

## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: BUILD TO WIN: COMMUNITY ORGANIZING, POWER, AND PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

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This dissertation focuses on community organizing and uses it as a mechanism to compare the political environments in Baltimore and Washington over the last three decades. By conducting comparison case studies, I identify the contextual circumstances that affect the ability of grassroots organizations to achieve desired ends. The fact that both cities have functioning Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) affiliates – Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development (BUILD) and the Washington Interfaith Network (WIN) – provides the opportunity to investigate the conditions that give rise to community organizing. Examining the interactions between BUILD/WIN and mayoral administrations over time sheds light on the varying temporal contexts while also explicating the different managerial styles of central political actors. By conducting these case studies, I highlight the optimal political conditions for the inclusion of grassroots organizations representing the interests of neglected neighborhoods.

BUILD TO WIN: COMMUNITY ORGANIZING, POWER, AND  
PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

By

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## Dedication

I dedicate this work to my wife Jacquelyn and our son Thomas.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my advisor Karen Kaufmann for her guidance and assistance over the years. I am also indebted to all of the organizers and ministers with Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development (BUILD), the Washington Interfaith Network (WIN), and the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) who made this project possible by allowing me to participate in trainings, attend actions and conduct interviews.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

In December 2008, nearly 1,000 members of Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development (BUILD) gathered at a local church to demand that funding for youth programming be a priority for the city, especially in difficult economic times. BUILD wanted Mayor Sheila Dixon to commit a percentage of the economic stimulus package from the incoming Obama administration on recreation centers and afterschool programs. Alternatively, the group said it would be satisfied if Dixon spent some of the city's Rainy Day Fund (i.e., budget reserve) on youth violence-prevention programs. "When times are hard, we're forced to make choices about what we value," said the Rev. Andrew Foster Connors, pastor of Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian Church – one of the few predominately white member churches of BUILD. As he spoke, audience members opened umbrellas to symbolize that it was beyond raining, and now storming in the city.

The position from mayor's office was that the city could not make commitments regarding the expenditure of federal stimulus money which would likely include categorical requirements. An additional argument was that tapping into the Rainy Day Fund would jeopardize the city's bond rating, hurting future budgets. Several city council members attended BUILD's event and supported the stimulus package demand, but some were reluctant to use the Rainy Day Fund. Like other cash strapped localities, the city faced an estimated \$65 million shortfall for the 2010 fiscal year. BUILD members said they understood those realities, but argued that tough

times require leaders to prioritize – and children should be at the top of the list, particularly given the recent string of youth homicides in the city.

One week later, BUILD attended the city’s Board of Estimates (BOE) meeting to make their voices heard. Though not a member of the Board, Councilwoman Mary Pat Clarke – one of the council members supportive of BUILD’s efforts – attempted to get the organization on the agenda. The meeting was to begin at 9:00 am, but was delayed for 30 minutes because the Mayor and Council President were upset at not being notified beforehand (in compliance with BOE standards requiring written notification of protests). As one present at the meeting, I can attest to the level of tension existing in the chamber; television cameras and reporters were also present to capture the exchange. Things came to a head when representatives of BUILD addressed the Board. The exchange went as follows:

BUILD: *“Will you meet with us?”* [BUILD delivers letter]

Mayor Dixon: *“I will give it to my scheduler. That is the process”*

Bishop Miles and Rev. Foster-Connors: *“Is process more important than our children?”*

Pastor Kean: *“We’re standing on principal, not process.”*

After this exchange, BUILD members left and convened outside the chamber.

Bishop Miles: *“We are constantly disrespected...told to talk to scheduling secretary...that would never happen to stadium developers! They are choosing to be politicians, not public servants.”*

Councilwoman Clarke: *“I’m embarrassed...sometimes it’s better to be sinned against to rally others to the cause.”*

Lead Organizer English: *“The same day the city announced \$300 million for a stadium, possibly with public financing. We’re not against the stadium, we’re for the children.”*

This sort of exchange is typical of IAF affiliates; in particular, the modus operandi of BUILD and WIN is to make high profile demands at crucial times. This often means putting pressure on elected officials to dedicate resources to neighborhood revitalization to counterbalance funds allocated for downtown development. In this case, funding for youth programs was also made in light of the city considering funding options for replacing a decades-old arena. Through such efforts, these organizations seek to organize communities to challenge the status quo of local governments supporting economic development while neglecting the needs of struggling neighborhoods and their marginalized populations.

While urban communities continue to suffer disproportionately from economic, social and political inequalities, mainstream political science literature very rarely addresses the issue of concentrated poverty, as well as potential solutions for the resulting gap in democracy. Despite Dahl’s assertion that disparities in political resources are non-cumulative, U.S. cities reflect patterns of inequality that are patently cumulative. Arguably, it is at the local level that the myth of pluralism is most clearly deconstructed. It is my contention that through community organizing activities, ordinary citizens – who more than likely would have been excluded from local policy making – are able to play a significant role in the political realm.

I assert that community organizing provides a landscape through which to view urban politics. It examines the classic question of who gets what, when and

how. In other words, organizing is a vehicle to understanding which constituencies what receive benefits, when this occurs and the process by which it happens. Thus, the study of organizing offers insight into the political process, focusing specifically on competing interests and citizen engagement in local governance. In the field of organizing, it is not easy to construct a cut and dried formula for success, as relationships not only matter, but are of the utmost importance. These relationships depend on social, economic, and political contexts, in addition to the leadership style and governing philosophy of specific mayors. Hence, organizational successes are related to mayoral typologies, but not necessarily dependent upon them. Though some mayors may be more amenable to collaboration than others, the varying types of mayoral regimes do not completely account for the variance in outcomes.

While leadership style matters, I contend that political culture, local institutions, and historical relationships are key factors to understanding the nexus between governing regimes and grassroots organizations. No two cities are exactly the same (histories, economies, demographics, etc.), and each mayoral regime is the product of specific circumstances. While this study also focuses on similarities between localities and political actors, it does not gloss over significant differences. In this regard, the Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner (ANC) system – a form of structured participation – is a distinguishing feature of Washington’s governing structure that must be considered, however this work will only touch upon it as my research has revealed that commissioners tend to work independently of organizers.

Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) affiliates are broad-based, multi-issue organizations whose membership is comprised of local institutions. As conditions

evolve, issues emerge – and these conditions and issues have a unique local flavor. Appropriately, organizing strategies must also be adapted to local conditions, as well as the attributes of existing mayoral administrations. Additionally, collaboration between grassroots organizations and mayoral regimes is based on calculations of mutual self-interest – with particular consideration given to previous relations (successes, disagreements) and future needs (votes, favored projects).

This type of study is important because it chronicles what is happening at the local level and what this means for the democratic process. As politics centers on who gets what, when and how, this is an effort to understand the forces at work in urban America; it also seeks to determine the most successful methods for community engagement in local governance. One major contribution is that it seeks to uncover what works at the ground level. In the process, it bridges the gap between political science literature and local governance – moving past static models and abstractions to make the discipline relevant to specific issues, communities and practitioners.

By necessity and design, this dissertation borrows from several traditions within political science; consequently it may not fit squarely into any one area but moves across subfields. While concentrating on the urban setting, it seriously considers political economy, relies on normative theory, and ultimately addresses gaps in participation and outcomes in American politics. Additionally it looks at administration and policy at the local level and how the interests of marginalized communities are most effectively pursued. The goal of this dissertation is to paint a picture of community organizing, using Baltimore and Washington as the canvas. As organizing has multiple moving parts and cannot be summed up in a linear fashion,

this study necessarily includes multiple facets. The chapters in the dissertation build upon one another and explore how organizing affiliates function in specific contexts.

Chapter 2 discusses the existing literature on community organizing and makes a case for why the project adds to extant knowledge on this topic. It also introduces the research project and highlights the points that it addresses. One major point is that organizing is needed to represent the interests of marginalized communities. Chapter 3 explores the social, economic and political histories of Baltimore and Washington, with a focus on the conditions that gave rise to organizing. Using historical records and interviews with organizers and ministers in each city, I illustrate how local conditions contribute to when and how organizing takes root.

Chapters 4 and 5 focus on the elements of mayoral leadership. Chapter 4 presents a theory of urban governance and the relationship between types of mayors and community organizers. It lays out the expectations of neighborhood inclusion in urban regimes, given the generation, race, and electoral coalition of mayors. The chapter also includes a typology of mayors based on a number of characteristics. Chapter 5 presents profiles of the mayors, focusing on how mayoral administrations either facilitate or frustrate the efforts of grassroots organizations. By looking at individual regimes and their relationships with organizers, this chapter tests expectations based on mayoral characteristics.

Chapter 6 examines the structure of organizing affiliates. It provides an in-depth description of Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development (BUILD) and the Washington Interfaith Network (WIN) and analyzes how they perceive

themselves and their missions. It also focuses on the composition of the organizations and describes how they function based on the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) model. Again, I argue that organizational structure (racial and economic composition) and strategies are all context dependent. All of the information in this chapter was gleaned from IAF training sessions, interviews with organizers, BUILD/WIN meetings and local actions.

Chapter 7 explores the most recent victories achieved by each organization. It assesses the influence of community organizing activities on municipal spending and tangible results, particularly in the realm of housing. The chapter also looks at the effectiveness of community/government collaborations and the obstacles to achieving desired ends. The findings from these case studies are particularly interesting given their consistency with the previously introduced mayoral typologies. The cases also powerfully illustrate the role that context plays in the responsiveness of local governments relative to available resources. In my view, social, economic, and political contexts contribute to success; as such, organizing outcomes are dependent on local economic resources as well as political will.

Finally, chapter 8 looks to future of community engagement and collaboration with local government. The purpose of this chapter is to critique the effectiveness of community organizing (by IAF affiliates BUILD and WIN) and lay out some policy oriented prescriptions for urban America. If we have learned anything, it is that although context matters, there are some general propositions which hold true. Mainly, local governments are prone to support downtown development and the key to achieving community benefits is to tie these requests to such projects.

## Chapter 2: Historical and Theoretical Underpinnings of Community Organizing

### Introduction

During the 2008 Presidential race, community organizing unexpectedly became a point of contention between the Democrats and Republicans. While organizing, as practiced by IAF affiliates is non-partisan, such grassroots efforts are respected in the so-called left, but are regularly shunned by the right. The most recent Republican National Convention provides ample evidence:

*-Former Governor George Pataki said: “[Barack Obama] was a community organizer. What in God’s name is a community organizer? I don’t even know if that’s a job.”*

*-Former Mayor Rudy Giuliani said: “On the other hand, you have a resume from a gifted man with an Ivy League education. He worked as a community organizer. What? [Laughter]...I said, OK, OK, maybe this is the first problem on the resume.”*

*-Governor Sarah Palin said: “I guess a small-town mayor is sort of like a community organizer, except that you have actual responsibilities.”*

Although the comments were intended to shed doubt on the relevance of the Democratic nominee’s experience, they highlight the disconnection between the grassroots and the officials that govern. It also speaks to the chasm between the urban and suburban, the black and white – in other words, the haves and the have-nots. In the end, one thing is apparent – that a great majority of Americans have a limited familiarity with the concept of community organizing and thereby have



limited substantive knowledge. This is despite the reality that most citizens have either directly or indirectly benefitted from sustained community driven efforts. The Civil Rights Movement is probably the greatest historical model of successful organizing. I argue that in the post-Civil Rights era, the work of IAF affiliates is the best modern example of successful community organizing.

In light of the limited understanding of community organizing, it is necessary to outline some of the major tenets. The process of building a mobilizable community is called community organizing. It involves building an enduring network of people, who identify with common ideals and who can act on the basis of those ideals (Snow et al. 1986). Community organizing can, in fact, refer to the entire process of “organizing relationships, identifying issues, mobilizing around those issues, and building an enduring organization” (Stall and Stoecker 1998: 730). An organizing approach changes politics and empowers citizens by de-professionalizing politics and relocating it in the face to face horizontal interactions among people. “Organizing begins with the culture, history, and past work of change in any setting. It has, as its first premise, a respect for the intelligence and talents of ordinary, uncredentialed citizens. It taps diverse self-interests, understanding self-interest in terms of the passions, life histories, relationships, and core values that motivate people” (Boyte 2004: 35). Organizing is necessarily attentive to power relationships, from positional leadership to informal networks of leaders who sustain the cultures and relationships in any particular setting.

### *Organizing During the Civil Rights Era*

A seminal work in the area of organizing is Piven and Cloward's *Poor People's Movements*. According to Piven and Cloward (1979: xi), "popular insurgency does not proceed by someone else's rules or hopes; it has its own logic and direction. It flows from historically specific circumstances: it is a reaction against those circumstances, and it is also limited by those circumstances." People experience deprivation and oppression within a concrete setting, not as the end product of large and abstract processes, and it is the concrete experience that molds their discontent into specific grievances against specific targets (Piven and Cloward 1979). Thus, the workings of social movements can be understood best in the context of a theory that sees them in all their particularity, and as consequences of the narratives through which people construct, interpret, and appropriate daily experience (Kling 2003).

Piven and Cloward (1979) reiterated the theme that while protest politics and electoral politics were different – one emphasized conflict, the other consensus and coalitions – they were also interdependent. Therefore, the proposed strategy was not to pursue protest politics independent of electoral politics, but to play them off each other. Electoral politics often created unsatisfactory results that over time could lead to the development of protest politics, and protest politics could help marginalized groups gain a greater voice in the electoral process (Shram 2003). As far as the Civil Rights Movement, Piven and Cloward (1979) concede that existing institutions provided the vehicles to forge solidarity, to define common goals, and to mobilize collective action. However, even as they recognized the presence of these organizational bases – what Morris (1984) later called "movement centers" – they neglected the theoretical import of the critical role such centers played (Kling 2003).

“The concept ‘movement center’ suggests that an alternative view best describes the workings of the civil rights movement: movement centers provided the organizational framework out of which the modern civil rights movement emerged and it was organization-building that produced these centers” (Morris 1984: 74).

However, the mobilizing tradition, which focused on large, relatively short-term public events, is what is best known. In popular memory, it is often taken as synonymous with the Civil Rights Movement. “Yet it was the organizing tradition that led to the transformation of everyday life and interracial power relations in the South... By patient, sustained work in communities, organizing approaches created foundations across the South on which the whole movement built...Such leadership had developed over decades. The movement created the context in which their public talents and political vision deepened and became widely visible” (Boyte 2004: 35). Southern black rural culture long included a tradition of community organizing that politicized the black community through political participation and the cultivation of indigenous leadership. That leadership emphasized helping people develop themselves for long-range progress and continuity rather than merely relying on a single event to effect change (Payne 1996). Such a rich organizational infrastructure provided the material resources, spiritual/cultural messages and communication networks necessary for communal solidarity; these elements in tandem are largely responsible for success of the boycotts and protests of the movement.

Hence, there were in fact two strands of the Civil Rights Movement – the mobilizing approach that led to demonstrations like the March on Washington and the organizing approach of organizers in local communities. Payne (1996) finds the

origins of the movement not exclusively in the Black church, or in external events, but in a long- standing, indigenous organizing tradition. This paints a clear picture of the older Blacks in the South who had their own, older organizing tradition and who provided crucial support for young civil rights activists in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). “What energized and sustained SNCC was not the relationship between young students and older leaders and organizations, such as Martin Luther King, Jr., the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), or the NAACP. Instead, it was personal ties and personal biographies on the local level. The movement in Mississippi was not the result of an infusion of outside activists but rather it was “about a young organizing tradition building upon an older one” (Payne 1996: 179).

#### *Alinsky and the Industrial Areas Foundation*

Building upon the tradition of organizing through religious-based institutions, Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) affiliates operate as interconnected networks of congregations. IAF affiliates are dues-based, adhering to the belief that power comes in two forms: organized people and organized money. Under this rubric, an effective broad-based collective is defined as many organized institutions with some organized money in the form of dues. This is a reasonable measure because it follows that when a broad-based collective has a well-organized base of people and some money, it has a more solid platform from which to deal with politicians and business interests. Also, as membership dues support the organizing efforts of the affiliates, they are less susceptible to control from external funding entities. However, institutional membership does not come without its own challenges as broad-based power

organizations must be able to take on multiple issues because their member organizations have multiple interests.

Nevertheless, the positives of this membership structure outweigh the negatives as existing institutions such as church congregations incorporate networks of citizens who share some level of initial trust and cooperative ties. “Religious congregations have staying power, so they can engage people in long-term processes of community building and democratic participation” (Warren 2001: 21). In addition, religion can offer a moral vision for political action. If we are particularly concerned with addressing the problems of low-income communities of color, commitments to social justice must inform understandings of community; a vision of social justice can inspire members of oppressed groups to action (Warren 2001).

“Alinsky pointed to pragmatic power concerns: poor communities had to start by unifying what “pockets of power” existed. Other approaches, he argued, simply did not generate as much power. In fact, this institutionally grounded organizing has, over a period of several decades, proven more effective in mobilizing poor communities than have competing models of citizen mobilization” (Boyte 2004: 49) Alinsky’s model divided cities into two systems, the neighborhood and the larger, adversarial power structure outside. “Poor, minority, and working class communities, in his analysis, were victimized by the affluent, powerful, downtown-connected interests who bestowed social services and economic largess on the already privileged areas of the city. Within neighborhoods, the goal was to create an organization of existing community institutions” (Boyte 2004: 49).

This is consistent with Ferman's assertion that "decisions made behind closed doors reflect the interests of those on the inside; neighborhoods often rise or fall as a result of those decisions" (Ferman 1996: 12). Ferman's treatment of urban arenas draws attention to institutional structures, patterns of resource distribution, and underlying political cultures; the goal is to identify the opportunities for political mobilization and the form that such mobilization will take (1996). Such an analysis identifies some of the conditions favorable to neighborhood incorporation, the nature of that incorporation, and its significance for progressive government. Thus, integrating neighborhoods into urban political analysis adds a normative dimension currently lacking in the economic development or marketplace conception of the city; such an analysis tackles questions of participation, citizenship, and quality of life (Ferman 1996).

Understandably, political engagement in depressed communities requires organization. Someone has to build strong enough relationships between people so they can support each other through long and challenging struggles. The IAF network continues to forge a thoughtful, constantly evaluated political practice out of the tension between 'the world as it is' and 'the world as it should be'. "It not only teaches specific political information and skills; it adds a strong public relationship-building dimension that helps re-center politics among citizens" (Boyte 2004: 53). To this end, communities often have to be "reorganized" to support political action (Alinsky 1971). Therefore, for successful progressive politics to take root, it must come via local mobilization. The IAF shows that people can be brought into politics if they are given the skills and the opportunity to have a real voice in the issues that

concern them (Osterman 2002). “The strongest case for organizing locally is that it is only at this level that politics can be taught. And it is at this level that people are best mobilized. No matter how important the national agenda, the power to achieve it can be generated only through local action” (Osterman 2002: 190).

The Alinsky (IAF) model is based in a conception of separate public and private spheres, with “community organizing” being the public sphere battles between the haves and have-nots. The main role of the private sphere is to support the organizer’s public sphere work. While problems begin in the private sphere, it is important to move the community to understand how those problems are connected to larger issues outside the community. Thus problems could not be solved solely within the community but by the community being represented better in the public sphere (Reitzes and Reitzes 1987b). Therefore, as power and politics both occur in the public sphere, poor communities are able to gain power through public sphere action – picking a single elite target, isolating it from other elites, personalizing it, and polarizing it.

In the Alinsky model, the organizer is not just there to win a few issues but to build an enduring formal organization that can continue to claim power and resources for the community – to represent the community in a competitive public sphere pluralist polity (Stall and Stoecker 1998). Hence, this type of community building is an ongoing approach to economic, social, and cultural vitality, as opposed to a specific program or formula. Successful community building includes “a sustained series of strategic accomplishments that have a discernible impact on people, families, market dynamics, and institutions” (McNeely et al, 2000: 10). As such, the

goal of IAF affiliates is to build sustained power. This is not the same as episodic demonstrations, but is rooted in the forming and re-forming of relationships over time, predicated upon mutual self-interest.

Thus, from a perspective that emphasizes the importance of the public sphere, organizing people requires appealing to the self-interest of groups and individuals. Organizers recognize that one has to work with people where they are and appeal to them in terms of what they understand their immediate interests to be. In order to be effective, organizers must operate in terms of the consciousness and political understanding of the people they attempt to organize (Kling 2003). The belief is that people become involved because they think there is something in it for themselves (Alinsky 1969; 1971). Since Alinsky saw society as a compromise between competing self-interested individuals in the public sphere, conflict was inevitable, and a pluralist polity was the means by which compromise was reached. Because poor people are at an initial disadvantage in that polity, the organizer's job is to prepare citizens to engage in the level of public conflict necessary for them to be included in the compromise process (Reitzes and Reitzes 1987b).

*Concepts: Participation, Power and Social Capital*

Ultimately, the purpose of building strong organizations and reinforcing relationships is for distressed communities to seize the power necessary to exert some control over their destinies. Real democracy requires effective connections between well organized communities and the political system. This requires mediating institutions that are capable of intervening successfully in politics and government and can hold public institutions accountable to communities (Warren 2001).



Community building through organizing provides the structure within which demands can be presented by those who have first-hand knowledge of the local problems from which their communities suffer disproportionately. Ongoing organizing efforts support the relationships and mechanisms of collaboration through which change can be accomplished in a way that all parties involved meet their institutional needs – i.e. mutual self interest.

Community organizing (which I consider a form of community building) is intimately related to social capital, which can be thought of as a bundle of resources that – when activated – reinforces the capacity to act. This capacity is the interaction of the organizational resources and social capital existing within a given community that can be leveraged to solve collective problems and improve or maintain the well-being of that community. Accordingly, community building is rapidly gaining recognition as a vital force for revitalizing democracy at the ground level as it seeks to reverse the decline of social capital in urban communities. Social capital resources exist in the structure of relations between and among actors (Coleman 1988). Essentially, social capital refers to the connections among individuals and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arises from them (Putnam 2000). Social capital signals that something of value has been produced for individuals who are involved in relationships with others (Putnam 2000).

As an antidote to a dearth of urban social capital, community development (another form of community building) can be defined as combining material development with the development of people. Real development necessarily involves increasing a community's capacity for taking control of its own development –

building within the community critical thinking and planning abilities, as well as concrete skills so that community members can replicate development projects and processes in the future. The end result should leave a community not just with more immediate “products” (e.g., housing), but also with an increased capacity to address future issues and ability to replicate their achievements in other situations (Kennedy 1996). Successful community development can be manifested through tangible products of development, but rests primarily on power and control being increasingly vested in community members.

“Although it is attractive and sensible to see the IAF as a piece of a solution to the growing deficit in social capital, there is a significant difference of spirit between the IAF and the social capital story. At its base the IAF wants to alter what it views as an imbalance in power, and it assumes and accepts that as part of its efforts, it will engage in political conflict” (Osterman 2002: 179). One challenge constantly confronting community organizers is developing leaders’ ability to accurately interpret their complex political environments. “Political environment here includes all those institutions, politically connected individuals, and issues that an organization might hope to influence. Interpreting that environment includes deciding what alliances to forge, which issues to pursue, what political or business leaders to target, and what information to gather” (Wood 1999: 314).

Thus, community organizations must constantly interpret an ever-changing and ambiguous political environment; gaining skills such as of leading meetings, analyzing political opportunities, and developing political relationships requires repeated exposure within the context of real political engagement. Sandel (1986: 348)

observes, “if local government and municipal institutions are no longer adequate arenas for republic citizenship, we must seek public spaces as may be found amidst the institutions of civil society – in schools and workplaces, churches and synagogues, trade unions, and social movements.” It is only via these institutions that people can practice the kind of real politics that strong democracy entails. However, deliberation and agency are only part of the IAF story. “The IAF also has a view about distribution, not simply that the problem lies in a general failure of participation, but that the systematic exclusion of the “bottom third” is the real villain. In addition, the IAF is concerned with power and self-interest, albeit a self-interest modified by deliberation and community” (Osterman 2002: 182).

If social capital is to be built – if attitudes of dependency are to be replaced with those of self-reliance – neighborhood residents must largely do it for themselves. This is consistent with the IAF’s Iron Rule: never do for others what they can do for themselves. In other words “community participation” is not enough; the community must play the central role in devising and implementing strategies for its own improvement. This does not mean that outside facilitators cannot provide guidance or that they cannot accept outside help or accomplish goals by partnering with outside agencies, but neighborhood residents must “own” the improvement process.

As power is central to the work of community organizers, it is also vital to this dissertation. According to Elkin (1985), power in the sense of the capacity to promote or protect interests is therefore not just the ability to influence the outcome of a particular decision, but rather the capacity to shape and take advantage of a set of arrangements that will produce an ongoing flow of favorable actions. Additionally, as

each city has its own history, stakeholders, and arenas, it is crucial to have an understanding of what specific arrangements are at work in Baltimore and Washington. Arenas are “spheres of activity” that are distinguished by particular institutional frameworks and underlying political cultures that lend a structure to these activities. “Local political systems are made up of numerous arenas – electoral, civic, and business; which institutions within the city are prominent and how they operate depends largely on which arena is the primary home of activity” (Ferman 1996: 5). Stone (1980) contends that, “Power is not only interpersonal; it is also intergroup (including relationships between classes and strata)... Power is not only a matter of intention; it is also a matter of context, of the nature of or “logic” of the situation... Power relationships are not only direct; they may also be indirect” (979-80).

This supports the point made by Bachrach and Baratz (1970) that contending groups exercise power not only to influence the outcomes of specific issues but also to shape the context of decision making and thereby influence how, and even whether, an issue develops. “Systemic power can be defined as that dimension of power in which durable features of the socioeconomic system (the situational element) confer advantages and disadvantages on groups (the intergroup element) in ways predisposing public officials to favor some interests at the expense of others (the indirect element)” (Stone 1980: 980). Furthermore, urban political coalitions can be put together in multiple ways, and different kinds of coalitions are formed for different purposes. Although electoral coalitions may appear to be pluralistic, once the highly visible election campaign is over, officials display a marked preference for

involving upper-strata interests in planning and formulating policy proposals (Stone 1980). Similarly, there are indications that mayors elected with strong lower-strata support nevertheless feel constrained to form policy alliances with business interests (Stokes 1973).

Because officials are predisposed to favor some interests and oppose others, this system lowers the opportunity costs for some groups while raising them for others, thereby having an important impact on the community's overall set of power relationships. This observation reflects the necessity to have avenues for the resource poor to be included in governing and the policy realm. To this end, although scholars such as Berry et al (1993) have studied advisory councils, no one has studied their success over time and how they intersect with grassroots organizing efforts. The question that has yet to be answered is whether institutionalized advisory councils have the intended effect of substantive neighborhood inclusion. This dissertation looks to answer this question as well determine what impact their success or failure has had upon community organizing over time. Are such structured mechanisms mere gestures of participatory democracy with no real impact or are they actually useful tools that simply do not have the capacity to represent the most urgent community needs and therefore necessitate community organizing efforts? Regardless, it will add to the knowledge of the political science discipline to conduct serious analysis in this area.

The concept of power is often misunderstood and too limited. There are two types of power – power over (dominant) vs. power to (relational); the power with which organizers are concerned is relational (power to = capacity to act). This

concept of power is rooted in forming, sustaining, and strengthening relationships; it is the nuanced treatment of relationships that is captured in the term “social capital.” I believe that latent community power may become active when underserved neighborhoods are organized with the intention of influencing the political process to achieve community-determined ends. Community organizing represents the push for inclusion of marginalized communities in addressing everyday issues; the focus is on self-determination within the existing policy realm. Accordingly, organizing efforts must be non-exclusionary (in terms of race and class) in order to be effective; such an inclusive orientation extends past a parochial and thereby limited perspective.

*Organizing in the Post-Civil Rights Era*

This dissertation looks at community organizing as a method for cultivating community capacity to influence local policy, including the distribution of resources and services. To some it might seem that there are no new lessons to be learned in the field of community organizing. From this perspective, everything of importance has already been said and the sad reality is that organizing has no substantial positive outcome. It is quite easy, and unfair for that matter, to assert that community organizing has no impact because one can see that all of the problems that beset large urban centers like Baltimore and Washington have not been solved. However, I argue that conditions in marginalized communities would be even worse in the absence of organizing activities. A major facet of my argument is that a number of benefits would never have come about without grassroots activity. In other words, changes in policy and the distribution of economic resources will likely not occur unless there is community-based pressure.

There are some lessons to be learned from the past, including victories and defeats, as well as new ones as we move forward in time. Community organizing does have its limitations, specifically when it comes to addressing larger systemic issues. The fact wholesale change did not occur as a result of the movements of the turbulent 1960s and 70s is not cause to abandon the concept of organizing, but to view it through a new and more practical lens. Some community activists in past generations tended to use more conflict-oriented strategies which conveyed the impression that they wanted to make inner-city neighborhoods self-contained and largely independent from an encompassing adversarial system (Kingsley et. al 1997). But an important difference with current community organizers is that they recognize that such methods are self-defeating and impractical.

Instead, organizers look for opportunities to partner with outside institutions in ways that will serve their own interests and strengthen their own internal institutions. In this way organizers attempt to use conflict as a tool of a pursuing a progressive agenda rather than letting it become an end in itself. The IAF has a slogan, “no permanent allies, no permanent enemies,” that reflects a realistic view of the world but that also shields it against a shallow reading of self interest (Osterman 2002). To this end, the only thing that is somewhat permanent are the issues affecting communities on a daily basis. This flexibility demonstrates the consistent pragmatism practiced by IAF affiliates given an unpredictable political climate and the need to create alliances. “The IAF is always willing to take half a loaf. Its ability to compromise and engage in a give-and-take is evident in virtually every issue it deals

with. It avoids “letting the best solution get in the way of a good solution” (Osterman 2002: 176).

Rather than throwing up hands in despair, it is more important than ever to speak to the issues that plague marginalized communities and find concrete solutions to concrete problems, as opposed to abstract theories totally divorced from reality and public policy. Organizing is based on an attachment to the particular; it aims to further the demands of a set of local people, and to foster their ability to govern themselves, challenge authority, and develop their civic capacities. Distressed neighborhoods suffer from systematic disadvantages resulting from macro-issues, which require both internal cohesion and collaboration with outside entities to attack (Sabl 2002). I contend that it is primarily through organizing that distressed communities are able to form a stable base from which to negotiate for beneficial policy outcomes. Indeed, the outlook is not hopeless, but organizing is not a panacea for all of the collective economic and social woes facing cities. The counterargument to the effectiveness of organizing is, in fact, an indictment of the prevailing political and economic system in the United States. Organizing works to counteract the deleterious consequences of urban inequality, however, the battle is against entrenched power.

Nonetheless, community organizing represents the most pragmatic, and arguably the most potent vehicle for depressed urban communities to be integrated into the political process. Splintered groups have so far proven unable to translate their grievances with the government into a political platform for negotiations – which is specifically what organizing seeks to do. In the 1970s and 80s there was



some fascination with and belief in the transformative power of community organizing. Unfortunately, this has somewhat waned over time as few scholars currently venture into urban political economy and the efforts of citizens to get their fair share of the American Dream. Rather than lamenting the problem of inequality and pontificating about options that have no feasible chance of implementation, the study of community organizing provides the opportunity to assess the success of something tangible and to make suggestions regarding effective strategies to secure desired outcomes. Organizers stress that achieving equitable policy outcomes requires addressing inequalities in social power. This activity may not turn the entire tide of American corporatism and the concentration of wealth, but organizing does create tangible differences in the lives of everyday people.

Moreover, whereas the standard measure of a social movement's "success" is the extent to which it achieves a predetermined set of demands or policy goals, the measure of an organizing movement's success is the extent to which it engages people to pursue their own goals (Sabl 2002). Although results are extremely important, organizing is worthwhile because it breaks down barriers between social groups and challenges the top-down paradigm – regardless of whether it succeeds in changing government or corporate policy. For democracy to thrive, political institutions must be constantly renewed through democratic action on behalf of those excluded from the polity. As low- and middle-income urban residents find it increasingly difficult to have their voices heard in the public arena, their ability to do so, comes from organizing large numbers of people together. In other words, they exert "people power" rather than the economic/political power of campaign

contributions, in which they are vastly outspent by more affluent residents (Verba et al. 1995). Among the most effective groups challenging the status quo in the United States are those engaged in “community organizing” (Boyte 1989; Greider 1992; Warren 2001). These “church-based community organizing” efforts thus make up far and away the most widespread social movement advocating social justice among poor and working-class Americans today (Wood 1999).

### *Research Agenda in Baltimore and Washington*

It is important to recognize that urban communities are not static, but dynamic and constantly changing. The urban landscape has changed over the last two decades as cities have reemerged as desirable places to the whites and middle-class blacks that left. Subsequently, more attention is focused on urban areas and the problems that have been neglected for generations. Although the demographics of cities may be changing through gentrification, power relations and the disparities of resources have remained somewhat constant. If power dynamics have not changed appreciably, it is important to understand why not. It is a different time period with different actors, so it is quite possible for the combination to produce somewhat different outcomes. And if power dynamics are truly static, it speaks to underlying systemic inequalities that must also be addressed.

In order to flesh out the importance of both grassroots organizing and codified mechanisms of community engagement and their respective impacts on the policy process, it is fitting to analyze cities with different structures of neighborhood inclusion. Baltimore and Washington are cities that are geographically close and demographically similar, yet have contrasting forms of community engagement in the

political/policy making process. Since 1973 – the beginning of Home Rule in Washington – each of the District’s eight wards has had Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners who act as conduits between the neighborhoods in the various wards and the elected council members. Conversely, in Baltimore there is no structured system – there are elected city council representatives and a number of neighborhood associations, but no formal connection between these groups and the city government. It seems plausible that this disconnection between communities and the local governing structure necessitates organizing activities. Additionally, the fact that both cities have functioning Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) affiliates – Baltimoreans United In Leadership Development (BUILD) and Washington Interfaith Network (WIN) – also provides the opportunity to investigate the conditions that give rise to community organizing by taking a look at their origins.

As long as those in depressed urban communities face the multi-faceted problems of limited employment opportunities, strained educational environments, dilapidated housing, and inadequate support services, community organizing remains the most accessible and productive outlet. The term “community organizing” is often tossed about by those with only a passing knowledge or familiarity. Those who have seriously studied community organizing have had to become intimately associated with such organizations in order to gain both trust and access. It is such a qualitative approach that allows me, as a researcher, to uncover previously ignored elements and make more nuanced assertions regarding grassroots efforts in local politics. True organizing is a marathon and not a sprint. It takes time to build relationships of trust, both among community members and between community organizations and the

local government. In this regard, successful organizing is based on forging and maintaining relationships (the building of social and political capital). Community organizing, like politics, is not so much an exact science as it is an art that must be practiced in order to be perfected. Nonetheless, there are some specific elements that could be deemed necessary and/or sufficient for grassroots activity to take hold.

Not to say that organizing cannot be analyzed in a coherent, structured manner, but true understanding only comes with a temporal, contextual orientation. The purpose of this study is to uncover the specific circumstances that contribute to successful community organizing. Proper analysis requires knowledge of key players/stakeholders and their motivations (self-interest), which is not static, but changes over time. As such, historical developments, along with the economic and political landscape specific to a city, is something that must be considered when making assessments of governing structures and citizen inclusion. Additionally the relative strength of the mayor (Baltimore vs. Washington) is a factor that may be correlated with the administration's willingness to collaborate with community groups. Both cities have relatively strong mayors, however, in Baltimore the mayor has greater ability to act unilaterally, while in DC the mayor must coordinate with the council to a greater extent.

There are three primary sectors that interact at the local level: public (electoral), private (business) and civic (grassroots organizations); each of these facets has a particular self-interest, which at some times may be in accordance or conflict with that of the other two. The self-interest germane to organizers in distressed communities is related to distribution of resources, service delivery, and

quality of life issues. The self-interest most crucial to business is an economic environment that increases profit margin and growth. The self-interest most critical to an elected official is electoral viability and support. I argue that each of these interests can be counterbalanced, but that the grassroots sector will only be included to the extent which organizers push the case. Elected officials and business entities often collaborate for the purposes of economic development, but coordination between governing administrations and grassroots organizations is often less than automatic.

Research Questions/Hypotheses:

*What role does the philosophical orientation/leadership style of the mayor have upon the longevity and success of community organizing initiatives?*

It is my contention that leadership does matter, and that the degree to which community organizers are integrated into the governing structure depends quite heavily on the orientation of the mayoral administration. Although other efforts have discussed mayoral administrations as more of an afterthought, I embarked on this research with the question of executive leadership at the forefront. Mayoral philosophies may fit into a general typology (top down/oppositional vs. inclusionary/collaborative). This distinction, which is by no means discrete (either/or), may provide a shorthand mechanism for categorizing and critiquing mayoral administrations and governing regimes.

*What impact does the political structure – presence or lack of structured community participation – have upon the existence of grassroots organizations? Does neighborhood representation make organizing seem less necessary because of perceived inclusion in the local power structure?*

I also believe that a city's governing structure matters in the development of community organizing affiliates. In the vacuum of meaningful neighborhood integration in local government, organizing sprouts as an antidote to this exclusion. However, I also find that government structured avenues for neighborhood participation can prove to be insufficient, from which emerges the call for grassroots organizing efforts. I hypothesize that community organizing and advisory councils are individually necessary, but could be more optimal when in tandem. Each has its own merits, however, if combined, inclusive government structures and bottom up strategies would provide for a more complete and responsive system.

*Why did organizing (IAF affiliate) take root in Baltimore thirty years ago, while this only occurred in Washington during the course of the last twelve years?*

Previous works have not asked the questions of why organizing takes place in some cities as opposed to others, why it occurs at different times in different places, and what contextual elements portend success or failure. Also, while there has been discussion of governing regimes, there has been little thought given to the types of government that allow organizing to be more effective, or make it seemingly unnecessary. I anticipated finding that in Baltimore the long history of organizing has served as a link between neighborhoods and government in the absence of a structured mechanism. I also expected to find that as a city such as Washington gentrifies, it becomes all too apparent that successive generations of black leadership and structured neighborhood representation are insufficient when it comes to meeting the needs of distressed communities.

*How effective are the organizing strategies employed by IAF affiliates? Are they catalysts for significant policy change, or only responsible for limited improvements at the fringes?*

It appears that in Baltimore and Washington, the respective IAF affiliates (BUILD and WIN) have managed to emerge as significant players in the policy arena, particularly when it comes to affordable housing. It appears that the strength of the mayor in relation to the city council and the types of projects for which the administration needs broad support has an impact on the degree to which the agendas of broad-based grassroots organizations are addressed. This is evidenced by deal-making regarding municipal projects; in Baltimore this meant securing affordable housing in exchange for the convention center hotel, and in Washington this meant securing affordable housing in exchange for the baseball stadium.

### *Theoretical Contributions*

I propose a theory of *Non-Exclusionary Organizing* which holds that organizing efforts that include a broad base of constituents/supporters are more likely to sustain challenges from majority-dominated institutions. Universal programs have much greater political strength than do programs targeted solely at low-income or minority populations. Further, integrated organizations arouse less suspicion and are able to make the case that benefits do not exclusively go to blacks/minorities, but to all of those that may need assistance. As a consequence, they are more able to sustain challenges from an urban regime. Organizers recognize that it is neither practical nor feasible to be strictly confrontational. Consequently, we see the emergence of this non-revolutionary organizing which does not necessarily advocate structural or

wholesale systematic change. This is not so much a failing as a realization that the revolution so bandied about in the 1960s and 70s never came to fruition; so short of that, largely black, marginalized communities must truly move from protest to organized politics. Since Alinsky's death, the surviving organization (IAF) has adopted a strategy that seeks compromise, but is also willing to engage in public conflict (Lancourt 1979).

There are others that have recently studied community engagement in urban politics, however, my approach merges the community development/building work in the field of urban planning with the social action/movements literature found in sociology and the writing on participation in political science. This approach combines a focus on housing and services with social capital and political efficacy. To understand what community organizing looks like, one must gain access in order to gain a more in-depth vantage point. As Richard Fenno popularized "soaking and poking" at the Congressional level, I have sought to do this at the local level. To this end, it was instructive to attend the IAF national training to get a better idea of how the IAF sees itself and how it trains organizers on the central elements of power and relationships. Consequently a major portion of my research agenda includes open-ended interviews with past and present organizers for BUILD and WIN.

Additionally, I look at organizing from the perspective of holding local administrations accountable to citizens/voters. Orr notes that "social capital, even robust intergroup social capital combined with financial resources, is not enough without the votes, representation, political incorporation, and political leadership required to back it up and convert it into policy" (Orr 1999, p. 12). It is the



mechanism behind the conversion of social capital into policy with which I am specifically interested. While Orr has looked at Baltimore and BUILD, his previous work has focused largely on the school system, while my work concentrates more on housing. I am also seeking to uncover the specific differences between mayoral administrations in regard to the inclusion of marginalized communities/neighborhoods. Although organizing strategies are of major importance, the ability to achieve desired ends is also related to the governing styles of mayoral administrations.

Also, while Ferman analyzes the efforts of community based organizations to challenge the downtown growth orientation of local governments, her treatment of arenas does not sufficiently address structured forms of participation. Her criticism of regime theory is that it holds a static view of the balance of power between business elites and political elites, despite evidence of variances in such power dynamics. As Ferman notes, while Elkin has emphasized the centrality of institutional arrangements in his typology of urban regimes, he noted that the “consequences” of institutional variation over time had not been investigated (Ferman 1996: 7). I seek to uncover these consequences in Baltimore and Washington. This dissertation does not look at community organizing in isolation, nor does it look at governing regimes in isolation, the major contribution is that it stresses the relationship between the two. Governments tend to be top down, organizers stress the bottom up; in order for the system to be effective these two orientations must balance one another. There are specific roles for the government and for citizens – government is responsible for

addressing macro issues, and communities are responsible for making sure that their specific issues are recognized by the government.

## Chapter 3: Two Cities

### Introduction

*“Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white--separate and unequal...Segregation and poverty have created in the racial ghetto a destructive environment totally unknown to most white Americans. What white Americans have never fully understood but what the Negro can never forget--is that white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it”*

The quote above is from the Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, better known as the Kerner Commission, which was convened after the 1967 riots in Detroit, Los Angeles, and Newark, NJ, to uncover the causes and potential solutions to the unrest. Although the study came to the clear conclusion that social, economic, and political inequality based on race was the motivating factor in these urban disturbances, neither the national or local governments were willing or able to address the long-standing systemic issues facing blacks in America’s cities. If Martin Luther King had a dream of equality and human dignity for all people, history reveals that it most certainly was deferred; and to quote Langston Hughes, “what happens to a dream deferred...does it shrivel up and die, or does it explode?” Entrenched poverty and lack of political voice was a powder keg waiting to explode, which it finally did in the late 1960s. Because this situation was not fully understood or appreciated, it is necessary to go back to this era to put the pieces together.

Local politics differs from national politics in important ways, particularly as group interest and conflict over power and material resources is quite apparent at this level (Kaufmann 2005). But whereas others look at group conflict via public opinion and voting patterns, my aim is to look at the expression of group interest via community organizing and policy outcomes. It is correct that the allocation of resources can be extraordinarily contentious and elicit heightened conflict among racial groups. However, it is my contention that the study of organizing is able to uncover a less understood dimension – not necessarily the conflict among communities, but the tension between underserved communities and local governments. Although local governments are tasked with serving neighborhoods, there are competing economic interests that often lead mayors to make decisions that may seem beneficial for overall economic development, but in reality are detrimental to the most vulnerable city populations. I propose that without pressure from local organizers, it is more than probable that the interests most salient to marginalized communities would not be addressed, or would be mere afterthoughts.

This chapter begins with the racial and political histories of Baltimore and Washington in the late 1960s and focuses on the conditions that give rise to organizing. The purpose of this chapter is to set the stage for community organizing efforts in Baltimore and Washington and detail the origins of Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development (BUILD) and the Washington Interfaith Network (WIN). My major thesis is that the historical context of the city determines when and how organizing will emerge. The larger purpose of this study is to not only understand BUILD and WIN as organizations – which is important in its own right – but more

importantly what they tell us about the political structure and policy outcomes in Baltimore and Washington, as it relates to neglected segments of the population and the issues that are of importance to them. Although there may be commonalities, no two cities are the same and an overzealous attempt to make generalizations will gloss over significant nuances. A major consideration in the choice of Baltimore and Washington is that these cities provide substantive variation across a number of important factors; the objective is to provide significant variation in political context as well as other systemic factors that influence neighborhood / community mobilization directly and indirectly.

Baltimore and Washington have similarities such as majority black populations, concentrated poverty and pockets of wealth, and some degree of descriptive representation/empowerment, but differ in a variety of ways. On one hand, Baltimore is a major American city, but has been studied far less frequently by political scientists and urban scholars than cities such as Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, and New York. On the other hand, Washington, DC is often viewed as an atypical American city, specifically because it is the Nation's Capital. But aside from being the seat of the federal government, the city surrounding this enclave is quite typical of many urban centers. Nonetheless, there are important institutional differences between the two cities as Baltimore is the large, black city in the state of Maryland, while Washington is the black city controlled by Congress, though lacking a vote within its halls. Another potentially important point of variation is the respective structures of their local governments, as Washington has the Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) as a form of structured community inclusion,

while Baltimore has no such system. However, one element that links the two cities is that they both have affiliates of the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), the oldest and largest community organizing network in the United States – BUILD and WIN.

Although both cities have a strong mayor system of local government, the mayor of Baltimore wields a bit more power than does the mayor of Washington. In Baltimore's government structure, most of the power lies in the mayor (especially when it comes to the budget), whereas the council has limited power. In D.C., there is more balance as the mayor needs a greater degree of support from council members to get budgets and favored legislation passed. This difference influences the way that the mayors in the respective cities interact with council members and partially dictates the strategies for organizers to engage local government. In addition, the large public sector employment base in Washington provides a certain degree of economic vitality and avenues for a burgeoning black middle class. This is in stark contrast to the economic chasm left by the decline of the manufacturing industry in Baltimore which translates to a smaller black middle class and large black underclass. Other important differences between Baltimore and Washington derive from their unique social and political histories.

From my perspective, the story begins in 1968, because I contend that the riots of that year are central to understanding the conditions in each city. These urban uprisings are undoubtedly demonstrative of the rage, disinvestment, and racial animosity that imperil urban areas and are directly related to the issues that organizers seek to address. Baltimore and Washington are two of the cities worst impacted by the riots that erupted in April 1968; sadly, in the aftermath of Dr. King's

assassination, the hope for political inclusion embodied in the civil rights movement went up in flames along with the many shops and businesses that served the black community. For those who remained in these primarily black and poor sections of their respective cities, the burned out reminders of past gone economic vitality along with exodus of whites and the black middle class emblazoned the belief that the civil rights movement had indeed passed them by.

This is quite true when it comes to certain neighborhoods in both cities, where many residents seemingly have little to no prospects for upward mobility or meaningful political inclusion. The ‘best of times, worst of times’ Dickensian dichotomy fairly accurately describes the economic fortunes of Baltimore City and the District of Columbia. In each locale there are peaks of wealth and valleys of poverty; and in both cities this economic disparity is further compounded by race. While having majority black populations for decades, wealth in Baltimore and Washington is disproportionately held by a white minority (ever increasing in DC), while poverty is concentrated in black communities. Although separated by approximately 50 miles, the similarities between the two are quite striking. Aside from Baltimore’s Inner Harbor and Washington’s Capitol Hill, notoriously impoverished communities languish within a stone’s throw of these nationally/internationally revered areas.

In addition to inter-city disparities, intra-city disparities are quite glaring in both locales. Undoubtedly, many of those employed in Baltimore and Washington live in suburban jurisdictions outside the city. However, gentrification has substantially changed demographics in Washington to a degree not yet seen in Baltimore. While

Washington may be shedding its longstanding black majority, Baltimore remains a solidly majority black city. The Baltimore-Washington region encompasses a significant geographical area and claims many inhabitants, however the region is often perceived as those suburban locations between the two cities as opposed the cities themselves (in particular, the most economically depressed sections of these cities). The federal government in Washington and the biotech industry in Baltimore attract highly paid individuals whose concerns are often addressed to the neglect of the most vulnerable individuals, who in most cases have been long-term residents.

So, why did organizing occur at different times in the two cities? In order to answer this question, it is important to have an understanding of the social climate and political actors in each city. Organizing is not a haphazard occurrence, but results from the confluence of events and the tangible motivations of individuals and communities. Organizing requires manpower and motivation, and the direction that it takes depends heavily on what is happening at the ground level. To this end, the approach of the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) is to first go in to see lay of the land – this means understanding political histories/culture, as well as prior and current divisions. Baltimore and Washington are complicated in their own ways, including different histories and governing structures. As such, some time must be dedicated to historical political developments in both cities that led to the emergence of IAF affiliates in Baltimore and Washington.

The available avenues for neighborhood participation and the outlets for expressing community interests determine the appropriate strategies of organizing and the degree to which tactics will be employed. This may explain why an IAF



affiliate has only recently taken root in Washington, while there has been one in Baltimore for three decades. My expectation is that systems that integrate grassroots community leadership/activism with the local policy/political process, though not entirely seamless, are better suited to respond to community interests. I assert that the differences in community engagement and organizing between Baltimore and Washington D.C. are largely shaped by contextual features – chief among these being empowerment a la descriptive representation and the presence or lack of an advisory commission structure.

### *Causes and Effects of the Riots*

Although the riots of 1968 predate the onset of IAF organizing in Baltimore and Washington, these urban uprisings are more than a footnote in history – they are integral to understanding the political/economic environments that organized groups encounter and attempt to address. Martin Luther King saw voting rights and desegregation legislation as necessary, but simply the initial phase in improving the prospects of the disenfranchised. The achievements of the civil rights movement were remarkable, but, he conceded, they did little for lower class blacks, in the South and elsewhere. In this regard, real transformation was a matter of effecting changes at the root of American society to bring about true social and economic justice (Jackson 2007). During his sermon in Washington at the National Cathedral on March 31, 1968, King remarked, “There is nothing new about poverty. What is new is that we now have the techniques and the resources to get rid of poverty. The real question is whether we have the will” (Widmer 2006). As King recognized, legal changes,

particularly changes targeted at a particular region (i.e., the South), was only the first step in a long march toward full equality in America.

Accordingly, the next step would call for massive government programs in education, health, job training, and housing, which would have a profound impact in the lives of the urban poor. Martin Luther King had always seen economic and social justice as necessary counterparts to racial justice, but between 1955 and 1965 his activism had focused on the last of the three. The Watts riots and a summer spent organizing in Chicago provided an altered perspective. In May 1967, he told workers in New York City that “the movement needed a second phase, an effort to change not just racial laws, but the unjust allocation of national resources that upheld poverty and economic division” (Risen 2009: 13). If anything, he said in January 1968, “The plight of the Negro poor, the masses of Negroes, has worsened over the last few years” (Honey 2007: 174). Days before he was killed, King told the congregation at National Cathedral, “We are not coming to Washington to engage in any histrionic action, nor are coming to tear up Washington. I don’t like to predict violence, but if nothing is done between now and June to raise ghetto hope, I feel this summer will not only be as bad, but worse than last year” (Gilbert 1968: 11).

This was all in the midst of Martin Luther King’s recently ended campaign in Chicago which had become stymied in Northern racial resentment and the disinterest of a massive urban bureaucracy. Through a Poor People’s Campaign, King intended to seek a more encompassing justice than the civil rights movement would have been able to achieve. The new campaign was to bring a broad array of America’s poor to Washington; a multiracial cavalcade of people would come to the Mall to claim the

parts of the American dream that had been denied them only because they were poor (Wilkins 2008). Conditions were so dire that King, known for advocating nonviolence, warned of a repeat of the rioting that had erupted the previous summer; unlike those who merely condemned the perceived criminality, King understood rioting to be the language of the unheard. His assessment was that it did not cost the country anything to integrate lunch counters and protect voting rights, but that there was now a need for a massive redistribution of wealth.

After King was murdered in Memphis, word of his death ignited civil disturbances in more than 100 cities across the United States. Lyndon Johnson reflected, ‘God knows how little we’ve really moved on this issue, despite all the fanfare. As I see it, I’ve moved the Negro from D+ to C-. He’s still nowhere. He knows it. And that’s why he’s out in the streets. Hell, I’d be there, too’ (Goodwin 1976: 305). The ghetto frustrations that led to civil disorder were a product of long-standing, deep-seated divisions – between blacks and employers, shopkeepers and customers, police and civilians, landlords and tenants. “Systematic research conducted by the Kerner Commission, which was charged by President Johnson with studying the events of the summer of 1967, demonstrated that there was reason to think riots at least in part were engaged in by people acting purposefully to protest their circumstances...And in many cities, stores operated by whites were targeted by arsonists and vandals, while shops operated by black proprietors were passed over” (Howard et al 1994: 171).

### *Decline of Civil Rights and the Need for Organizing*

To a large extent, the black-led groups responsible for placing many black leaders into office experienced a decline throughout the 1970s. “Civil rights organizations lost much of their membership and support, at both the national and city levels. As organized groups became less influential, black candidates turned their appeal to broader electoral constituencies, including whites and middle-class blacks, who were less visibly united with poor blacks than a few years earlier” (Williams 1987: 130). At the same time, the influence of the black clergy was diminishing with the rise of black politicians who were not church-based, as were the majority of civil rights leaders, and did not necessarily rely on the church for electoral support. Thus, as former movement members were transitioning toward formal politics and away from church congregations, the clergy was in a position where they were not able to produce the change they desired or were once able to effect.

Even after the civil rights advancements of the 1960s, Baltimore continued to be racially polarized, albeit in a more subtle fashion. The subsequent years were a period of drought for a number of reasons. In addition to white flight and the backlash of the corporate sector, there was no federal bailout for struggling cities and their most depressed neighborhoods. Also, the fact that it was a machine city (at that time under Schaefer) made it difficult for independent voices (not affiliated with the machine) advocating for change to be heard. With plenty of patronage – opportunities to dole out rewards or punishment – political incumbents had the ability to pacify individuals and small groups, thereby preventing broad systemic issues from coming to the fore. The patronage system, though involving a number of African Americans,

was challenged by civil rights figures seeking more comprehensive attention to problems in the city; but such challenges were limited and not particularly effective.

In Baltimore during the 1970s, there was a lack of organized political action since the civil rights battles of the 1960s. Recognizing the inability of the church to address the myriad issues affecting Baltimore, civil rights veteran Rev. Vernon Dobson asked the IAF to come. He and others saw the need to bring a new sense of organization and further the civil rights movement. Baltimore was the first predominately black city that the IAF worked in since the 1960s. Previous affiliates in other cities moved out with the onset of the Black Power Movement and the War on Poverty. In the late 1960s, Alinsky felt that the IAF needed to be in white middle class neighborhoods because he feared that they would drift further to the right, which arguably did occur. However, the 1970s proved that without this brand of local organizing, prospects for residents in increasingly poor and black cities like Baltimore would be severely constrained.

Alternatively, Washington was always a target for the IAF, however, for some time there was a lack of time and staff to dedicate to the effort, as well as characteristics of the District that presented a unique challenge. There was some local perception that an additional organizing approach was not needed for several reasons: churches connected with the black mayor (Barry) felt that they could get what they wanted, the existence of a number of community organizations, and the ANC system. Furthermore, DC's relationship with Congress posed some initial concerns about the suitability of an IAF affiliate. In later years, "Congress granted the Control Board considerable powers over the District's purse strings, including authority over budget

and financial planning, above and beyond that held by the Mayor and the Council; approval of District borrowing; responsibility for reviewing all acts by the City Council that affect finance and revenue; approval for all labor contracts and leases” (Fauntroy 2003: 15). In the face of the Congressional takeover, there were questions as to whether such an IAF organizing effort could be effective.

Race has always been central to politics in Washington, but there also was/is greater class segmentation of the black community. At one end of the spectrum are the poor and downtrodden and at the other end are black insiders – the middle and upper middle-class who function as the political and social elites. In Washington during the 1990s, there was a void in vocal religious leadership in the city. Although there were older ministers who were veterans of the civil rights era, they seemed to be fighting the battles of a previous generation. There was also a vacuum of political leadership as political characters and policies remained stagnant. In this regard, a weakness of black leadership is duplication; one critical observation is that by now, older figures ought to be mentors as opposed to central actors. Also, as in other cities, the ascension of post-civil rights politicians who were not connected with the church is a relevant factor. For instance, some politicians, seeing that many of the license plates in the District on Sundays were from Maryland and Virginia, surmised that these congregants were not local voters. This may have caused them to see the pastors as weak and therefore not partners in political collaboration.

Timing is of the utmost importance, and it appears that the 1990s was the right time for a merging of energies in Washington. Younger ministers were looking for their role in addressing the issues of the day (crime, drugs, poverty, etc). And with the

limitations of descriptive representation being acutely felt, there was a growing movement for congregational and community inclusion in local decision making. The 1996 founding rally was attended by 2000 people, representing a wide range of organizations; at that time, WIN focused on affordable housing, after school programs, jobs, and community policing. The organization began with 30 churches (with almost equal black and white presence) throughout the District; this is significant as some of the white churches have wealthy and powerfully connected congregants (i.e. Congressional staffers, Board of Trade members, etc.) who are able to exercise some level of influence as well as contribute financially.

#### *Economic Constraints and Resistance to Redistribution*

Aside from episodic demonstrations, the federal government has been an ineffective actor in alleviating urban poverty. In the late 1960s, Johnson's urban agenda was typified by the Community Action Agencies which allowed for some degree of community participation in initiatives to solve local problems. This program provided politicized blacks, especially those with connections to local community-organizing campaigns and community development organizations, access to public money and influence over its expenditure (Greenstone and Peterson 1976). An additional feature was the Model Cities program which directed federal funds toward cities, albeit in a fashion that was too widely dispersed to be effective. During the 1970s under the Nixon, Ford, and Carter administrations, New Federalism translated into a relative decline in the importance of categorical grants for the urban poor, and the rise of block grants such as the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), the latter of which gave priority to physical development rather than social

service projects” (Howard et al. 1994: 175). Instead of “maximum feasible” or even “widespread” participation, each CDBG applicant merely had to guarantee that it had provided the public with “adequate” information about the program and an “opportunity to participate” in the application process (Dommel 1980; Lovell 1983; Nathan 1977).

In the 1980s, Reagan’s domestic policies, emphasizing retrenchment and devolution, represented a major shift away from redistribution and toward the promotion of economic growth, a reduction in federal domestic expenditures, and increased in the responsibilities of state governments. As a result, the state and local political economy became more important in shaping urban affairs and citizen participation (Kirlin and Marshall 1988; Marshall and Kirlin 1985; Palmer and Sawhill 1982). These trends persisted under the Bush administration as part of a larger Republican attack on traditional Democratic programs and constituencies (Ginsberg and Shefter 1990). “Redistributive benefits which affected primarily the poor (e.g., larger grants for poverty programs and expanded services) depended, to a degree that seems to have been unappreciated at the time, on support from a pro-spending national elite. As the national economy became less buoyant and many local economies fell into serious decline, political resources and public policies also shifted” (Clark and Ferguson 1983: 177). It follows that perceived constraints on local economies are connected to government resistance to redistributive policies.

Public officials in urban regimes must balance responsiveness to the citizenry (popular control) with the promotion of their economies (market control). Peterson (1981) argues that cities have limited discretion in how they spend their money, as the



public interest requires that local officials create a positive business climate to attract jobs and revenue to their communities. In contrast, redistributive politics is seen as exacerbating the community problems by raising the cost of doing business. The contention is that cities should focus on being better off economically (development policy) and not worse off (redistributive policy). In this regard, “business involvement in development policy is not a matter of dominance, not a matter of prevailing over other interests; it is a matter of contributing to the capacity of the city to realize its general well-being” (Stone and Sanders 1987: 165). Replacing the poor (drains on city coffers) with the more affluent (tax payers) is a strategy that some cities may see as beneficial to the local economy. However, critics of this argument charge that cities should not be agents of corporations, and officials need not neglect neighborhoods and the poor to promote investment.

But given the perceived – and somewhat accepted – inability of cities to address the needs of the most vulnerable citizens, local governments are often able to avoid serious critiques of their economic development strategies. It is true that cities must function within the parameters of a larger macroeconomic economic system and respond to its attendant trends and shocks. Yet, in the face of neighborhood neglect, community organizing necessarily arises to give political voice to the unheard; it is one of the few endeavors to bridge the gap between communities and government. However, despite such efforts, “it is absurd to present neighborhood and church initiatives as appropriate responses to the effects of government-supported disinvestment, labor market segmentation, widespread and well-documented patterns of discrimination in employment and housing” (Reed 1995: 189). The reality is that

local governments are tasked with both staying afloat and being responsive to its residents; this requires partnerships at several levels. “Today as population decline, revenue shortfalls, white flight, political isolation, and other negative consequences of deindustrialization and suburbanization continue, black leaders have to work with white corporate leaders and white suburban voters to assemble financial resources” (Orr 1999: 192).

In the 1950’s, Baltimore was a city in the midst of a post-war economic boom. Fueled by plentiful jobs and a climate of opportunity, the city’s population swelled to nearly 950,000. The population declined over the next half century to 651,154 in 2000 – a loss of approximately 30 percent from the peak population in 1950 (U.S. Census). Driven by a huge demand for durable goods during World War II and immediately thereafter, Baltimore’s economy prospered in the 1950s. About one-third of all employees in the city worked in manufacturing. In the next half century, blue collar manufacturing jobs were replaced by white collar service jobs (Baltimore City Department of Planning, 2006). With the decline of manufacturing, the service sector came to be the dominant base of employment for Baltimore City residents. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, service-providing jobs account for over 90% of all jobs in Baltimore City.

The forces that have contributed to the overwhelming concentration of poverty within the city have been at work for decades. Service jobs have a heavily minority workforce; one study found that in 1990, 71% of low-wage service workers in Baltimore were African-American, though African-Americans represented only 59% of the City’s population (Niedt et al 1999). Baltimore City has only 30 percent of the

region's population, but 70 percent of its poor (Rusk, 1996). The loss of its residential base further exacerbates Baltimore's economic transformation. As population has moved to the suburbs, so has retail activity. Today, the city's portion of retail sales is significantly smaller than its proportion of the region's population. Suburban office space is another decentralizing trend, tilting jobs and the regional tax base even more heavily into outlying areas surrounding the city.

In the 1950's, Washington's population was over 800,000. The population declined over the next half century to 572,059 in 2000 – a loss of approximately 30 percent from the peak population in 1950 (U.S. Census). In 1950, the District accounted for nearly 75 percent of the metropolitan area's employment. By 2000, it accounted for less than 25 percent. In recent decades, the District has faced chronic negative trends that have limited its ability to meet the needs of many residents. These trends include population loss, job decline, high unemployment and poverty rates, fiscal insolvency, and the loss of spending power to the suburbs. Economic indicators also point to growing geographic disparities, with areas in the northwest portion of the city particularly advantaged and areas east of the Anacostia River particularly disadvantaged. While there have been positive signs on many fronts since 2000, the historic east-west divide in the city has only deepened. Since the late 1990s, the District has seen significant private-sector employment growth, particularly in white-collar industries such as legal services, technology consulting, and similar sectors (District of Columbia Office of Planning, 2006).

However, the economic paradoxes of the District of Columbia are quite apparent as all segments of the population have not benefitted. The recent housing boom and

increase in property values has increased personal wealth for many District homeowners and substantially enhanced city revenues. Simultaneously, the city has more jobs than residents but an unemployment rate that is twice the regional average. Jobs in the District provide some of the highest wages in the country, but over 20 percent of the city's residents live below the poverty line. The region has the fastest annual job growth rate in the country (2.3 percent), yet unemployment in the city is rising (District of Columbia Office of Planning, 2006). Billions of dollars of income are generated in the District, the majority of which the city is unable to tax because its earners live in other states. In addition, the city is barred by Congress from taxing the U.S. government, which occupies more than 40 percent of D.C. land.

Undoubtedly, local governments are quite limited in what they can accomplish unilaterally, and because of such limitations and fragmentation, regime theorists emphasize that informal systems of cooperation are indispensable. "The study of urban regimes is thus a study of who cooperates and how their cooperation is achieved across institutional sectors of community life" (Stone 1989: 3). Appropriately, it is understood that business interests are an integral aspect of urban governance; this type of arrangement is clearly at play in both Baltimore and Washington. In the face of black population growth and political empowerment, there are varying levels of resistance employed by the previously entrenched white power structure. The most common strategy is withdrawal; although it is more often understood as a physical phenomenon (white flight), disengagement from the black poor can even occur while remaining within the city. According to Eisinger (1980), displaced actors employ covert or indirect means to reassert formal dominance. One

subversive method is the attempt to consolidate significant control, especially over the city's economic fortunes.

In 1955, the Greater Baltimore Committee was created to deal with the city's growing poverty and its continuing loss of taxpayers to the suburbs; the GBC began to engage in efforts to become competitive with suburban shopping centers. The GBC's first urban renewal committee chairman was developer James Rouse, who put forward a concept for convincing private investors and government to work together on downtown revitalization. The philosophy was that to revive the city, its most precious resource – land – had to be developed with bold planning at a much faster pace, and specifically focused on downtown. Although its projects primarily affect the central city, the Greater Baltimore Committee draws many of its more than 500 members from across the region, including Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties, in addition to Baltimore City. In many ways, the GBC functions almost as an arm of local government and has significant input on many economic development projects in the city.

Founded in 1889, the Greater Washington Board of Trade represents the business community and has a significant impact on the economic undertakings of the city and region. The Board of Trade has about 1,100 members and an \$8 million annual budget; it also has four political action committees (PACs) – DC, Federal, Maryland and Virginia – that endorse and financially support political candidates and policymakers who advocate the Board of Trade's priorities. PACs use the Board of Trade's overall priorities and legislative agendas to evaluate candidates. With such an expressed role in local politics, it is reasonable to assert that the BOT's influence

substantially affects economic development policies in the city. It could be argued that business interests – controlled largely by whites – are often times at odds with the social, economic, and political well being of poor blacks in the District of Columbia. Though economic and development need not be detrimental to city residents, such policies have historically had created that exact outcome.

### Demographic Change

Even before the riots, the affected corridors had begun a steady decline as desegregation propelled middle-class black families to leave those neighborhoods and whites moved to suburbs where new shopping plazas were drawing patrons from downtown Baltimore. The unemployment rate was nearly 30 percent in the inner city before the riots, and nearly half of the homes in inner city neighborhoods were rated as “very poor” by the federal government. Thousands of black families were forced from their homes for urban renewal projects or highway construction (Kiehl 2008). Baltimore had begun losing residents in the 1950s, as the promise of bigger homes, greener lawns and safer streets drew thousands to the suburbs. But after the riots, the flight became a stampede with the city losing 13 percent of its population – 120,000 residents – in the decade between 1970 and 1980. Those who left took with them their tax money out of the city and, in some cases, their jobs; increasingly, they shopped and worked in the suburbs. From 1969 to 1980, the number of jobs in the city fell sharply, from 540,000 to 505,000. For the first time, Baltimore made the list of the nation’s 10 poorest cities (Kiehl 2008).

Similarly, by April 1968, many Washington neighborhoods were inhabited by a black population that was largely poor and working class. They endured rat-infested

housing and low-paying jobs. Their children attended dysfunctional, decaying public schools, where three of every four students read below the national average. In Washington alone, the riot resulted in \$57.6 million in property damage. A survey of business owners found that 97 percent of those affected were white, resulting in the shuttering of 510 businesses. “The destruction of local businesses resulted in nearly 5,000 lost jobs, 57 percent of which were held by blacks; many more were lost as the riots’ impact coursed through the local economy. A year after the riots, of the three hundred commercial buildings completely destroyed in the District, only two had been replaced, both by liquor stores” (91<sup>st</sup> Congress 1969: 3162).

“By 1969 the riots were already having a clear effect on racial integration within the District – or lack thereof. The city demographically dominated by blacks, was being permanently abandoned by whites. Shop owners and shoppers alike retreated to their suburbs and stayed there, shriveling the District’s tax base (91<sup>st</sup> Congress 1969: 3231). Whites were not alone in fleeing the city as middle-class blacks were also part of this shift. Over the next two decades, many of the inner-ring suburbs of Maryland, particularly Prince George’s County, would essentially flip racially; what had been one of the wealthiest white counties in the country became the wealthiest black county. Between 1970 and 1995, 1 percent of the city’s black population left each year. Over time, the District’s responsibilities as a city, county and state, along with a severely constrained tax base lead to revenue shortfalls and in 1995, the city’s \$335 million budget deficit led Congress to impose a federal governing board. According to a Government Accountability Office report, the

District’s obligations translate into a “structural deficit” of \$1 billion annually (Labbe-Debose and Harris 2008).

The population loss and racial transition in both cities is remarkable; the period immediately following the riots saw dramatic demographic changes. From 1960 to 1970, Baltimore’s white population decreased 20.0 % while the black population increased 25.0%. Similarly, from 1960 to 1970, Washington’s white population decreased 39.4% while the black population increased 30.6%. Also, from 1980 to 2000, Baltimore’s population decreased 17.2% and Washington’s population decreased 10.4% (U.S. Census). The following tables detail the racial transformation over time.

Table 3.1 Demographic Change in Baltimore

U.S. Census

<b>Year</b>	<b>Black Population</b>	<b>White Population</b>
1960	35.0%	62.0%
1970	47.0%	50.0%
1980	54.4%	43.4%
1990	59.0%	38.7%
2000	64.0%	31.0%

Table 3.2 Demographic Change in Washington

U.S. Census

<b>Year</b>	<b>Black Population</b>	<b>White Population</b>
1960	53.9%	45.2%
1970	71.1%	27.7%
1980	70.3%	26.9%
1990	65.8%	29.6%
2000	60.0%	30.8%



*Local Political Culture: Machine Politics, Home Rule and Black Leadership*

The purpose of this dissertation is to analyze a potentially transformative approach to reversing the political impotence of marginalized urban communities – community organizing. Once again, it is necessary to recognize that the ground level conditions and specific challenges in a particular city provide the impetus for organizing efforts. Therefore before delving into community organizing and policy debates, it is important to understand the economic and political constructs existing in a given city. This initial step is necessary as “political culture variables have been underemphasized or ignored altogether by most urban scholars” (Orr 1999: 190). One example is Ferman’s comparative analysis of Chicago and Pittsburgh which shows that political culture helps shape the direction of a city’s politics and local policy.

According to Walton (1972: 11), “black politics springs from the particular brand of segregation practices found in different environments in which black people find themselves. In other words, the nature of segregation and the manner in which it differs not only in different localities but within a locality have caused black people to employ political activities, methods, devices, and techniques that would advance their policy preferences.” Therefore, I argue that in order to place Baltimore and Washington in their proper perspectives, it is appropriate to view both of them as “Black Cities.” The fact that both have been majority black for decades – and the perceptions associated with this – is a distinction that must be acknowledged, especially in light of the political significance. That the demography of both cities shifted as a result of white flight to surrounding jurisdictions is not inconsequential. Black power activists, referring to the disproportionate influence of whites in the

affairs of their communities, adopted the term “white power structure” (Carmichael and Hamilton 1967). One could argue that this structure is at play in the form of a hostile Maryland General Assembly or Congressional Control Board.

Given that local governments do not exist within a vacuum, it is necessary to examine the larger political systems in which they are embedded. Despite their similarities, Baltimore and Washington have faced unique challenges to black political empowerment. Baltimore often has to fight against surrounding suburban jurisdictions and a state legislature insensitive to the issues plaguing Maryland’s largest urban center. Similarly, Washington, D.C.’s push for statehood is at odds with the neighboring jurisdictions (Maryland and Virginia) and the federal government which seeks to maintain control over the city, thereby denying autonomy and the economic benefits that would come with it (i.e., the ability to assess a commuter tax, spending on social services, and upholding its established handgun ban). Furthermore, there is a racial element to this frequently adversarial relationship – although Baltimore and Washington have been majority black for over three decades, there has remained a strong undercurrent of white resistance to black governance of both cities.

In Baltimore, relations between African American and white leaders centered around patronage politics. However, one of the problems with machine and patronage politics is that it undercut discussions of broad issues, such as housing, employment, and public education. “Black machine politicians’ preconceptions with the control and distribution of material and personal benefits encouraged them to accept the desires of white civic and political leaders; black political cooperation was secured at

a relatively low price, thus forsaking any real inroads on communitywide concerns” (Orr 1999: 62). In Baltimore, a machine system with limited opportunities for significant black input made it apparent that an organizing approach was needed. “Where urban machines have dominated, competing views have been ignored and new actors discouraged from participating. Perhaps most important, city officials, regardless of race or ethnic background, have come under increasing pressure to make economic development their overriding policy objective” (Howard et al. 1994: 181).

Additionally, the struggle between Baltimore and the General Assembly illustrates the racial animosity directed toward black Baltimore from largely white suburban jurisdictions. Often the city’s demands for additional state funds have led to clashes between city and suburb. Local politicians and activists in Montgomery County and in Baltimore have learned to use race to promote solidarity for their positions. “By their own admission, elected officials in Montgomery County understand that “Baltimore bashing” plays on white anxieties and helps solidify support among suburban voters” (Orr 1999: 183). Suburban representatives are not swayed by arguments that concentrated poverty is a deep and intractable problem for the city, resulting from a series of trends to which the state has contributed. In other words, as long as a problem is seen as isolated in the city, a legislature dominated by representatives from suburban areas has little inclination to address it. Also, as economic change has given Baltimore City a shrinking tax base, and demographic shifts have left the city with a diminishing electoral base, its influence in the General Assembly is equally constrained.

As for the District, issues of race and class take on a special significance. Despite its large black population, there had been a significant white (and wealthy) portion of the population that questioned black governance. From the outset, the largely black district has been subject to primarily white Congressional overseers. The Metropolitan Washington Board of Trade, with three appointed commissioners running the city, had immense power and control; this white-run business organization had fought home rule for decades. In 1965, as the home-rule bill neared a vote in Congress, the Board of Trade gave its version of the debate in a mass mailing to newspapers across the country. “The fact is that a great many Washingtonians – including an overwhelming majority of local professionals and business leaders – are opposed to pending home rule legislation,” the letter said (Jaffe and Sherwood 1994: 45). Local leadership in Washington, D.C. had been denied by the federal government until home rule was achieved in 1974. However, some may argue that pandering to home constituencies is still a major factor in the decision-making process of members of the House and Senate committees who have oversight responsibilities for the District of Columbia. “For most members, being tough and aggressive on the District is a no lose proposition, as it helps them in their districts with the racially conservative elements of their constituency” (Fauntroy 2003: 7).

Furthermore, paternalistic members of Congress face no repercussions in the District, because Washingtonians lack the representation that would allow them to have a voice in such matters. Thus, the issue of black leadership is important because the majority of the leadership in the home rule movement was African American. Although the issue of race has clear distinctions, i.e. black, white, social class is less

clear cut, as the District has a substantial middle and upper income African American population. Such distinctions make it difficult to make sweeping assessments regarding the black community in Washington; the reality is that there were several black communities. Regardless, many of the District's black leaders had roots in the civil rights movement. "The home rule movement had considerable black leadership that viewed a change in the status quo as positive for the community that it represented. The change black leaders sought, however, would potentially undermine the racial status quo and its efforts to use the city and its government as a personal financial windfall for big, white-owned businesses in D.C." (Fauntroy 2003: 6).

### Neighborhood Inclusion

I contend that in Washington, descriptive representation (black mayor) and the semblance of neighborhood inclusion (ANC system) lessened the perceived need for organizing. Baltimore and Washington are both cities with a history of legalized segregation and which are now majority black. Although demographically similar in many ways, blacks in Baltimore and Washington have had quite divergent levels of black political empowerment; while black mayors have been the standard in Washington since the early 1970s, Baltimore did not elect a black mayor until the mid 1980s. On the one hand, although there are many community groups in Baltimore City, they tend not to be organized in a collective manner. This largely unorganized duplication of efforts and expression of interests severely limits their effectiveness in procuring desired public goods and policies through the political process. On the other hand, community groups in Washington have a built-in mechanism providing access to the local government – the Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner System.

The argument for ANCs is that since there are elections, regular publicized meetings and minutes, community interests are able to be expressed in an organized and politically legitimized fashion.

But in some respects, the ANC system may be the neighborhood equivalent of American democracy – elected officials (albeit unpaid) that may or may not speak for the constituents they purport to represent. Although somewhat of a conduit between the community and the city council, the purpose tends to be more procedural than advocacy-based. Examples of this procedural focus are business regulations and renewals of various licenses, which is not necessarily the same as advocating for community benefits. ANCs provide input to government agencies on behalf of neighborhoods, but they do not seek to change existing dynamics. Power analysis is central to IAF organizing – the purpose is to determine who the players are, their levels of resources, and how they interact / demonstrate influence. In this regard, the question for ANCs is – do they have a following or strategic agenda? It appears that many commissioners do not, so for the most part, WIN infrequently collaborates with ANCs. One could argue that the ANC system is demonstrative of DC’s highly politicized environment. Aside from the federal presence, Washington has a very active political scene with competitive elections from mayor down to single member ANC districts.

However, as ANC elections receive less attention, commissioners tend not to draw support from a very large base. There are 37 ANCs across the district, with each ward having four to six separate bodies; within these bodies there are a half dozen to a dozen neighborhood representatives. Some neighborhoods have productive

collaboration between WIN and the ANC, but in others the ANCs can frustrate the efforts of local organizers (e.g., commissioner who sees him/herself as a neighborhood representative vs. commissioner is closely aligned with the councilmember). In DC, many ANC members simply go through the required motions (elections, fees), and hold a titular position; however, they can make a lot of noise around neighborhood issues (alcohol sales, development plans) that directly involve District government regulations. The focus of ANCs depends on where you are talking about – some are pro-gentrification, while some ANCs collaborated with WIN in its initial efforts around afterschool/recreation. WIN is more citywide – affecting the District as whole, as opposed to ANC’s parochial interests; but as individual churches have relationships with ANCs and commissioners – and church congregations constitute WIN’s membership, their role should not be ignored. So although the ANC system may provide some level of community voice, there is still a need for the advocacy of an IAF affiliate such as WIN.

#### *The Emergence of IAF Affiliates in Baltimore and Washington*

Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development (BUILD) was founded in 1977 but floundered for three years. Organizer Arnie Graf came to Baltimore in 1980 to try to salvage the organization which was \$30,000 in debt. BUILD began as an integrated organization, but a number of churches fell off after the initial failure. The affiliate was saved by turning it into a *movement* – however, this type of organizing largely had no interest to whites in Baltimore. BUILD has a black church culture, a focus upon the issues of the lower-income, and a relatively small white minority. Aside from demographics, this racial imbalance also highlights how difficult it can be

for many whites to be the minority in a coalition (or even a neighborhood) given their longstanding majority status. The next organizer, Jonathan Lange understood/viewed BUILD as a black power organization – there are a few progressive white churches who are involved, but it is predominately black. This is consistent with Saul Alinsky’s shifting of IAF resources to the black community because he concluded that black people were in motion for their own liberation, and that this kind of motion was an opportunity to build black power.

Many of BUILD’s early campaigns were aimed at the corporate community. During BUILD’s infancy, business leaders tried to ignore its demands and often refused to meet with its leaders. “In its formative years, BUILD emphasized protest, confronting the defenders of the status quo and harassing established power holders into concessions. Over the years, however, BUILD leaders recognized that developing relationships with other power forces – mayors, governors, state legislators, business leaders – is critical to addressing the needs of the thousands of families they represent” (Orr 2001: 86). More recently, BUILD created the Child First Authority; it was organized in 1996 and authorized by city and state legislation at the urging of BUILD leaders. While presented as an after-school program designed to improve school performance, Child First is also an effort to “empower parents by making them agents of change in their communities” (Fashola, 1999: 25).

The Washington Interfaith Network (WIN) was founded in 1996 and benefitted from the IAF’s experience in Baltimore. Arnie Graf, the lead organizer who got BUILD off the ground in the 1980s, had the time to build the organization more slowly and correctly. Rev. Lionel Edmonds (along with 6 other black pastors



affiliated with Howard University Divinity School) met Arnie Graf in 1992 and the organizing effort began with house meetings. WIN was intentionally begun as an integrated organization (35-40% white). In the District, WIN has a visibility and racial/economic diversity which provides strength; there is also a depth of clergy and a more dues paying base, somewhat in contrast to BUILD which has fewer clergy members and dues paying institutions. WIN churches are led by ministers with traditional theological/seminary training whose view of ministry has a social responsibility. As far as size, mega churches (10-15k members) are rare, since they tend to believe that they do not need IAF-style organizing and already have access to resources.

Through interviews with organizers, it has been revealed that the direction that organizing takes is not only the result of social and economic conditions, but is also the result of individual decisions and judgment calls. Although certain factors must be in place, primarily the desire of local communities to begin organizing, there is no one-size-fits-all strategy. Although Baltimore and Washington are both majority black cities, BUILD is a primarily black organization, while WIN is more racially diverse. While the attempt at the outset was to create BUILD as an integrated organization, the issues that the group organized around (such as redlining) tended to get more traction in poor black communities. Additionally, Baltimore's tense racial climate in the late 1970s and early 1980s severely weakened the prospects for a truly integrated organization. The same might have been true in Washington during the same time period, which is one of the reasons that IAF organizers made a calculated decision not to make such an attempt. Additionally, as the IAF pushes for

accountability, the Control Board posed an obstacle to local governance and thus made it unclear who to target politically. If there was no one for the IAF affiliate to hold accountable, it could be a waste of time organizing in DC.

IAF affiliates like BUILD and WIN are comprised of institutional members, namely moderately-sized churches (not of the large and powerful mega variety). Also, the churches most likely to be members are lead by pastors who are open to collective leadership. These organizations necessarily address current issues that are the result of historical developments, specifically, the ignoring of persistent problems in marginalized black communities. Years of neglect have exacerbated neighborhood poverty, demonstrated by lack of resources/amenities and made communities vulnerable economically (i.e. depressed housing markets) and socially (i.e. low capacity, influence). Thus, the lifeblood of BUILD and WIN are institutions motivated by social justice to address the issues that directly affect its members and their communities.

### *Current Connections*

Population and economic trends are better understood within the context of the larger Baltimore–Washington region. The economic interdependence between Baltimore and Washington was officially recognized in 1992 when the federal Office of Management and Budget combined both metro areas into the Washington-Baltimore Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical area (CMSA). More recently, Baltimore’s income and population growth can be partially attributed to the migration of residents from Washington, DC to Baltimore. However, this same trend has contributed to the recent rise in the cost of living. The Baltimore region rose from 3rd

least expensive benchmark region to 5th most expensive benchmark region between 2003 and 2005. This shift reflects increasing home prices, a factor influenced by the discovery of Baltimore's housing bargains by families previously living in Washington, DC, which has the second highest cost of living in the nation. Also, the Baltimore region continues to benefit from the buying power of the Washington region, which ranks 4th nationally (Baltimore City Department of Planning, 2006).

While the lack of adequate housing has long been an issue in urban areas, gentrification is also responsible for the heavy focus on quality affordable housing by the respective IAF affiliates. As cities have recently seen a reemergence during the housing boom, home prices in both cities have risen dramatically. This shift has seen previously neglected, largely black neighborhoods become pricey enclaves for white suburbanites attracted to life in the city. Gentrification which often confounds and masks the problem of entrenched poverty, changed the complexion of the District over the course of a decade, and is now descending upon Baltimore, as individuals priced out of the former are finding refuge in the latter. In Baltimore, this has meant an influx of buyers looking for comparative bargains in a city with vast swaths of vacant houses.

Over the past decade, as developers rediscovered cities across the country, the pace of construction exploded along Washington's riot corridors. Boarded-up buildings and vacant lots were reborn as expensive loft apartments, luring white professionals to predominantly black neighborhoods. The symbols of Washington's metamorphosis are the cranes that have become a constant presence over its skyline in recent years. Since the late 1990s, developers have delivered amenities that other

cities take for granted such as big-box retail, dozens of shops and cafes and restaurants, and a \$600 million publicly funded, 42,000-seat baseball stadium. Since 2001, along the riot corridors alone, developers and the government have poured more than \$3 billion into new housing, offices, theaters and a new convention center. During the 1990s, Metro spent more than \$500 million to open four stations in neighborhoods along two of the corridors, each station helping to catalyze further investment (Schwartzman and Pierre 2008).

“It doesn’t look like the ghetto anymore,” said Council member Marion Barry, a community organizer in the District during the riots who also served four terms as mayor. Barry stressed that the redevelopment has not solved the city’s social problems. “We did a lot to move forward,” he said. “But the progress is not what it should have been in 40 years. Poverty has gotten worse. What happened in this city is we moved poverty...we didn’t solve it’ (Schwartzman and Pierre 2008). It is this poverty that IAF affiliates seek to address through organizing communities for change. Specifically, WIN has been instrumental in gaining concessions from the District government during this era of development. The group was very outspoken on the issue of a publicly financed stadium and was successful in pushing the city to allocate millions of dollars to support affordable housing.

Moreover, the District of Columbia’s longtime status as a majority-black city appears to be diminishing. The 14 percent increase in non-Hispanic white District residents and 6 percent decrease in blacks from 2000 to 2006 have resulted from the gentrification of once-affordable city neighborhoods. The impact on the city’s racial makeup is noticeable. In 2000, blacks made up 60 percent of the District’s population,

by 2006, that figure was 55 percent. If the trends continue, the city will almost certainly cease to be majority black by 2020. From 2000 to 2006, the number of non-Hispanic black residents in the District declined to 322,000, the number of non-Hispanic whites rose to about 184,000 and the number of Asians increased to 18,000, a 20 percent gain (Aizenman 2007). The reality is that whites are moving into the city because they are able to afford the pricey housing in all these areas that are gentrifying and becoming much more middle- and upper-middle class. Meanwhile, the city is becoming more unaffordable to lower-income black families.

Although Baltimore's solid black majority remains in place, there is a glaring disparity between black and white residents – the median income for African Americans is \$13,123 compared to the \$25,139 for whites; African Americans make up 64% of Baltimore's population, but only 11% of Baltimore's middle class are African Americans (Alexander 2008). Recently, a coalition of organizations has launched an effort to urge black middle-class Baltimore residents to stay in the city, and is appealing to those who have left to return. Their contention is that a strong black middle class contingent is the key to revitalizing Baltimore. Additionally, enticing Washington residents to relocate to Baltimore is what the people behind 'Live Baltimore' had in mind when they began their campaign to attract city dwellers 10 years ago. Since Live Baltimore's inception, home prices in the city have risen 205 percent. And after losing population every decade since 1950, it increased by almost 900 residents in 2006. The home center has conducted three advertising pushes to win over Washington residents by promoting Baltimore as a great place to call home and

as an affordable alternative. Since beginning the D.C. campaign, there has been a positive net migration from the D.C. metro area to Baltimore (Jones-Bonbrest 2007).

This current relationship is further confirmation of the indelible and ongoing link between these two cities. As both cities have a history of segregation, disinvestment, rioting and disillusionment, now followed by urban renewal and gentrification, the impact of race and class upon political engagement in urban communities must be seriously addressed. In terms of community organizing, lessons can be learned from the challenges and successes of the past as BUILD predates WIN by two decades. And though Baltimore and Washington face similar issues, the strategies utilized by respective local IAF affiliates are considerably shaped by their specific economic and political contexts. It is also apparent that certain conditions – including the housing market – of one city can substantively affect the fortunes of the other; this relationship may not necessarily be direct or consistent, but it does exist.

### Conclusion

Political opportunities and racial group interests are shaped by the social, economic and political contexts within which they take place (Keiser 1997). As such, the appearance of community organizing collectives is shaped by the same aforementioned forces. Although local governments are tasked with serving neighborhoods, there are compelling economic interests which often lead mayors to make decisions focused on economic growth, while neglecting the most vulnerable city populations. Again, I propose that without pressure from local organizers, it is more than probable that the most pressing interests of marginalized communities would not be addressed, or would be far down on the list of local priorities. The

necessary economic changes so critical to poor blacks in urban areas are likely not to occur through traditional political or economic models, but through creative social protest and policy advocacy (IAF-style community organizing).

## Chapter 4: Mayoral Typology

### *Introduction*

Over the last 40 years, the presence of African Americans as mayors of major U.S. cities has gone from being an anomaly to a commonplace occurrence, particularly in cities with significant or majority black populations. For Washington during this period, home rule for the majority black population has resulted in the steady election of black mayors; however, Baltimore, which has also maintained a majority black population over time, has only twice elected a black mayor. The documented rise in black mayoralty resulted from the confluence of several historical factors, not the least of which being black migration to industrial centers and white flight from central cities. But as time goes on, the leadership of urban areas seems to be undergoing a perceptible shift. Seemingly gone is the first wave of mayors whose preparation for office came on the front lines of the civil rights movement, and whose energy was primarily directed toward minority inclusion in local government.

To a large extent, it has been uncommon to see white mayors of majority black cities (Washington); but while white mayoral leadership of majority black cities was believed to be near impossible, some cities (Baltimore) have witnessed this development. This may speak to differing levels of black political empowerment in the two cities or simply be an epiphenomenal aberration. However, as racial inclusion and descriptive representation have ostensibly been achieved over the past four decades, the focus seems to have moved away from symbolism and protest



toward more pragmatic policies for managing the complex issues of large cities. This phenomenon is demonstrated by the willingness of some majority black cities to elect white mayors, while others have chosen to elect more moderate black mayors.

There appears to be both a generational and ideological shift in urban politics, particularly in regard to black mayors. In cities where the symbolic novelty of having a black mayor has diminished over time, more and more attention is being paid to persistent problems. As such, efficient service delivery and innovative economic development plans are the calling cards of successful mayoral candidates and office holders. In addition, as gentrification is bringing whites back into these older large cities, the political lines continue to be drawn and redrawn with respect race. Explicit appeals for racial solidarity seem to have diminishing returns and often become political liabilities rather than strengths, except in extreme and highly racialized contexts. Consequently, the pragmatically focused, racially moderate candidate represents the newest wave of urban leadership. Before introducing a new typology of mayoral leadership it is necessary to discuss the evolution of urban leadership and what it has meant for neighborhood inclusion. In time, the promise of black political empowerment was met with the reality that benefits were not evenly spread across urban populations; it is this deep chasm that translates to the need for local community organizing.

### Empowerment

The majority of the first wave of black mayors elected in the late 1960s and early 1970s were elected in highly racially polarized elections, garnering the lion's share of energized black voters and winning small but critical sections of the white

vote – usually drawing liberal white or downtown business support (Thompson 2006). This first wave consisted of “civil rights” mayors who were elected in cities that had become majority black or were approaching a black majority. The black mayors were initially able to make significant strides such as the creation of police review boards, the appointment of more minorities to commissions, the increasing use of minority contractors, and a general increase in the number of programs oriented to minorities (Browning, Marshall, and Tabb 1984).

However, when blacks entered city hall to take the spoils of victory, they found that whites had carted away the wealth of the metropolis to suburban communities beyond central-city jurisdictions; hence the black-ruled fragments were little more than bankrupt relics of past greatness (Teaford 1993). Further exacerbating urban economic challenges were President Reagan’s fiscal policies of the 1980s which resulted in significant cutbacks in federal aid to cities. Thus the ability of black mayors to substantively improve the conditions of their cities was dramatically curtailed. As a result, black voters who had been initially excited by the election of blacks as mayors now became increasingly disenchanted. This created, in turn, incentives for black officials to demobilize the black poor or to allow demobilization to occur. The negative relationship between the swelling ranks of black officials and lower-status participation – along with worsening conditions of lower-status blacks across a range of indicators – prompts scholars to revisit the uneven class-benefits of black incorporation (Harris, Sinclair-Chapman, and McKenzie 2006).

Moreover, incumbent public officials who are at least partially driven by the goals of reelection and consolidation of power tend to have an interest in dampening

the possibilities for new or widespread mobilization. These electoral considerations translate into a preference for a brokered “politics as usual” that limits the number and claims on the policy agenda (Reed 1999). Therefore, as black public officials emerged, some of the limitations of descriptive representation became visible. Blacks’ ascension to prominence within the institutional apparatus of urban administration did not appreciably alter the mission or official practices of the institutions under their authority. Clearly, therefore, putting black in previously all-white places was not a sufficient program for those who identified with institutional transformation along populist lines or who otherwise rejected the status quo of race relations management (Reed 1999). By the mid-1980s, high levels of violent crime, drug abuse, homelessness, school failure, and job loss undermined black civil rights mayors.

Black mayors were increasingly criticized for assuming a role of race leader rather than as city manager, and accused of antagonizing white businesses and failing to entice them to their cities (Ross and Levine 2001). New, younger, black mayoral candidates replaced mayors of the civil rights era, promising to deemphasize race, promote efficient government, and offer strategies to lure investors to strengthen downtown businesses and create jobs (Thompson 2006). This second generation of black mayors like Kurt Schmoke of Baltimore, were seen as “more pragmatists than pioneers, professionals than preachers, coalition builders than confrontationists, they came to power during a period of drastic cutbacks in federal money for cities, and they are hawking economic progress and managerial expertise” (Moore 1988: 373). However, the nation’s technocratic black mayors have suffered fates similar to their

more racially motivated predecessors. They came into office promising change and significant improvements, and they were often blamed when they could not stem the tide of urban decline; their primary success seemed to be providing grander facilities for professional sports (Thompson 2006).

One significant problem of governmental structure impeding the effectiveness of black mayors is the connection between their election and the broader empowerment of disempowered black civic organizations (Kilson 1996). Black “civil rights” mayors tended install small networks of government employees through patronage, as well as limited summer jobs programs, all of which generated a political base for their reelection campaigns. Thus the political and economic benefits that were expected to be community-wide were often exclusive and clustered among insiders. The more technocratic black mayors who followed them, faced with cuts in federal aid and limited by their aversion to the appearance of racial favoritism, have been even less effective in empowering black civic leadership (Thompson 2006). The lack of a strategy including grassroots black civic empowerment to augment black mayors has hindered black political participation and, as a consequence, has weakened black mayors in their struggles with white led state legislatures and suburbs, and federal officials.

On the one hand, first wave “civil rights” mayors, like Maynard Jackson of Atlanta, Coleman Young of Detroit, and Marion Barry of Washington, D.C., had won in majority black cities in highly racially polarized elections and were fierce racial advocates known for their frequent denunciations of white racism. Also, because of their secure electoral base, it was unnecessary to appeal to white voters in order to

stay in office. On the other hand, technocratic mayors such as Bill Campbell of Atlanta, Dennis Archer of Detroit, and Anthony Williams of Washington, D.C. came to office after running against other black candidates, other veterans of the civil rights struggle, and relied on white voters to edge out these competitors (Thompson 2006). The latter type utilized a “deracialized” strategy that tended to argue that race was a distraction from the more important fiscal and managerial issues facing cities; and this stance reassured and made inroads among moderate white voters and businesses that shared that perspective (McCormick and Jones 1993).

In this light, another important distinction is the notion of authentic black leadership versus “deracialized” African American politicians. Walters (1992) argues that black elected officials whose base of support is within the white community should not be considered authentic black leaders such as those that emanated from the civil rights/black politics movement. According to Guinier (1991), establishment endorsed blacks are unlikely to be authentic because they are not true representatives of the black community. Such estimation is particularly relevant in cities lacking a black majority (or where the majority may be fragile), which necessitates appealing to whites. Such officials are often viewed as marginal community members whose only real connection is skin color, which is thus a convenient proxy for political authority (Guinier 1991). This differentiation has a significant impact on how black mayors are embraced or rejected by certain electoral constituencies. Although in the aforementioned cases, the rumblings of questionable authenticity were drowned out by both black and white voters who were more concerned with the policy direction in which the city was headed, rather than personal or racial affinity.

The “civil rights” model has reached its demographic limit and old style candidates seem to have lost the enthusiastic support of the black poor (Gilliam and Kaufmann 1998). Cities with large black majorities have already elected black mayors, and in cities such as Washington, D.C. – black “civil” rights candidates have been replaced by technocratic black candidates who forged coalitions with disaffected black and white voters (Thompson 2006). A third kind of black mayoral politics does not fit either the “civil rights” or “technocratic” model. Such mayors attempt to “restructure government to strengthen the connection between holding office and grassroots black civic empowerment; they work to provide services for the poor rather than consolidating ties to downtown business elites at the expense of developing programs for poor neighborhoods, and confront white racism, at the same time that they attempt to build ties with low-income whites and Latinos around substantive common issues” (Thompson 2006: 15).

#### *Voting Patterns and Electoral Strategies*

Just as previous ethnic groups rarely held a majority in the cities that they ran, African Americans have not necessarily dominated the local electorate. Therefore, success depended on intergroup support and alliances. Furthermore, until barriers to voting were removed and unless activists mobilized the community and registered voters, an African American popular majority did not necessarily translate into a voting majority. Many cities elected African American mayors when blacks constituted a majority of the population but a minority of the voters (Adler 2001). Candidates sought to mobilize as much support among black constituents as possible and to increase their voter registration numbers while building coalitions with white

supporters, mainly liberals and business people (Colburn 2001). Thus with the racial makeup of electorate, black candidates could garner sufficient votes to secure a runoff in the Democratic primary, but typically black voters alone could not determine the outcome of the primary or general election.

On the one hand, the rhetoric of campaigns in black neighborhoods was rooted initially in the civil rights movement and in an emerging black consciousness. On the other hand, at the city-wide level, there was at least the tacit understanding by some black mayoral candidates that it was also necessary to make inroads with the broader constituencies to ensure electoral victory and eliminate potential obstacles in governing. Also, in these cities small groups of whites began to recognize relatively early that a black voting majority was imminent and that a political transition to black leadership with white cooperation would be beneficial to them and to community relations. Thus, support came frequently from business people who endorsed black candidates for pragmatic reasons; they concluded that black leadership was inevitable and that they could continue to influence city government and secure their business interests by being on the ground floor of this political change (Stone 1989). Consequently, the more frequently blacks served in prominent political positions and as mayor, the more acceptable they were to white voters at large and the business community in particular.

This trend was especially evident in reelection campaigns and in elections in the 1980s and 1990s as black candidates became more commonplace and as black mayors demonstrated they could govern these complex cities no less fairly and wisely than whites (Cole 1976). The fears of whites diminished gradually, and the focus of

campaigning began to shift away from race and toward the black candidate's record and political agenda for the city. However, as black governance became more commonplace, white candidates turned increasingly to certain key issues to undermine the candidacy of their opponents; these "race-correlated agenda items" included crime, drugs, homelessness, and urban violence (Colburn 2001). Most black candidates found it necessary to defend themselves on these issues as their opponents questioned their ability to address them satisfactorily. The implication was that these issues were endemic to the black community and that a black mayor was not equipped to resolve them (Colburn 2001).

Conversely, by the 1990s some black candidates in tight races attempted to use race overtly to mobilize black voters against their opponents. Despite the fact that appeals to racial solidarity served as a key component in the campaigns of black candidates, they were not sufficient by themselves to maintain black support (Colburn 2001). Black voters did not automatically cast their ballots for a black candidate, nor did middle-class blacks and lower-class black voters always vote the same. As such, an ineffective mayor could not overcome such political problems by simply calling for black solidarity. In many campaigns, race played a crucial factor in the strategies of candidates and in influencing the outcome of the campaigns. Well into the 1980s and even into the 1990s, black candidates in these cities faced a huge hurdle in trying to attract white voters.

### *Economic Development*

Elected on reform platforms that promised profound changes in the policy-making process, black mayors have almost uniformly embraced corporate-centered



strategies that have virtually precluded the redistribution of major benefits to broad segments of the black community” (Nelson 1987: 174). Black regimes clearly generate racially redistributive benefits, such as general municipal employment and contractual services, but these benefits tended to cluster primarily among middle- and upper-strata blacks. From the mid-1970s onward, the racial advancement strategies most frequently advocated by black officials included increasing black owned businesses and increasing black involvement in white businesses. Those are strategies most compatible with the larger configuration of systemic power in which the black regime operates (Reed 1999). Accordingly, when private sector business interests are relatively powerful, they provide the city’s politicians with a strong incentive to reach an accord with the business community and to pursue fiscal policies that are acceptable to it.

In response to the devastating effects of deindustrialization, city leaders advocated a downtown-centered redevelopment strategy, which was quite often to the disadvantage of the disintegrating neighborhoods outside of downtown. Peterson (1981) contends that cities have an overriding interest in avoiding redistributive policies that benefit poorer neighborhoods while pursuing development policies aimed at the downtown business district. “Black regimes adhere to the pro-growth framework for the same reasons that other regimes do: It seems reasonable and proper ideologically; it conforms to a familiar sense of rationality; and it promises to deliver practical, empirical benefits” (Reed 1999). “In addition to the business community, which is the principal beneficiary, middle- and upper-middle-class blacks receive set-aside contracts, support for small business and private neighborhood economic

development activity, and improved access to professional and administrative employment in both public and private sectors” (Reed 1999).

In studies of urban power, regime theory stakes out a middle-ground position between pluralists (Dahl 1961) and economic determinists (Harvey 1985; Peterson 1981) by recognizing a division of labor between the state and market (Stone 1989; Stone and Sanders 1987). Leaders within both spheres possess resources of value to the other side; government officials have legitimacy and policy-making authority, while business elites are able to create jobs, generate tax revenues and provide financing (Mossberger and Stoker 2001; Elkin 1987). Public officials and private elites, therefore have an incentive to cooperate with each other and nurture informal alliances – or regimes – to pursue common goals in an otherwise fragmented environment. Regime theory is concerned with the “internal dynamics of coalition building” as a vehicle for achieving a capacity to govern effectively over periods of time (Mossberger and Stoker 2001; Stone 1989).

In theory, regimes can take multiple forms, but in practice, elected officials searching for coalition partners gravitate toward private interest groups with the resources necessary to move an agenda forward (McGovern 2009). By contrast, community-based organizations offer limited economic resources and their ability to mobilize may be inhibited by lack the institutional mechanisms linking citizens with their government (Stone 1989). In most cases, even city officials who are sympathetic to neighborhood interests wind up cooperating with the downtown business community because the latter offers the greatest potential for advancing an agenda. In policy terms, this translates into favoring development initiatives over redistributive

and regulatory measures and giving priority to the revitalization of downtown business districts over neighborhood redevelopment. The result is a pattern of uneven development and steadily increasing inequality within cities (Squires 1989).

Regime theory offers a compelling explanation for the frequency and durability of downtown-oriented growth coalitions in many cities during the last half of the twentieth century, but it has been criticized for its difficulty in accounting for regime change (Orr and Stoker 1994), and the emergence of progressive regimes that embrace redistributive and regulatory policies that benefit groups beyond the downtown core (Rosdil 1991). While regime theorists stress the possibility of alternative regimes, in contrast to market centrists such as Peterson, they are pessimistic about their likelihood (Stone 1989, Elkin 1987). I am also pessimistic about the likelihood of alternative regimes; this reality further demonstrates the necessity for local community organizing. There is a lack of political will for redistributive policies and without a voice representing the interests of heretofore marginalized communities, the consequences would be even bleaker in an already dire situation.

### Regime Change

In normative theories of democracy, elections are acknowledged to be central to democratic politics at all levels of government. Presumably elections make some difference in the policy agendas that elected officials pursue and the resulting public policy outputs. Specifically, elections which change the occupants of public office have the potential of bringing into office individuals or groups with a policy agenda or leadership style that differs from their predecessors (leadership succession). At the

urban level, however, there has been relatively little interest in or research on the question of the impact of elections and leadership succession on public policy. This lack of interest undoubtedly reflects the prevailing wisdom in the political science literature that urban political leaders exert a relatively minor impact on public policy and that elections and leadership change are of minor importance. “Instead, urban public policy is frequently viewed as either: (1) determined by nonelected business elites whose public policy desires are able to prevail regardless of whom is mayor or (2) determined by social and economic forces in the environment (e.g., level of income, extent of urbanization, etc.) whose explanatory power far outweighs that of political variables” (Wolman et al 1996).

In contrast with the national and state levels, partisanship in mayoral elections is not particularly relevant. Baltimore and Washington are both examples that are consistent with Garand’s (1985) finding that the vast majority of urban governments with populations in excess of 100,000 are functionally nonpartisan in nature; both cities have been solidly Democratic for decades. And unlike the work at the national and state levels, there is little research that examines the impact of mayoral elections on public policy. Nonetheless, case studies, particularly those in the pluralist tradition, frequently identify the mayor to be an important actor with respect to public policy (see Dahl 1961). Traditional democratic theory suggests that elections, to some degree, are contests over alternative forms of public policy or at least referenda on the policies pursued by the incumbent.

Although mayoral elections, like those at other levels of the American political system, clearly are contested to a substantial extent on personality grounds as

well as on policies and issues, it is likely that new mayors who attain office by defeating incumbents have indicated to the electorate some degree of policy difference from the incumbent (Wolman et al 1996). While only a minority of newly elected mayors may disrupt existing arrangements, those who come to office by defeating incumbents do so with a presumption that they will undertake policy change that differentiates them from their predecessor whom the electorate has just rejected. This suggests that the degree of policy difference between a newly elected mayor and the previous mayor should be greater if the newly elected mayor defeated the incumbent than if he or she succeeded a mayor who voluntarily left office (Wolman et al 1996). However, it should be noted that in both Baltimore and Washington over the last 30 years, rarely has an incumbent mayor been defeated by a challenger; the end of most mayoral tenures was either the result of attaining higher office or not seeking reelection.

Also, the new mayor's links to the electorate may differ from the previous mayor. Newly elected mayors may reflect different electoral coalitions with different interests and policy preferences from those of their predecessors. Indeed, previous research emphasizes the critical importance at the urban level of constructing and reconstructing electoral coalitions (Shefter 1985; Elkin 1987). Changes in city population (racial composition, income, size, etc.) bring about changes in the pattern of political demands. These are reflected during mayoral elections through shifts in electoral coalitions. Incumbents tend to hold on to the electoral coalition that originally brought them to office and continue to reflect, with modest change over time, the policy preferences of their original coalitions. However, substantial change

in the nature of a city's population may restructure electoral alliances sufficiently to weaken an incumbent's base.

Moreover, if an incumbent mayor retires, the previously dominant electoral coalition may be difficult to put together again in cities with substantial population change; the new pattern of political demands will likely be reflected in a newly dominant electoral coalition. "In short, this argues that electoral coalitions tend to be "sticky" and that changes in the pattern of political demands are not likely to be reflected in public policy until a new mayor, reflecting a new electoral coalition, takes office" (Wolman et al 1996). Electoral change thus acts as a threshold effect; election of a new mayor permits changes in the set of political demands that have been held back by the dominant electoral coalition responsible for the election of the previous mayor. New mayors, reflecting new electoral coalitions are thus likely to produce changes in public policy from that of their predecessors (Wolman et al 1996).

As Stone (1989) has emphasized, mayors come to office not simply as representatives of electoral coalitions, but as key actors in governing coalitions or regimes. These regimes are put together to accomplish public purposes, i.e., to achieve a set of policy ends. Even if new mayors come to office by succeeding a retiring incumbent or with no change in electoral coalition, they may desire to make some changes in the nature of the regime, to pursue new policies or an altered agenda. "Where urban machines have dominated, competing views have been ignored and new actors discouraged from participating. Perhaps most important, city officials, regardless of race or ethnic background, have come under increasing pressure to make economic development their overriding policy objective" (Howard et al. 1994:

181). By analyzing political actors, we can see that these cities have witnessed the progression of mayoral leadership through several waves of development. However, this progression has had its fits and starts, and in some instances the type of leadership has not changed much over the years.

### *Community Organizing and Urban Governance*

What brought about the rise of the technocratic mayor was that significant portions of black voters came to reject the perceived empty symbolism of some black mayors and instead gave their support to candidates with the most convincing plans for economic prosperity. But as mayors have increasingly positioned their leadership styles around such economic imperatives as tax abatements for downtown development and professional sports stadiums, the pendulum has swung in the opposite direction, but not all the way back to the civil rights types. City residents of all colors, who feel that they have been left out of the economic boon befalling many cities, are in search of leadership that will be both socially conscious while at the same time fiscally sound. Hence the dawn of a new generation of urban leaders who attempt to lead across racial and class lines by running on populist platforms while being careful not to alienate the business community. Thus urban leadership seems to have gone from one extreme to the other, and then to the middle – the next generation of mayors.

Three major factors appear to affect mayoral leadership: (1) substantive differences in major contextual variables from one locale to another; (2) the impact of different issues on major cleavages in a given political context which may have transforming, but temporary effects on the local political order; and (3) the temporal

nature of patterns of conflict and alignment in a given political context which occur as a function of broad based socio-political change (Person 1985). As such, proposing distinct waves of urban mayors may be a convenient way to categorize local leadership however such categories may not capture certain nuances and are not necessarily mutually exclusive. There are instances and contexts in which some mayors may fit more than one category or may change categories depending on the circumstances. For the most part, a discernable pattern is demonstrated, but it must be noted that it is difficult to place individual mayors in specific categories without taking into account local history and salient cleavages.

Political activity encompasses efforts by individuals and groups to gain or preserve political power and a distribution of public goods and services favorable to themselves; this is particularly necessary for marginalized and neglected communities. However, even as citizens have been somewhat incorporated into the decision-making process of public agencies, this has primarily occurred in ways that produce small, incremental changes in public policy. In response, urban populism has cropped up as a potential antidote to this discrepancy at the local level. Urban populists are openly suspicious of concentrated power, whether in the form of big business or big government; they stress local solutions to local problems and build upon the strength of community churches, ethnic associations, and similar organizations (Howard et al 1994). Urban populism is largely influenced by the protest movements of the 1960s (Boyte 1980; Piven and Cloward 1979).

This dissertation does not look at community organizing in isolation, nor does it look at governing regimes in isolation, the major contribution is that it stresses the



relationship between the two. Although organizing strategies are of major importance, the ability to achieve desired ends is also related to the governing styles of mayoral administrations. All politics is local, and in local politics, the mayor is the executive and holds a significant degree of power. In order to understand decision making at the local level, it is imperative to understand urban executives. Although mayoral power is tempered by other factors, the philosophical orientation of the mayor has a significant impact on the opportunities for collaboration with community organizations. I contend that there are specific mayoral attributes that facilitate community engagement. I have identified the pertinent characteristics to be: Local Bond, Campaign Type, Platform, Development Focus, and Use of Power. Subsequently, I propose a theory regarding the characteristics/factors I anticipate will enable/frustrate relationships over time.

Politics within a city has its own culture and success in this realm has much to do with local perceptions. *Local Bond* is relevant because one's municipal experience before reaching the mayor's office influences leadership style. At one extreme is the Insider – one who is from the community or is seen as speaking for it; such individuals may utilize patronage systems and pay attention to neighborhood concerns. The other extreme is the Outsider – exemplified by weaker local ties and a rapid rise to executive leadership. Mayors from other cities tend to lack personal ties and/or affection and adopt a strictly technocratic stance. *Campaign Type* refers to statements of beliefs at the outset that help to frame the agenda. An Incumbent campaign trades on the currency of experience and knowing city government; candidates may be machine affiliated or have come up through the local ranks.

Insurgent campaigns are positioned outside of the current power structure and often focus on the underserved. Fixer campaigns promise a new direction and tend to take on a policy orientation.

How one governs is related to the campaign that was run, but the two need not be identical. *Platform* represents the type and orientation of governing regime; these are: Patronage, Boosterism, Civil Rights, Populism, Technocracy. Patronage is largely connected with machine politics and the spoils that come with it. Boosterism focuses on development and selling the city as a destination. Civil Rights platforms are most closely linked with black political empowerment in response to white control. Populism refers to appeals for redistribution and serving the marginalized. Technocracy has a significant policy orientation and may be employed by an insider or outsider (but often an outsider). *Development Focus* pertains to the degree of balance between downtown focus and neighborhood focus; each is necessary, but perception/reality is based on proportion of accomplishments. This is critical as high level mayoral attention toward or concern for urban poverty/affordable housing, in proportion to development, helps facilitate collaboration in organizing efforts. *Use of Power* refers to executive decision making; this also affects levels of responsiveness to appeals and organizing strategies. At one end is a unilateral form which consolidates control, shuns input, and uses forceful gestures; at the other end is a more cooperative version which is open and engaging.

#### Mayoral Categories/Typology

There may in fact be a typological profile that explicates the types of mayors who frustrate or facilitate success for organizing efforts. This typology is formulated

by assessing factors across several categories. *Imperial* mayors are described as local insiders, who run incumbent campaigns, promote patronage and boosterism as a platform, place a high focus on development, and demonstrate unilateral/forceful use of power. *Changers* tend to be outsiders, run insurgent campaigns, utilize civil rights or populism as platforms, place a low/moderate focus on development, and use power cooperatively. *New Wave* mayors may be either be insiders or outsiders, who run campaigns based on fixing, utilize a technocratic platform, place a moderate focus on development, and whose use of power varies between unilateral and cooperative. *Hybrid* mayors exhibit characteristics consistent with multiple categories. In this regard, the hybrid – the latest generation of local black politicians – may be considered a legacy of the civil rights movement, governs technocratically, encourages development, and has flashes of populism. The table below presents these typologies and their defining characteristics.

Table 4.1: Mayoral Typologies/Characteristics

	<b>Typology</b>	<i>Imperial</i>	<i>Changer</i>	<i>New Wave</i>	<i>Hybrid</i>
<b>Characteristics</b>					
<i>Local Bond</i>		Insider	Outsider	Either	Either/Transition
<i>Campaign Type</i>		Incumbent	Insurgent	Fixer	Any
<i>Platform</i>		Patronage, Boosterism	Civil Rights, Populism	Technocracy	Combination/All
<i>(Downtown) Development Focus</i>		High	Low/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
<i>Use of Power</i>		Unilateral/Forceful	Cooperative	Varying	Varying

Mayoral typologies (Imperial, Changer, New Wave, Hybrid) are based on combinations of attributes and categories that are not mutually exclusive or absolute

as there may be varying degrees of overlap. However, mere degrees can account for significant differences in the relationships between mayors and organizers; it also affects the available avenues and corresponding strategies necessary for achieving desired ends. Therefore, these typologies have bearing on the types of relationships that mayors have with organizers. Every mayor is different, yet there are characteristics that appear to be most conducive to their support for bottom-up, grassroots organizing efforts. These categories are not mutually exclusive or exact, but provide some very basic parameters. An attempt at strict classifications across multiple cities will oversimplify quite complex local realities and individual personalities; in other words, this may be convenient but ultimately inaccurate. The best we can do is to highlight general similarities in light of contextual circumstances.

In spite of these limitations, I am still able to present some hypotheses. It is my contention that mayors who emphasize populist priorities should be expected to be the most willing to collaborate with community-based organizers around neighborhood focused agendas. A mayor's philosophical orientation regarding neighborhoods is probably the factor that matters most and is the greatest determinant for whether a mayor will be responsive to community based organizing efforts. Although the degree to which executives are able to do so is also based on contextual constraints, I contend that mayoral characteristics exert an independent influence on in this process. I also hypothesize that mayors are most likely to support the agendas of organizers when previous grassroots efforts are successful and there are opportunities for credit claiming. Hence, the purpose is not categorization simply for

the sake of classification, but categorization with an eye to what mayoral attributes mean for local community organizing and neighborhood inclusion.

With respect to expenditure priorities, it is useful to consider Peterson's (1981) three-fold division of city expenditures into developmental, redistributive, and allocational. Developmental expenditures, according to Peterson, are policies that enhance the economic position of a community in its competition with other communities; redistributive policies benefit low-income residents at the expense of better-off members of the community; and allocational policies essentially consist of traditional housekeeping services. In making calculations about which expenditures receive priorities, mayors must weigh the requests for redistribution against local economic local realities. "Economic constraints, coupled with the growing diversity of disadvantaged groups, and at times their direct competition with each other, have extended the time lag between political empowerment and tangible benefits in the lives of many urban blacks" (Howard et al 1994: 154).

Undoubtedly, there are exogenous factors (local economy) that affect the level to which the goals of community groups can realistically be achieved. The combination of slower rates of economic growth, the exodus of more affluent residents to the suburbs – and, hence, declining tax bases of many cities, public resistance to tax increases, and the increasing mobility of capital has limited cities' ability to engage in redistribution (Reed 1988; Stone 1989). The ability to solve longstanding neighborhood issues (including affordable housing) depends both on local circumstances and the commitment of urban executives. There are also elements of local political structures (patronage system, structured participation), economic

conditions (poverty levels, property transfer taxes), and social composition (race relations, coalitions) that contribute to the extent to which administrations are receptive to community issues and bottom up movements. Specifically, mayors who at the outset prioritize neighborhood level problems/issues and project their missions as improving the lives and opportunities of underserved city residents are more likely to be substantively engaged with organizers.

Regardless, some mayors are more attuned to community driven movements; this disposition is likely influenced by previous experiences and governing philosophies (open/collaborative vs. closed/unilateral). Organizing strategies must be tailored to mayoral characteristics. Organizing is based on relationships, and relationships change and evolve over time – over the course of a term or multiple terms. Because of this reality, one cannot paint the successes/challenges of organized groups with a broad brush. Administrations matter, issues matter, previous collaborations or disagreements matter, and of course economic resources matter; specific historical events also shape this process. Thus, there is somewhat of an ebb and flow which is dictated by local circumstances. It should be noted that IAF affiliates are nonpartisan and can therefore not endorse candidates or work on their behalf. However, I hypothesize that candidates who publicly agree with stated agenda items are more likely to be responsive to the organizations if they are elected. Although campaign promises are often broken, it is the role of community organizers to hold elected officials accountable. In this way, previous statements by candidates/officials are used as the basis for future demands.

My categorization of relationships is based on several indicators: Disposition, Level of Partnership, Attention to Appeals, Organizing Strategy, and Origin of Outcome. *Disposition* refers to feelings of closeness or lack thereof – amicable, tense, or estranged. *Level of partnership* describes the working relationship between mayors and organizers – collaborative (highly productive), reluctantly collaborative (productive), and non-collaborative (non-productive). *Attention to appeals* refers to the reaction from executives – responsive, moderately responsive, and non-responsive. *Organizing strategy* describes how organizers go about approaching mayors – non-combative, moderately assertive, and confrontational. *Origin of outcome* captures how issues are resolved – willing partnership, negotiation, or agitation / forced hand. The combination of these indicators is used to distinguish between three primary types of relationships: partners, collaborators, and foils.

*Partners* are just that – they work with organizers and share a vision. A relationship between a partner and organizers is typified by an amicable disposition along with a collaborative and highly productive level of partnership. Because partners are responsive to appeals, the strategy employed by organizers is non-combative and outcomes result from willing partnerships. *Collaborators* also work with organizers, but the degree to which they do so varies depending on the situation. A relationship between a collaborator and organizers is typified by a sometimes tense disposition along with a reluctantly collaborative, but productive level of partnership. Because collaborators are moderately responsive to appeals, the strategy employed by organizers is moderately assertive and outcomes result from negotiation. *Foils* serve as obstacles to grassroots agendas and are hesitant to work with organizers. A

relationship between a foil and organizers is typified by an estranged disposition along with a non-collaborative and non-productive level of partnership. Because foils are unresponsive to appeals, the strategy employed by organizers is confrontational and outcomes result from agitation and force. The following table lays out the parameters of these relationships.

Table 4.2: Type of Relationships between Mayors and Organizing Groups

	<b>Relationship</b>	<i>Partner</i>	<i>Collaborator</i>	<i>Foil</i>
<b>Disposition</b>		Close, Amicable	Sometimes Tense	Estranged
<b>Level of Partnership</b>		Collaborative, Highly Productive	Reluctantly Collaborative, Productive	Non-Collaborative, Non-Productive
<b>Attention to Appeals</b>		Responsive	Moderately Responsive	Non-responsive
<b>Organizing Strategy</b>		Non-combative	Moderately Assertive	Confrontational
<b>Origin of Outcome</b>		Willing Partnership	Negotiation	Agitation, Forced Hand

Given what we know about mayoral attributes and contextual circumstances, there are particular mayoral profiles that lend themselves to collaboration with organizers. Mayors who project populist stances may be most responsive to organizers' agendas. Considering that their respectively stated goals are similar, it follows that there should be increased collaboration. Conversely, the foil is critical because the resistance of this actor provides an opportunity to personalize and polarize; high level resistance provides a focus for organizing and builds unity within organizations through a shared struggle. To personalize is to put a face and a name to



the opposition; having a stated enemy to organize against. To polarize is to place political actors on side of an issue or the other – for or against the agenda. Also, both organizers and politicians need success stories to demonstrate their effectiveness; this provides further support for them to continue doing what they do. Collaboration and credit claiming are relevant as successful ventures may bolster the reputations of either or both parties.

Additionally, the self-interest of mayors may extend further than immediate calculations of electoral strength and may very well include aspirations for higher elected office, which requires building a larger (statewide) constituency, which often includes suburban jurisdictions hostile to the interests or distressed, inner-city communities. In such a situation, it may be politically expedient down the road for a sitting mayor to demonstrate independence from unpopular constituencies (largely black, poor, marginalized communities). This applies to Baltimore, but not to the District; where there is no avenue or aspiration for higher elected office, the focus is on continuing to hold the position and maintaining power – lack of term limits allows for this. The District's progress toward statehood, or at least substantive representation in Congress may change the political landscape for current and future DC mayors. Also, Washington's mayor, though powerful, must interact with the council to a large degree in order to get budgets approved and favored legislation passed. The District's home rule charter gives the council the ability to amend the mayor's proposed budget by cutting certain items as well as moving funds from one program area to another.

To the contrary, Baltimore has an especially strong form of mayoral leadership, while the city council is not particularly powerful. City spending is approved not by the council but by the Board of Estimates, a five-member panel that includes the mayor and two mayoral appointees. Baltimore City's charter gives the mayor wide authority over the budget – the council cannot add spending or move funds from one item to another. The council only has the ability to cut from annual budgets; and a simple majority of votes provides the executive with favored legislation. Over time, majorities could easily be managed with funding pet projects in councilmanic districts. Historically, the mayor held the patronage reins as well, wielding control over the Board of Estimates, which handles the city's day-to-day business (Smith 1999). In this body, the mayor can count on three votes – his/her own and those of two others whom are mayoral appointees. Hence, the relative strength of the mayor is critical as it affects the degree to which they feel the need to collaborate with the legislative branch and the neighborhoods that they represent.

I agree with the estimation by Howard et al (1994) that the difficulties of developing political coalitions that give priority to the challenge of poverty and the plight of American cities must not be underestimated. “It seems unlikely, but not impossible that the current generation of elected officials will genuinely attempt to address these problems. If so, these officials will undoubtedly make disadvantaged groups the targets of government action rather than providing them with the political resources needed to bargain as political equals” (Howard et al 1994: 190). In contrast, a more fruitful arrangement would involve an alliance between the latest cohort of urban elected officials and urban populist groups representing the disadvantaged. If

substantive collaboration were to occur, this could possibly constitute a governing coalition in some cities. Nonetheless, it would obviously challenge current political dynamics and understandings of power at the local level.

My typology builds upon previous conceptions of mayoral administrations, but goes further by explaining which types are most likely to be responsive to grassroots organizations. Based on this typology, there are specific expectations of mayoral leadership and the subsequent relationships with community organizers. Imperial mayors are likely to be foils. Changer / New Wave mayors tend to be collaborators. Populist insiders are likely to be partners. Additionally, some outsiders may become collaborators; and at times, technocrats may act as foils. Moving forward, the profiles of individual mayors test the validity of these expectations. I contend that the emergence of hybrids reflects the current political realities in urban areas – each of the previous styles speaks to separate (electoral) constituencies (e.g., black poor and upwardly mobile professionals) and is a necessary component of effective campaigning and governance. This speaks to the natural, yet calculated evolution of urban leadership.

## Chapter 5: Mayoral Profiles

### Introduction

As urban executives, mayors are responsible for setting local priorities through their leadership. Mayoral types and governing regimes vary, and this variation has an impact on the form and level of community inclusion. In this regard, there are specific characteristics that indicate which mayors are likely to collaborate with grassroots organizers. The following profiles are based on consistent themes expressed in books, newspaper articles and interviews with organizers. One of my primary goals is to capture the nuances associated with each locality; broad categories may capture a lot, but by doing so they are inherently less accurate. The focus on specific actors in two cities allows me to drill down on specific characteristics and contexts without making sweeping generalizations; admittedly, there is some tradeoff between breadth and depth. As the mayoral typologies have already been laid out, this chapter will test their predictive power. This analysis covers mayors in Baltimore and Washington over the last three decades. The following chart presents profiles of mayors based on their individual characteristics and relationships with grassroots organizations over this period.

Table 5.1: Mayoral Profile

<b>Mayors</b>	<b>Typology</b>	<b>Relationships</b>
<i>Schaefer</i>	Imperial	Foil
<i>Barry</i>	began as Changer, moved toward Imperial	Collaborator
<i>Schmoke</i>	New Wave (insider), populist/technocratic focus	Partner
<i>Williams</i>	New Wave, (outsider)	Collaborator
<i>O'Malley</i>	New Wave, (outsider)	Foil, then Collaborator
<i>Fenty</i>	Hybrid: began as Changer, then New Wave, unilateral use of force	Partner
<i>Dixon</i>	Hybrid: has exhibited characteristics in each category	All

Baltimore's Clarence Burns and Washington's Sharon Pratt Kelly receive limited attention in this work for substantive reasons. Burns was Baltimore's first black mayor, but was not elected to the post, having finished the remainder of William Donald Schaefer's term. Clarence Burns was, for the most part, a brief continuation of the former mayor's machine that would ultimately come to an end at the next election. Kelly, the District's first black female mayor, served only one term and was elected in the midst of Barry's temporary political exile stemming from legal troubles. For Sharon Pratt Kelly, her efforts at reelection were futile as she finished a distant third in the primary, losing to the former mayor who had not sought reelection in the previous contest. These mayors are both outliers that fit no previous or later model, and whose mere occurrences were due to temporary circumstances more than a shift in politics. This omission is also inconsequential in terms of this study as

neither had much time to foster a relationship with the organizations. In Baltimore, Burns came into office at the tail end of an administration that had a strained relationship and virtually no contact with the organizing affiliate; he was mayor for a very short period of time – serving only 11 months – before being defeated in the next primary election. Kelly’s mayoral term in Washington ended two years prior to the founding of the organizing affiliate.

### Mayoral Profiles

#### **Baltimore**

##### *Schaefer*

William Donald Schaefer is an example of an Imperial mayor. Growing up in Baltimore and rising through the ranks of local government, Schaefer’s local bond was strong. He was the consummate insider; as city council president he was next in line for the mayoralty and ran an incumbent campaign. At a time of machine dominated politics, he was able to take advantage of the patronage system and use it as a base of support. As an Imperial mayor, Schaefer would not be expected to engage in much collaboration with local organizers. This is borne out by the accounts of his administration. His forceful and unilateral use of power did not provide much of an avenue for community inclusion. Also, his focus on boosting downtown development was largely at odds with the goals of organizers representing neglected neighborhoods.

Before becoming mayor, William Donald Schaefer had been around city hall for sixteen years, twelve as a councilmember and four of them as council president, learning how city government worked (Smith 1999). Schaefer was ingrained in the

community – neighborhood groups, block associations; he used the patronage system, provided walk around money for working the polls on election-day. While council president, Schaefer, was struck immediately by the enveloping sense in Chicago of government at work and by the constant reminders to citizens that one man was government in their city. As mayor, Schaefer, who admired Richard Daley, adopted a similar political approach. He could point to projects and say ‘I deliver...when people want something they come to me.’ Another similarity was that he was not going to be nice about confrontations and “actions” aimed at him, and if people were coming to him with demands, he would “set them back on their heels” (Smith 1999: 154).

Schaefer’s dedication and political energy helped transform Baltimore from the blighted, depressed town of the 1960s into a national symbol of urban renaissance. Schaefer could often be found sitting in the back row of neighborhood improvement association meetings scribbling notes on his ubiquitous “action memos”(Weisskopf 1979). To his detractors, the same zeal that sent Schaefer into the forgotten corners of Baltimore turned him into the “imperial mayor” who sputtered at opposing views, browbeats aides, placed reporters on “suspension” for unflattering stories and ignored the city’s poor in favor of glamorous building projects. When the council rebuffed him, he would lash out, often punishing his opponents (Weisskopf 1979). Schaefer would insist that he had always been a proponent of Baltimore’s neighborhoods although he had no hesitation about pushing ahead with controversial projects, whatever the pain to individuals, if he thought the greater good would be served. In his second term, Schaefer reaffirmed his devotion to making government serve the neighborhoods as if he were still campaigning. If he was to keep the public

enthused and voting “yes” on multi-million-dollar borrowing questions posed on election ballots, he had to make them confident that he would never abandon them, or forget their needs (Smith 1999).

Schaefer’s aides found opportunities for making deals using a constellation of quasi-public bodies – obscure city agencies that could be public or private as financial circumstances and the law dictated. The city could do things that private entities could not and vice versa; such an arrangement provided money, speed and flexibility beyond that of the city’s charter. He had grown more comfortable with operating in secret, avoiding formation of committees that would give citizens a say in public policy making. One of his former neighborhood-based mentors commented that “Schaefer believes that he does not particularly need advisory commissions because he has been a member of city council and in government for many years...I think he feels he doesn’t want to be bothered with citizens’ committees because he has listened to all that in the past. He is in power now and he wants to accomplish what has wanted to accomplish all these years” (quoted in Smith 1999: 198).

Schaefer always considered downtown to be the pivot upon which Baltimore’s recovery would turn. His theory was that the revenue and employment benefits of downtown development and the tourist economy would filter through the entire fabric of his city, enabling it to rebound from the decline of the manufacturing sector and become more self-sufficient. Schaefer transformed downtown Baltimore through attractions such as Harborplace and the National Aquarium that spurred a downtown building boom that by 1988 had nearly doubled existing hotel space in a five-year period, bringing 3,000 new jobs. Accordingly, property in the city’s downtown



district increased in value since 1980 (Kenworthy 1986). Schaefer acted as Baltimore's chief salesman and his frenetic personality became synonymous with the city. During his 15 years as mayor, he led the city through unprecedented growth that became known as "the renaissance." Schaefer believed that you had to sell your city, run it like a corporation and rule it like a regiment (Shields 2004).

Schaefer knew the neighborhoods, but seemingly cared more about the Inner Harbor. Although he received support from the majority of the black community he was disliked by civil rights types. Schaefer found himself the target of angry and bitter recrimination. He was, the critics declared, a "bricks and mortar man," a caterer to capitalists who sacrificed the concerns of the needy and the neighborhoods. "Harborplace was diminished as an avenue of excess, an ego-driven, business-favoring indulgence" (Smith 1999: 221). The argument was made that the Baltimore of Mayor Schaefer was the Baltimore of the wealthy, that he simply created "two Baltimores" – one for the well-heeled and one for the poor people who remain crammed into dilapidated houses. It seemed that his priority was structures and buildings for the middle classes. Schaefer bristled at such criticism, insisting that the city spent \$8 of every \$10 on social services (Weisskopf 1979).

Previous mayors had faced the demands of poor people and black militants, who had made legitimate claims for power and a share of government's favor. Schaefer and time had all-but neutralized protest. By the 1980s, Baltimore had a majority black population whose dream of political control had been deferred – denied – by the machine and Schaefer (Smith 1999). He achieved something few big city mayors – especially white mayors in predominantly black cities – can claim, he

neutralized all meaningful political opposition. “During his city council days, Schaefer had a record of voting “right” on civil rights issues; this was particularly important to running a city with a growing black electorate” (Smith 1999: 59). Even in the large and poor black community of Baltimore – where blacks made up 56 percent of the city’s population – the mayor appeared unbeatable. The polls showed he was nearly as popular among blacks as he was among whites. However, with an ever increasing black electorate and the potential for serious black contenders, Schaefer was widely considered to be Baltimore’s last white mayor (Weisskopf 1979).

Just as Baltimore’s building boom did not cure the city’s chronic fiscal woes, it brought only limited relief to the city’s large population of impoverished and poorly educated residents, most of whom are black. Baltimore’s building boom primarily benefited suburban commuters who made up an increasing share of the city’s work force. Three-fourths of all city neighborhoods and 90 percent of black neighborhoods experienced increases in poverty during Schaefer’s tenure (Kenworthy 1986). Hence Baltimore’s renewal was a double-edged sword for Schaefer, as critics perceive his mayoral priorities as bricks and mortar over education and social programs. Schaefer was living the trickle-down theory long before Reagan popularized the term, however, there was no significant trickle down from the Inner Harbor boom. Schaefer’s policies, by essentially turning city government into an instrument of the business community and developers, ignored the genuine distress that occurred in a vast majority of city neighborhoods (Kenworthy 1986).

Consequently, Schaefer's relationship with BUILD leaders was strained. "Many of BUILD's earlier demands, such as improved police protection, arson control, decent and affordable public housing, and rat eradication, had been directed at Schaefer and his administration. BUILD leaders were also vocal critics of his administration's emphasis on downtown redevelopment" (Orr 1999: 131). "Several of BUILD's activist ministers were considered to be political opponents of Mayor Schaefer. Some of them, like Douglas Miles and Vernon Dobson, had openly and aggressively campaigned for city council candidates and mayoral hopefuls critical of the Schaefer regime" (Orr 1999: 131). Given Schaefer's dominant political personality, this created an adversarial and contentious environment in which to attempt organizing.

"Schaefer was especially irritated when asked tough questions in public and was particularly uncomfortable attending BUILD's issue forums. These were usually held in a large black church and attended by hundreds of volunteers" (Orr 1999: 131). During the 1983 campaign, BUILD sponsored a mayoral debate in which Schaefer stormed out, saying he was "set up" and "embarrassed" (Leff 1986). Afterward, Schaefer did not meet with BUILD leaders or attend any of their forums until after his election as governor in 1986. Governor Schaefer was reported to have said to one BUILD organizer: "I don't like you, but I know I have to work with you." Organizers contend that Schaefer may have been difficult to get along with and would fight you, but his word was his word; for example, he later came through on BUILD's requests for gun control measures and affordable housing funds. Characteristically, he would

not talk about BUILD's Nehemiah housing program until the organization went to the black church and raised \$100,000; Schaefer would later praise BUILD for its efforts.

*Schmoke*

Kurt Schmoke is an example of a New Wave mayor. Growing up in Baltimore and representing the first opportunity for a black mayor, Schmoke's local bond was strong. Though an insider, he was able to run an insurgent campaign as he was outside of the machine previously in power. As a New Wave mayor, Schmoke would be expected to employ a technocratic approach; but in combination with populist tendencies, this would lead to collaboration with local organizers. This is borne out by the accounts of his administration. His cooperative use of power provided more of an avenue for community inclusion than under the previous mayor. However, economic realities meant that his focus on neglected neighborhoods had to be balanced by a moderate focus on downtown development.

By 1983, Baltimore remained the only majority black city without a black mayor. In 1987, blacks made up 60 percent of the city's population but held only six of the city council's 18 seats. As Baltimore's first elected black mayor, Schmoke was, for the most part, able to keep race from becoming a significant issue in city government – a challenging task in a city where whites only recently slipped into the minority. Schmoke, who was once the city's prosecutor, seemed to have broken with the past Baltimore style of governance by powerful persona and even more powerful machine politics and perquisites. When William Donald Schaefer was mayor, it sometimes seemed that his name was emblazoned on every city park bench, garbage truck, office building and new construction project that might be viewed by a voter.

In a departure, Kurt Schmoke began talking about a human agenda that concentrated on education and poverty and put less emphasis on physical things like seaport revival (Ayres 1988).

Schmoke was different, his style was that of a modern technocrat, yet his disdain for traditional politics might have been an obstacle to realizing his vision. The mayor did not seem to operate well in the back rooms of politics and had no taste for the quid pro quos of dealmaking (Warner 1988). Schmoke wanted to continue revitalizing the city which enjoyed a downtown renaissance around its harbor and became a magnet for moneymaking conventions. But simultaneously, his election altered the composition of the city's governing regime, opening city hall to black leaders long ignored during former mayor William Donald Schaefer's tenure. BUILD leaders, for example, became major players" (Orr 1999: 141). By the time Schmoke took office in December 1987, he and BUILD had developed a solid working relationship. BUILD was considered part of Baltimore's governing regime. (Orr 1999). "When it comes to the things we (BUILD) want, such as better education, housing, employment opportunities and health care, he's been extremely accountable, making contact at least every three weeks" (Ayres 1988). Many observers attributed Kurt Schmoke's close victory over Burns to his quick endorsement of BUILD's agenda (Orr 1999). A few days after he won the election, Schmoke told an audience of about 2,000 BUILD volunteers that "the real winner was BUILD's agenda. And BUILD's agenda is Baltimore's agenda" (Crocket 1987).

BUILD says the Schmoke administration was more amenable to neighborhood concerns, and they wished to correct years of public neglect and private

disinvestment in neighborhoods. Schmoke himself was interested in developing a neighborhood-oriented development strategy and creating a self-sustained community development effort in the city and channeling more public resources to neighborhoods. Schmoke was regarded for his personal attention to housing issues. Early in his tenure, he worked with Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development (BUILD) to create one of the country's first Nehemiah developments for low-income homebuyers. During his administration almost 1,000 Nehemiah homes were built (Rath 1999). "He engaged us at a level most mayors wouldn't engage a community organization at." Graf says Schmoke met with BUILD representatives every six to eight weeks during his first six years in office (Rath 1999).

Schmoke, Baltimore's first black elected mayor was considered one of a generation of pragmatic black mayors who built a base of support across racial lines. "Kurt Schmoke was considered to be a black leader who could really build biracial coalitions, but he really wasn't able to pull it off," Orr says (Rath 1999). Facing a white challenger, his reelection campaign colors – red, black and green, the traditional colors of the symbolic African liberation flag – were seen as a direct appeal to African-Americans in a city where 55% of Democratic voters are black. Schmoke was one that the black community could relate to, identify with, and be proud of; but this had its drawbacks. Being a product of the black church – which fostered a "we raised you" type of relationship – made it difficult to apply tension. Consequently, running actions on him was challenging because it was difficult to determine effectiveness.

At times, Schmoke's administration was disappointing to organizers; he was willing in some instances and had to be forced into a corner in others. According to organizer accounts, Schmoke would sometimes claim credit for initiatives after battling them – championing after the fact. To some his vision was not big enough as there seemed to be little new thinking, continuing the usual position with the corporate community. Schmoke seemed cautious and his staff protective, so he had to be cajoled on some things. However, he would reach out to organizers by calling and saying they needed to meet. After a challenger supported an agenda which included Child First, BUILD's afterschool initiative, Schmoke eventually got on board and raised the necessary money from the sale of the city's golf course. Schmoke was an ally with Child First and pushed for dedicated funding – he did not get it, but BUILD continued to push for it; he also delivered on the living wage and BUILD's signature campaigns. BUILD concedes that if it was not for him, there would be no living wage, Child First, or Nehemiah homes; Schmoke also gave credit to BUILD. These victories came out of created tension between his mayoral power and BUILD's power.

Acknowledging at the outset that his objectives were sweeping, Schmoke said he would be satisfied with incremental change. Baltimore was/is socially and economically depressed and Schmoke was working with diminishing federal and state resources. “Those were different times,” Schmoke said. “Schaefer had a good economy and \$23 million a year in (federal) revenue-sharing. I got the recession and no revenue-sharing” (Minzesheimer 1995). “Even Schmoke acknowledged that he might not have become the city savior residents sought, however unrealistic the

expectations.” (Shields 2004: 2). One of his legacies was his ability to attract more federal and state aid while subsidies diminished elsewhere. Schموke held up the \$100 million federal Empowerment Zone Baltimore received to lure new jobs and businesses as one of his proudest accomplishments” (Shields 2004: 5). “Although Baltimore was known nationally as a “Renaissance City” for the redevelopment of its glitzy harbor and \$19 million a year in hotel bed taxes from tourists, Schموke continued to describe it as the “Tale of Two Cities.” Some of the most abject poverty in the nation existed 10 blocks from the shining harbor in any direction” (Shields 2004: 7).

### *O'Malley*

Martin O'Malley is an example of a New Wave mayor. Growing up in Montgomery County, MD, his local bond was not very strong. O'Malley was an outsider, and after two terms on the city council, he positioned himself to run a fixer campaign. As a New Wave mayor, O'Malley would be expected to adopt a technocratic approach; this would not automatically lend itself to much collaboration with local organizers. This is borne out by the accounts of his administration. His often forceful use of executive power provided limited avenues for community inclusion. Also, his high focus on downtown development was largely at odds with the goals of organizers representing neglected neighborhoods.

After eight years on the Baltimore City Council, Bethesda, MD native, Martin O'Malley entered the 1999 mayor's race late and used a divided electorate and tough talk on crime to prevail against two other candidates. O'Malley won a racially charged election and erased expectations that a white candidate could not prevail in a



majority-black city (Mosk 2001). However, some saw O'Malley as an opportunist. "There was no talk of an O'Malley candidacy until you had ...two to three other African-Americans in the race," says the Rev. Douglas Miles, president of the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance (Rath 1999). Miles was widely quoted (or misquoted) as saying an O'Malley victory would be a "stunning setback in race relations". "Had he declared himself before three or four black candidates were already in the running, then he would have some credibility. He has no credibility" (Shields 2004: 103). Nevertheless, O'Malley had properly read the mood of Baltimore and ran on a law and order platform; the implication was that the previous mayor and police commissioner had stood idle, while the murder rate climbed.

O'Malley stumbled into an early misunderstanding, when he scheduled his first campaign press conference at a Head Start center run by an African-American church in West Baltimore—without getting approval from the church's pastor. The event was scuttled, and O'Malley found himself facing black ministers' accusations that he was treading on their turf for political gain. "It was not his intent to do that, but it was his lack of understanding of the black church. Nothing flies in the black church without first being flown by the pastor," Miles said (Rath 1999). Also, at a BUILD candidate forum in August 1999, O'Malley used the phrase "you people" while addressing the mostly African American audience; O'Malley's words provoked a roll of grumbles through the church. Though O'Malley uttered the phrase perhaps innocently, it demonstrated a lack of awareness. O'Malley took it personally that people outside of BUILD used it against him.

To organizers, O'Malley appeared to be thin skinned and sensitive to criticism; he tended not to see a difference between individual ministers who were critical and BUILD. O'Malley also tended to believe that all politics is personal and took his disagreement with Miles as being synonymous with BUILD being against him. O'Malley also had verbal clashes with perceived opponents (allegedly cursing out an organizer over the phone). Because of their previous misunderstanding Miles somewhat disassociated himself from BUILD, functioning as clergy member, but not taking a visible leadership role. In an interview, Miles was quoted as saying O'Malley's election would be the worst thing for race relations in Baltimore. However he contends that the full statement was that it would be the worst thing for race relations if he were elected by a white minority. This was a potential fear because of the number of black candidates in the race.

To the organizers, O'Malley seemed to be fighting a large portion of the black clergy community – seemingly saying “I have my own clergy”. O'Malley was endorsed by Rev. Frank Reid, pastor of Bethel AME Church, the largest black church in the city with 14,000 congregation members; Reid is also Kurt Schmoke's half brother. O'Malley won the Democratic primary with 53 percent of the vote; the two leading black candidates received 28 percent and 17 percent respectively. According to election officials, 42 percent of the voters cast ballots. O'Malley became the first white mayor of this predominantly black city since 1986. Baltimore joined other predominantly black cities such as Oakland, California, and Gary, Indiana that have elected white mayors in recent years (Dominguez 1999).

Voters also decided to postpone the next mayoral election a year to make it coincide with the presidential election in 2004. The change, promoted as a money-saver, gave O'Malley a five-year term (Dominguez 1999). One of O'Malley's immediate priorities was finding a police commissioner; the former commissioner supported community policing over the zero-tolerance strategy. Zero-tolerance policing, in which all crimes no matter how small are aggressively enforced, had been advocated for years by O'Malley, who credited it with lowering crime in New York and other cities (Dominguez 1999). CitiStat is a program O'Malley introduced in Baltimore just months into office, a repackaging of New York City's much-heralded crime-fighting strategy, which used computers to monitor and map every offense, then reposition officers where crime rates were highest. CitiStat also proved to be a perfect match for O'Malley's detail-oriented style – an approach to governing borrowed from one of his best-known predecessors, William Donald Schaefer, who was famous for telling city workers to “do it now” (Mosk 2001).

At the beginning, O'Malley appeared to be a single issue mayor – law and order – and had difficulty engaging in other issues. His focus was on crime and safety and did not make an immediate connection to youth/afterschool. His administration looked at dedicated funding for Child First, BUILD's afterschool component; to this end, BUILD attended morning meetings, proposals were soon enacted, but the money was held by the city. Child First was/is Baltimore's most successful afterschool partner, but O'Malley wanted funds cut, supposedly because of auditing. In 2001, O'Malley claimed that Child First books were not audited and would not meet with BUILD. While they were pressing for dedicated funding for afterschool

programming, a Child First staff member submitted an accounting form that had errors. O'Malley characterized the error in a way that made it appear that Child First was unaudited/misappropriating money. In response, BUILD presented the last 4 years of its audits at the Board of Estimates which was a bit of an embarrassment for the mayor, further straining the relationship.

Moreover, there was widespread speculation that he was contemplating a run for Maryland governor, after just two years into a five-year term. To many, it was apparent that he was attempting to build a name and broader reputation. "There's no question he's building a national profile – and fast," said Al From, founder and chief executive of the Democratic Leadership Council, the incubator for moderate Democrats that helped propel Bill Clinton onto the national stage (Mosk 2001). BUILD questioned the mayor's record on social issues. The group wondered if he had as much interest in problems such as poverty and housing. They noted that mayor O'Malley had failed earlier to keep promised dates with the group (Rath 1999). The mayor's chief deputy wrote BUILD to defend O'Malley's decision to cut funding for a child care program the group runs – a decision he believed was behind the group's criticism (Mosk 2001). But organizers with BUILD said the group's fears ran deeper. "We need to know if this mayor is committed to Baltimore, or if he's just using it as a steppingstone to higher office". It was not just O'Malley's streak of appearances in the national news. More than anything, the group's concern stemmed from persistent speculation that O'Malley was considering a run for governor in 2002 (Mosk 2001).

But there were local issues that needed urgent attention. About 400 people gathered at the burned out row house where Angela Dawson and her family lived to

protest what they called the city's neglect of the east side's Oliver neighborhood. The ministers accused Mayor O'Malley of refusing to respond to requests for meetings to devise a strategy to fight drug-related violence. They said the mayor's administration had also ignored pleas to increase police patrols and take other steps to revitalize the neighborhood, where boarded-up houses pockmark most blocks and violent drug dealers take over corners at night. A spokesman for O'Malley, accused BUILD's leaders of politicizing the deaths to get back at the mayor for not providing more money for the organization's after-school programs. Top aides to Mayor O'Malley said "that neighborhood is going to be a key for the mayor for the next year or so because of this tragedy... It opened our eyes as to what was going on over there" (Marks 2002). Activists who were organizing there for over four years said they were appalled that it took the deaths of a whole family to get city hall's attention. But once they've had it, they were determined to use it (Marks 2002).

After the Dawson family tragedy in 2002, O'Malley and BUILD began to talk; it was a turning point in the relationship. BUILD spent 5 years deeply embedded in the community and two of the children were in Child First. The group's philosophy was that in a crisis you meet; in their view, BUILD had valuable information, but O'Malley seemed unresponsive. BUILD knew the neighborhood and its issues and requested a meeting with the mayor (via fax and kept a copy of the transmission), however there was no response. The message they were attempting to communicate was "can't the mayor be bigger than our differences". Later, O'Malley was on local talk radio and BUILD organizers contacted the producer about trying to meet with the mayor and faxed requests to the radio station. O'Malley was asked "why won't you

meet with BUILD” and responded “I’ll meet with any organization acting for the good of the city...BUILD doesn’t reach out”. BUILD sent copies of 4 faxes sent to O’Malley requesting a meeting, which he denied ever seeing. At this point the mayor said “I’ll meet with them any time” and BUILD replied “how about today?”

The first meeting with O’Malley was tense, however, there was recognition that he needed BUILD’s deep relationships in the Oliver community – 5 churches, 250 children in the afterschool program. O’Malley helped the organizers rebuild BUILD; as they see it, his overreaction allowed for an opportunity to personalize and polarize. The governor at the time and BUILD’s partners in the corporate community urged O’Malley to meet and negotiate with them. Needing state aid and private sector support for the city he did so; the result was a contentiously fruitful relationship. The relationship would eventually be mended – much of it having to do with credit claiming for successful projects. In September 2003, O’Malley won his second Democratic primary, amidst limited competition, gaining 67 percent of the vote. He left in 2006, when he ran successfully for governor.

#### *Dixon*

Sheila Dixon is an example of a Hybrid, as she exhibits Imperial and New Wave qualities. Growing up in Baltimore and rising through the ranks of local government, Dixon’s local bond is strong. She was the consummate insider; as city council president she was next in line for the mayoralty and ran an incumbent campaign. With traits of a New Wave mayor, Dixon would be expected to employ a technocratic approach; this would not automatically lend itself to much collaboration with local organizers, nor rule it out altogether. This is borne out by the accounts of

her administration. Dixon's varying use of executive power has provided avenues for community inclusion, albeit limited at times. She also has been accused of unilaterally using power, consistent with Imperial mayors. Also, her focus on downtown development has been at odds with the goals of organizers representing neglected neighborhoods.

Sheila Dixon, the first black woman to serve as mayor of Baltimore, secured a full term in office with a resounding victory in the 2007 Democratic primary; Dixon took over as mayor from Martin O'Malley who was elected governor. Dixon, who once waved her shoe in the air during a racially charged City Council debate over redistricting, has mellowed considerably and broadened her appeal. Dixon seemed to undergo an extreme makeover while running for mayor – tough city council member becomes progressive, forward thinking, and compromising. Dixon, a Baltimore native was elected to the City Council in 1987 and won two citywide races for City Council president (Nuckols 2007). After a 1991 redistricting that raised the number of black-majority City Council districts from one out of six to five out of six, council member Sheila Dixon took off a shoe and waved it at her white colleagues, saying, "Now the shoe is on the other foot. See how you like it." In return, Dixon's white colleagues chided African-American council members for continuing to hold separate Black Coalition meetings despite their new majority (Rath 1999).

The relationship between Dixon and BUILD began with the controversy over the convention center hotel in 2005. Ministers protested, accusing the City Council president, Sheila Dixon, of reneging on a promise to provide \$50 million for the redevelopment of blighted neighborhoods as the council considered building a \$305

million hotel just west of the harbor. The hotel proposal was supported by Mayor Martin O'Malley and the city's tourism and economic development agencies as a way to stem the loss of convention business to competing cities (Gately 2005). The proposal called for the city to develop and own the 752-room Hilton, which would be built next to the downtown convention center; it would be Baltimore's most expensive public project ever. When BUILD members marched into a meeting of the Board of Estimates to accuse Dixon of breaking her promise and to demand a meeting, she agreed to talk later with the group.

Bishop Douglas Miles, former head of Baltimore's Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance, said City Council President Sheila Dixon had "selective amnesia" about the campaign promise. "We're not gonna get into a debate about your perception of my commitment," Dixon retorted. BUILD says that Dixon publicly promised twice during her 2003 campaign that she would deliver \$50 million in city-revenue bonds that would help groups like BUILD develop and construct affordable housing units in Baltimore; the group accused her of abandoning her pledge to invest in needy neighborhoods in favor of the ritzy hotel (Janis 2005). Miles said the final straw came when a "stonewalling" Dixon e-mailed him a 32-page application for aid (Rosen 2005).

But Dixon denied she broke a promise and said the city had pumped more than \$100 million into neighborhoods in the previous five years. She said BUILD had yet to provide a specific plan for redevelopment. "We can't write a \$50 million check when they don't have a plan, and they don't have a plan," she said. BUILD countered that Ms. Dixon knew the group was not planning to propose specific development



plans, but was asking the city to commit the money to demolish, acquire and rebuild blighted and vacant properties. The council president said that she had been working with BUILD and that the city was making progress to wipe out blight, stimulate the economy and improve housing (Gately 2005).

“It’s a tale of two cities and two visions – one uptown, one downtown, one doing extremely well, one struggling to survive,” said the Rev. Douglas Miles, also a co-chairman of BUILD (Gately 2005). “Since the hotel bill, she’s stopped returning our calls,” a BUILD organizer said. In her weekly constituent e-mail, Dixon called BUILD’s assertions “absolutely untrue,” stating that she was a strong supporter of affordable-housing construction. “Certainly the appearance of Harborplace is a stark contrast to some of our challenged residential neighborhoods . . . [but] the great majority of the development that you see in the downtown area is private investment,” she wrote in that e-mail. “It’s very misleading . . . to continue this fiction that the city spends all of its money on the downtown area. In fact, quite the opposite is true” (Janis 2005).

The 2005 Hilton hotel and convention center development project was handled in controversy: nine council members voted against it at first, three of whom voted for it later after being promised development in their districts. Dixon says getting a fund for affordable-housing out of that deal was a huge victory – though most observers credited the activist group BUILD with pressuring Mayor O’Malley to fund the affordable-housing trust fund along with the hotel. Still, Dixon insists that the complaint by her opponents and others that she is too much of a downtown mayor and not enough of a neighborhood mayor is “totally inaccurate. If not for downtown

we wouldn't have the \$59 million [from the hotel deal] now going to the Oliver community, which in some places looks like a war zone" (Ericson 2007). Dixon ran on a pledge to continue the progress the city enjoyed under O'Malley including a decline in violent crime and a downtown development boom. But at the same time, she was not afraid to distance herself from the former mayor particularly on crime. She ended his zero-tolerance policing strategy, in part out of concern that too many questionable arrests had badly damaged the relationship between police officers and the communities they serve. O'Malley pledged to reduce homicides to 175 a year, but never came close. Dixon, meanwhile, set no statistical goals and did not expect her strategies to pay immediate dividends (Nuckols 2007).

Contrary to her portrayal by her opponents, Dixon suggests she has been a champion for the city's have-nots, both in government and in the neighborhoods. (Ericson 2007). But BUILD contended that the city needs to commit more of its resources to rebuilding neighborhoods (Janis 2005). It appears that Dixon believes – like a lot of businesspeople and economists – that the engine of any city's growth is the central business district. She believes that feeding that central business district – awarding tax breaks to favored developers, assembling land for them, changing zoning for them, financing their hotels – allows wealth to trickle down to the neighborhoods (Ericson 2007). After the fight around the convention center hotel, Dixon and BUILD later reconciled, but the question of whether or not she could totally trust BUILD continued to linger. Dixon is still working through the initial distrust. Dixon seems willing to be creative as mayor, and currently has a working relationship with BUILD. Dixon campaigned on youth and gave more than some

mayors have in this area, but not what she promised. To some it appears that Dixon has calculated that she does not need BUILD. At this point, BUILD is not necessarily at the table, but there is some relationship.

### **Washington**

#### *Barry*

Marion Barry is an example of a mayor who transitioned from a Changer to an Imperial style. Although initially an outsider, his local civil rights organizing work allowed him to eventually be seen as an insider who spoke for the disadvantaged. As a result of rising through the ranks of local government, Barry's local bond was strong. After being elected mayor, Barry became more of a supporter of downtown development – which was seemingly at odds with his previous populist stances. This is borne out by the accounts of his administration. He was also able to dominate local politics by constructing a machine based on a patronage system and using it as a base of support. As an Imperial mayor, Barry would not be expected to engage in much collaboration with local organizers; also, by appearing to a Changer representing the downtrodden, he was able to neutralize appeals from this segment.

Barry initially came to Washington as a leader of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC); but he quickly sensed that SNCC was losing its clout and that the civil rights movement itself was moving into a new phase that could find its form in the nation's capital. In his estimation, the traditional civil rights groups with middle-class emphasis could not or would not reach the poorest blacks. At that time, Washington's black elite looked on Barry as an inarticulate rabble-rouser. Regardless, many of the men and women who had stood on the front lines of

the movement saw the city's unique black majority community as fertile soil to carry on a civil rights movement as it changed into a struggle for economic power. (Jaffe and Sherwood 1994).

In the 1978 mayoral primary, Barry stood out from his opponents in his commitment to social welfare goals by advocating tangible improvements in such areas as better schools, more low-income housing units and an increase in black power. But in a race where his two opponents had virtually locked up the support of the black middle class, Barry had to broaden his electoral base by appealing to white voters, a decision that proved crucial to his victory. While Barry carried only 27 percent of the black vote, he outdistanced his rivals among whites with 53 percent of their support (Henig 1993). "Barry's core support lay among liberal whites and younger blacks. It was essentially the same coalition that had propelled the student civil rights movement in the early 1960s. Fifteen years after SNCC had peaked, here was the SNCC support system ready to be molded into a political constituency" (Jaffe and Sherwood 1994: 113). In the 1978 mayoral election, "solid majorities in the affluent white precincts and the city's gay community, a cohesive and politically growing minority, and a respectable share of black poor and middle-class voters punched Barry's ticket" (Jaffe and Sherwood 1994: 122).

The fact that whites made up a significant portion of Barry's political base worried some blacks; home rule had created a black-led government, but there was always the specter of white reclamation of leadership in the city (Coleman 1979). People questioned whether Barry changed; was he betraying his image as a street-fighting activist who organized bus boycotts and challenged police on the street?

Suddenly he had to deal with the same white business community that had objected to his demands for money for the home rule movement (Stone 1986). In return for financing his campaigns, for withholding most criticism of his government, and for including Barry's friends in their deals, Barry would give the businessmen almost a free hand in developing Washington's downtown business district" (Jaffe and Sherwood 1994: 123). Also, shying away from him at first, the rising black professional class embraced the mayor because he positioned himself as a champion of black economic empowerment. He set a goal to increase business with minority contractors from 10 to 35 percent. "Barry worked adroitly to transform the District from the sinecure it had once been for whites appointed by friends in Congress into an opportunity structure for local blacks" (Gillette 1993: 194).

The mayor deftly used the Minority Business Opportunity Commission to spread hundreds of millions of dollars in city contracts to firms controlled by blacks, Latinos, and women. Barry's aides also made sure that they reciprocated with community support and campaign contributions. There were three legs to Barry's political machine: "campaign money from the business community, power and votes from the churches, and the loyalty that derives from political patronage." (Jaffe and Sherwood 1994: 140). He began by courting the city's powerful black ministers. Barry wooed them with special clergy license plates, invited them to high-profile meetings at the District Building, and showcased them at an annual citywide prayer breakfast. Most important, Barry put millions of dollars at the disposal of the ministers to fund church-based day-care centers, senior-citizen meals programs, and job-training efforts. (Jaffe and Sherwood 1994).

To shore up his standing in the poorer neighborhoods, he worked with local clergy who had been cool to his election on such social concerns as housing and aid to the elderly. In a symbolic and highly publicized move, he shifted his residence from a racially mixed neighborhood on Capitol Hill to the politically strategic black middle-class Hillcrest section of Southeast Washington. In the 1982 election, Barry won nearly 60 percent of the vote. His opponent only won the predominantly white Ward Three, receiving 54 percent to Barry's 34 percent. Every predominantly black precinct went for Barry by more than two to one. "The results marked the total shift of Barry's electoral support from an integrated base in 1978 to one that relied on the black middle class and poor. In 1978 the white vote put him over the top; in 1982 it alone couldn't defeat him." (Jaffe and Sherwood 1994: 143).

Achieving economic power was supposed to be the second phase of the civil rights movement. Nonetheless, what began as an attempt to broaden the economic base of the city, proved to be a rich source of political favors. The city would sell land at bottom-basement prices to development teams that included minority partners, and frequently were people with strong social and political connections to Marion Barry. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development said that the city was giving away its assets (Jaffe and Sherwood 1994). The problem with Barry's version of the spoils system was that he always seemed to spread them to the same people.

After 1987, when problems in the Barry administration became public knowledge, Congress and the Reagan White House signaled disapproval by holding down the federal payment, the annual amount that the city receives to compensate for untaxable federal land in the district. Marion Barry's reign as mayor is marked by

financial and management failings that prompted Congress to install a financial control board in 1995. Subsequently, Congress and President Clinton suspended home rule in August 1997 as part of the \$928 million federal bailout of the city. Nine critical city agencies were stripped from Mayor Marion Barry's control and placed under the control board as part of the bailout (Hansen 1998).

The Barry administration was least effective with the city's poorest citizens – those who helped him rise to power but remained trapped in decrepit public housing. Regardless, the poor and middle-class African American communities credited Barry with improving basic city services that most people take for granted: accurate water billing, street repair, garbage collection. These services were not completely efficient, but worked much better than before. Barry derived power because he gave the impression that he could contain the disenfranchised by giving them a voice, or unleash them by inciting their anger (Sherwood and Jaffe 1994). WIN was founded at the tail end of Barry's last mayoral term; by then accountability was an issue as the control board wielded an inordinate amount of power. Nonetheless, Marion Barry demonstrated respect for WIN because of their ability to mobilize large numbers of people from all parts of the District. But, Barry's initial disposition was "why should I meet with you?" He also attended a church with 7,000 members, while WIN's churches tend to have no more than 300 families.

### *Williams*

Anthony Williams is an example of a New Wave mayor. Not being from Washington, and only recently arriving, he was the consummate outsider. As the chief financial officer during a period of recovery from well-documented and

widespread mismanagement, he was able to run a fixer campaign. As a New Wave mayor, Williams would be expected to adopt a technocratic approach; this would not automatically lend itself to much collaboration with local organizers, especially as an outsider. This is borne out by the accounts of his administration. His varying use of executive power provided avenues for community inclusion, albeit limited at times. Also, his focus on boosting downtown development was largely at odds with the goals of organizers representing neglected neighborhoods.

Williams, a Los Angeles native, arrived in Washington as chief financial officer for the Department of Agriculture, after stints at economic development agencies in Boston and St. Louis. In 1995, Congress had taken most of Barry's power away amid a deep and paralyzing fiscal crisis and placed it in the hands of a federally appointed control board. One of the few things the four-term mayor could do was hire a semi-independent chief financial officer for the city, but only the control board could fire him. Barry named Williams as CFO in 1995 at the behest of the control board. As chief financial officer, Williams said the management problem was rooted in a mind-set that hobbles reform. "D.C. government has retrenched by focusing on its core, loyal base: its employees and a few favored contractors," Williams said. "The public doesn't fit in that picture. Machines and good management are not antithetical," he said. "When a political machine works, it delivers to its customer base. In Washington, we've got the machine, but things don't work" (Powell 1997).

As the 1998 election year approached, a draft movement of city activists suddenly called for Williams as an alternative. A grass-roots movement that began in



Ward 7 'drafted' Anthony Williams to replace Barry in the belief that he could do for the city what he did as chief financial officer (Hansen 1999). He won the election by a wide margin, but the results showed a deep split in his support during the Democratic primary. The predominantly white neighborhoods in Washington voted overwhelmingly for Williams. After his inaugural address, Williams signed in private an agreement with the presidentially appointed control board that gave him virtually all the powers it stripped from Barry in August 1997 (Hansen 1999). Nine critical city agencies were stripped from Marion Barry's control and placed under the control board as part of the bailout.

Williams was granted the authority to set policy and run the District government day to day without interference from the presidentially appointed control board, which scaled back its role to providing vigorous oversight and focusing on the city's budget. Also, the agreement formally gave Williams the ability to fire agency directors and other city workers. The control board's decision to hand the reins of power to Williams – while retaining the authority to review appointments of agency heads – had bipartisan support in Congress (Vise 1998). Williams, was credited on Capitol Hill with cleaning up the financial mess that pushed the city to the edge of insolvency in 1995. Unlike Mayor Marion Barry, who had a rocky relationship with Congress, Williams is widely respected for his accomplishments, officials said. Rep. James P. Moran Jr. (D-Va.), the ranking Democrat on the House Appropriations subcommittee on the District, lauded the transfer of power (Vise 1998).

The control board was seen to have served a vital function; its presence helped the District get back into the bond market successfully. A transition back to prior

powers was regarded as an appropriate step once the city was fiscally secure under Williams' management. The changes in the city's governance structure were put into place in the summer of 1997 by then-Sen. Lauch Faircloth, the North Carolina Republican whose legislative amendment transferred operational control over most of the government from the mayor to the control board. Until that time, the control board, which was created in 1995, had focused mostly on the city's finances (Vise 1999). This reinstatement of power, in part, demonstrated that Williams rolled into office with a mandate to revamp the troubled D.C. government.

Williams, the accountant, was cleaning up the mess; he was seen as non-political, the opposite of Barry and the beginning of post-civil rights politicians in DC. But politicking was not easy for him. While making efforts at public outreach, Williams had trouble figuring out how to build coalitions and work with other politicians in the city, particularly the council (Cottman 2000). Williams said in late 1999: "I strenuously object to any notion that I don't reach out to the council....I go to enormous lengths to reach out to them, consult with them, make sure they're on board. I've made announcements with them and supported them...even when they haven't done a damn thing for me" (DeBonnis 2009). In addition, some community activists soon began to complain that some Williams aides were talking down to them – a problem made worse because most of the aides were white and most of those complaining were black (Cottman 2000).

As a candidate, Williams agreed to things on the Washington Interfaith Network's accountability night. Williams was awkward in the first meeting with WIN, however, Williams met with WIN every 6 weeks. In the last two years

Williams was less responsive; they met more often during first term, but over time WIN surmised that he was not delivering. But after the debacle over petition signatures which kept Williams off of the Democratic ballot in 2002, he came to a meeting. Williams, who often seemed to prefer working in the office to meeting and greeting, began to increase his appearances at community gatherings. He also emphasized his commitment to creating economic opportunities in the city's poorest neighborhoods. But critics cast the mayor as an elitist bureaucrat, with little feel for the concerns of working-class and low-income blacks. Williams' Neighborhood Action program sponsored several forums with the goal of incorporating residents' suggestions into policy. Williams attempted to promote understanding by bringing everyone to the table, through the citizens' summits (Cottman 2000).

But the mayor remained perplexing – even downright infuriating – to many of those he claimed to be most devoted to helping, particularly African Americans (Timberg 2002). Williams remained something of an enigma to many black community leaders east of the Anacostia River who were increasingly worried that their part of town might be left behind as Williams' vision of an economic rebirth in the District continued to unfold, drawing whites back into the city (Cottman 2000). There had been previous plans to remake Ward 8 which includes some of Washington's poorest, most crime-ridden neighborhoods. Marion Barry, got nowhere but is widely beloved, hailed on the street as a champion of the needy. But, Anthony Williams made some progress yet was viewed as an arrogant outsider throughout his tenure. (Fisher 2008).

That racial rift in Williams' support never closed and, by many measures, actually widened. This was not new to Williams after decades of having people question whether he is "black enough" (Timberg 2002). Williams' ease in connecting with whites came through when interacting with them; he seemed somewhat comfortable and relaxed. This was not the case when he was among blacks; Williams seemed to be a poor mixer, even standoffish. His body language tended to convey a remoteness that said to those around him: 'I'm here because I have to be here' (King 2006). With Williams, there was no flamboyant, in-your-face leadership. And he never resorted to the racially charged rhetoric for which Barry was known. A challenger in one election – an Anacostia minister – charged that Williams was "arrogant and insolent," a callous leader who catered to the mostly white business community at the expense of the city's mostly black neighborhoods. Polls also found a persistent coolness to the mayor among African Americans, who in many cases said he did not understand their community (Timberg 2002).

Williams' relationship with voters in Wards 7 and 8, largely east of the Anacostia, remained tenuous. The mayor had been reminded that residents are being pushed out of the city by gentrification and that there is more work to be done before everyone shares equally in the economic gains. "It's not economic revitalization when just one group benefits and others suffer," one minister said. Others, however, called Williams an ally who made good on his promises. The Rev. Lionel Edmonds, a member of the Washington Interfaith Network, agreed. He said Williams kept promises to the group that he would work to provide more affordable housing units and increase youth programs (Cottman 2000). At the end of his last term – and after a

good degree of public cajoling by WIN – Mayor Anthony Williams pledged to start putting money into a \$450 million community investment fund, which would be tied to the proposed new baseball stadium. Also, Williams helped WIN build 150 townhouses for first-time buyers, prevented foreclosure on 1,000 units of subsidized Section 8 housing and pressed the city to require contractors for city projects to train and hire D.C. residents.

Supporters of Williams liked the fiscal savvy he brought to city government and his restrained, almost nerdy style – his persona as Barry’s opposite. Williams left in his wake a city with a good bond rating, sizable cash reserves, a more accessible health-care system for the underserved, several promising neighborhood projects, a major league baseball team, a new stadium under construction and a town that was no longer a glaring example of poor management (King 2006). But on his watch, the District underwent its most profound transformation in generations – gentrification. Anthony Williams wanted to attract 100,000 new residents to the city, mostly single and childless. Williams promoted an investment climate that led to city development but longtime residents also witnessed the conversion of old neighborhoods into enclaves for a growing and politically active new middle class, some of whom have little tolerance for the history they are replacing. The common perception is that under Anthony Williams, the District of Columbia became more wealthy, and more white. Williams left office perplexed and angered by the fact that he was much more popular among whites than among African Americans (King 2006).

## *Fenty*

Adrian Fenty is an example of a Hybrid; he began as a Changer and later transitioned toward a New Wave mayor. Growing up in Washington and serving on the city council, Fenty's local bond was strong. Though an insider, he was able to run an insurgent campaign as he was outside of the previous power system. As a New Wave mayor, Fenty would be expected to employ a technocratic approach; but in combination with populist tendencies, this would lead to collaboration with local organizers. This is borne out by the accounts of his administration. His cooperative use of power provided more of an avenue for community inclusion; but he also has been accused of unilaterally using power, consistent with Imperial mayors. After being elected mayor, Fenty has become more of a supporter of downtown development – which is seemingly at odds with his previous populist stances.

At the outset, Fenty was criticized as being a relentless press hound with spotty interest in the day-to-day work of the D.C. Council, where he served for six years, nor any aptitude for putting together the coalition necessary to get legislation passed. Fenty's focus on the council was constituent services – getting curbs cut and trees pruned, showing up at PTA meetings, sending and answering e-mails. He introduced bills that helped launch the District's school modernization program and indoor smoking ban. He cast the only vote against a hastily assembled crime bill and advocated for low-income families left behind during the boom of the past decade (Grunwald 2006). To the skeptics, Fenty is an opportunistic showboat who is good at highlighting problems but unwilling to work with others to solve them. Critics say, on the council, he never demonstrated much interest in the nuts and bolts of legislation

(Grunwald 2006). In light of previous positions, Fenty might have been figured to be anti-business and a reliable ally of labor unions and tenant-rights activists. He opposed the stadium project and favored requiring developers to include middle- and lower-income units in all future housing developments (Pearlstein 2006).

But if Williams was a remote technocrat, Fenty is the master of the personal touch. An activist in Fenty's ward, said Fenty the councilman was great at attending meetings, moderating meetings and proposing more meetings, but not so great at making things happen: "Adrian takes care of the low-hanging fruit – trees, trash and traffic – but good government is more than making a call to get a pothole fixed" (Grunwald 2006). Fenty's opponents deride him as an old-style machine politician. The Barry era gave charisma a bad name; the Williams era gave boredom a much better name. The Fenty machine is positioning itself to make the city to believe that a mayor can be charismatic and fiscally responsible (Grunwald 2006). Thus, Fenty appears to attempting to combine the most successful elements of the Barry and Williams administrations.

Adrian Fenty made a point to consult other big-city mayors such as New York's Michael Bloomberg and Chicago's Richard Daley; he has modeled much of his early administration on measures practiced by Bloomberg. Fenty emulated Bloomberg in several areas (Emerling 2007). Fenty knocked down walls to create a bullpen-style office for himself and his staff on the third floor of the District's Wilson Building – an open-air office structure ripped directly from Bloomberg's similar style in New York. The bullpen layout allows staff members to conduct their business in the open, and reportedly gives them more access to their respective bosses (Emerling

2007). Fenty also has borrowed from Bloomberg a more managerial governing style. The new mayor planned to streamline the District's sometimes-bloated government by running it like a business and gutting inefficient agencies. "He manages New York City like a corporation," Fenty said of Bloomberg. "His managerial style of leadership encourages productivity and accountability, which yields results." But Fenty's biggest imitation of Bloomberg was his proposal to take over the District's struggling public school system (Emerling 2007). One of Fenty's top priorities is fixing the public schools. Thus, he has admitted, in effect, that he was wrong when he opposed Mayor Anthony Williams for wanting to take control of the public schools (Pearlstein 2006).

Since taking office, Fenty replaced African Americans with non-black people in four of the city's highest-profile jobs: city administrator, police chief, fire chief and schools chief. Among those who hold arguably the 10 most influential positions, five are white, three are of Asian descent and one is Latino. Only one – the deputy mayor for planning and economic development – is black (Nakamura et al 2007). In dozens of interviews, residents, particularly African Americans, said they were concerned that Fenty's choices have created a cabinet that does not reflect the city it governs. They also said he has made many of his appointments in virtual isolation, consulting few city leaders or residents (Nakamura et al 2007).

During his campaign, Fenty cast himself as a part of a new generation of mayors who would focus less on politics and more on improving accountability and outcomes, lifting all parts of the city through hard work. He has made a point to appear in Ward 8, the city's poorest ward, as often as possible and delivered his State



of the District address there (Nakamura et al 2007). Race has long been intertwined with District politics. Marion Barry, who served four terms as mayor, famously told white residents who did not support his reelection in the mid-1990s to “get over it.” Former mayor Anthony Williams was criticized for failing to bring development to largely black neighborhoods east of the Anacostia River, even as he oversaw a renaissance downtown in Northwest. Further, the Cabinet has been viewed as a reflection of which constituencies the administration is aiming to serve (Nakamura 2007).

Overall, Fenty, who swept into office by winning every voting precinct, remains popular, with more than seven in 10 residents saying they approve of his performance. But the poll also revealed that the mayor faces persistently deep gulfs of perception between blacks and whites, and rich and poor residents when it comes to the city’s quality of life. While 74 percent of whites in the poll said D.C. is headed in the right direction, 45 percent of African Americans agree. And two-thirds of those living in more affluent Northwest Washington see the city on the right course, compared with less than half of those who live in Northeast and Southeast (Nakamura and Cohen 2008) .

Fenty took over a city whose downtown core had undergone a remarkable economic revitalization during Williams’ eight-year tenure, but whose poorer neighborhoods were largely left behind and whose schools and social services remained broken. Upon taking office, Fenty vowed to attack those problems. He downgraded the school board and took direct control of the education system and installed new chiefs in charge of the schools and the police, fire and health

departments. Fenty's management style has been more visible and hands-on than the aloof Williams; Fenty held multiple news conferences and attended several community meetings nearly every week. Some council members and residents, however, have been frustrated by Fenty, saying he has charged ahead on some issues, such as schools, with little input from others. As Fenty has moved quickly, D.C. Council members have complained that he routinely ignores them, and six in 10 residents characterized the relationship as less than good (Nakamura and Cohen 2008).

One telling development is that Adrian Fenty's deputy chief of staff resigned after a year on the job, citing growing disenchantment with the mayor's governing style. "I was disappointed that an administration that was built on strong populist tendencies has gotten to a place where the council and the public feel left out of decisions," he said. "I believe this is the opposite of what people had expected and hoped for when our campaign won every precinct in the city" (Nakamura 2008a). Fenty embraces a private-sector management model, surrounding himself with capable deputies trusted to execute his administration's vision. But it appears that the Fenty model is short on trust with those on the outside. "Adrian doesn't believe in loyalty," said one former Fenty supporter. "Loyalty with Adrian Fenty seems to be a one-way street" (DeBonnis 2009b).

How much of Fenty's governing style has been inspired by Williams' early difficulties is debatable. As a council staffer and then a councilmember, Fenty watched firsthand as Williams took a beating from the legislative branch. Some observers see in Fenty's hard-nosed approach to interbranch relations—refusals to

send executive witnesses to council hearings, for instance—more than a little bit of obsession avoiding the treatment Williams received from the council. Both Fenty and Williams have had their run-ins with the council, invariably over a lack of consultation—neither has spent much time personally consulting with legislators (DeBonis 2009a). But the differences between Fenty and Williams go much deeper than organizational discipline. It is true that Fenty likes the spotlight and the personal aspect of politicking much more than Williams ever did—shaking hands across the city and calling multiple press conferences every day, whether reporters show up or not. But his real distinction as a politician is in how he wields his power. Where Williams was content to let things work themselves out, Fenty makes a point to reward his friends and punish his enemies in ways Williams never would have imagined. A former aid of Williams said, “His first instinct wasn’t always to use the power of his office. Mayor Fenty clearly understands the power that comes with being mayor...the focus he can bring to any issue. He’s marshaled that very, very well” (DeBonis 2009).

From 2004 through 2006, Williams was the stadium’s biggest champion, the mayor who put his political career on the line during a rough-and-tumble fight over public financing of the \$611 million ballpark. Fenty, then a council member, was opposed to the project from the start and one of the fiercest critics of the plan. Fenty said he objected to the stadium deal because Major League Baseball had initially refused to contribute any money toward the project and only grudgingly agreed to chip in \$20 million after the council balked (Nakamura 2008b). In large measure, Fenty’s populist stance against big-money baseball owners helped propel his

powerhouse mayoral campaign, in which he swept every voting precinct. Williams suffered significant political wounds, as perception of him as sympathetic to deep-pocketed developers was cemented in poorer neighborhoods whose residents felt left out of the city's sweeping gentrification (Nakamura 2008b). Now, though, Fenty sounds a lot like Williams did in 2004 when Williams promised that the stadium would be worth the money because it would speed up redevelopment in what had been a blighted industrial area.

After the election, Fenty displayed respect for WIN's agenda. According to Fenty, WIN is pushing the agenda of the people, therefore he will execute it. Organizers feel that Fenty has a staff that is in line with his vision and may be even more aggressive at pursuing it. WIN has met with nobody more than Fenty who details progress on promises. They started off with a good relationship and somewhat parallel agenda; Fenty was responsive to WIN as a council member. As a candidate, Fenty did well on accountability nights. One organizer said that "Fenty gets us more than other mayors. WIN (15-20 pastors and lay leaders) meets with Mayor Fenty every six weeks; they also meet with key staff – City Administrator and Deputy Mayor for Economic Development one week prior. The purpose of the meetings is to strategize on how to keep prior commitments. When an apartment building burned down, Fenty held four briefings in a week to reiterate his pledge to help displaced tenants. At one, he included the Washington Interfaith Network, who had been planning a rally at the Wilson Building. After being invited, the group called off its demonstration. "There's a real alliance here," said one organizer. "He's committed to the neighborhoods where we have been organizing" (Nakamura 2008c)

As city politicians have discovered, it is wise to make friends with WIN, whose members routinely show up at the Wilson Building (city hall) to support or oppose initiatives. During the campaign, Fenty was among the handful of mayoral candidates who had pledged that, if elected, they would make good on a list of WIN initiatives. “I said I’d be back if I won,” Fenty said. “So I guess I’m glad I’m back because that means I won” (Nakamura and Labbe 2007). Adrian Fenty announced a wide-ranging plan to provide permanent housing for the city’s chronically homeless, to preserve affordable housing by making it harder for landlords to convert buildings into high-priced condos and to help fund 500 townhouses affordable to low- and moderate-income workers (Moreno 2007). The proposals were presented to more than 500 Washington Interfaith Network members, who elicited a promise from Fenty during his 2006 mayoral campaign to fund, build and preserve 14,000 affordable housing units over a four-year period. Included in that goal is the creation of 2,500 units for the chronically homeless that would come with supportive social services (Moreno 2007). “What we have tonight is the nuts and bolts of a vision that was cast when the mayor first got elected on how you bridge the gap between the haves and the have-nots, and that’s affordable housing, quality education and living-wage jobs,” said Lionel Edmonds, WIN co-chairman (Moreno 2007).

### *Profile Summary*

Schaefer is an example of an insider; Baltimore is his hometown, which corresponds to his early neighborhood focus and involvement in machine politics. With a downtown focus, Schaefer was credited with the city’s renaissance; but, the do it now – need for speed – philosophy translated to diminished community input. This

also supported the perception that he was more concerned about development than community concerns. Schaefer eventually transitioned to higher office – governor and later state comptroller. Barry was initially an outsider, but became an insider. He started with the civil rights movement and was an organizer for the downtrodden, but later was downtown oriented, though maintaining the appearance of neighborhood focus. In many ways, Barry represents the unrealized promise of black empowerment. Currently serving as a city council member, he could be described as a political hanger-on; even after his four terms as mayor and despite personal and professional shortcomings he is unwilling or unable to step down from local government. Washington is distinct in that it witnessed several stages of Marion Barry – from civil rights and populism, to machine governance and economic development.

Baltimore is unique in that it never had its civil rights generation black mayor. Arguably, a missed stage in development; this possibly added to unrealistic expectations of Schmoke at the outset. Schmoke was an insider and was seen as community product; Baltimore is his hometown and he was the first elected black mayor in a city with a black majority. Schmoke was a consensus builder/collaborator, but his cerebral nature seemed to not be well suited for day to day governance. The hope or expectation for profound change did not materialize and his prospects for higher office seemed to end with his discussion of drug legalization; after three terms, he chose not to run for reelection, which marked the end of his political life. Williams is from Los Angeles and was always perceived as an outsider; socially and politically awkward, the former chief financial officer was drafted to run. He was technocrat who de-emphasized race, and is credited with better management and an economic

renaissance. After two terms, Williams decided not to seek reelection which was the end of his political life.

O'Malley was an outsider, originally from Bethesda, MD; he began as a white city council member in a majority black city. He employed a technocratic style and implemented best practices from other jurisdictions. O'Malley was criticized for looking past the mayoralty, and made a relatively quick transition to the governor's office. Fenty is an insider; Washington is his hometown and he began as a populist city council member, with a constituent services focus. He uses the media to his advantage and employs technocratic best practices. Fenty has been criticized for his secretive decision making process, consolidation of power, and us-versus-them disposition; he combines elements of predecessors and his future options remain unclear. Dixon is an insider; Baltimore is her hometown, where she gradually rose through the ranks of the city council. She also combines elements of her predecessors and her future options are unclear, especially in light of current legal challenges.

In summary, the previous profiles support my hypotheses regarding mayoral interaction with grassroots organizations. Mayors who emphasize populist priorities tend to be the most willing to collaborate with community organizers around neighborhood focused agendas. Thus, a mayor's philosophical orientation regarding neighborhoods is one of the primary factors determining executive level responsiveness to community-based organizing efforts. However, mayoral characteristics do not provide the sole explanation for how and why such organizations achieve successful outcomes.

## Chapter 6: Organizing Structure

### Introduction

*“We recommend that you should try to get what it is possible for you to get...The standard of justice depends on the equality of power to compel and that in fact the strong do what they have the power to do and the weak accept what they have to accept.”*

The quote above is from Thucydides’ *History of the Peloponnesian War*, a reading that is central to IAF training. Its purpose is to get the participants to understand dealing with the ‘world as it is’, rather than the ‘world as it should be.’ In other words, the IAF stresses pragmatism; while always pursuing a vision of what should be, affiliates must work within the confines of what is possible. From the IAF perspective, the most pragmatic course is to cultivate relationships with political actors over time in order to get the maximum possible from the interaction. In Thucydides’ story, the weaker Melians were decimated by the stronger Athenians because they did not understand both parties’ self interest and failed to accurately assess power relationships and potential allies.

I contend that organizations such as BUILD and WIN fill a political void by providing a mechanism for citizens to navigate the local political process. By doing so, they push for participation that goes beyond voting and pursues accountability in local governance. As affiliates of the Industrial Areas Foundation, these organizations have the same underlying philosophy, but act autonomously. Although the model is universal, context affects the execution of strategies and opportunities for success.



According to Boyte (2004: 27), “it makes sense to focus in depth on one area because this provides a concrete setting to see how the IAF approaches the challenges posed by a particular political and economic environment.” The fact that both Baltimore and Washington have an IAF affiliate allows for a natural political experiment. How do organizations in different cities – and therefore different political contexts – execute the same IAF model? How are organizing strategies adapted to local conditions? This is a unique contribution as other scholars have not made direct comparisons between IAF affiliates. This analysis not only provides a contrast of the organizations, but does so with an eye toward the adaptation IAF principles to specific local contexts.

Since the late 1950s, the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), under the direction of the late Saul Alinsky, has been practicing a pragmatic approach to community organizing that emphasizes tangible, short-term goals. He believed that achieving a series of small victories was more likely to achieve community power than championing abstract unwinnable causes. Therefore there was no preferred mode of organizing and whatever tactics worked were to be used. Alinsky further believed that the cultural resources of the community should be utilized rather than ignored, and that local institutions could be strengthened in the process. Consequently, preexisting, authentic community institutions like churches became the foundations for grass-roots organizing. “The modern IAF has taken Alinsky’s original vision, refined it and created a sophisticated national network of citizens’ organizations” (Perry 1990: 7). Unlike Alinsky, who prided himself on being confrontational and fighting the power structure, modern IAF leaders emphasize the development of a “broad, powerful base” that can “relate to other power centers such as government,

school systems and corporations” (Perry 1990: 8). As Ed Chambers, Alinsky’s successor put it, “the only purpose of our organization is to amass power – but we are not interested in brute power...we are about relational power” (Rogers 1990: 48).

*Summary of IAF National Training*

IAF national training is a seven-day workshop designed for leaders and organizers of IAF affiliates from around the country. The series of sessions is conducted by experienced organizers who now serve on the IAF national staff and provide oversight and guidance to the local affiliates. These teachers of IAF-style organizing include Arnie Graf – former organizer with BUILD and WIN, Jonathan Lange – former organizer with BUILD, Ernesto Cortes – organizer with affiliates in the Southwest, and Ed Chambers – the current IAF executive director, who directly followed Saul Alinsky. One of the first points that the IAF examines is the tension between the world as it is, and the world as it should be. In order to move closer to the world as it should be, they stress that marginalized communities must change their view of power. Rather than accepting a position of perpetual powerlessness, communities must have confidence in their own efficacy and seek to exert people power in the face of political and economic dominance.

To this end, broad-based organizations take existing mediating institutions and form a collective; by organizing around tangible issues, the affiliates also help to build and buttress these institutions. The IAF contends that the key to effective broad-based organizing is organized people and organized money; both of these must be able to be delivered consistently and with a focus in order to have an impact. By purpose and design, intermediary institutions such as churches and schools help to

develop self and citizenry. Thus, the goal of IAF is to retrieve a relational culture by forming organizations of institutions based within communities. It is imperative that broad-based citizen organizations are comprised of institutions like churches that pay dues because organized money that is controlled by the members provides the independence to determine the agenda. To this point, the budget for any organization is a statement of theology – a reflection of what they value – and funding speaks to who the controls the organizer (forces inside or outside the community).

In keeping with the IAF perspective, a view that reduces political culture to sheer class warfare is oversimplified. In reality, the work of organizing communities is broader than just pitting the haves against the have-nots; it is also about understanding mutual self-interest and power. As opposed to dominant power, relational power is the ability to act in communion with others. Relational organizing seeks to shift the tide away from a society in which people are atomized and isolated toward one where they interact based on collectivized interest and common gain. “Civil society in poorer neighborhoods and the public sector are interdependent so that what can be accomplished in alliance with one another is different from what each can accomplish separately” (Stone 1999: 851). Hence, the goal of the IAF is to reconstruct a relational culture – the opposite of a dominant culture. The following table presents the differences between dominant and relational culture as perceived by the IAF.

Table 6.1: Contrast of Dominant and Relational Cultures

<b>Dominant</b>	<b>Relational</b>
European, male, wealthy	Have-nots, racial minorities
Homogenous, uniformity	Mixed multitude
Power is unilateral, hierarchical, top-down	Collegial, mutual, reciprocal power
Self is disconnected, individualistic	Self is encumbered, obligated
No history, no obligation	History, tradition
Preferences (are manipulable)	Interests (have permanence)
Claims based on status as consumers, customers, clients	Claims based birthright
Forged electorate (passive – hibernates between elections); chooses lesser of two evils	Political nature (constantly active – engaged citizenship)
Premium on elite communication – directive, order	Conversation – listening, curiosity; agitation, tension, conflict, compromise
Priority on experts – disconnected, sterile	Tacit knowledge – comes out of experience

Typically, community-building efforts are conceptualized and promoted by extra-neighborhood institutions, including private foundations and government agencies, but with aspirations of having meaningful neighborhood impact (Chaskin and Garg 1997). By addressing multiple issues, the IAF teaches its members the craft of agenda building and compromise but also avoids being pigeon-holed as a special-interest, single-purpose organization (Boyte 2004). Overall, the purpose of IAF organizing is to build local community power, as opposed to setting up local branches of an overarching organization. Though the IAF provides a general framework and technical support, the affiliates are autonomous and only exist through the will and action of local communities.

By necessity, the IAF model remains strategically flexible as affiliates must work given local strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges. This dissertation focuses on how – and the degree to which – this is done in both cities. To

this end, agenda setting is crucial as it determines what issues and potential solutions are up for discussion. Though usually considered as the purview elected officials, the goal of IAF affiliates is to turn the tables and have this function reside with community members. This is based on the understanding that whoever sets the agenda has more power; without this power, communities remain subjects rather than active participants – being affected by policy, with no ability to shape it. Also, conducting a power analysis – assessing the strength of the organization in relation to other local political actors – is critical to understanding the political terrain. Because circumstances matter, organizations must know when and how to compromise – as illustrated by Melian story

During one training session, Arnie Graf of the IAF distanced himself from the idea of empowerment. In his words, “how can I give people something they already have (power)? I can free up something within you, but I cannot give you power.” The point is that latent power resides in individuals and communities and the role of the organizer is to help manifest and channel it. This is consistent with the Iron Rule that IAF organizers constantly adhere to: never do for others what they can do for themselves. The determination of whom to work with is based on a simple estimation – communities must be ready for action. According to Graf – BUILD’s lead organizer in the early 1980s who also helped organize WIN in the 1990s – if one wants to effect long-term institutional change, “something has to happen to people. We can dream up all the programs we want, but we can’t dream up people.”

As a central purpose of organizing is to build relationships of trust that lead to power and action, enlightened self interest is also central to the equation. In this

regard, self preservation (food, clothes, shelter, and safety) is balanced against the drive for meaning (fulfillment, recognition, and acknowledgement). In order to understand interests and build the legitimacy needed to speak for communities, organizers must conduct hundreds of one-on-one meetings with nascent leaders. A leader is described as someone who has a following that can be delivered and from which money can be raised; a following refers to the people that an individual can influence and turn out for meetings, actions, etc. Hence, leadership is demonstrated by an exchange of money and people. Also, a multi-issue format is required because different people have different interests; on some issues, one set of members may be more energized, on some issues others may be energized. The key is to get disparate groups and those representing different geographic areas to support one another in each other's struggles. IAF staff stresses the point that "if we want power we join with people who are not like ourselves, those outside of our comfort zone."

Moreover, in public life, organizations need to have a persona, which means wearing an appropriate professional mask. While this may involve a calculated vulnerability – through presentation of needs and requests for assistance – organizations must choose between being liked and respected by elected officials. To this end, Cortez quotes a statement by Pope John XXIII – "that which is owed in justice should never be given in charity." However, since being right is not enough, affiliates must be reasonable, and compromise requires judgment. Public relationships are held together by interest and such bonds are tentative as they are dependent on specific circumstances. The IAF understands the concept of quid pro quo – this for that. In this regard, recognition is a central issue and is a two-way street – both

regimes and organizations thrive on this – so credit claiming is a valuable commodity. Additionally, agitation is a necessary component for change and is exercised to varying degrees within a relationship (both between organizers and leaders and between the organization and local officials). This type of agitation means to stir, to bring ideas to the surface by probing into one's story beyond abstractions and stereotypes. It is through agitation that motivations and interests become apparent and can be acted upon.

Attending IAF National Training provides a critical insight: the same skills an organizer needs are the same skills that IAF trains leaders to have; organizers do it for pay on a full time basis, leaders do it for their community in their spare time. In order to function, affiliates need leaders, and leaders come attached with problems to address. For the purpose of organizing, the IAF focuses on the distinction between problems and issues. On the one hand, problems are generalized and vague (e.g. education). While people constantly talk about them, they seem insurmountable and garner no urgency; also, they are faceless which makes it difficult to assign responsibility. On the other hand, issues are specific/concrete (e.g. charter school) and may be acted upon. Because they are winnable, they garner tension and immediate action; they are also opportunities to personalize – assigning a face and responsibility.

There are three steps that the IAF teaches in terms of addressing issues – research, action, and evaluation. The method for transforming a problem into an issue is through research; this type of research involves intimately knowing the issue (details, pros/cons) and how it affects specific communities. This research educates the membership base and puts the organizations on more sure footing when

challenging policies proposed by the governing regime. The IAF puts great emphasis on the concept of metis – local knowledge. In other words, there is knowledge held by the community because of their day to day experience living there. Issues are central to building an organization because they attract new leaders and new institutions as well as foster depth within existing institutions. Issues can also bring press coverage and additional funding. All of these enhance the overall power of the organization.

Actions are designed to bring the membership base into contact with elected officials and policy makers. To be effective, preparation requires distinction between problems and issues – this translates to having a solid position and lobbying for something specific. Actions may take the form of hosting accountability sessions and candidate forums, testifying at city council meetings, and holding demonstrations or rallies. In such efforts, organizations must be attentive to issues and what can be actionable since the purpose of an action is to get a reaction. Essentially, an action is a form of business conducted in the public sphere. In order to build and sustain momentum, the event should be made exciting, if possible; however leaders must be attentive to balance between business and drama.

Designing the drama is integral to how IAF affiliates function. Elements of the drama include: protagonist / antagonist; story (description how bad the situation is); tension / climax; resolution (will you work with us?). There are several steps for an action: (1) form strategy team (schedule pre-meeting), (2) pick a target (personalize – who is responsible?), (3) find allies, (4) determine goals (what you will ask for?) (5) establish level of turnout (institutional commitment – names and precise



number of attendees), (6) choose location / place and time (appropriate size for venue to look full) (7) contact media. Immediately following an action, there is an evaluation where the IAF affiliates typically spend thirty minutes discussing the event – what was successful, what needs to be improved, and planning next steps.

By placing accountability at the center of its approach to politics, the IAF speaks to a deep need in American politics (Boyte 2004). One of the central forms of an IAF action is the accountability session. In these sessions, politicians are brought in front of the local affiliate and asked quite specifically about their positions on agenda items. These events often dovetail into candidate forums during election years. The organization then follows up with these officials after they are elected and places continuous pressure on them to follow through on their commitments. The IAF stresses that the accountability session must be fair and non-partisan – not favoring one candidate; this is important given the non-profit tax status of the organizations, in addition to the need to work with whoever is eventually victorious.

### *Role of the Church*

Being that IAF affiliates are membership organizations comprised largely of church congregations, it is important to dedicate attention to the role and contribution of this institution. The behavior and effects of activist African American churches that partner with government go unnoticed by most political scientists. The research, particularly the most influential and innovative studies, on the political engagement of African American churches in the post-civil rights era focuses almost exclusively on these churches as sources and sites for electoral action and ideology formation, not

political engagement in policymaking processes (Reed 1986; Tate 1993; Harris 1999; Harris-Lacewell 2004; McClerking and McDaniel 2005; Smith and Harris 2005).

In this vein, Calhoun-Brown (2003: 46) argues that electoral and protest myopia prevents social scientists from observing “other important parts of the political process including agenda setting, interest articulation, policy formation, policy implementation, policy impact, and policy assessment – areas in which an institutional presence [by churches] may be particularly significant.” Similarly, Lincoln and Mamiya comment that “politics” in relation to African American churches is properly understood only when it is “broadly defined beyond electoral politics and protest politics to include community organizing and community building activities that are part of the ministry of many black clergy and churches” (1999: 234).

Therefore, “social scientists must define the political engagement of African American churches and black clergy as encompassing an assortment of ways they, alone or alongside other institutions, seek to influence public policy” (Owens 2007: 7). This is particularly important for the study of churches in cities, given the new characteristics and forms of urban politics that have emerged over the last thirty years as a result of social movement activity, minority incorporation, and changes in government such as the devolution of public policy, privatization, and the replacement of political machines with urban regimes (Elkin 1987; Stone 1989; Orr 1999; Hula and Jackson-Elmore 2000; Hula, Jackson, and Orr 1997).

IAF affiliated clergy members like Rev. Lionel Edmonds (of WIN) see IAF organizing as the merging two traditions – the prophetic (ministry rooted in protest of

the status quo) and the priestly (non-confrontational, top-down orientation). In his view, Christ's ministry could be characterized as urban considering that He walked amongst the people; conversely, the priests were in the temple and somewhat removed from the people, but connected to the political powers at the time. In keeping with such a distinction, the civil rights movement was emblematic of prophetic ministry, whereas the burgeoning mega church phenomenon may be more akin to the priestly tradition (residing in the temple, on high). Thus, one factor that must be understood is the impact of the changing church culture, specifically, the type of minister that people aspire to be (mega-church, prosperity gospel vs. activism, social justice). This is shift important considering the decreased volume of activists in the post-civil rights era.

For Reverend Dobson (a founding member of BUILD), a key point that people often do not understand is that spiritual growth is not monastic: it does not involve a pulling away from people. It comes from struggle, from interaction with others. "Our witness depends on this... The mega churches are leading us to anonymity. Five thousand parishioners, all strangers, sitting in an auditorium or watching television, waiting for some mesmerizing experience that they then have to take home and connect to their own lives. It's an illusion. The reality of life can only be worked out in struggle and in concert with others." (quoted in McDougall 1993: 134). Therefore, interpersonal relationships based on mutual interest are critical to effective organizing and social change.

It is through such relationships that IAF affiliates derive their power and ability to represent community interests when addressing local policy-makers.

“Collaboration, especially when it involves government and nongovernmental organizations, is a relationship of two or more actors working together to mutually achieve goals unlikely to be realized save for collective action” (Owens 2007: 8). Moreover, “collaboration involves collective action among organizations that one would normally not expect to act together, with groups often working across the boundaries of the public, commercial, and voluntary sectors” (Fosler 2002: 19). It implies that all of the actors involved recognize that an end is important and the likelihood of achieving it is greater if they act together than alone. Collaboration, nonetheless, is “more than simply sharing knowledge and information and more than a relationship that helps each party achieve its own goals (Chrislip and Larson 1994: 5). The IAF focuses heavily on the concept of mutual self interest – it is the basis of their organizing strategy.

#### *Application of the IAF Model in Baltimore and Washington*

BUILD and WIN’s congregational structure follows the basic IAF structure. The leadership consists of four “co-chairs” two of who are clergy, while the others are lay persons. Optimally, co-chairs are only to serve for two consecutive years. A strategy team of lay and clergy leaders comprise what is essentially an executive committee. The strategy team is the key group of leaders who make day-to-day organizational decisions in BUILD and WIN. It meets monthly to set the agenda for the organization and plot strategy. In Washington, WIN closely follows the IAF structure, rotating co chairs/leadership regularly. However, the dearth of potential leaders in Baltimore, translates to less frequent leadership turnover for BUILD.

BUILD has a full-time staff of four, and is comprised of about 40 predominantly African American churches (with varying levels of membership and participation in actions and strategizing). BUILD raises at least \$500 from each member institution; the amount can be as much as \$5000 for large churches. There are some churches that are financially insolvent and therefore contribute no dues. BUILD accepts no government money and takes foundation grants only for individual projects not essential to the organization's survival. Child First Authority, BUILD's school-based component which was launched in 1996 as a locally constituted authority, does receive such moneys. Creating an 'authority' requires city and state legislation and is essentially a public/private partnership; the board includes three people from BUILD and four appointees from the city.

Carol Reckling is a long time leader with BUILD and currently serves as the Executive Director of the Child First Authority, which focuses on after school academic programming. A Baltimore native, she considers herself part of the generation that embodied the hope of the civil rights movement – attaining social advancement through education. Although education is so critical, to her and others it appeared that by the 1980s, the city was not paying enough attention to schools. In Reckling's view, the city was gearing itself toward tourists/business interests and not seeing the connection to vibrant residential life. While focusing on the expansion of downtown businesses, regardless of community conditions, neighborhoods have continued to deteriorate because they have remained out of sight – or off the agenda.

While previously working for the Greater Baltimore Committee, Reckling was privy to the notion that Baltimore was seen as a one-night town (a stop-over on the

way to somewhere else); as such, the goal was to move it toward a three-night town by creating developments that would attract and keep the attention of visitors. The question in economic development circles was ‘what do we need?’ to lure tourists, and there was always more needed. In recent years, Reckling has been quoted as calling the Inner Harbor an “insatiable beast”, always demanding to be fed more money. Despite the constant infusion of money, all the attention did not seem to reverse the city’s fortunes. Nonetheless, BUILD recognizes that growth is critical to the city’s survival and is not anti-development. As such, understanding interests, key players, and how deals are made allows BUILD to more effectively negotiate with mayors while pursuing community benefits.

Douglas Miles is pastor of Koininia Baptist Church and has been a BUILD co-chair for quite some time. In his view, BUILD is able to rely on relational power because it is an organized force in Baltimore and Maryland politics. He and others relay the fact that Child First funding came from organizing and a promise of funding made by Governor Parris Glendenning. In the summer of 1998, leading to the fall gubernatorial election, Glendenning needed to build bridges in Baltimore and came to BUILD to ask for help. “Before election day, Governor Glendenning appeared before a BUILD assembly and endorsed several specific BUILD issues, including a proposal for Maryland to provide \$500,000 per year for the Child First Authority. BUILD could not formally endorse Glendenning because of its nonprofit tax status, but BUILD leaders and volunteers aggressively spread the word that the governor supported their agenda” (Orr 2001: 87).

BUILD worked on voter turnout around their agenda, registering approximately 10,000 new city voters, and was listed as a winner in post-election coverage. According to organizer accounts, Governor Glendenning told people he owed the election to BUILD and introduced himself as BUILD's humble servant; subsequently, he eventually kept every commitment he made to BUILD. This previously gained currency in Annapolis would prove to be fruitful over time as Governor Glendenning was able to influence Mayor O'Malley (who needed state aid for the city) to work with BUILD. This type of arrangement has proven to be a piece of their operating strategy – when blocked at the local level, BUILD lobbies at the state level to wield power.

Again, the goal of organizing is not doing things for, but with the neighborhood. So, how do they choose schools, neighborhoods, etc? This is a calculated decision based on ability to make changes. In other words, the dedication of organizer time and energy is determined by who is leading and willing to be actively engaged. Child First is present at twelve city schools and for the program to thrive, it must deliver quality programming and parents and schools must be an active constituency. This means that there must be an organized body of people saying that the issue is important, while doing something. Schools are also chosen on proximity to BUILD affiliated neighborhood churches, which allows the organization to build on existing relationships. Child First as a form of relational organizing leads to issues of self interest and things to organize around – in particular educational enrichment and school conditions. The work of Child First also provides legitimacy and a stable constituency for BUILD. To this point, the mayor or a councilmember could ask in

the midst of a protest, ‘do you live in the district?’, and all BUILD would have to do is point to the neighborhood schools with which they are in relationship.

Nevertheless, the challenges inherent to organizing remain constant over time. While politicians tend to believe in “divide and conquer” (in reference to black church support), BUILD seeks to unite churches so that all – as opposed to a select few – benefit. As far as Reckling is concerned, mayors come and go, so her attitude is “see me now or see me later...you don’t have to like us, we don’t have to like you”. This is consistent with the statement by Arnie Graf that “BUILD is like an elephant...long memory...at some point the mayor will need us.” The overall point is that regardless of personal inclinations, it is in the mutual interest of BUILD and city hall for the two to work together. BUILD has a track record of voter turnout and afterschool education which are useful to any regime; BUILD understands quid pro quo and shares credit, but requires acknowledgement.

Additionally, changes in church membership – spatial and class distinctions – have an impact on the ability to organize around neighborhood-level concerns. Congregants may go to church in the city but live in the county; over time they become more connected to suburban neighborhoods. Therefore, BUILD seeks to go beyond the walls of the church. In order to garner depth in the community, the cost is primarily that of BUILD organizer time. For Child First to expand there is a financial cost (approximately \$100,000 – \$1000 per student – needed to run the program in each school) as well as maintaining funding to support what already exists. Leadership in BUILD is stretched thin; while there is clergy participation, there are



more challenges in connecting with lay people, which is why Child First is so critical to the organization's survival.

Lottie Sneed is a current BUILD organizer who has also worked with WIN in the past. A graduate of Duke Divinity School, Sneed believes in “provocative preaching”; this requires having a mission outside of the church, which builds both the community and the church. One consistent challenge for organizers is that they must prove themselves – knowing they will be viewed with suspicion they must be unwavering to win people over. Sneed makes that point that the availability of more resources in Washington provides the ability to shift resources. Conversely, there is not the same level of wealth in Baltimore, where there is an abundance of legitimate needs. Since organizations cannot solve every existing problem, the most prudent approach is tackling pieces and trying to make difference where feasible. In Baltimore, the school piece is not separate from the central organization, as schools are used as a base to mobilize churches and train parent leaders. Baltimore is a city with a larger population, but fewer resources, so the question becomes “what can you get?” Over time, people have been disappointed so much in Baltimore that they are very disillusioned, which often translates to lower expectations.

This view is also held by Coleman Milling, a current WIN organizer who has also worked BUILD in the past, and describes an “entrenched non-progressive attitude in Baltimore.” Milling contends that the city dropped the ball on recreation and schools in the 1980s and 90s and is now only beginning to address it; this is what necessitated BUILD's current, ‘save our kids/ save our city’ campaign. Also, in his view, the city council in the District has greater power and is more professional than

that of Baltimore, which may provide a greater avenue for political maneuvering. Milling also mentions that WIN has a level of visibility and diversity which provides strength; the affiliate also has a depth of clergy and a more dues paying base which is somewhat in contrast to BUILD. WIN has a full-time staff of four and is comprised of about 45 churches whose membership dues are anywhere from \$500 to \$10,000, depending on the size and wealth of the church. For WIN, affordable housing is at the top of the agenda, followed by supportive housing and youth investment (libraries and recreation centers).

In Washington, WIN co-chair Lionel Edmonds is a pastor of Mount Lebanon Baptist Church, one of the affiliate's member churches. He is one of the Howard University Divinity School-affiliated pastors that Arnie Graf met with to get WIN off the ground and has been a co-chair essentially since the beginning. Edmonds has been active in the NAACP and Urban League, which to him have a significant degree of hierarchy and bureaucracy, whereas he sees the need for a more immediate impact. Edmonds' philosophy of ministry is that "spiritual formation leads to social transformation"; in other words, the message preached in the church should lead to action outside of its walls. In his view, the IAF is the best vehicle to express this point of view and structure for the world. Above all, an individual cannot do what an institution can, which is why the IAF model works. However, Edmonds makes the point that dues from member churches are not enough, and affiliates must create revenue producing vehicles to stay viable. His belief is that in the long run, "WIN must become economically independent and can't rely (solely) on dues and grants".

There are particular attributes of WIN churches that make the affiliate successful. The organization is comprised of ministers with traditional theological/seminary training whose view of ministry has a social responsibility; also these pastors are comfortable with collective leadership rather than an individualistic model seemingly more compatible to the mega church model. Timing is also very important as WIN's origin corresponded with the fortuitous convergence of issues and opportunities. In reference to Washington D.C. bearing the title of the "Murder Capital" during the crack epidemic in the 1990s, Edmonds commented that an organization "can't let a good crisis go to waste." On the heels of well publicized conditions of crime and poverty, WIN's 1996 founding rally was attended by 2000 people, representing 20-30 organizations focusing on affordable housing, after school programs, jobs, and community policing.

At the outset, WIN fought with the Control Board, who in Edmonds' words, "thought they were on a slave plantation. This was a slap in the face to the dignity of the District and cracked your psyche. It was an open sore that never healed – a daily reminder of the loss of freedom. If you vote for people, you want to see them be able to govern and wield power. Who do you hold accountable? With a Control Board with marching orders from Congress...WIN had to go to Congress folk with whom its sister organizations had relationships." In IAF organizing, if politicians agree to the agenda, they must be held accountable. Edmonds added, "But how can you make them accountable, if you don't sit across the table from them?" Thus, in order to hold elected officials accountable, it is critical for grassroots organizations to be in relationship with the governing regime. It is also well understood that politicians

understand money and votes. During 1998 mayoral election, WIN's sign up and take charge campaign lined up politicians and mobilized 30 churches; 75,000 scorecards on agenda were handed out over the city. After a session where Councilman Kevin Chavous, an unsuccessful candidate for mayor took a negative position on a WIN agenda item, Marion Barry was reported to have said to him, "I told you not to mess with those WIN people."

According to Edmonds, once WIN began functioning, "everybody got baptized" and they were "holding politicians' feet to the fire." This meant bringing people to the city council for actions and leaving when the mayor would show up late for meetings. WIN organizer Tim Tilghman also makes the point that in order to organize for power, communities must be able to speak to those in positions of power; in some neighborhoods this meant beginning by contacting District government regarding stoplights and crosswalks. This is consistent with the estimation that small things lead to bigger things. Similarly, as an organization, WIN began by focusing on improvements at schools and libraries before expanding its scope to affordable housing. It took four years before WIN began to see significant results.

The organization "planted seeds years ago and nature took its course...seeds took root in the 1990s and are now bearing fruit now." By the time of negotiations regarding the baseball stadium, WIN had some political capital and was able to procure benefits for District neighborhoods. It must be noted that there are stages in relationships and many steps before an action. WIN has never really had to "go there" as agreements were often made before having to call out politicians. The ability to

affect turnout is a threat, because “such large numbers don’t just disappear and they vote.” For change to occur, organized citizens must create political will, then things such as affordable housing will be accomplished. In this realm the city holds many of the cards – for affordable housing it has to assemble land, financing, etc. “We’re not experts on finance, but we are experts on political will. If you have the political will, there will be affordable housing.” WIN also collaborates with socially conscious developers who may be willing to forgo some level of profit to make a project feasible.

Though collaboration is desired, IAF affiliates specifically make a point to not become co-opted by the governing regime. As Edmonds commented, “You want to be in the room – at the table, but not in the bedroom – no pillow talk.” Through collaboration with DC government, WIN has negotiated \$1 billion for neighborhood development; however to determine how and where to spend, it is necessary to have a presence in the community. Additionally, to be legitimate in the eyes of the regime, an affiliate “can’t be perceived as a black or white, poor or middle class organization, but must be a balance.” When Tilghman began in 2000, to him WIN seemed like a white middle class organization because of its initial strength in the wealthier northwest portion of the city. Over time, the organizers have carved out solid bases in each ward, including less affluent neighborhoods east of the river. This speaks to the importance of non-exclusionary (racially and economically diverse) organizing.

Also, confrontational strategies are outdated. As recounted by Edmonds, on one occasion WIN was trying to schedule a meeting with Council President Vincent Gray when two (young, white, female) organizers approached him exclaiming “why

won't you meet with us!" This approach was not effective and turned Gray off, but when two black male organizers approached him more respectfully and conversed, a relationship was formed. To this point, Edmonds contends that in order to be more effective, the IAF must diversify national staff – this also means more black male organizers; an emphasis on recruiting, hiring, training, and redesigning the training model.

### Conclusion

Through interviews with organizers and clergy leaders of BUILD and WIN, I have gained a nuanced understanding of the particularities of each IAF affiliate. Through this research, I am able to compare and contrast the structure and composition of both organizations. In this regard, one primary truth remains – local conditions dictate strategy. A smaller economic pie means that there are limited resources to be dedicated in all areas; in particular, this disproportionately affects expenditures on what is categorized as redistribution or social programming. This speaks to different realities (local conditions and issues) which necessitate different approaches (strategies). One of the difficulties of organizing in a largely poor city such as Baltimore is that it is hard to address the myriad of basic needs. It is quite difficult to get individuals in communities to see the importance of collective action in the political realm when their own individual misery is so encompassing. In this regard, the prospect of going to city hall to protest or lobbying at the state capital can seem far removed from securing basic necessities such as food, clothing and shelter.

Baltimore has a larger and lower income population, less municipal money, and a lower number of pastors (smaller leadership pool and less turn-over). While

BUILD has a longer track record which has engendered both collaboration and animosity, without a large clergy pool to pull from, BUILD utilizes Child First to build membership. The fact that this poor population is trapped in a struggling school system provides a ready-made issue and mobilizable base. BUILD's strongest constituency is Child First; and out of necessity, there is no real separation between the two entities. Child First has a larger staff and more organizers than BUILD itself; this works for the organization as the schools, parents, and youth provide a significant membership recruitment base.

Washington has smaller and higher income population, more local revenue, and a greater diversity of pastors (larger leadership pool and more turn-over). WIN's strength is its larger number of churches (institutions = organized people) and its larger dues paying membership (organized money). Moreover, the more politicized environment of Washington places political action closer to the forefront. Although there is stark poverty in the District, the ability to organize is assisted by pastors who are more politically active and vocal. Additionally, the recent housing boom has been beneficial as proceeds from transfer (property) taxes may be used to fund agenda items. For WIN, neighborhood investment (i.e., affordable housing) to counterbalance downtown development has been the most salient agenda item and has contributed to the growth of the organization.

Additionally, as these are both majority black cities with African Americans at the helm, it might be controversial to assert that black regimes are more responsive to white constituencies, but it becomes easier to posit in light of the tendency for white neighborhoods to be wealthier than black ones. We also know that education and

income are correlated with voter turnout and political efficacy; thus more affluent communities provide valuable resources to a regime (votes and taxes) and therefore their voices are more often heard, commanding attention and city services (see Massey and Denton 1993). My theory of *Non-Exclusionary Organizing* (NEO) holds that organizing efforts that include a broad base of constituents/supporters (diversity of race and wealth) are more likely to sustain challenges from urban regimes. This is because universal approaches embody greater political strength than programs targeted solely at low-income or minority populations. Further, integrated organizations are able to make the case that benefits are spread across a broad section of the population. In this way, NEO may insulate an organization from government opposition and potential white backlash – which is extremely important for distribution of resources.

Non-exclusionary organizing is seen in the example of WIN – a truly multiracial, interdenominational organization. WIN has clearly mastered NEO, whereas demographic and political realities make this difficult for BUILD to do; Washington has gentrified, while Baltimore is still largely ghettoized (with pockets of white wealth). For the most part, BUILD is primarily black and Protestant (with some Catholic member churches). Furthermore, the lack of a sizable middle class in Baltimore makes it difficult to forge inter-class connections; middle class church goers (potential leaders) worship in poor neighborhoods, but may live in suburban/middle class neighborhoods and are therefore not as invested in conditions associated with urban poverty. Washington, on the other hand, has a significant



middle class population within the city, in addition to a significant population of the severely marginalized.

Ultimately it is not only a matter of needing to connect isolated actors with more powerful and broadly networked ones; effective community-building work must also aim to enable impoverished neighborhood residents to change the processes that lead to a status of isolation. Some have argued that we are witnessing in cities new forms of representation and a broader incorporation of minority interests into policy making and policy implementation (Ferman 1996, Hula, Jackson, and Orr 1997, Fraser et al 2003, Burns 2006). The IAF is attempting to build a new politics and a new local economics; it is accomplishing this by organizing and mobilizing the very people who are left out of politics as practiced today (Boyte 2004).

Although one of the goals of the IAF is to identify leaders and train members of marginalized communities how to function in the political realm, this process may be easier when a foundation has been previously established. To this end, having a middle class contingent is valuable, as it is extremely difficult to organize the poorest of the poor. The extremely impoverished lack economic resources and have low political efficacy, whereas the middle class is able to rely on connections to institutions that are able to wield influence/power. Therefore a mix of the middle class (property owners, tax payers) and poor (transient/renters, service users) is ultimately desirable.

## Chapter 7: Organizing Outcomes

### Introduction

*“However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results.”*

The quote above is attributed to Winston Churchill and can be applied to a variety of circumstances – in this case local politics. Normatively speaking, community organizing is valuable because it opens up the democratic process, making it accessible to the heretofore unengaged. While governments tend to be top down, organizers stress the bottom up; in order for the political system to be effective these two orientations must balance one another. There are specific roles for the government and for citizens – government is responsible for managing bureaucracy and implementing public policies, while communities are responsible for making sure that their issues are recognized by the government. For local democracy to thrive these elements of governance need not, and must not be seen as mutually exclusive; rather this relationship should form a natural feedback loop essential for responsiveness and accountability.

In this way, outcomes can be achieved by putting public pressure on the governing regime to live up to promises made during or after an election season. Thus, high profile public fights between organizations and regimes can lead to significant city-wide benefits. Organizational successes (outcomes) are related to mayoral leadership, but not necessarily dependent upon it. Though some mayors may be more amenable to collaboration than others, the varying types of mayoral regimes

do not completely account for the variance in outcomes. To assume that the success of community organizing is totally dependent on the mayor would be to accept a top-down view; to claim that all power lies in the community would support a bottom-up view. In my estimation, an either/or formulation is incorrect; in reality, there are elements of both top-down and bottom-up processes at work in local governance. Hence, policy outcomes are based on this two-way relationship between urban executives and grassroots organizations. Additionally, the potential success of organizing campaigns is also shaped by local economic constraints.

Each organization has had numerous victories over the years and chronicling each of them in detail would be a project unto itself. Instead, this chapter will focus on the largest, most recent victories by each organization, particularly in the realm of housing. The highlighted outcomes are the culmination of years of work – community organizing and government collaboration – and have come as result of pushing for affordable housing in exchange for downtown development. The ability to extract community benefits from local government speaks to how the relationship between these organizations and local regimes has evolved to the point where tangible results can be seen. Although these victories may be current, previous mayoral administrations have also played a part in more recent developments. Ultimately, the expected level of collaboration given the mayoral typology is supported by the available evidence.

### *BUILD in Baltimore*

BUILD's track record of housing advocacy began in the late 1980s with the Nehemiah Housing Opportunity Program. This federal program enacted by Congress

in 1988, authorizes the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to make grants to nonprofit organizations to enable them to provide loans to low-income families for the purchase of newly constructed or substantially rehabilitated houses. The Nehemiah program, named for the Hebrew leader who organized the rebuilding of Jerusalem, was created to permit massive intervention in inner-city neighborhoods, and was made available only to cities proposing a project with a scale large enough to make a significant impact. The first Nehemiah Project was conceived by the East Brooklyn Congregations (EBC), an IAF affiliate in New York.

In 1988, over eight hundred BUILD members, Mayor Schmoke, Governor Schaefer, Senators, Mikulski and Sarbanes, Representatives Mfume and Cardin, and scores of religious and lay leaders gathered to announce a collaboration among BUILD, the city, state, and federal governments, and the Enterprise Foundation. BUILD raised \$2.2 million toward the development of 300 homes for low- and moderate-income families. Mayor Schmoke committed \$11 million in land, site clearance, and municipal services; Governor Schaefer promised \$11 million in low-interest mortgage financing (McDougall 1993). In early 1989, more than 4.2 million was awarded to the Nehemiah partnership by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). With its partner Enterprise Homes, BUILD is the largest nonprofit developer of lower-income owner-occupied housing in Baltimore. As of today, BUILD and Enterprise have helped to develop more than 767 Nehemiah homes (Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development 2007).

In addition to recognizing the need for neighborhood revitalization, BUILD has also strived to supplement Baltimore's struggling public school system.

According to BUILD's documentation, during the 1995 mayoral campaign, Kurt Schmoke endorsed BUILD's proposal for Child First, and after the election led the charge to create the authority. Within six months after the election, the state passed legislation authorizing the Child First Authority. Since its inception, Child First has grown from seven to thirteen schools, providing academic, cultural and recreational enrichment to more than a thousand students each year. During its history, Child First has leveraged \$10 million for after-school programs and has become the leading recipient of city afterschool funds. BUILD has organized parents to secure nearly \$500,000 in state funding every year since 1998 (Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development 2007). Child First's growing constituency lends numerical and institutional strength for BUILD which has been critical in subsequent organizing campaigns.

In 2005, BUILD decided to fight plans for a downtown convention center hotel unless the city funded the redevelopment of blighted neighborhoods. Mayor Martin O'Malley, along with city development and tourism officials, believed that Baltimore needed a convention center hotel to revive its sagging convention business. The plan was for the city to develop and own the 752-room Hilton, which would be paid for with \$305 million in city revenue bonds. Ministers with BUILD contrasted the thriving Inner Harbor area with Baltimore's struggling neighborhoods and demanded equity. "It looks like a tale of two cities," said the Rev. Marshall Prentice of Zion Baptist Church. "The city they see and the city we see. ... In their city, they want one hotel after another after another. We say, stop seeing hotels and start seeing what we see. We're not asking for a handout," Prentice said. "We're asking for an

investment. ... We just want the same respect that is given downtown uptown” (Rosen 2005). Subsequently, BUILD protested at city hall during a council hearing on the proposed hotel.

In particular, BUILD scorned Council President Sheila Dixon who, according to the group, reneged on a campaign promise to dedicate \$50 million for redevelopment efforts in struggling neighborhoods. BUILD says that Dixon made a campaign promise in 2003 that she would deliver the funds in city-revenue bonds for the construction of affordable-housing units in Baltimore. Two years later, the group accused her of abandoning her pledge to invest in needy neighborhoods in favor of the ritzy hotel. BUILD says she publicly promised twice during her 2003 campaign to sponsor a \$50 million non-revenue bond that would help groups like BUILD develop and construct affordable housing in the city. But BUILD’s lead organizer Rob English said Dixon had not delivered, and he believed that with a \$305 million hotel bond on the City Council agenda, Dixon had other priorities. Carol Reckling, director of Child First called the Inner Harbor “an insatiable beast,” always wanting more. “They say if we only had this one thing it would be better. Then we build it and it’s the next thing and the next thing,” she said. “And look where we are, all these boarded-up homes” (Rosen 2005)

Ultimately, BUILD’s efforts were successful and the Affordable Housing Trust Fund was created in 2005 to provide homes for the poor and the working class in Baltimore. The fund was created as part of a deal struck by then-Mayor Martin O’Malley and then-City Council President Sheila Dixon to win support for a city-owned hotel adjacent to the Baltimore Convention Center. BUILD could not stop the

hotel, but organized 10 out of 15 votes on the city council to invest in neighborhoods beyond the hotel. When O'Malley and Dixon saw they did not have the votes on the council to support the project, they structured a \$59 million bond bill to rebuild blighted neighborhoods. The final vote was 9-6 and several council members voted for the hotel only after they were assured of the \$59 million housing fund. Legislation that created the fund says it should be used for essentially three purposes: acquisition and demolition of property; planning, preservation, rehabilitation and development of economically diverse housing in city neighborhoods; and rental payment and home purchase assistance for eligible households.

Currently, the Housing Authority of Baltimore City is using a significant majority of the \$59 million fund to tear down 15 public housing sites across the city. Housing Commissioner Paul Graziano defended using the money to demolish more than 1,500 housing units, saying the sites are being prepared for redevelopment. But critics say that the new housing is years away, if it materializes at all, and that the loss of housing units is inexcusable when 20,000 households are on a city waiting list for housing and specific redevelopment plans are lacking. City Council President Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, who supported the convention center hotel deal, said demolition is an appropriate use of the affordable housing money.

At six of the sites, plans are in place for the construction of 3,700 new mixed-income housing units. Nearly half of the units would be affordable or low-income housing. According to newspaper accounts, Graziano could not say how much of the \$59 million is going toward demolition, but he acknowledged that it will be a majority of the fund. "There will be plans for all of them eventually," he said. The

first task is to eliminate blighted, abandoned properties that are a drain on neighborhoods, and planning will come after that. “There’s no reason to leave blighted and largely, if not totally, vacant housing sitting there,” Graziano said. “So, if we can do demolition work in advance, we have eliminated blight and made a site ready for rapid redevelopment once we have adopted a plan and selected a developer.” Graziano called it “part of a citywide blight elimination effort” (Kiehl 2007).

As BUILD was the primary advocate for the creation of the fund, the organization’s lead organizer, Rob English, said the fund is being used as the group expected. He said developers are loath to spend money preparing sites for projects, so demolition is an acceptable use for the affordable housing fund. “That was the first piece of the puzzle,” English said. “The second piece is to create a plan to rebuild on that land. And we trust the city to do just that.” He said eliminating blight is a proper use of the money. “If that land sits for two years as the community develops a plan, that’s better than this decaying mess that’s been there for years” (Kiehl 2007).

To this end, BUILD is responsible for assembling the first new houses in the Oliver neighborhood in half a century. In July 2008, Governor Martin O’Malley, Senator Barbara Mikulski, Mayor Sheila Dixon, and State Housing Secretary Raymond Skinner joined representatives from BUILD and The Reinvestment Fund (TRF) at a housewarming celebration for new residents of Preston Place in the Oliver neighborhood. This East Baltimore neighborhood has been a blighted community, where one survey put the vacancy rate at 44 percent and where drugs and crime have chased out most of the middle class. In this depressed community where entire blocks



have been abandoned, the landscape is undergoing a significant change as the first ten of 122 new and rehabbed homes were built in the summer of 2008.

Preston Place is the product of a partnership between BUILD and TRF, with support from city and state government. The project began in 2001 when BUILD approached the city to help reclaim abandoned properties around Oliver, and secured \$1.2 million to acquire 200 properties. Initially, Mayor O'Malley offered \$400,000 to demolish old homes, but the group, hoping to bankroll a longer-term plan that includes other neighborhoods, insisted on millions. In 2007 the city, under Mayor Dixon, committed \$1.2 million in HOME Funds to underwrite the cost of developing 40 homeownership units. Additionally, the Department of Housing and Community Development acquired and delivered the properties in coordination with TRF. The Department of Housing and Community Development contributed \$1.55 million to help acquire property and clear the land and \$1.65 million to subsidize the construction of the homes to keep the costs down. "This is really the beginning of a major transformation and revitalization of the community," said Baltimore City Housing Commissioner Paul Graziano (Kiehl 2008).

Preston Place is the first redevelopment project in BUILD and TRF's revitalization plan for the Oliver community and will feature 122 affordable homeownership units. To lead organizer Rob English, "it's instant impact...a radical transformation for the Oliver community and the people living here." All of the houses, to be sold to single-family homeowners, will be built in a six-square-block area just north of Johns Hopkins Hospital and the new east-side biopark. Oliver hopes to build on the success of that development and by concentrating the new homes in

the core of the neighborhood, the hope is that the renewal will spread outward through the entire area.

Once a solidly middle-class community, Oliver – like so many city neighborhoods – saw its core residents flee for the suburbs as well as an influx of drug activity. Oliver hit bottom in 2002, when a firebombing killed seven members of the Dawson family, who had battled the dealers on their block. The tragedy underscored the need for a comprehensive plan to rebuild the Oliver community and reclaim the neighborhood from violence and crime. BUILD partnered with TRF to form TRF Development Partners and crafted a revitalization strategy for the area to acquire and assemble underdeveloped real estate. Galvanized by the tragedy, churches and activists in the neighborhood drew up a plan to rebuild Oliver, with BUILD raising money to acquire vacant houses and assemble land for new development.

In discussing the partnership with BUILD and TRF, Mayor Dixon commented “We are celebrating the beginning of yet another project to create affordable homeownership on the East side...We know that expanded home-ownership in Baltimore is one of the keys to continuing the progress we’ve made in the last several years” (City of Baltimore 2007). “Often we talk about partnerships ... but this is a true example of it,” Mayor Sheila Dixon said. “What we need to say to people in this community that are skeptical ... is be patient. Feel the spirit of all these organizations working together” (Cahall 2008). The state has invested more than \$10 million in the project, federal contributions have exceeded \$800,000 and the city has helped the BUILD-TRF partnership by reclaiming titles on vacant property.

The homes are being built and sold by Philadelphia-based TRF Development Partners, a nonprofit that specializes in reviving inner-city neighborhoods. The company raised the \$10 million in capital needed to get the project started, promising investors a 2 percent return. The Oliver project will include 75 new homes, selling for about \$139,000 each, and 47 rehabbed homes at about \$99,000 each. The development has staggered price points, making affordable housing available to families ranging from 48 percent to 80 percent of Baltimore's Area Median Income. The three-bedroom, energy-efficient homes are subsidized to keep mortgages at \$140,000 for families with annual incomes of \$35,000 to \$60,000. "The State of Maryland has really understood what it takes to make affordable housing work and bring back vitality to Baltimore's neighborhoods. The State joined with many private investors to provide TRFDP with the flexible capital needed to redevelop while at the same time making a mortgage commitment to homeowners during this uncertain credit market," says Sean Closkey, President of TRF Development Partners (Office of the Governor of Maryland 2008).

At the housewarming celebration in July, 2008, now Governor O'Malley said, "I am proud to stand with all of you and celebrate Preston Place, another important step towards the revitalization of this community. We are committed to helping the people of Oliver and the surrounding areas maximize their full potential as strong, sustainable communities" (Office of the Governor of Maryland 2008). Through the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), the State provided \$750,000 to TRF Development Partners for strategic demolition in the neighborhood and development of Preston Place. DHCD will also provide mortgage assistance to

prospective Preston Place homebuyers through the Maryland Mortgage Program (MMP). Preston Place's MMP borrowers can also access down payment and closing cost assistance through DHCD's Down payment and Settlement Expense Loan Program (DSELP). With the DSELP commitment, combined with MMP mortgages and fund provided for acquisition and demolition, the state has invested over \$10 million in Preston Place (Office of the Governor of Maryland 2008).

Speakers at the ceremony commemorating the new housing recalled Angela Dawson, an Oliver community activist who was killed along with her five children in 2002 when a drug dealer set fire to their home in retaliation for her efforts. O'Malley and BUILD Co-Chairman Bishop Douglas Miles said Oliver revitalization efforts were already under way at the time, but believed the tragedy gave the project a new urgency. "That tragedy was like our Alamo," O'Malley said. "Rescuing good from evil ... is something that's ingrained in the people of our city. There are very few cities and states that would have triumphed from that tragedy" (Cahall 2008). Preston Place and the revitalization of the Oliver community will be supported by additional redevelopment efforts in surrounding areas in Baltimore City. These efforts include: East Baltimore Development, Inc.'s activities, which will strengthen the Oliver community's eastern border; and the East Baltimore Biotech Park, located adjacent to Johns Hopkins Hospital, featuring 22 acres of mixed use development and up to 8,000 jobs. And with Hopkins employees being able to receive a \$17,000 tax credit for purchasing a home, the potential for gentrification is within sight. But given its prime location near ongoing development and its history of activism and strong churches, Oliver is also primed for revival – with the city as a partner.

WIN in Washington

In the spring and early summer of 1998, WIN leaders collected signatures of 20,000 voters who supported WIN's agenda of community policing, homeownership, universal after-school programs, and living wage jobs for District residents. In July and October of that year, WIN leaders conducted accountability sessions with all of the mayoral candidates, seeking public commitments to WIN's agenda. With information from each candidate, WIN leaders distributed 40,000 voter information cards during the summer and 60,000 in the fall informing citizens of the mayoral candidates' responses to the agenda. According to WIN, Anthony Williams, the eventual winner, was the only candidate to publicly commit to the group's full agenda.

In November 2000, WIN leaders gathered with Delegate Eleanor Holmes-Norton, Mayor Williams and religious leaders from key denominations in the city to break ground for 147 Nehemiah affordable homes at the old Fort Dupont public housing site, the first of 1,000 affordable homes pledged to be built by the Williams administration in partnership with WIN. Construction began in 2002, and leaders assembled in September 2003 for the ribbon-cutting at Dupont Commons Nehemiah. At this affordable housing development, WIN secured 147 contracts for first time homeowners with incomes between \$15,000 and \$60,000. In December 2003, the first owners moved in, and the last round of new owners came in February 2005. After being elected, Williams helped WIN build these townhouses for first-time buyers, in addition to preventing foreclosure on 1,000 units of subsidized housing and pressed the city to require contractors for city projects to train and hire DC residents.

In December 2002, Mayor Williams pledged before 600 WIN leaders to create the \$200 Million Neighborhood Investment Fund and to start immediately to address neighborhood blight, particularly east of the river in Wards 7 and 8. At the same time, there was much excitement when Major League Baseball returned to the Washington after 34 years. But its arrival ignited strong feelings in the city, particularly in communities east of the Anacostia River that have largely felt disconnected from the renaissance experienced in the rest of the District. The push for a baseball team prompted the group to seek a huge down payment on the promised investment in neighborhoods. In June 2003, 75 clergy and lay leaders from WIN attended the DC Council's Finance and Revenue Committee hearing to demand that the council and mayor take action on Bill 15104 – "DC Neighborhood Economic Development and Investment Amendment Act of 2003" – before taking action on baseball financing legislation (Washington Interfaith Network 2003).

The bill would raise at least \$100 million to capitalize the \$200 Million Neighborhood Revitalization Fund called for by WIN; the bill was also supported by 9 council members. Supporters on the council included the two leading candidates for mayor in the next election – Linda Cropp and Adrian Fenty; this is significant as Williams decided not to seek reelection and his legacy in the District would be tied to the stadium deal. WIN's position was that the mayor had taken no action in the targeted WIN neighborhoods because he was too busy promoting a public financing scheme to lure the Montreal Expos to Washington. At a press conference, WIN clergy announced their Neighborhoods First Campaign to hold up action on baseball until

the neighborhoods received equivalent resources for rebuilding (Washington Interfaith Network 2003).

Mayor Anthony Williams' proposed financing package for a \$440 million baseball park in Southeast Washington included a bond issue, a sales tax on in-stadium purchases and a new tax on city businesses that take in \$3 million or more a year. The proposal was controversial to leaders of the faith community who know the city's human needs firsthand. Many were happy to see baseball coming to the nation's capital, but they did not want resources diverted from the city's other responsibilities, such as educating its young, caring for its sick and uplifting its needy.

Rev. Lionel Edmonds of WIN said the group had "conversations with [D.C. Council] people to ensure that there is an equal investment in neighborhood funding compared with the baseball stadium. If you're going to put \$500 million into baseball, you're going to put \$500 million into neighborhoods. . . . There ought to be a dollar-for-dollar match," said Edmonds (Murphy 2004). The Rev. Joseph Wayne Daniels, senior pastor at Emory United Methodist in Northwest, said that although "there is a lot of excitement" about baseball's arrival, "we got schools falling apart . . . we got marching bands in high schools that can't even afford new uniforms . . . and here we are investing \$400 million in a baseball team. . . . There is great anger in churches that our values are misplaced, our priorities are misplaced" (Murphy 2004).

The Rev. Roger Gench, pastor of New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Northwest wanted equivalency. "If the mayor can propose a tax on business to go for a stadium, why couldn't he do the same thing for low-income housing?" he asked. The bottom line, he said, is how the economic perks get spread around: "Baseball is a

great thing, but it's got to benefit everyone, not just a few people" (Murphy 2004). The pastor of 19th Street Baptist Church in Northwest, the Rev. Derrick Harkins, said that the city must invest in human capital, by funding education, street safety and health care. "I've just never seen from the mayor's office or, for that matter, the business community . . . the collective will to address those issues," Harkins said. "If you had said you're going to infuse the public school system with \$400 million, just imagine what you could begin to talk about" (Murphy 2004). The most ambitious project in WIN's history was the effort to mobilize its member congregations to urge the city to invest \$1 billion in neighborhoods for such projects as parks, recreation centers, computer laboratories and sidewalks.

The Neighborhood Investment Fund (NIF) is a pot of money set up to appease the Washington Interfaith Network and other activists during ballpark negotiations in 2004. The NIF, which is funded with up to \$10 million yearly from personal property tax revenue, was intended to fund revitalization projects in a dozen underserved neighborhoods through a rigorous planning process. In January 2004, the Neighborhood Investment Act created a \$100 million fund secured by dedicating 15% of the revenue from the personal property tax on businesses for 12 target neighborhoods where WIN member institutions organized. In March 2004, WIN secured the next \$100 million for neighborhoods through tax increment financing and announced WIN's new goal, \$1 billion for Neighborhoods First, which would be achieved by capturing \$500 million in tax increment financing revenue from the city's projected \$8 billion investment in the Anacostia Waterfront Development Initiative (Washington Interfaith Network 2007).



In December 2004, after two years of organizing in the community and garnering leverage at the legislative level, WIN – through the DC Council – compelled Mayor Williams to include a \$450 million Community Benefits Fund in a bill to fund the construction of a new baseball stadium on the Anacostia waterfront – keeping the commitment to WIN to make an equivalent investment in the neighborhoods. The commitment to Neighborhoods First included in the bill was the creation of a \$450 million fund capitalized by revenues from a tax increment financing district in the area surrounding the stadium. The revenue is supposed to be dedicated to affordable housing, neighborhood retail, libraries, other public facilities, infrastructure repairs and upgrades in the city’s poorest neighborhoods.

“We wanted baseball not just for the sake of baseball,” Anthony Williams told 600 people at a WIN gathering. “Our challenge is to put our arms together and lift up all parts of our city” (Pierre 2005). Despite the initial grievances and skepticism regarding the stadium deal, some consider Williams an ally who made good on his promises. “We have to give credit where it's due,” said the Rev. Marcus Turner, the pastor at Beulah Baptist. “The mayor has been working hard” (Pierre 2005). Mayor Williams pledged to start putting money into a \$450 million community investment fund, which was tied to the proposed new baseball stadium, three to five years earlier than planned. The fund was not expected to start producing benefits until 2011 at the earliest. But according to Williams, there was enough private investment in the proposed site to allow the city to free up money in its budget so it could start building up the fund earlier than anticipated; the money began flowing at the start of the 2008

season, when the new stadium opened. However, with construction delays and cost overruns, the price tag for the stadium eventually ballooned to \$611 million.

At a WIN candidate forum in 2006, the leading candidates for mayor pledged to make social justice for children and the poor their top priority in office, vowing to spend about \$1 billion on neighborhood redevelopment, youth services and 14,000 units of affordable housing. In front of more than 800 coalition members, the candidates promised to pay for those programs without raising taxes by managing existing city funds more efficiently and by generating cash from development projects. Council member Adrian Fenty pledged to find \$350 million in “new dedicated revenue” for such youth services as libraries, recreation centers and extracurricular activities in public schools. “I commit to you that I’m going to raise the bar,” Fenty said, explaining that the city’s housing production trust fund and its new school modernization fund are both being bankrolled with existing tax revenue. “We’ll take that \$7.4 billion budget we have and make sure the money goes to the priorities that you and the rest of my constituents want it to go to” (Montgomery and Woodlee 2006).

Each candidate was asked to respond to three questions: would they dedicate an additional \$500 million to neighborhoods, \$350 million to youth services and at least \$117 million a year for affordable housing? All of their answers were yes and the candidates also promised to meet with leaders of WIN at a later date to lay out more detailed plans for accomplishing their goals. In the meantime, the organization, which did not endorse a candidate, put more than 400 election workers on the streets to educate voters about the candidates’ commitments and to make sure they voted in

the Democratic primary. “Others have come before us, and they said they would put neighborhoods first, and it didn’t really happen,” the Rev. Christine Wiley of Covenant Baptist Church told the crowd. “Read my lips. We are aware of the promises in the past that were made and not kept. We’re going to hold you accountable” (Montgomery and Woodlee 2006).

In 2009, Mayor Fenty proposed taking \$11.6 million from the NIF and spreading it to various places around the government. Much of it, under the proposal, is to stay under the control of the deputy mayor for planning and economic development. Up to \$10 million annually from personal property taxes goes into the Neighborhood Investment Fund which was created to improve the city’s neglected neighborhoods. However, the fund is being divided among several agencies and funneled to big-budget nonprofits such as the Kennedy Center in Mayor Fenty’s new proposed spending plan. Ed Lazere of the D.C. Fiscal Policy Institute, informed of the mayor’s moves, expresses some concern: “It seems like they’re using the [NIF] in part just to plug holes in the mayor’s budget....In some ways, it’s not a huge problem [that they’re not following the NIF process]...but it seems like some of these things aren’t in keeping with the spirit of the law, which is to fund neighborhood projects” (DeBonis 2009).

By law, the office of the deputy mayor for planning and economic development is supposed to gather community input before deciding how to use the fund, which will have more than \$17 million in 2010, according to the budget. In the past, community groups have jockeyed for the money after city officials have met with leaders in targeted neighborhoods spread across the city. But according to recent

newspaper accounts, some council members say that has not happened during the most recent budget cycle. “This particular budget, they’ve eliminated the whole process of coming to the community with a spending plan. They just want to give the money to who they want to give the money to,” said Council member Kwame Brown. “It’s just another way to do earmarks” (Stewart 2009).

Under the proposed budget, only \$5.4 million of the \$17 million will be set aside for neighborhood groups. About \$1.6 million will be transferred to the Commission on Arts and Humanities and distributed through grants of mostly \$250,000 to the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Washington National Opera, the D.C. Jewish Community Center and other groups, all based in Northwest. Brown, chairman of the Committee on Economic Development, said that the groups may be “worthy” but that he is disappointed with the process and how some remaining funds could be used under the plan. A spokesman for the deputy mayor’s office, said that there was an error in the budget book and that more money will be awarded to community-based projects than is currently reflected in the document. The spokesman said that the budget is actually less than \$17 million and that the deputy mayor’s office will award \$11.8 million to neighborhood groups (Stewart 2009).

### *Assessment of Outcomes*

As a result of the work of BUILD and WIN, neglected portions of the city have received increased attention and funds have been dedicated toward neighborhood revitalization. In both cities, the major vehicle for achieving community benefits has been to connect such requests with support for development

projects. In the midst of grand development plans sponsored by mayoral administrations, these organizations bring additional considerations to the table that would not ordinarily be considered. In essence they use such plans as opportunities to get community/neighborhood-based agendas on the table. In Baltimore, the \$59 million Housing Trust Fund (HTF) was secured as a result of BUILD's activity concerning a new convention center hotel. In Washington, the \$1 billion Neighborhood Investment Fund (NIF) was secured as a result of WIN's position concerning a new baseball stadium.

The two organizations engage in public political battles with mayors and city councils and have varying degrees of success in achieving stated agenda items. And while each mayor has defining characteristics and is the unique product of timing and local conditions, there is also a degree of overlap between mayoral regimes. Consequently, outcomes are not necessarily the result of one administration, but rather represent a point in a continuum of events. There is a long and storied history regarding how these things came to pass as past efforts and relationships contribute to present clout. While WIN was founded in 1996, BUILD was founded two decades earlier and naturally has longer history of negotiating with mayoral regimes.

In Baltimore, BUILD had a confrontational relationship with Schaefer who exhibited an imperial style and acted as a foil; consequently, there was not much collaboration. BUILD was able to form a working relationship with Schموke whose populist focus spurred him to act as partner. Under his administration, BUILD was able to secure some of its greatest victories including Nehemiah Housing and Child First. O'Malley's outsider status and new wave focus positioned him as a foil at the

outset, as exhibited by some high profile disagreements with BUILD. He later transitioned to a collaborator as demonstrated by his eventual support the organization's work around housing in Oliver. While Dixon has been a long-time insider, she has been around long enough to go through several stages of relationship with BUILD. At times she has been a foil (fight over convention center hotel), sometimes Dixon has been a collaborator (housing in Oliver). Ultimately, BUILD's public fight with then-Mayor O'Malley and then-Council President Dixon resulted in the affordable housing trust fund.

In Washington, WIN did not have much of relationship with Barry whose final mayoral term was ending as the organization was getting off of the ground. WIN was able to form a collaborative relationship of necessity with Williams; while a technocratic outsider, the neighborhood investment fund was secured in exchange for the baseball stadium that he desired. Fenty who came in as changer with populist tendencies acted as a partner from the outset, further supporting and expanding the neighborhood investment fund. Because BUILD has been around longer than WIN, there is a longer track record of successes; this does not, however, mean that the magnitude of successes is necessarily greater. Grassroots organizations are critical, yet the local economic and social context contributes to the effectiveness of community organizing and the policy outcomes generated in response. To this point, the relative wealth of cities has an impact – in the District, a larger local economic pie corresponds to a larger slice for organized communities, while Baltimore is a cash poor city with a significantly disproportionate underclass.

Recently, scholars have embraced the notion that non-profits can play a vital role in the governing process in America's cities (Ferris 1994). As Boyte (1989:17) notes, "IAF groups shifted from simply protest organizations to the assumption of some responsibility for policy initiation and what they call governance." As Hula, Jackson, and Orr (1997: 478) note, governing nonprofits seek to "restructure local political agendas" by assuming "a number of roles and responsibilities traditionally identified with formal governing authorities, including the identification of citizen preferences, program design, securing public resources, and marshalling public opinion." It is through governance that an organization moves from protest and electoral mobilization to the delivery of public goods. This phase involves the ability to affect the implementation of policy by elected and appointed officials.

Both BUILD and WIN have been successful at negotiating concessions from local government, however, the usage of these hard-won funds (Baltimore's HTF and Washington's NIF) remains under the auspices of the respective mayoral administrations. And because of the fungibility of set-aside money and the potential for misuse, community-based organizations must continue to stay on top of elected officials to ensure that programs and funds are being implemented as designed; thus, they need to be ever vigilant in following the money from allocation to expenditure. Additionally, the preceding chronicle of recent events does not yield end results – given the fact that efforts are currently ongoing – but one may make predictions given past campaigns and levels of success. In particular, the emphasis on bricks and mortar does not necessarily address the development of human resources which have lagged behind. Houses may be rehabbed, but there are other factors that affect a

neighborhood's stability, such as crime, drugs, lack of employment, and a poor education system.

Even with improved housing, this does not improve schools and provide the amenities that neighborhoods need to thrive. Hence, some of the areas included in the Nehemiah project remain impoverished and isolated. BUILD has worked for years to build hundreds of new houses in some of the city's roughest neighborhoods. Some of those houses in West Baltimore's Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood stand in neat, red-bricked contrast with the boarded homes and graffiti-riddled former shops. This is a lesson that BUILD has learned well; consequently the organization's more recent housing ventures have sought to play off of existing strengths by going into areas adjacent to other development.

It is undoubtedly true that organizing gives voice to the marginalized and can be a catalyst for substantive change. However, community organizing does have its limitations, specifically when it comes to addressing larger systemic issues such as eradicating poverty or completely transforming public education. Traditional social welfare programs that appear redistributive and only benefit the poor tend to be a much harder sell than housing redevelopment programs which generate broader support. The issues affecting cities such as Baltimore and Washington are long-standing, complex and dependent on numerous factors. IAF affiliates like BUILD and WIN have been able to make strides in housing and education, but are unable to – nor are they designed to – do it all by themselves. Government has its role, the community has its role, and the two must be in relationship with each one another. As collaboration is necessary, these organizations serve as a vehicle for community



participation which pushes for accountability and responsiveness from local government.

## Chapter 8: Conclusion

*Deuteronomy 15:11 – “There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land.”*

According to the Christian tradition, the statement attributed to Jesus that “the poor will always be with us” appears in Matthew 26:11. Over time some have taken this passage to mean that since poverty is a constant issue, one can turn a blind eye to its existence. However, a more thoughtful reading of the verse and knowledge that it alludes to the Old Testament scripture above calls for a different type of response. It exhorts the people of God to both acknowledge the reality of inequality in the world and work on behalf of those who have not. Nevertheless, regardless of religious affiliation, the looking away from poverty and the multiple ills that befall urban communities has become quite accepted and pervasive in American society. Aside from token gestures of concern during moments of crisis (see Hurricane Katrina), there is a serious lack of attention to the economically, socially, and politically disadvantaged and the work required to change their collective fate. Rather than regarding the members of distressed communities as active and equal participants, it is quite commonplace to view them only as subjects or clients to be served. However, self-determination through community empowerment is a way to not only address the material needs of the marginalized but also to provide the social and political capital needed for substantive inclusion in local governance.

This dissertation looks at community organizing as a means to influence local policy, including distribution of resources and services at the local level. For critics, it is quite easy, and unfair to assert that community organizing has no significant impact because one can see that all of the problems that beset Baltimore and Washington have not been solved. Of course, there are still poor people (they will always be with us) and neighborhoods suffering from high unemployment and crumbling housing stock. However, I argue that such conditions would be even worse in the absence of organizing activities. A major facet of my argument is that many of the recent benefits, which some may consider mere table scraps, would never have trickled down to the masses without some ground-level push. Put differently, even though a local administration/government may have its heart in the right place, the distribution of economic resources and changes in policy will not occur unless there is pressure emanating from community driven movements.

Poverty has continued to be persistent, concentrated demographically and geographically, and relatively isolated from the mainstream social and economic forces in this country. Many of these challenges have been attributed to the lack of social capital, and community building through organizing has been developing as a way of addressing these challenges. Although a political orientation based on organizing may not cure all of the maladies associated with American capitalism, it is much more useful and relevant than pontificating about what might be ultimately desirable, but which will never be. If the racial/economic/social revolution were to have occurred, it would have done so decades ago when the climate was most open to such a transformation. But surely, the concentrated owners of the means of

production never have nor will be willing to part with that which sustains their entrenched positions (power elite) without a degree of cajoling.

This project began with several research questions and hypotheses. Through my research we are able to better understand how these elements fit together. My qualitative approach is rooted in experiences (academic, personal, professional) which have guided my thinking and provided the contextual background to make informed assertions. In my opinion, this undergirds my ability as a scholar to make practical and relevant contributions. Hence, one of the goals of my work is to appeal to both scholars and practitioners. Through this research project I have come to the conclusion that above all, it is context that matters. By context I am referring to each city's unique history, social structures, economic conditions and political actors. Context influences when and how community organizing develops, the composition of organizations, the issues they seek to address, and the response from local regimes.

The first question was what role does the leadership style of the mayor have upon the longevity and success of community organizing initiatives? It is my contention that leadership matters, and the degree to which community organizers are integrated into the governing structure depends somewhat on the orientation of the mayoral administration. Mayoral philosophies fit into a general typology, which is by no means discrete, but provides a shorthand mechanism for categorizing and critiquing mayoral administrations and governing regimes. Also related to context is the nature of relationships between organizing affiliates and mayoral regimes. While mayors are generally seen as the central political actors at the local level, they are not the sole explanatory factor regarding organizing outcomes.

The truth is that there are both top-down and bottom-up mechanisms at play. As such, organizers cannot achieve their desired ends on a totally independent basis and must rely on the government to be partners since they hold the keys to local resources. Also politicians (mayors) work in four year cycles, however, organizers work regardless of who is office. Nonetheless, there are certain factors that are associated with successful organizing. Aside from the organizations themselves, one significant factor is mayoral leadership. There are some types of mayors that are more amenable to grassroots participation and redistribution than others. In particular, populist mayors are most likely to partner with organizing affiliates, whereas development minded mayors are less likely to do so willingly. As relationships are constantly evolving, some mayors are going to be initially more receptive than others, while others can either be forced into cooperation or they can engage in a process of social learning the longer they work with community organizations.

The second question was what impact does the political structure – presence or lack of structured community participation – have upon the existence of grassroots organizations? In Washington it appears that structured participation and descriptive representation made organizing seem less necessary because of perceived inclusion in the local power structure. In Baltimore, the lack of meaningful neighborhood integration and empowerment in local government caused organizing to sprout as an antidote to this exclusion. However, government structured avenues for neighborhood participation can prove to be insufficient, resulting in the call for grassroots organizing efforts. Depending on the circumstances and the area of the city, ANCs can have differing modes of operation. In more wealthy portions of the District,

commissioners with higher education, economic resources and political connections tend to see themselves as co-equal with the government and have a high deal of efficacy. In less affluent sections, commissioners with less education, few economic resources and no political connections see themselves more as advocates, but are often ineffective.

At the outset, I hypothesized that there might be a synergistic effect between organizing and structured forms of participation. However, my research in Washington revealed that the Advisory Neighborhood Commission system and WIN had relatively little overlap. The issues addressed and methods employed are significantly varied as the former often acts as a procedural arm of the government while the latter is more advocacy-based. Nonetheless, I contend that structured forms of participation like the ANC are indeed useful to supporting local democracy. While they may not necessarily act as advocates, it is important for local democracy to have community representatives engaging with local government in the policy making process. The minimal collaboration between WIN and the ANCs may constitute untapped potential within the District. Perhaps if the two worked together they might be able to exercise greater political leverage.

The third question was why did organizing (IAF affiliate) take root in Baltimore over thirty years ago, while this only occurred in Washington during the course of the last thirteen years? I hypothesized that community organizing and advisory councils are individually necessary, but more optimal when in tandem. Each has its own merits, however, if combined in a substantive fashion, inclusive government structures and bottom up strategies could provide for a more complete

and responsive system. In Baltimore, the long history of organizing has served as a link between neighborhoods and government in the absence of a structured mechanism. As a city such as Washington gentrifies, it becomes all too apparent that successive generations of black leadership and structured neighborhood representation are insufficient when it comes to meeting the needs of distressed communities.

As the ANC is set up to be more procedurally focused, there is a need for organizers to help build political efficacy in resource poor communities. One WIN organizer relayed the story of how addressing seemingly minor issues can help to build efficacy and power in neglected communities. He used the example of one priest who tended to avoid confrontational politics, and contended that “nobody gets to talk to the mayor”. After becoming involved with the organization, he called on the Director of the Department of Transportation to fix a stoplight and crosswalk and is now one of the more engaged pastors. The point is that in marginalized communities, residents must often be convinced of their own power to push for change and that small steps can lead to big things.

Clearly, it is an uphill battle, but this is the purpose of IAF affiliates like WIN – to teach communities how to speak truth to power through organizing. When money and status are lacking, communities must rely on their greatest strength – people power. One of the beauties of WIN is that it has been able to form a constituency throughout the District – including sections that are as starkly disparate as the largely wealthy Ward 3 and poverty stricken Ward 8. It is this breadth that makes them such a force to be reckoned with – poor, middle class and wealthy, black, white and Latino

– the organization can legitimately contend that it “stands for the whole” in keeping with the IAF model.

The last question was how effective are the organizing strategies employed by IAF affiliates? Are they catalysts for significant policy change, or only responsible for limited improvements at the fringes? In Baltimore and Washington, the respective IAF affiliates (BUILD and WIN) have managed to emerge as significant players in the policy arena, particularly when it comes to affordable housing. It appears that the strength of the mayor in relation to the city council and the types of projects for which the administration needs broad support has an impact on the degree to which the agendas of broad-based grassroots organizations are addressed. This is evidenced by deal-making regarding municipal projects; in Baltimore this meant securing affordable housing in exchange for the convention center hotel, and in Washington this meant securing affordable housing in exchange for the baseball stadium.

The outcomes associated with organizing are based not only on ground-level activism, but are also based on local economic and political realities. In other words, political will is necessary but is insufficient on its own accord; there must also be money available to dedicate to agenda items. As we have seen, the key to exerting power and extracting resources is to link requests to support for development projects favored by city hall. IAF-style community organizing is valuable because it represents the interests of marginalized communities, while drawing strength from its broad-based model. Ultimately, the most optimal scenario is to have a sympathetic mayor, a racially and economically diverse organization, and sufficient local



resources to dedicate to issue areas. Absent these conditions, it becomes increasingly difficult – but not impossible – to make progress on an organization’s stated agenda.

As far as collaboration with local government, WIN currently has a more optimal situation characterized by regular meetings, an ambitious agenda, and hefty financial concessions. However, conditions such as a housing boom, populist mayor, etc. cannot be transported to other locales. At this time, BUILD’s relationship is more strained typified by infrequent meetings and battling over scarce local resources. On the one hand, it could be argued that WIN benefited from a unique situation in Washington with plenty of money and a cooperating mayor. On other hand, while BUILD has had both amiable and contentious relationships with mayoral administrations, their level of success over the years – in a chronically poor city – is a testament to their viability as local power.

Regardless, the strategies and accomplishments of each of these organizations may prove to be instructive for organizers in other cities. The main take-away point: local governing regimes tend to push for downtown development – use this as an opportunity to lobby for neighborhood investment. IAF affiliates like BUILD and WIN preach that they are financially independent and survive based on organized money – dues. While this is largely true, it would be disingenuous to claim that such large scale projects are funded by such meager resources. However, while the organizations may accept foundation grants and outside contributions for specific projects, the day to day functions and organizing campaigns are controlled by the membership.

Also, as the Industrial Areas Foundation is divided into regions, BUILD and WIN fall under Metro IAF which is made up of 17 affiliates in the Northeast (Boston, New York, New Jersey), Southeast (DC, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina) and Midwest (Illinois, Ohio, Wisconsin). This body meets periodically for group trainings, actions, etc. and the affiliation is also being used to push for broader, more national issues. While IAF affiliates function as autonomous units, there has been some recent movement toward collective action at the state level. At a meeting in December 2008, Action in Montgomery (AIM), People Acting Together in Howard (PATH) and BUILD voted to come together as Maryland IAF in order to leverage their strength and lobby at the state legislature regarding the distribution of federal stimulus funds. While Maryland IAF encompasses the three affiliates in the state of Maryland, it does not include WIN, which reflects the Washington DC's unique non-state status. In any event, this unification of affiliates may be appropriate if it results in greater strength and recognition at the state level. However, one drawback could be the perceived loss of local ties and an agenda that may be too broad to speak to specific circumstances at the local level.

Nevertheless, one of the benefits of the IAF network is the sharing of ideas/concepts. As an example, BUILD leaders decided to take on the issue of work and wages in 1992. The result was that BUILD discovered that many of the people using social services offered by BUILD churches were low-wage workers in service jobs, and that many low-wage workers were employed by contractors doing business with the city. That led to BUILD's demand that the city include "Living Wage" standards in all its service contracts. A living wage was defined as a wage that could

bring a family of four above the poverty line. After a series of large actions with Mayor Schموke, terms of a bill were negotiated and passed in 1994. BUILD and Baltimore began what has become a national and international movement. Today, because of BUILD's efforts, no politician can talk about jobs without using the term "living wage."

At this point, I will now return to the story at the beginning of this dissertation – BUILD's exchange with Mayor Dixon at the Board of Estimates meeting in December 2008. Through the federal stimulus plan, the state of Maryland did receive an infusion of funds that were used to plug some of the holes in Baltimore City's budget; however the money was not dedicated to youth as requested by the organization. While the effort to force the mayor's hand on youth spending was unsuccessful, BUILD continues to be at the forefront of the fight for youth funding, particularly around the city's recreation centers that have been slated to close during the summer of 2009. Meanwhile, talks of a new arena have stalled as have many other development projects during this time of economic uncertainty. A major challenge presented by economic downturns is that big ticket projects often go by the wayside. Short-term outlooks could be bleak if agenda items can only be realistically be tied to seemingly once-in-a-generation development opportunities. The ability of local government to address long standing issues is contingent on the quantity and availability funding sources. It is increasingly difficult to direct adequate attention toward struggling neighborhoods in the face of limited financial capability and cities most often reduce services when resources are constrained.

Nonetheless, there still remain opportunities for collaboration between organizing affiliates and local governments. Although this dissertation has focused primarily on accomplishments in the realm of affordable housing, BUILD and WIN cannot be reduced solely to this issue. As the IAF model prescribes, these organizations have a broad scope and have the flexibility to shift priorities in light of local conditions. In addition to housing, the organizations have also focused on banking, community policing, drug treatment, education, employment, recreation, etc. Ultimately, the story is ongoing as both BUILD in Baltimore and WIN in Washington continue to push their respective local governments to be accountable to community determined agendas. It is this push – sometimes successful, sometime not – which brings often marginalized and neglected citizens into the political process. Again, IAF-style community organizing does not operate on a utopian basis, but functions on a pragmatic foundation – dealing with the world as it is, while always pursuing a world as it should be.

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