CONSPIRE FOR POWER: RELATIONSHIPS OF TRUST, COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND THE NEW COMMUNITIES’ PROGRAM IN TWO CHICAGO NEIGHBORHOODS

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SCHOLARLY ARGUMENTS

Trust

- Allows actors to engage in community building\(^1\)
- Increases civic engagement and high levels of economic development\(^2\)
- Opens up access to resources\(^3\)
- Socialize member organizations\(^4\)

Mistrust

- Leads to a breakdown in community
- Presents challenges to redevelopment\(^5\)

\(^1\) Chua, Ingram, & Morris, 2008; Coleman, 1988; Rotter, 1980
\(^2\) Sampson 2012
\(^3\) Cross, Parker, Prusak, & Borgatti, 2001; Davis & Greve, 1997; Keyes, Schwartz, Vidal, Bratt 1996
\(^4\) Davis & Greve, 1997; Ibarra, Kilduff, & Tsai, 2005
\(^5\) Ross, Mirowsky, & Pribesh, 2001
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Does interorganizational trust operate to expand community development opportunities within poor communities in an equitable way that also includes residents in decision-making?

2. Conversely, does the presence of mistrust between organizational actors work to deter collaborative projects?
NEW COMMUNITIES’ PROGRAM (NCP)

- 10 year initiative (2002 – 2012)
- $47 million from MacArthur Foundation
- 16 low-income and/or distressed neighborhoods
- Connected local “lead agencies” to various economic and political power-holders across the city
- Lead agencies = community-based organizations (CBOs)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010 Census</th>
<th>Greater Englewood</th>
<th>Little Village / La Villita</th>
<th>City of Chicago</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population Size</td>
<td></td>
<td>66,159</td>
<td>79,288</td>
<td>2,695,598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% African-American</td>
<td></td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Latina/o</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.67%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than High School</td>
<td></td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Median Income</td>
<td></td>
<td>$22,824</td>
<td>$33,593</td>
<td>$47,371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Rate</td>
<td></td>
<td>26.9%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Below poverty line</td>
<td></td>
<td>33.79%</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Crimes</td>
<td></td>
<td>7,941</td>
<td>2,326</td>
<td>150,626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Violent</td>
<td></td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
METHODS

24 months Ethnographic Work
- Public Meetings, Community Advisory Meetings, Information Sessions
- Member of 6 organization
  - 2 Lead Agencies
  - 4 Neighborhood Nonprofits

32 Semi-structured and open-ended interviews

Content analysis
- Reports, Newspaper Articles

Archival Work
- Harold Washington Municipal Library, Chicago History Museum Research Center
FINDINGS

1. Interorganizational *trust* networks can work to socialize less powerful organizations into a similar community development organizational culture.

2. Interorganizational *mistrust* can be used to mitigate power differentials and may lead to networks of opportunity.
NETWORKS OF OPPORTUNITY

- Form of “weak tie”
  - Diffusion of diverse ideas
  - Bridges individuals to variety of groups
  - Access to resources

- Allows for collaborations of skepticism
  - Heterogeneous (re)development plans
  - Level the playing field
  - Evolve based on common goals

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TRUST: “A MASK FOR DOMINATION”

Grassroots Groups and Organizational Trust

“There’s a mistrust on behalf of residents because they’re starting to see these same patterns. They seen [sic] that all these organizations come into the neighborhood and make these promises and say that they’ve gotten this money, but they haven’t seen any real change on the ground. So there’s a lack of trust.”

~Resident and local activist

7 Mansbridge, Jane. 1990. Feminism and Democracy. The American Prospect, 1(1)
“There’s no community representation…. community residents are not at the table when it comes to these development plans. Organizations like [the Englewood lead agency] has [sic] an idea of how Englewood should look or be developed…They’re getting money because they wrote Englewood into the grant, yet because they don’t have that accountability [to the neighborhood] there’s no one saying what did you do with this money?”

~Resident and local activist
GRASSROOTS GROUPS & COLLABORATION

“we may not like [the lead agency] and we may be critical of the LISC funds, however, we need to put that aside to ensure that the neighborhood receives the best programming and development that it can”

~Non-NCP community organizational member
NETWORKS OF OPPORTUNITY

“[Just because I don’t fully trust someone or the organization that’s] not to say that I won’t work with them. But that I will be more cautious as to what I’ll say and the depth of that relationship. And I’ll think about that person a little bit more and think about how they approach their work and what decisions they make. I’ll be more critical.”

~ Little Village Organizer
“NO ONE KNOWS HOW TO DO IT. WE KNOW HOW TO DO IT!": NCP DEVELOPMENT MODEL

A lot of great work happened, and a lot of great relationships were built, and all of our lead agencies are part of our network.

NCP was also a methodology and a framework that taught us how to do this kind of work...

...This network provides our partner organizations with a shared language and culture, this is really really critical. A big part of what we do is build a common culture, language, and a common framework.

~ LISC/Chicago Senior Staff Member
[author’s emphasis]
LEAD AGENCIES & THE NETWORK: BENEFITS

- Access to funds
  - Seed grants
- Networking opportunities
- Highlighted as leads on projects

“Because of [the lead agency’s] connection to NCP, money gets funneled to the organization...It has to do with being at the table, those political connections, and being seen as an organization that can get the work done...It’s very difficult to separate relationships from [the] work because it’s all part of the same thing. But it does certainly, the work that [it] do[es] and the relationships that [it] ha[s] make [it] privy to certain information and get[s it] at certain tables.”

~NCP lead agency organizer
LEAD AGENCIES & THE NETWORK: CONSTRAINTS

- Discouraged from pursuing development projects that would endanger relationships with the city
  - Ex: Park 553

- “Community voice” incorporated during planning phases, ignored during implementation

- Advocacy work was explicitly not supported by LISC/Chicago or the NCP
  - “We’ve never been an advocacy organization...we’re not out to change the world...that’s not us.”

~LISC/Chicago Staff Member
CONCLUSION: IMPORTANCE OF TRUST & MISTRUST

- Interorganizational Trust Networks
  - Important for coalition building
    - Political clout
  - Increased access to resources
    - Funds, technical expertise, training
  - Minimize dissent
  - Socialize members into a homogeneous organizational culture

- Networks of Opportunity
  - Careful evaluation of projects
  - Commitment to community and resident gains (over citywide)
  - Increased accountability
The End