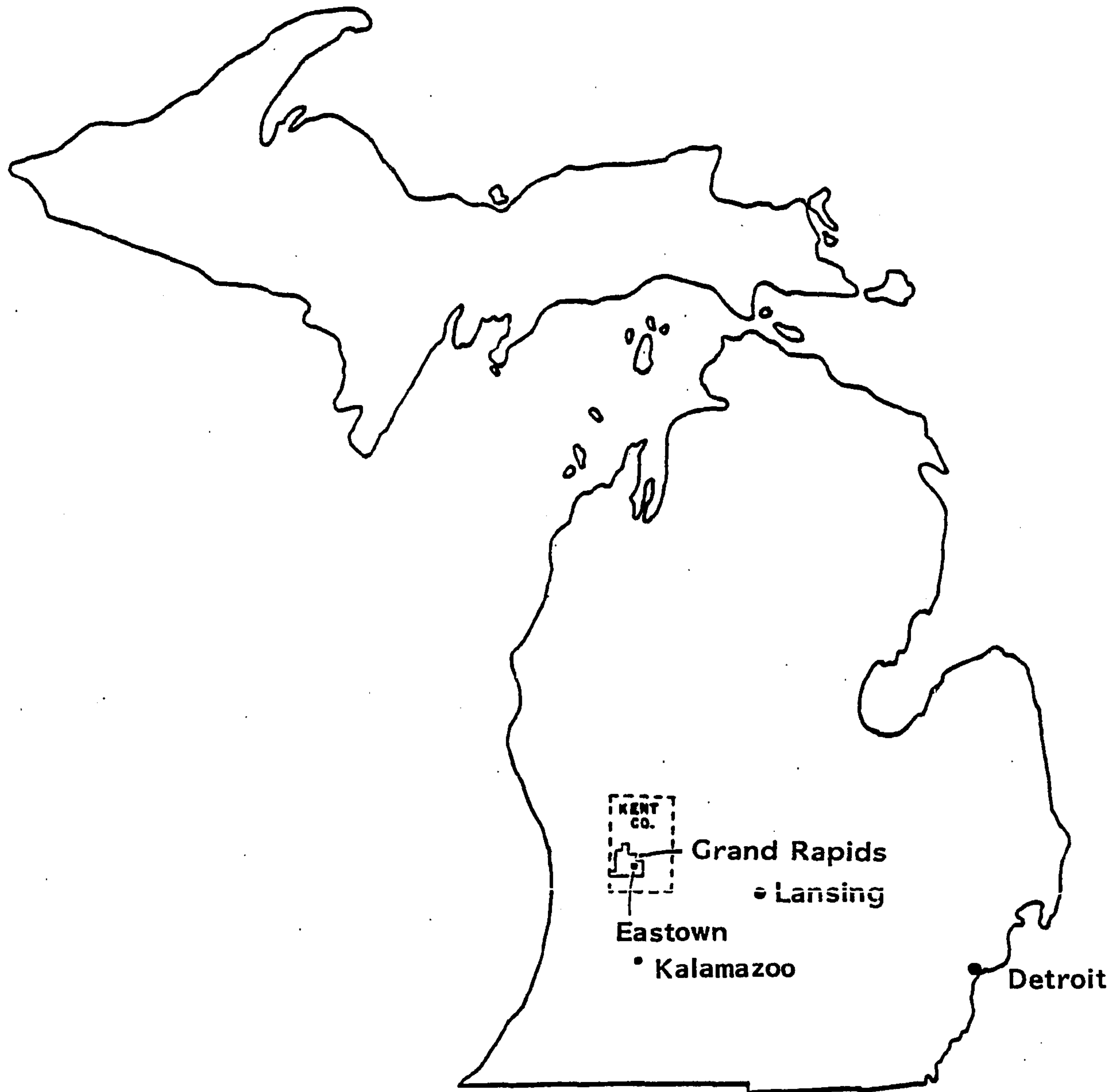

Figure 2.1 - Location of Grand Rapids and Eastown in Michigan (adapted from Lewis 1974:42)

amongst the richest men in the state. Recently, Amway has invested millions in improving downtown Grand Rapids, purchasing three office buildings, a hotel, and constructing another hotel. (Grand Rapids Press, Aug. 14, 1980). Like about 50% of the firms in the Grand Rapids area, Amway is not unionized. A recent independent audit of the city emphasized the "exceptionally harmonious management/labor relations" which characterize the business climate in Grand Rapids (Industrial Development Research Council 1977).

"It is said that the city has 200 millionaires, the oldest of their fortunes having been built on lumber, foundries, and furniture...however, the wealthy people of Grand Rapids don't exactly overwhelm anyone with their philanthropy...(for example) they have not fulfilled a Community Pledge for years"(Sherrill, 1974, 72).

In 1969, the families in Grand Rapids with money income that lived at or near the poverty level (approximately 13%) was slightly less than that for national figures (approximately 15%). About 28% of all black families in the city were considered below poverty level at that time (See Table 1).

The Grand Rapids area unemployment statistics are close to national and state figures for the last five years averaging about 7% per year. Unemployment for the city of Grand Rapids is slightly higher than that of the Grand Rapids Metropolitan Area (see Table 2).

TABLE 2.1 - FAMILIES WITH MONEY INCOME IN 1969

	All Families				Black Families	
	Below Poverty Level*	Below 125% of Poverty Level	$15,000 and over	Median Family Income	Below Poverty Level	Median Family Income
	%	%			%	
United States	10.7	15.0	20.6	9,586		6063
Michigan	7.3	10.3	26.7	11,029	19.2	8498
Grand Rapids, S.M.S.A.**	6.1	9.1	21.9	10,629	27.1	6779
Grand Rapids	8.9	12.8	21.5	10,004	28.1	6623

*In 1969, poverty income levels ranged from $1,487 for a female unrelated individual 65 years old and over living on a farm to $6,116 for a non-farm family with a male head and with 7 or more persons. The average poverty income level for a non-farm family of 4 headed by a male was $3,745.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, County and City Data Book, 1977 U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.

**Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area

TABLE 2.2 - PERCENTAGE OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE CIVIL LABOR FORCE

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
United States	9.1	8.4	7.6	6.5	5.8
Michigan	12.5	9.4	8.2	6.9	7.0
Grand Rapids, S.M.S.A.	11.1	7.9	6.3	5.0	5.5
Grand Rapids	12.3	8.6	7.0	5.5	6.2

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1979, Washington, D.C.

Kimler, Dick, Michigan Employment Security Commission, Grand Rapids, Michigan, September 1980.

Information available on a county basis concerning welfare recepients indicate that about 8% of all families in Kent County have received Aid to Dependent Children funds from 1978 through 1980. (See Table 3).

TABLE 2.3 - FAMILIES RECEIVING AID TO DEPENDENT CHILDREN

Month of August	Number of A.D.C. Cases	Total Number of All Kent County Families*	% of Kent County Families Receiving A.D.C.
1980	9881	100,800	10%
1979	7733	"	8%
1978	7050	"	7%

*Total Number of Families in 1970 in Kent County

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, County and City Data Book 1977, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.

Mr. DeYoung, Department of Social Services, Grand Rapids, Michigan, September 1980.

Political Structures

Since 1916, Grand Rapids has been governed by the Commissioner-Manager plan, a system which has been adopted by most medium-sized cities in the United States. This essentially means that a small, part-time, elected government body (a mayor and 6 commissioners) make policy decisions, and a full-time City Manager, whom they appoint, and staff carry them out. The Commissioners are elected on a non-partisan basis by wards, two from each of the three wards into which the city is divided. Commissioners

serve four-year overlapping terms. The mayor is elected at large by a majority of all voters. He presides at the meetings of the City Commission at which he had a vote, but no veto power.

Grand Rapids had always been known as a solidly Republican town, even faithful to this party through all the New Deal years. However, the growing diversification of the economy has gradually created a "real two party attitude in Grand Rapids" (Sherrill 1974: 88). This change was demonstrated in 1974 when a democrat, Fichard Vanderveen, gained Gerald Ford's Congressional seat when Ford became President of the United States. Vanderveen was the first Democrat to be elected from the district since 1910. This seat was returned to the Republicans be a narrow victory in 1976.

Over thirty percent of the voting population in Grand Rapids did not participate in a major form of political expression, the 1972 national presidential elections. This compares with about forty percent who did not vote on a state wide and national basis. (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1977, 1978).

Urban Processes and the City of Grand Rapids

Like the majority of medium and large-sized cities in the United States during the last three decades, Grand Rapids has undergone suburbanization, exurbanization, and shifts to the non-metropolitan areas of population, jobs, and housing construction.

> Between 1950 and 1970, the population of the Grand Rapids Standard Metropolitan Statistics Area increased by 85 percent, from 288,000 to 535,000...that growth was uneven, with the majority occurring outside the central city. The population of the central city increased by only 12%...While the suburban population grew...by 196 percent. the exodus of nearly 50,000 whites from the central city between 1955 and 1970 largely accounts for the rapid suburban growth. At the same time, the in-migration of blacks and other minority groups, mainly Spanish-speaking, was largely responsible for continued central city population growth, inspite of large out-migration of whites. ...since 1970 the population of the Grand Rapids Standard Metropolitan Statistics Area has grown at a much slower rate... increasing by only 5.4% by 1975 (Johnson 1980: 42-44).

During the last three decades many of the job opportunities in the central city also decreased. For example, between 1963 and 1973, 115 manufacturing firms left the central city for suburban location. Much of the housing construction in the area since 1950 has also taken place outside of the city. Between 1960 and 1977 only 12% of the new houses constructed in the Grand Rapids SMSA were built within the city of Grand Rapids (Johnson 1980: 47).

As a result of these processes, by 1976 the central city contained a substantial number of low and moderate income households (56% had low or moderate incomes; 33% were at or below the poverty level) many of whom were black and housing stock which displayed signs of major deterioration (Johnson 1980: 49-51).

<u>Summary - Grand Rapids</u>

In sum, Grand Rapids is a medium-size city which exhibits the general economic stratification and political centralization which characterizes the larger state level society of which it is a part. Even with a relatively stable and diversified economy, a significant proportion of the area's families are unemployed, receiving welfare benefits, or living near poverty level. The most popular entry of the citizens into local decision-making processes occurs when eligible voters elect two city commissioners from each of the three wards and a mayor to represent them. Over thirty percent of the voting population in the Grand Rapids SMSA chose not to participate in the major form of political expression, the national presidential elections, which were held in 1972. Poverty and powerlessness are a part of life in Grand Rapids and recent migrations of population, jobs and housing construction starts to have made these problems even more severe in the inner city areas.

Eastown: A Changing Neighborhood

The Eastown neighborhood encompasses approximately 6,700 residents within a square mile are consisting of 70 blocks (Johnson 1980: 6). A commercial district is located on the prominent crossroads which intersect the neighborhood. The Eastown area is divided into four regions: WEFF (bounded by wealthy, Ethell, Franklin, and Fuller streets); Wilcox Park; Woodstone; and Aquinas College. The neighborhood lies between the Central Business District of Grand Rapids and the suburb of East Grand Rapids, with a small portion of Eastown coming under the jurisdiction of East Grand Rapids. (See Figure 2).

Early settlement of the area began in 1832 with 90 percent of the homes constructed by 1939. Development continued so that by the end of World War II, Eastown had become a "well-established, white, middle-class community, with a prosperous commercial and medical establishment located at its business district (Edison 1977: 9)." In 1960, Eastown could still be classified as a "healthy neighborhood" according to a widely-used model developed by Public Affairs Counseling, which identifies a series of stages in the life cycle of many inner city neighborhoods:

> "According to the PAC (1975,23), residents of a healthy neighborhood are generally homogenous--much like one another in terms of race, income, status, education and job...this usually means that residents are predominantly white, with middle to high incomes...a healthy neighborhood is predominantly owner occupied...the buildings...

THE EASTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD

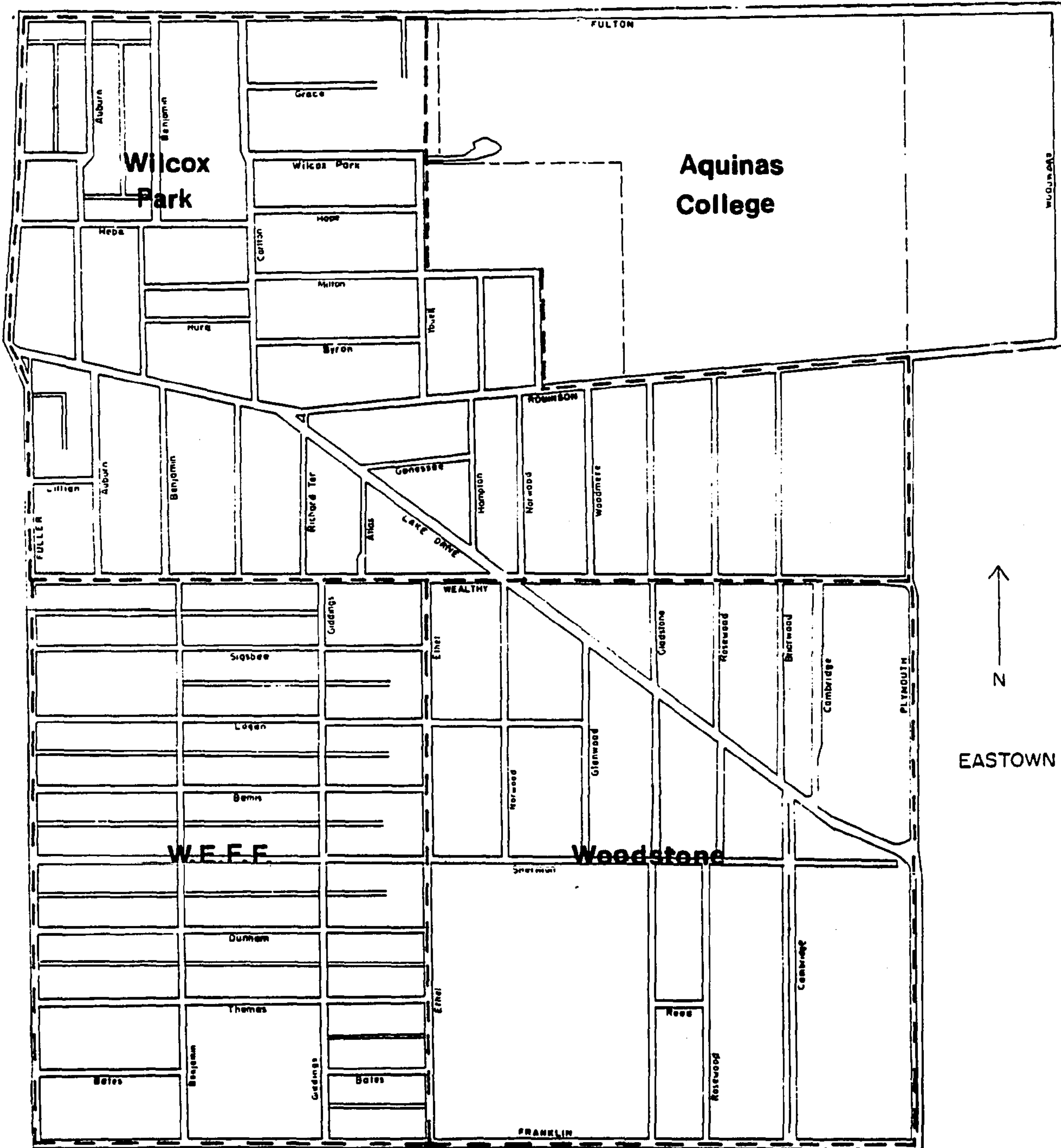

Figure 2.2 - Detailed Map of "Eastown"
Source: Aquinas College Geography Department

> usually are similar to each other - either almost all single family homes or almost all apartments or townhouses, in sound condition, and reflecting good maintenance and high owner investment...property values are high...the attitudes of intermediaries toward a healthy neighborhood are indicated by the presence of a high level of investment. Home insurance financing are readily available and at good terms. (Johnson 1980: 77)

In the late 1960's and early 1970's the area began to experience changes that the PAC model terms "incipient decline." (PAC, 1975,25).

> The people moving in...differ from the people moving out. Over time, these differences reduce the previous homogeneity of the residents. Income levels, educational levels, and social status of new residents are lower than those of previous residents... sometimes the new residents are different racially or ethnically from the old residents. The old residents may become fearful of racial transition and less confident about the neighborhood's future...a primary characteristic of an incipient declining neighborhood is its aging housing stock which exhibits some visible signs of wear and tear. As buildings are aging, and some functional obsolescence appears, normal maintenance costs go up, but the low economic status of the residents may not permit an increased investment in maintenance. House values and rents gradually decline, or at least do not rise...(Johnson 1980: 85).

However, by 1979 the Eastown neighborhood had undergone a "turn around" and had established a reputation as a "desirable place to live" in Grand Rapids. The social and environmental impacts of Eastown's revitalization included:

(1) overwhelmingly positive and favorable perception and attitudes by incumbent residents toward revitalization;

(2) major improvements in housing conditions, for example, the number of well maintained structures increased by 52 percent between 1973 and 1978;

(3) increased availability of conventional mortgages and home improvement loans;

(4) revival of business activities in the community commercial center;

(5) numerous public improvements including the removal of burned out houses, newly paved streets, and resurfaced sidewalks, and

(6) so far only minimal coerced or forced displacement of elderly, black, and renter households... (Johnson 1980: abstract).

Social Science Research in Eastown

The Eastown neighborhood lies within two census tracts (#s 24 and 33) (see Figure 3) and therefore aggregate census tract data does not contain material on the Eastown area by itself. However, there have been several serious efforts to gather this information.

In 1971 Aquinas College organized a "neighborhood study committee" to assemble data on the area. The Aquinas Geography department, under the direction of Sr. Jean Paul Tillman and Tom Edison, played a leading role in this research.

In 1974, Russell Lewis, another Aquinas faculty member, coordinated a student survey of 260 households in the area in order to test a set of interrelated hypotheses about personal concepts of "community". He concluded that an individual who is a member of a modern complex culture has more than one definition of "his/her community." Such an

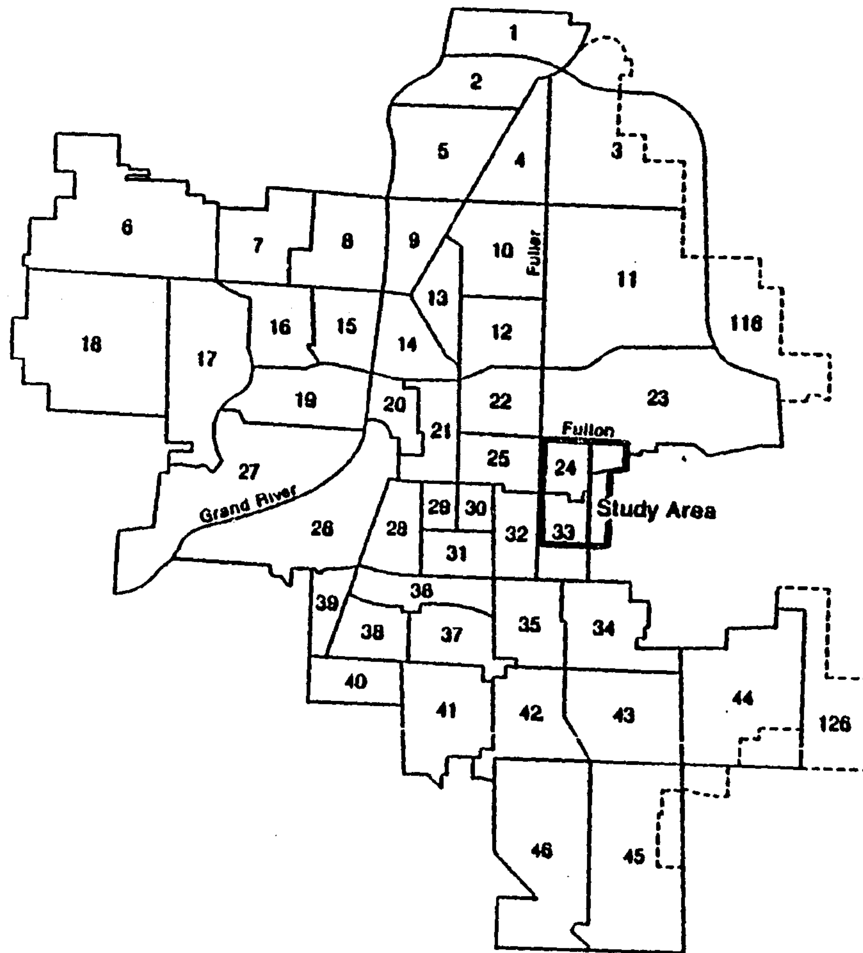

Figure 2.3 - (adapted from Johnson 1980: 49)
GRAND RAPIDS CENSUS TRACTS

individual's concept will expand to include a wider geographical area with the addition of information (e.g. education, travel) and in the face of problems which are highly complex and are not directly related to his family unity (e.g. air pollution, land use). (Lewis 1974).

The Kellogg Foundation presented $130,000 to Aquinas College in 1972 to be used over a three-year period for their work in the Eastown community. Annual reports on this project were prepared by Aquinas and E.C.A. and in 1977 Tom Edison coordinated a joint Aquinas faculty and student "Analysis and Evaluation of the Aquinas/Eastown Project" as a final report to the Kellogg Foundation (Edison 1977). This work was favorably received and the three major authors were asked by the Foundation to further elaborate on it in a book, EASTOWN, and to then use this book as the focus for a series of workshops and consulting sessions with other institutions and neighborhood organizations (Rau 1978).

A geographer from Michigan State University, James Johnson, completed dissertation research in 1980 which looked at the extent of the decline and recent revitalization that the Eastown neighborhood had experienced and evaluated the role that the Eastown Community Association has played in the life of the community. He utilized census data, real estate information, the Polk City Directory, Eastown Community Association records, and a social survey of 160 households to complete his study (Johnson 1980).

Information from these research projects will be used to describe the general characteristics of the Eastown neighborhood and to illustrate specific details of the major changes outlined above.

Physical Dimensions of Eastown

Housing - The period from 1830 to 1917, when most of the houses in Eastown were constructed, was a unique era, during which mass production meshed with individual craftsmanship (Fleetwood 1979: 34). This is evident in many of the 1600 homes in the area. Like the city in general, Eastown has a high amount of home ownership. This increased slightly during the last two decades reaching 75 percent in 1979 for the Eastown neighborhood. (See Table 4)[1]

In 1960, 96 percent of the homes in Eastown could have been classified as well-maintained compared with about 86% for the city as a whole. By 1973 a Kent County Housing Survey (1973) showed that less than half (42 percent) of the houses were well-maintained with almost 60 percent displaying signs of deterioration. However, by 1978, the proportion of all dwelling units which could be classified as well-maintained increased dramatically to 64.8%, with the biggest change occurring in the WEFF region (see Table 5) (Johnson: 82,125,129).

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[1]Johnson did not include the small portion of Eastown which lies in East Grand Rapids in his research project.

TABLE 2.4 - HOME OWNERSHIPS

	Eastown			Grand Rapids (City)	
	1960[1]	1974[2]	1979[3]	1960[4]	1970[5]
Estimated Totals	1556	2018	1600	59,030	68,206
Owner Occupied (percent)	68.4	71.9	75.5	60.5	60.7
Renter Occupied (percent)	31.6	28.1	24.5	33.5	32.3

Sources: 1 - U.S. Bureau of the Census, U.S. Census of Housing 1960. Vol III. City Blocks, Series HC (3), No. 206. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1961 in Johnson: 81.

2 - Lewis, Russel, Individual and Community Variables as They Relate to Delineating Community Boundaries, 1974, 61, 44 (Survey).

3 - Johnson, James, Eastown Community Survey, 1980

4 - U.S. Bureau of the Census. U.S. Census of Population and Housing: 1960 Census Tracts. Final Report (PHC) (1)-55 Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962.

5 - U.S. Bureau of the Census. U.S. Census of Population and Housing: 1970 Census Tracts. Final Report (PHC) (1) - 80, Washington, D.C. U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972.

TABLE 2.5 - PERCENT OF WELL MAINTAINED HOUSING IN EASTOWN

	1960	1973	1978
Well-Maintained	96.2	42.2	64.8
Deteriorated	3.3	57.8	35.2

Source: Johnson, James, Incumbent Upgrading and Certification in the Inner City: A Case Study of Neighborhood Revitalization Activities in Eastown, Grand Rapids, 1980, 82, 125, 129.

Change in Number of Well Maintained Houses Eástown, 1973-1978

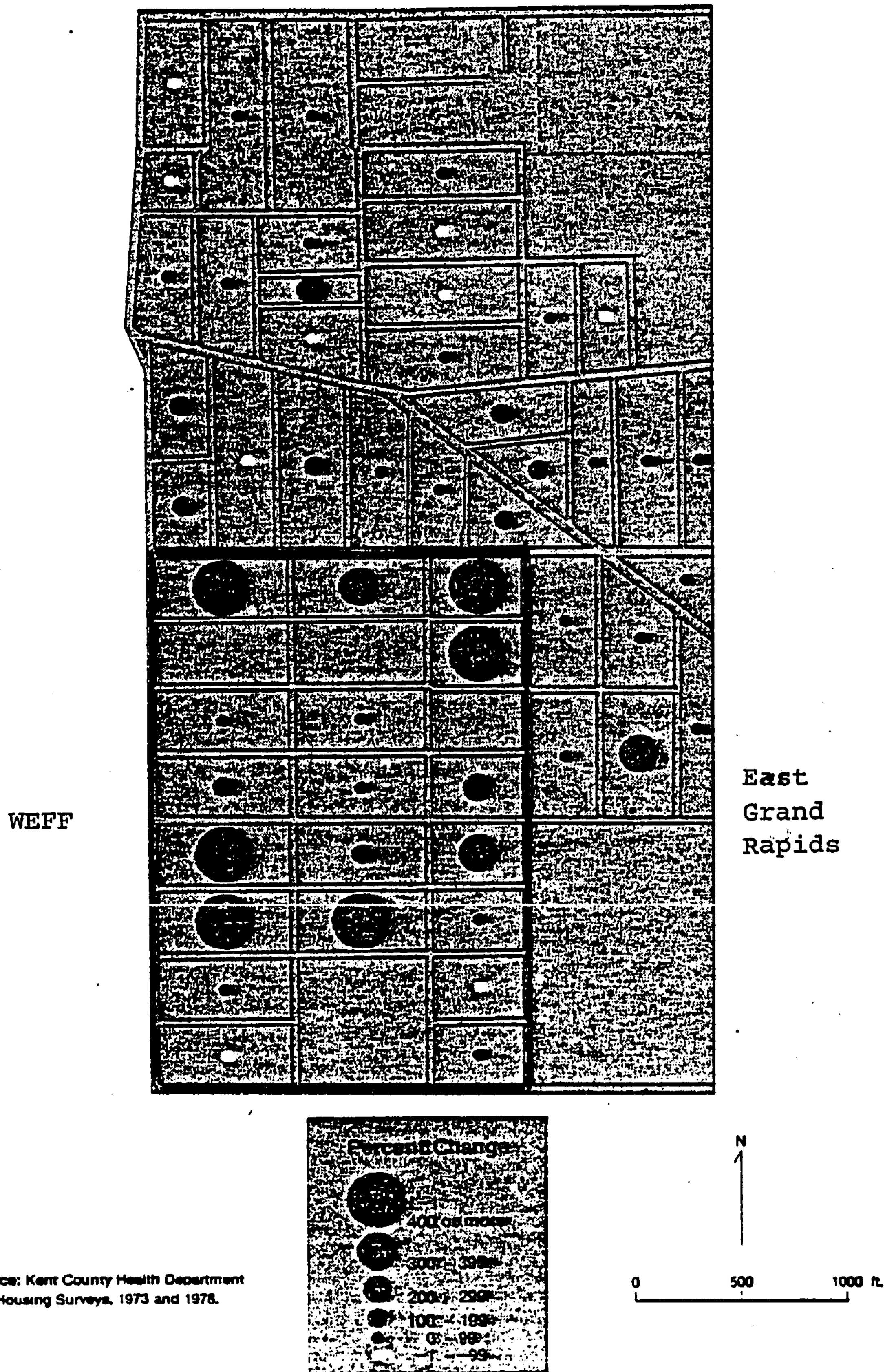


Figure 2.4 - (Adapted from Johnson 1980: 143)

Business District - The commercial life in the area has also changed during the last two decades. Up until the late 1960's this district served the convenience and specialty needs of a prosperous, white, middle-class community. The businessmen formed an association which sponsored joint marketing and maintenance projects. Then,

> during the 1960's two powerful and inter-related forces influenced the development of the commercial area. First, as was previously mentioned, the social and economic characteristics of the area traditionally served by the Wealthy/Lake Drive center were experiencing fundamental change. For the shopping center the transition was reflected in declining customer purchasing power and a resultant change in market preference. Second, new and attractive market sites were being established around the Grand Rapids area in response to the extensive migration of the white, middle-class to suburban areas. By the late 1960's the commercial and residential migration had lured a significant proportion of the Eastown commercial community and their clientele to the "malls". To a large extent this migration was emulated by the medical establishment from the Wealthy/Lake Drive area. By 1972, most of the original specialty shop functions of the commercial center had evacuated the area, leaving behind a doubtful convenience sector and a conspicuous 30% vacancy rate (Edison 1977: 17).

Gradually small specialty shops, fast food restaurants, and service oriented institutions started to rent the vacant store fronts. Turnover was high because of the lack of business experience, limited resources, and considerable competition for a financially limited market. But these "shoe string" operations promoted the image that the area was beginning to revive. The nearly 100

businesses which are established in Eastown at present seem relatively secure. (Edison 1977: 18). However, many of them cater more to the needs of the commuters traveling between East Grand Rapids and the central business district than to the daily demands of Eastown residents. For example, the area has only one grocery store, no drug store, nor any "dime" store. Two of the major food establishments are only open during breakfast and lunch hours.

Public Improvements - Increasingly more space is often devoted to the flow, storage or maintenance of the automobile as an area becomes more urbanized. From 1973 to 1978 the amount of land devoted to the automobile remained at about 35 percent of the total area. The plans of city officials to increase this amount through street widenings and expanding intersections were thwarted by members of the Eastown Community Association (Edison 1977: 22).

The only traditional park facility, Wilcox Park, began to be plagued by vandalism and poor maintenance. This situation changed in 1976 when many improvements were made in the park (e.g. new lights, a new basketball court, increased police surveillance) (Edison 1977: 23).

Since 1977 there has been a substantial amount of public improvement work done in the neighborhood, partially due to the WEFF region being classified as a target area for Community Development programs. For example, 250 trees

have been planted, 8 vacant lots have been maintained, 2 bus shelters were built, and 2,685 square feet of sidewalk have been reconstructed (Community Development Block Grant cited in Johnson 1980: 185).

Educational Institutions - The schools also experienced changes during the last two decades. For example, the public elementary school, which had less than 1 percent black enrollment in 1960 jumped to a 90 percent black enrollment in 1973 (Edison 1977: 20). The two local Catholic elementary schools had financial and enrollment problems during this period because many young white families left the area and the new residents did not utilize their schools. Finally, in 1975, aften ten years of effort, the parents of children in the public school negotiated with the Grand Rapids Board of Education and obtained a new public elementary school with an adjoining park in the WEFF area. Gradually, the enrollment at the parochial schools has grown and stabilized. (Edison 1977: 20).

Calvin College, which was located in the southern end of the neighborhood, moved to a suburban location in the late 1960's. Some residents accused the College of leaving the area because of its racial transition, but the College claimed that it needed a new campus because of an enlarged student body (Johnson 1980: 96). By 1976, another educational institution, the Grand Rapids School of Bible and Music had moved into the vacated campus and had begun to rehabilitate nearby housing to accomodate its student body.

Population Characteristics of Eastown Residents

Racial and Age Composition - The proportion of blacks living in the Eastown area increased dramatically during the last two decades. They reside predominantly in the WEFF region (see Table 6). Unlike many other inner city neighborhoods where revitalization has largely meant displacement for disadvantaged households (e.g. blacks, elderly, renters), so far, Eastown has managed to retain its diversity (Johnson 1980: 164).

In 1973, Edison observed, "Eastown is a age and racial microcosm of the City of Grand Rapids, while differing considerably from the more exclusive suburban community of East Grand Rapids (Edison 1973: 9). (See Table 7).

TABLE 2.6 - RACIAL COMPOSITION OF EASTOWN AND GRAND RAPIDS

	Eastown				Grand Rapids (City)	
	1960[1]	1970[2]	1974[3]	1979[4]	1960[5]	1970[6]
Total Population	5,783	6,700		6,700	177.313	197,649
White (percent)	99.9	80	89.6	71.5	91.6	88.7
Nonwhite (percent)	.1	20	11.4	28.7	8.4	11.3

Sources: 1 - U.S. Bureau of the Census. U.S. Census of Housing: 1960. Vol. III, City Block Series Hc (3), No. 206. Washington, D.C. U.S. Government Printing Office, 1961 in Johnson 1980: 78.

2 - U.S. Bureau of the Census. U.S. Census of Housing, 1971 in Johnson 1980: 6.

3 - Lewis, Russell, 1974: 61. (Survey)

4 - Johnson, James, 1980: 139 (Eastown Community Survey)

5 - U.S. Bureau of the Census, (see Source #1 above)

6 - U.S. Bureau of the Census, U.S. Census of Population and Housing: 1970 Census Tracts. Final Report (PHC (1)-80) Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972.

*There are few other minorities living in Eastown besides blacks. The term as used here basically means blacks living in Eastown and in Grand Rapids.

Black Population
Eastown, 1970

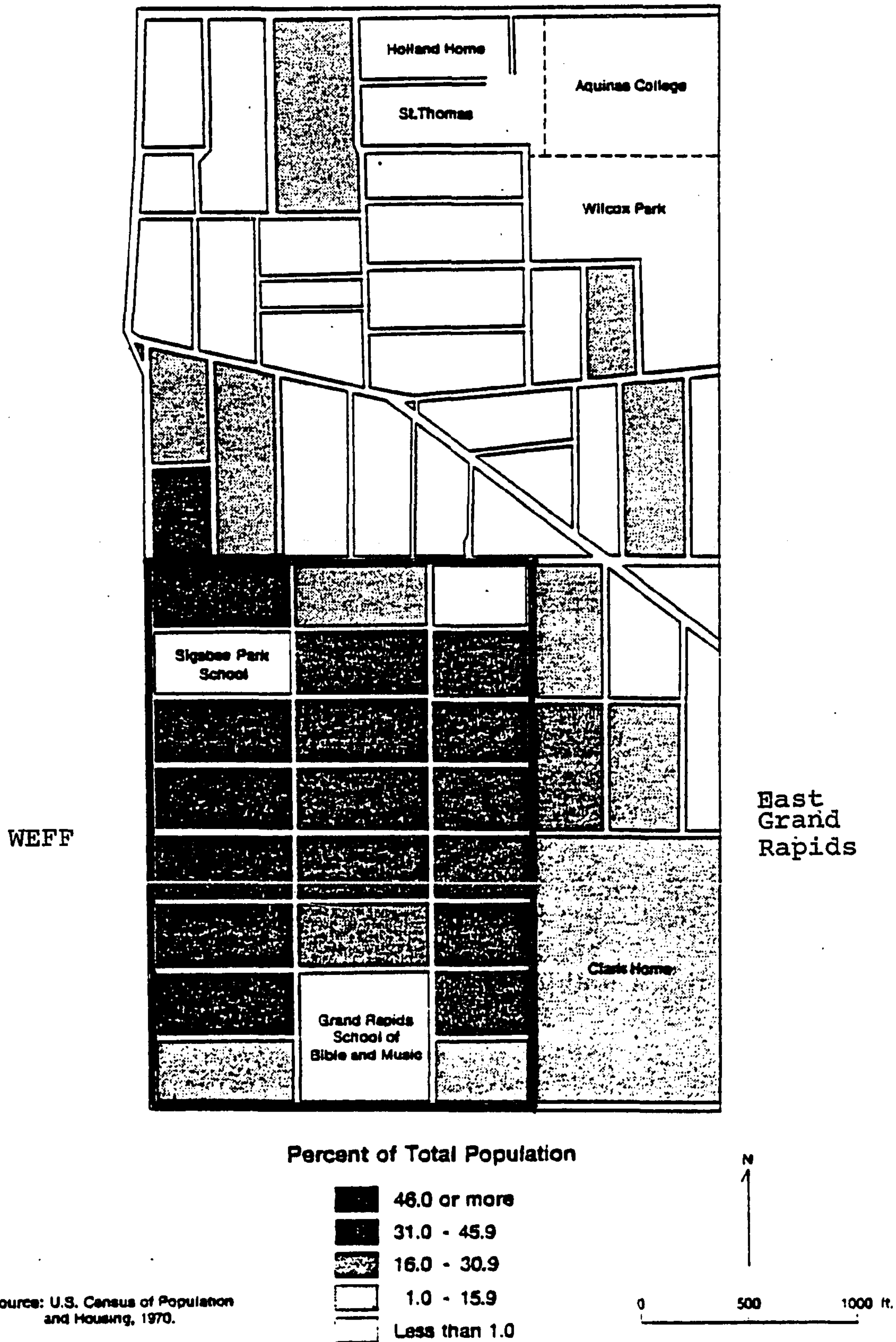


Figure 2.5 - (adapted from Johnson 1980: 91)

TABLE 2.7 - AGE COMPOSITION OF EASTOWN

Eastown			
	1972[1]		1979[2]
Under 18	32.8	Under 21	5.1
19 - 61	41.1	21 - 30	31.6
		31 - 40	22.8
		41 - 50	12.0
		51 - 60	10.1
		61 or older	17.1
over 62	12.6		

Sources: 1 - Tillman, Sr. Jean Paul and Tom Edison, 1972.

2 - Johnson, James, 1980 139 (Eastown Community Survey)

Marital Status - 60 percent of the residents are married, a figure which is similar to that of the general Grand Rapids population (see Table 8).

TABLE 2.8 - MARITAL STATUS OF EASTOWN AND GRAND RAPIDS RESIDENTS (percentages)

	Eastown		Grand Rapids	
	1974[1]	1979[2]	1960[3]	1970[4]
Married	65.4	57	63.4	57.9
Single	16.2	26	23.2	28.2
Separated Divorced	8.8	8	5.1	6.2

Sources: 1 - Lewis, 1974: 53 - (Survey)

2 - Johnson 1980: 139 (Eastown Community Survey)

3 and 4 - U.S Bureau of the Census. U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1960 and 1970 Census Tracts. Final Reports (PHC(1)-80) (PHC(1) 55) Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962 and 1972.

Education - About 60 percent of Eastown's residents have attended college whereas approximately 12 percent of the population responding to research surveys has not finished school (see Table 9).

TABLE 2.9 - EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF EASTOWN RESIDENTS (percentages)

	1974[1]	1979[2]
Less than High School	10.4	13.3
High School Graduation	28.5	24.7
Attended College	30.7	24.7
College Graduation	18.1	18.4
Graduate Work	7.7	7.0
Graduate Degree	3.8	7.0
No Response	.8	

Sources: 1 - Lewis 1974: 54 (Survey)
2 - Johnson 1980: 140 (Eastown Community Survey)

Occupational Status - Eastowners span the full range of occupational classifications. They differ from the general Grand Rapids population primarily in the high percentage of students attending area colleges. (See Table 10) (Lewis 1974: 66)

Income - The household incomes in the area also span a wide range with about 50 percent of the households in 1979 falling into low and moderate income categories (less than $14,000 per year for a family of four). (Eastown Community Association Brochure 1980: 5). (See Table 11).

TABLE 2.10 - OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF EASTOWN AND GRAND RAPIDS RESIDENTS

	Eastown			Grand Rapids	
	1960[1]	1974[2]	1979[3]	1960[4]	1970[5]
Professional, Technical	16.9	25.4*	15.0	10.0	13.7
Managerial, Administrative	19.2	13.1	14.0	11.0	7.4
Sales	13.8	15.0	5.1	10.2	9.6
Clerical	8.9		6.6	8.5	18.9
Craftsman	3.1	13.5	3.7	20.0	12.2
Operatives	2.9	7.7	8.1	24.0	19.3
Laborers and Service	7.2	9.2	15.4	12.7	17.3
Retired	--	11.9	13.2	--	--
Non-classifiable	12.0	--	24.3	--	--
Not Reported	16.0	--	--	3.2	--

Sources: 1 - Based on a random sample of 426 households drawn from the 1960 Polk City Directory. (Johnson 1980: 80).

2 - Lewis 1974: 57. (Survey)

3 - Johnson 1980: 140 (Eastown Community Survey)

4 - U.S. Bureau of the Census. U.S. Census of Population and Housing: 1960. Census Tracts. Final Report PHC (1) -55.

5. Washington , D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962 in Johnson 1980: 80. 1970 Census Tracts PHC (1)-80, 1972.

*Lewis (1974) noted that a number of the students surveyed were also employed and indicated their employment status rather than their student status on the survey which may account for this high percentage. He concluded that his survey indicated that about 22.3% of area residents are students compared with 8.4 percent of the city of Grand Rapids in 1970. Tillman and Edison (1972) had concluded that about 19 percent of Eastown's residents were students.

TABLE 2.11 - EASTOWN INCOME LEVELS

	1974[1]		1979[2]
below 4,000	9.2	below 7,000	14.5
4,000 to 8,000	20.8	7,000 to 9,999	12.0
8,000 to 12,000	26.9	10,000 to 12,999	13.7
12,000 to 16,000	12.3	13,000 to 15,999	18.8
16,000 to 20,000	10.0	16,000 to 20,999	21.4
over 20,000	7.7	21,000 to 25,999	8.5
		26,000 to 29,999	6.0
		30,000 and more	5.1

Sources: 1 - Lewis 1974: 54 (Survey)

2 - Johnson 1980: 141 (Eastown Community Survey)

Explanations for Eastown's Decline

In sum, the Eastown neighborhood has experienced both a decline and a revitalization during the last two decades. Johnson (1980: 86) argues that "two interrelated factors appear to dominate in the decline of the Eastown neighborhood: (1) white flight in response to fear of racial transition and (2) Federal Housing Administration (FHA) lending practices.

White Flight

In the mid-1960's blacks moved out from the city's central business district towards the western border of Eastown. At about the same time, open housing became a major issue in Grand Rapids. The 1967 race riots also heightened white fears that black neighbors could mean litter strewn streets, crime, and declining property values.

Research by Johnson (1980: 87) on the spatial pattern of out-migration during this period illustrates that whites did not follow the normal pattern of intra-urban moves (i.e. short distances and directionally biased) but appeared to be fleeing because of the fears of racial transition (i.e. making moves that were mostly long distance and not directionally biased, except to other white communities).

Federal Housing Administration Policies

In the late 1960's, the civil rights movement pressured F.H.A. to change its discriminatory lending practices. Unfortunately, these new policies were poorly administered. For example, housing inspections were often either carelessly done or not done at all and the applicants capability to maintain homes were rarely considered. Many realtors abused the program with block busting tactics. Thus, low income black families were easily granted FHA (Federal Housing Administration) mortgages on houses in Eastown that were in need of major repair. A large number of abandonments and foreclosures resulted because such families could not afford the repairs and because banks were not granting conventional home improvement loans in racially changing neighborhoods (e.g. the practice of redlining) (Johnson 1980: 87-90).

An examination of Johnson's research on the changing lending patterns since 1963 again illustrates phases the Eastown neighborhood has been through. Between 1963 and

1965 lending patterns for the Eastown area were not substantially different from those for the city of Grand Rapids as a whole. Then, between 1966 and 1973 almost 42 percent of the home mortgages granted in Eastown were FHA insured as compared to 18 percent across the entire city. Beginning in 1974, the lending pattern in Eastown began to again reflect the pattern for the city as a whole, although the FHA proportion of all loans made in Eastown until 1979 was still relatively high (Johnson 1980: 131) (see Table 12)

TABLE 2.12 - ASSOCIATION OF MORTGAGE LENDING PATTERNS IN GRAND RAPIDS METROPOLITAN AREA

		LC[1]	FHA[2]	CONV[3]	CASH	VA[4]	OTHER	TOTALS
1963 to 1965	Eastown	35.6	16.6	28.8	16.6	--	2.3	100
	Grand Rapids	38.7	17.1	23.6	18.1	--	2.3	100
1966 to 1973	Eastown	32.5	41.7	7.7	7.3	9.0	1.6	100
	Grand Rapids	32.3	17.9	26.4	11.3	9.4	2.7	100
1974 to 1979	Eastown	31.7	24.7	23.2	3.5	8.0	8.9	100
	Grand Rapids	27.3	11.2	34.4	8.9	7.0	11.1	100

1 - Land Contract 2- Federal Housing Administration 3- Conventional Loans
4 - Veteran's Administration Financing

Sources: Compiled from Multiple Listing Files, The George Miller Realty Company, by James Johnson 1980: 83, 93, 132.

Explanations for Eastown's Revitalization

In considering the various reasons behind the "turn around" in the Eastown area, Johnson reviewed several models of neighborhood change and concluded that this revitalization was due mainly to two processes (i.e. Spot Gentrification and Incumbent Upgrading) described in a model developed by Phillip Clay (1978; 1979) (Johnson 1980: 20).

Spot Gentrification

Gentrification is a term which is used to describe the influx of middle income residents into older, deteriorating, inner city neighborhoods.

> The new residents are primarily young, professional and without children, and enjoy a higher socioeconomic status (middle-or upper-income) than current or previous residents. Such neighborhoods are primarily white after revitalization; and change has been more the result of individual effort than community or organization initiative. Incumbent residents are often pushed out, and gentrification often results in substantially higher prices and rents (Clay 1978: 3 in Johnson 1980: 21)

Twenty-two percent of the respondents to Johnson's 1979 social survey in the Eastown area were in fact "resettler households" who are located in clusters which form a "spot gentrification" pattern in the area. Most were purchasing their first home and were attracted to Eastown from other areas in the city because of (1) the perceived historic character of the neighborhood (2) the schools

and colleges in the area (3) accessibility to friends and relatives and socio-cultural activities, and (4) the cost of repairs and taxes (Johnson 1980: 162).

Johnson's analysis of the occupational characteristics of recent buyers and sellers suggests that the displacement of disadvantaged households (elderly, blacks, and renters) which usually accompanies gentrification has so far been minimal. "...that is, the housing turnover process appears currently to reflect an expected pattern where the in-migrants are similar in status to out-migrants. However, this interpretation should be viewed against the fact that many of the resettler households have moved into the neighborhood so recently (within the last 6 to 8 months) that their names did not appear in the real estate files when this analysis was done in the fall of 1979 (Johnson 1980: 164)."

Incumbent Upgrading

In this case, the revitalization is primarily accomplished by existing residents along with some of the new residents, who are often part of the same socioeconomic class.

> These neighborhoods generally have strong organizations and a sense of identification. There is substantial home ownership, housing of good physical quality, and some sense that the neighborhood with its present population is at least an adequate environment. (Clay 1978: 3 in Johnson 1980: 21). (emphasis added)

Johnson believes that the Eastown Community Association spearheaded the revitalization of the neighborhood by "articulating the needs and interests of the residents of Eastown and insuring that their views and opinions are represented in decision-making processes impacting on the neighborhood (Johnson 1980: abstract)."

> In reversing neighborhood decline in Eastown, E.C.A. has (1) thwarted a number of institutional policies and locational decisions which otherwise would have accelerated and exacerbated neighborhood decline; (2) developed programs and activities which have created neighborhood consciousness, pride, and loyalty; and (3) assisted incumbent low and moderate-income familes in rehabilitating their homes by manipulating city officials to obtain home improvement loans and grants. (Johnson 1980: 161).

Summary

This chapter began by considering some of the major economic and political characteristics of the Grand Rapids area and then looked briefly at the urban migratory trends which have recently affected the city. Data from several research projects which had been conducted in Eastown were used to portray the decline and revitalization which the neighborhood has experienced during the last two decades. White flight and the poor administration of Federal Housing Administration policies during the late 1960's and early 1970's were largely responsible for the area's decline. The influx of new white middle class residents into specific parts of the neighborhood, "spot

gentrification," and the activities of the Eastown Community Association account for the recent revitalization of the area which has benefitted both long-term and new residents. The next chapter will explore the organizational changes which the Eastown Community Association itself has undergone during the early years of its history.

CHAPTER III

ORGANIZATIONAL PHASES OF THE EASTOWN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

ORGANIZATIONAL PHASES OF THE EASTOWN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION*

This chapter begins by reviewing two of the major typological schemes which have been developed to categorize different kinds of neighborhoods. The importance of an internal social organization and linkages to the external environment are emphasized in both constructs. However, neither model explains how an area could change from one type of a neighborhood into another. The major models which look at changing neighborhoods have primarily emphasized the physical and economic aspects of deterioration, although they have differed in their assignment of the cause for such decline (e.g. individual households; economic institutions). In contrast, several other scholars have recently researched the processes by which neighborhoods are revived and point to the importance of political organizations in improving these areas. However, very little is known about how these and other ogranizations, themselves, especially non-profit ones, experience changes over time.

A modified version of a model developed by Noel M. Tichy is used to analyze the changes in the Eastown Community Association. It suggests that there are four on-

*Portions of this chapter were presented in a paper entitled "Developmental Phases of a Neighborhood Organization," at the 1979 American Anthropological Association meetings in Cincinnati, Ohio.

going problems which must continually be solved by an organization (e.g. techno-economic, social structural, political, and ideological.) The demands these problems make on the organization may vary and at different points in time one of them may be in more need of immediate attention than the others. This variation may be best conceptualized in terms of cycles and stages in organizational development, and can be delineated by the "peaking" of specific problem cycles. Either external events or internal dynamics can influence the formation of a new stage. These transitions from one stage to the next are often accompanied by a great amount of internal organizational conflict and thus the development and use of conflict resolving mechanisms by an organization can be critical to its survival.

The remainder of the chapter describes and interprets the various type of activities which E.C.A. engaged in during the first seven years of its history. Charts contained in Appendix A graphically illustrate the stages which were formed by the primary problem areas being addressed at a specific time. Mention is also made of how the organization was handling the "secondary problems" during this period. The specific conflicts which arose during phase transitions are also explored. The chapter concludes by comparing the Eastown Community Association with Similar neighborhood organizations throughout the country in terms of their major characteristics.

Typological Constructs of Neighborhoods

Much of the research on urban neighborhoods has consisted of case studies of single localities (D. Warren 1975; Kornblum 1975; Hunter 1974). Thus it has been difficult to conduct comparative research on neighborhoods in different cities (Schoenburg and Perlman 1980). Among those who have attempted to classify various kinds of neighborhoods and thus create typologies (Bell 1957; Gans 1962, 1967; D. Warren 1969, 1975), two relatively recent works stand out.

The first, elaborated in THE NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZER'S HANDBOOK, by Rachelle and Donald Warren (1977) develops a six fold typology which evaluates neighborhoods utilizing three criteria:

1. Interaction: How often and with what number of neighbors do people visit and interact on the average during a period of one year?

2. Identity: How much do people feel they belong to a neighborhood and share a common identity with others--a sense of consciousness about what their neighborhood is and where it is spatially and symbolically?

3. Linkages: What channels exist in terms of both people with memberships in outside groups and those who bring news about the larger community back into the neighborhood. (Warren and Warren 1977: 95).

They then relate the type of neighborhood with other characteristics of each area such as the flow of influence and information, the leadership roles played by activists,

and the tactics most often used by the activists in each neighborhood.

Over the five year period of time during which the two major studies for this typology were conducted, fifteen of the twenty-seven neighborhoods researched changed types. Although the Warrens did not attempt to explain why or how these changes occurred they concluded that:

> It is clear that the social organization of a neighborhood is very dynamic--even in short time intervals...more research is needed to ascertain how neighborhood social organization changes and which dimensions are most "volatile." Our own evidence indicates that identity is the least stable factor and interaction is the most---with linkage patterns changing almost as quickly as identity. We need more follow-up data from our present neighborhood samples to validate and extend the tentative findings on neighborhood social organization change. (Warren and Warren 1977: 227).

Another major contribution towards the development of a typology of neighborhoods has been done by Sandra Perlman Schoenberg and Patricia Rosenbaum in their book NEIGHBORHOODS THAT WORK: SOURCES FOR VIABILITY IN THE INNER CITY (1980). They make a critical distinction between urban areas that are "mere collections of streets that house entrapped victims of city living and organized neighborhoods where residents control the social order of their communities" (1). They develop four propositions with related indicators that define and assess viability in urban working-class and low-income neighborhoods and then use these criteria to evaluate five neighborhoods in

St. Louis, Missouri. Their propositions are that a viable urban neighborhood has:

1. established mechanisms to define and enforce shared agreements about public behavior.

2. a formal, internal, organizational structure that provides for communication, leader identification, and neighborhood definition.

3. Linkages to public and private resource givers through branch institutions in the neighborhood or through leaders who make linkages to outside institutions.

4. an established context or interest aggregation, whether formal or informal, to create conditions for exchange between conflicting groups for goal definition and goal support over time. (In other words, the ability of neighborhood groups to make exchanges over time, to avoid internal conflicts that consume resources, and to maintain an ongoing dialogue (31-41)

Schoenberg and Perlman indirectly look at recent changes which have occurred in these neighborhoods in their evaluation of the strategies they have each developed for creating agreements on public behavior, for formal organizational behavior, for linkages to resources, and for exchanges between groups.

Both of these typologies emphasize the importance of the internal social organization of a neighborhood and the ties which an area has to its external environment. These two dimensions are related in that "strong leadership and some experience of successful goal attainment in organizations appear to be the elements that facilitate linkages to resources outside the neighborhood." (Schoenberg and Rosenbaum 1980: 151). However, neither work

specifically looks at how an area changes into a different type of neighborhood.

Dimensions of Neighborhood Change

The major models which have been used to do this have focused on physical and economic dimensions of neighborhoods and have documented the dynamics of their decline. For example, the model developed by Anthony Downs (1970) has been widely adopted by urban planners. He categorizes neighborhoods into five types and then suggests that there are five simultaneous processes which are the causal factors involved in neighborhood decline:

1. the declining socioeconomic status of the neighborhood's residents
2. ethnic change
3. physical decay
4. pessimism about the future of the neighborhood on the part of the residents
5. economic disinvestment (failure to risk money in neighborhood improvements) by property owners. (Real Estate Corporation, n.d., in Cohen, R., 1979: 341).

Downs argues that four out of five causal processes of decline begin with the household decision:

> Neighborhood movement in either direction (up or down) is caused by the decisions that households make...The real force behind neighborhood change is the impact of people moving in, moving out, deciding to look elsewhere for housing. The dynamics of the neighborhood change process revolve around the household decision. Other people, (bankers, brokers) make decisions, and they are important and often critical, but it is the change in resident population and the decisions

> behind that, that fuel the neighborhood change process. (Public Affairs Counseling 1975: 10-14 in Cohen, R., 1979: 349).

This implies that institutions such as banks, insurance companies, and government agencies are absolved of responsibility for neighborhood conditions.

Arthur Naparstek and Gale Cincotta (1976) offer a model of neighborhood change which provides evidence for the opposite kind of thing occurring. They see neighborhood decline occurring in four stages and they argue that such deterioration occurs as a direct result of actions of the public and private sector institutions controlling the allocation of resources (capital and credit for housing) within the city.

In both of these theories of neighborhood change, housing is the locus of the visible indicators of neighborhood decline and underline the economic motivations of the actors in the process. This also conveniently puts both models "squarely in the ballpark of the planning profession, whose entry point into neighborhood change is generally the housing stock and the housing market (Cohen 1979: 346).

However, Cohen notes, that "economic solutions have been notoriously weak, except for the traditional techniques of replacing poor families with richer households. The displaced residents benefit little from the preservation for others of what was once their neighborhood.

The movement for greater citizen participation and influence in the shape and direction of neighborhood preservation projects shifts the frame of reference from economic solutions to political solutions." (Cohen 1979: 347). For example:

> The politically unsophisticated neighborhood will have a difficult time participating in the political side of neighborhood preservation. Facing seasoned political veterans in municipal agencies, financial institutions, and in other neighborhoods, this neighborhood may well lose---either badly needed resources will go elsewhere in the city, or the use of resources in the neighborhood will not benefit current residents or strengthen the neighborhood's social fabric. The neighborhood with a higher level of political "savvy" may be able to protect itself by influencing, shaping, or controlling wise neighborhood preservation policies (Cohen 1979: 348).

A somewhat similar suggestion for the neighborhood development process was put forth by Morris and Hess in their book NEIGHBORHOOD POWER (1975). They very briefly sketched a four phase process which began when residents organized "to maintain the integrity of their area against outside interests and evolves into the "Take-Off Stage", the point of development when "there is a spontaneous and almost exponential growth in neighborhood organizations, pedestrian traffic within the area, and creativity in both stance and projects " (Morris and Hess 1975: 19).

Rick Cohen, himself, goes a little further in detailing a five step theory of neighborhood political development

which may be useful in determining a neighborhood's political capacities. His focus is on the internal social organization of urban areas and he emphasizes the gradual formation of a group which claims as its primary purpose the community's civic concerns and which also delivers a variety of services and programs affecting all aspects of the neighborhood's social and political life in the fifth stage. However, Cohen uses five different neighborhoods as examples of each stage and thus does not give us a clear idea of the specific processes by which either a single neighborhood or an individual neighborhood organization moves through these five stages.

Lack of Studies on Neighborhood Organizational Change

In sum, the majority of neighborhood research consists largely of case studies of single neighborhoods (Schoenberg and Perlman 1980). Recently, several major works have attempted to create typologies of neighborhoods in the United States (Warren and Warren 1977; Schoenberg and perlman 1980). They have utilized the degree of social organization and the amount of linkages to outside resources, along with other criteria, for evaluating different neighborhoods. Neither typology specifically tries to explain how one neighborhood changes from one type into another. Two theoretical constructs which do try to examine such changes focus solely on physical and economic dimensions and document these changes in terms of neighborhood

deterioration but give little insight into the processes of their revival. On the other hand, the two models which do emphasize the importance of social and political organizations in the improvement of neighborhoods discuss this either as a very general theoretical process (Morris and Hess 1975) or use a different neighborhood to illustrate each stage (Cohen 1979). Thus these studies do not follow the internal stages which one neighborhood organization experiences as an urban area changes from one neighborhood type into another.

Research on Organizational Dynamics: The State of The Art

> Organizations change dramatically over time. They are created, they grow, develop, expand, stabilize, decline, and disappear---or perhaps revitalize and continue in altered form. Yet this dynamic quality of organizational life is missing from most research and writing about organizations, with the result that organizational theory is generally static, nonhistorical, and less realistic than it might be. (Kimberly 1980: 3).

Thus, we know little about either the evolution of structures and processes or the patterns of learning and decision-making that occur as organizations attempt to move from creation to maturity (Miles and Randolph 1980: Kimberly (1980: 3) offers five major reasons for this static orientation in organizational research:

1. In most cases, researchers are involved with a subject organization or set of organizations only at a particular point in time and their research is inevitably cross-sectional.

2. Organizations tend to outlive individual members. This means that research that relies on data collection from organizational participants runs the risk of personalization. A single slice of time is being examined, and the fact that the informants themselves have only a relatively temporary affiliation with the organization limits in some ways, the kinds of responses that are likely to be given.

3. Organizational researchers, most of whom have been trained in the disciplines of psychology or sociology, are usually socialized in the values of traditional science, which emphasizes the importance of objectivity and empirical evidence. It also emphasizes the central role of verifiability and reproducibility and, hence, leads researchers not to trust their own intuitions and judgements but instead to rely on the tools of science for explanation of the phenomena of interest. This often results in a historical perspective on organizations and places a generally negative value on historical analysis and in-depth descriptive case studies. the effects of the widespread acceptance of traditional scientific values have been a positivistic bias in organizational research and, more subtly, limitations on both the kinds of problems organizational researchers define as legitimate and on the accompanying research strategies.

4. Most organizationl research is sponsored by clients whose objective is to improve organizational performance and this generally constrains the kinds of questions asked by researchers.

5. The reward structure for academic researchers and the demands of longitudinal research are generally incompatible. Young scholars are implicitly encouraged to tackle research that holds the promise of relatively rapid and prolific publication. Cross-sectional research holds just such promise, but longitudinal research usually does not.

In an effort to begin to correct this deficiency, in 1980 Kimberly and Miles edited a collection of research reports in a book entitled THE ORGANIZATIONAL LIFE CYCLE.

They concluded their review of recent work in this area by stating "...we are still far away from a general theory and an inclusive set of propositions for this developmental perspective..." (Miles 1980: 45). What we do know is that many organizations do experience the general processes involved in being born, maturing, and then perhaps becoming revitalized or decline. We also know that such processes have little to do with their chronological age (Kimberly 1980: 6). Although there is no inevitable linear sequence of stages in organizational life, there maybe remarkable similarities among the developmental patterns of certain clusters of organizations (Kimberly 1980: 7).

Many organizational planning and change theorists have drawn upon and expanded upon the early work done by Lewin (1947) on group decision-making and social changes (Van de Ven 1980: 88). Lewin described a three phases process of group and organizational change: unfreezing, moving, and refreezing. Unfreezing requires the entry of new forces, pressures, or tensions (e.g. external and dialectical triggering events) to move a social system to change, while refreezing requires establishing a new constant pattern of forces different from the initial pattern (Van de Ven 1980: 88).

Problem Cycles in Organizational Developments

More specifically, we can utilize these ideas to describe the rise and decline of various cycles within the organization itself. Noel Tichy suggests that organizations have three interrelated cycles which are not based on maturational processes but on the dynamics of social systems surviving and making adjustments in various contexts. She argues that such adjustments are made as the organization attempts to resolve three basic ongoing dilemmas:

1. Technical Design Problems - which include the ways that social and technical resources are arranged so that the organization produces some desired output.

2. Political Allocation Problems - which deal with the allocations of power and resources. The uses to which the organization will be put, as well as who will reap the benefits from the organization, must be determined.

3. Ideological and Cultural Mix Problems - as social tools, organizations are in part, held together by normative glue, that is, by the sharing of certain important beliefs by its members. Hence, the organization must determine what values need to be held by what people (Tichy 1980:165).

In utilizing Noel Tichy's framework to analyze the development of the Eastown Community Association, I placed the problems encountered in arranging social and technical resources into two separate categories and thus revised Tichy's scheme to include four sets of problems which are faced by organizations:

1. Technological-Economic Problems
2. Social Structural Problems
3. Political Problems
4. Ideological Problems

Given that organizations are dynamic and always undergoing shifts and changes, none of these problems is ever completely resolved--they are, instead, ongoing dilemmas. However, at different points in time one of them may be in need of more adjustment and attention than the others. Thus the activities of the organization at any one point in time will most likely center around the set of problems most in need of adjustment. The interrelationships of these problem sets over time might best be conceptualized in cyclical terms: thus there are techno-economic, social structural, political, and ideological cycles. Adjusting Tichy's scheme to include four sets of problems instead of three modifies his graphic illustration as shown in Figure 1 . The left axis of the figure includes two dimensions: (1) the amount of stress or tension created in the organization with regard to a particular problem area, and (2) the need for adjustment or activities to manage that particular cycle. Thus a peak represents both high stress and high need for adjustment in one problem area, whereas a valley indicates a relatively smooth, non-problematic time for that cycle. Peaks in a particular problem cycle can also be used to

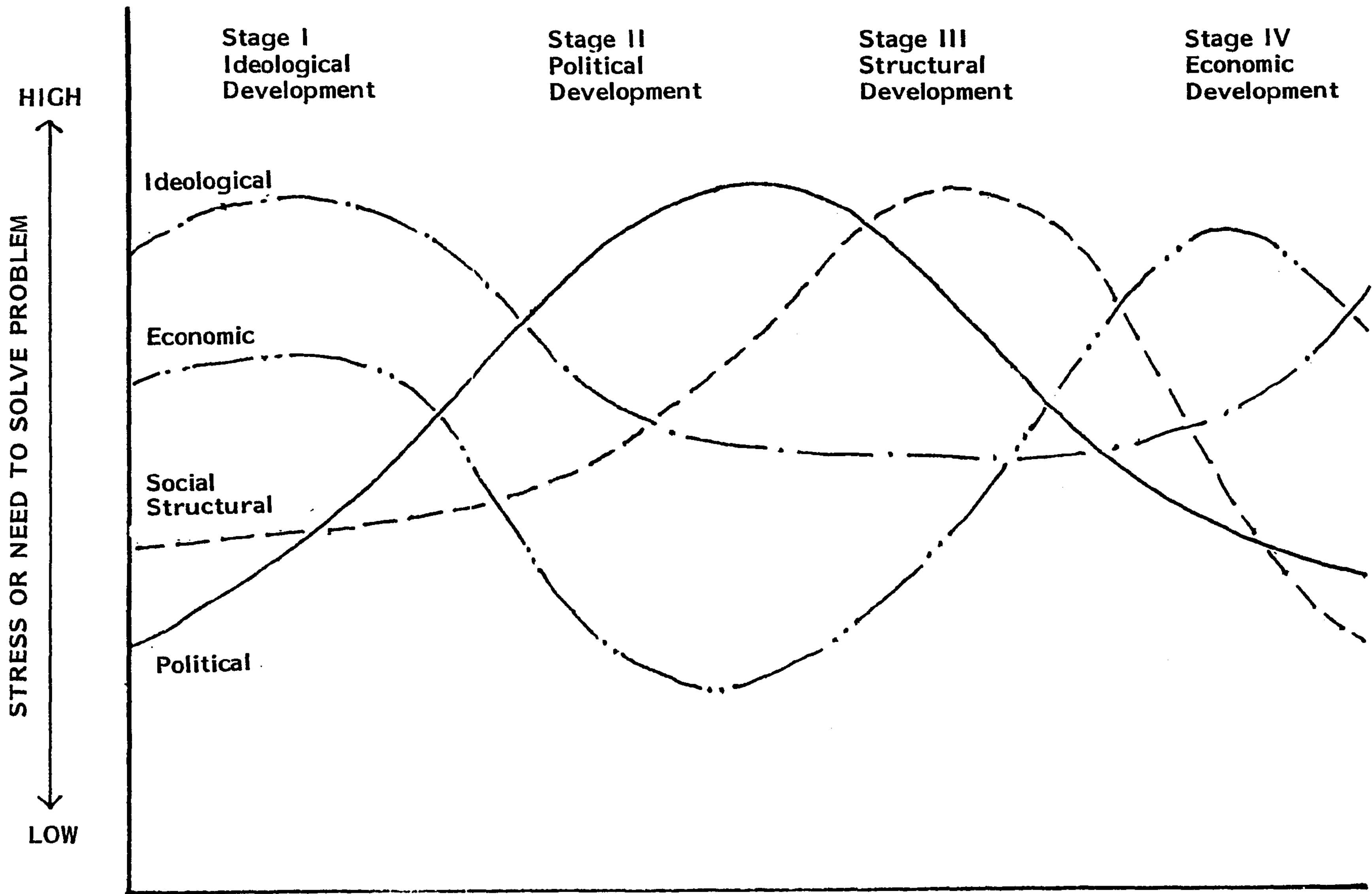


Figure 3.1 - Organizational Cycles - Eastown Community Association

demarcate specific phases in the life cycle of the organization. Figure 2 roughly illustrates the order in which specific cycles peaked in the Eastown Community Association and thus created distinctive phases in the growth of the organization.

The general process of cyclical change is the same regardless of the events that caused it (Tichy 1980: 169). Some core group in the organization experiences uncertainty (unfreezing in Lewin's terms) and respond to it; the results are stress and a felt need for adjustment (movement) and a consequent stabilization (refreezing) of the cycle. Thus, in some senses, it is failure which leads to change (Cangeclosi and Dill 1965: 196).

Specifically, in reference to the Eastown Community Association:

> Problems with the community organization develop for a variety of reasons...as such problems become more apparent, some members of the organization will begin to question the ways things are being done. They develop new ideas and suggest different ways of doing things. As these innovations are discussed among the members, conflicts may arise between those who benefited from the old methods and those favoring the new ones. Eventually broad agreement may be reached concerning the inadequacies of the structure, and innovations are adopted which require major changes in the organization. Thus a new phase begins (Easley 1978: 58).

This dialectical process is illustrated in cartoon form in Figure 2.

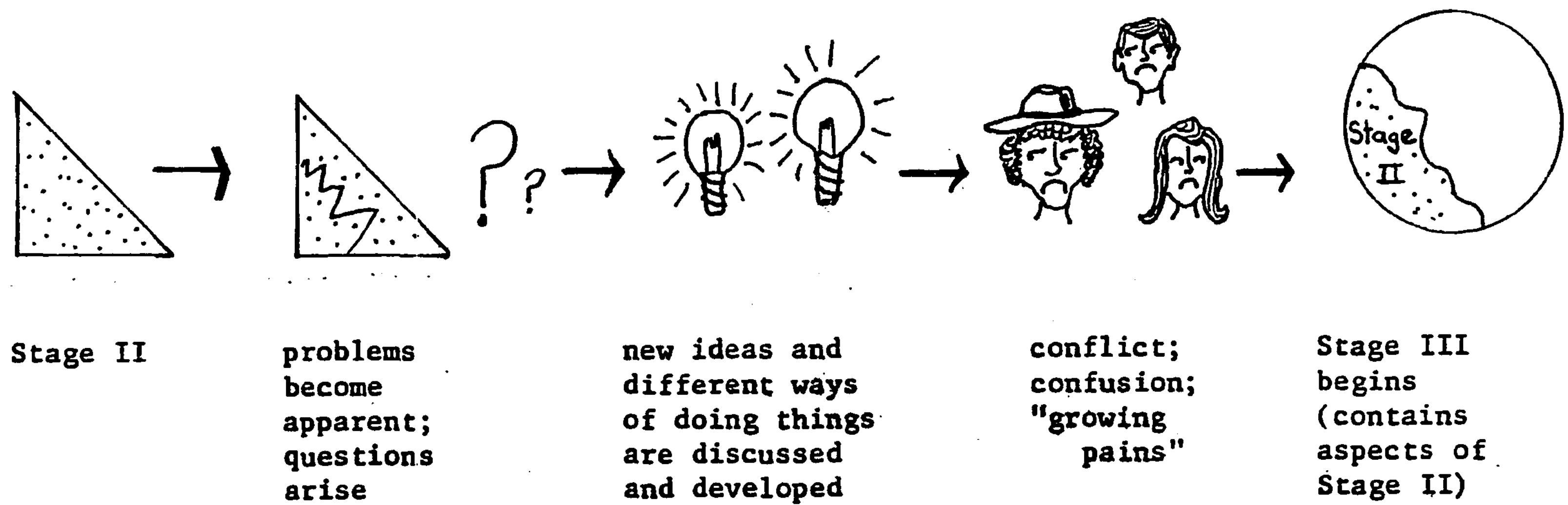


Figure 3.2 - Dialectical Transition from One Stage Into the Next

When Does a New Organizational Phase Begin?

There is no inevitable sequence to the peaking of particular cycles (the occurrence of specific phases) and it is possible that more than one may peak at the same time.

Tichy categorizes events which trigger uncertainty and thus cause organizational cycles to peak into two types.

> 1. One set represents events and activities that occur independently of the cycles. This could include general environmental changes which might affect all four cycles simultaneously (e.g. race riots) or it could involve external changes in a specific area (e.g. technological-economic) which would, in turn, then specifically affect one cycle. (Example: Decreasing funding sources brought about the peaking of techno-economic cycle in E.C.A.)
>
> 2. The second set of triggering events for cycles are the cycles themselves. Since the cycles are dialectical, they cause counterreactions in one another. For example, when the Eastown Community Association focused on the development of its political base through issue-organizing activities it relied on an ad hoc decision-making structure. However, this type of structure could not provide a means for on-going community participation, which was one of the major goals of the organization. Thus, eventually the need for a more democratic structure was recognized (the social structural cycle peaked) and much time and effort was put into designing one (e.g. by-law committee meetings, goals and objectives meetings). (Tichy 1980: 68).

Rachelle and Donald Warren, in their work, The Neighborhood's Organizer's Handbook (1977), have made this observation which relates to that dialectical nature of organizational cycles:

> Robert Michels--the renowned political theorist--once enunciated the "iron law of oligarchy"---stating that all organizations end up in the hands of few dominant individuals (Michels 1962). Yet the history of groups suggests equally an "iron law of democracy"---that challenge to the "older order"is as predictable as the fact that a small minority who once were "outsiders" become "insiders" given time and dedication to their cause. The dynamics of keeping a neighborhood organization alive and responsive to people's needs are important bases for evaluating where the action is or should be. And it is important to look beyond the immediate personalities of those currently "running the show." For behind their efforts are some group dynamics that may recur again and again---new faces but the same plot (Warren and Warren 1977: 61).

The Conflict Ridden Processes of Organizational Change

The "movement" described by Lewin, the high stress referred to by Tichy, and the experiences of failure alluded to by Cangeolosi and Dill often involve a great amount of interpersonal conflict among members of an organization. Several active members of the association commented on this during the historical presentations they gave on the E.C.A. at the Aquinas-Eastown workshops held during the spring of 1979. Bill Blickley, who had been active in neighborhood improvement efforts since he moved into the area in 1963, noted that struggle is a necessary thing. The first Executive Director of E.C.A., Saundra Fleming, stated quite emphatically, "there was

friction, there is friction, there will always be friction" (Blickley 1979; Fleming 1979).

However, many individuals and groups do not know what to do with this conflict when it erupts. Often there are those who hold the naive view that "we are the good guys" and therefore everything will just work out (Schur 1976: 111). Some try to promote conflict resolution and consensus in order to mobilize the organization. However, considerable data suggest that conflict, if it is not polarizing, is a more effective mobilizer to action and participation (Coleman 1957 and Kohfeld 1976 in Schoenberg 1981: 36). For example, disagreements about goals, tactics, and leadership can help to clarify an organization's purpose and direction. Sometimes such discussions can involve serious questioning about the value of the organization and people informally take turns playing the "devil's advocate," with others, in turn, rallying to its defense.

> "---really what we are saying is where in the hell is the Eastown Community Council? ...I saw it initially and I still do as a strong political force, and I'm sure other people see it as other things, but this is basically how I see it. But it sure as hell hasn't taken that direction. It's just like kind of an overburdensome social club at this point, really. We have many activities and many good things happening or at least starting to. Really getting nowhere fast." (Degraff 1975)

> "We, the Community Council, are little more than a body of concerned, dedicated, and,

> I am afraid, incompetent, individuals working together to "develop a community." Incompetent because we have never been prepared for the task at hand, but we are not ignorant, and do learn and grow from our mistakes" (Edison 9/8/75).

They can increase the participant's determination to further their own ideas, methods, or loyalty to one leader or another. And this, in turn, may lead to increased efforts to communicate with others and to recruit new members to the group, thus expanding the organization (Gerlach and Hines 1973: 171-172). This was reflected by an increased attendance at the Council meetings in November of 1975 during the height of the conflict which ensued during the move from Stage II (Political Development) to Stage III (Structural Development). Attendance doubled during these controversial meetings (See appendix B).

Mechanisms for Dealing With Organizational Conflict

Karen Paget, director of the Youth Project Foundation, which funds innovative programs in the United States, sees this inability to creatively handle internal conflict as one of the major flaws of present non-profit organizations in this country (Paget 1982).

The E.C.A. created mechanisms for handling conflict on both informal and formal levels. Socializing after meetings, de-briefing at a bar, sessions after issue-

organizing activities and eating Friday night dinner together at a restaurant provided relaxed settings in which dissensions among Eastowners could be aired and shared. The social bonds created when birthdays were celebrated and good parties were held also served to build up trust along non-business dimensions and thus served to balance out the hostility which may have been built up in arguments concerning the work of the E.C.A. No matter how angry people got with each other at meetings, they forgot about it long enough to enjoy parties together.

On a more formal level, the E.C.A. held several day-long retreats to assess its operations and to make future plans. This also provided arenas for discussions. One such workshop began by asking each particpant to share their views of the current goals of E.C.A.; their personal goals in their work with the Association; and the concerns they have in their attempts to reach either the community or personal goals with the Association. It devoted the remainder of the morning to small groups sessions concerning the organization's internal structure (e.g. block meetings; education and orientation of staff and council members; staff operations) and the afternoon was devoted to sessions on specific activities and issues (e.g. economic development; fundraising; displacement) (Easley 2/24/79). Annual orientation sessions during which new council members began their socialization into

the organization also provided a time for new and critical questions to be raised by the incoming members and considered by the old members.

Probably the most important conflict-solving mechanism created by the organization has been the Planning Committee. It was originally set up to consider long range plans for the organization and thus provide a place where members could put their daily pragmatic concerns into larger frameworks of cultural change in the United States (it was started by an academician). However, it has slowly evolved into a committee which not only develops the guidelines for general policies, but also does miscellaneous committee work and provides a forum for the discussion of new ideas, internal conflicts, and interpersonal complaints. The meetings are open to all Eastowners and convene once a month on the week before the monthly council meetings. There is no time limit on these gatherings, so they provide an open arena for the consideration of many ideas which the Council would not have time to discuss in detail. For example, during a planning meeting in June 1977 two items took up three hours of discussion as the conversation meandered about:

1. how do we get people involved from block meetings to something else?
2. how do we run elections in the fall? (Easley 6/1/77).

The Planning Committee often forms resolutions and recommendations based on these lengthy discussions, which are then brought to the Community Council for final deliberation.

Changes in Organizational Conflict Over Time

The conflict and confusion of transitions to new cyclical peaks (i.e. different stages) may be less intense and bitter as the organization ages. In other words, people don't just stop coming to activities if they disagree with what is going on, nor do they engage in backstabbing gossip against those they are in conflict with. Instead they basically agree to "fight it out" through face-to-face discussions within the meetings or the socializing sessions afterwards. This could occur for several reasons:

1. As the membership of Eastown Community Association broadened to include people with different backgrounds (e.g. low-income) it became more important to set up more formal and efficient conflict resolving mechanisms (e.g. Planning Committee, formal agendas). People who worked at uncreative jobs all day were unwilling to spend three or four evening hours listening to petty arguments among people they didn't know well. (Miles and Randolph 1980; Warren and Warren 1977:60).

2. As the organization moved from a reactive posture (i.e. fighting city hsll in Stage II) to a more active approach (i.e. building an organization in Stage III) more planning was involved and thus some problems could be better predicted, solved and prevented (Van de Ven 1980: 128). For example, serious planning for the April or May Street Fair began in January.
3. As the Association grew, so did the number of activities it undertook, and thus the energies of its members were absorbed in specific tasks (e.g. committee work, issue organizing). People were more likely to accept each other and overlook personal dislikes in order to get things done. Its when a group has no specific purposes or tasks that its participants often turn their energies into controlling or criticizing others (Freeman 1972-1973: 159).
4. Members of the Association became accustomed to debating and arguing with each other over a period of time. They grew willing to consider different ways that the same values could be carried out (Lodahl and Mitchell 1980: 200). They learned that there was more than one way to skin a cat so to speak and adopted a kind of experimental

attitude. For example, an ACCESS article evaluating the Street Fair indicated that:

> "many people have expressed concern about what appears to be the growing "rock festival" orientation of the day (Street Fair) in place of the neighborhood/family context. Negative comments have also been heard about drugs, beer, and dogs. Still the great portion of the comment has been enthusiastically positive" (ACCESS 5/76).

Thus, Association members had to consider other ways in which all components of the community (including the Aquinas College students) could come together for the annual spring Street Fair to "celebrate their community." This involved the elimination of rock music. Those who had invested a great deal of time and effort in arranging for this free music were initially somewhat miffed but eventually became involved in the process of designing a different type of fair.

5. As members of the organization interacted more with each other through their work with the organization and on a social basis they built up trust and were not so apt to become quickly involved in intense battles over superficial differences. They were willing to let idiosyncratic things about each other slide without making a big deal out of it. Instead of getting

their feathers all ruffled, they would just dismiss it by quietly saying to themselves or to the person next to them "There goes Tom again" or "Bill keeps repeating the same thing."

Previous Uses of the Concept of Stages in Examining E.C.A.'s History

In the final report submitted to the Kellogg Foundation on the Aquinas-Eastown Project, Tom Edison discussed the history of the Association in terms of two basic phases. One he defined as an Image Development Phase and the other as a Structural Phase (Edison 1977: 39). In the process of co-authoring the book, Eastown, I further refined this concept of stages and delineated three which the organization had experienced in the same time period (i.e. Identity Development, Image Development, and Structural Development) and projected that the organization was moving into a phase which I described as Community Development (Easley 1978).

In light of reading Noel Tichy's work on problem cycles in organizational development, I now find it useful to describe these phases in terms of the primary problems which the organization faced at different points in time. I also see the last phase described as one which focused more on solving financial problems than on "community development" (Tichy 1980). A chart in Appendix A

summarizes the major activities which occurred in each phase experienced by the organization from 1971 until 1978. It also includes a brief description of the problems and or conflicts whcih initiated or accompanied the shift from one stage to another.

<u>Stage I - Ideological Development: Creating an "EASTOWN" Identity</u> (September 1971 to December 1973)

The primary problems E.C.A. faced in its birth involved defining what the organization was about. Early members of the organization spent most of their time and energy defining and researching the community while at the same time trying to develop a common ideology and sense of mission for the organization. Then they had to move into the community and make this ideology credible to neighborhood residents.

Several small territorially organized groups existed in the neighborhood prior to the creation of the Eastown Community Association. A student researcher at Aquinas College discovered the existence of "the East End Advocate," an early area newspaper which appeared in the 1920's. On January 15th 1922 the headlines read: CRIME WAVE SWEEPING OVER THE COMMUNITY. LOCK YOUR DOORS AND BEWARE OF HOLDUP MEN. THE TIME HAS ARRIVED WHEN... The article went on to suggest that one solution to the problem might be better lighting. The early residents

then organized a group known as "the East End Improvement Association" and went on to fight City Hall to obtain "Boulevard Lights" (they had had no lights previously). The article included items that could have been written in the ACCESS in the 1970's:

> Ignorance of the law excuses no man... ignorance of community needs is also inexcusable. If you have imagined the Advocate merely an Advertising scheme you are right. It is an advertising scheme to boost your interest, if you are an East Ender.
>
> If you are one of the innocents who kick on taxation, high prices, lack of conveniences, education, or any other problems, why not become educated? Your part is to read and act. Participate in affairs---don't say "I didn't know." Read and learn. World news is all well and good, state news is fine, but you live at home (Horton 1975).

More recent groups included Catholic parish organizations, the public elementary school's Parent Teacher's Association, the Wealthy-Lake Drive Businessmen's Organization, and a political campaign organization for a Democratic Congressman. During the late 1960's the residents in the southwest region had formed a neighborhood organization called WEFF, which was named for its boundary streets. They focused primarily on attacking crime problems in this area and were successful in getting the city to install lights in the alleys and in establishing their own volunteer street patrol system. Some members of this group were also among those who led the the fight against closing the only public elementary

school in the area and were included in official planning sessions for its eventual replacement with a new school building. Several leaders of the WEFF organization were called upon to give advice to those interested in setting up the Eastown Community Association.

Calvin College, which is the major center of higher education for the Calvin Christian Reform Church, had its campus center located in the southern part of the neighborhood. In the late 1960's it made a decision to move to a more suburban location and was replaced by the Christian School of Bible and Music. In 1969, Aquinas College, a small, Catholic liberal arts college located in the northeastern part of the neighborhood, was facing a declining enrollment and a growing deficit. They hired a new president that year, who began tackling these problems by initiating a year-long institutional self-study effort which included a Neighborhood Study Component. At the same time, to fill a teaching position in their Geography Department, Aquinas College actively sought out someone who would be interested in conducting further research in the neighborhood and in working in the surrounding community. They hired Tom Edison, who was later to become a key figure in the early development of the Association. Many observers of organizational growth have noted that charismatic leaders can have an important impact in the beginnings of organizations (Kimberly 1980: 27;

Warren and Warren 1977: 79; Tichy 1980: 168). As organizations mature, however, they usually develop mechanisms which are formally or informally designed to limit the influence of this primary mover (Kimberly 1980: 15). For example, E.C.A. encouraged participants to begin to only take on primary responsibility for one committee at a time. In Tom's case, he was sometimes asked to chair meetings, which meant that he had to keep the big picture of the discussion in mind and could not go off on tangents as easily. In the early days, meetings were often held at his house and Tom was known to "hold forth" from his big black chair in the corner of the living room. Resenting this "professing," some encouraged meetings to be held at the Hall. At one point in 1975 a list of individual participation in E.C.A. activities was drawn up and it was evident that Tom and several others had their fingers in too many pies. It was suggested by the Council that people not become involved in more than two activities or committees.

Developing an Identity and a Structure

In January 1973, Aquinas College presented the findings of its research on the neighborhood to a meeting of area business leaders and to another meeting of about one hundred neighborhood residents. Many of these residents were contacted from lists of campaign workers

for an area Democratic Congressman. However, E.C.A., like most neighborhood organizations, has not ever been directly related to any political party organizations (Kotler, G. 1979; Green, G. 1978; Cunningham 1978).

At these meetings the boundaries for the neighborhood were drawn up and rationales for them discussed. Three of the boundaries were based on major street divisions and one on the different time periods in which homes on either side of the street were constructed. A small portion of the delineated area lay in East Grand Rapids which is a suburban, independent political entity from the city of Grand Rapids. With the advice and consent of its leaders, the entire WEFF portion of the neighborhood was also included within the E.C.A.'s boundaries.

Eastown was purposely defined to include both different races and different classes. Milton Kotler suggests that this is typical of many neighborhood organizations today..."the newer generations of community organizations have deliberately chosen a geographical boundary which is inclusive of different races" (Kotler M. 1979: 41).

These meetings with business leaders and residents in the Eastown area resulted in the creation of a Task Force of about fourteen members which then gradually evolved into the Eastown Community Association. Greta Kotler

found that 78% of the 41 community organizations she studied were initiated by non-governmental sources, where-as, Green found that this was true in 94% of the 45 community organizations she surveyed. (Green 1978; Kotler, G. 1979).

Students, largely those from the Geography Department at Aquinas College, played a major role in the beginnings of the organization. They worked along side of the steering Committee members to create an EASTOWN identity. At that time only the local theatre used this name. Several years later this name was adopted by a bank branch, a saloon, a grocery store, and a public parking lot in the area. Students were especially instrumental in organizing the first spring Street Fairs which featured craft booths and music. In many respects the first one served as the debut of the organization to the community. It was the first time many residents heard the name "Eastown" for the area in which they lived. The Fair has continued to be a major annual event for the past ten years. Students also helped to establish and distribute the neighborhood newsletter entitled THE ACCESS.

The Association began a Food Coop which was first located in the Geography Department's classroom at Aquinas College. Cans of food, boxes, bags, and produce of this emerging neighborhood institution became part of the classroom's decor...a symbolic link between the college

and the community. The operation grew and was soon moved to the president of the Association's basement. Later it was located in a storefront which also served as E.C.A.'s Hall.

Financing the New Organization

To fund their activities the members of the organization developed a Patron Plan under which residents and business leaders were encouraged to contribute. The Kellogg Foundation had financially supported an Environmental Studies Project at Aquinas College and indicated that it was interested in encouraging programs which strengthened college-community linkages. Thus, the Aquinas College Geography Department submitted a proposal which combined concerns with a faculty development program at the college and support for the new community organization to the Foundation.

Gaining Power Within Eastown

The core group of the Eastown Community Association recognized that "...in actual practice the neighborhood and community organizations base their power precisely on the degree to which they can get mass based involvement in their actions, and wide use of their services and program benefits by residents (Kotler, M 1979: 41). In other words,

in the legitimitizing process, the bottom line was their ability "to deliver." Besides the Food Coop, a program of supervision at Wilcox Park was established and a landlord-tenant's union created. Area residents were also invited to take advantage of the house paint which was available from the county at little cost to low income households and distributed by the Association.

Stage II - Political Development: Becoming a Power to Be Reckoned With (January 1974 to June 1975)

The Political Ties That Bind

As E.C.A. members examined various problems in the neighborhood, they began to look more closely at the linkages between this area and the operations of agencies which were responsible for city services in the neighborhood. They started to set up meetings with the city officials who were in charge of making decisions about the distribution of specific services. For example, after a series of discussions with the City Commission and Parks and Recreation Department, E.C.A. obtained promises that $20,000 would be used to improve the Wilcox Park area; that three people would be hired to supervise the park; and that the small shelter in its center would be reopened.

After discovering that plans existed to widen a major street running through the area, residents held several

public demonstrations and were able to effectively block this plan. During the summer of 1974 several abandoned homes had burned and upset neighbors requested that the city pass an ordinance requiring that such homes be secured and boarded up. To publicize the issue, the Association arranged a bus tour of the area for city officials and T.V. cameramen. The tour guide was Ollie Armstrong, a stout outspoken black woman who was head of a large household and one of the first black families to live in the Wilcox Park area. The City Commission passed the ordinance in the fall of 1974.

In the meantime, other neighborhood associations were beginning to organize in Grand Rapids and together with E.C.A. they decided to formalize their relationships in a Neighborhood Alliance. With help of an Aquinas College faculty member, E.C.A. became involved in the debate as to the kind of decision making structure which should be created to determine the distribution of the new community development monies coming into Grand Rapids. The City Commission eventually went along with E.C.A.'s recommendation that a Citizen's Advisory Board be established and its suggestion that this body allocate 50% of the funds for 1975 towards the improvement of housing in the city.

In its development of these political issues E.C.A. shared some common characteristics with other neighborhood organizations throughout the country:

1. The issues and projects were genuinely established by the people, rather than impressed upon the community by external authorities (Kotler, M. 1979: 40). In other words, the issues were not ones dreamed up by urban planners and city officials, but flowed from the concerns that residents expressed to the staff organizers or problems they called into the Eastown Hall about.
2. The Association was involved in a variety of issues and activities (e.g. housing, Food Coop, street widenings, senior citizens recreation, landlord tenant's union, traffic) (Green 1978; Kotler G. 1979).

Tapping the Grassroots with a Structure

As the organization sought to broaden its membership to include the entire Eastown neighborhood, it began to arrange meetings at the block and regional levels. This way, organizers could become more familiar with problems which were "close to home" and could also appeal to the more immediate self-interest of individual residents. They hoped that in trying to solve a problem of personal concern Eastowners would discover that they could be more effective if they cooperated with their neighbors and would thus recognize their common interest. In C. Wright Mills'

terms, organizers could better help residents translate their "private problems into public concerns" by working door to door at the block level (Mills 1967).

A brief description of highlights of life on "my block" and the Association's relationship to these residents might best illustrate this block organizing process. During much of the time the block I lived on in the WEFF region consisted of fourteen households, including both sides of the street. Eight usually contained black families, five white families and two sheltered mixed racial couples. On one corner lived the Colliers, a retired black couple who had raised their family there and took pride in the work they had done on their home. Mr. COllier would often spend hours sitting out on his porch, watching the neighborhood go by, waving and chatting with people who passed his way. I always waved to him on my way in and out even though he was at the other end of the block. Shortly after I arrived in the area he explained his theories behind the efforts of the city to close the nearby public elementary school. He saw it as part of a general effort to discourage people from staying in the inner city by denying them city services and thus devaluing the property so that people could cheaply move in from the suburbs, as energy costs rose. He said he was determined to hold on to his house as long as he could.

Two doors down lived Helen, an older woman who had

lived by herself for years in the same house. She also spent a lot of time "watching over the block," and waiting for the mailman to arrive. Bryan, the young man who lived next door, often did things for her. He was a recent graduate from Aquinas College who had purchased his run down house for several thousand dollars and was slowly in the process of fixing it up. He worked part time as a woodcraftsman and carved a unique picture for his front porch to frame his mailbox.

Next to Bryan lived three men, one of whom earned his living by driving truck. About once a year, in the summer, they gave a big noisy party, and cars would be parked all around for several blocks away. Clay, a black man, lived with his white wife and two children next door. He owned a Doberman Pinscher dog which was kept in his fenced back yard. It barked a lot and one night his neighbor shot it. Many of us felt bad for him, but nothing came of the police investigation. The man involved was a big ex-Marine, and had a shady criminal reputation, so nobody messed with him. Clay soon got a similar dog and his neighbor moved out shortly after.

These were the more "permanent" people on the block. The others were renters of the single family houses and duplexes. Almost everyone had a porch and spent time on it during the hot summer months watching traffic and people go by. A continual hum of human voices and activities

flowed through the open screened windows. There were few air conditioners. A walk down the street often meant stopping to chat with the people on each porch along the way--sharing local gossip and comments on the weather. Several residents grew some vegetables in flower pots or in small plots in the back of their houses and the progress of tomato plants was often noted in these conversations.

Block meetings, which in this case involved two blocks, were also held in the summer. There were initiated in two ways: either someone called the Hall about a problem or Gordy, the staff organizer who was assigned to our area, would spend some time visiting with people and then arrange a meeting. He would circulate flyers about the meeting a few days in advance and then would call or stop by the houses the day of the meeting to remind people to come. We often met on someone's porch and sipped ice tea or lemonade as we talked. Gordy usually shared some information about activities of the Association and then we moved into a discussion about block problems (e.g. rats, pigeons, vacant lots, dogs barking, crime). In one case, some people had moved out of a house and left the garage filled with garbage. Calls to the housing inspector had brought no response so we invited him to come to a meeting and to take a walking tour of the area. Landlords or government officials directly related to the specific problems being discussed were often invited to come to

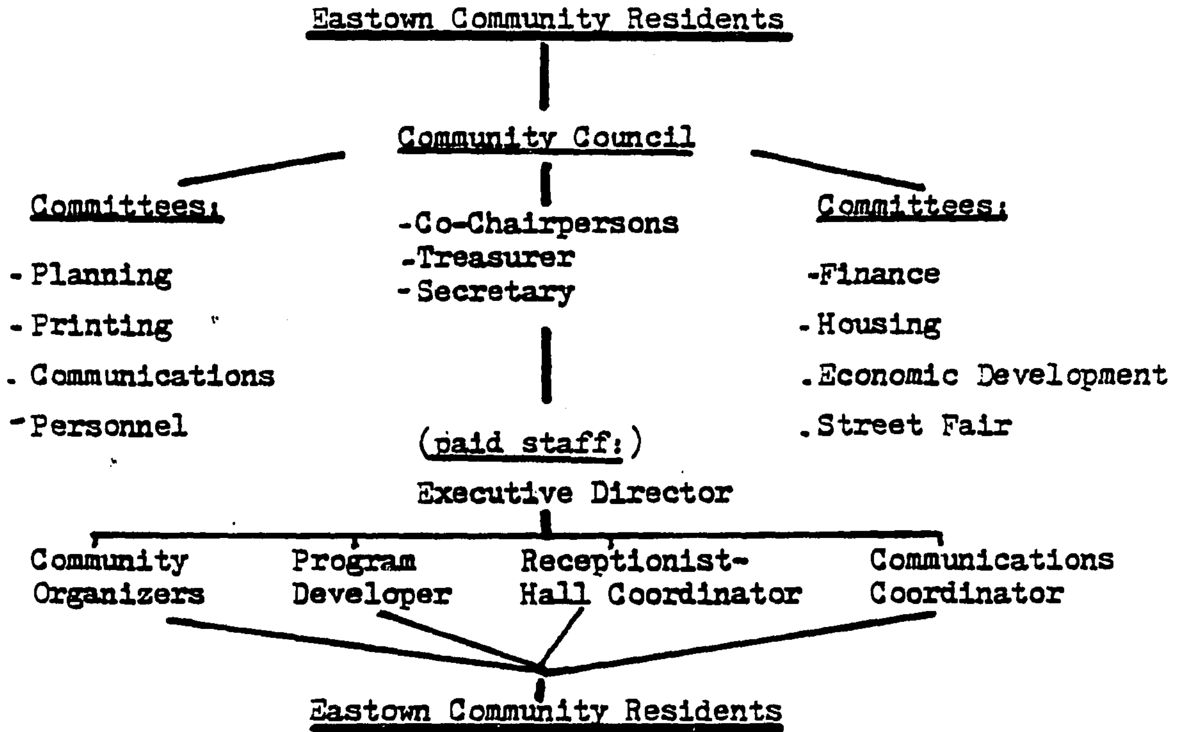


Figure 4.1 - Schematic Organizational Structure of the Eastown Community Association - January 1976

answer questions during the latter part of our meetings.

Several times we met to set up a Neighborhood Watch Program in which we would consciously keep a look out on the area. This was co-sponsored by the Association and the Police Department. Policemen gave us suggestions on how to take preventive measures to deter crime. This included carrying whistles which could be blown when one saw or was a victim of criminal activity. People were instructed to call the police immediately upon hearing the sound of a whistle.

According to Mr. Collier the block had been asking the city to repair the curbs on the street for sixteen years. In 1978 the Association staff got the city to promise it would do this work the following year and then found that it was not included in the new budget. The neighbors were incensed. "It bothers me that in a well run city people have to fight and scratch for what's basic." (Wiersma: 1979). Letters were written and phone calls made. Finally, the curbs were repaired.

Late one night in the summer of 1980 Sheldon Herman, a Council member, was walking home and saw that the inside of a house was being wrecked. He called the police and the landlord was contacted. It turned out that he had hired some men to gut this rundown house that he had previously rented. The E.C.A. staff then met with the block residents to decide what we would like to have

happen. We had three options: to go after the landlord, to make it into a vacant lot, or to have it rehabilitated. An arrangement was made for the house to be donated to the city which then hired a non-profit Housing Repair Service to fix it up and to put it on the market to be sold.

Heavy snowstorms provided the best context for block cooperation. Children and adults got their shovels and helped dig out cars. One by one we would unbury them and move them to a parking lot in the business district. Then, we'd call the city and proudly announce that we were ready for the plows to come to our street. We always believed we were the first block to have cleaned itself out in the city.

Bryan decided to put a white picket fence around the house he was working so hard to remake. The idea caught on and two of his next door neighbors did the same. Although somewhat of anomalie in the middle of the city, this white picket fence joining three households in a row symbolizes in a tangible way the spirit of our block's cooperative efforts.

Hidden Internal Tensions Accompanied the Move to Stage II

Those originally involved in the creation of E.C.A. were predominately white, middle-class residents "motivated by a sincere desire to make the area a more attractive place to live." One very committed early participant

speaks of "the preservation of neighborhood values," while another expresses a deep concern to "improve communication in a racially changing neighborhood" (Edison 1977: 19). Several factors may have caused the alienation of some of this group from the association. Tom Edison frankly portrays some of these possibilities in a position paper addressed to the Council in September 1975:

> ....we are not representative of the community in general and we are not seen as representative in the community. It should surprise no one that we are seen as racist by some in the Black community, and as nigger lovers by some in the White community, and in general still have a White Hippy image although most people probably don't think about us very much at all. We have alienated some of the conservative monied White minority in the area by entering into programs that at least attempt to go beyond limited cosmetic change. We failed to impress some and turned off others of the liberal community through our disasterous record of planning incompetence and lack of program follow through (Edison 1975: 1).

At this point, the underlying conflict between these older members and those who had become more recently involved primarily as a result of their effective work on political issues was not openly expressed. Instead, many of the early members just gradually withdrew from participating in the organization's activities.

Ideological Expansion

In the meantime, the E.C.A. was indeed creating a name

for itself with the widespread publicity on its political successes. "Eastown" had become a place in Grand Rapids. The Geography Department conducted a Human Resource Survey in which the students visited 90% of the homes in the area. The Street Fair they organized again was another success. The ACCESS newsletter continued to be published about twice a month and plans were underway to set up an Eastown "People's radio station." In August the Association moved to another, more permanent, storefront located in the center of Eastown's business district.

"Money is Only a Small Object"

The major reason why the organization was able to immerse itself in these diverse activities was that it did not have to put time and energy into keeping financially afloat. In January 1974, the Kellogg Foundation awarded Aquinas College a grant of approximately $130,00 which was to be basically used to provide financial incentives for faculty members to work in the Eastown Community and then to utilize their experiences in ways which would help their teaching (2/3's of the grant was to be devoted to this purpose) and to underwrite the major expenses (e.g. rent, phone, two person staff, consultants) of the fledging Eastown Community Association (1/3 of the grant). The funds were to decrease roughly by 1/3 in the second year and another 1/3 in the third year.

A dependable source of funds was a critical element in the development of the organization at this time (Grosser 1968: 135). It's importance was especially appreciated later when the funds began to run out. "The danger lies in the fact that the struggle to stay afloat fiscally may involve the majority of E.C.A.'s time and concern. Issues and services would have to take a back seat and Eastown's effectiveness would be severely diminished"(Wrzesinkski 1976). Later, Mike Williams, an Aquinas College Faculty member commented on its impact in the EASTOWN book. "With this support, the E.C.A. was given an important three-year period to mature and to build the necessary internal structure and community-wide legitimacy to become self-supporting"(Williams 1978: 15).

In obtaining such a non-governmental source of funding, E.C.A. was comparable to other community organizations throughout the country (Green 1978 and Kotler, G. 1979).

Internal Contradictions Move the Association Towards Stage III

However, this funding, like most external resources, came with some strings attached. At the College, a team was formed of about six faculty members who were receiving "paid release time" through the grant for their involvement with the Eastown community. This group met quite frequently throughout 1974 and held a Urban Studies class

which was specifically focused on examining the Eastown area during the spring of 1975. Lewis Clingman, the city's historian, gave an engrossing historical presentation of the Eastown community during one evening of the class. Given rising energy costs, the future may involve decreasing use of the automobile. One class period was devoted to listening to the stories of older residents describe what life had been like without cars so that we could begin to imagine what Eastown might be like again.

Some E.C.A. staff members and volunteers felt that the Aquinas Eastown Faculty Team was too involved in the operations of the organization and gradually some tensions developed between the Team and the E.C.A. One volunteer expressed it this way: "I saw some people making decisions affecting the community who were not involved" (Fleming 1979).

In the meantime, the E.C.A. Steering Committee had slowly become less relevant to the operations of the organization as it took on more grass roots political issues. Instead ad hoc decision-making began to characterize many of the organization's activities. There were several advantages to using this type of a structure at this point in time. It did enable the residents at the block level to make important decisions in the name of

the whole neighborhood and to see specific results of their own personal work (e.g. phone calls and visits with public officials). Such a structure encouraged diverse types of people throughout the entire community to become active in Association activities. The lack of bureaucratic controls allowed the staff to take the initiative and to be innovative in exploring and developing issues. Failure with one issue (e.g. developing Pocket Park in the business district) did not affect the progress of a different one in another region of the community. However, the successes served to reinforce the Association and to show what could be done by working together to solve common problems (Gerlach and Hines 1973:168-169). To outsiders, it was the Eastown Community Association, not an individual or a committee which was pushing for change (Williams 1978: 15).

However, this type of an ad hoc structure presented problems as well:

1. The first by-laws of the organization demonstrated a commitment to democracy, which was true of similar organizations. Milton Kotler concluded his review of four major studies on neighborhood organizations by stating. "The data show that in most cases the constitutions of the community and neighborhood organizations are democratic (Kotler, M. 1979: 41). However, with the Aquinas Faculty Team intervening and the staff determining what issues would be followed and the methods which would be used, there seemed to be little room for democratic decision-making to be done by neighborhood residents.

2. The E.C.A. staff could get people to become intensely involved in specific political issues but there were few meaningful activities to keep residents active between such issues. To put it another way, many activists were at a loss after the T.V. cameras left. (Booth 1982).

3. In the meantime, the Association had begun to receive funds from various programs (e.g. Urban Corps, Vista, Comprehensive Employment Training Act) which enabled them to hire more staff. This expansion along with an increase in the number of people becoming involved in Eastown activities created a need for more coordination among the staff and added to the pressures toward structural change.

<u>Stage III - Structural Development: Tinkering With the Internal Organization</u> (July 1975 to June 1976)

<u>Tightening Up the Structure</u>

In December of 1974 the Steering Committee was dissolved and a new Community Council was formed. It was to be comprised of representatives from various Association activities (e.g. Food Coop, Radio Station, Newsletter) the officers and anyone else who lived or worked in Eastown

who might be interested in participating. Each existing committee was asked to submit a goal statement to the council. Two other committees were formally defined at this time: a Planning Committee which was supposed to assist the organization in both short and long range planning efforts and a Finance committee which did not really become active until almost a year later.

The new Community Council sought to assert its authority in both big and small decisions, ranging from questions about the purpose of the organization to how much paper should we purchase for the next ACCESS, and often the meetings were very long and tedious. Both committee and staff members became caught between the erratic decision-making of the Council and their need to generate activities in the community independently. The articulation of such problems by two different consultants encouraged the association to hold two retreats in the spring of 1975 to discuss the goals, structure, and programs of the Association.

The Association increasingly felt a need to be better able to explain itself to itself and to the outside world. They needed a tool to talk about the organization with. The Planning Committee was assigned the task of writing a statement of purpose during the summer of 1975. They began by discussing words that would get at what they wanted to say and then sorted them into four broad catagories:

power, political structures; participation in decision-making; our humanness, rights as human beings; and working with each other. They also gleaned information from their initial by-laws and from documents by several other neighborhood organizations in Connecticut, Ohio, Pennslynania, and Washington D.C. After much debate and discussion they finally reached agreement on this statement of purpose by August:

> The Eastown Community Association believes community development is a deliberate act of all neighborhood people working collectively to take responsibility for their lives in a fully human way by participating directly in the decisions which affect their lives through neighborhood power and control.

The word "deliberate" was selected because "it's not a haphazard thing, it's people sitting down and deciding to go ahead and do it" (Anderson 1975) . There were objections to using the word "vehicle" to describe what the organization does because people would get the impression that "when I have a problem all I have to do is give a jingle down there (the hall) and they'd solve the problem for me." (DeGraff 6/15/75). They wanted to have people realize that they had to take direct responsibility for their lives, that E.C.A. did not exist to serve them. Howard Tuthill, the vice president, put it this way, "if you don't get in there and therefore get your piece of the pie, don't cry"

(Tuthill 1975). The phrase "community development" was used because they wanted to include the several "neighborhoods" that existed in the Eastown area (e.g. WEFF, Wilcox Park, Woodstone.) Much of the discussion centered on the word "power". Some were afraid that people would be turned off by it and suggested the word "strength" be used instead. After all "actions would speak louder than words"(Weber, A. 1975). Others argued that we should "come right out and say what we are"(Anderson 1975). Jim Degraff pointed out the E.C.A. is more than just organizing around specific issues. (e.g. Wilcox Park, abandoned housing) even if many don't recognize this yet. In the end they could not agree on whether to use the word "power" or "control" so they included them both.

At one point during the ardous process of pounding out this statement Howard Tuthill exclaimed, "I think when it gets all done its going to be so ambiguous that the Chinese well be the only ones that understand it." (Tuthill 1975). When they were done they knew it sounded clumsy and like it had been created by a committee, but they were also proud of it, it was truly their own.

An ad hoc committee was then established to derive a set of objectives from the statement of purpose:

1. to develop a self-sustaining community organization.
2. to develop and maintain indigenous leadership

3. to be an advocate for community needs.

4. to provide an information and communication service.

5. to provide a public forum that can facilitate community decisions, identify priorities, and seek to resolve conflict within the community.

6. to develop community self-determination and self-reliance.

7. to develop working relations with other groups.

The committee continued its work by systematically listing strategies to accomplish each objective and made an inventory of human and material resources which were available to do so.

The Planning Committee was then asked to design a set of By-Laws for the Association. The major questions addressed in writing this document were: How can we make E.C.A. the most representative possible of the Eastown community? And how could we make it the most democratic? (Easley 10/11/76). The By-Laws which had been developed by the Adams-Morgan neighborhood association in Washington, D.C. and the ones used by the Sto-Rox community organization in Pittsburg Pennsylvania were carefully scrutinized and parts were selected from each document that would be best for Eastown purposes. Planning Committee members conferred with the Council along each step of the way and the final set of By-Laws was approved in January 1976.

E.C.A.'s By-Laws can be seen as an important step towards establishing democratic decision-making procedures, but not necessarily a sufficient one. Milton Kotler's 1979 review of four neighborhood studies which included a total of 116 neighborhoods indicates that "in most cases the constitutions of the community and neighborhood organizations are democratic." Although Kotler sees the formalization of decision-making structures as a way in which the rights of residents can be addressed and measured, "there is, however, no data in the studies which examine the sufficiency of the by-laws of these organizations to provide protection for individual or group members" (Kotler, M. 1979: 41).

The Council also closely examined the roles the growing staff played in the organization and saw the need to develop ways in which to make the staff more directly accountable to the Community Council. Thus they created the position of an Executive Director and asked the lead staff organizer to take this position. The chart on the following page illustrates the organizational structure which was arrived at as a result of these discussions:

Political Activities Continue

At the same time as these formal structural policies were being formulated, several new committees were being set up: Education, Health, and Personnel. The staff was holding block meetings throughout the community which were

focusing on issues of crime, housing inspection, and street widenings in the area. Thus, on the one hand, the association was tightening up its structure, whereas the staff continued the development of political issues.

Moving to Stage III (Structural Development) Involved Internal Conflict

During the fall of 1975 the energies of Association members and staff were immersed in open internal conflict. The disagreements were expressed informally during private conversations and phone calls and aired openly at Council meetings with written position papers often used to provide the basis for discussion. The accusations got quite vicious at times and involved a great deal of character assasination and scape goating. The tensions and friction were interpreted in a variety of ways. Some viewed it as a conflict between the Aquinas College Faculty Team and the Association. Faculty members were accused of not being directly involved in the community, not getting their hands dirty, and yet all too willing to evaluate the Association and tell staff members what to do. They were seen as intellectually elitist by some. One Council member complained that he needed to go to college and bring a dictionary to understand what they were saying (Easley, 10/8/75). The Faculty team felt the Association was too confused to tell the College what it wanted from it and that the staff were quite immature. The two organizers,

John Fodor and Gordy Fessendon, had been Aquinas students.

On the other hand, it was viewed as a conflict between the Council and the paid staff. The staff wouldn't follow directions from the Council, wouldn't attend Council meetings concerning the By-Laws and did not encourage "street people" to join the Council. The Staff perceived the Council as self-appointed, with no real constituency or ties to the community and thus did not respect their ideas about it. They claimed to be "the voice of the people" because of their daily work with residents on issues, and wanted to see the issue orientation of the Association continued and expanded (Easley, 10/8/75).

Tom Edison's unwillingness to give up his powerful role in the organization was also seen as a source of problems by some (Easley, 10/23/75). Tom had his own interpretation. He had been inspired by the model of neighborhood government developed in 1969 by Milton Kotler in his book Neighborhood Government. Kotler advocated the decentralization of decision-making in urban areas and suggested structures in which community residents could democratically work together to make decisions about life in their neighborhoods. The staff of the Association had been formally trained by followers of Saul Alinsky, the "father of modern day community organizing," who encouraged people to take united action on issues which directly

concerned them. Tom Edison summarized his views of the internal dissension in a position paper presented to the Community Council in October of 1975:

> "First, I think it fair to say the general emphasis of the Community Council, since its initiation, has had to do with internal structural development and has had a general Kotler orientation; the staff, with its emphasis on neighborhood organization, on Alinsky. This is probably the way things should be. It seems reasonable that in the early phases of development the Association depends on organizing methods that create excitement, visibility, notoriety and carry high success factors. And it seems reasonable that the early stages in the respective "neighborhoods" emphasize the same methods for the same reasons. It also seems appropriate that with maturity the emphasis of the Association shifts to developmental considerations (i.e. the change from the Steering Committee to the Community Council).
>
> In this context the Community Council began to plan a model for its future development that would maximize community participation and local political control. From this planning effort a statement of purpose, some operational objectives and the rewriting of the Association By-Laws have evolved. This transition to developmental planning has also influenced the function of the staff. Where once the primary staff responsibility had been to "organize" in the community, the staff was now responsible for the implementation and development of Community Council policy decisions. The role of the Community Coordinator has shifted gradually from community organizer to executive director. The ramifications of this shift were not immediately apparent to the Community Coordinator or the Community Council; it is only now that the significance of this shift in emphasis is being acknowledged.

> The reluctance and/or inability of the Community Coordinator to take over the administrative responsibility and his desire to return to "street work" is only one manifestation of the transition from organizer to director responsibilities. Another manifestation has been the Council's apparent inability to develop successful working committees, except around specific issue orientation, although several developmental committees have tried and failed (i.e. health, education). . ." (Edison 10/75).

As alluded to above, John Fodor the lead organizer, (Community Coordinator), ended up resigning instead of taking the newly created Executive Director's position. It was subsequently filled by a former Community Council member. About the same time, Don Walsh, who had been Chairperson of the Association for three years, resigned ostensibly to make room for new people.

Ideological Clarifications

The discussions surrounding these conflicts helped the organization to clarify its purpose and direction (Gerlach and Hines 1973: 171-172). Another major contribution to ideological clarifications came as a result of visits from outside consultants which Aquinas College co-sponsored. Prior to my own arrival, Paulo Friere, Milton Kotler, and the Berrigan Brothers had given presentations at the College and toured the community. In 1975, Joe Gardner from the Woodlawn Organization in Chicago and Sister Paulette and others from the Sto-Rox

neighborhood in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania visited. Joe Gardner, drawing from his experiences with the Woodlawn Organization which had been orignially developed by Saul Alinsky, emphasized the importance of developing services. "For years we stayed away from services, but then people realized that need to justify their involvement and identification with the organization." However, he also cautioned that a staff division of labor should be maintained: issue organizers should not be administrators, (Gardner 1975). This advice was taken seriously during the debates which ensued eight months later around staff roles.

Sister Paulette and the six others who came with her were quizzed extensively about the philosophy and organizational mechanics of the Sto-Rox Organization. In promoting democratic decision making structures she argued that, "unless there is a preparedness for people to have the power, it (a change) will just be a new set of exploiters" (Sister Paulette 1975). Shortly after this the E.C.A. began writing its statement of purpose and information shared by the Sto-Rox visitors was often part of those discussions.

The Kellogg Foundation grant was also used to send staff and volunteers to attend training workshops and conferences with other leaders from neighborhood organizations throughout the country. For example, a 1977 summary of E.C.A. activities indicated that members had attended

the following conferences: National Housing, Alliance for Neighborhood Government, Neighborhood Council, National Neighbors, Catholic Conference on Urban Ministry, Great Lakes Senior Citizen and National Organizers. On such occasions they listened to presentations on redlining, fundraising, developing by-laws, and socialized with other neighborhood activists. One national group, the National Association of Neighborhoods, arranged to have participants stay in homes in the neighborhoods sponsoring their conferences. Meals and meeting rooms were provided by area churches. When NAN became too large for these kinds of arrangements, they decided to make the smaller regional associations the focus of their activities so they could continue these types of arrangements. They vowed never to hold a meeting in a hotel.

Trips to such conferences often provided unique opportunities for lower income Eastowners to travel outside of Grand Rapids. One middle-aged woman, who served as a council member and then later became a staff member, used to plan her trip wardrobe for days in advance and looked forward to opportunities to sightsee in the area. This contrasted to the attitude taken by the middle-class professionals who threw something in their suitcases the morning they left and had long since visited the tourist spots in Chicago, Washington, D.C., and New York.

These excursions also drew the Eastowners who participated closer together. The long drives east provided time for interesting conversation. Jim lobfell, a Council member, who works with a company that supplies ice for ice machines, often fondly reminisces about the geographical conversation he had with Tom Edison, as they passed through the strip mining regions of Ohio on their way to Baltimore. During one conference we were scheduled to sleep on the floor of a fire station in Brooklyn which was being "temporarily held" by the neighbors to prevent it from being shut down. It was already crowded when we arrived so the nun with us suggested that we drive around and look for a church or convent that might put us up. We had all brought sleeping bags. We finally found one that would accept us. Sheldon Herman, an Aquinas student who was active with E.C.A., became the first man to ever sleep overnight in this one-hundred year old convent.

A few years later, Mary Melito a white homemaker and active volunteer, shared a room at the National People's Action Conference in Washington, D.C. with two black women who were on the staff. Upon her return she told of how they began to discuss their backgrounds and became so interested in each other's stories that they decided to skip a major presentation and continue to talk at length.

She felt much closer to them as a result of this meaningful exchange.

The Association asked conference participants to report on their experiences by submitting written reports addressing the following questions:

> How will the things you learned at the conference affect your future involvement in E.C.A.?
>
> From what you have learned at the conference what specific suggestions would you make to the E.C.A. and its activities?
>
> What did you like or dislike about the conference?

They were also asked to give an oral report to the Council and often disseminated literature they had gathered about other neighborhood organizations throughout the country.

Such trips and the utilization of consultants meant that Eastown was kept abreast with the experiences of similar organizations and did not have to be constantly "reinventing the wheel." Participants could see their work as part of a large national and international social movement towards political decentralization.

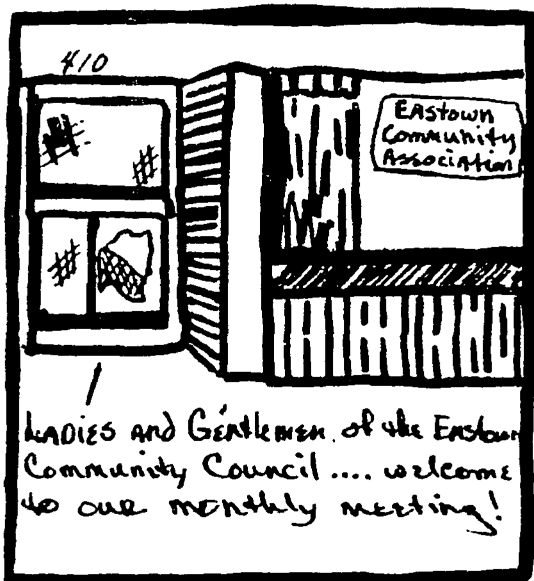
Stage IV - Economic Development: Solving Financial Problems (July 1976 to December 1977)

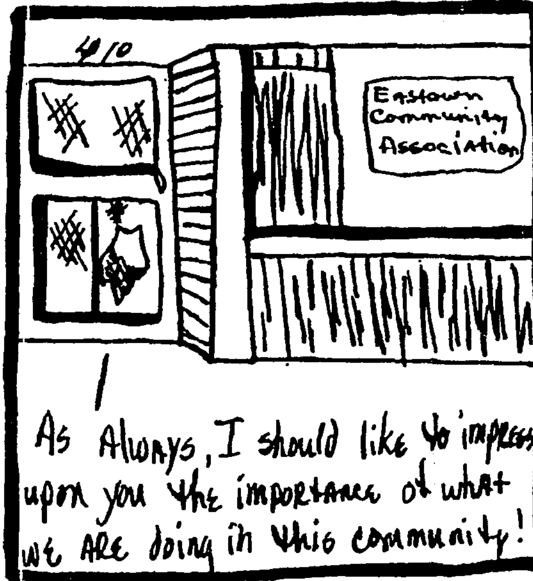
By the end of 1975, the realization that the Kellogg Foundation monies were decreasing again by another third began to hit home. The finance committee was revived and plans were made to invite business leaders to contribute

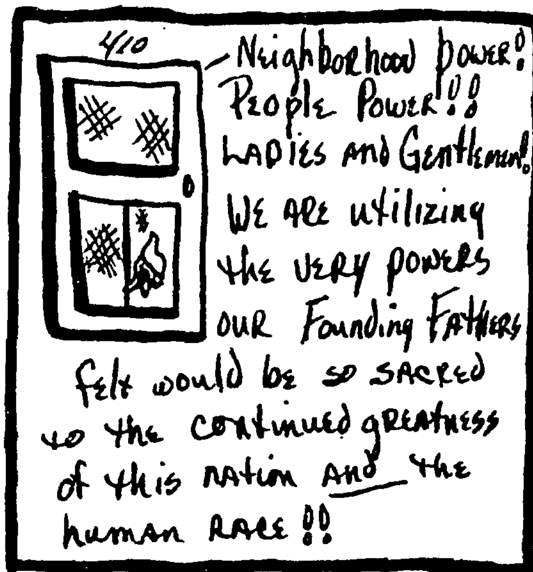
to the organization. Throughout 1976 a number of small scale fundraisers (e.g. keggers, rafflers, bake sales, rummage sales) were held. (The cartoon on the following page by the ACCESS editor, Sharon Wrzesinski appeared in the June 1976 issue). The Association held a chicken dinner in which prepaid orders were taken and 200 deliveries were made in one day. Although, $183.00 was made for the organization, this turned out to be quite a cumbersome project.

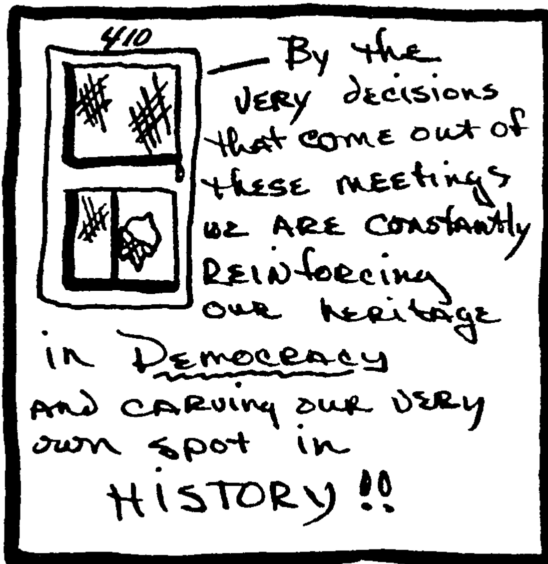
Differing Ideas About Sources of Financial Support

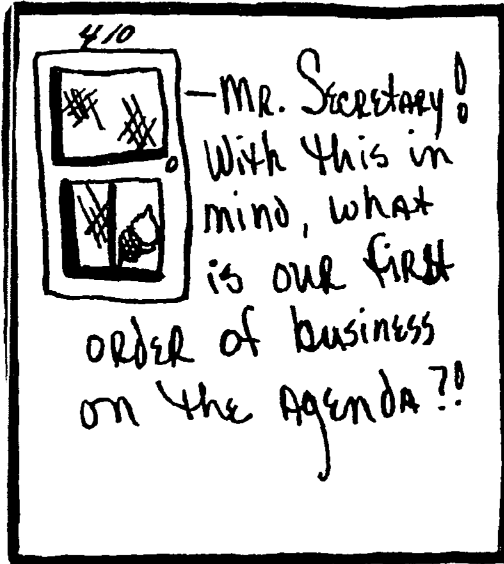
There were some conflicting points of view about the directions that fund raising for the organization should take. Those involved in the small scale fund raisers saw them as ways to involve many residents in the effort. Women friends of active Association members and staff were asked to make things for the Christmas bazaar and for the bake sales held about twice a summer at the city's Farmer's Market located at the edge of the neighborhood. This was often the only participation of these women in Association activities. "Fundraising people will often work but not come to meetings." (Gerky 1976). Thus the coordinators of these projects argued that the Association should continue to sponsor these activities. However, the organization could not raise much money nor make long range plans with this type of income. A membership drive was

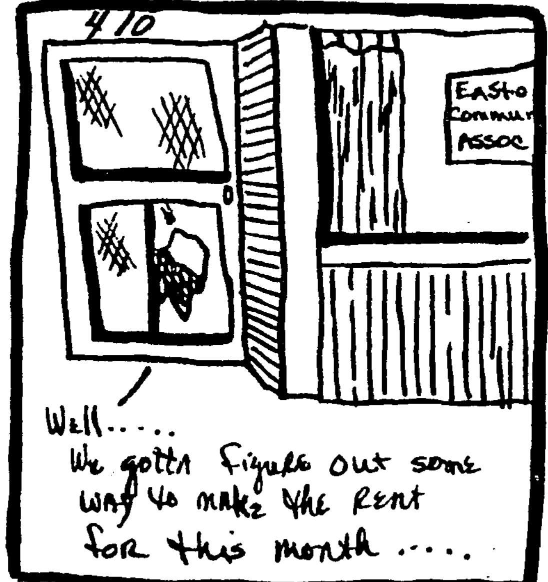












4.2: "Door To Door" (Source: Sharon Wrzesinski, ACCESS 6/76)

initiated but few liked the idea of canvassing door to door for money. Some advocated that the organization strive to become self-sufficient by setting up its own systems of production. An Economic Development committee was formed to set up a cottage printing industry with a press obtained through funding from Catholic Human Development offices. They also seriously explored the idea of setting up a weekly Bingo game and an Eastown Credit Union. E.C.A. received its non-profit tax deductible status at the end of 1976. Prior to that donations to the organization were funneled through Aquinas College so that contributors could use their donations as tax deductions.

Some felt that efforts should be put into obtaining foundation money and they created a slide and tape show which they successfully pedaled to various foundations during the spring of 1977.

Jim DeGraff, a middle-aged high school graduate with a wife and three children, injured his back while working at an unclaimed freight shop. In 1975, while collecting compensation payments for this, he became active with E.C.A. and was later hired as the Program Director. He was a natural expert in public relations and had a reputation for being able to get the Association what it needed with his "silver tongue." He developed a method of approaching local foundations that seemed to work: During the initial phone call, the community organizer

should introduce himself and give a brief history of the organization, its past funding, and its proposed budget for the coming year. Next, he can ask for an appointment to discuss the matter further with a representative from the foundation. If the answer is "no," the organizer might ask such questions as: "When would be a good time to contact you in the future? When does your fiscal year begin? When do you receive proposals each year? Does the foundation require a written proposal?" If this does not get the organizer any further, the conversation can be ended with an offer to send the foundation a packet of informational materials about the organization. If an appointment is obtained, several people should attend it, including at least one person who has been with the organization for some time. (DeGraff 1978).

Finally, it was decided that different members of the Association should work on the fund raising projects which they personally felt most comfortable doing (e.g. small scale, approaching foundation cottage industries) and thus the organization used a combination of all three approaches.

By the spring of 1977 it was evident that more space was needed for the Association's operations. It had become real crowded with the food coop in the backroom, and the print machines, receptionist's desk, and a large meeting table taking up all the space in the front room. To reach the staff's desks one had to hang carefully onto a

railing and climb down the rickety back stairs to a dimly lit basement.

After looking at various places we could rent, Jim DeGraff came up with the notion that we should buy a place. The Council saw it as kind of a "pie in the sky" idea and when the first opportunity came up decided that "it would not risk $500.00 to be used as earnest money to hold the building"(ACCESS, March 1977). Jim was not defeated and continued to research possibilities until he came up with an arrangement whereby E.C.A. could buy a house across the street (for about $15,000) that was in need of rehabilitation work. The decision to go ahead and do so was a momentous one which each member took seriously as they formally signed their name to the motion.

Jim also negotiated a unique arrangement with the local Steelcase Foundation to supply the needed materials. E.C.A. purchased the supplies, used them, and then once a month, the head of the Foundation would drop by, inspect what had been done, and write a check out to cover the materials that had been used. It was estimated that a total of 3,200 volunteer hours were put into the rehabilitation project during the summer and fall of 1977.

As the Association turned its attention away from designing a structure (Stage Three) towards obtaining funding (Stage Four) and repairing the Hall, it needed people with different leadership skills. Jim DeGraff was

one of them and Johnny Wagner another. Johnny was originally from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and joined the staff as a young VISTA volunteer in 1975. He began his work as an organizer but eventually designed a Home Repair Program in which residents could pay for minor repair work according to a sliding scale. He supervised a crew composed of people who were receiving help from a drug treatment agency. Some of the materials he used were from old garages in the area that people asked to be torn down. Johnny's carpentry skills and his general "charming personality" were appreciated on the Hall project. He was known as a "good listener."

Expanded Political Arenas

In the meantime, Eastowners were becoming increasingly active in the city and state political arenas. Eastown was represented on a new Citizen's Participation Task Force which the City Commission had created to consider ways in which Grand Rapids residents could be involved in running the city. The Association had submitted and publicly defended its proposal to become a designated "target area" for Federal Community Development funds being funneled through city governments. Working in an informal coalition with other neighborhood organizations, it had helped to thwart the closing of two small neighborhood fire stations. Gordy Fessendon, the staff organizer, had done extensive research on the degree to which banks were refusing to

grant loans to residents (i.e. redlining) and then was asked to present testimony for the Governor's Task Force on Redlining for the State of Michigan. These findings and the work by Eastowners on this issue played a key role in the formulation of the state's anti-redlining legislation and in the formation of the local Grand Rapids Coalition on Redlining.

Testing the New Structures

The newly reformed structure of the organization continued to work through minor changes. The WEFF organization decided to formally join E.C.A.

From Bill Blickley, the ex-urban planner's perspective, the Council was too slow in arranging for elections to be held for Council members. In the fall of 1976 he informed the Grand Rapids Press that E.C.A. would be holding elections soon. Although he was chastized for this unilateral action by the Council, the first elections for the twenty-one member Council were held soon afterwards.

Two intensive orientation meetings explaining the history and present structure of the Organization were held for the old and new Council members. The Council meetings became shorter and more efficient because an emphasis was placed on doing the majority of Association work at the Committee level. The staff had expanded with the addition of several Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA)

appointments, but at the same time a conscious effort was made to have them work closely with volunteers.

Interpreting Eastown

The Kellogg Foundation had requested that an evaluation team of faculty and students review the changes which both the College and the community had experienced through the use of the Kellogg Grant. Tom Edison coordinated this evaluation during the spring of 1977. The following fall, Kellogg offered to underwrite the cost of a book which would tell 'the Eastown story' and serve as a basis for a series of workshops for training both local area organizers and college administrators as well as attract similarly interested persons from throughout the country.

Both of these workshops opened up the Association, the College, and the neighborhood for inspection from the outside. Frequent questions were asked about racism within the organization given the racial composition of the community (about 20% black and 80% white). In one of the general sessions, Hilda Sanders, a black woman who had first been a receptionist and then a Housing Inspector working with the Association tried to explain how when working together on a problem like abandoned housing, rat control, etc. it doesn't matter whether the people are black or white. She saw the Association as an organization in which blacks and whites could work together

towards common goals. Later, still pondering this statement and similar ones made by other black Association members and staff, one white college administrator commented while on a walking tour of the neighborhood, "I can't figure out whether what is going on is pre-1960's or post 1980's?" (Easley 6/5/79).

Eastown staff and volunteers were often asked to give advice to other fledging neighborhood organizations in the area. In the process of participating in these efforts to "spread the word" Eastown members had to think through and articulate the purposes and activities of the organization.

Submerged Problems

Much of E.C.A.'s efforts during this period were turned outward--asking for financial support from external sources; working in political coalitions; and consulting sharing aspects of the Eastown experiences with other neighborhood groups. Internally, much time and energy was devoted to renovating the new Hall for a four-month period. In the meantime, there was less of a focus on meetings at the block level and on developing political issues in the neighborhood. This tendency to turn outward too soon at the expense of internal growth has been noted by several researchers in their examination of social movements and they have partially attributed their decline to such a phenomenon (Piven and Cloward 1977). E.C.A.

members were beginning to recognize this external orientation as a problem and entertained more discussions as to the ways in that Association activities could be carried out (e.g. ACCESS distribution) with a better use of volunteers from Eastown.

Another problem "in the wind" could occur as a result of the neighborhood improving to the point of becoming "a fashionable place to live." The new white, middle-class homeowners who would join the Association might not be as sympathetic to the needs of the lower income groups in Eastown as the present membership.

An Historical Event

175 people attended the Eastown Community Association celebration which was held during the official open house for the new Eastown Hall in November 1977 and has been celebrated each year since then. City officials and religious leaders played a part in the day's activities. A young local artist unveiled an outside mural which illustrated neighborhood life. In reference to the decline and revitalization of the Eastown area it was entitled, "Baby, I've Got My Ups and Downs." Good Neighbor Awards were distributed for the first time. The pride that many felt was summed up by Johnny Wagner who said upon receiving his plaque, "Some people get college degrees. Instead I am proud to get a Good Neighor Award" (Wagner 1977).

That day, two trees which had been purchased from the city were planted in front of the Hall. The following summer Mary Alice Williams, the new Executive Director, used their progress to describe E.C.A.'s efforts in her article in the ACCESS, "from the director's desk,":

> As we look around at our improving housing stock and revitalized commercial district we can realize how far we've come in little more than half a decade. But we also have to recognize that there is much yet to be accomplished. Every house that gets painted brings to mind one that hasn't been reached yet. Every roof that gets repaired reminds us that there's a sagging porch that needs attention. One of the two trees we planted at E.C.A. last fall is in its first greening; the other is dead and needs to be replaced.
>
> Somehow the fate of those trees helps me keep honest and focused on the realization of our task. As a community we do have the resources to solve our common problems if we apply ourselves to the demands of the task. Not all our efforts meet with success. But enough do to keep hope alive. (Williams, M.A. 1978).

Summary

Much of the research conducted on neighborhoods has consisted of single case studies or typologies which have emphasized both the importance of internal social organization and their ties with external entities. Those few scholars who have studied changing neighborhoods have focused on the physical and economic dimensions of declining neighborhoods.

Recently, several researchers have noted the importance that political organizations can play in the redevelopment of neighborhoods. However, they have not looked at how these organizations may have changed along with the neighborhoods over a period of time. This may be because there have been very few longitudinal studies conducted on organizational life, especially non-profit associations.

A model of organizationl development was adapted which looks at associations in terms of the primary problems they are facing at different time periods. The major activities of the E.C.A. from 1971 to mid-1977 were graphically illustrated on a series of charts* and interpreted in terms of the "peaking" of these problem

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*Located in Appendix A

area cycles. Reasons for the movement of the organization from one phase to the next was described as well as the conflict which accompanied such transitions. Explanations for the decrease in such conflict as the organization moved to later stages were also entertained.

By the end of 1977, the Eastown Community Association shared many characteristics in common with neighborhood organizations throughout the country:

1. Full-time, paid professional staff
2. Well-developed fund-raising capacity
3. Sophisticated mode of operation, including:
    a. neighborhood street organizing
    b. advanced issue-research capacity
    c. information dissemination and expose techniques
    d. negotiation and confrontation skills
    e. management capability in the service delivery and economic development areas
    f. policy and planning skills
    g. lobbying skills
    h. experience in monitoring and evaluating government programs
4. Issue growth from the neighborhood to the nation. (Perlman 1979: 17).

CHAPTER IV

RESPONSES DEVELOPED BY THE EASTOWN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

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Problem Solving

The E.C.A. experienced many of the same problems which similar organizations throughout the country have faced (Perlman 1979; Boyte 1980). The following section examines some of the major questions which arose within the Association from 1971 through 1980 and the answers which E.C.A. worked out for them. It begins with a discussion of the importance of creating an alternative vision of the future which is stated in vague enough terms so that it can be embraced by diverse groups in the neighborhood and yet embodies principles important to the Association. Mention is also made of the role that a charismatic leader and semi-autonomous structural situations played in the initital formulation of the ideology of the Association. This is followed by a review of various mechanisms which E.C.A. used to disseminate its worldview: newsletters, door to door organizing, orientation sessions, encouraging people to find the information they needed to take collective actions, etc. Much of the power of a neighborhood organization is based on community participation in its activities, services, and programs. The Eastown Community Association gradually developed an

annual cycle of events around which other activities are woven. The various factors which influence decisions regarding the kinds of activities the Association chooses to become involved in are discussed along with the ways in which various strategies (e.g. protest, service provision, electoral politics) are chosen. It is noted that E.C.A. has made less and less use of protest strategies as the years have passed and several explanations for this are reviewed. Efforts by the Association to create and maintain linkages with other organizations are also delineated.

The next section begins with the observation that the very value of democarcy is now becoming a debated issue in this country. It then looks at the specific mechanisms which the Eastown Community Association developed to encourage democratic decision making. A general description of a typical Community Council meeting is presented. The policies that have gradually evolved which help prevent the growth of bureaucratic tendencies within the Association are then delineated. The value of community participation is discussed along with the methods that E.C.A. uses to get and keep people involved in the Association. The effects that participation has on those who do become involved is described as well as the implications that the middle class background of many of the Association's leaders has for the operations of the

organization. An overview of the changing relationship between the Association and Aquinas College, a small liberal arts institution located within the area, is provided along with a consideration of various explanations for these changes. The concluding section of this chapter describes the advantages and disadvantages which the Eastown Community Association has discovered in securing various types of economic support.

Although isolated for analytical purposes, in many cases the issue discussed are interconnected. The general order in which these problems will be discussed corresponds to the order in which the activity cycles peaked during the first seven years of the Association's development. However, the specific problems could have been encountered and addressed at any point in the organization's life cycle. And one can often note that answers created to one set of concerns leads to a new set of problems. Each major section in this chapter begins with a brief overview of the general problems which were encountered and then discusses the responses which the E.C.A. worked out to them.

Ideological Considerations

The Composition and Functions of Ideological Frameworks

Both social scientists and community organizers have commented on the importance that ideology plays in motivating political activists for the long haul and in providing

a framework on organization's activities (Alinsky 1972; Flacks 1979: 103; Morris and Hess 1975: 41; Thorne 1971: 238).

Like many statements of purpose, the formalized goals of E.C.A. were made to be vague:

> The Eastown Community Association believes community development is a deliberate act of all neighborhood people working collectively to take the responsibility for their lives in a fully human way by participating directly in the decisions which affect their lives through neighborhood power and control.

Such general statements of purpose serve at least two important functions:

1. They emphasize the unity of the community. It would be very difficult for anyone to disagree with them. For example, in Eastown both those who believed in the workings of the capitalist economic system and those who doubted it could "live with" the above statement. As Don Walsh, first President of E.C.A. stated: "I'm part of the establishment. . . I believe you can make the establishment work. I believe that local control is the only way to make the establishment work"(Walsh 7/16/75). On the other hand, Tom Edison, who had serious questions about capitalism as the best system for meeting human needs, had played a major role in helping to formulate this statement.

2. Such ambivalence in purpose also allows for major structural changes to occur in the organization without necessitating possible divisive ideological changes. Obviously, a problem arises insofar as people are reluctant to change, especially when they contributed to the establishment of the status quo. This is one reason why the primacy of the ideology must be stressed (Lodahl and Mitchell 1980: 200). Bill Blickley appealed to the emphasis on democratic decision making in the Association's statement of purpose when he "forced" the Council to open up by holding elections during the fall of 1976.

Legitimizing problems is another critical function of the ideology of community organizations. C. Wright Mills has observed that private problems generally become viewed as public issues in the United States when they begin to directly affect the middle class components of the population (Mills 1956). E.C.A.'s organizing in the area deviated from this formula somewhat in that it often translated the problems of lower and working class people in the area (e.g. ineffective city services, lack of good quality housing) into Eastown community concerns.

The explantions for public problems contained in an organization's ideology also imply solutions. Both of these can change over time. For example, in the early

years of the Eastown Community Association the deterioration of the area was seen by some as the result of the incoming new arrivals (e.g. blacks, lower income) and their seeming lack of interest in "keeping up their homes." This led to an emphasis on "Paint and Fix" Programs, Alley Clean Ups and planting marigolds in the area. In a spring edition of the WEFF NEWS residents were urged to buy marigolds: "A good opportunity to make WEFF known for its marigolds and the friendly spirit of our neighbors." And encouraged them to come to an alley clean up: "Bring a shovel and rake and a pair of gloves and a 'song in your heart' to make this a rewarding contribution to our neighborhood" (WEFF NEWS 5/17/75).

Later research by E.C.A. staff pointed to the damaging effects of redlining policies which were being practiced by local banks and insurance companies. This in turn called for actions to be taken at various levels of city, state and federal governments in order to design and implement anti-redlining legislation. Thus, the explanation for the poor quality of housing in the area went from one which in essence blamed the victims and thus demanded that they change to one which focused on the unjust structural arrangements which were involved and thus encouraged collective efforts to change political and economic institutions which impacted the Eastown area (Ryan, 1976). If the Eastown Community Association had stuck with its emphasis

on beautification programs, it might have won a few cosmetic battles, but it would certainly have lost the war over the economic and political survival of the Eastown area. Jerry O'Bee, E.C.A. Chairperson, and Sister Wanda Ezop, Chairperson of the Financial Development Committee, pointed this out in a letter appealing for funds in the spring of 1977, "Without an active community organization seeking to improve the neighborhood, life in Eastown would be much different. Lake Drive would be wider, Wilcox Park would still be waiting improvements, condemned homes would still be standing, FHA owned property would be deteriorating, street lighting would not have been upgraded, detrimental zoning variances would have been granted and the delivery of city services to Eastown would be declining. These are only a few examples of what had been accomplished or avoided through E.C.A. The point is, where would our neighborhood be without the Eastown Community Association?" (Ezop and O'Bee, 1977).

One of the implicit goals of a neighborhood organization is to actively counter many residents' view of themselves as powerless victims. A good example of this occurred when E.C.A. and other neighborhood organizations worked together to design and propose an alternative truck route plan. The city engineers claimed that their plan was better because they were the "experts" in this field. The neighborhood residents replied by stating that while it was true that they may be specialists in engineering technology

the neighbors were "the experts on the quality of life" in the city's neighborhoods. The city officials began to take a more serious look at the neighborhood organizations' plan and an acceptable compromise solution was eventually agreed to by all parties involved.

It is important that a neighborhood organization not feel isolated and as if it is "going it alone." An ideology which portrays the organization as part and parcel of a larger movement can help people feel as if they are "a part of something big." E.C.A.'s use of consultants from other areas of the country and its participation in regional and national conferences made Eastowners aware of the existence of a neighborhood movement and further legitimized their local activities. "The experience of these different conferences, with educational and practical workshops have given volunteers and staff a broad perspective on the neighborhood movement throughout the country" (E.C.A. Activities Report 1976).

Another factor which especially helped WEFF residents see their neighborhood in broader terms were the articles by Bill Blickley which appeared in the WEFF NEWS during 1974 and 1975. He and his family were very active in WEFF and when they visited neighborhood organizations in Western Europe and West Africa they shared their observations with their neighbors. Bill returned to take a position with the Grand Rapids Planning Department which he later resigned

because "While working here I have found the Planning Department is not conducting, nor is it interested in conducting, a planning process which includes informed, significant, and effective citizen participation in the Community Development Program" (Blickley 2/9/76). Bill later developed a thriving snowplow business which offered discount rates to neighbors on the same block who requested his service.

Formulating the Vision

In many cases, a charismatic leader plays a key role in developing and spreading the organization's vision (Kimberly 1980: 27; Warren 1977: 79; Tichy 1980: 168). As has been mentioned in this case, it was Tom Edison, an Aquinas College faculty member who inspired many students and Eastown residents. His perspective located Eastowners within a larger global context and encouraged organization members to think they were doing something very important as his "Call to Action" editorial in a fall 1974 ACCESS illustrates:

> The scale and depth of the current crisis situation is so comprehensive that it can only be considered in terms of SURVIVAL. . . that demands immediate decisions and actions on the part of all of us. . . Our statement of purpose now stands as follows: To develop a community of human scale, dedicated to human involvement and cooperation; as a radical alternative to the contemporary social, economic, and political reality. . .

> If you feel that we can't wait too much longer before taking some kind of collective decisive action to deal with our current survival situation, and if you feel our stated purpose of cooperation, involvement, and human interaction offers the basis for a realistic alternative; let's do it together, let's make it happen !!!! (Edison, 10/11/74).

On another level, we must look beyond individuals to the structural situations which nurture the development of such alternative visions. Harry Boyte has coined the term "free spaces" (e.g. church meetings, taverns, cooperatives) to describe places which

> provide the crucial context for inculating alternative conceptions, ideas, and values, for deepening the definition of protest from defense of what exists into a struggle for new conceptions of rights and possibilities, and at times generating revolutinary hopes and expectations. In such free spaces, relatively independent of elite control, activists learn skills, trust, and democratic forms of decision-making. They develop practices of self-reliance, cooperation, and mutual aid. And they establish media which can communicate alternative interpretations of history and current events, redefining the group's allies and opponents (Boyte 1978: 22-23).

The ambiance of the Geography Department at Aquinas College initially provided such "free space" and this was later nurtured and expanded by the use of a storefront as an E.C.A. Center. The discussions which were continued in the bars after E.C.A. meetings were also critical in helping participants come to common understandings. On one such occasion Jim DeGraff and Mary Melito discovered to

their delight that they had worked together in the same grocery store on the other side of town in their earlier days.

On a more formal level, the Planning Committee provided a forum where many "wild ideas" could be bounced back and forth for hours at a time. This is where talk of starting an Eastown sewer system, having Eastowners collectively clean the snow off their streets with hand shovels; and a community spaghetti dinner with tables set up down the full length of Wealthy Street was entertained. As Sheldon Herman once said, "it's a place to trip" (Herman, 1976).

Articulating and Spreading "The Word"

> Maturity in an organization is signaled by its ability to reproduce. . . so that the organization "exists" independently of those who currently embody it (Lodahl and Mitchell 1980: 184).

The reports to the Kellogg Foundation demanded formal periodic assessments of the organization's activities. Later, applying for grants and incorporation status encouraged the organization's ideology to be articulated and accurate records to be kept. In awarding a grant of $5,000 to E.C.A., Mr. David D. Hunting, Sr. of the Steelcase Foundation "commended E.C.A.'s service to the neighborhood as well as the Association's sound money mangement and reporting procedures (Hunting 1978).

Thus, almost from the beginning the Association had to develop an explanation of what it was doing and was accountable both to community residents and external funding sources for its operations.

The ideology was more systematically examined as the organization devoted a great deal of time and energy to the development of a statement of purpose; objectives; strategies and working by-laws. These were then used at retreats and staff meetings to evaluate and guide both individual and organizational performance.

The newsletter, the ACCESS, published by the organization was critical in spreading its ideology throughout the community. Information about the area stirred people's consciousness and developed the idea that the neighborhood is a real entity, with definite perimeters and a definite cohesion (Morris and Hess 1975: 25-26).

> The Eastown ACCESS is your communication to your community. It is your collective voices on paper. It is here for you to use. Write about your family, your block or your neighborhood, write letters to the editor or to your Commissioners, or anything that you think your neighbors would like to know. Does something bother you? Is there something you would like done? What do you want to buy or sell? The ACCESS is designed to put you in touch with your neighborhood (ACCESS 2/76).

The newsletter usually contains a variety of articles including announcements that lost puppies had been found; recent Community Council meeting minutes; block club news; an article concerning the city's rejection of a citizens public

safety advisory committee; and a warning that Eastown would be destroyed in the event of a nuclear war. Residents of the Clark Home, a nursing home at the southern end of Eastown, spent several hours each month stapling the paper together and interviews with them are occasionally featured in the ACCESS.

The house to house door knocking done by staff organizers also played a key role in transmitting the organization's belief system. "As an organizer you should have the big picture, you should understand the overall view"(Williams, M.A., 2/79). The organizers would patiently listen to residents describe the problems they saw in the nearby area and then they would try to demonstrate to them that it was in their personal self-interest to work together with their neighbors through the Eastown Community Association to take actions to solve these problems.

E.C.A. also developed several formal methods for "passing down information." Each fall orientation sessions were held for Council members and often in the spring day-long retreats were held to put the organization's work into perspective. An unsuccessful attempt was made to create "internal education" committees which would encourage the discussion readings circulated within the neighborhood movement. Consultant visits also provided forums for discussions of the past and future directions of the organization.

As previously mentioned, conflict can help an organization tighten up its ideology. Disagreements about goals, tactics, and leadership can help to clarify its purpose and direction (Gerlach and Hines 1973: 171-172). This was certainly the result of the many heated discussions in which the Alinsky and Kotler models of the community organizing were debated.

Mary Alice Williams, a former executive director of E.C.A. insisted that "people learn what they have to learn" and consequently if people are encouraged to take responsibility for getting something done they will tend to find out what they need to know to do it (Williams, M.A. 1979). Therefore, one could view the E.C.A. structure itself as encouraging curiosity in people in that responsibility for its operations was spread among its members. For example, people attending block meetings often volunteered to make phone calls to public officials about local problems (e.g., rats, abandoned cars, pigeons, vacant housing). To do this they must find out "who is in charge" as well as be able to articulate the collective interest of their neighbors and E.C.A. in solving the problem. Instead of attending lectures about the operations of various components of city government, Eastowners found this out first-hand because they needed to know them to improve life on their block and/or in the Eastown area.

Building a Power Base

An Annual Cycle of Events

Community organizations derive much of their power from the participation of the community in their activities, services, and programs (Kotler, M. 1979: 41).

Over a period of time, E.C.A. activities developed a predictable rhythm of their own. The Street Fair, usually scheduled at the end of April became a ritual celebration of Spring, drawing about 10,000 people each year. It often begins on "Crazy Friday" afternoon when Bill Blickley drives a pick up truck with children and Mike Wright playing a piano on the back through the neighborhood to promote the day. At about 5:00 Aquinas students, dressed up as clowns, pretend to temporarily stall an old car in the main intersection and then scatter among the backed up cars for a few minutes passing out leaflets about the Fair. Many of the staff and volunteers eventually end up at Pacos, a Mexican restaurant located in the skid-row area of downtown Grand Rapids, for supper.

Early the next morning Association members set up tables for the crafts booths and prepare further for the day. It officially begins with a children's parade, --led by fire trucks which wake people up at 9:00 as it winds its way through Eastown. Families often come out in their

pajamas and housecoats to watch the high school bands, decorated bicycles, politicians, and clowns go by. Three stages and about 100 craft and art booths are set up in the business district in the afternoon. Streets are blocked off for the day. Eastown Council members and staff often wear colorful tuxedos which are donated by an Eastown dry cleaning business for the day. T-shirts and balloons advertising the Fair can be spotted through the crowd. About 10,000 people participate in the event each year. It's not as big and as grand as the June art extravaganza which is held in downtown Grand Rapids. In comparing the two, Ron Vanderkooi, a sociologist at Calvin College, once remarked, "This doesn't have the support of the cultural elite, it's not so middle-class" (Vanderkooi, 1975). The day officially comes to a close at 5:00 and then Association members spend a few hours picking up trash, sweeping the streets, and often leaving the area cleaner than what they found it. A week after the Fair a family picnic is held in the Aquinas College athletic field to thank everyone who helped put the Fair together.

Summer weather nurtured the growth of neighborliness as people spent more time on their porches, doing yard work, or fixing up the exteriors of their homes. Thus, intensive efforts were put into organizing block meetings during the summer months. In the fall, plans for the annual Council elections were put into operation along

with arrangements for the anniversary celebration of the first open house for the new hall. After Christmas attention turned to fund raising efforts and plans for the Street Fair.

For several years birthdays were used as "excuses" to have parties about once a month in someone's home. On late Friday afternoons the staff and several volunteers relaxed in the Intersection, a bar located in the middle of the business district. After that they were joined by other volunteers and their families for a cheap Mexican meal at Pacos. This predictable schedule of activities provided a general grid on which other more ad hoc efforts were woven.

Which Neighborhood Problems are Really Addressed by E.C.A.?

At various times, E.C.A. has systematically constructed inventories of which problems exist in the neighborhood and then prioritized them for action. Such information has been formally synthesized and discussed at Council meetings, in organizational retreats, through surveys, and at Long-Range Planning Committee meetings. However, whether or not action is actually taken along these lines depends largely on whether or not a staff member or volunteer is interested enough to "put energy behind it," "to make it their baby" (Bailey 1974: 76). For example, although the Association had agreed, while writing the By-laws,

that it was a good idea to hold a community wide Assembly at least once a year, no one put systematic effort into coordinating this and thus it has not happened.

In other words, there are always many problems which could be addressed and often there are many creative ideas generated about what E.C.A. could be doing to solve them. What actually gets done depends largely on whether or not a single individual or small group makes it their top priority to tackle the issue and follow it through. The role of E.C.A. thus becomes one of approving, encouraging, and publicly supporting these efforts in the name of the whole Eastown Community. Many people come to the Association saying "I think you people should be doing. . ." and the Council and staff's general posture has become, "That's a good idea, we'll help you do it." When some of the women of the community wanted to start a babysitting cooperative they felt somewhat miffed by this procedure and decided to set up their coop so that "if the Association falls apart tomorrow, the Babysitting Coop will still go on." The Association supplied paper for printing the rules and the ACCESS contained some publicity on the project. $1.00 was charged to all new members so that these expenses could be covered by the Coop in the future. Now the Babysitting Coop is held up as an example of what an ideal relationship should be between the Association and its various programs.

One of the major things taken into account when considering action on a problem is whether or not other people in the neighborhood will see it in their self-interest to solve the problem. This is usually gauged through conversations with neighbors. (Morris and Hess 1975: 40). As a community organizer "you use yourself as an instrument to help people define their problems. It's not your problems, you way of seeing things. They have been conditioned not to participate, to be apathetic " (Fessendon, 2/79).

The aim is to find out what people themselves perceive as problems and to encourage them to work together to solve them. "Satisfaction and self-confidence gained from small accomplishments can lead to the undertaking of more and more difficult problems, in a process of continuing growth. . ."(Biddle and Biddle 1979: 372).

In assessing the various problems to be tackled their potential for being solved at the local level must also be evaluated. For example, although one of the major obvious problems in the area is unemployment, E.C.A. has not systematically attempted to address this concern.

Another factor to be carefully considered are the solutions which have already been tried to address the problem (Bailey 1974: 57). In other words, it is important to view the community as already organized to address the problem and to respect that system even though

it may not be working very well. For example, the E.C.A. decided to establish an education committee which could coordinate efforts among parents and educators to improve the quality of education in the area. However, members of this committee did not adequately research the previous work which had been done by a group of parents to fight the closing of the public elementary school and to demand that a new one be built. Thus, in the end, these parents informally sabotaged the work of the new committee by questioning the motives of people on the committee whose children attended the two integrated private Catholic schools instead of the almost all black public schools in the neighborhood and it eventually was disbanded.

Although issues around "classism," racism, and sexism are obvious in the community, problems are rarely articulated by the Association in these terms. Part of this has to do with deaccentuating the defining of issues in ways which would create decisiveness among the neighbors. (Morris and Hess 1975: 24). Instead, these issues are attacked more indirectly in developing practical solutions (e.g., housing inspection, foot patrols) to such problems as housing and crime.

There is also a certain reluctance on the part of Association members to work closely with political groups who do see these as their primary concerns (e.g., Urban League, NOW, Institute for Global Education). Lee Weber, an

Executive Director of E.C.A. has explained this by saying that members of these groups often will not take other concerns of neighborhood people seriously and only are interested in recruiting more people to work on "their cause" (Weber 1980) (See also Morris and Hess 1977: 46).

At the organizational level the actual attendance of blacks at Council meetings was poor (see Appendix 2). The Association tried to rectify this each year by encouraging blacks to run for the Council. It also ensured the appointment of blacks to the WEFF area target Council which was set up to administer Community Development Funds in 1978. About one-third of the staff hired by the Association through 1980 were black.

On an individual level, residents got to know one another while working together on E.C.A. activities and this often created personal bonds which transcend racial, class, and gender differences. (Perlman 1979: 21). Lorraine Wright, a young black woman, who had recently moved to Grand Rapids from Mississippi was hired as a receptionist for the Association. Soon after she arrived she admitted that she felt uncomfortable with white folk in general and would avoid being in situations where she was the only black person present. She even discreetly excused herself from various Association meetings if this was the case and was cautious about the restaurants and bars she would go to with us. Gradually, through her work with the Association,

her trust grew and eventually, she enjoyed attending along with several other blacks, Gordy's large and elegant "white" wedding reception in a fashionable downtown restaurant.

Which Strategies Should be Used?

The most heated source of debate among those who attended a 1979 conference sponsored by the journal Social Policy on the meaning of the neighborhood movement centered around the question of what is the most appropriate approach for neighborhood groups to use in addressing their community's problems:

1. advocacy (i.e. protest) - using direct action to pressure existing elites and institutions for greater accountability

2. services - bypassing existing arrangements and establishing self-help or alternative institutions such as cooperatives or community development corporations.

3. electoral politics - seeking electoral power in order to replace the existing elites and institutions (Perlman 1979: 16).

The value of each of these approaches has also been discussed in the Eastown Community Association as each of them have been utilized at various times to address neighborhood problems.

The choice of the method used depends in part on the training and expertise of the staff and participants involved (Bailey 1974: 56). In other words, "if your only

tool is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail." For example, those who were trained in the Alinsky style of organizing leaned more towards public demonstrations and meetings with officials as tactics, whereas those familiar with the electoral process promoted petitions as a valid procedure for influencing the political process.

During its ten year history, the Eastown Community Association has developed skills in all three approaches and continues to train its staff and volunteers in these areas. This enables the organization to debate which approach will be more effective given the problem to be solved in contrast to being limited to one method because of the lack of training in other areas. Both short term goals and long term consequences of approaches can be carefully considered. For example, Eastown has been able to organize public demonstrations to demand a city ordinance for boarding up city housing; set up a bottle and newspaper Recycle Program, and circulated petitions to public officials to prevent the opening of "Smut Shops" in Eastown. In sum, in order to survive and remain effective in a complex and changing world, E.C.A. has had to have many skills in its "bag of tricks."

The Decreasing Use of Protest Activities

Protesting activities (e.g. marches, demonstrations, confronting officials at meetings) are best seen as a type

of political resource (Lipsky 1968). These activities, including the threat of them, can be seen as a major source of power for relatively powerless groups (Bailey 1974: 83). There have been few scientific studies of the role which protest tactics play in cultural change (Lipsky 1968; Piven and Cloward 1977).

In reviewing the general trends of E.C.A. activities one can note the decreasing use of protest as a tactic (e.g. demonstrating against street-widenings, for stop signs) along with more of an emphasis on providing services (e.g. Food Coop, Home Repair Services, Housing Inspector) and an increasing interest in electoral politics (e.g. publishing interviews with City Council candidates in the ACCESS.) Such changing emphasis in tactics can also be seen in other neighborhood organizations (Jones 1979: 46).

Several contrasting perspectives can be found among the few scientific studies which examine the role which protest tactics play in cultural change.

1. <u>The Unpredictableness of Third Parties</u> - In an article entitled "Protest as a Political Resource," Lipsky argues that protest is only successful "to the extent that reference publics of protest targets can be activated to enter the conflict in ways favorable to protest goals" (Lipsky 1968: 496). Since such participation by these external actors is fickle, "long run success will depend on the acquisition of stable political resources which do not

rely for their use on third parties"(Lipsky 1968: 496). From this perspective to be successful the Eastown Community Association would have to eventually go beyond public confrontations with city officials to cultivating additional political resources, through its provision of services to the community in return for its support (Lipsky 1968: 500).

2. Organizations Which Use Protest Eventually Become Coopted - In their book on Poor People's Movements, Piven and Cloward (1977) critique Lipsky's emphasis on the necessity of third parties for successful protest and focus on the importance of the collective defiance used by protesting groups (Piven and Cloward 1977: 33). They argue that neither third parties; the numbers of people involved, nor the degree of organization of the group are crucial to the success of protest activity. Whatever people win is a response to their turbulence to their ability to cause serious institutional changes, not to their organized number (Piven and Cloward 1977: ix).

> . . . it is not possible to compel concessions from elites that can be used as resources to sustain oppositional organizations over a period of time. . .those which survive do so by becoming useful to those who control the resources on which they depend (Piven and Cloward 1977: 30).

From this perspective, E.C.A.'s increasing focus on service delivery along with its attention to structural considerations during its third phase can be interpreted as ways in which its potential power base based on issue organizing

(Stage II) was curtailed and brought under control of the area's political and economic elites (Jones 1979; Mollenkopf 1979: 25). Mike Miller views this process as a new form of "welfare colonialism (Miller 1973: 37).

Outside governing bodies determine the financial appropriations and make it nearly impossible for the organization to meet community needs. At the same time, the community association takes the blame for inadequately providing services. In an ACCESS article about Hilda Sanders, the E.C.A. Housing Inspector hired with Community Development funds, Gertrude De Boer, a Council member, noted that Hilda had been able to begin processing 37 homes in her first six months of work in contrast to the 40 homes city-wide which had been authorized for improvement by the Community Development program in its first four years (De Boer, 4/78). However, even Hilda was often unable to cut through the red tape at City Hall and thus was held responsible by residents for what was actually the incompetence of the bureaucratic machinery at City Hall.

Sometimes organization staff and volunteers can get so bogged down with forms and procedures required for the administration of these governmental and foundation programs that they cannot effectively respond to other issues which may arise in the neighborhood (Miller 1973). And in the process their constituents become transformed into clients (Perlman 1979).

According to this view, the involvement of neighborhood organizations in electoral processes also serves to enhance the interests of the economic and political elites. First of all, efforts in this direction assume that electoral processes do in fact have a substantial impact on life in the city, whereas Piven and Cloward argue that little change in the actual redistribution of wealth and power can come through the electoral system (Piven and Cloward 1977: 1). Actively campaigning then means that a lot of the member's time and energy are taken away from more important issues to empower a few people at a time just when the powers of local government are weakening. It was true that Mary Alice Williams' campaign for City Commission absorbed the energies of Eastowners for a four-month period.

3. Building Alternatives - Unfortunately, the above analysis tends to gloss over some of the real limitations of an approach which relies primarily on protest activities. According to Piven and Cloward, the primary role of an activist should be to escalate the momentum of people's protests (Piven and Cloward 1977: 36). However, the consequence of this can be a leader dominated and manipulated group where people do not become empowered but are merely victims of yet another type of political control. Recognizing some of these dangers in its own emphasis on issue organizing during phase two, E.C.A. undertook the project of

designing its own internal decision-making structures.

Protest also implies that a group is primarily reacting to something. E.C.A. wanted to be in a position in which it could both react and act in the political processes influencing the neighborhood (Morris and Hess 1975: 20).

The organization also needed some way to keep people actively involved between the issues of protest. Tightening up its structure and offering services was seen as a way to emphasize the goal of building an alternative way of life along with learning how to fight to defend it.

Piven and Cloward seem to romanticize lower and working class organizations and imply that somehow pure alternative cultures will emerge overnight among the ashes of protest to replace the capitalist system.

> . . .working class and lower class movements arising in a corporate capitalist society are democratic and egalitarian or. . .progressive and not ultimately cooptable (Piven and Cloward 1977: 17).

In contrast, E.C.A. takes into account the cultural webs people live in and tries to embrace and support the growth of their progressive traditions in the gradual building of alternative institutions (Boyte 1982).

Other factors may also be involved in the decreasing use of protest strategies by E.C.A. As time went by, E.C.A. learned how the local governing processes worked and was able to manipulate them with more success. Thus, it did not have to rely on public confrontations to be heard.

Council members only had to pick up the phone, call city officials directly and identify themselves as being with E.C.A. Usually they were seriously listened to. They also began to work more closely with state and federal officials which rendered local protest activities less effective.

Another factor that may have led to less use of protest activities was the fact that a national organization of neighborhood associations, ACORN, had begun to organize several neighborhoods in Grand Rapids and was using protest as a major means of doing so. Thus E.C.A. could portray itself as the more reasonable and moderate "neighborhood voice." Having established the reputation of not being hesitant to use protest in the past, the mere threat of this could give E.C.A. access to political channels which had previously been closed to it.

Moving Into Electoral Politics

In August 1975 E.C.A. sent a registered letter to city commission and mayoral candidates requesting that they answer several questions which then were published in the ACCESS:

1. The E.C.A. is involved in the following areas: City Services; Education; Employment; Housing; Recreation; Security; Traffic. Which two do you consider to be most important? What improvements will you make in these two areas which would affect Eastown residents?

2. Why should an Eastown resident vote for you instead of another candidate?

3. The E.C.A. believes citizens should participate directly in the day to day decisions which affect their neighborhoods. If elected, how would you facilitate such citizen involvement?

E.C.A. actively became directly involved in the electoral arena when its members worked to get its former Executive Director, Mary Alice Williams, into the City Commission. In August of 1979 the city commissioners representing the Eastown area and officials from the Police Department were invited to address crime issues at a large meeting sponsored by the Association in the WEFF area. Afterwards, a group of staff and volunteers walked a few blocks up to the White Rabbit, a bar located at the boundary of Eastown. We angrily discussed the naivete and insensitivity displayed by the evening's guests. After a few beers, it was suggested that Mary Alice Williams should run to replace the woman on the commission representing Eastown. She had recently returned to a homemaking role after serving for several years as Eastown's representative on a city Citizen's Participation Task Force and then later as the Association's Executive Director. However, the date for the entry into the primary had just passed, so this required an all out effort to promote her as a write-in candidate. She successfully won the primary and went on to take a seat on the City Commission.

By and large neighborhood organizations have eschewed such electoral involvement in the past because of the

reasons delineated in the previous discussion. However, more recently, these organizations have begun to take a more active role in this area. One reason for this might be the fact that labor unions have been weakened as the global corporations have expanded, which leaves the government as the major organization which has the potential to counteract their power (Boyte 1980). Another consideration is the fact that today many neighborhood associations, like E.C.A., have now developed strong bases of support and sophisticated organizations so that they can handle electoral participation without damaging their own structures (Booth 1982).

This current emphasis in relationships between neighborhood organizations and governmental bodies goes beyond linking them up in a partnership or defining neighborhood organizations as "mediating structures" as has been proposed by Peter Berger and Richard Neuhaus in their book <u>To Empower People: The Role of Mediating Structures for Public Policy</u> (1977). It involves taking over the government. The changing of the slogan used by National People's Action, a national organization of neighborhoods, illustrates this new focus. They recently transformed it from "Neighborhoods First" to "Reclaim America" (Cincotta 1982) and view participation in electoral processes as a means to that end (Booth 1982).

Although these three approaches--advocacy (i.e. protest), service, electoral--have been discussed separately, they are by no means mutually exclusive. "In fact, given the inherent limitations of each one, the most innovative and successful groups often combine two or even three approaches" (Perlman 1979: 16).

Creating and Maintaining Linkages and Coalitions

One of the simplest functions the E.C.A. performs is to act as a referral agent, providing specific names and phone numbers of people whom individual residents can contact throughout the community, the city, and the state about specific problems. This is particularly important for low-income residents who are so much at the mercy of governmental and social service agencies. The organization helps them cut through the red tape and can provide them with the means for more personalized contacts with staff inside of large complex bureaucracies (Warren and Warren 1977: 27).

In terms of organizational linkages, E.C.A. staff and volunteers frequently meet informally with members of other neighborhood groups to share ideas. They have also served as consultants to other organizations and have been instructors in the VISTA training program which prepares VISTA workers to become neighborhood organizers. Several years after the first attempt to formalize these ties in

the Neighborhood Alliance failed, a second effort, the Council on Neighborhood Associations was begun. However, the most effective coalition building has come informally as a result of neighborhood organizations in the city working together to address common issues (e.g. designing an alternative truck route plan, protesting the closing of city fire stations).

E.C.A. has also co-sponsored city-wide events with non-neighborhood oriented groups and permits these organizations (e.g. Congresswatch, Ralph Nader's local organization, Grand River Anti-Nuclear Alliance) to use the Eastown Hall for meeting space. At the state level, E.C.A. was instrumental in creating a anti-redlining coalition and, nationally, members of the organization frequently participate in conferences sponsored by national networks of neighborhood groups and subscribe to their newsletters (National People's Action, National Neighbors, National Association of Neighborhoods).

One of the key questions involved in coalition building is knowing when the time is ripe for formalizing the ties that bond groups together. For example, it appears that the first attempt in Grand Rapids to form a Neighborhood Alliance failed because the individual organizations were not strong enough to sustain both an active commitment to their internal grass roots organizations and at the same time to democratic involvement in

the formally structured alliance. "Umbrella groups would be stronger if their constituent neighborhood organizations were working more effectively in their own territories before attempting more ambitious metropolitan strategies" (Cohen, R. 1979: 355).

In coalition building, it is also important to make sure that "our very different reasons for supporting them as well as our analysis of the limits they embody find a public forum "(Cerullo 1979: 98). In trying to forge a sense of unity,important differences can be glossed over only to emerge later, undermining the cooperative efforts of the alliance. Today, for example, there continues to be internal debate and underlying tension among members of the second alliance of neighborhoods concerning the nature and scope of the organization and this tends to sap its effectiveness. Some are suspicious of the fact that some of its funding is supplied by the city. Others argue that the focus of its efforts should be on the more "underdeveloped" neighborhood organizations in contrast to aiding all neighborhood organizations on an equal basis.

Given the fluidity of political processes, E.C.A. has had to learn when and how to redefine "an enemy" as a friend. For example, its relationship with the Federal Housing Administration officials began as a hostile one as the Association pressured them to rehabilitate their

houses in the area. As F.H.A. reluctantly complied, more cooperative ties were established with the local office. Sister Paulette from the Sto-Rox Neighborhood Association in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania put it this way: "You must always leave room for a person to turn around" (Sr. Paulette 6/75).

In sum, E.C.A. has created a network of formal and informal linkages both within the neighborhood and with external institutions and organizations. Janice Perlman describes the importance of such ties in her review of recent developments in the neighborhood movement during the past several years.

> Given the strong egos of many of the organizers, the territorial imperatives of 'turf', and the competing organizing philosophies, it was an open question whether such coalitions would be possible. It was also questionable whether participants who frequently become involved on the basis of self-interest would be able to develop the sense of shared purpose which would enable them to work together with groups representing other neighborhoods or other causes, rather than perceiving them as competitors for scarce goods and services. . . perhaps the most encouraging development over the past three years has been the increasing contact among groups through regional or functional networks and their willingness to join alliance with each other and with labor organizations and public interest groups (Perlman 1979: 20).

Creating Democratic Structures

Questioning the Value of Democracy

Several developments in recent decades have intertwined to make concepts of democracy increasingly important ones. Social movements at home (e.g. civil rights, women's liberation) and abroad (e.g. Nicaragua, Mozambique) have emphasized the importance of people having control over the major decisions affecting their lives. Participants in the neighborhood movement have also valued democracy (Bailey 1978: 136). At the same time, corporate interests have begun to step up their attacks on both democratic ideas and structures (Boyte 1980: 15).

As the very value of democracy becomes a debated issue more of an effort must be made to define more specifically what is meant by the concept. In the paragraphs that follow, I will briefly describe the evolution of the formal decision-making structures which the Eastown Community Association has developed and then analyze the ways in which it has dealt with several specific dimensions of democracy.

The Evolution of E.C.A.'s Internal Structures

During the first stage, Ideological Development, E.C.A.'s decision-making processes looked much like those of other non-profit organizations. Informally, a rather

closed homogeneous group of friends ran things. They had primarily been recruited from a democratic congressional candidate's campaign. They shared similar backgrounds, life styles, value-orientations, amounts of spare time and usually recruited their friends to the organization. Members of the group often talked with each other socially and consulted with each other concerning decisions about organization activities. At meetings, they listened to each other more attentively than to "outsiders," interrupted less frequently, and repeated each other's points (Freeman 1972: 154).

The Council meetings were often lengthy and lacked formal agendas. Anything seemed up for discussion at any time from a family fight that had just occurred over dinner to debating how much ditto paper could be purchased next month. There was no formal election of Council members and no systematic attempt to have its members represent all components of the Eastown community.

As the need for more political effectiveness and community participation grew, the Association found it had to "tighten up" its structure in order to "open it up" to more of the neighbors. For example, most people in the community did not have the time to spend hours at rambling meetings every week. A way had to be found to do more work outside the Council meetings and as a result more of an emphasis began to be placed on committee and block

work. As a consequence Council meetings usually took two hours instead of three or four and were only held once a month instead of every two weeks.

The Council became more representative when the elections for the twenty-one member board started being held. Each fall, ballots for regional representatives are included in the ACCESS and residents mail them or bring them to the Hall. Each Council member is asked to attend the monthly Council meeting as well as to take some responsibility for an activity during the year (e.g. committee work, issue organizing). The Council is directed by two co-chairpersons. Ideally, one has already served as co-chair for a year and the other is new to the position, serving in a kind of apprentice role.

A few days before each Council meeting, the chair-persons and staff plan an agenda, which is delivered, along with relevant papers, committee, and staff reports, to each Council member's home by a staff member so that they can be reviewed and studied before the meeting. The Council meetings used to begin with a short prayer, but given disagreements about the religious orientations (e.g. Catholic, Dutch Christian Reform) of the prayers and the value of prayer in general, the meetings now begin with several minutes of silence for reflection, meditation, or prayer, depending on one's private choice

on how to use this time. It does have the effect of "centering" people, of bringing them psychologically together and prepares them for concentration on the business which is about to be discussed.

Next the minutes of the former meetings are approved along with the proposed agenda. This is followed by a series of committee and staff reports and then old and new business is considered. In the process members are able to "show and tell" what they have been doing during the past month. Thus they receive recognition and the group as a whole feels a sense of the organization's movement; that the time they have spent at meetings has not been wasted (Bailey 1974: 60).

These committees are both permanent (e.g. Housing, Printing) and ad hoc (e.g. Street Fair, Fire Station, Truck Route). The Planning Committee, which is open to all Eastowners, meets one week prior to the Council meetings and considers the general policies of the organization and miscellaneous committee work. It also provides a forum for discussion of new ideas, internal conflicts, and complaints. There is no time limit on these meetings, so they provide an open arena for consideration of many ideas which the Council would not have the time to debate and discuss in detail. The Planning Committee often forms resolutions and recommendations based on these discussions which are later brought to the Community Council. This

committee can be seen as the workhorse of the organization.

Often major resolutions passed by the Council are first put into writing and all members are asked to personally sign it, indicating their personal vote and responsibility in the matter. At the end of the Council meeting, time is sometimes set aside for special presentations by local politicians, or organizations who want to inform the Council of their activities. Afterwards many go across the street to a bar or the bowling alley or perhaps to sit on someone's porch to "hash things over." Often an informal evaluation is then done of how the meeting was run and suggestions for its improvement are made. For example, it might be remarked that too much time was spent on a specific discussion or that one person was allowed to dominate the proceedings. Such evaluation sessions of these meetings helped improve their efficiency and lent an air of seriousness to them.

The Association has seriously considered organizing a community-wide Assembly or Town Meeting to be held annually, at which time elections of Council members would be held, and long-range policies for the organization would be established through direct democratic decision-making. Such Assemblies have been conducted successfully in the Sto-Rox neighborhood of Pittsburgh Pennsylvania and in the Adams-Morgan area of Washington, D.C. So far, E.C.A. has not put serious effort into doing this.

Dimensions of Democracy

One of the questions raised by academicians involved in the relatively new field of organizational development (Mitchell 1980: 204) and by those who study social movements (Boyte 1980: 8, 17; Freeman 1972) has to do with the bureaucratization which often takes place within such groups. The Association is also interested in preventing such a process. "We are trying primarily to build a community, and of necessity a community organization. . . what we are trying to develop is an association within the Eastown community, hence I suppose the name Eastown Community Association and not the Eastown Organization" (Edison 5/75).

Jo Freeman, in her article entitled "The Tyranny of Structurelessness" has outlined some principles which organizations should adhere to if they are to be "both democratically structured and politically effective" (Freeman 1972). The Eastown Community Association, gradually, by trial and error, has developed similar practices. What follows are paraphrased excerpts from Freeman's article, along with brief discussions of Eastown's experience with them.

1. Responsiblity should be distributed among as many people as possible.

Indirectly this principle deals with the representation by E.C.A. of all parts of the Eastown community.

At the Council level area institutions (Calvin Reform Church, School of Bible and Music) are invited to nominate candidates for the Council. Nominees from among the community are asked to have at least five people from their immediate area sign a nominating petition. And if the election results do not yield a balanced Council in terms of such factors as age, race, sex, and region of the neighborhood, then several members can be appointed by the Council to serve.

One advantage of emphasizing block and committee work is that at these levels individual residents have more of a chance to directly participate in decision-making processes (Hess 1976: 46).

The community organizers and other staff members are assigned to cover specific geographical areas of the community and an emphasis is placed on including as many volunteers as possible in their work. One staff organizer, Jeff Fredrickson, was assigned to the WEFF area and was given a nickname which he officially adopted. He signed a letter addressed to area residents in the fall of 1979, "Yours for stronger neighborhoods, WEFF JEFF (Fredrickson, 1979)."

2. Individuals may exercise power, but the organization has the ultimate responsibility for how the power is exercised.

Jo Freeman suggests that "formalization" of the structure encourages the collectivity to take this

responsibility. When the rules for decision making are clearly open and available to everyone, more people are encouraged to participate, even though they may not have either the time nor the inclination to cultivate social friendships with other members of the organization. Most importantly, those who work with the organization are then held directly responsible to the larger group through the formal structure and thus the ultimate power for decision-making is retained within the organization rather than in the hands of a small informal friendship network (Freeman 1972: 154).

Within the E.C.A. both the written and oral reports by staff members and committee leaders at the Council meetings encourage accountability. The Personnel Committee periodically evaluates the work of individual staff members using detailed job descriptions which they had previously drawn up. At the Council meetings, some chairpersons have encouraged detailed discussions of the "homework" done by each Council member during the previous month. The community newsletter, the ACCESS, reports on the work of the organization for the Eastown community each month.

Another way that collective responsibility for the operations of the organization is encouraged is through the use of a kind of quasi-consensus method of decision

making. Few issues within E.C.A. actually come to a formal vote at any given meeting. Instead there is an emphasis on achieving a general consensus on decisions. It is assumed that if there is a clear division of opinion on an important decision then the organization probably is not really ready to act on it as a group. Khinduka makes these comments about the problems with a consensus approach:

> It is easier to obtain near-unanimity on superficial and innocuous matter; issues of substance, which affect the diverse subgroups of the community in different ways, often generate controversy as well as a clash of interests... major structural reforms have rarely been instituted with the enthusiastic consent of those who are most likely to lose as a result of those reforms. A certain modicum of legal coercion is a necessary component of any effective strategy of social change (Khinduka 1979: 360).

On the other hand, it can also be argued that within a small group, over a long period of time, those "forced" into a decision against their will are likely to sabotage it, undermining it in the long run. An emphasis on consensus decision making also encourages participants to make genuine efforts to convince more than a mere majority of their personal positions on issues and thus nourishes the idea of collective responsibility.

3. <u>Tasks should be delegated to persons who are interested in and willing to perform them.</u>

At one point attempts were made to have the Council prioritize neighborhood concerns and then assign individual Council members to be responsible for specific tasks. Many eventually balked at this. Now, members are encouraged to develop programs and activities which they are personally interested in. The Council and the Association in general are then viewed as resources which they may draw on to help them do what they want to do with and for the Eastown community.

4. <u>Tasks should be rotated among various members.</u>

Several efforts are made along these lines, although more could be done. For example, an attempt is made to train different members in procedures for contacting local foundations for funding support. Each year the spring Street Fair is coordinated by different individuals with previous directors serving in many ways as their assistants.

5. <u>People should be given an opportunity to learn skills they do not have.</u>

The staff community organizers make an effort to gradually build up the leadership skills of its members by encouraging them to coordinate activities and lead block and committee meetings.

6. Equal access should be provided to the resources used by the organization.

E.C.A. has encouraged neighborhood residents to utilize the Hall for meetings and other activities. Residents are also invited to write articles for the ACCESS.

7. Information is Power! The more the entire group knows about how things work and what is happening, the more effective all of its members can be.

Council orientation sessions, assigning new Council members to work with old ones, agenda packets, and periodic retreats all serve this function within E.C.A. Staff members also make an effort to contact Council members and other volunteers on a one to one basis to inform them of daily operations at the Hall. Council members are encouraged in turn to actively talk with other residents on their block in order to better understand their concerns and to explain E.C.A. activities.

The Eastown Community Association has also developed three other policies and practices which have been useful in its efforts to be both democratic and politically effective.

8. A formalized structure to resolve internal conflict

has been created with the development of the Planning Committee. As has been previously mentioned, it serves as a forum for ideas, conflicts, and dissention which

may occur. These can be brought up, listened to, discussed, and then formulated into recommendations to be considered at Council meetings.

9. Staff members often come from the community.

The majority of people on the staff are those who have spent many hours in volunteer work for the Association prior to their hiring, and often this continues well after their employment with E.C.A. They are people who live in the Eastown community and have a long-term commitment to improving the quality of life in the area.

In 1974, Mary Milito, a young homemaker in the Wilcox Park area, was asked if she had time to deliver the ACCESS to her neighbors. Later, reflecting upon this she said "There were times when I really didn't look forward to being a 'paper girl,' however, I used delivering the ACCESS as an excuse to get out of the house at least a half hour a month. At first I took my daughter, Carrie, now Zack is my assistant. The kids always look forward to delivering the paper and I've gotten to know my neighbors. This has turned into one of the most rewarding things I do" (ACCESS 5/79). Mary went on to become active in her block club which throws a block party each summer, supervises the children's activities at the Street Fair each year, volunteers to design and supervise an annual garage sale in which 10% of the

the profits are donated to E.C.A. and holds hayrides during the winter. Exasperated with the city employee strike in 1980, this block mounted a city-wide postcard campaign to the City Commission. Garbage collection in the city had stopped and residents were being asked to bring their garbage to pick up spots, one of them being near a cemetery. The postcards stated "I want a refund on my taxes or my city services reinstated now!!!. . . I'm being taxed to drive my car to dump my garbage on my mother's grave." Mary Melito played a prominent role in all of these efforts and served on the Community Council from 1976 until just recently when she began a full time job.

Lee Weber grew up in Eastown and lives there with her family today. Her mother and grandmother also reside there. She initially got involved in an issue on her block and then became a Council member. In 1979 she replaced Mary Alice Williams as Executive Director. It was her historical roots in the area and commitment to its improvement that helped her guide the Association through the transitional period which occurred as a result of staff resignations which occurred when CETA appointments ran out (e.g., Jim DeGraff, Gordy Fessendon, John Wagner, Lorraine Wright).

10. <u>Reciprocal relationships are encouraged</u>

The Association is making an effort to develop reciprocal relationships in exchange for various services it provides area residents. For example, if someone wants a garage torn down or home repair work done, she is requested to pay for this work according to a sliding scale or to volunteer hours of service to the Association.

These principles and policies have gradually evolved as a result of the daily operations of the Eastown Community Association. Such guidelines have been important in keeping the Association operating at the grass roots level as well as maintaining a democratic and politically effective organization.

<u>Community Participation</u>*

Khinduka suggests that a mystique has been developed around the desirability and efficacy of citizen participation by those involved in local cultural change efforts. And yet, "as a technique, it is not backed up by unequivocal evidence that it is indeed as crucial a mechanism for the success of a community development project as has been so frequently suggested"(Khinduka 1979: 360).

*Portions of this section were presented in a paper entitled "Dimensions of Participation in Neighborhood Organizations," at the 1980 Central States Anthropological Society Meetings in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

However, Morris and Hess, in their book on Neighborhood Power, argue that "the importance of neighborhood begins with the importance of citizenship. To be a citizen is to participate in civic affairs. To simply live in a place, and not participate in its civil affairs is to be merely a resident, not a citizen" (Morris and Hess 1975: 7). They, and others, also explore meanings of democracy which broaden it from individuals voting every once in a while for representatives to using the concept to describe a process in which citizens discuss, debate, and make decisions themselves (Piven and Cloward 1977; Boyte 1980).

The value of participation must be also considered in terms of the long range goals of the cultural change. If economic and political democarcy are to be achieved, participation by those affected would be a critical component of the methods used to accomplish this goal. Other advantages derive from the fact that the people themselves are often "the experts" concerning their own needs and that if they are intimately involved in change processes they will feel an "ownership" and responsibility for the successes.

Participation in an organization such as the Eastown Community Association is difficult to measure. Statistics of those who attend Council meetings only provide a partial picture (See Appendix 2). Counting the people

at such public activities as meetings, hearings, and demonstrations overlooks those who only bake brownies for bake sales, those who choose to baby sit for others so that they can participate in Eastown events, and the many who sign petitions. About 40% of the respondents in two surveys of the community conducted in 1977 and 1979 indicated that they had participated in one or more programs and/or activities sponsored by E.C.A. (Edison 1977; Johnson 1980).

Getting People Involved - The face to face contact with an E.C.A. staff member or volunteer has been found to be a key factor in bringing people into the organization (Biddle and Biddle 1979: 37). Thus, in setting up a block meeting, for example, staff organizers often knock on people's doors a few days beforehand and the day of the meeting and remind people in person or over the phone.

> Active members often recruit others from their networks of families, friends, and associates. News stories, television, and public demonstrations may create interest in the operations of the organization, but the best way to make an active participant of someone who has followed the activities of the organization from afar is through close personal ties with an actively involved person or small group (Gerlach and Hines 1973: 173-174).

In addition to discovering the concerns neighbors identify as important, the activists also pay close attention to what organizations, both formal and informal, already exist in the area. E.C.A. has learned to be careful to present itself as an organization which wants to cooperate with these groups (e.g. churches, business leaders, schools) instead of competing with them for the time and allegiance of area residents.

Community participation also became an important consideration in planning projects and programs. For example, this criterion has weighed heavily in discussions about whether or not E.C.A. should pay a few youngsters to deliver the ACCESS or if it should continue to encourage volunteers at the block level to distribute it.

Some stages of the organization's growth allow for more or different kinds of participation than others. For example, during the peaking of the political cycle (Stage II) hundreds became involved in demonstration activities, whereas few were attracted to the many meetings which were held during the structural phase (Stage III) when hours were spent deliberating about details in the by-laws.

Keeping People Involved - "Neighborhood groups, community action groups, public interest, ethnic and cultural groups at the local level are proof that people will

become involved when they are convinced that their involvement can be effective (National Commission on Neighborhoods 1979: 9). This means that participants must feel that their presence really does "make a difference." An example of this comes from looking at the changing role that women have played at the Council level, especially during the political development phase. Some women would often come to a few Council meetings, but not continue on a regular basis. The fact that many of these women had young children was one explanation they gave for not becoming more involved was the expense and difficulties they had in arranging childcare for the evening (Easley 1976). However, on closer scrutiny, it was observed that these same women were able to make childcare arrangements to participate in other evening activities (e.g. church meetings, community education classes). What became apparent was that their presence really didn't make mcuh of a difference at the Council meetings. They were often interrupted and/or ignored when they did try to participate in the discussions due to the loose structure of the meetings. As efforts were made to generally "tighten up the structure" both women and "outside" men began to participate more. The childcare problem still remained but now the meetings were more readily understood and easier to plug into. They seemed worth the effort it took to get a babysitter for the evening.

Sexism was not defined as an important issue in the Eastown community nor within the Association. Indirectly, however, this is what seemed to be behind the reluctance of the Association to lend its full support to activities which were seen as women's concerns (e.g. bake sales, a childcare area at the Hall, the breast examination clinic, Reclaim the Night march). As far as formal leadership was concerned, five of the ten people who held either chair or co-chair positions from 1975 to 1980 were women and three out of the four Executive Directors during this period were women. Twenty-seven out of the fifty-seven staff members hired by the Association through 1980 were women.

Individuals may have many different motives for participating in the Eastown Community Association (e.g. to gain personal recognition, to protect property values, lack of good T.V. programming on a specific evening, opportunities to socialize) Warren and Warren 1977: 66). During the Warrens' study of 59 neighborhoods in Detroit, 400 activists were asked about their reasons for getting involved:

> Personal helping and the sense of reward from completing a job and showing their skills in influencing others were foremost motivations. Often such activities were a substitute for a dead-end or non-challening job. Frequently neighborhood activists said they wanted to take their mind off some

> Problem in their life which was bothering them and had no immediate solution.
>
> Less frequently mentioned by neighborhood activists is the satisfaction of social bridge building and sociability rewards. . . .we can sum up these motivations under the general label of personal effectiveness (Warren and Warren 1977: 66).

Effects of Participation on Individuals - Involvement with the E.C.A. makes one more aware that he/she is part of a neighborhood and fosters an identity with a territory. For example, people introduce themselves at meetings in terms of where they live and how many years they have lived in Eastown.

It encourages people to cooperate with others and teaches people how to "get things done" in their neighborhood (e.g. organize a block meeting, calling public officials, circulating petitions, attending public meetings). This helps to build a sense of self-confidence. Pete Gerky, an elderly woman from Wilcox Park, who has been a long time Council member and coordinator of the Christmas bazaars noted at a recent Open House that work with the Association had built up participants' confidence and skills. "We have all learned so much!" (Gerky 1981).

Gail Cincotta, who began by working with her working class neighbors in Chicago to solve local problems and

then eventually became a major creator and promoter of anti-redlining legislation at the national level summarizes this effect by stating, "There aren't many vehicles for blue collar and marginal people to feel they can do anything. That's what organization does. It gives a sense of control and dignity"(Cincotta 1979).

Leadership - In reviewing the studies on neighborhoods for his work on Organization for a Better Austin, Bailey found that almost nothing is known about the persons mobilized for unconventional political action. (Bailey 1974). Two conflicting ideas had emerged about them: (1) that they were model citizens trying to better their communities and (2) that they were wild-eyed radicals and agitators.

Morris and Hess (1975) also identify similar groups as important to the movement for neighborhood organization: (1) there are those with deep roots in the area, property owners, who have been active in voluntary associations in the past and (2) there are younger residents who have a different value system from the older residents.

Many of the leaders of E.C.A. activities, at least in the beginning stages, could be characterized in one of these two ways. There were those who remained in the area in spite of the white flight trends during the early

1970's, and there was also an influx of students from Aquinas College

> whose off campus living experiences exposed them directly to an environment of urban poverty. Certainly they could anticipate a future escape from this environment, but their growing survival consciousness provoked in them sincere indignation and the desire to improve the local conditions--a desire that led to useful and effective action in the community (Edison 1978: 36).

Both of the groups come from middle-class backgrounds. Bailey also notes that O.B.A. did not mobilize the poor, but rather the well off who happened to live in the community. In other words, activists are, on most dimensions, typical civic leaders who live in an atypical community (Bailey 1974: 122, 132).

There is some correlation between the backgrounds of the leaders and the characteristics of those who generally participated in Eastown Community Association activities. Johnson's study indicated that cross tabulations of the levels of participation in E.C.A. programs and the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of his survey respondents, failed to reveal any statistical differences according to age, race, education, and income. However, renters and blue-collar workers were less likely to have participated in E.C.A. sponsored programs than homeowners and white collar employees, retirees, and students (Johnson 1980).

This data tends to generally confirm findings about political participation in the U.S. in terms of variance by race and socioeconomic class. For example, Olsen notes that when socioeconomic status is controlled, differences in white and black participation disappear. Participation rates seem to be largely unaffected by race, the existence of a machine government, or a ghetto environment; rather they appear to be a function of socioeconomic status (Bailey 1974: 33; Olsen 1970: 683).

Many other researchers have also noted the relationship between socioeconomic status and political participation (Coit 1978: 3; Piven and Cloward 1977: 19; McLean 1978: 42).

Several researchers have concluded that the domination of the leadership in the neighborhood movement by middle class elements means that it is not likely to serve in the best interests of lower income groups (Coit 1978; Jones 1979). For example, Coit points out that the middle classes share many basic values and goals with the elites, and tend to encourage compromise and conciliation in order to obtain minimal concessions.

> By permitting some of those at the bottom of the social and economic ladder to participate or even merely to air their hostility toward some of the most obvious injustices relating to urban life and urban spaces---through demonstrations and other forms of protests---by permitting this <u>but at the same time keeping a level on these</u>

> groups, a participation that is reinforcing rather than undermining the present system of domination is being legitimized in the eyes of the poor and the working class groups (Coit 1978: 302) (emphasis is author's).

Others argue that the poor and working class cannot go it alone and that the time has come for them to work closer with the middle class to challenge the political and economic domination by the elites (Alinsky 1972; Boyte 1980). Boyte suggests that a major reason for the failure of the social movements of the 1960's and 1970's was due to their focus on single-issue constituencies (e.g. welfare recipients, blacks, women) and, in contrast, he advocates the formation of multi-issue groups and coalitions.

> . . .crucially, such a strategy is a majority strategy that seeks the linkage of 'middle American' discontent---the angers, frustrations, and hopes of those portions of the upper working class and the middle class which have felt battered and uprooted by the seventies---with the protests of the poor, minorities, and women, the most exploited, oppressed, and impoverished sectors of the working class. Without such a majority approach, no one will win in the coming period except our rulers. (Boyte 1978:4).

An emphasis on the "community of interests" which such diverse groups have in the life which is lived on a piece of territory can be one way to do this.

Eric Wolf, in his book Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century, describes the leadership role that members of the middle-class, especially the marginal ones, played in the seven social movements he analyzes (Wolf 1970).

Thus far, although much of the leadership in E.C.A. has come from middle class backgrounds, they have publicly articulated an appreciation for and defense of the socioeconomic diversity of the area. Many of the activities of the organization (Community Development programs, Paint N' Fix Program, Housing Inspector) have directly benefited the lower income groups in the neighborhood (Johnson 1980). In other words, E.C.A. has served as an effective advocate, as a "voice" for these groups. However, this is still not the same as having these people speak for themselves in their own self-interest.

Staff Volunteer Relationships

The majority of people on the E.C.A. staff are those who have spent many hours in volunteer work prior to their employment with the Association. They are also people who live in Eastown and thus have a personal commitment to improving the quality of life in the area. Inspite of the emphasis on using volunteers, it appears that the more paid staff E.C.A. employs, the less effectively volunteers are used. Bill Blickley brought up this problem at a retreat held in the spring of 1978.

He began a discussion of staff-volunteer relations by saying, "the staff have forgot what people can do for themselves" (Blickley 1978). Thus the gap which exists between staff and volunteers is aggravated.

> The paid staff members because of their position and because they have their entire day to devote to the community, have a great deal of power in these local agencies. It is inevitable that the residents will leave most of the work to the staff, who in turn can use their position to manipulate the residents. Furthermore, the staff is nearly always mainly made up of members of the middle class, inspite of "maximum feasible participation"(Coit 1977: 299).

Efforts to correct these tendencies in E.C.A. towards staff domination have been made through an emphasis on having staff work with volunteer committees and block clubs and by encouraging them to spend time developing personal ties with neighborhood residents throughout the community. Johnny, the Home Repair Coordinator, would often just stop by for a visit over a cup of tea. Organizers soon got a reputation of "using" people if they did not take the time to enjoy these social ammenities with Eastowners.

Perlman notes that questions concerning the role that staff and leaders should play in neighborhood groups is a widely discussed one---Do they best "serve the people" by providing a vehicle to carry out their wishes? Or by

offering strategic analysis and leadership? (Perlman 1979: 20). Coit's analysis of squatter groups in Italy also observes this seeming dichotomy:

> One should understand that. . .a radical praxis should be developed that holds within it the seeds of fundamental social change. The ambiquity of local action is inevitable in that it seeks to do two things at the same time---obtain reforms and change political consciousness. Local action is like a tool, in that what results depends less on the tool than on the user. Reflection is thus necessary, experimentation essential (Coit 1979: 308).

The Eastown Community Association's Planning Committee provides a viable forum for this kind of reflection by Eastown's leaders. The custom of writing and sharing written papers which explained in depth an individual's position on an issue also aided the group's re-election process. For example, in the fall of 1976, Sister Wanda Ezop reviewed her notes and the minutes from the past meetings she had attended and provided the Council with a list of six examples of projects which had been agreed to but not followed through by the Council. This encouraged the Association to stop and take stock of its operations (Ezop 10/1976).

Relations with Area Institutions

The Eastown area includes various religious, medical, and educational institutions. The one which E.C.A. has

had the most dealings with has been Aquinas College which serves approximately 1200 students and is located in the northeast portion of the neighborhood. Most of Aquinas' involvement came as a result of the initial grant from the Kellogg Foundation with which about $130,000 was used on campus and in the community over a three-year period. At the end of the grant period a three-person faculty team worked with a group of students to evluate the Aquinas-Eastown Project. The Kellogg Foundation then issued another grant which was used to underwrite the joint authorship of a book, Eastown , on the relationship between the College and the community. The authors concluded that no major structural changes had occurred at the College as a result of the Project, whereas many changes were documented in the community (Rau 1978). The second grant was also to be used to sponsor workshops for interested institutional administrators and community organizers which would be centered around the material contained in the book. This was to be followed up with the financial support of E.C.A. staff and volunteers serving as consultants for interested institutions and community groups.

However, Tom Edison's contract with Aquinas College was terminated with no formal reasons given, shortly after the final draft of the Eastown book was completed.

In response to protests by members of the community to the loss of one of their key leaders, the College responded that the matter of his firing was a private institutional affair which community residents had no business being concerned about.

In actuality, only two workshops were held, one for area community organizers and one for about twenty-five college administrators from throughout the country. Only two consulting opportunities were realized (e.g. communities in Texas and Hawaii) and the College eventually returned approximately $34,000 of the unused money from the second grant back to the Kellogg Foundation. In the meantime, the Aquinas-Eastown Faculty Team on campus dissolved and the college ceased to nominate formal representatives to the E.C.A. Council. At present a few faculty members and students are involved in E.C.A. as private citizens, in contrast to formally representing the college.

Explaining the Changing Roles of the College - A prevailing explanation held by members of the institution for its withdrawal from the community is that it saw itself as only a catalyst for community change and that to prevent paternalistic and dependent relationships from developing it had to withdraw into a more passive role vis a vis the community. However, this implies that

either the College must play a dominant role or not any role and overlooks the possibilities of a more equalitarian and cooperative relationship.

Some, in contrast, would explain both the College's initial interest and subsequent withdrawal as a result of the College acting in its own very narrowly construed self-interest (Worthy 1976; Piven and Cloward 1977). As long as the College felt threatened by deteriorating conditions in the neighborhood it was interested in being part of the community. In the case of the University of Hawaii branch at Hilo, a department was facing decreasing enrollments and was then seriously interested in ways it could better serve outlying communities. This is why Eastown consultants were brought in. According to this view, Aquinas was only interested in improving the community so that the College would not have to change. Once this occurred and the initial grant money ran out, it withdrew its support of individuals and groups who were active in Eastown.

Mike Williams, one of the authors of the *Eastown* book, looks at the lack of continued institutional support in terms of the failures which occurred at structural levels within the College. He suggests that although the College did not use an "agency mindset" to impose formal bureaucratic operations on E.C.A. community activities, the

College did do this prematurely on an internal level with the early establishment of the Aquinas-Eastown Faculty Development Team (Warren and Warren 1977: 48-49). Members of this group, who were receiving pay in the form of released time for their community endeavors, all had quite individual motives for participating in the Project (e.g. financial compensation, political commitments). The Team did not clearly define its group goals nor did it clarify the roles individuals were expected to play in the community. As a result, most of its members did not actually "get their hands very dirty" out in the community. Therefore, both on an individual level and on a group basis a deep commitment to the neighborhood was not nourished by the Team. Thus, the institution's interest in the Eastown area waned (Williams, M. 1978).

E.C.A. members often discuss the importance of first appealing to the self-interest of residents and then helping them broaden their definition of this to include the whole neighborhood. The same type of strategy could be done with local institutions---individuals inside the institutions could be appealed to in this manner. Eventually, then, these individuals may form their own informal network based on their genuine common interests in the community (Edison 1978). Such a network may later be transformed into a formal group which could work for internal structural changes while at the same time helping

community groups request these changes from the outside (Williams 1978: 44). Without both internal and external pressure exerted on the institution cooperative relationships between neighborhoods and their institutions will be short-lived.

This was illustrated by the failure of efforts to set up a childcare center with the help of Aquinas College. In late 1975, Mike Williams, a faculty member, called together parties from both the campus and the community who were interested in starting such a program on campus. It was to have been a research and teaching facility for faculty and a day-care program for both students and Eastown residents. He wrote a proposal to the President, who wanted a feasibility study done before any further steps were taken. Four months later, when the study was released concluding the idea was too ambitious, the original group had dissolved, and the whole idea was forgotten. Mike explains the failure by noting that he did not take the time to involve Eastown residents in drafting the proposal. Thus they had not developed a group identity around the issue by seeing themselves work together. They relied entirely on him to do this. He sums up the situation by saying, "If the institution truly wishes to help, it must learn the art of teaching community groups, to know what to ask for and to keep asking. It must generate pressure on itself" (Williams 1978: 44).

It is true that the original Kellogg Grant did enhance college-community relations in its financial support of the Eastown Community Association. Ironically, in the long run, however, it may have caused a larger rift between them than had exited before. Beginning in Stage II (Political Development) some resentment developed concerning the interference of the Aquinas Eastown Faculty Team in the affairs of the Association. Later, according to an article in the ACCESS,

> Eastown residents expressed shock and dismay upon learning of Edison's fate. The credibility of the college and its professed commitment to Eastown is now being questioned by our community. It is difficult to understand the reward system at the college which lavishly praises the accomplishments of the E.C.A., encourages faculty involvement, and then fires the person who has been most deeply involved and committed (ACCESS 4/78).

Mary Alice Williams, in her position as Executive Director of E.C.A. wrote a strong letter of protest to the college, inspite of the fact that she was married to Mike Williams, an Aquinas College faculty member:

> I question the credibility of the institution which even now is having its stature enhanced by the Eastown project. Simple souls that we are, we non-academic community folk will find it pretty hard to maintain a relationship with or feed into headlines for Aquinas from now on (Williams, M.A. 4/7/78).

Although faculty members continued to sit on the Council they refused to do so as formal representatives

from the College because they were upset with the institution's actions. The College's interest in the community did appear to wane as the original grant money ran out and it no longer felt threatened by a decaying neighborhood, given the revitalization of the area.

Economic Survival

E.C.A. has created its economic support base from a variety of sources over the years. It has sought out non-financial donations (e.g. desks, paper, meeting rooms, lottery prizes) from local institutions and businesses. It has also developed various fundraising programs to get financial support from community members and also learned how to tap sources of external financing. The following is a review of some of the funding sources used and/or considered by E.C.A. along with a brief look at the problems which can be associated with each one.

Raising Funds Within the Neighborhood

Membership Drives - Whether or not to charge a membership fee to belong to the organization has almost been an annually debated issue. On the one hand, it is argued that such a fee would make the Association more directly accountable to the area residents and that this would give the organization a clear idea of who it represents. However, such a fee might exclude people who would other-

wise join. And those who paid may feel that they are not obligated to contribute additional time or energy to the work of the organization. Membership lists could also be used by opponents to the organization to prove that E.C.A. does not represent the entire community. E.C.A. only half-heartedly once attempted to conduct a membership drive. Instead, the Association continues to claim anyone who lives and/or works in Eastown among its membership.

Small Scale Fund Raising Activities - E.C.A. has had its share of keggers, movie benefits, bake sales, chicken dinners, and bazaars. One of the nice things about these events is that they can involve a lot of people who each contribute their own little bit to the organization and this also helps to solidify social networks in the neighborhood. However, it involves a lot of people's time and energy for very little monetary gain and cannot be counted on to raise large amounts of money. During one memorable evening in the spring of 1975 about 30 costumed Eastowners disrupted a City Commission meeting and made "friendly demands" that the Commissioners each shell out money for two tickets to their upcoming movie benefit. The Commissioners were amused and complied. Eastowners were also pleased with the picture in the Grand Rapids Press the next day. The movie was well attended.

From the Patron Plan to Phonathons - For about the first eight years of its existence the major way in which money was collected from the residents came in the form of the Patron Plan, under which neighbors and residents could make private contributions. This assumed that they were familiar with E.C.A.'s activities and knew of the benefits the area derived from them. It also required accurate recordkeeping and frequent correspondence with the donors in many cases. A similar, but more successful effort has been instituted during the last few years with a phonathon during which volunteers spend two hours a night for four nights in the fall to phone residents listed in the Polk City Directory. About $10,000 per year has been both pledged and collected in this manner.

Tapping External Sources of Support

One major source has been the federal and local government programs which have underwritten most of the staff salaries for the E.C.A. (e.g. Job Corps, Vista, Safeguard, CETA). The other major source of support has come from local and national foundations, primarily Steelcase, Mott, and Kellogg.

Advantages to utilizing funding from these sources includes the fact that they involve large amounts which can be counted on for extended periods of time. Publicity surrounding the receipt of grants serves to help legitimize

the work of the organization.

The problems with the E.C.A. accepting government paid workers involves the fact that decisions about the numbers of staff they receive, the jobs to be done, the training they are to experience, and the length of time they stay are all formally outside of the hands of the Association. However, E.C.A. frequently got around many of these constraints by lobbying individual officials and submitting suggested job descriptions designed by its Personnel Committee. It also offered bonuses to staff members out of the Association general coffers and tried to provide its own training for new staff members. However, some of these personnel never did develop a commitment to the organization and treated their work like a regular "8 to 5" government job. Improved interview techniques and training sessions helped to correct the situation somewhat.

Government agencies and foundations require many forms and reports to be filed. Energy put into this type of administrative work draws energy away from other activities. This continues to be an ongoing problem for the Association (Weber 1980).

> The trick is to be able to make the institutions change their policies and practices without becoming responsible for their day to day operation. To do otherwise is to

> accept the responsibilities of government without any of its basic powers; legislation, taxation, appropriation of funds, and so forth (Miller 1973: 37).

Funding from these external sources also tended to promote a false sense of security and pride. Efforts to drum up money from the community itself waned as "big money" came in from the outside. The Association has had to consider whether or not it could afford to "bite the hands that fed it" in several disputes with Aquinas College, the city government, and business enterprises (Ackerman 1977: 122). It also had to debate whether or not to accept donations from groups with whom it had serious political and moral differences (e.g. Zondervan Bible Publishing Company with holdings in South Africa; Consumer Power Gas Company). They finally concluded that given that there are few sources of "pure support," they would go ahead and accept "bad" donations (e.g. money linked to profits from South Africa, a truck from the Gas Company) to do "good things" in the neighborhood.

Financial backing from these sources cannot be counted on for years of support. Grants tied to institutions can be withdrawn when the institution loses interest in community projects (e.g. Kellogg grant). Foundations tend to give seed money for new projects and are often reluctant to fund on-going programs or staff salaries. If the

organization is publicly linked to one foundation then others tend to be less interested in contributing to the Association. And, finally, as more and more neighborhood organizations developed Eastown began to feel it was competing for funds locally. More recently, government policies towards funding social services have fluctuated and are on the decline.

Becoming Self-Sufficient

There are many advantages to the creation of neighborhood owned and controlled industries. Such efforts can involve more members of the community and may also provide jobs to local residents. E.C.A.'s successful experiments along these lines in the small print shop it has set up in the basement of the Hall has been inspiring.

Of course capital is needed to begin such enterprises. In the case of the print shop, this was obtained through the Mott Foundation and the Catholic Human Development Office. Those interested in setting this up had to do research on legal connections between this cottage industry and the Association and had to find local experts in printing to help them get it going.
They had to figure out a way to set up a fair situation for the two workers who were subsequently employed and questions of worker control with the WOBBLIE Union, and

Association control over the operation had to be worked through. They also established a policy whereby other neighborhood organizations and non-profit associations in the city could have their materials printed at cost.

The time and energy put into this project drew energy away from other social change projects. Thus some question as to whether or not Eastown should be getting into the business of producing goods and services and other similar endeavors (e.g. Credit Union, Housing Cooperative, Bingo Game) have been explored but lack of capital has prevented these dreams from becoming realities. (Bailey 1974: 61) However, given the advantages inherent in neighborhood owned and controlled industries similar efforts will probably be explored in the future.

Summary

This chapter has looked at some of the specific details of the general problems encountered by the Eastown Community Association throughout its history and the various responses it has had to them. It began by looking at the importance of ideology and the means by which it was formulated and has been disseminated by the organization. This was followed by a discussion of how decisions are made regarding the kinds of activities the Association engages in and the selection of strategies to be used. Major explanations for the decreasing

utilization of protest strategies were reviewed. E.C.A.'s linkage construction and coalition building with other organizations were seen as major components of its political power.

The efforts by the Association to create democratic decision making structures and to formulate anti-bureaucratic policies were described along with the specific tools E.C.A. uses to encourage community participation. The implications of the organization's leadership being drawn largely from middle-class groups in the neighborhood were examined. Next, various explanations for the dramatic changes in the relationship between Aquinas College and the Eastown Community Association were considered. Finally, the pros and cons of various types of economic support which the Association has obtained were reviewed.

The fact that other neighborhood organizations have faced similar problems and have often worked out similar answers to them has been illustrated throughout the chapter.

CHAPTER V

ELEMENTS OF THE FIELDWORK PROCESS

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Taboo Topics

In general there has been a reluctance on the part of anthropologists to publish material on field methods and field experiences (Freilich 1977: 36). Many of the publications which exist focus on the "happy solutions to fieldwork problems" encountered in what Rosalie Wax terms the second stage (Wax 1971: 16; Freilich 1977). The first stage, which involves the period of initiation or resocialization, is ignored or passed over in many accounts, as is that of the post field experiences. "It is rare indeed to hear a speaker describe the emotional pains of fieldwork, especially those of the early 'culture shock period' (Wax 1971: 16).

My own fieldwork was unique in several ways, the major one being that as a white, politically active, middle-class woman, I set out to study the behavior of people like myself, whereas classic anthropology essentially involves "observation of people of one kind by people of another" (Hughes 1974: 330 in Cassell 1977: 412). Therefore, I

*Portions of this chapter were presented by Anabel Dwyer and Linda Easley in a paper entitled "Leaps: From the Ivory Tower into the 'Real World' and Back Again," at the 1977 Central States Anthropological Society Meetings in Cincinnati, Ohio.

decided to devote an entire chapter to a description of my particular fieldwork experiences and the ways in which they changed me.

In this chapter I will describe my own entrance into the field situation and the major transitions I experienced in the process. This is followed by brief comments about some of the relatively unique roles I played during the second phase and some post-fieldwork reflections concerning the effect fieldwork had on my own personal development. The chapter ends with some suggestions for other researchers who are considering fieldwork research in their own culture.

Shocked at Culture Shock

Unlike most anthropology graduate students I did not expect to experience culture shock in my field situation given that I would be working with people similar to myself who lived about 80 miles away from the University. On a visit back to the University a few months after my move to Eastown, several faculty members questioned me extensively about my fieldwork and suggested that I might be suffering from many of the common symptoms of culture shock (Rubel, Hinnant, McKinley 1975).

Culture shock usually involves the feelings of confusion, disorientation, anxiety, and frustration which a person may experience when he moves outside of his own social group (Spradley 1972: 43). It is what happens when

the familiar psychological cues that help an individual to function in the society are suddenly withdrawn and replaced with new ones that are strange and incomprehensible (Toffler 1970: 47). The individual must grapple with unfamiliar and unpredictable events, relationships, and objects. Her habitual ways of accomplishing things are no longer appropriate. Signs, sounds, and other psychological cues rush by her before she can grasp their meanings (Lundstedt 1963: 3).

In order to understand, to participate in the shared meanings of the new group, a person has to become "resocialized." She must relearn "how the world works" (Wax 1971: 15). In describing how field work affected her personally, Rosalie Wax says, "What changed me irrevocably and beyond repair were the things I learned. More specifically, these irrevocable changes involved replacing mythical or ideal assumptions with correct (though often painful) facts of the situation" (Wax 1971: 363).

It was the transitions in any work, my social relationships, in self-definitions, and in my political views which underlay the cultural schock I experienced in moving from a graduate school "sub-culture" to living in Eastown.

Transitions in Work

Graduate work demands that a significant amount of one's time and energy be spent reading books, attending classes, writing papers, and participating actively

in intellectual discussions with other academicians. Along the way, students sharpen their skills in written and verbal expression and reaffirm their beliefs in the importance of "getting a good education" and in the legitimacy of anthropological endeavors.

The people I first met in the field did not understand my sense of accomplishment at having just completed my doctoral exams in anthropology. Having a college degree of any kind automatically created a barrier between myself and some others. Very few were familiar with what anthropology is or with what fieldworkers do. I learned that the social science concern with scientific explanations for human behavior was a unique perspective. Frequently people asked me questions such as, "Why do you think so much?," and "Do you ever stop thinking?" I eventually found that simply introducing myself as a teacher created less confusion than trying to painstakingly explain why I really was not interested in visiting the nearby Indian cemetery for my research. When appropriate I always let neighborhood people know that I was conducting research on the neighborhood and the Eastown Community Association for my doctoral dissertation. No one seemed to doubt the legitimacy of my purpose in being there and I felt that I was not prevented from taking part in anything because of it. But, I began to keep more and more observations and questions to myself and was cautious about the comments I made about my experiences there.

I was surprised to find few people enjoyed reading. For example, I was not able to have the city newspaper delivered in my area of the neighborhood because of the lack of other subscribers and a perceived danger to young carriers. I also noted that I was able to express myself quite articulately at meetings and was often asked to write up meeting minutes because I frequently took notes and was viewed as having an ability to write well. If nothing else, my many years in school seemed to mean that I had developed an enjoyment of reading and could write fairly well.

In contrast to the graduate student situation, where I could plan and parcel out my work into specific time and space slots, my research work was very dependent upon the activities taking place within the neighborhood, which meant that it seemed largely outside my control. It was very difficult at first to select which of the many community activities I should be involved in. I found it helpful to attempt to establish a daily schedule which would enable me to record field notes, read some social science literature, and participate in local events, but I had to learn to maintain a great deal of flexibility with any routine I established.

Changes in Social Relationships

In graduate school I could choose the people with whom I desired to cultivate friendships. I had *unconsciously* developed categories to use as a basis for

seeking out close relationships. For example, in general, I preferred to associate with cultural anthropologists as compared to archaeologists; those who had passed their master's exams in contrast to those who had not; and with those who were actively involved in changing the sexist, racist, and class conditions of our society, in comparison to those who were "unaware" and politically inactive. In sum, I surrounded myself with a circle of friends with whom I shared similar "life styles" and views of the world.

In my new neighborhood, I found myself having to relate to many people who did not live like I had been living and who did not perceive life the way I did. The "boxes" I had developed to place people in were no longer useful in helping me make meaningful distinctions between people. I had to create new ways of reaching out to people. I soon developed interests in exchanging recipes, games for children, and in ideas for homemade Christmas gifts.

One of the things that set me apart from others in the neighborhood was my close links to a world outside of the city, graduate school. Barrie Thorne has commented on this as being an important factor in her research with the draft resistance movement:

> My strongest marginal trait was my position as a graduate student, a role which evoked suspicion and mistrust...my being a student gave me a set of involvements and options which ran against the

> Resistance sense of collectivity and demand for full commitment... (Thorne 1976: 11).

Many people in the neighborhood have lived in the city all their lives and do not frequently travel outside this area. Gradually I became more careful about discussing my continuing ties with graduate school and my friendships with people who live outside of the city.

Psychological Insights

One of the themes in the anthropological literature I had reviewed was that the "natives" an anthropologist studies are usually obviously different from herself. And it was these differences which qualified them for "objects" of her study.

On some levels the people in my neighborhood appeared to be quite similar to me: they spoke English, dressed in identical clothing, ate the same kinds of food, lived in similar types of houses, and watched the same television networks. And yet, upon scratching these surfaces, I discovered important differences. Thus, in some ways I was studying "me," but in other ways I was not. Fieldwork in one's own culture blurs the usual distinctions which may be easily set up between the anthropologist and the "natives" she is studying. In this case, I was the "object" and the "subject" of the research at the same time.

Since beginning my fieldwork, I have gradually been developing an interest in the field of psychology. Perhaps

this has come about as a response to the discoveries I was making about myself while doing research in my own culture. Alvin Toffler, in his comparisons of responses among soldiers in combat, disaster victims, and culturally dislocated persons, noted the similarity of these reactions to the behavioral characteristics displayed by many schizophrenics (Toffler 1970: 347). Stanley Diamond also noted the similarities between experiencing culture shock and the behavior of many schizophrenic patients (Diamond 1974: 231). Wintrob, in an article on psychological stress in fieldwork, has raised some interesting questions about the utilization of psychology by anthropologists:

> If it is true that psychological stress reactions are as common and as important to the performance of reporting field research as this report would suggest, then what practical means could be utilized to extend the fieldworker's understanding of his own psychological needs and responses, and to broaden his understanding of the psychological significance of the reactions of the people he sets out to study (Wintrob 1969: 79).

Clarifying Political Positions

Shortly after entering graduate school one learns to define "who is whom" in the department power hierachy, as well as how to adjust to one's place in this structure. And the student frequently reads ethnographies in which prestige and respect were almost automatically accorded the white American male anthropologist in most foreign field situations, at least in the past.

In contrast to this, the power structure in my neighborhood appeared to be much less clearly defined. Length of residency in the city and experience in local political arenas served as important criteria for placement in positions in the power hierarchies. I was not well qualified because of my deficiencies in these areas and because I am a woman. Having recently passed my doctoral exams and thus being one of the older, "looked-up-to" graduate students, I found this new lowly position within the community a little difficult to adjust to. An advantage of this situation was that I could often just take the role of an "observer" in some discussions and meetings.

Because of my academic credentials, some people did perceive me as a potential threat to their jobs, particularly those who worked in the "helping professions" (e.g. child care, education, community organizing, social work). I became increasingly conscious of the ways in which I introduced myself to others and tried to focus many of the first conversations on them, rather than sharing much information about myself.

The ideal of becoming an objective, neutral, value-free, emotionless scientist were stressed explicitly and implicitly in graduate school. Little serious attention was given by the professors or students to questioning the political aspects of financial support for anthropological

research nor to examining the purposes for which such work is used.

In my field situation, I was treated as a "whole" human being, as a person who had emotions and values. I was expected to engage in political activities, to vote at the meetings of the neighborhood association, to express my opinions on crucial issues, and to join various factions. I was also seen as responsible for the results of my having conducted research in the community.

The experiences strengthened the previous doubts I had been having about the validity of striving to be objective and value-free. Every researcher has definite ideas about "what makes the world tick" as well as values and feelings about how it "should be working." Her goal should be to become aware of what these are and to explicitly state them in her research reports. "The good field worker must work with and through his biases, become aware of them, control them and use them" (Bennett 1960: 431). I found it extremely useful to keep a personal journal apart from my field notes. In reviewing my data for written reports and for my dissertation, I have been examining material from both kinds of entries.

Barrie Thorne's comments about her involvement in the draft resistance movement also describe my experiences. "Movement participants would not have tolerated the presence of an avowed neutral, but I discovered that

partisanship and participation are both a question of degree" (Thorne 1976: 17). I also found that I could make choices about the ways in which I participated in political activities. But, in order to do this, I had to have a clear view of my own political beliefs. I had to attempt to understand how activities in my own neighborhood were connected to events in the midwest, in the nation, and in the world in order to make decisions about which local activities to participate in and how. I had to very seriously consider what effects my research might have on the commmunity and in what ways it could be used to harm or help these people solve their problems more effectively.

Having developed these ideas I then had to try to convince the diverse people I worked with that they were "good ones." This helped me clarify my views even further.

Comments on My Roles

While living in Eastown, I played various roles in addition to being a participant-observer. In this section I briefly describe these and the problems that came with them.

On Being A "Single" Woman/Living Alone

During the first few months I lived in the Wilcox Park area with the Edisons and was seen somewhat as part of their family. Subsequently, I found a large spacious apartment in the WEFF area of the neighborhood. This meant that I went home alone at night and had to "figure out what

happened" by myself. It also meant that I was much more emotionally vulnerable to social interrelationships in the neighborhood than if I had had a family to serve as a kind of buffer between me and my field situation. Instead, I had to actively create my own support system of friends. Often there were conflicts between the activities I wanted to attend in the neighborhood and those which I was interested in outside my fieldwork situation. However, Eastown's events usually got priority.

Gradually I learned to recognize symptoms which signaled to me that I needed to spend more time with people in my support system. For one thing, I would begin to grow more and more intolerant of people who seemed to be quite different from me. And after hours of stretching myself to try to understand others I found myself wanting to tell "my stories" too, and often "unloaded" on friends outside of the fieldwork situation. In short, I would develop a deep yearning to be "listened to and understood."

Along with friends in Eastown and other parts of the city, I relied on support from my mother, from friends I had made during graduate school and from a special relationship I had developed with a man who lived several hours away. The latter committed relationship gave me a somewhat "quasi-married" status. When working on Eastown projects I seldom ran into problems with "sexual games". In other words, it was assumed that we were

primarily together for non-sexual purposes. Both married and single men and women frequently socialized after meetings with no sexual innuendos made about this (Melito 1982; Weber 1982).

However, because I had never been married and did not have any children, I was initially misperceived by some as a "cold career woman" and later viewed by many as not quite grown up. This, in contrast, to being seen as an adult who has made different choices in life than many have.

Other female anthropologists have noted the androgenous role which they have been expected to play in the field. I too felt these expectations were there. For example, on one hand I had the same, if not more, professional credentials as many of the men and participated actively in meetings where they predominated. However, I was still expected to bake brownies for the bake sale and to contrubute food for the frequent potlucks--things which the men were not expected to do.

On Being a Volunteer and Activist

Shortly after I first arrrived in the field I became quite involved with E.C.A. activities. Later I consciously withdrew from such intense involvement in order to experience the organization from the point of view of a "typical resident" in Eastown. However, my resignation from the Council at this time was not well received and I was asked to continue to serve during my entire stay in

Eastown. I agreed to do this but at the same time withdrew from most other Association work except for the Planning Committee meetings. Later I took up a more moderately active position.

I was able to keep in contact with people who were not active in Association activities through my acquaintanceship with neighbors on my block. Indirectly, I gathered information by listening to E.C.A. council members discuss their constituent's lives and through the curveys which I assist-Tom Edison and Jim Johnson in conducting.

Besides being a Council member and attending Planning Committee meetings I tried to offer my help where and when it was needed within the organization (e.g. coordinating the Education Committee; participating on the By-Law Committee; setting up, cleaning up and running the Information Booth at the Street Fair; stripping paint in the new Eastown Hall; circulating petitions on specific issues; and attending block meetings.) I was often asked to design the orientation sessions and retreats for Council members.

In other words, I generally played a very "behind the scenes" role in the organization. This was often very frustrating because there were many times when I personally was interested in being more of a leader on certain issues, but I felt that "my hands were tied" by the time and energy I had to devote to my research and teaching obligations. My lack of deeper involvement was not due to an effort to

maintain "objectivity" by keeping a safe distance from these activities. Increased involvement can make one more committed to learning "the truth" because one has more investment in knowing it. In other words, questions asked about too much involvement could be reversed: Is there such a thing as too little involvement by the researcher in the situation she is studying?

This role was also frustrating because respect in the organization was largely accorded to those who could publicly "make things happen" and low-key roles were not held with such high prestige.

On Being a College Instructor

As previously mentioned, in order to financially support my field research I served as an adjunct faculty member in various social science departments at five colleges in the area. It is true that this provided me with a legitimate and somewhat prestigious role. However, I tended to de-emphasize my work in college teaching when I discussed my daily life with neighbors because campus life was not a part of their experiences and such discussions only served to emphasize the barriers between us.

As a teacher one can almost "command love and respect" and thus one can easily be surrounded with a false sense of security. Such reaffirmation was not automatically given by community members to each other or to college instructors. Instead, their respect had to be gradually

built and earned. Sometimes, I found this switch from classroom "obedience" and monologues to community democratic discussions unsettling, but I feel it was very healthy for me to do this.

As the relationship between Aquinas College and the neighborhood deteriorated, my own insights into the situation became suspect to some because I was teaching there and thus they felt I had too much stake in the situation to be helpful to the neighborhood. A group of individuals from Eastown who were not connected to the college should have been formed to critically review the operations of the College in regard to the community.

On Being A Social Scientist

I was very open about my research intentions and sat through many meetings taking copious notes. Sometimes I served as the secretary for them, but I tried to avoid this as much as possible. I often taped Council meetings for the first few years, but found that was not worth the trouble unless I had the time to review them for specific quotations later. Instead, informal observations and interviews provided much of the data for my research.

I was willing to openly share my perspectives on what was happening and material from books on the neighborhood movement which I was reading that might be useful. However, I experienced what many social scientists also find in expressing their views with people in casual conversation. Inspite of the differences in experiential and

educational backgrounds on the topic, my views were not held in any higher regard than the views of anyone else. This might be contrasted with the great degree of respect given to medical doctors' pronouncements concerning health issues in general discussions.

The co-authorship of the EASTOWN book with two other faculty members from Aquinas College, and the two subsequent training workshops along with the consultant work in Hawaii changed this somewhat. However, at the same time as myself and others were gaining recognition outside of Eastown, we seemed to be less involved in the neighborhood and thus were losing touch with what was really going on in the community.

As my fieldwork continued and my notes and chronological charts became more relied on by the Association for historical purposes, I was often introduced to newcomers as the organization's historian. I gradually became one of the "oldies but goodies" and to my surprise, often found myself explaining "why things have always been done this way" at many meetings. In other words, although I could intellectually understand the dynamics of conflict between the old and the new that were occurring, I still found myself staunchly defending the old ways and emotionally being uncomfortable with the new ideas of the "upstarts." Thus, I personally experienced what I had described as occurring for other individuals and subgroups within the organization in Chapter three.

The long term field situation gave me an opportunity to watch the ebbs and flows of neighborhood life and to observe the variations in the annual life cycle of the Association.

Reciprocal Relationships

Like many anthropologists, I was conscious of the need to give something back to the community in return for the information they gave me. I tried to do this in several ways and some efforts were more successful than others.

Written Materials

First of all, in considering reciprocal exchanges one has to choose something to give back that is meaningful to the community. I had seen my work on the EASTOWN book as an important contribution to E.C.A. However, inspite of the fact that I had interviewed individuals and had tried to write the material up in a non-academic fashion, Eastowners did not appear overly enthusiastic about the book. Thus, even though I have tried to write this dissertation in a form which may be useful to them and other neighborhood associations, and individual members of the Association who will be asked to review the rough draft, I do not think I can really consider this to be a valid form of reciprocity.

Quasi-Therapy

At some points during my fieldwork I found myself spending a lot of time carefully listening to Eastowners discuss personal problems. This was particularly true one

summer when several marital relationships were unraveling. The people involved appreciated my genuine concern and insights. At that time, I indicated that it might be viewed as a kind of reciprocity and they accepted that perspective. I was aware that several anthropologists had suggested that reciprocity in certain communities in the United States might take on a quasi-therapy form.

> My informants have stable jobs, comfortable homes with expensive decor, several cars, and can maintain children in private schools and colleges. However, the lot of relatively affluent middle class individuals is not necessarily a particularly happy one for them. Acute personal problems frequently have their origins within the confines of the family culture and subculture. These problems are as severe and urgent to family members as are the kinds of problems linked to economic need. The emotional need and propensity of middle class Americans to talk easily about their personal problems may offer one of the few areas--and perhaps one of the most significant--in which an anthropologist can reciprocate. He can listen. Persons who would never go to a therapist may share with the anthropologist personal matters that anthropologists may be little equipped to handle personally or professionally...the non-clinical yet constructive listener function of the anthropologist may, indeed, turn out to be an unavoidable and weighty responsibility in the contemporary urban field work. It likewise may constitute one significant aspect in the defining of the role expectations of the anthropologist in studying the culturally similar (Albon 1975: 7).

Pelto has also commented, "the anthropologist's role is not unlike that of the psychotherapist...the difference is that the ethnographer receives information rather than money in exchange" (Pelto 1970: 220).

However, since then I have had more serious doubts as to whether or not anthropologists should be moving in this direction. We are not trained in therapy skills nor are we prepared to ethically handle these situations professionally. Instead, I would suggest that we learn enough about the services available in our communities to be able to refer people to the appropriate sources of help.

Brokering

Given my particular linkages to three local colleges and social networks in the city, I often plugged neighborhood people into events and services outside of Eastown. I also informally represented "a neighborhood voice" to agencies and institutions operating at the city wide level. I also shared my ties to other activist groups on the state and national levels. I think this role of being a kind of referral agent or "switchboard operator" could be more consciously developed as a form of reciprocity to be used by anthropologists working in complex cultures.

Volunteer Work

Probably the most appreciated thing I gave in return for the information I gathered was the time and energy I spent working together with E.C.A. members to improve life in Eastown.

Some Practical Implications of My Fieldwork Experiences

Benefits of Fieldwork Research for Social Movements

Movement activists can easily become consumed by the demands and activities which surround the center of

the movement. They can adopt a pure and self-righteous position, ignoring the perspectives of those outside of the inner circles and the impact that the movement ideology and institutions may be having on them. Anthropological field research can be used to assess the ways in which various components of the population are relating to the movement. For example, I found that the women's movement was perceived by many women in Eastown to be a group of white middle-class career women who were not interested in addressing the concerns of those who choose to be homemakers. The consistent lack of effort on the part of organized women's groups to reach out to the neighborhood women often confirmed their ideas. Marilyn Gittell and Nancy Naples also noted the same phenomenon in their exploratory study, Women Activists and Community Organization:

> The community- or neighborhood based organization women resent the fact that women-specific organization women do not identify with the problems faced by low-income, working-class, and minority women. Women-specific organization women, on the other hand, define their issues from their own experience. Issues of abortion rights, sexual harrassment, and equal pay are seen as priorities for these women (Gittell and Naples 1982: 27).

Anthropological field research conducted on movement organizations themselves can help them to become more cognizant of their internal operations and thus better able to assess and make adjustments in their own organizational structures at the same time that they are trying to

change those of the culture at large. This may help to prevent the 'counter culture' from becoming merely a reactive form of the larger culture (Klein 1969: 330).

Graduate School Training in Anthropology

A few months after I entered the field I complained to a member of my dissertation committee that I should have taken more sociology courses in order to be better prepared for the work I was doing. (Rubel 1975). He argued, to the contrary, that my classes on tribes and peasants had given me a foundation with which to compare and contrast what I was observing. Furthermore, he pointed out that while it is relatively easy to find courses and books in sociology, anthropological perspectives are less accessible in our culture. I have come to agree with him and appreciate more than ever the historical, comparative, and holistic perspectives I obtained from my educational background in anthropology.

I would suggest that anthropologists preparing to work in mainstream American culture read about the field experiences of other anthropologists who have studied in other cultures so that they will be prepared for the culture shock which may occur during the first phase of their fieldwork.

The whole notion of "the field" should be broadened to include the study of cultural phenomenon wherever they occur (Lurie 1982). In other words, mini-field studies in

nearby communities and within academic institutions themselves could be an integral part of the anthropology graduate curriculum.

Graduate students should be encouraged to be aware of and explicit about their own value systems during their training instead of operating under the illusion that they actually will be neutral, value-free, and objective in their research. Some aspects of the value clarification training in social work education may be useful here (Venus-Madden and Easley 1982).

To ease one's entry into fieldwork and to create less immediate suspicion it might be easier to define oneself in terms of acceptable occupations within the community (e.g. journalist, novelist, teacher). I found that an "anthropological researcher" was certainly not a readily understandable category in the Eastown community. I do think it is important to let people know that you are doing research and for what purposes, but I am hesitant about calling one's major occupation that of a researcher. Another model which could be followed is that of "Participatory Research," advocated by Paulo Friere, in which the researcher actively works with the people in her field situation to explore the questions they have selected in contrast to the researcher working by herself to find answers to the questions she is personally interested in. (Friere 1972; Stinson 1979: 139).

It's important to become aware of what and who gives you psychological support before you enter the field situation so that you can draw on these sources, even if they are at a distance, once you enter the field.

In general, I think it would be very helpful to encourage graduate students to participate in more fieldwork in conjunction with their taking of the usual academic courses in anthropology. This could also be accompanied by extensive readings on what other anthropologists have written about their field experiences. More opportunities for passing down "the oral traditions" surrounding the fieldwork experiences of faculty members should also be encouraged (e.g. parties, campfires, etc.).

Reflections: Effects of Doing Fieldwork on My Personal Growth

Becoming a Marginal Person: A Woman Without a Group

Many anthropologists have described the feelings of marginality they have experienced while conducting fieldwork. In many respects our extensive educational background makes it impossible for us ever to really "go native" completely.

However, there are degrees of marginality and one's entrance to the field can be critical in shaping this. I had introduced myself primarily as a researcher and as a result found myself often trying to prove to people that they were not just "merely objects of study" to me. I can

empathize with Barrie Thorne's description of her own experiences with this:

> I discovered that talking about my role as sociologist sometimes generated a great deal of suspicion and hostility---far, in excess, I felt, to what my project deserved. With some part of myself I didn't blame them; my being an observer with an outside purpose in mind added an instrumental quality to any interchange. But I also wanted, sometimes desperately, to be trusted (Thorne 1971: 373).

My "credentials" as a former leader and activist in social movements did not transfer to my field situation. At the same time, the demands of adjunct college teaching prevented me from becoming an active leader in the neighborhood. This work was also not something that

Unconsciously, I saw the anthropology department at Michigan State University as the place where I was more understood and accepted, a kind of "home base." However, it slowly dawned on me during one of my visits there that my fieldwork experiences had differentiated me from old friends and colleagues (Hart, 1979). I realized that I no longer really belonged anywhere but was still expected to fit into both Michigan State University academia and Eastown life. Soon after this, I discussed this phenomena with my dissertation adviser, who responded by asking if being loved means being understood; then can anthropologists, by virtue of their personal fieldwork experiences ever be loved?

The answer I worked out is that yes, I can be loved. But, given that one person or one group can only understand a part of the anthropologist, it may mean that she has to be in touch with many different people with whom she has shared very different experiences to feel understood and loved.

I now realize that there is no longer a geographically defined group of friends who readily understand and thus love me. Instead I will always be gleaning support from many spatially separated individuals with whom I have shared different special experiences.

Challenged by Differences

As previously described, while in graduate school I had surrounded myself by circles of friends who basically agreed with each other and thus reaffirmed each other's basic beliefs. We tended to self-righteously avoid personal interactions with those who held radically different values. In many respects we were afraid of them.

Fieldwork forced me to directly face people I basically disagreed with. And in stretching myself to understand them, I found that we shared more similarities than differences.

> To claim that one is more like than unlike other people is perhaps the most radical position a person can take. The simple notion that although each of us is unique we are members of a species, and are in the most profound ways alike, is very threatening. Threatening, because one of the most certain ways of perpetuating the status quo is to ignore this reality, and

> to be consumed with the differences between yourself and others. Certainly this has always been a standard tool of oppression and the underlying theme of fascism: blacks are not like whites; Jews are not like Aryans; women are not like men (Lester 1974).

In the fieldwork process I learned how to de-emphasize the barriers between myself and others. Thus, I was recently asked, "Why don't you have a big ego, with all those degrees you have collected?" If this is true, it is because of the efforts I had to make to get along with many different types of people in my field situation. Instead of fearing those who seemed different, my curiosity grew and I became challenged by them, wondering what had happened in their lives that encouraged them to think so differently from myself. Such a perspective led me also to a job teaching an introduction sociology class to a group of Sheriff's Deputies at the Grand Rapids Junior College. I was told that I was hired specifically because they felt that, as an anthropologist, I was trained to work with people who were different from myself.

Given these experiences, I have decided to try to keep a better balance between relating to people who I know will basically support much of who I am and spending time with people who, at least appear to be, very different from myself. Both kinds of relationships seem essential to my personal growth.

Revising my Explanatory Frameworks

Having been active in the women's movement and researched anthropological literature on gender for my doctoral exams, I approached fieldwork thinking that gender was the most critical element in defining many social situations. Gradually I moved away from this perspective. Perhaps this was because I personally was treated as androgenous. I also found many occasions when the gender seemed blurred and of less importance and this general framework didn't seem to explain enough about why things happened the way they did. Another reason for this change in perspective could be general differences in focus between participants in the women's movement and those in the neighborhood movement. In the discussion of their study on women and community organizations, Gittell and Naples note:

> The leaders of community organizations perceived their constituency as the entire community. They saw their primary issues as education, employment, housing and child care. Some also emphasized health care as a major concern. They framed their concerns in terms of the needs of the men, women and children in their community. Leaders of women-specific organizations, on the other hand, had primary and often exclusive identification with women as their constituency, virtually ignoring class differences. They focused on legislative and institutional changes that would counter sex discrimination (1982: 27).

I then began to utilize socioeconomic class variables to try to explain individual's involvement within the

organization and suggested that this could be a critical factor during one of the workshops held around the EASTOWN book. However, neighborhood residents pointed out that this was too simplistic of an analysis (Fessondon, 1979; Williams 1979). From their point of view, as people who "get things done" in the neighborhood, the important thing to know is who will help you do what you want to do. And such people can exist in very high as well as very low places. They neither overly romanticized the poor nor chastized people for being in the middle class. They saw the limitations and potentials of both and tried to work with all of them. Eric Wolf, in his book Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century, also notes the important role played by a coalition by these two groups in creating cultural change (Wolf 1970). And Harry Boyte has more recently termed this a "majoritationa Strategy" wherein groups of different people work together around common interests to create change. He contrasts this to the emphasis on singe-interest (e.g. blacks, women, poor) organizing that characterized the 1960's (Boyte 1982).

I have thus moved from a primary interest in women's lives and socioeconomic class variables looking at the ways in which conflicts are bridged among these different groups as they work together to try to create a better world.

Building versus Fighting

Prior to my work with E.C.A. I had adopted a general fighting stance vis a vis the injustices I saw in the world

around me. I definitely knew what I was against (e.g. sexism, racism, "classism"). The emphasis in the Eastown Community Association, in contrast, was on building a community in the neighborhood and creating alternative institutions. In some ways it had been easier to be against many things and it was more difficult and took more courage to take a strong position for something. However, it also is more exciting and hopeful to be part of creating new and more just forms of community life. I can now much more clearly see "the seeds of the future in the present."

Summary

The chapter began with a description of the various aspects of culture shock I experienced in moving from a graduate school environment at Michigan State University to my field situation in a neighborhood in Grand Rapids, Michigan. My field research was unique in that I was "studying people like me." Transitions in work, changes in social relationships, psychological insights and the recognition of the inherent political dimensions of scientific research were described. This was followed by a brief discussion of the various roles I took on while conducting my research: a single woman/living alone; a volunteer-activist; a college instructor; a social science researcher.

Like most anthropologists, I had to seriously consider what I could give back to Eastowners in exchange for the information I had gathered. After I became aware of the

irrelevance of written materials (e.g. books, a dissertation) to many, and the unethicalness involved in taking on a quasi-therapist role, I decided that my reciprocity would come in the form of serving as a broker (e.g. plugging Eastowners into area-wide college programs) and working as a volunteer with the Association.

The discussion then moved on to looking at some of the implications that these fieldwork experiences could have for social movement participants and for graduate students in anthropology. Having a sympathetic observer studying the internal organizational processes within a social movement can make a group much more cognizant of its own dynamics and thus able to change them if they are inconsistent with their goals. Suggestions for graduate students who plan to work in mainstream American culture included: being well-grounded in information about non-Western cultures; being acquainted with the process of culture shock; conducting fieldwork as an integral part of one's graduate training; becoming aware and articulate about one's own value system; and building a support group outside of one's field situation. Another suggestion was made concerning the possibilities of anthropologists working with the people in the field to develop and explore the questions they themselves develop (i.e. participatory research).

In the concluding section I described some of the major ways in which I have personally grown as a result of my living in Eastown. I have come to recognize the

permanency of my "marginal state" and realize that I will have to interact with many individuals and groups who may be spatially separated, in order to feel understood and thus loved. Fieldwork forced me to learn how to de-emphasize the barriers between myself and others and taught me the importance of keeping a balance between interacting with people who reaffirm me and those who may be quite different from myself. In the process of conducting this research, my interests changed from looking primarily at gender roles and socioeconomic class differences in trying to explain the organization's behavior to looking at the conflict resolving mechanisms which were developed to bridge such differences. I moved from a general stance of fighting much of the injustices I saw in the world around me to focusing on the processes through which people can work together to build better alternatives. In sum, I discovered that:

> Rather than studying people, ethnography means learning from people (Spradley 1980: 3).

CHAPTER VI

THE EMERGENCE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD MOVEMENT

THE EMERGENCE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD MOVEMENT

This chapter describes the general circumstances which have encouraged the formation of the neighborhood movement. Three critical problems--poverty, powerlessness, and alienation, are described and a brief review of several unsuccessful efforts by global corporations, the federal government, and city administrations to tackle these problems is given. It is suggested that one reason for these failures might lie in the fact that poverty, powerlessness, and alienation are an inherent part of these structures and therefore new institutions may be needed to address them. The next section looks at how such new social forms can be developed at the local level and then describes the general macro scale conditions which have encouraged such "culture building" processes in the United States during the last fifteen years. After a brief comparison of the similarities and differences between the neighorhood movement and other movements for social reform, the chapter discusses three different trends which exist within the neighborhood movement: viewing the neighborhood as a political base, as a political community, or as a social community. It concludes by suggesting that the neighborhood movement may be creating the new social institutions which are necessary to address the problems of poverty, powerlessness, and alienation.

Contemporary Social Problems

Many of the social problems (e.g. crime, illiteracy, poor health, environmental deterioration) which plague modern state level cultures can be traced directly to the fact that the majority of their inhabitants do not have either control over essential economic resources nor effective access to political decision-making processes. Although many suggest that "the poor have always been with us," Bodley (1975: 15) points out that this is not an historically universal situation and notes that "personal and social problems related to inequality, such as poverty, powerlessness, and alienation are not characteristic of primitive cultures, but they may be intrinsic aspects of industrial civilizations" (emphasis added).

Poverty

Poverty, which may be generally conceptualized as the lack of sufficient resources to meet subsistence needs (e.g. shelter, food, clothing), is prevalent throughout the modern world. "The existence of classes and the exploitation of the poor by the rich have been for 4000 years the most outstanding fact of social life" (Peet 1978 : 103). Lester Thurow, a professor of economics and management at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, calculates that in the United States:

> The richest 10% of our households receive 26.1 percent of our income while the poorest 10% receive only 1.7%... blacks earn 69% as much as whites; women who

> work full time earn 56% as much as men. If we look at the distribution of physical wealth, the top 20% own 80% of all that can be privately owned in the United States and the bottom 25% owns nothing (many of them, in fact, have debts that exceed their assets. (1979: 4).

Of all the world's industrial nations only France has a greater degree of income disparity. (National Commission on Neighborhoods Final Report 1979: 4). This gap between the rich and the poor within the United States and on a global level has not been closing (Barnet and Muller 1974). "Although victory in two world wars and the production stimulated by war and peace has increased the total "pie" of the United States, there has been no significant income redistribution since 1910 (Sherman and Wood 1979: 25). Another "fact that continually surprises analysts is that a large proportion of the poor are employed on a full-time basis" (Eames and Goode 1973: 223).

<u>Powerlessness</u>

Political decisions are those which are made to guide and influence the lives of entire groups of people (Vivelo 1978: 135). Such decisions are made within state level societies by specialized individuals and/or groups (e.g. kings, royal families, Congresses, City Councils) who operate within centralized, hierarchichal, authoritarian structures. Thus the majority of the people are only peripherally involved in the political decision making processes which govern their lives; they remain relatively powerless.

The widespread existence of poverty and undemocratic political institutions are interrelated, "for if politics in the contemporary world is about anything at all, it is certainly 'about' the control of the technoeconomic sphere and how the economic pie is to be cut up and distributed" (Kaplan and Manners (1972: 11).

Alienation

Research on alienation often assumes that it is produced, at least in urban areas from the increase in the numbers of role relationships one has with strangers, which then leads to a breakdown of one's primary groups. In contrast, Eames and Goode suggest,

> "there is a strong interconnection between alienation and the subordination of the individual to political and economic forces beyond his locality...the nature of capitalistic-industrial production subordinates the city to regional, national, and international economic forces such as the multinational corporation, which are highly centralized" (1978: 49).

Thus the conditions of poverty, powerlessness, and alienation which the majority of the people in the world today experience are relatively recent developments in human history and are getting worse. Some attribute the development of these problems to the type of economic systems we have, whereas, others point to political structures as the basic source of inequality:

> Ever since the time of Karl Marx, there have been a growing number of observers who ascribe to "capitalism" per se the various socioeconomic problems they choose to identify. Yet the primary source is probably the general type of political system defined above as the nation-state (with capitalism, socialism, and communism, etc.) being only particular attributes, or variants, of a common political form...Those who speak in the name of the state enact policies and pursue courses of action that tend to increase the security of the state---i.e. they tend to increase power and authority, thus rendering the state less susceptible to challenge from the populace---despite self-depreciatory postures of the state to the contrary (Vivelo 1978: 142).

Addressing These Problems at Various Levels

A brief review of the major efforts which have been made at many levels to tackle these critical problems illustrates the limitations of such endeavors.

International Companies

For example, one of the claims made by global corporations is that they are "the most effective and rational force to develop and distribute the resources of the world" (Barnet and Muller 1974: 24). However, in their book THE GLOBAL REACH, Barnet and Muller effectively argue that "the development track pursued by global corporations in those years (the 1960's) contributed more to exacerbation of world poverty, world unemployment, and world inequality than to their solution (1974: 151). They conclude their review of the political operations of global corporations by saying, "All of this raises what indeed is shaping up as

the supreme political issue of our time (i.e. whether it is really 'rational' to attempt to organize the planet through centralizing technologies into every larger pyramidal structures" (42).

National Programs

On a national level, the attempts which have been made by the federal government to address the poverty problem have not been successful. For example, the Community Action Programs were designed to be controlled by local community residents. However, lack of funding has undermined many of these efforts and increased control over their operations has been given to local elites which means that in many cities these programs have only served to strengthen the status quo (Bailey 1974: 45; Piven and Cloward 1977: 31). Another federal solution aimed at improving the employment situation for the poor, the Comprehensive Employment Training Act, has run into widely publicized problems of corruption. William Ryan suggests that a major reason for the failure of these federal poverty programs lies in the fact that most of them have focused on activities which will either change the poor as individuals or pacify them instead of promoting needed structural changes within our political economy (Ryan 1971: 24).

The foremost expression of citizen participation in the United States takes place in the form of voting for public officials. During the last two national elections approximately fifty-five percent of the eligible adult

population voted (World Almanac 1979). The role that this franchise plays in the political decision making processes is highly debated among social scientists. The predominant view held by a school of political scientists known as the pluralists is that the electoral system balances out the power held by those who control the means of wealth in this country. They hold that free political choices are made by free women and men (Dahl 1961). On the other hand, Piven and Cloward argue that any group's participation in the political process is strongly influenced by its location in the class structure and they suggest that as long as lower class groups follow the electoral norms they will have little influence (Piven and Cloward 1978: 12). Other critics demonstrate the specific ways in which wealth influences election procedures and the biases toward the interest of the elites which exist in "neutral" governmental structures (Mills 1956; Domhoff 1967).

Urban Efforts

Increasingly large and centralized city departments have been created to tackle many problems in the city because of the supposed "vast economies of scale to be gained by having single departments, covering great areas, to do essential work. In fact this increase has not solved these problems, brought smaller budgets, nor even shrunk, as the city populations have declined (Morris and Hess 1975: 5).

In sum, the efforts which have been made by global corporations, the national government, and city administrations to tackle the interrelated problems of poverty, powerlessness, and alienation have largely failed. This may be generally due to the fact that these problems are built into the operations of the very structures which have been given the responsibility for solving them.

New Institutions Are Needed

The Viability of Urban Forms

Poverty, powerlessness, and alienation are often viewed as "urban problems." This may be partly due to the fact that these areas presently contain the majority of the country's population. However, Bashem, an urban anthropologist, suggests that the development of gaps between the rich and the poor is inherent in the urbanization process itself. "There can be little doubt that progressive urbanization and the increasing division of labor which accompanies it, promote class distinctions (Bashem 1978: 210). Or it may be a result of policies which have encouraged the development of poverty in urban areas. For example, federal money was used to subsidize low cost housing for the poor in urban centers which were far from the higher paying jobs in the suburbs. And government agencies concentrated most of their social programs in the cities which also encouraged poor people to migrate there (Fleetwood 1979: 20).

The urbanization process also promotes general regional imbalances in the distrubution of economic ans political power throughout the country. Many scholars today use Horace Miner's conceptualization of a city as a "center or dominance" in their efforts to describe urban life and explain its development (Miner 1967: 5-10; Wheatley 1967; Uzzell and Provencher, 1976). To Miner, the role of the city as a power phenomenon is its essential quality (Eames and Goode 1978: 37).

Thus, some scholars suggest that a major concern of those now analyzing "contemporary urban forms or cities is the question of the viability of forms that currently exist (Eames and Goode 1977: 36,(author's emphasis) Dwyer 1979; Morris and Hess 1975).

Alternatives to Nation-States

Others argue that it isn't ruralness of urbanness that is important and look to the contradictions which exist in our political and economic institutions. Until recently most social scientists have assumed that the modern, large, technologically-developed state systems are more adaptive and more efficient than other cultural types (e.g. bands, tribes) (White 1949: 393). However, Marvin Harris notes that every state level society must face an unrelenting organizational challenge "due to inequalities in the form of differential access to basic resources, asymmetrical redistribution of the producer's surplus, lopsided work loads and consumption standards (Harris 1971: 405).

And Morton Fried concludes that "the maintenance of general order" and "the need to support the order of stratification" are the primary functions of the state (Fried 1960: 728). In other words, political and economic inequities seem to be an integral part of both the structure and function of state level cultures.

Scholars are beginning to suggest that such political systems may be maladaptive and inefficient (Bodley 1976; Morris and Hess 1975: 11; Rappaport 1977). For example, a prominent political geographer, Edward Soja, suggests that:

> it is possible that the nation-state in its present form is no longer suitable to the radically changed situation in the contemporary world. New organizational structures and new bases for societal identity may be required to contend with contemporary global problems (Soja 1971: 17).

Limits of Global Organizations

In The Global Reach, (1974) Barnet and Muller critically assess the capabilities of multinational corporations and conclude by saying:

> Our criterion for determining whether a social force is progressive is whether it is likely to benefit the bottom 60 percent of the population. Present and projected strategies of global corporations offer little hope for the problems of mass starvation, mass unemployment, and gross inequality. Indeed, the global corporation aggravates all these problems, because the social system it is helping to create violates three fundamental human needs; social balance, ecological balance, and psychological balance. These imbalances have always been present in

> our modern social system; concentration of economic power, antisocial uses of that power, and alienation have been tendencies of advanced capitalism. But the process of globalization, interacting with and reinforcing the process of accelerating concentration has brought us to a new stage (Barnet and Muller 1974: 364).

Among their recommendations for remedies to this situation, Barnet and Muller suggest that international regulatory agencies be strengthened. "Paradoxically, the precondition for effective international regulation, in our view, is the restoration of certain power to national and local communities to manage their own territory (Barnet and Muller 1974: 373). Also along this line, Roy Rappaport comments:

> An increasingly complex world organization is based upon decreasingly organized local, regional, and even national, social and ecological systems. It seems doubtful that a worldwide human organization can elaborate itself indefinitely at the expense of its local infrastructures, and it may be suggested that the ability of the world system to withstand perturbation would be increased by returning to its local subsystems some of the autonomy and diversity they have lost, as China seems to be doing. This is not to advocate fracturing the world into smaller, autonomous self-sufficient systems, as undesireable as impossible, but to suggest that redistribution of organization among the levels of the world system would serve well the world system as a whole (Rappaport 1977: 21).

Meanwhile, Back in the Neighborhoods

Active "Victims"

Analyses of macro systems often imply that the people affected by them are merely passive victims who adapt as

best they can to the operations of these overwhelmingly powerful institutions and processes. However, this does not take into account the variations in the impacts that these institutions have on populations throughout the world (Wolf 1979). It also ignores the active efforts that women and men make to control their lives. They are not "simply adaptive, but develop alternative ways of organizing production, reproduction, and values" (Collier 1972: 7; 1972,1979). Piven and Cloward describe academic attempts to address this latter oversight:

> Perhaps the singular contribution of the intellectual tradition of the left, as it has developed since the nineteenth century, has been to bring working-class people fully into history, not simply as victims, but as actors. The left has understood that working class people are a historical force and could become a greater historical force (Piven and Cloward 1977: ix).

"Organized" Patterns of Behavior

Along with the word "victim," the term "unorganized" is often used to describe various segments of the population. However, any group of people who interact over a period of time develop systematic patterns of relating--an organizational structure. Perhaps this mistake is so frequently made because the lives of the groups being analyzed (e.g. lower class, blacks, women) are organized differently than the lives familiar to many social science observers (e.g. middle class, white, male) (Schaaf 1981; Stack 1975). Often, researchers and political activists

interpret the lack of formal organizations as the lack of any organization (Piven and Cloward 1977; National Commission of Neighborhoods Final Report 1979). An anthropologist who has studied urban neighborhoods for the past ten years, Delmos Jones, writes, "My own work as a researcher and organizer has made me aware of the strong tendency on the part of policy makers and scholars to confuse the existence of an organization in a neighborhood with the organization of a neighborhood (Jones 1967; 1977).

In examining these informal patterns of organization which exist at the local level in industrial society, Mina Caufield focuses on the strength of the family unit which operates with alternative forms of economic arrangements (e.g. subsistence production) and creates a multiplicity of social relationships (e.g. cements family ties and builds friendship networks) which may contribute to survival and to political resistance (Caufield 1979).

Caufield and others see this as part of a larger culture-building process" which takes place at the micro level of society. "Culture is a continual creative act; the qualitative leap into awareness and affirmation that takes place in the struggle to resolve the contradictions of man's existence" (Caufield 1979; Fanon 1963: 238; Blauner 1969: 422).

"Free Social Space"

Eric Wolf also discusses this phenomenon in relation to peasant villages, "the ecological crisis forced men to seek

new social forms which would grant them shelter...a revolution consists of the outcome of such defensive reactions, coupled with a search for a new and more human social order." (Wolf 1970: 50) Boyte adds that "the crucible for such change is "free social space"--in the neighborhood context, local structures and constellations of structures which have become activated in a new way and which retain an important measure of organizational, cultural and political autonomy from dominant power" (Boyte 1979: 10)

Anthony Leeds' classic article "Locality Power in Relation to Supralocal Power Institutions," also emphasizes the autonomous dimensions of localities:

> The amorphousness, multiplicity, and kaleidoscopic quality of the organization of localities, which give rise to the flexibility I have mentioned are very difficult to grasp intellectually, even by the specially trained. By the same token, they are virtually impossible to legislate for (or against) or to control by uniform sets of sanctions. The only fully effective control over localities, one which would affect all forms of organization, would be total coercion through major application of force. Because of these conditions, localities are almost always found to be characterized by a certain autonomy from external agencies and institutions, a certain ability to enter into relationships with them as independent bodies. This independence is maintained by "padding" provided by the complex of social relationships in the locality against the impact of these supralocal entities. In this independence and its social and ecological bases is found as a locale of power for cooperation with--but especially for resistance against the encroachments of--the supralocal institutions, as we shall

> see. It is also the basis for the emergence of the true community: a cross-section of all major institutions of society transected by a local, self-maintaining boundary (Leeds 1973: 24).

And it is such autonomy which is a pre-condition for a potentially insurgent group to develop explicit self-consciousness of its oppression and confidence in its capacity to struggle against oppressive structures...the emergence of democratic revolt requires, in addition to a degree of organizational autonomy, an important measure of cultural freedom--both in the sense of insulation from dominant, individualist, competitive patterns and also in the sense of openness to experimentation and diversity (Boyte 1979: 12).

Conceptual Blinders

In sum, when scholars and activists describe neighborhoods as both alienated and unorganized, they overlook the patterns of everyday life which exist and the new structures which are evolving at this level. They also ignore the various linkages which tie these localities to regional, national, and international systems. Many fail to recognize the relationship between developments at the local level and larger scale changes. For example, Piven and Cloward point out that:

> ...insofar as contemporary movements in industrial society do not take the form predicted by an analysis of nineteenth century capitalism, the left has not tried to understand these movements, but rather has tended simply to disapprove of them. The wrong people have

> mobilized, for they are not truly the industrial proletariat. Or they have mobilized around the wrong organizational and political strategies. The movements of the people disappoint the doctrine, and so the movements are dismissed." (1977: 5).

They also note that these same movements are discredited in the dominant pluralistic tradition by political scientists on the grounds that they are not necessary because there are plentiful opportunities for the working class to pursue its interests through the franchise (Piven and Cloward 1977: x). Mina Caufield and Harry Boyte make similar comments about the "conceptual blinders" which scholars wear regarding such social movements (Caufield 1972,1979; Boyte 1979).

Boyte attributes this partially to those using a Marxian model of class consciousness. This perspective assumes that for people to become truly involved in progressive cultural change they must strip themselves of traditional relations, beliefs, and historical affiliations so that they can come face to face with the real conditions of their oppression. Thus, the family, ethnic organizations and the church are viewed as the backwaters of the culture where ignorance, superstition, and prejudice predominate. In contrast to this, Boyte argues that "the process of group revolt always draws upon rich cultural resources from the past. And oppositional consciousness emerges first from partially autonomous existing structures which have become politicized in a new fashion (Boyte 1979). The current neighborhood movement is noted for this

emphasis and thus Janice Perlman writes, "The miracle of community organizing strength since 1970 is its ability to use the fundamental values of received culture---home, family, and religion---to build an increasing demand for the rights and privileges of citizenship (Perlman 1979: 18). However, it is the conditions which exist outside of localities which influence whether or not their potential to create cultural change becomes a reality.

Ripening External Conditions

Consciousness and Behavioral Changes

During the last fifteen years in the United States, economic and political developments have strengthened the "culture building" processes in many neighborhoods and have encouraged their autonomy. They have also provided the pre-conditions for the rise of protest movements. Piven and Cloward describe the emergence of a protest movement as involving both a transformation of consciousness and of behavior. The change in consciousness has at least three distinct aspects:

1. "The system"--or those aspects of the system that people experience and perceive--loses legitimacy. Large numbers of men and women who ordinarily accept the authority of their rulers and the legitimacy of institutional arrangements come to believe in some measure that these rulers and these arrangements are unjust and wrong.

2. People who are ordinarily fatalistic, who believe that existing arrangements are inevitable, begin to assert 'rights' that imply demands for change.

> 3. There is a new sense of efficacy; people who ordinarily consider themselves helpless come to believe that they have some capacity to alter their lot.

The change in behavior involves two distinguishing elements:

> 1. Masses of people become defiant; they violate the traditions and laws to which they ordinarily acquiesce, and they flaunt the authorities to whom they ordinarily defer.
>
> 2. Their defiance is acted out collectively, as members of a group, and not as isolated individuals...those who engage in these acts may consider themselves to be part of a larger group, share a common set of beliefs. (Piven and Cloward 1979: 3).

This conceptualization differs from most in that it does not stress the inclusion of conscious intentions or social change goals, but focuses on collective defiance as the distinguishing feature of protest movements.

In reviewing the social science research on the rise of protest movements, Piven and Cloward divide the various perspectives into two categories. There are those that (1) emphasize the pressures that force eruptions and (2) those that focus on the breakdown of the regulatory capacity of the society. They, themselves, add that the people involved also have to perceive the deprivation and disorganization they experience as both wrong and subject to redress for a social movement to occur (Piven and Cloward 1977: 8).

Economic Pressures

"Pressure theorists" emphasize the ways in which economic changes disturb the relationship between what women

and men have been led to expect and the conditions they actually experience. (Gurr 1968, 1970; Davies 1962).

The "American Dream" has not come true for many who expected it recently because of the slowing growth of the general economy (Garretson 1976: 47). This has involved an increasing inflation rate, growing indebtedness, and worsened fiscal conditions for American cities. Fierce competition for capital has increased the pressure on urban neighborhood institutions by accelerating the practice of redlining, (e.g. the policy of a bank to refuse to lend to residents in poor-risk neighborhoods) (Boyte 1979: 10).

Within this larger context several scholars have suggested that inner city neighborhoods are suffering from aspects of imperialism which are similar to those experienced by Third World countries (Morris and Hess 1975: 14). In the 1979 Final Report to the President, prepared by the National Commission on Neighborhoods, neighborhoods are described as "less developed countries inside our own country" and as colonies of the United States (National Commission on Neighborhood 1979: 1, 10). These areas are largely owned by outsiders who view them as profitable investments (e.g. slumlords). In general, the neighborhoods export labor-intensive services and import capital-intensive goods. There is little domestic industry and where it does exist, it is supplied by "foreign firms." The communications network is controlled by global corporations and thus local customs and cultures do not have access to conventional

media channels. Often there is even a lack of a community of interest among the residents. Some people are rich and allied with "foreign" interests, often as minor partners. Middle class residents work as managers in the "foreigners" firms (Morris and Hess 1975: 17).

At the same time, rising energy costs and inflationary trends have encouraged more people to stay closer to home and thus more of their lives may be lived out in their neighborhoods--within bicycling distance as Tom Edison is fond of saying. (Edison 1980). For example, we are witnessing the strengthing of regional professional organizations (e.g. Central States Anthropological Society) and the decrease in the number of meetings held by the corresponding national association (e.g. American Anthropological Association).

Political System Breakdowns

Although neighborhoods may once have operated as autonomous political bodies, they now come under the jurisdiction of various administrative and political units (e.g. police, school, social agencies) within a larger metropolitan area (Kotler 1969). During the 1960's and 1970's people in urban neighborhoods experienced a decline in the quality of services delivered by these institutions. Alperovitz and Faux suggest that this is because many of the old Democratic ward party bosses had been bought off by bankers and developers (1979: 22). Residents began to ask questions about the way these departments and agencies

operated. "Neighborhood activists know that it is rare for government to serve real community needs; government programs are consistently subordinated to marketplace considerations and, as often as not, are designed to fail as much as to succeed." (Mollenkopf 1979: 24).

In response to these severe difficulties, corporations in the 1970's have defended themselves with a new aggressiveness and a hostility to reform of any sort, seeking instead to redistribute the national wealth upward. They have made readjustments in political relations which would favor large corporations. One result of this seems to be a crisis in the traditional mode of interest group politics (Boyte 1979: 10). There is an increasing competition between social groups, each seeking to preserve its own pattern of consumption, regardless of the consequences for less powerful groups (e.g. California's Proposition 13). In other words, the citizenry as a whole has become reluctant to finance government services which go, not to them, but to some special interest...traditional pork-barrel liberalism has reached its Waterloo" (Mollenkopf 1979: 24). Boyte notes the early signs of a new, class defined political polarization (Boyte 1979: 9).

There has also been a breakdown in the processes which usually regulate political processes in this country. These situations correspond to Piven and Cloward's description of circumstances under which consciousness changes:

> ...transvaluation (reappraisal of situations as both wrong and subject to redress) is even more likely to take place or to take place more rapidly, when the dislocation suffered by particular groups occur in a context of wider changes and instability, at times when the dominant institutional arrangements of the society, as people understand them, are self-evidently not functioning (Piven and Cloward 1977: 9).

The Neighborhood Movement and Other Movements for Social Reform

Organizing at Work and Organizing at Home

Several observers have compared the neighborhood movement with labor organizing. "As the welfare state has grown and the role of the government in people's daily lives has expanded, the need for organization at the place of residence has become equally or more important as the need for such organization at the work place... the fact that urban services are consumed collectively and not individually has also led naturally to community wide demands by neighborhood residents" (Perlman 1979: 20). Schoenberg and Rosenbaum indicate that there may be some relationship between the fact that increasing numbers of women have entered the public economy and the strengthening of neighborhood ties. "One of the crucial supports for a working woman who knows she will not be home when her children return is a safe neighborhood with schools, stores, recreation, and household services within walking distance of home" (1980: 145).

"It was one thing for a union to give higher wages and quite another for it to be able to prevent the corporations from taking back the wages through fixed and inflated prices or to prevent the government from taxing away the wages and returning them to the corporations...it is here that community organizations have stepped in to fill the vacuum" (Boyte 1979: 10).

Both movements aim to represent a fairly broad sector of the working class...both aim to be stable, long-term organizations that will outlast any particular campaign (Ackerman :123). They are guided by many of the same principles--self-interest, pragmatism, and an emphasis on winning specific issues. One of the major figures in the community organizing movement, Saul Alinsky, worked closely with the union organizer, John Lewis, and borrowed many tactics and principles from the early labor movement (Bailey 1974: 48).

However, some important differences exist between the two movements as well. Community life is far more fragmented--divided along various class, ethnic, racial, and religious lines. It is more difficult to clearly define the on-going constituencies and to delineate and prioritize issues to act on. There is no union shop or collective bargaining laws and thus community residents can easily come and go. Therefore, a neighborhood organization has to maintain a higher level of agreement

among its members and its leadership cannot take actions that members strongly oppose. And, in contrast to other social movements which may use appeals to conscience and morality in their efforts to recruit members (e.g. anti-war) community organizers must find out where the people are and work with what they define as in their self-interest (Morris and Hess 1975: 39).

Unlike a union, a neighborhood organization faces a multitude of different types of oppositions (e.g. housing authorities, school officials, highway engineers). This does give them greater freedom from direct manipulation and does require them to be skilled in a variety of organizing strategies. They also can rely on the greater responsiveness on the part of government to public pressure (Boyte 1979: 58, 1979: 10; Ackerman :123).

Other Distinctive Characteristics of the Neighborhood Movement

Draws on Tradition

As has been previously mentioned, the neighborhood movement differs from other social movements in that instead of encouraging its participants to reject their "traditions" (e.g. family, ethnic organizations, church), it draws on these as rich cultural resources to be built upon.

Diverse Constituencies With Multiple Issues

The emphasis on the similar interests which people have because they share a common territory encourages the existence of diverse constituencies with holistic outlooks in contrast to the single interest and narrowly defined constituencies present in other social movements (e.g. blacks, welfare rights, women's). This also gives participants a sense of definable boundaries in which they feel they can "get a handle" on life, whereas it may be more difficult to see the immediate results of work done on other issues (e.g. peace, ecology). Neighborhood organizations also tend to form temporary and permanent coalitions with groups who have similar interests.

Formal Democratic Internal Organizations

Democracy is a theme which is emphasized throughout the movement and care is taken to "practice what they preach" through the development of internal organizations in which people can practice the art of collective democratic decision-making. Such structures are often formalized in contrast to the often informal groups which serve as the basis for other social movements and often concentrate their efforts on trying to change the world outside of themselves (e.g. peace, ecology). This is discussed in my detail later in this chapter.

Currents Within The Neighborhood Movement

The neighborhood movement means different things to different people. Today it includes those who see neighborhoods as composed of architectural artifacts and potential investments. The desirability by the middle class for inner city housing has increased sharply due to the energy crisis and the higher prices in the conventional housing market. Public authorities have been seriously looking at the neighborhood as a smaller unit for planning analysis and the delivery of services. On the other hand, an insider's perspective focuses on providing affordable housing for low and moderate income residents and looks at possibilities for local control and self-government (Levy 1979: 28).

Paul Levy outlines three other images that neighborhoods have had for different participants in the movement during the last fifteen years. These three components of the neighborhood can be seen as differing in the focus they place on addressing the major social problems discussed earlier.

The Neighborhood As a Power Base (focuses on poverty)

Saul Alinsky encouraged residents to organize their neighborhoods in order to get what was their due from public and private officials. His work as an organizer and theoretician in the 1930's and 1940's has served as

the cornerstone for community organizers since then. (Alinsky 1946). Boyte describes three basic principles of his techniques:

> 1. He organized people for power by appealing to their perceived self-interest around concrete issues. His concern for short term goals was non-ideological, pragmatic, and experimental. He was pretty much willing to work with anyone who would help him with an issue, forming political alliances across a broad range of political opinion.
>
> 2. Alinsky stressed the building of indigenous leadership by identifying, unifying and enlisting the leadership which existed in the infrastructure of the community. "Central to Alinsky's method is the understanding of culture as a resource to be used, not discarded, and the perception that a successful organization must build upon, strengthen, and open up the existing elements of the social fabric, not destroy them" (Boyte 1979: 13).
>
> 3. And Alinsky organized to win by using a wide range of tactics which were already too familiar to area residents. He always began by working "within their world of experience." Alinsky emphasized continually small victories on concrete issues as a way of building the self-confidence of residents who has felt defeated in may of their life experiences. (1978: 49)

However, what was won for whom? Alinsky-organized groups fit quite readily into the pluralistic interest group political processes and instead of changing urban institutions or the political processes they ended up being only better integrated into them. Several such groups finally organized to prevent blacks from moving into their neighborhoods (Bailey 1974: 49).

A recently formed national group which is neighorhood based, the Association of Community Organizations for

Reform Now, takes the position that national problems cannot be solved locally and views neighborhoods as areas to be strengthened mainly for mounting statewide and national campaigns around political and economic issues.

The Neighborhood as a Political Community (focuses on power)

Those with this focus view the neighborhood as the setting in which to revive and maintain American democracy through local self-government (Kotler 1969; Morris and Hess 1975). To do this they see the necessity to build new civic institutions for democratic participation by all neighborhood residents, regardless of class, color, or sex. Smallness of scale, active participation, and civic vigilance are important themes for this group. Some see democratic processes severely threatened in this country (National Commission on Neighborhoods Final Report 1979: 7). "The convergence of big government and big business toward a corporate state is designed to guarantee order and statility to the nation and profit to the balance sheet of private corporations. In this context, a fundamental issue of the coming decade will be to the extent to which democracy can survive and expand in an era of continued pressure on America's real income (Alperwitz and Faux 1979: 22). DeGraff has noted that democracy as a political form for the future is being debated in the business community:

> Hunnington (a Harvard professor) calls this new concern for social and economic justice "excessive democracy" in his Trilateral Report and suggests that popular democratic rights, including freedom of the press, will have to be curtailed in the "national interest"--that is, in the current economic status quo. What these worries on the part of Trilateral strategists suggest is a forthcoming corporate attack on democratic principles and the lifting of standards of "average American." If the people do not accept a program of austerity for themselves and vastly increased profits for the corporate elite, then democracy has become "excessive" and a new system is needed. "It will be a hard pill for most Americans to swallow," editorialized Business Week in 1974, "the idea of doing with less so that big business can have more." But the people must be made "to accept the new reality." And if they do not? (DeGraff 1977: 18).

To counter such trends, the members of this component of the neighborhood movement see neighborhoods as one part of a generally decentralized political system which would involve major decisions made at appropriate levels--from the block clubs (e.g. child care) to international organizations (e.g. ocean fishing rights). They point out that new technologies based on renewable resources (e.g. solar, wind, methane) would be best utilized within such a politically decentralized framework. To those who would fear that neighborhoods may be petty, vicious, and cruel, they point out that larger institutions often have these characteristics too and have the power to spread their meanness and violence over a much wider area. Some worry that if neighborhoods had more political independence

they might defy the goals of national leaders. "But how better to judge the wisdom of a larger political goal than by whether or not the people involved will actually support it? And where might people better discuss and decide their support than in the one place where they can debate among themselves as citizens--in their own neighborhood" (Morris and Hess 1975: 3). Neighborhood political structures make it possible for diverse groups to come together to represent their own interests directly on a face to face basis.

Boyte sums up this emphasis on democracy which runs through the neighborhood movement:

> There is frequently voiced through the range of neighborhood networks an independent democratic vision of change which stresses neighborhoods (sometimes in alliances with other structures, like unions) as building blocks for structural transformation of society from the bottom up. Cincotta (a nationally known leader in the anti-redlining legislation work) argues that the only word which adequately describes the neighborhood movement is "democratic." The national Association of Neighborhoods articulates a vision of what it calls "Jeffersonian democracy." Father Geno Baroni (known for his interest in urban ethnic neighborhoods) challenged Congress: "We are building democracy, you know." And Richard Harmon of the Industrial Areas Foundation similarly expressed their "faith that a continually multiplying group of trained radical leaders and organizers will create and develop mass organizations capable of transforming the Watergate institutions (Boyte 1979: 14).

Recent social movements in this country have not focused directly on political democracy as an issue nor have they paid close attention to the creation of democratic structures within their own organizations.

> "In both the civil rights and student movements the meaning of democracy frequently had a naive, romantic, and anarchic character which made it difficult to sustain, and which often reproduced authoritarian relations in more manipulative and disguised forms. Few people with ordinary jobs and family responsibilities could long participate in the structureless meetings and lack of clear-cut decision-making processes on which the young radicals insisted (Boyte 1979: 20).

Boyte observes that the socialist movement has not dealt with the problems of bureaucracy and the democratic control of large organizations He suggests that this is because "Marx and Engel's treatment of class formation was highly ambiguous about democracy. Throughout their careers, they held that radicalization entailed, intrinsically, a sharp break with tradition and culture. Even in terms of present and future patterns of organization, their writings often reflected an authoritarian streak" (Boyte 1979: 15).

In their book, Poor People's Movements, Piven and Cloward are very critical of attempts by movement leaders to emphasize the development of formal organizational structures. They argue that such

organizations are "acutely vulnerable to internal oligarchy and status and to external integrations with the elites... tend to blunt the militancy that was the fundamental source of such influences as the movement exerted." (1979: XV) In contrast, those who see the neighborhood as a political unit would perhaps compare the development of such organizations to the Committees of Correspondence which were set up by the American colonists as a quasi-governing structure during British rule and then later served as the formal political system after the American Revolution for a short period.

The Neighborhood As a Social Community (focuses on alienation)

Many ethnic and immigrant organizations have traditionally been neighborhood based, but in the 1970's there began a renewed campaign to recognize and enhance these social networks. Perhaps this developed in response to the black communities' appeals to black pride in such slogans as "Black is Beautiful." Lobbying efforts were made in Washington to try to persuade urban policy makers that these ethnic communities have value in and of themselves, as a vital counterforce to the individualistic ethos and alienation which pervades our society. (Greely 1973).

Summary

In this chapter it has been suggested that one reason why attempts to address the critical problems of poverty,

powerlessness, and alienation have failed in the past is because these phenomena are an integral part of the institutions that are supposed to be solving them. Thus new structures will have to be created to seriously tackle these problems. Such social forms may be created at the local level. However, their growth and development is heavily influenced by external conditions. During the past fifteen years international and national developments have encouraged the creation of various types of protest movements. The neighborhood movement differs from other social movements in its emphasis on territorially based organizations which are formally structured along democratic principles and which are integrated with the area's traditional culture (e.g. religious values, family forms). It also involves a broader constituency than many of the single issue movements, and is open to coalition building.

Three major strands within the neighborhood movement were discussed--those who view the neighborhood as a power base, a political community, or a social community. Many of the movement participants see themselves as constructing alternative institutions. They would agree that "the challenge is not simply to "win" on issues or have specific demands met, but to create a new mentality, new structures for meeting people's needs, and a new balance of power to support them (Perlman 1979: 18). A sociologist, Herbert Blumer, also comments on the tendency of social movements to "establish a new order of life...

becoming societies in miniature (Blumer 1959: 169, 214). In other words, participants and some scholars see the neighborhood movement as building "new institutions which can create the seeds of future society within the present one" (Morris and Hess 1975: 37).

CHAPTER VII

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS: POTENTIALS AND LIMITATIONS

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS *
POTENTIALS AND LIMITATIONS

In the last chapter three major problems (poverty, powerlessness, and alienation) characteristic of state level societies were described along with brief discussions of major solutions developed for them by global, national, and urban systems. The continuing failure of these solutions has helped to create the conditions for the growth of the neighborhood movement in the United States and in other industrialized countries. In this chapter, I will summarize the ways in which poverty, powerlessness, and alienation have been treated, directly and indirectly, by the Eastown Community Association; make some brief comparisons with the ways that other neighborhood organizations have dealt with these problems and discuss the general implications that the Eastown case study has for evaluating the future role of the neighborhood movement in the United States.

> While some see the movement as the "cutting edge of the new progressivism that will emerge in the next decade, others see the neighborhood as "as local and parochial as ever" (the only new thing being that they have been discover' ed on high) or simply as one more special interest group in the pluralistic arena.

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*Portions of this chapter were presented in a paper entitled, "Neighborhood Organizations as Answers to the Problems of Poverty, Powerlessness, and Alienation," at the 1981 Central States Anthropological Society meetings in Cincinnati Ohio.

> Underlying this is the fundamental issue of whether social justice can be served by local control, given the basic inequalities among groups and localities (Perlman 1979: 20).

Poverty as a Problem

Khinduka, in an article appearing in a social work textbook on community organizing, is extremely critical of community development strategies and by implication, the present neighborhood movement:

> The besetting limitation of community development as a strategy for social change is its psychological rather than socioeconomic approach to social problems. Community development programs aim at revolutionary change in the people's psychology without bringing about an actual revolution in their socioeconomic relations (Madge 1960: 23). They are concerned with people's psychological capacity to make decisions, not with their economic power to do so. By encouraging them to participate in community activities, community development seeks to give them a feeling that they count and that they are competent, but it stops there. Community development will do practically everything to improve the psychological lives of the poor: it will create among them a sense of self-respect and confidence, of civic pride, and identification with their locality---which may be an uninhabitable slum; it will provide recreational programs; it will even organize courses and encourage handicrafts to increase their earning capacity. But it will not usually question the economic system which permits the coexistence of poverty and plenty (Khinduka 1980: 362). (See also Jones 1979: 44).

It is true that the Eastown Community Association has never formally defined either neighborhood or external

class divisions as a major problem to be directly addressed to the organization. There may be several interrelated explanations for this. First, the largely middle-class leadership of the organization is not, at least thus far, personally experiencing the problems of being poor (e.g. lack of employment, living primarily on welfare or social security benefits) and thus do not view such problems as worthy of major attention. From a methodological point of view, the Association's staff try to develop those issues that appear to be "winnable" and it is much easier to demand that the city live up to its promises for improving the neighborhood (e.g. housing inspection, curb replacement) than it is to tackle complex problems with long-range solutions (e.g. rising energy prices, providing jobs, welfare rights). And in an attempt to unite all residents in joint efforts towards neighborhood improvements, class differences, along with those of race and sex, are submerged under the emphasis on the fact that "we all live in the same neighborhood." Another reason for this lack of overt focus on economic inequities, may be that the organization has found it more fruitful to deal with specific manifestations of poverty (e.g. poor housing conditions, lack of adequate police protection) than to organize around the more abstract concepts like "classism," or "waging war on poverty." (Colati, 1979).

What Has the Eastown Community Association Done About Poverty?

Many of the programs and activities of the Eastown Community Association have directly benefited lower and working class residents of the neighborhood. For example, the Association worked hard to have the WEFF region designated as a "target area" for federal Community Development funds and the Organization has subsequently played a key role in the administration of these programs. Other examples include the creation of a Home Repair program which operated on a sliding fee scale to help people with minor rehabilitation projects. The Association has also developed an extensive referral service to area agencies which is used by many low and moderate income residents.

In 1980, Jim Johnson completed a geography dissertation which evaluated the recent changes which have been occurring in the neighborhood. He concluded that the area was indeed being revitalized and that the Eastown Community Association has played a key role in this process. This has been primarily due to "incumbent upgrading," which involved long-term residents making home improvements with the help of various loans and grants, and to new residents rennovating homes in the area. Johnson's data indicated that the majority of all residents in Eastown have benefited, not just the middle-class, as so often occurs in neighborhoods of socioeconomic diversity. For example, information on housing improvements suggest that they have

occurred 'across the board' and are equally distributed in terms of the socioeconomic and racial characteristics of the area. (Johnson 1980:159-167). In other words, his research suggests that the efforts of the Eastown Community Association have not widened the gap between the rich and the poor in the neighborhood.

The Limitations and Potential in E.C.A.'s Efforts

Who Owns the Neighborhood?: Gentrification versus Neighborhood Ownership- Most of the Association's efforts, thus far, have been concentrated on one issue of poverty: (inadequate housing). For example, it took a leadership position in formulating and passing anti-red-lining legislation at the state level based on research conducted on redlining in the neighborhood. However, this has led to very little change in the basic control that Eastown residents exercise over critical resources in the area. The threat of gentrification (i.e. the resettlement of the area by white upper middle-class residents) looms high and illustrates this lack of control. For a variety of reasons (e.g. high gasoline prices, rising crime in the suburbs, high cost of new housing construction) members of the middle class are now finding the older homes in the urban areas increasingly attractive. Just as "useless" land which was once "given" to the Native Americans is being redefined as valuable because of currently needed mineral resources, so inner city land is similarly becoming re-classified. At least one author implies that one of the

largest and recent "victories" claimed by the neighborhood movement, anti-redlining legislation, "may, in fact, be due instead to bankers discovering that these (white middle-class) residents are among their safest loans, and they are now willing to invest in city real estate (Fleetwood 1979: 22). And in the process, poor people are being "displaced" by higher rents and property taxes and are thus indirectly "forced to move from these areas."

Although such "revitalization" activities have received a great deal of media attention, several scholars have recently concluded that they are "relatively insignificant" when viewed within the context of the overall housing market (Black 1975:6; Clay 1978:3). The Eastown Community Association has been aware of the twin possibilities of gentrification and displacement. It has formally committed itself to keep Eastown an economically and racially diverse area and has taken some practical steps in that direction. The co-sponsorship of Johnson's study of the revitalization of the area was one of those. During the spring of 1980 the organization applied for a grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development which would have enabled the Association to buy homes, renovate them and use them for housing cooperatives and/or rental units for low and moderate income families. Unfortunately, they did not receive the grant but have been working closely with several non-profit housing renovation groups in the city to make major repairs on several homes in Eastown.

Who Are The "Enemies?": Government versus Business as Targets - In its efforts to combat some of the poverty problems, the Eastown Community Association, like many other neighborhood organizations, has often made government agencies and public officials its major objects of discontent in contrast to focusing on private industry as a source of the major problems for neighborhoods. The editor of the journal, Social Policy, offer this explanation for the present anti-government focus in the neighborhood movement:

> Most Americans work in the private sector--at least 4/5ths of them do--and as their security shrinks, they hold on even more tenaciously. As a result, deep-seated dogma about private interests and private property seem to tie the corporate executive and the corporate line workers together against the threat of public spending. On the other hand, the taxpayer does "own" the government and claims some right to control what it does and does not do...it explains why large numbers of people can be vehemently opposed to government bigness while not feeling similarly about corporate power (except in so far as its products affect them as consumers. (Riessman 1979:2).

Thus the government is largely held responsible for living conditions in the neighborhoods, whereas important roles played by corporations and major institutions are largely overlooked (Jones 1979: 44).

This description also fits the work that the Eastown Community Association has carried out. It has viewed the area corporations (e.g. Zondervan Bible Publishing) and institutions (e.g. Blodgett Hospital, Aquinas College) more as potential funding sources than as critically impacting

the lives of people of the area in terms of such things as employment, services, ownership of land. However, this position may be slowly changing as evidenced by the Eastown Community Association's recent work with other neighborhood associations to oppose a twelve-year tax relief requested by a multinational corporation, Amway, for its downtown Grand Rapids construction projects.

Such changes in focus can also be seen at the national level. Alperovitz and Faux have characterized this trend in the neighborhood movement as one which goes "from grassroots and towards big economic issues. . . the next stage of this historic democratizing process points to such central economic issues as local unemployment, inflation, and energy" (1979: 22) (emphasis is author's). At least one national organization based on neighborhood groups, ACORN, is attempting to address such oversights by encouraging constituents to organize around "issues which will point directly to the structural foundation of society from which unequal distribution of goods and services derive. . .They maintain that an organization moving to cut corporate profits or monitor anti-inflation regulations is very different from an agency that feeds people who can't work or whose salaries are so low they can't afford rising prices (Rathke W. et al., 1979: 35-36).

Who Can Make the Changes?

The political and economic elite in America continues to dominate the masses. Marvin Harris has argued that the

evolutionary viability of the state:

> rests in large measure on the perfection of institutional structures that protect the ruling class from confrontations with coalitions of alienated commoners.

and that these structures fall into two basic categories:

1. those who control the content of ideology
2. and those institutions that physically suppress the subversive, rebellious, and revolutionary actions of alienated individuals and groups. (Harris 1971: 405).

In reference to ideological influences, we often find "classist" themes (e.g. poor people are lazy, welfare mothers are cheaters) in the songs, movies, new reports, which influence how people view those with lower incomes and how poor people view themselves. The physical and social isolation of the poor tend to lend support to such beliefs. Thus, the masses (i.e. lower, working and middle-classes) tend to be divided from each other and "conquered" by the elite.

Harry Boyte argues that part of the failure to successfully organize around poverty issues during the last several decades was due to the isolation of the poor in such efforts. In other words, that fact that it is an upper class elite and not the middle class which is the major perpetuator and benefactor of poverty conditions was often forgotten. Instead, the middle classes were often falsely defined as "the enemy" instead of perceived as a potential ally.

Boyte suggests that the structural changes needed to eliminate poverty in America will require that the poor work with the working and middle classes (Boyte 1980). Neighborhood organizations, especially those which exist in heterogeneous neighborhoods like Eastown could provide the beginnings of an infrastructure for such development.

Empowerment

One of the major results of the work of the Eastown Community Association is that Eastown residents have gained more direct input into public decisions affecting life in their community. In other words, they have increased the amount of political control they have over what happens in their neighborhood. For example, in 1979, when the city's sanitation department considered changes in garbage pick-up, it sent representatives to each neighborhood organization in the city to discuss the impact of the changes on each community and finally developed separate plans for different neighborhoods in the city based on this input.

The formal power of the Eastown Community Association is shared internally by an annually elected Community Council which brings together representatives from the three major regions of the neighborhood to work together through a democratic process to solve area problems.

The Association has also worked with other neighborhood leaders to create seventeen similar organizations in the city and to cooperate on activities around specific

issues (e.g. anti-redlining, fire stations, truck routes). E.C.A. has also been involved with two formal attempts to create coalitions among the city's neighborhoods and has co-sponsored, with Aquinas College, both local and national workshops on community-institutional relationships for both neighborhood and institutional leaders.

Organizations and Their Environments

In Rules for Radicals, Saul Alinsky examines the major socioeconomic classes in the United States and the primary base from which each derives its power. The upper class has control of resources, the middle-class has created organizations, and the working and lower classes have large numbers of people. Alinsky basically argued that empowerment involved organizing these masses. (Alinsky 1972). Such a theory is based on a set of commonly held assumptions about the value of formal organizations:

> First, formal organizations presumably make possible the coordination of the economic and political resources of large numbers of people who separately have few such resources. Second, formal organizations permit the intelligent and strategic use of these resources in political conflict. And third, formal organization presumably ensures the continuity of lower-political mobilization over time. This, in brief, is the model of mass-based, permanent organization which has dominated efforts to build political power among the lower classes (Piven and Cloward 1972: xx).

Piven and CLoward argue in their book, Poor People's Movements, that this model contains a "grave flaw...it is not possible to compel concessions from elites that can be

used as resources to sustain oppositional organizations over time." They go on to say that:

> elites are likely at times of mass disturbances to seek out whatever organizations have emerged among the insurgents, soliciting their views and encouraging them to air grievances before formal bodies of the state. While these symbolic gestures give the appearance of influence to formal organizations composed of lower class people; they are responding to the underlying force of insurgency. But insurgency is always short-lived. Once it subsides and the people leave the streets, most of the organization which it temporarily threw up and which elites helped to nurture simply fades away. As for the organizations which survive, it is because they become more useful to those who control the resources on which they depend than to the lower-class groups which the organizations claim to represent. Organizations endure, in short, by abandoning their oppositional politics (Piven and Cloward 1979: xxi).

Cerullo also argues along a similar vein:

> concessions are wrung from the formal political process only under the pressure of ongoing popular mobilization--consciousness raising, struggle, disruption, turmoil--outside the electoral/state arena. Civil rights, welfare rights, gay rights, abortion, E.R.A., opposition to the war only became state issues after movements raised, popularized, and legitimated them, threatening both the legitimacy and day to day functioning of the state (Cerullo 1979:91).

Bailey cites Gurr's research which indicates that men "who have alternative ways to obtain their goals are less likely to become aggressive when one way is blocked than those who have few alternatives. Consequently it is

possible that Alinsky organizations reduce the likelihood of urban insurrections by creating new channels for expressing old grievances (Gurr 1968). In his own study of an Alinsky style organization in Chicago, Bailey notes the same phenomenon occurring on an individual level:

> Occasionally a special relationship develops between organization members and a bureaucrat. For organization members the special relationship means that matters they bring to the bureau get priority treatment. For the bureaucrat, the special relationship means that there is less possibility that his office will be disrupted by protest activity. A special relationship emerges because it benefits both parties...that special relationship does not make the bureaucrat immune from pressure, although it does make him immune from the protest approach to pressuring. (Bailey 1974: 95).

Uzzell and Provencher in their textbook, Urban Anthropology, suggest that even research on neighborhoods serves in a similar way to maintain the status quo:

> After the use of the police, the most venerable solution has been to promote primary relationships in the city. Speaking about England, Norman Dennis has suggested that the reason sociologists and social workers have concentrated on the neighborhood (and the reason that foundations and governments have funded them) is that such studies have not disturbed established interests in society one whit. It is much safer to establish a clean-up, paint-up program in the ghetto than it is to change the social and political (capitalist)structure that created the ghetto in the first place. And such a program lets powerful groups sleep much better at night, knowing that the morning will bring social improvement,

> and little or no change in the social and economic arrangements (Uzzell and Provencher 1976: 35; Dennis, N. 1968: 91).

Two major issues are intertwined in the above discussion. One concerns the value of creating and maintaining formal organizations by activist groups engaged in wide-scale cultural changes and the other concerns the relationship between such groups and their environment (e.g. the government, corporations). I will deal with issues around the latter concern first.

<u>Dealing with the Outside World: "Foreign Relations"</u>- As has been mentioned, the Eastown Community Association is primarily connected to local, state, and federal governments through its reliance on funding (e.g. VISTA, Community Development Programs) from these bodies. A network of people associated with the organization also played a critical role in the election of the former Eastown Community Association executive director to a City Commission position. In other cities, neighborhood organizations have been granted formal legal status through formal revisions of city charters (e.g. Philadelphia, Baltimore). The 1980 Census administrators made it possible for neighborhood organizations to have data gathered by formally recognized neighborhood boundaries which existed in a city instead of by census tracts.

The question of whether or not such government recognition, legitimation and funding is a blessing or a curse is

another much debated issue within the neighborhood movement. "If the powerful things about these groups are their localism, diversity, and autonomy, will government recognition, programmatic responsibility, and federal funding be the proverbial kiss of death?" (Perlman 1979: 20). Along these lines, it is argued that "alliances with local government would lead to cooptation and ultimately loss of credibility. . . as people recognize that 'the costs of capital are increasingly socialized (paid by government) and as government claims primary responsibility for maintaining a political system based upon the extraction and imposition of power from people." (Rathke, et al. 1979).

However, others believe that neighborhood and community organizations can serve as "mediators" and should be recognized partners in government (Berger and Neuhaus 1977).

<u>Shallow Victories?</u> - In any case, it appears that neighborhood organizations are gaining their legitimacy just at the time that local governments are losing their powers (Khinduka 1979). Jones has termed this phenomena "community control by default" -- a reference to the fact that agencies of the government are becoming more and more incapable of working with ghetto communities and are thus willing to turn over more responsibility to community organizations. (Jones 1979). However, such organizations are not often given funding to carry out these

programs (e.g. housing inspection) nor do they have taxation powers.

One national organization of neighborhoods, ACORN, takes the position that the government is basically trying to protect and assist capital growth (at the expense of the constituency) while maintaining credibility with people by supporting their neighborhood organizations (Rathke 1979).

Traditionally, social scientists have assumed that there is a strong relationship between the centralization of activities and the control of a population. Horace Miner's conceptualization of a city as "a center of dominance" illustrates this relationship. However, this correlation is now being questioned because "modern technology" allows (urban) functions to be performed without the same consequences in form. What has happened in the United States recently is that these central place functions and their morphological and demographic attributes have become increasingly dispersed and are found outside the traditional political and architectural units called the city. (Eames and Goode 1977: 43). In other words, a trend toward increasing decentralization in form does not necessarily imply a lessening of control. Brookes and Rummers document a similar process within global corporations:

> despite "the current ideology of management which speaks in terms of personal responsibility and participation" the logic of the planetary enterprise will make each operation increasingly dependent

> upon the world headquarters. . . a decentralizing ideology masks a centralizing reality (Barnet and Muller 1974: 44).

What this means in terms of the neighborhood movement is that the activities of increasingly local governmental structures no longer have to be located in city hall or the county building, but can be performed in store-front operations, mini-town halls, or neighborhood organization head-quarters throughout an urban area. Thus, an ideology of political decentralization of some superficial moves in that direction may only serve to maintain the status quo. Jones sees this as another version of the process wherein the poor, always a potentially troublesome population of society, are re-integrated into the society without changing their socioeconomic status. . . intermediary organizations become structurally important (because the poor are hard to reach), providing that their control remains in the hands of establishment institutions. In other words, government penetration of hard-to-reach sectors of society is thereby extended while governmental institutions remain intact and unchanged. (Jones 1979: 46, see also Esman 1978). The current moves towards decentralization and the gains of the neighborhood movement can thus be viewed as another illustration of the ways in which an ideology is used to "protect the ruling class from confrontations with coalitions of alienated commoners." (Harris 1971: 405).

What Should Be Done About City Hall? - Much of the above discussion assumes a constant and perfect "hand and glove" fit among the elite (i.e. corporate and governmental operations). That this is not always the case is illustrated by the efforts on the part of major corporations to reduce governmental controls on their operations and to delegitimate public initiative and power (Boyte 1980). In the process they are undermining the major instrument of control, the governmental structure, which citizens have over business operations and activities. In light of this, Boyte argues that we "should project as a central goal the struggle to democratize representative political institutions, not hand them over (Boyte 1979: 133; see also Booth 1982).

Participants in the neighborhood movement disagree as to whether or not neighborhood groups should ally themselves closely with the government as well as methods on how to do so. Some suggest that neighborhood organizations operate as another special interest group competing in a political arena in which "the real mainline disputes are how much and which programs should be cut" (Kotler 1979: 38). Others suggest a more distant watchdog and educational approach which would question why the cuts are occurring in the first place. For example, Kutliner and Kelston have documented the ways in which business and commercial taxpayers have been able to shift their tax burden to

residential taxpayers (Kutliner and Kelston 1980: 80). Such a shift is given as one of the major reasons for the recent tax revolts and for the rising popularity of anti-government sentiments. Heather Booth, a well-respected leader in the neighborhood movement, now advocates that neighborhood organizations become active in electoral campaigns at all levels. (Booth 1982).

Thus, more participants are thinking about and experimenting with ways to join city hall, instead of fighting it, in efforts to gain more control over the economic decisions which affect neighborhood life (Trapp 1981).

Why Organize

No activist group, neighborhood organization, or otherwise, operates in a vacuum. It must make decisions as to how to relate to those in its external environment (e.g. government officials, social agencies, corporations, other activist groups.) Such decisions can be most effectively and democratically made over the long run through the construction and operation of a formal organization. For example, group leaders are less apt to be personally "coopted" if they are directly accountable for their actions to an organization. Formalizing the operations of an organization also prevents the development of what Jo Freeman calls a "tyranny of structurelessness" in which a small clique informally dominates the group (Freeman 1972). A group which ignores and/or neglects its own internal organization and the way that power is

handled within it, may end up becoming a mirror image of the hierarchical and authoritarian political system that they are trying to change (Klein 1969).

Recognizing that "change does not happen overnight" the Early American revolutionists set up "Committees of Correspondence" which operated as a parallel government prior to the American Revolution and were able to function as the new government for a short period afterwards. In a similar way, neighborhood organizations can be viewed as fledging alternative decision-making bodies which may serve a critical role during future economic and political changes in this country.

In the introduction to the paperback edition of Poor People's Movements, Piven and Cloward themselves argue for some type of organization:

> We may then begin to consider alternative forms of organizations through which working class people can act together in defiance of their rulers in ways that are more congruent with the structure of working-class life and with the process of working-class struggle, and less susceptible to penetration by dominant elites (Piven and Cloward 1977).

However, this brief concluding statement leaves one with many questions about the specific shape and form such organizations would take and what relationship there might be between such groups and the organizations which presently exist in this country. Such new organizations do not spring up overnight in a vacuum.

Linkages Among Neighborhood Organizations

There exists a wide range of diversity among the various groups involved in the neighborhood movement. This can be seen as an important strength in that they "can respond flexibly, with different organizationl structures, and across a range of issues from sanitation services to discriminatory insurance rates" (National Commission on Nieghborhoods 1979: 9).

At present there are many informal networks which exist among such groups along with a few formal alliances. Information is easily shared and thus each organization does not have to struggle along to "reinvent the wheel." At least fourteen training schools exist throughout the country which offer educational programs for neighborhood activists. There is some debate within the neighborhood movement and other activist groups as to whether or not such linkages should be further solidified and formalized to create some form of a national party. Cerullo, drawing on her experience in the socialist-feminist movement, argues that there is a tension which exists between building the movement (i.e. getting people into ongoing struggles that defend and extend our power) and building new organizations in a period of relative weakness (Cerullo 1979: 94, Flacks 1979: 103). In other words, one can only be done at the expense of the other. Piven and Cloward also take a similar position arguing that energies directed into organization-building and maintenance sapped

the vital forces of protest, and insurgency essential for sustaining a movement culture and spirit (Piven and Cloward 1979). Harry Boyte, however, offers an alternative explanation for the failure of the recent protest movements. He attributes them to the fact that such groups tried to use protest strategies to build large-scale movements out of relatively homogeneous constituencies. Boyte observes that

> Only those forms that found a broader constituency (like NAM, involving activists from the old left,) modified their objectives and developed mechanisms for institutional self-sufficiency (like many radical cooperatives) or had from the outset more modest and service-oriented objectives (like many self-help institutions of the women's movement) were able to last. Out of the sixties' protests, the organizations that have continued on a large scale have been those with very diverse constituencies as their base and with political strategies focused on winning concrete reforms. . . (Boyte 1979: 16, 138).

If this is true, the Eastown Community Association and other neighborhood groups can serve as models for other activist groups organizing in the 1980's.

Connections Within the Community

The interconnection between alienation and the subordination of the individual to political and economic forces beyond her locality was previously described in Chapter Six. The activities of the Eastown Community Association have decreased such subordination, especially in the political realm, and thus one can

hypothesize that they have correspondingly decreased the degree of alienation experienced by Eastown residents.

In the spring of 1977 a telephone survey was made of 10% (150) Eastown households to determine perceptions both of neighborhood changes and of the Eastown Community Association. 80% of those sampled indicated that they were aware of the Association. 66% said they would go to E.C.A. if they had a problem in the neighborhood and 75% answered yes when asked, "Do you think the Eastown Community Association has made your neighborhood a better place to live?"(Edison 1977: 47).

In 1979, Johnson conducted another household survey of Eastown residents and discovered that 95% of his sample favored attempts by the Eastown Community Association to improve the physical and social environment. A series of chi-square tests on his data revealed that support for E.C.A. attempts to preserve and rejuvenate the neighborhood was strong among all socioeconomic and demographic sub-groups of the sample. 95% of his respondents concluded that E.C.A. is definitely exerting a strong and important impact on the community when asked, "In your opinion, what impact has the E.C.A. had on the neighborhood." About 40% of the respondents in both the 1977 and 1979 surveys indicated that they had participated in one or more programs and/or activities sponsored by the Eastown Community Association. (Johnson 1980: 121).

In sum, the Eastown Community Association is highly visible and has created a positive image in the neighborhood. Participation in its activities is somewhat higher than that found by a 1977 Christian Science Monitor Poll of communities with populations over 50,000 nationwide. This study found that 1/3 of the participants claimed to have already taken part in some kind of neighborhood improvement effort and a majority declaring their willingness to take some sort of action in defense of their neighborhood in the future (McBride 1977).

Such participation counteracts the feelings of alienation and develops a practice "that begins to anticipate the kinds of society we want to live in... To create that kind of society we will have to change the structures of power that are internalized and reproduced in our daily lives... This means a longer struggle in which people's deepest commitments to this society are eroded through the process of collectively experiencing something different" (Cerullo 1979: 15).

Summary

Although the Eastown Community Association has not formally defined poverty as a problem to be addressed, many of their activities have benefited low income Eastown residents, especially in terms of improved housing. The Association has not closed the gap between the rich and the poor in the neighborhood, but it does not appear to have

widened it either. Even though gentrification (i.e. migration of higher income residents into areas previously occupied by low income families) and the consequent displacement do not seem to be occurring at present, the threat is a real one as the neighborhood becomes increasingly viewed as a "fashionable place to live." The Association is aware of this and has committed itself to working with its present residents to maintain Eastown as an economically and racially diverse area.

Like many other neighborhood organizations, E.C.A. has focused its efforts primarily on changing power relationships between the Eastown area and the government. It has been much slower to tackle corporate interests as targets.

Some argue that successful organizing around poverty issues will necessitate the alliance of the poor with the middle classes. The Eastown Community Association does provide a structural framework in which lower income groups can work together with others on neighborhood issues and in doing so can build bridges which cross minor class barriers. This encourages clearer definitions of the similar structures (e.g. economic, political) which serve as the basis of their common problems.

The Association has been the basic tool which Eastown residents have used to influence political decisions concerning life in the community. Questions have arisen as to how closely the Association should be working with local government officials given the risk of possible cooptation.

On the other hand, government entities can be viewed as the only legitimate organizations which serve as buffers between the neighborhood residents and corporate interests. Thus, E.C.A. has both attacked and in some cases cooperated with official governmental bodies at various times.

Another aspect of empowerment has involved the degree to which internal organizational life becomes formalized. E.C.A. has found that the formalization of its structures has had many advantages, including the encouragement of different types of participation (e.g. more women) and the development of more accountability among its leaders.

As the Association has formed new linkages with other neighborhood organizations, questions concerning the degree to which these relationships should be formalized have arisen several times. Formalizing these ties too early can take important energy away from the constituent groups. Both attempts to create such coalitions on a city-wide basis have not been very effective.

About 40% of the Eastowners polled in two surveys (Edison 1977 and Johnson 1979) indicated that they have participated in one or more programs sponsored by the Association and a 1979 survey indicated that 95% of the respondents felt that E.C.A. is exerting a strong and important impact in the community (Johnson 1979). These statistics could be interpreted to indicate that the Association is both "in touch" with its community and has encouraged the development of interconnections, (i.e. non-alienating

linkages) within the neighborhood. The collection of close to $10,000 from neighborhood residents in 1980 as a result of a phonathon would also tend to support this conclusion.

Seeds of the Future

Steve Max, an instructor at one of the leading training schools for community organizers, described the consequences of using Direct Action Organizing, a method which "focuses people's power on a specific, significant target, which is small enough to be moved." His thoughts also portray many of the present ideals and the future potential which exists for the Eastown Community Association and the neighborhood movement in America.

I will conclude by paraphrasing his words:

> Neighborhood organizing is an appropriate way of dealing with local, and sometimes state wide issues. It can not, in and of itself, bring about fundamental social change such as would be necessary for a genuine full employment program and the elimination of poverty. Neighborhood organizing does, however, lay the ground work for social change by building stable organizations through which alliances between people of different races and classes can be made, based on common self interest. Because these organizations focus on immediate victories, they help to overcome the sense of helplessness which, not just the poor, but many Americans feel. Neighborhood organizations re-establish people's confidence in themselves and in their communities by teaching through experience that people do have the power to improve their lives. The revitalization of democracy through participation in decision making is the underlying theme...

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

Stage I
<u>Ideological Development:</u>
Creating an "EASTOWN" Identity
(September 1971 to December 1977)

<u>Primary Problem Area:</u> <u>IDEOLOGICAL</u>

Activities:
- Research on area
- Defining boundaries
- Selecting a name
- Street Fair
- ACCESS (newsletter)

<u>ECONOMICAL</u>

Activities:
- Patron Plan
- Geography Department at Aquinas (informal)
- Develop proposal for Kellogg Foundation

<u>STRUCTURAL</u>

Activities:
- Steering Committee
- Aquinas Students (Off Campus College)
- Storefront Hall
- Initial By-Laws
- (Charismatic leader)

<u>POLITICAL</u>

Activities:
- Food Coop
- Landlord Tenant Union
- Park Supervision
- Paint n' Fix Program
- Alley Clean Up

<u>Problems/Conflicts</u>

Association does not see linkages between neighborhood life and external environment (e.g. redlining by banks, lack of city services.)

A white, middle-income group runs things

Stage II
<u>Political Development:</u>
Becoming a Power to be Reckoned With
(January 1974 to June 1975)

<u>POLITICAL</u>

- Issue Organizing Around:
  - Abandoned Homes Ordinance
  - Street Widenings/Stop Signs
  - Park Improvements
- Joined Neighborhood Alliance
- Lobbied for input into Community Development Funding decisions
- Food Coop (continues)
- Radio Station plans begun

<u>STRUCTURAL</u>

- Block meetings/Regional meetings
- Ad-hoc Steering Committee meetings
- Aquinas Faculty Eastown Team meetings
- Urban Studies class - Aquinas
- Demonstrations/Hearings

<u>IDEOLOGICAL</u>

- Human Resource Survey (Aquinas)
- Media publicity on issues
- ACCESS (continues)
- Street Fair (continues)

<u>ECONOMICAL</u>

- Kellogg Grant begins

A-1 - Stages in the Development of the Eastown Community Association

Stage III
Structural Development:
Tinkering with the Internal Organization
(July 1975 to June 1976)

Problems/Conflicts

Aquinas Faculty Eastown Team interference

Staff dominate decision making

Ad hoc structure

No continuity between issues

Lack of staff coordination

Long rambling inefficient meetings

STRUCTURAL

Statement of purpose
Objectives
By-Laws rewritten
Planning Committee formed
Executive Director position created
Personnel Committee

POLITICAL

Issue Organizing Around
- Crime
- Housing
- Street Widening

Food Club (continues)
Education, Health Committees
Mayoral Candidate Pre-Primary Forum

IDEOLOGICAL

Retreats
Street Fair (continues)
ACCESS (continues)
Outside consultants visit
Participation in conferences

ECONOMICAL

Kellogg Grant
Grant for Printing Press received
Contacts with Eastown businesses

Stage IV
Economic Development:
Solving Financial Problems
(July 1976 to December 1977)

Problems/Conflicts

Kellogg Grant "runs out"

Expansion of staff discourages volunteers

Recognize value of coalition building

ECONOMICAL

Small scale fundraisers
Tax deductible status
Foundations are approached for funds
Purchase of a house by E.C.A.

3,200 volunteer hours spent transforming house into E.C.A. Hall

IDEOLOGICAL

Kellogg Foundation Report
EASTOWN book project
Consulting with other neighborhood organizations in Grand Rapids
Street Fair (continues)
ACCESS (continues)
E.C.A. Hall Open House

POLITICAL

Issue Organizing: Truck Route
Fire Stations
Lobbying - Community Development
Governor's Task Force - Redlining
Grand Rapids Coalition - Redlining
G.R. Citizen's Participation Task Force

STRUCTURAL

Elections held for Council members
WEFF formally joins E.C.A.
Orientation Sessions

A-2 - Stages in the development of the Eastown Community Association

APPENDIX B

	1975					1976				
	Total	White/Black		Male/Female		Total	White/Black		Male/Female	
Jan.	18	18	0	12	6	30	27	3	11	19
Feb.	18	17	1	10	8	18	14	5	19	9
Mar.	21	20	1	11	10	18	14	4	9	9
Apr.	28	23	5	15	13	17	15	2	9	8
	17	16	1	9	8					
May	23	19	4	10	13	n.d.				
	22	19	3	11	11					
June	16	13	3	8	8	12	12	0	5	7
	15									
July	11	9	2	6	5	n.d.				
Aug.	14	13	1	8	6	n.d.				
	16	15	1	9	7					
Sept	19	16	3	9	10	17	15	2	10	7
	13	12	1	6	7					
Oct.	15	13	2	7	8	24	22	2	10	14
	10	9	1	5	5	14	10	4	6	8
	9	9	0	5	4					
Nov.	33	29	4	16	17	13	10	3	5	8
	23	18	5	13	10					
Dec.	17	13	4	8	9	19	16	3	10	9
	15	12	3	7	8					

A-3: Attendance at Eastown Community Association Council Meetings*
(Sources: Fieldnotes, Council Meeting Minutes, ACCESS Reports)
*n.d. = no data available

	1977					1978				
	Total	White/Black		Male/Female		Total	White/Black		Male/Female	
Jan.	15	14	1	7	8	15	13	2	7	8
Feb.	11	11	0	4	7	13	12	1	5	8
						18	16	2	8	10
Mar.	12	11	1	5	7	16	15	1	9	7
Apr.	12	11	1	6	6	22	16	6	8	14
May	18	17	1	7	11	15	14	1	5	10
Jun.	16	12	4	9	7	9	8	1	4	5
Jul.	15	11	4	6	9	22	20	2	6	16
Aug.	15	11	4	6	9	n.d.				
Sept.	14	12	2	5	9	n.d.	13	3	10	6
Oct.	n.d.					22	20	2	16	6
Nov.	n.d.					n.d.				
Dec.	n.d.					n.d.				

A-4: Attendance at Eastown Community Association Council Meetings *
(Sources: Fieldnotes, Council Meeting Minutes, ACCESS Reports)
*n.d. = no data available

	1979 Total	White/Black		Male/Female		1980 Total	White/Black		Male/Female	
Jan.	n.d.					20	18	2	9	11
Feb.	15	15	0	4	11	n.d.				
Mar.	14	14	0	8	6	n.d.				
April	19	17	2	9	10	21	20	1	8	13
May	19	18	1	7	12	n.d.				
June	15	10	5	3	12	n.d.				
July	13	12	1	4	9	13	11	2	5	8
Aug.	11	8	3	4	7	17	16	1	7	10
Sept.	16	14	2	5	11	18	17	1	7	11
Oct.	n.d.					16	14	2	6	10
Nov.	18	17	1	5	13	21	16	2	10	11
Dec.	24	22	2	11	13	n.d.				

A-5 : Attendance at Eastown Community Association Council Meetings*
(Sources: Fieldnotes, Council Meeting Minutes, ACCESS Reports)
* n.d. = no data available

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