Reading Tips and Study Questions
CLASS NINE

Required reading

1. **Randy Stoecker**, "The CDC Model of Urban Development: A Critique and an Alternative," in *The Community Development Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2008)*.
2. **David Micah Greenberg**, "How Does Community Matter for Community Organizing," in *The CDR.*
3. **Briggs**, "Networks, Power and a Dual Agenda: New Lessons and Strategies for Old Community Building Dilemmas," *Working Smarter in Community Development Series*, Brief #3 (2007).
4. **Harold Meyerson**, "L.A. Story," *The American Prospect* (July-August 2013).
5. **Peter Dreier, John Mollenkopf and Todd Swanstrom**, "A metropolitics for the 21st century," in *Place matters* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2001).

Session overview

In this session, we'll discuss the question of community development's potential: Is it to be "on the vanguard of social change"? More modestly, to expand the political connections and resources of poor neighborhoods? To incorporate a range of political organizing approaches, according to specific moments and in specific local contexts? A bit of all of these?

And beyond the orbit of most neighborhood-based players, what directions are innovative community-labor initiatives taking in America's cities, for example in the form of the L.A. Alliance for a New Economy?

This is the final session of Part 2 of the course. The sessions to come will focus on (a) affordable and inclusionary housing and (b) local economic development. But we will continue to consider the political and institutional context, as well as the broader economic context, in which particular policies and programs try to succeed.

Discussion questions

1. Does **Stoecker** argue that the community development corporation model is inherently flawed, or what exactly is his critique? What role does he envision for organizing, especially organizing linked to planning? Note his use of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative in inner-city Boston, and its neighborhood-based planning work, as an example. This example also appeared in von Hoffman's history of community development.

2. About a decade ago, leading community development funders in Massachusetts decided to back an effort to demonstrate how CDCs could re-incorporate community organizing into their work. The result was a multi-CDC effort across the state, which a DUSP doctoral student named David Greenberg helped to document and critically analyze. This brief chapter is drawn from his dissertation about that effort. Why, according to **Greenberg**, must CDC-initiated organizing be adapted to community context? How, in his view has the debate about consensus versus conflict-oriented organizing been misdirected, and how does he recommend reframing the choices open to community-based organizations that wish to organize?

3. **Xav** argues that too much organizing, much of it in the context of "community building" to foster social capital, has been confused as to goals and ignored the role of conflicts within neighborhoods (as distinct from conflicts between different interest groups in cities). What exactly is the "dual agenda," and what specific tactics does he recommend to address the various gaps in practice?

4. What have been the keys to LAANE's effectiveness, according to **Meyerson**? And what new challenges and opportunities does the organization and its allies face?

5. In 2001, **Dreier, et. al.** proposed to build a metropolitan alliance of suburban and central city actors that could overcome the politics that obstruct progressive action in poor communities. How does that plan look in retrospect? Are there elements of this coalition plan that could still be pieced together?

In today's **recommended reading**, Kubisch et al. examine specific ways in which community-based organizations can link to external resources more effectively. And several authors examine the particular significance of community-based organizations for **immigrants** in destination cities and metros as well as the activism of **hometown associations**—along transnational networks—to support and leverage the presence of migrants across national borders.

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