Neighborhood councils: A family-driven approach to community change

Merlinda Raquel Gallegos

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/rtds

Repository Citation


https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/rtds/3066

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Scholarship@UNLV. It has been accepted for inclusion in UNLV Retrospective Theses & Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Scholarship@UNLV. For more information, please contact digitalscholarship@unlv.edu.
INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6” x 9” black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI
A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700  800/521-0600

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS: A FAMILY-DRIVEN APPROACH TO COMMUNITY CHANGE

by

Merlinda Raquel Gallegos

Bachelor of Arts
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
1992

Master of Arts
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
1995

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Doctor of Philosophy Degree
Department of Sociology
College of Liberal Arts

Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
May 1999
The Dissertation prepared by

Merlinda Raquel Gallegos

Entitled

Neighborhood Councils: A Family-Driven Approach
to Community Change

is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

Examination Committee Chair

Dean of the Graduate College

Examination Committee Member

Examination Committee Member

Graduate College Faculty Representative

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
ABSTRACT

Neighborhood Councils: A Family-Driven Approach to Community Change

by

Merlinda Raquel Gallegos

Dr. Donald E. Carne, Examination Committee Chair
Professor of Sociology
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Following times of social upheavals, especially when social tensions exist in ethnically diverse and lower class neighborhoods, the U.S. government has provided increased aid to the poor, and new community-based initiatives have emerged. This dissertation focuses on Nevada's neighborhood-based, community-driven, collaborative approach to providing services in low-income areas: Family Resource Centers. The purpose of this exploratory study is to develop strategies which will increase community participation in Nevada's Family Resource Centers' neighborhood councils.

After two years of participant observation and the use of focus groups in four neighborhood councils, seven dimensions emerged concerning strategies to increase voluntary participation in neighborhood councils: (1) establishing a foundation, (2) role of the case manager, (3) recruiting, (4) training, (5) facilitating a committed council, (6) providing recognition, and (7) providing benefits for neighborhood council members.
This study records the recommendations offered by those who utilize the services provided by the Family Resource Centers with the purpose of implementing such strategies to ensure truly neighborhood-based, community-driven initiatives.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .................................................................................................................................................. iii

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ................................................................................................................................. vii

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................................... 1

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW ........................................................................................................... 5

  Settlements ..................................................................................................................................................... 6
  Assumptions ................................................................................................................................................... 6
  Policy Implications ....................................................................................................................................... 7

  Chicago Area Project ...................................................................................................................................... 9
  Assumptions ................................................................................................................................................... 9
  Policy Implications ....................................................................................................................................... 11

  People's Organization: Back of the Yards Neighborhood Council .............................................................. 13
  Assumptions ................................................................................................................................................... 13
  Policy Implications ....................................................................................................................................... 16

  Mobilization for Youth ................................................................................................................................... 17
  Assumptions ................................................................................................................................................... 17
  Policy Implications ....................................................................................................................................... 19

  The War on Poverty's Community Action Programs ....................................................................................... 21
  Assumptions ................................................................................................................................................... 22
  Policy Implications ....................................................................................................................................... 23

  Problems with Conventional Neighborhood-based Initiatives ....................................................................... 25

  Nevada's Family Resource Centers ............................................................................................................... 28
    Inheritor of the Past ..................................................................................................................................... 28
    Neighborhood Councils .............................................................................................................................. 30

  Neighborhood Councils: Reliance on Volunteers ......................................................................................... 31
    Definition of Terms ....................................................................................................................................... 32

  Volunteerism .................................................................................................................................................. 33
    Who Donates Their Time .............................................................................................................................. 33
    Processes through which People Become Involved in Volunteerism ......................................................... 34
    Reasons People Volunteer ............................................................................................................................ 36
    General Strategies to Increase Volunteerism ................................................................................................. 40

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am greatly indebted to many people for their contributions to this project. I would like to thank my graduate committee chairperson, Donald Carns, for his warm smiles, encouragement, patience, and excellent guidance throughout this study. I also appreciate very much the teachings and valuable editorial input of the other members of my committee: Lynn Osborne, for her enthusiastic lectures and friendship; Yanick St. Jean, for her elegance in all situations; and Terance Miethe, for his knowledge of the field. Veona, I know God sent you as an angel. Thank you for always knowing when a hug, a caring ear, or warm words of encouragement are needed. Lynne, your smile has brightened my days.

Thank you to my hometown friends: cousin Krista, Jeanne, Alicia, Sheryl, and Christy who always have open arms and a cold beer waiting for me. Much gratitude to Andrea and Roxanne -- my soul mate friends whose support and love always keep me pumped. You all remind me of who I am and where I come from -- you keep me grounded, thank you. I really appreciate the support of my Nevada "Latina Connection" Eva, Jackie, Fran, Adrianna, Kelly, Liz, Anabel and Magda -- all strong women who remind me of how lucky I am to be born into such a rich heritage. Smiles and hugs to my mentor Fernando Romero, and an all-around good Chicano, Jose Luis.
I want to especially thank Melissa Monson and Denise Dalaimo -- two women I am gladly indebted to, after all, we share the same brain. Your friendships have changed my life. I know the Goddess smiled upon me the day we all connected, and I will thank her every day for bringing us together, my sister-friends.

To all my extended family, I know I am extremely lucky to have the love, velas, and prayers of the hundreds of you. My brother Christopher, your support and pride make my heart smile. To Judi Gallegos and Chris Gallegos, more reasons to praise God! You are the greatest parents -- I am blessed to have been born to such loving and supportive people who both encouraged and provided me with the tools to make a positive contribution to society. Finally, I am especially indebted to my husband, Dr. Paul J. Vigil. Your determination and love help me to believe in myself as I strive to reach my goals. I look forward to the start of our new journey.

This study is dedicated to all of the committed people who are working toward making Nevada's Family Resource Centers the truly neighborhood-based, community-driven initiatives they were intended to be.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

When sociologist C. Wright Mills wrote that the sociological imagination "enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society" (1959:6), he was speaking of its ability to help us understand how social situations shape our private realities. By linking one's personal troubles to public issues, people can better understand their position in society. The U.S. government historically prefers to view poverty and its consequences as local problems (Halpern 1995; Gilbert 1970; Themstrom 1969). In response to this government fiat, and thus, out of necessity, neighborhood-based initiatives in urban and rural areas have developed throughout the past century or so. Striving towards eradicating poverty, these neighborhood-based initiatives have been shaped by the evolution of poor urban neighborhoods themselves. Since the early 1900s these neighborhood-based initiatives have worked to transcend the "local environments of the individual and the range of his [sic] inner life" (Mills 1959:8), by beckoning concerned citizens to get together to address their collective concerns and to attempt to renew their community.

This dissertation focuses on Nevada's neighborhood-based, community-driven, collaborative approach to providing services in low-income areas: Family Resource
Centers (FRCs). Introduced by Governor Bob Miller in 1995 as "social laboratories testing new approaches to meeting consumer need [sic] and providing a focal point for community action," FRCs were instituted as facilities within "at-risk" neighborhoods (Nevada's Family Resource Center Project 1997b:1). The mission of FRCs is to assist families in obtaining:

1. An assessment of eligibility for social services;
2. Direct social services, and;
3. Referrals to obtain social services from other social service [sic] agencies or organizations (Nevada's Family Resource Center Project 1997a:3).

In an effort to achieve a grass roots approach, each FRC is responsible for organizing a neighborhood council which conducts a needs assessments of its targeted neighborhood and creates "a service delivery plan unique to the demography and desires of the residents, and responsive to changing needs and resources" of each community (Nevada's Family Resource Center Project 1997b:1).

Originating from an internship I completed during the spring semester of 1997 in an FRC located in central Las Vegas, the purpose of this exploratory study is to develop strategies which will increase community participation in Nevada's Family Resource Centers' neighborhood councils. My data-gathering techniques consisted of participant observation and the use of focus groups. Participant observation brought me into frequent contact with neighborhood council members and allowed unstructured interviews to take place throughout my internship and involvement with four FRCs' neighborhood councils. Having been in the field for at least six months prior to conducting the focus groups, I perceived that members were willing to discuss the topic of interest because they wanted
to increase community participation in their neighborhood councils. In other words, my methods fit well with their aims.

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter Two examines the assumptions and policy implications of five twentieth-century, neighborhood-based, community action initiatives that reflect "not just an evolutionary process but a repetitive one" (Halpern 1995:4). The literature on the settlement movement, Chicago Area Project, People's Organization: Back of the Yards Neighborhood Council, Mobilization for Youth, and the War on Poverty's Community Action Programs will be reviewed. Next, I will introduce the topic of Nevada's Family Resource Centers, with a strong focus on their neighborhood councils. The final section will give a brief review of the literature on volunteerism, specifically discussing who donates their time to volunteer activities, how people become involved with their volunteer activities, and why people volunteer their time. Lastly, I will review the literature which suggests general strategies to increase volunteerism.

After presenting my research questions, I will delineate and elaborate on my research design, methods, and procedures in Chapter Three. Here, I will address the methodological approach utilized in this study -- participatory action research (PAR). I will also address the positive aspects of my research design as well as possible limitations, and the issues of validity and reliability.

In Chapter Four I will discuss my findings. Through the course of the research phase of this project, seven dimensions emerged concerning strategies to increase voluntary participation in neighborhood councils:
(1) establishing a foundation,

(2) role of the case manager,

(3) recruiting,

(4) training,

(5) facilitating a committed council,

(6) providing recognition, and

(7) providing benefits for neighborhood council members.

The multiple indicators of each dimension will be discussed and expressed with the use of direct quotes from respondents. To mitigate against any tendency to "speak for" or attempt to "represent" participants, I shall rely heavily on direct quotes.

Chapter Five will discuss policy implications for this project, specifically the distribution of summary results to the Family Resource Centers' neighborhood councils and case managers as well as to the regional coordinators' offices. Fortunately, a limited amount of funds for neighborhood council activities and events is allocated in the annual budgets of each FRC, facilitating the implementation of the recommended strategies. Suggestions for future research will also be discussed.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the following chapter I will examine the assumptions and policy implications of five neighborhood-based, community-driven initiatives: (1) the settlement movement, (2) Chicago Area Project, (3) People's Organization: Back of the Yards Neighborhood Council, (4) Mobilization for Youth, and (5) the War on Poverty's Community Action Programs. Emerging throughout much of the twentieth century, the purpose of these initiatives was to address poverty-related social problems in specific urban areas. In response to poverty-related social problems in the 1990's, the state of Nevada developed its own neighborhood-based, community-driven initiative. The following section introduces this initiative -- Nevada's Family Resource Centers -- with a strong focus on their neighborhood councils. As will be seen, the development of neighborhood-based initiatives "reflects not just an evolutionary process but a repetitive one" (Halpern 1995:4). The final section reviews the literature on volunteerism, specifically addressing who donates their time to volunteer activities, how people become involved with their volunteer activities, and why people volunteer their time. Lastly, I will review the literature which suggests general strategies to increase volunteerism.

5

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
SETTLEMENTS

Assumptions

Brought over from England to the United States in 1886, the settlement movement established itself in most major cities by 1910. Seeking a new approach to solving the problems of the poor, the settlement movement became the vehicle for reformers to address poverty-related social concerns without questioning the ideals that the United States was founded on (Halpern 1995, Hampden-Turner 1974). During the Progressive era reformers believed the urban environment was the key to solving social problems. According to settlement movement leader Robert Woods the inner-city represented the "microcosm of all social problems," thus making it a natural testing ground for all social reform (cited in Melvin 1987:18).

Settlement reformers believed the key to neighborhood reconstruction was integrating residents of poor neighborhoods into the larger urban space (Halpern 1995; Trolander 1975). Previous institutional responses to poverty were shaped purely by the predispositions of individual reformers. Settlements, the first institutional response to poverty shaped in part by the needs of poor families and neighborhoods, were already emerging in impoverished neighborhoods in order to provide services to residents. Some affluent people settled among the poor so they "could better determine the needs" of their poor neighbors (Trolander 1975:18). With hopes of gaining new insight into poverty, these reformers set out to establish relationships by living among the poor (Trolander 1975).

Starting with small groups in local settings, reformers hoped to link the neighborhoods with each other thus organizing the larger community. The use of first-
hand knowledge allowed settlements to be instruments of social reform by bringing about changes in the living conditions of specific impoverished neighborhoods (Trolander 1975). By calling attention to the conditions in slums, settlement workers assumed the community would move into action to improve the physical and social environment of these areas (Trolander 1975). If healthful values and improved group relationships developed in neighborhoods, reformers assumed these seeds of goodwill would spread throughout the city -- eventually altering the values of those who held political and economic power (Halpern 1995:30).

Policy Implications

Each settlement was responsible for establishing its own policies and programs and raising its own funds. The basic program of a settlement consisted of a day nursery program, educational classes, recreational activities, and organized social clubs. Reflecting current middle-class values, settlements attempted to provide a home atmosphere. Most settlements contained a kitchen, dining room, living area and -- in larger quarters -- rental apartments were available (Halpern 1995). Staffed by volunteers, settlement houses "agitated for statutes prohibiting or regulating prostitution, horse racing, gambling and the mistreatment of prisoners, children, and animals" (Ellis and Noyes 1990:145). Although concentrating on group work, some settlement workers performed a limited amount of casework (Ellis and Noyes 1990; Trolander 1975). Originally intended for social action and experimentation, buying into institutional programs eventually left little time for advocacy.
Although more inclusive than traditional government responses to poverty, the settlement was not without its problems. Settlement leaders tended to be elitists who did not believe residents could determine their own needs and interests (Halpern 1995). The boards of settlements consisted of professional, business, and social leaders of their communities. For the most part, these members of society held conservative beliefs, consequently inhibiting social action (Trolander 1975). According to Davis (1967), despite the settlement workers toil in the neighborhood, they remained outsiders, "most of them unmarried, had their own life, their own fellowship within the settlement. This meant that they were only artificially a part of the neighborhood" (p. 231). Staff viewed themselves and the organizations as "mediating institutions, both interpreting immigrants to America and its mainstream institutions and vice versa" (Halpern 1995:31). Expected to adopt the Protestant work ethic and learn the English language, immigrants were pressured to become "Americanized." Settlement employees encouraged area residents to use settlement houses as a vehicle to facilitate this process.

Unfortunately, racism also played a part in the settlement movement (Halpern 1995; Trolander 1975; Lindenberg and Zittel 1936). According to Trolander (1975) the National Federation of Settlements never did much collectively to address race relations due to each settlements' diversity of practices. Throughout their existence the efforts of the settlements ranged from intentional integration to strict segregation.


Settlement leaders supported the maintenance of "the color line" when they could. Nonetheless as more African Americans moved north they over-spilled the boundaries of designated black districts, and many lived in the
catchment areas of particular settlements. Christamore House in Indianapolis defined its mission as uplift of white people "and moved -- rather than desegregate its facilities -- when the surrounding neighborhood became predominantly black" (P. 38).

Jim Crow policies, though dropped during the National Conference of Social Work, were still in effect for the 1934 National Federation of Settlements conference held in the same Kansas City hotel (Trolander 1975). Following this incident an International Committee for the National Federation was set up to address the issue of race relations in the settlements. No action was ever taken except for a 1939 session on "America's Minority Problems" (Trolander 1975:136).

CHICAGO AREA PROJECT

Assumptions

Established in 1932 and initially operating in three white, ethnically homogeneous Chicago neighborhoods, the Chicago Area Project (CAP) was an early community-action-oriented anti-delinquency program that eventually expanded to eighteen neighborhoods (Bartollas 1997; Cazenave 1993). Conceived by University of Chicago-trained sociologists Clifford Shaw and Ernest Burgess, CAP's goal was to change the social environment of local residents by encouraging them to participate in the neighborhood and community life (Halpern 1995; Krisberg and Austin 1993). With the CAP's mission being delinquency prevention:

All of the activities in the program [were] are carried on with a view to making the neighborhood conscious of the problems of delinquency, collectively interested in the welfare of its children, and active in promoting programs for such improvements of the community environment as will develop in the children interests and habits of a constructive and socially desirable character (Burgess, Lohman, Shaw 1937:9).
Heeding Burgess's (1928) idea of urban growth as cities expanding radially in patterns of concentric circles, Shaw and McKay (1942) supported this ecological approach in their development of social disorganization theory. Analyzing official rates of delinquency, Shaw and McKay (1942) identified delinquency as being directly related to the urban city environment: neighborhoods with the highest rates of crime and delinquency were found to be located in Zone II — the "slum area in the throes of change from residence to business and industry" (p. 18).

The areas of heaviest concentration are, in general, not far from the central business district, within or near the areas zoned for light industry or commerce. As one moves outward, away from these areas into the residential communities, the cases are more and more scattered until, near the periphery of the city, they are, in general, widely dispersed (Shaw and McKay 1942:52).

Even though the ethnic composition of residents changed, the central business district and adjacent residential areas -- Burgess' (1928) "zone in transition" -- continued to have the highest crime rates over a 33 year period. Urbanization, migration, immigration, and rapid industrialization contributed to an increase in delinquency since they were believed to disorganize community-based institutions and break down conventional social controls (Shoemaker 1990:82).

In these communities many children encounter competing systems of values. Their community, which provides most of the social forms in terms of which their life will be organized, presents conflicting possibilities. A career in delinquency and crime is one alternative, which often becomes real and enticing to the boy because it offers the promise of economic gain, prestige, and companionship . . . (Shaw and McKay 1942:316).

This lack of stability and value consensus in areas of high social disorganization, Shaw and McKay (1942) believed, led to the cultural transmission of deviance.
In an effort to organize the inner-city, the CAP initiative in community building attempted to solve local problems by providing professional guidance to "natural leaders" (Halpern 1995). Initiating "indigenous community-based social controls" consisted of a "community action" strategy where the involvement of local residents was emphasized (Cazenave 1993:54). According to the CAP program philosophy, participation by local residents was "essential to the reconstruction of the social, moral, and political life of the people residing in deteriorated areas of the city" (Cazenave 1993:55). The settlement movement's vision of relying on community members to play active supportive roles was extended by the CAP to include professional guidance as a cornerstone to community success (Halpern 1995:51).

Policy Implications

With an emphasis on neighborhood participation, "curbstone counselors" -- reformed delinquents and young adults from the community -- were recruited to "embody and provide the social control -- caring, feedback, guidance, and monitoring -- that presumably had dissipated in the community" (Halpern 1995:52). As youth advocates, curbstone counselors' actions ranged from organizing recreational activities to going before juvenile courts on behalf of neighborhood youth. The use of these natural leaders was thought to facilitate the redirection of delinquents to more socially acceptable behaviors. Curbstone counselors were used as a form of social control with hopes that they would "align the support of the primary group world within which youth lived in favor of conformity with the law and its institutions" (Finestone 1976:145).
A standard recreational program for area youth was established by all CAPs. Programs included "summer camping, scouting, handicraft, forums, and interest trips" (Shaw and McKay 1942:324). In line with program goals to curb juvenile delinquency, "self-help community committees" concerned with youth gangs were also established (Lundman 1993:68). Along with the curbstone counselors, the instituting of these types of programs was hoped "to reestablish the bonds between youth and adults and to improve the access of young people to the educational, recreational, and occupational structures of the larger society" (Finestone 1976:128).

Accepting the idea that residents were responsible for the deteriorating condition of their community, the CAP did not pressure the city for better services (Halpern 1995). Rehabilitation of the physical environment was still stressed by the CAPs and most had campaigns focusing on sanitation (Lundman 1993:67). For example, in one community garbage cans were provided as part of an educational campaign developed to discourage residents from disposing of refuse in vacant lots and alleys (Schlossman and Sedlak 1983). Shrubs were also planted in an effort to instill community beauty and thus pride.

Although attempting to enhance residents' sense of control over their lives -- in contrast to traditional welfare and youth-serving agencies in which residents took a subordinate role -- the CAP's idea of providing trash cans and shrubs was obviously misguided (Finestone 1976:141). Exploitation by landlords was overlooked by the CAP, along with any effort to make other fundamental economic, political or social changes. Although the CAP was criticized as a "conservative response to radical changes" needed in disorganized communities (Bartollas 1997:535), social experts still emerged as
legitimate scientists who took a more activist role as professional reformers enhancing community-wide democratic participation (Cazenave 1993).

**PEOPLE'S ORGANIZATION: BACK OF THE YARDS NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL**

There were no pavements -- there were mountains and valleys and rivers, gullies and ditches, and great hollows full of stinking green water. In these pools the children played, and rolled about in the mud of the streets; here and there one noticed them digging in it, after trophies which they had stumbled on. One wondered about this, as also about the swarms of flies which hung about the scene, literally blackening the air, and the strange, fetid odor which assailed one's nostrils, a ghastly odor, of all the dead things of the universe (Sinclair 1946 [1905]:28-29).

It was in this *Jungle* of Upton Sinclair where a coalition of union leaders, local churches and workers established the Back of the Yards Neighborhood Council (BYNC) in a slum of south Chicago. In 1938 Saul Alinsky, a University of Chicago sociology student, was sent out by the Chicago Area Project's founder, Clifford Shaw, to the stockyards area known as the Back of the Yards.

**Assumptions**

*After all, the real democratic program is a democratically minded people* -- a healthy, active, participating, interested, self-confident people who, through their participation and interest, become informed, educated, and above all develop faith in themselves, their fellow men [sic], and the future. The people themselves will solve each problem that will arise out of a changing world. They will if they, the people, have the opportunity and power to make and enforce the decision instead of seeing that power vested in just a few. No clique, or caste, power group or benevolent administration can have the people's interest at heart as much as the people themselves (Alinsky 1969:55).

Using a refinement of a Progressive assumption, Alinsky believed strengthening local democracy would be the most successful method to address poverty (Halpern 1995).
Alinsky recognized for a program to be successful, its clients must have input from its inception. By approaching people before any solutions were declared he knew "the programs themselves would come out of a process of discussion and democratic decision-making among the people," allowing the residents to own their solutions (Knapp and Polk 1971:44).

This, then, is our real job — the opportunity to work directly with our people. It is the breaking down of the feeling on the part of our people that they are social automations with no stake in the future, rather than human beings in possession of all the responsibility, strength, and human dignity which constitutes the heritage of free citizens of a democracy (Alinsky 1969:50).

Understanding the importance of native leadership, Alinsky approached Joseph Meegan, a community leader and director of Davis Square Park.

The building of a People's Organization can be done only by the people themselves. The only way the people can express themselves is through their leaders. By *their* leaders we mean those persons whom the local people define and look up to as leaders. Native or indigenous leadership is of fundamental importance in the attempt to build a People's Organization (Alinsky 1969:64).

Already highly integrated in the community, Meegan was an indigenous leader. He had already earned his position of leadership and served as a valid representative of the people. Being a native of the area, it was decided Meegan would be the front person for the BYNC and would deal publicly with the community (Slayton 1986). Alinsky, on the other hand, was an outsider whose role was to stay in the background and work with the unions (Slayton 1986). By March 1939, Alinsky and Meegan organized the Back of the Yards Neighborhood Council as an umbrella organization for the area with hopes of providing a forum where community problems could be identified through the "democratic processes of discussion, deliberation, and voting" (Halpern 1995:54).
The Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) was already campaigning to unionize the stockyard workers at the time Alinsky arrived in the Back of the Yards. Having previously worked with the CIO, Alinsky had established friendships with CIO members which led to making acquaintances with members of the Packinghouse Workers Organizing Committee. The BYNC had the support of the organizing union (Slayton 1986:199). Labor union organizational strategies were used as a base for the BYNC's claim of a "new theory of community organization" (Cazenave 1993:58). By advocating the democratic participation of area residents the BYNC "existed specifically to pursue the partisan interests of area residents," moving away from the objective stance of traditional social work (Cazenave 1993:60). Unlike the Chicago Area Project, the development of political resources was seen as key, allowing residents to exert pressure on government officials which would eventually affect the distribution of public goods (Bailey 1974:105). Professing the use of conflict and disruption as legitimate means to force authorities to act, Alinsky believed community action programs such as the BYNC should not be viewed as "a philanthropic plaything or a social service's ameliorative gesture" but should instead be used as a:

"deep, hard-driving force, striking and cutting at the very roots of all the evils which beset the people... It thinks and acts in terms of social surgery and not cosmetic cover-ups... A People's Organization is dedicated to an eternal war. It is a war against poverty, misery, delinquency, disease, injustice, hopelessness, despair, and unhappiness. They are basically the same issues for which nations have gone to war in almost every generation (Alinsky 1969:133)."

According to Alinsky (1969), the BYNC would be the "medium through which they [the people] can express and achieve their program" (p. 196). Ensuring a grass roots approach, the BYNC's "commitment to community participation in public-policy..."
formation and implementation processes" forced professionals to take a more activist role in the promotion of community change (Cazenave 1993:62).

Policy Implications

Defining and articulating issues was one of the most important activities undertaken by the BYNC. With 350 participants representing 76 organizations, the first BYNC meeting established four committees: child welfare, housing, unemployment, and health (Halpern 1995; Slayton 1986). After each committee presented reports, resolutions were democratically voted on concerning all four issues. By "working through (even by suggestion) the local people and their organizations, all proposals [carried] carry with them the approval and prestige of these local persons or groups" (Alinsky 1969:106).

The BYNC aimed to transform the area into a model working-class community. The family was the top priority of the BYNC and an office was established to help with any problems ranging from "broken streetlights" to "juvenile delinquency" (Slayton 1986:216). Working as an information and referral bureau, the Council social workers arranged aid from other agencies as well as handled some cases themselves. To assist families with financial problems, the BYNC began operating a credit union in 1945 (Halpern 1995; Slayton 1986). In an effort to better meet the needs of the families who lived in the Back of the Yards, the Council believed they had a legitimate right and responsibility to advise and assist families with their budgeting (Slayton 1986).

With the use of letter-writing campaigns, boycotts, sit-downs and other more militant tactics, the BYNC managed to win major concessions from City Hall (Alinsky 1969; Bailey 1974). An Infant Welfare Station, a health service clinic open to parents and
children under age six, was established in Davis Square Park. A free lunch program for children was also established that fed between a thousand and fifteen-hundred children a day (Halpern 1995; Slayton 1986). Additionally, a Neighborhood Youth Committee was set up to resolve conflicts and divert area youth from the juvenile justice system (Halpern 1995). The BYNC also tabulated housing violations and turned them over to the city. Along with the purchase of a portable exterminator, two thousand 55-gallon garbage drums were provided to the area residents.

Believing people in the community could figure out their own solutions to problems, "We the People Will Work Out Our Own Destiny" became the motto for the BYNC (Alinsky 1969:196). By creating a democratic system based on local control of the social structure, the BYNC accomplished what government agencies could not and did not care to do: It improved the quality of life for the residents of the Back of the Yards.

MOBILIZATION FOR YOUTH

Assumptions

With an initial three-year budget of $12.6 million, the Mobilization for Youth (MFY) originated at the Henry Street Settlement in New York City in 1962 (Halpern 1995; Hall 1971; Moynihan 1969). Concerned with the growing gang problem in the area, the settlement's board members consulted experts involved in the prevention of juvenile delinquency. After months of deliberation, members decided on a multiple-pronged approach to combat delinquency. Helen Hall (1971), director of the Henry Street Settlement, elaborated on this approach:
what was most important and experimental about Mobilization for Youth was the attack on the multiple causes of delinquency over a wide geographical area in a city slum, bringing to bear every device and every known -- or to be devised -- method to change the social climate of the area. We wanted to get away from a piecemeal approach and to deal with the community as a whole. It was an effort to saturate a whole poverty area with services enough to change its living conditions (pp. 271-272).

Although the conceptualization stage for MFY began in 1957 and it moved into its first headquarters in 1960, it was officially launched on the White House lawn by President John F. Kennedy in 1962.

In addition to the Ford Foundation's Youth Program, the MFY primarily received funding from the National Institute for Mental Health, the President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Crime, and the City of New York. The original 22 member board was made up of white professionals from settlements houses, eventually including one person each from the African-American and Puerto Rican communities (Knapp and Polk 1971).

Consultants to the MFY, Richard Cloward and Lloyd Ohlin (1960) were members of Columbia University's School of Social Work when they expanded opportunity theory in delinquent studies. In preparing a revised proposal for the MFY, Cloward and Ohlin stated,

delinquency ordinarily represents a search for solutions to problems of adjustment. In the sense that delinquency is an effort to resolve difficulties resulting from attempts to conform, it is not purposeless, although it may be random and disorganized and may not result in a successful solution (cited in Moynihan 1969:54).

Extending the ideas of Robert Merton (1938), Edwin Sutherland (1947), and Albert Cohen (1955), Cloward and Ohlin (1960) suggested that adolescents have varied access to illegitimate opportunities as well as legitimate means. Acknowledging that some lower-
class adolescents internalize middle-class values and strive towards middle-class lifestyles and goals, the majority, Cloward and Ohlin (1960) argued, sought a higher status within a lower-class context. When social structures exert pressure on youth to engage in nonconforming behavior, many adolescents pursue illegitimate opportunities when legitimate means to achieve success are not available (Platt 1977). In the MFY proposal prepared by Cloward and Ohlin (1961) they wrote,

... persons who participate in delinquent patterns are fully aware of the differences between right and wrong, between conventional behavior and rule-violating behavior. They may not care about the differences, or they may enjoy flouting the rules of the game, or they may have decided that illegitimate practices get them what they want more efficiently than legitimate practices (cited in Moynihan 1969:54).

According to Cloward and Ohlin (1960), to adapt as an innovator the adolescent is required to not only be motivated, but also to have the opportunity to learn and use illegitimate means.

**Policy Implications**

Asserting its mission of delinquency prevention, MFY funded youth employment and training programs, after-school tutoring, recreational programs, and preschool programs for children in the area. Concerned with education, MFY encouraged teachers to become more sensitive and responsive to the needs and situations of the community children (Covey, Menard, and Franzese 1992). Continuing the emphasis on education, MFY staff developed their own "oral-aural-visual-writing techniques for teaching reading to illiterate and semiliterate school dropouts" (Cohen 1965:138).
Although the main focus was on youth, the MFY plan included efforts to mobilize and energize adults in the area. Reminiscent of the Chicago Area Project, the MFY adult recruitment effort centered on "curbstone" social work to increase participation by adult residents. Wanting citizens to have access to meaningful roles, job descriptions were developed for paid positions filled by local "nonprofessional workers" (Reiff and Riessman 1965:11).

Mobilization for Youth was the first neighborhood initiative of that era to encourage minority residents of an inner-city neighborhood to define the initiative's agenda. It expanded the idea of community-based work for neighborhood residents beyond such limited roles as teacher aides, most notably creating paid jobs for neighborhood residents and organizers (Halpern 1995:105).

The void of positive role models was to be filled by those community adults who participated in the programs. A job training program for adults was also developed that placed 60 percent of its 817 participants in at least one direct job placement (Marris and Rein 1982).

Conceived as an information and referral center, MFY opened a storefront neighborhood service center in November 1962. Organizing community efforts, the staff of MFY first played a mediating role between residents and governmental agencies (Knapp and Polk 1971). The move from mediation to advocacy occurred when staff themselves experienced the frustration of dealing with governmental bureaucracies such as the Department of Public Welfare.

To act effectively, the advocate must have sufficient knowledge of the law and the public agency's administrative procedures to recognize injustice when it occurs and then seek a solution in harmony with his [sic] client's interests . . . One of the advocate's most demanding tasks was to serve notice on his [sic] opposite number within the welfare bureaucracy that he [sic] was prepared to move a notch further up the hierarchy if justice was not tendered on the present level (Cloward and Elman 1971:177).
Concerning community resident's participation, MFY soon "shifted from encouragement and persuasion" to a call for confrontational tactics (Halpern 1995:104). Employing four full-time attorneys, free legal services were established by MFY and action was taken against the police and welfare departments (Cloward and Elman 1971).Rent strikes and school boycotts were organized as well as protests in city officials' offices (Krisberg and Austin 1993; Knapp and Polk 1971).

THE WAR ON POVERTY'S COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMS

The War on Poverty was laid out in the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 as the first comprehensive federal government program to address poverty in the history of the United States. Attempting to break the cycle of poverty, the War on Poverty was created as an effort to enhance economic opportunities and prepare the poor to take advantage of these new opportunities (Halpern 1995; Cruikshank 1994; Handler 1972). This approach was unlike the policies of the New Deal where even humanitarian programs were created to facilitate business recovery (Eitzen and Timmer 1985).

Combining existing programs with the novel Community Action Programs, the War on Poverty was supplemented by President Johnson's domestic programs of the Great Society (Jackson 1993; Blum 1991; Piven and Cloward 1971). As the foundation of the War on Poverty, the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 created the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) as an agency to coordinate the antipoverty effort (Quadagno 1994). In turn, the OEO delegated responsibility for administering community action to the Community Action Agency (CAA) whose purpose it was to "embody the federal government's assumptions, intentions, and specific programs" (Halpern 1995:107). The
CAA became the fiscal agent for both national emphasis programs and local initiatives.

Approximately 50 percent of funds were allocated to the creation and maintenance of national programs consisting of Upward Bound, Head Start, legal aid, family planning, and community health centers (Halpern 1995; Rose 1972). The remainder of monies was granted to "almost anything in the areas of neighborhood service, education, health, manpower, housing, social services, and economic development" (Halpern 1995:108).

The following section examines the neighborhood-based Community Action Programs, a key element in the War on Poverty.

**Assumptions**

In Section 202 of Title II in the Economic Opportunity Act a Community Action Program was defined as a program which would:

1. Mobilize its own public and private resources for this attack [on poverty].
2. Develop programs of sufficient scope and size that give promise of eliminating a cause or causes of poverty.
3. Involve the poor themselves in developing and operating the anti-poverty programs.
4. Administer and coordinate the Community Action Programs through public or private non-profit agencies or a combination of these (excerpt from memo of the President's Task Force on War Against Poverty, cited in Clark and Hopkins 1969:262).

With fourteen varieties of programs referred to as community action by the legislation, Community Action Programs (CAPs) were created to be a "vehicle for organizing discrete initiatives into a coherent local poverty-fighting effort" (Halpern 1995:4). In an effort to decentralize decision making and delegate authority to the community level, federal funds were to bypass state and city governments, flowing directly to community-based organizations (Sviridoff 1994). To ensure the success of CAPs, 340 to 350 million dollars
was allocated by the Johnson Administration⁶ (Marris and Rein 1982; Piven and Cloward 1971; Moynihan 1969).

Until the 1950s the existing social welfare system would "plan programs for the poor, not with them," but Robert F. Kennedy envisioned the CAPs differently:

The community action programs must basically change these organizations by building into the program real representation for the poor. This bill calls for "maximum feasible participation of the residents." This means the involvement of the poor in planning and implementing programs: giving them a real voice in their institutions (cited in Moynihan 1969:90-91).

This principle of maximum feasible participation was central to the CAPs. Although recognizing citizen participation had an important legitimizing function, CAP's concept of maximum feasible participation was to go "beyond the customary rituals of legitimization" (Piven and Cloward 1971:266). In addition to elected officials and community groups each comprising one-third of CAP's board of directors, the final one-third was to be composed of "local, elected community representatives" (Sosin 1986:269). This would assure community residents a voice, allowing "the poor themselves" to take a significant role in determining priorities, programs and resource distribution of their CAPs (Halpern 1995; Blum 1991; Peterson and Greenstone 1977; Cahn and Passett 1971; Covey, Menard, Franzese 1992; Gilbert 1970; Moynihan 1969).

Policy Implications

CAPs provided funding to over 1,000 cities in its effort to coordinate existing social services and provide new programs to the poor (Jackson 1993:419).

Community action brought people together who would not normally have come together, leading to dialogue, new relationships, and occasionally to coalition building. Community action created or fostered scores of new local
affiliations and organizations -- single-issue coalitions, tenant organizations, legal services, public interest law firms, various rights organizations. These organizations did what they could to improve community life, gave poor people critical support in coping with poverty-related stresses, and a voice in at least some of the issues shaping their lives (Halpern 1995:115-116).

This emphasis on coalition building may very well be the legacy of CAPs.

An examination of CAPs shows they succeeded in increasing the political participation of African-Americans and other historically excluded citizens (Peterson and Greenstone 1977). With the civil rights movement taking on mass dimensions by the early 1960s, the CAPs were "transformed into a means of attacking the local political exclusion of blacks" (Heclo 1986:322). By participating in CAPs, many African-American leaders gained experience and visibility and were successful in getting elected to various levels of public office (Quadagno 1994).

Although the CAP legislation called for the "maximum feasible participation" of community residents, the various planning groups which drafted this poverty program did not have even one African-American member, much less did they invite neighborhood residents to participate in the planning process (Moynihan 1969). According to sociologist Lillian Rubin many involved in the drafting of CAP legislation did not understand the "full meaning" of maximum feasible participation while others simply ignored this provision (Gilbert 1970; Moynihan 1969). As Piven and Cloward (1971) note, "Some such participatory clause graces much federal domestic legislation, just as token 'representatives' grace many of the public bodies charged with implementing legislation" (pp. 265-266). The lack of participation by the poor in previous governmental efforts led some policy makers to posit "apathy' and political inaction" as the most significant cause of poverty (Cruikshank 1994:37).
The difference with CAP was that "it meant to empower the poor to demand fundamental changes in the distribution of power within their communities" (Langston 1992:105). Theoretically summoning the voluntary participation of the poor to govern programs, in practice CAPs, for the most part, were run by professional social workers who administered traditional services (Jackson 1993:418). Once citizens began participating they wanted to put the rhetoric to practice and truly control their programs (Blum 1991). In some instances there were abuses, ranging from fiscal mismanagement to embezzlement, by community leaders entrusted with funds (Halpern 1995; Peterson and Greenstone 1977; Piven and Cloward 1971). This led to a backlash whereby the next program of the Johnson administration, Model Cities, was implemented through city governments -- the same political structure the CAPs were designed to by-pass (Halpern 1995:118).

Michael Harrington (1988) and others argue that, although the War on Poverty was a "decent, often timid and underfinanced program that had two or three years of hope," it was, in fact, "a concept that was never really put into practice" (p. 18).

PROBLEMS WITH CONVENTIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED INITIATIVES

Although most "neighborhood initiatives often have provided the most holistic, if not always coherent, approaches to problem solving in their era" (Halpern 1995:11), a few tend to view each problem of the community as independent from other issues in the community (Alinsky 1969:57). Programs such as the Chicago Area Project and Mobilization for Youth each formed attempting to solve one problem -- juvenile delinquency and youth gangs. Social problems are interrelated and there must be a
coherent, all-encompassing struggle to address these concerns. As Alinsky (1969) noted, "all issues are part of a chain of human issues, and that chain is no stronger than its weakest link" (p. 200).

As suggested by Michael Harrington (1969) the federal government has the "considerable funds" and ability to coordinate and establish national standards, while "the actual implementation of a program to abolish poverty can be carried out through myriad institutions" (p. 167) at the state and local levels. Still, the limited federal funds allocated to help the poor, such as the programs of the War on Poverty, were often spent on supporting a larger bureaucracy instead of providing services to people who were in need (Halpern 1995; Quadagno 1994; Piven and Cloward 1971). Even in Community Action Programs that were created to bypass local government, many of the "indigenous leaders" took advantage of their positions and stole from their communities. A balance must be found between accountability for appropriation of funds and community autonomy.

Before the settlement movement and continuing through the Community Action Programs of the 1960s, racism has played a role in neighborhood-based community action programs. Even organizations such as the Back of the Yards Neighborhood Council turned their tactics inward, becoming an "organizational vehicle" for defending the neighborhood against the "encroachment" of a newly arriving African-American population (Halpern 1995:56). In order to be effective for all people, the underlying assumptions of neighborhood-based initiatives must abandon anthropologists Oscar Lewis' (1966) "culture of poverty" thesis and similar arguments.

The theoretical emphasis on the behavior of the poor also obscures the relationship between the declining standard of living and the profit-driven decisions of the business sector and the state. In a society where women
and persons of color are heavily overrepresented among the poor, it becomes inherently racist and sexist to blame the decay of the social fabric on the decisions of those at the bottom, while ignoring those decisions made at the white and male-dominated top (Abramovitz 1994:145).

Instead of pointing to deficient cultures and "blaming the victim," such behavioral differences must be viewed as adaptive responses to exploitive conditions.

Perhaps the most detrimental problem with neighborhood-based community action programs is that they do not address the structural causes of poverty. As noted by Piven and Cloward (1971), government relief becomes available during times of conflict to reduce conflict and protect the wealthy. The implementation of neighborhood-based initiatives may actually impede the eradication of poverty by pacifying the residents and preventing any calls for radical change. For example Quadagno (1994) pointed out:

Undeniably, the War on Poverty did not end poverty in America. Indeed it was not designed to do so. Only $800 million was appropriated for its first year of operation, and the programs were not designed to redistribute wealth or fundamentally restructure the economy (P. 175).

For those who call for radical movement these types of government programs, with their band-aid approach to social problems, will never eradicate poverty. They may instead impede social change by deflecting possible attempts at structural change.

Whereas the settlement movement of the early 1900s was shaped in part by the needs of poor families and neighborhoods, the Chicago Area Project sought to increase participation of area residents. The Back of the Yards Neighborhood Council carried this further by committing to build a "People's Organization" whereby democratic decision-making allowed residents to devise their own solutions. The Mobilization for Youth recognized the importance of a multi-pronged approach to solving social problems.

Finally, the Community Action Programs of the War on Poverty called for the "maximum
feasible participation of the residents" and stressed coalition building as funding flowed directly to community-based organizations. Building on the heritage of neighborhood-based, community-driven initiatives of the twentieth century, Nevada's Family Resource Centers attempt to solve social ills with a community-based, multi-pronged, collaborative approach that provides funding directly to communities.

NEVADA'S FAMILY RESOURCE CENTERS

Inheritor of the Past

Historically the U.S. government has provided increased aid to the poor when the threat of violent political and social unrest arises. As Piven and Cloward (1971) indicate, during times when the social order is threatened, "modest concessions in relief-giving as a means of placating the discontented" are sanctioned (p. 243). Following times of social upheavals, especially when social tensions exist in ethnically diverse and lower class neighborhoods, new community-based initiatives emerge.

Although claiming to have a fresh approach to problems that plague the inner-city, or outlying slums, most of these new initiatives are recycled ideas refashioned to fit the present social context.

The attraction to neighborhood residents was the assistance provided in coping with the endless difficulties of everyday life, the specific skills taught, and the wide range of supportive services and recreational activities. Common elements included day nurseries, kindergartens, after-school programs, sports, sewing, hobby, and other kinds of clubs, and summer camps (outside the city) for children; equivalent clubs as well as day and evening classes of all sorts for youth and adults . . . primary health care, help in finding jobs, legal assistance, counseling, information and referral, emergency food, fuel, clothing, and bedding (Halpern 1995:30).
Although this could be describing a number of Nevada's Family Resource Centers, this is actually a description of a 1920s settlement house. Following the heightened social tension after the Rodney King verdict in 1992, new initiatives concerned with poverty cropped up across the United States. In Nevada, the Family Resource Centers emerged as the initiative to answer the call for help in lower-class neighborhoods.

Created by Senate Bill 405 (NRS 430 A), Family Resource Centers (FRCs) were established in "at-risk" neighborhoods to assist families in accessing needed services. In 1995 Governor Bob Miller allocated $1.1 million to 21 FRCs, including ten in southern Nevada, eight of which are located in the greater Las Vegas area. Funding was increased in 1997 to establish 19 additional centers throughout Nevada. Appointed by the state, the Southern Nevada Family Resource Center Local Governing Board was developed as an entity to assist FRCs. The board represents four coalitions and social service entities: Family Cabinet, BEST Coalition, Economic Opportunity Board, and HELP of Southern Nevada.

FRCs typically include child care resources and referrals, parenting education, support groups, educational classes, recreational programs, and youth development activities:

Each center attempts to eliminate bureaucratic, geographic and cultural barriers by allowing a "grassroots" [sic] approach in designing services tailored to the needs of area families, thus diminishing traditional barriers to service access (Nevada's Family Resource Center Project 1997b:1).

Modelled after the Family Resource Coalition (1994) in Chicago, Nevada's FRCs emphasize a neighborhood-based, community-driven, collaborative approach to providing services in low-income areas.
Neighborhood Councils

What is a people's program? The question itself leads to the obvious and true answer that a people's program is whatever program the people themselves decide. It is a set of principles, purposes, and practices which have been commonly agreed upon by the people (Alinsky 1969:54).

This definition of a "people's program" is central to the mission of Nevada's FRCs. As defined by Nevada's Family Resource Center Request for Proposal, "a Neighborhood Council is an organization of people, residing in an at-risk neighborhood, who assist and advise the Family Resource Center" (Nevada's Family Resource Center Project 1997a:4). The proposal further states that the Council should consist of at least eight (8) and not more than twenty-five (25) persons. At least sixty-percent (60%) of the members must meet the following criteria:

1.) Must be parents of children who live in the neighborhood.
2.) Must not be employed by any local government or school district (Nevada's Family Resource Center Project 1997a:4).

Like many of its predecessors, Nevada's Family Resource Centers were designed to demonstrate a "commitment to community participation in public-policy formation and implementation processes" (Cazenave 1993:62). In an effort to achieve a grass roots approach, each FRC is responsible for organizing a neighborhood council that conducts a needs assessments of its targeted neighborhood.

Guiding the overall plan of action, neighborhood councils are to "establish a Neighborhood Action Plan which describes the services to be offered" in each neighborhood (Nevada's Family Resource Center Project 1995:1). The creation of "a service delivery plan unique to the demography and desires of the residents, and responsive to changing needs and resources" of each community becomes the mission of each FRC (Nevada's Family Resource Center Project 1997b:1). After compiling a list of
the services and activities to be offered through the FRC and providing a detailed
description on how these services and activities will be provided to the residents, specific
measurements of outcomes -- in terms of changed conditions and characteristics for each
program -- must be provided. Councils meet monthly to quarterly in order to express
opinions and concerns relative to the overall plan of action. While not a panacea, the
community-based programming of FRCs

is attempting to frame community issues among the partners of the community,
is attempting to reawaken the response of the community to its societal decay, is
attempting to resurrect the "self-help" movement of the sixties to a "community-
help" of this decade and beyond (Gillett-Karam and Killacky 1994:121).

NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS: RELIANCE ON VOLUNTEERS

Made up of a corps of volunteers, the neighborhood council is the heart of every
FRC. To ensure a community-driven approach to improving the lives of area residents, it
is of utmost importance to have a neighborhood council with community-wide
participation. Members serve on the council in a voluntary capacity, receiving no
monetary compensation for their time and energy.

Although 60 percent of neighborhood council members must reside in and be
parents of children in the community, 40 percent may reside outside the geographic
boundaries the FRC serves. Throughout their existence many FRCs face the challenge of
getting neighborhood residents to continually participate in the formation and
implementation of the neighborhood action plan. In a statewide case managers' meeting
during the summer of 1998 the following areas were identified as "Barriers to Effective
Neighborhood Councils":

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
political agendas, lack of organization, serving only the interests of the most vocal members, lack of commitment to attendance, language barriers, time constraints -- over extended, families involved in primarily self-survival, apathy from the neighborhood, sharing resources and learning to prioritize, and poor follow-through on projects (Hyman 1998:1).

Since Nevada's FRCs were designed to "provide a service network developed by residents of each FRC neighborhood to serve the population of that specific 'at risk' area," the role of volunteers is vital to the success and future funding of Nevada's FRCs (Nevada's Family Resource Center Project 1997b:1).

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, a *volunteer* will be defined as:

an individual who chooses to participate in activities perceived by that person to promote human welfare, human dignity, and social justice when those activities -- are not the source of one's livelihood -- require involvement beyond what is expected of all citizens (e.g., voting) or of all members of an organization (e.g., paying dues), and -- are conducted in a manner consistent with the ideals of a free, democratic, pluralistic society (Park 1983:5).

Although it is possible to find the terms *voluntarism* and *volunteerism* used interchangeably, for this study it is important to differentiate between their distinct definitions. Using Ellis and Noyes' (1990) definition, *voluntarism* is defined as, "The generic term for all that is done in a society voluntarily" (p. 5). This broad definition encompasses religion, nonprofit agencies, foundations, philanthropy, and anything considered to be a part of the voluntary sector. Yet, this definition does not include government institutions, "since they are mandated by law and funded by taxes" (Ellis and Noyes 1990:6). *Volunteerism*, that is, "Anything relating specifically to volunteers and volunteering" (Ellis and Noyes 1990:5), is more useful for this thesis. It encompasses
volunteering regardless of whether it takes place in profit-making businesses, nonprofit organizations, or government programs (Ellis and Noyes 1990:6).

VOLUNTEERISM

This final section gives a brief review of the literature on volunteerism. The following will be specifically included: who donates their time to volunteer activities, how people become involved with their volunteer activities, and why people volunteer their time. Lastly, I will review the literature which suggests general strategies to increase volunteerism in Nevada's FRCs.

Who Donates Their Time

In 1995, 93 million or 49 percent of the U.S. adult population 18 years and over volunteered their assistance in one form or another (Gallup Organization for the Independent Sector 1995). Volunteerism is highest among females, among people who range in age from 35 to 55 years, among those employed part time, among married people, among households with children, and among college graduates (Gallup Organization for the Independent Sector 1995). In general, the higher the household income, the more likely people will engage in volunteer activities. This may also be due to the relationship between education and volunteering -- persons with college degrees generally have higher incomes than those with fewer years of schooling (Hayghe 1991:20). People who occupy a high status are also more likely to engage in volunteer activities. Providing more "human capital" (e.g., education, income, and health), higher status people are more likely to be asked to participate in volunteer activities (Wilson and Musick
While 52 percent of Caucasians engaged in volunteer activities between May 1995 and May 1996, only 35 percent of African-Americans and 40 percent of Latinos volunteered their assistance during the same time period (Points of Light Foundation 1996). The current trend shows some indication that populations with traditionally low volunteer rates, specifically African-Americans, Latinos and unmarried persons, are steadily increasing their participation in volunteer activities since the 1970s (Hayghe 1991; Ellis and Noyes 1990).

**Processes through which People Become Involved in Volunteerism**

Results from a 1992 national survey concerning how adults and teens learned about their volunteer activities are summarized in Table 1. The Independent Sector (1992) reported that 35.9 percent of adults and 40.7 percent of teens learned about their volunteer activities by someone asking them to participate (Hodgkinson and Weitzman, with Noga and Gorski 1992a, 1992b). Approximately 36 percent of adults learned about their activities from participating in an organization or group while 25.9 percent of adults learned of their volunteer activities because a friend or family member belonged to or benefited from the activity.
Table 1. How Teens and Adults First Learned about Their Volunteer Activities (percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How First Learned About Volunteer Activity*</th>
<th>Teens</th>
<th>Adults</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asked by someone</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>35.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through participation in an organization or group</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>36.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had a friend or family member in the activity or</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>benefiting from the activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sought out activity on own</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saw an advertisement or request in the media</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Respondents could give multiple responses.

Approximately 18 percent of volunteers sought out the activity on their own, while less than four percent of adults learned about their volunteer activity from radio, television, or printed sources. Rather than individuals finding a volunteer activity on their own, voluntary participation is most likely to occur when individuals are asked to participate or are already participating in other groups or organizations. According to Virginia A. Hodgkinson (1995), a leading expert on volunteerism and the nonprofit sector:

Survey results have consistently shown that people are more than three times as likely to volunteer when they are asked than when they are not . . . When asked to volunteer, over eight out of ten adults and teens will volunteer; when not asked, less than one out of four will seek out the activity on their own. These findings hold true regardless of age, income, or racial and ethnic background (pp. 43-46).
Hodgkinson (1995) further stated that only 32 percent of African-Americans and 33 percent of Latinos reported that they were asked to volunteer in the previous year while 46 percent of Caucasians reported they had been asked to do so:

If we are truly to develop a pluralistic, multicultural, caring society, we need to ensure equal opportunity to serve and participate in society. Leaders of voluntary organizations, schools and colleges, and community organizations need to ask senior citizens, young people, single people, and people from a wide range of racial and ethnic groups to volunteer. Lack of participation among these groups results from the failure of those people and organizations who do not ask them to participate (P. 49).

Reasons People Volunteer

Amongst democratic nations . . . all the citizens are independent and feeble; they can do hardly anything by themselves, and none of them can oblige his [sic] fellow-men to lend him [sic] their assistance. They all, therefore, become powerless, if they do not learn voluntarily to help each other (de Tocqueville 1987:202).

According to Murray Hausknecht (1962) the stereotype of "American as joiner" has endured since Alexis de Tocqueville observed, in Democracy in America, the pervasiveness of associations formed in the civil lives of U.S. citizens. Signified as serving a crucial function of democracy (Ellis and Noyes 1990; Hausknecht 1962; Rose 1954; Roosevelt 1940), voluntary associations help individuals understand the operation of the political process, prevent a centralization of power, and can be mechanisms for social change (Rose 1954).

Table 2 summarizes volunteers' self-reported reasons for volunteering. The most often related reason for volunteering was "work and co-workers interesting." The next oft cited reason for volunteering was to provide "service to others," with 45 percent of Independent Sector (1986) respondents and 50 percent of respondents indicating so in the
Gallup Organization (1987) survey. According to Pearce (1993) this was a big shift from the 1960s and 1970s when respondents claimed to volunteer primarily for altruistic purposes (p. 72). Also interesting is the 39 percent and 27 percent of volunteers who relate they volunteer for "instrumental gain" -- an increase from earlier nationwide surveys (Schram 1985). This may be due to a societal acceptance of nonaltruistic reports of reasons for volunteering (Pearce 1993). Still 22 percent of Independent Sector respondents and 32 percent of Gallup Organization respondents gave "other" responses ranging from "to keep taxes down" to "religious concerns" (Pearce 1993:72).

Table 2. Self-reported Reasons for Volunteering (percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work and co-workers interesting</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service to others</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental gain</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asked to volunteer/Nothing else to do</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Independent Sector (1986); Gallup Organization (1987).
*Respondents could give multiple responses.

As illustrated in Table 2, most people claim to volunteer in the spirit of altruism (Flashman and Quick 1985; Allen and Rushton 1983), for interesting social contact (Bell 1995; Pearce 1983; Sharp 1978), and to promote personal goals and those of the different organizations (Pearce 1993; Murnighan, Kim, Metzger 1993; Babchuck and Gordon 1962; Sills 1957).
According to Janoski and Wilson (1995) participation in voluntary associations is usually explained by a Weberian theory that employs human capital variables (e.g., income, education, occupation and health). According to this theory "voluntary action is driven, or made possible, by socioeconomic interests and resources, and will change as these interests and resources change" (Janoski and Wilson 1995:273). By focusing on status transmission, current socioeconomic resources become the primary determinant of participation in volunteer activities, since "life chances are affected by market position" (Janoski and Wilson 1995:273). With human capital, life chances increase and people can choose to belong to voluntary associations. Voluntary organizations are also attracted to people who possess a significant amount of human capital, and are thus more likely to recruit such people (Wilson and Musick 1997a; Hodgkinson 1995; Janoski and Wilson 1995; McPherson 1981). As related in the previous section, when asked to volunteer, over eight out of ten adults and teens will participate (Hodgkinson 1995:46): Thus, it is not surprising that volunteerism is frequently positively correlated with income, educational, and occupational status (Wilson and Musick 1997a; Smith 1994; Pearce 1993; Hodgkinson and Weitzman 1992; Clary and Snyder 1991; Hayghe 1991; Klobus-Edwards et al. 1984; Axelrod 1973; Babchuk and Booth 1973).

Janoski and Wilson (1995) further argue that a status transmission model best explains participation in self-oriented/instrumental/purposive groups -- those voluntary organizations that have a tangible outcome for the individual or client groups. This is similar to Sills' (1957) idea that voluntary participation occurs due to a particular personal interest in the organization. It also compliments Hausknecht's (1962) observation that."Voluntary associations have traditionally functioned as 'interest groups,' and it is through
affiliation with them that the individual has sought to enhance and protect his [sic] own interests" (p. 114).

Whereas as a Weberian theory may best explain participation in self-oriented groups, Janoski and Wilson (1995) argue a Durkheimian theory is more suitable for explaining voluntary participation in community-oriented organizations. Similar to Sills' (1957) service to "humanitarian" goals, these types of community, neighborhood, and service organizations are oriented toward community welfare and social improvements.

From a normativist perspective, joining a volunteer activity becomes an expression of solidarity that comes from adherence to a "set of corporate obligations" (Janoski and Wilson 1995:272), i.e., to a set of norms. Adherence to these norms is learned the same way other norms are learned -- through agents of socialization: family, friends, schools, churches, the workplace, and the mass media. Thus, the disposition to join and volunteer is transmitted from one generation to another through family socialization mechanisms. From a structuralist perspective, extending from the work of Georg Simmel, voluntary action is the "expression of structural isomorphism: children resemble their parents because their roles and statuses become identical" (Janoski and Wilson 1995:272-273). Rather than status transmission, parental socialization is the key to voluntary participation. Volunteering then depends on one's network of social relations and degree of social integration to society.

Wilson and Musick's (1997a) theory on volunteer work is based on the premise that "volunteer work is productive work that requires human capital" (e.g., education, income, health) (p. 694). Like any other form of work, Wilson and Musick (1997a) contend, a market exists for volunteer labor and "admission to and performance in this
market is conditional on 'qualifications'" (p. 695). As noted above, it is not surprising that people with human capital are more likely to be asked to participate: "Human capital qualifies a person for volunteer work and makes that person more attractive to agencies seeking volunteer labor" (Wilson and Musick 1997a:698).

Since FRCs serve "at-risk" areas, most area residents do not possess human capital in the traditional sense. In order to increase voluntary participation in neighborhood councils, other resources must be embraced -- the motivation to learn, to help the community, and make a difference in the lives of people. As noted by Tomeh (1979), minority volunteers must be provided a work environment in which they can be productive and feel comfortable (p. 94). As the face of the United States changes, volunteer groups must also change:

The challenge facing volunteer leaders is to accommodate cultural differences in attitudes toward helping, charity, the role of government, and family obligations. The need to be bilingual (in a number of languages) in recruitment and management of volunteers may become a priority in some geographic areas (Ellis and Noyes 1990:361).

Language is but one factor. Poor people, including those of color, "must receive clear messages that their work is needed and valued, and that the work they do is important in reaching the goals of the organization" (Tomeh 1979:94).

**General Strategies to Increase Volunteerism**

Evelyn S. Byron (1974), a former member of Hull-House in Chicago suggested several techniques to recruit volunteers. The organization seeking new recruits should plan an open house with a publicity release to the media "describing the agency's purpose, programs of service to people, its contributions to community life, and its plan for
establishing a new volunteer program" (p. 39). A "morning coffee" for area business people and delegates from local community groups may also prove useful to ask for their cooperation in publicizing the volunteer needs of the organization. Byron (1974) also suggests the use of group recruitment whereby at the invitation of a member, knowledgeable staff persons or volunteers attend meetings of other agencies, and give a brief orientation to the organization.

To strengthen existing government volunteer programs, Associate Professor of Public Administration Jeffrey L. Brudney (1990) suggested the following strategies: adequate funding for the volunteer program, arrangements for power sharing, orientation and training for employees and volunteers, increased access to volunteer opportunities, and promotion of feedback from the program (p. 200). Although tailored toward organizing county volunteer efforts, the National Association of Counties Volunteer Toolbox (Bradley et al. 1990) contained many helpful strategies to recruit and sustain a volunteer pool including: a written volunteer program containing a mission statement, goals and objectives, and a vision of success; a job description for each volunteer position defining responsibilities and tasks; an orientation and training sessions; documentation of all volunteer activities and expenses; provision of benefits to maximize recruitment and maintenance of a committed volunteer force; and budgeted support for volunteer recognition events, activities, and presentations.

Three recipients of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (1996) National Excellence Awards for the City Summit offered strategies that were useful for increasing voluntary participation in their neighborhood councils. Susan Ronk Moriarty from the "Transforming Neighborhoods Together" program in Knoxville,
Tennessee sent "Knoxville's Neighborhoods: A Resource Guide for Success." This booklet contained information on why neighborhood organizations are needed, how to start a neighborhood organization, problem solving approaches, as well as sample agendas, by-laws, and other useful resources for neighborhood councils (Catchot et al. 1996). Moriarty asserted the organized material helped to recruit members, as well as demonstrated the program's commitment to community residents. Dr. James C. Sears from the "Center in the Square" program in Roanoke, Virginia maintained that identifying key members in the community was "the core" of organizing an effective neighborhood council. After identifying community leaders, invitations to join should be extended.

Dr. Sears also suggested volunteer recruitment drives and meetings be announced on radio and television (Public Service Announcements). Robert Miller from the "Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program" in Minnesota claimed training classes were central to the success of his program's neighborhood council. Moriarty, Sears, and Miller all maintained the most important strategy was to "sell the idea" the council was organizing around. Miller stated, "If you sell the idea, get their interest -- you're on your way to getting them!"

Once members commit to serving on the neighborhood council, it is important to facilitate an ongoing relationship in order to retain them. In their examination of recruitment and retention strategies implemented by human service agencies, Watts and Edwards (1983) concluded that training, flexible scheduling, reimbursement for costs (meals and travel), and designating meaningful responsibility to members, are all successful approaches to volunteer retention. In her study, Pearce (1993) found, "Organizations in which volunteers work is recognized as worthwhile and is actively managed will
experience less turnover and performance unreliability" than agencies which passively manage and do not recognize their volunteers (p. 171). Lastly, to ensure the continued involvement of volunteers, Brudney (1990) suggests organizations increase "participation in problem solving and decision making, opportunities for training, supportive feedback and evaluation, and documentation of work performed" (p. 164).

The statewide meeting of FRC case managers in the summer of 1998 that identified barriers to effective neighborhood councils also related three broad strategies to overcome such barriers: educate the community on the purpose and services offered by FRCs, recruit a diverse membership, and include teens on neighborhood councils (Hyman 1998). This final suggestion points to the need to nurture the "spirit of volunteerism" among the young (Wilson and Musick 1997b:269). A neighborhood council president that attended the meeting suggested, "Looking at Neighborhood Council members who would be good for us -- getting people we need and utilizing them in their identified areas of strength and expertise." Although professionals who work for the FRCs offered helpful suggestions throughout this project, especially during the development of the research questions, this study seeks to record the recommendations offered by those who utilize the services provided by the FRCs with the purpose of implementing such strategies to ensure truly neighborhood-based, community-driven programs.
ENDNOTES

1 A few settlements were developed to specifically serve the African-American community. These included the Ada McKinley Center in Chicago, the Wendell Phillips Settlement also in Chicago, the New York Colored Mission in Harlem, the Phyllis Wheatley House in Minneapolis, the Susan Parrish Wharton Settlement in Philadelphia, the Robert Gould Shaw House in Boston, the Kingsley House (black branch) in New Orleans, and the Bethlehem House in Louisville (Halpern 1995; Trolander 1975).

2 While working for the Institute for Juvenile Research, Alinsky became interested in the social force of the union movement. During the mid to late 1930s he became friends with union director Herbert March. For further discussion see John L. Lewis (Alinsky 1970, New York: Vintage Books).

3 By Executive Order, President John F. Kennedy (1961) created the President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Crime in order for the federal government to collaborate with state and local communities to "find new solutions to the problems of delinquency" (Council of State Governments 1965:79).

4 Introduced during his 1965 Inaugural Address, President Lyndon B. Johnson's "Great Society" included the establishment of: Medicare, Food Stamps, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Water Pollution Control Authority, and the National Endowment for the Arts, among other programs. For an interesting discussion on the formation of domestic programs under the "Great Society" see Regulating the Poor: The Functions of Public Welfare (Piven and Cloward 1971, pp. 256-288, New York: Pantheon Books).

5 Included as parts of an effort "to help people escape poverty, not to make it more
bearable," were the following programs: services to develop employment opportunities; special and remedial education (including adult literacy); special education for migrant and transient families; academic counseling and guidance services; after-school, summer and weekend academic classes; programs to benefit pre-school children; child-care and youth activity centers; recreation and physical fitness services and facilities; rehabilitation and retraining of physically and mentally handicapped persons; improvement of home management skills, living facilities and living conditions for elders; health examinations and education for children; health, employment, and educational service to young men not qualified for military services; and services to enable families from rural areas to meet problems of urban living (Moynihan 1969; Clark and Hopkins 1969).

Projected increase expenditures for social programs were leveled off due to the continuing war in Vietnam (Harrington 1988; Peterson and Greenstone 1977; Miller and Roby 1968).

Developed by the Johnson administration, Model Cities was the first program of the newly-formed Department of Housing and Urban Development. Unlike the CAP's call for "maximum feasible participation," Model Cities was unwilling to give control to the people, pointedly calling for "wide-spread citizen participation" (Langston 1992:106).

I was in telephone and e-mail contact with five HUD award recipients during November and December of 1998 and January of 1999. Susan Ronk Moriarty of the "Transforming Neighborhoods Together" program in Knoxville, Tennessee was helpful and supportive of this research project. Dr. James C. Sears of the "Center in the Square" program in Roanoke, Virginia and Robert D. Miller of the "Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization" program in Minnesota were also enthusiastic in sharing information.
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this exploratory study is to develop strategies which will increase community participation in Nevada's Family Resource Centers' neighborhood councils. The research questions guiding this thesis include: (1) Through what process do area residents become members in their neighborhood councils? (2) What reasons do members give for continued participation in their neighborhood councils? (3) What strategies can be implemented to increase voluntary participation in neighborhood councils?

RESEARCH DESIGN

Participants for this study were neighborhood council members of southern Nevada Family Resource Centers (FRCs). Participants were active council members for the past three months to three years. Individual members of four neighborhood councils were my units of analysis.

The methodological approach for this project embraced participatory action research (PAR) which is defined as:

a process of systematic inquiry, in which those who are experiencing a problematic situation in a community or workplace participate
collaboratively with trained researchers as subjects, in deciding the focus of knowledge generation, in collecting and analyzing information, and in taking action to manage, improve, or solve their problem situation (Deshler and Ewert 1995:2).

I entered the field knowing I wanted my dissertation to focus on Nevada's FRCs. With the "lived experience of people" (Reason 1994:328) being central to my approach, the research questions emerged through informal discussions with the center's clients and service providers. It was during the final month of an internship that I decided, with the help of area residents who accessed services, the case manager, center director, and regional coordinators, to concentrate on the neighborhood council aspect of the FRCs.

Although an internship initially brought me into the field, "The community's interests [were] are identified and defined as a starting point rather than beginning with the interests" of myself as an "external researcher" (Deshler and Ewert 1995:8). The neighborhood action plan, the heart of each FRC, was to be driven by the neighborhood councils, making community participation the essence of each center. According to PAR practitioner Yoland Wadsworth (1998), "Research which involves the collaboration of people, rarely is sustained without a shared purpose," (p. 14) and the "shared purpose" for this project was the development of strategies to increase citizen participation. When engaging in PAR:

The knowledge that is generated is intended to help solve practical problems within a community and, ultimately, contribute to a fairer and more just society. Its primary purpose is to encourage the poor and oppressed and those who work with them to generate and control their own knowledge. It assumes that knowledge generates power and that people's knowledge is central to social change (Deshler and Ewert 1995:5).

The knowledge and experiences of area residents, neighborhood council members and service providers were valued throughout this study.
As stated by Fals-Borda and Rahman (1991), "a task of PAR is the 'enlightenment and awakening of common peoples'" (cited in Reason 1994:328). I did not want to change the field and did not attempt to "enlighten" other people. Although I was a member of one neighborhood council, I did not help direct group goals or identify possible issues during meetings and community events. Consistent with an inductive approach, I instead observed what group members stated was important to them. I do not believe researchers should try to "empower" people but instead should develop and suggest instruments, and people who choose to use them may change the world for themselves. This was the type of relationship I developed with members of all four neighborhood councils: We were all common people who were thinking, feeling, and acting our way through the process set forth by the service network tailored to each community.

Interaction with members led me to believe that PAR, although not a formal procedure, was an instrument used by one of the councils. The neighborhood council meetings encouraged empowerment through the "process of constructing and using their own knowledge" (Reason 1994:328), i.e., their own ways of knowing. In line with the goals of PAR, efforts were made to "identify issues, to reclaim a sense of community, and emphasize the potential for liberation" (Reason 1994:329). Members were actively encouraged to work towards greater effectiveness of their neighborhood councils by going outside the groups and letting others know the neighborhood action plan of each FRC should be driven by the people of the community. It was explained that the neighborhood council was the vehicle through which residents were to develop and contribute to the action plan.
It is with this in mind that methods were chosen. Triangulation, the use of a multi-method approach, aided in obtaining an in-depth understanding of key concepts, especially their interrelationships, and enhanced my answers to the research questions (Babbie 1995; Denzin and Lincoln 1994; Reinharz 1992; Kirk and Miller 1986). Data gathering techniques consisted of participant observation and focus groups. The use of participant observation and focus groups permitted a study of participants' orientations and actions -- including interpretation and motivation -- in terms of their subjective meanings to the respondents. The use of these techniques best fit the research questions.

Positive Aspects of Research Design

Aside from focus groups, participant observation was a central data gathering technique for this study. I took the role of participant-as-observer (Gold 1958) in all four neighborhood councils I worked with. In line with my intention of being candid with respondents, during my first contact I told members of the council I belonged to that I was conducting research. The use of participant observation brought me into frequent contact with members and allowed unstructured interviews to take place. This was critical during the formulation of the research questions as well as throughout this project. Consistent with avoiding control over others and developing instead a sense of connectedness with other participants (Reinharz 1992), fieldwork gave me the ability to collect data on a large scale range of behaviors. Studying members in their natural setting helped me apply verstehen. By working in a family resource center during a six month internship, I was able to observe the structure of the organization, learn the roles of various people, and
view a wide variety of interactions. The flexibility inherent in participant observation was also useful as I was able to engage in field research whenever the group had an activity.

The use of focus groups was also a critical component of my data gathering techniques. Having been in the field for at least six months prior to conducting the focus groups, I perceived that participants were willing to discuss the topic of interest. In fact, many members wanted to increase community participation in their neighborhood councils. Since sensitive or embarrassing topics were not going to be discussed, the use of focus groups was deemed appropriate (Morgan 1988).

As stated by Morgan (1988), the goal of focus groups is to get closer, through interaction, to the participants' understandings of the researcher's topic of interest (p. 24).

As Krueger (1988) noted:

The focus group interview works because it taps into human tendencies. Attitudes and perceptions relating to products, services, or programs are developed in part by interaction with other people. We are a product of our environment and are influenced by people around us (P. 23).

Through the use of focus groups, participants were stimulated to offer more depth concerning their ideas and opinions on voluntary participation in neighborhood councils. Some ideas members shared served as a "springboard" for other members who may not have thought of certain issues had they not heard previous statements made by other group members. This group interaction also helped to reduce interviewer effect.

According to Menakshy (1994), focus groups allow the moderator "to experience the actual interaction and also watch facial expressions, which can help him or her to better understand the feelings, beliefs, and attitudes of group members" (p. 58). The high level of moderator involvement ensured the covering of planned topics and, although I
redirected non-productive discussions, there was still room for the exploration of related topics. As I conducted the focus groups I realized "overly dominant members must be helped to listen and quieter members must be invited to share their ideas and opinions" (Billson 1994:5). Offering a concentrated insight into the participants' views (Morgan 1988:31), this technique offered the opportunity to observe a large amount of interaction, concerning motivations and attitudes towards volunteerism, in a proscribed period of time (Morgan 1988:15).

**Possible Limitations of Research Design**

Focus groups are not without their limitations. The non-naturalistic setting was a concern. For this study, focus groups were conducted in the FRCs, although not always in a room the members had previously worked in. Although body language was observed, communication during the focus groups was mainly limited to verbal behavior that was initiated and guided by me, as the moderator (Menakshy 1994; Morgan 1988). I also risked the possibility that respondents would participate in "group think" as the "emerging group culture" may have interfered with individual expression (Fontana and Frey 1994:365). This became apparent during the first focus group when respondents followed the lead of a person who gave a socially acceptable response. Following one member's response of altruism, all of the other members insisted they not only agreed with the answer, but that it was "obviously a great answer" that "summed up" their feelings. Although I am not certain participants intended to give the same response prior to hearing the other member, had the same question been asked in a private face-to-face interview, different views may have been shared. As suggested by Frey and Fontana (1991),
individuals may have been stifled by pressure to conform rather than stimulated by group interaction.

Qualitative methods also have problems with reliability. Although efforts have been made to assess internal and external consistency, the results may still not be replicable by another researcher. Finally, findings may not be generalizable to other volunteer organizations since probability sampling techniques were not employed.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Prior to conducting this study, permission was obtained through the university regarding the proper use of human subjects (See APPENDIX I). Lofland and Lofland (1984:25-27) suggest that connections, accounts (brief explanations of proposed research), knowledge, and courtesy can help a researcher gain access to the field. I became acquainted with a predominantly Latino neighborhood in central Las Vegas after visiting the local community center in 1995. I applied for an internship with their new Family Resource Center and, during the spring semester of 1997, I worked there approximately twelve hours per week. This allowed for frequent contact with participants since I was in the field three times a week for the duration of my internship.

Within this six month period I attended two monthly networking meetings for case managers. It was at these meetings that I made contact with five FRCs and their neighborhood councils. Between June 1997 and December 1998, I attended the neighborhood council meetings (one council met monthly, two met every two months, and two met quarterly) of five FRCs. I also continued to volunteer and support various
events sponsored by each neighborhood council. It was through this participation that I developed rapport and established trust with respondents.

Initially, I attended one neighborhood council meeting of five FRCs. Two of the FRCs serviced an ethnically diverse population, while each of the other FRCs aided an African-American, Caucasian, and Latino clientele, respectively. Four of the FRCs were established during the first funding cycle in 1995. The fifth FRC was one of four in Las Vegas established during the 1997 funding-cycle. It became operational in the spring of 1998. I decided to include it in the study to observe the formation of a neighborhood council.

After volunteering during a food and clothing distribution day and attending three neighborhood council meetings of one FRC, I decided not to include it in this study since its council was not representative of the targeted population. Although the geographic boundaries which the FRC served were inhabited primarily by African-Americans, the neighborhood council was structured around the English as a Second Language class, which primarily consisted of Latinas. At the time, I was told there was also an African-American neighborhood council. This afternoon meeting consisted of one Caucasian woman and one African-American woman who was attending for the first time. The case manager was very enthusiastic about this project and I hope this FRC will benefit from the findings of this study.

At the first meeting of each neighborhood council, I was introduced by the case manager as a "graduate student from the university, interested in helping more people get involved in the neighborhood council." Each neighborhood council member received a flyer (See APPENDIX II) and was asked to participate in a group discussion. A sign-in
sheet with space for their name, number, and address was circulated. At Council A, all 24 members said they were interested in participating, at Council B, 8 of 12 members signed the sheet, at Council C, 15 of 42 signed the sheet, at Council D all four members verbally agreed to participate and decided the discussion would take place immediately following a regular neighborhood council meeting.

I kept a field journal with me throughout the participant observation phase of this project. Early on I realized the importance of chronicling the activities with extensive field notes that included as much detail as possible. At times the presence of the yellow pad seemed to distance me from members, so I left it in my vehicle. During these times I took mental notes until I could get to pen and paper. My personal and emotional involvement with the participants was acknowledged throughout my field notes, especially during my internship. Preliminary interpretations were also noted.

The use of sensitizing concepts, which gave me "a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances" (Blumer 1969:148), was relevant to my research. Rather than entering the field with preconceived categories, I entered with a list of sensitizing concepts that emerged from the literature review along with extensive conversations with colleagues and other professionals. Community empowerment and collaboration between service providers and residents were two such concepts that were useful throughout my field research. Although these concepts helped me focus, they were not intended to limit my observations but rather served as loose guidelines. I took my general conceptual ideas and applied them to the actual research situations.

I maintained a filing system throughout this project which facilitated the coding of data. Through the informal discussions that took place during the participant observation
stage, five dimensions emerged concerning strategies to increase voluntary participation: (1) the role of the case manager, (2) recruiting, (3) training, (4) facilitating a committed council, and (5) providing recognition for neighborhood council members. Although in discussions with neighborhood council members patterns did not emerge concerning two other dimensions, I included them because they were pertinent for this project. The sixth dimension "establishing a foundation" was included since many of the case managers were mandated to execute the indicators when their FRCs first opened. As suggested by the literature review (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 1996; Forrester 1992; Bradley et al. 1990), "providing benefits" was also added as the final dimension.

Because of interviewee homogeneity, I conducted four focus groups with an average of five people in each group. I sent a reminder letter (See APPENDIX IV) to participants one week prior to each of the focus groups. For two of the focus groups I also called the night before to remind them of the meeting. At the beginning of each focus group I read aloud and had each participant sign an informed consent form (See APPENDIX III). I also handed out my business card to all participants. The sessions were audio and video recorded and later transcribed. I was the moderator for the focus groups and, as suggested by Frey and Fontana (1991), I was directive, and therefore, the interview questions tended to be purposive and "somewhat structured" (p. 182). Each group stuck to four preplanned topics including motivations, attitudes toward political activism, involvement in volunteer positions, and suggestions for increasing voluntary participation. To generate new ideas, time was left at the end of each group for a brainstorming discussion. Each session lasted between 55 minutes and 95 minutes.
Before starting the groups, I considered money constraints. Due to budget constraints, monetary incentives were not used. However, I did supply food and beverages at the completion of each focus group. I did not incur the expense of renting a research site since all site managers allowed me to use the site facilities where the FRCs were located. Within a week after each focus group I sent respondents a letter thanking them for their participation and informing them that results would be passed on to the case managers at the conclusion of this project (See APPENDIX IV).

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

My use of triangulation, discussed in previous sections, helped ensure the validity of indicators.

The most fertile search for validity comes from a combined series of different measures, each with its idiosyncratic weaknesses, each pointed to a single hypothesis. When a hypothesis can survive the confrontation of a series of complementary methods of testing, it contains a degree of validity unattainable by one method (Kirk and Miller 1986:30).

Babbie (1995) states, "The kinds of comprehensive measurements available to the field researcher tap a depth of meaning" in key concepts that are not as readily available with quantitative methods (p. 301). According to Blumer (1969:150) sensitizing concepts can be tested, improved, and refined: "Their validity can be assayed through careful study of empirical instances which they are presumed to cover." For this study, validity of the observational data was predominately based upon face value. That is, how closely these indicators -- based upon the focus groups, the literature review, and intuitive sense -- appeared to measure the concepts that they were intended to measure. Multiple indicators of a variable in a composite measure also help ensure validity (Babbie 1995:183). After a
brainstorming discussion at the conclusion of each focus group, I gave each member a list of seven dimensions with multiple indicators and asked if my findings resonated with them. In accordance with participatory action research, I asked members if they thought the strategies developed to that point "made sense" or "were off target" (Wadsworth 1998:12). In this way, council members tested my understanding of the research project (Morgan 1988). Some indication of reliability appears in the measures of validity, as a measure can not be valid unless it is also reliable (Kirk and Miller 1986).

Measures of reliability in field research seek to discover whether observations about members are internally and externally consistent. Internal consistency was accounted for by comparing the actions of members in the research setting, over time, in different situations. Whether during a neighborhood council meeting, a neighborhood block party, or a focus group, I was constantly noting respondents' comments and questions. Observational consistency indicated a level of reliability: across the four neighborhood councils the same five dimensions emerged, and many indicators were consistently mentioned by the different councils. External consistency was increased by cross-checking my findings with people knowledgeable about the field: case managers, the regional coordinators, and three recipients of the HUD National Excellence Award all being helpful. I also consulted several texts which contained some strategies for increasing voluntary participation.
ENDNOTES

1 The case manager was hired two weeks before I started my internship. This afforded me the opportunity to have input from the beginning with developing and formatting office forms, an informational pamphlet, and monthly program reports, assembling an inventory list, and most importantly, assisting with direct client services (translating, assisting with computer classes, assisting with citizenship forms, providing information and referrals). Many of these residents became active in the neighborhood council and even attended the Governor's Conference on "Nevada's Future: Building Communities by Strengthening Families."

2 Over the course of two years, I attended five neighborhood council meetings of the FRC I completed the internship with. Within an 18 month period, I also attended five meetings of the FRC in which I was an ex-officio member. I attended two meetings of the FRC that serves an ethnically heterogeneous population, and three meetings of the newly funded FRC.

3 Along with participating in neighborhood council meetings, I attended a grand opening, neighborhood council parties, and open houses: I volunteered for holiday community parties, neighborhood information and unity fests, and back to school parties -- often serving as a translator to the Spanish-speaking community. Within a week after I attended or volunteered for an event, I sent letters (See APPENDIX IV) to the FRCs congratulating them on their success.

4 My advisor for this thesis suggested I contact the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for their needs assessment and a tool that measures voluntary participation. After an exhaustive search of the HUDUSER website and extensive
conversations with their Community Connections Office, I ordered *Communities as Work: Addressing the Urban Challenge* (1996), a review of the National Excellence Awards for the City Summit recipients. Five agencies out of the 25 award recipients incorporated neighborhood councils as part of their programs. Although none had developed formal strategies to increase community participation, three of the agencies were helpful in sharing approaches that worked for them. Susan Ronk Moriarty, program director for the Center for Neighborhood Development in Knoxville, Tennessee sent a useful manual, "Knoxville's Neighborhoods: A Resource Guide for Success" (Catchot, Moriarty, Rigsby, Rogers, Trent, Tullock 1996).
CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS/ANALYSIS

Qualitative data, gathered during the two years of my participant observation, along with data from four focus groups, will be presented in this chapter. In order to evoke the voices of research participants, I have relied heavily upon direct quotes from neighborhood council members, area residents who accessed services, case managers, and other employees from four southern Nevada Family Resource Centers (FRCs). Organized into three sections, this chapter addresses each of the research questions guiding this thesis: (1) Through what process do area residents become members in their neighborhood councils? (2) What reasons do members give for continued participation in their neighborhood councils? (3) What strategies can be implemented to increase voluntary participation in neighborhood councils? This final question is, of course, the main focus of this project.

THROUGH WHAT PROCESS DO AREA RESIDENTS BECOME MEMBERS IN THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS?

For many neighborhood council members, their initial involvement with the council was by invitation. Some members were invited due to their earlier participation in the development of other programs.
I have been a member of this <community center> for at least, maybe 15 years, and I was originally involved in the start-up of the Boys and Girls Club. Whatever, (pause) that neighborhood advisory board that started that thing, so I guess my name has been out there. So I came by invitation.

We're an at-risk school. We have a tremendous number of children in families who need the kind of assistance the Family Resource Center offers. So it was natural that we got a hold of each other. And we've been doing things that benefitted our children as well as the families [elementary school principal].

I came down to do {teach} a class and they asked me to join them because they were just starting out. I said great! And, so they {two other members} were so friendly they said (giggle) that, it, you couldn't say no, it was wonderful!

I came around three of four years ago when <the Family Resource Center> first started. Of course, I knew <the case manager> for probably seven years prior to that, and she asked me to start coming to <the neighborhood council> meetings. And they originally had a different council in place which lasted maybe two months and then it was disbanded. And when it was brought back up she asked me to come back to the meetings, and I was voted in as president and have been here ever since (giggle).

This is consistent with nationwide surveys that report, when asked, over eight out of ten adults will volunteer (Hodgkinson 1995; Hodgkinson and Weitzman, with Noga and Gorski 1992a, 1992b).

Other members became involved with their neighborhood councils after people from their place of employment or other group memberships informed them of the FRCs and the purpose of the neighborhood councils.

I was involved in a resident council in my immediate neighborhood, and then from there they got me into the office, and actually I was the president of the council there. The manager said, "You have to go." [other voices: laughter] He told me when I needed to go, where I need to go. And that was three years ago!

I've lived here awhile. I came from Los Angeles. I learned about this place because some of us have an Alcoholics Anonymous group every Tuesday.
I worked for <the area hospital> for three years and <one of the Sisters> from admissions services said, "You live in <that township.> You should come to the neighborhood council." And there was one meeting of particular interest, and I don't remember what it was. And I came and then I saw how it was very active and I really enjoyed it.

I learned about this from the union of construction workers. In one meeting, there was a lawyer who was talking about workers' rights. And he had handbills, and he had some information on <the Family Resource Center.> And it is through that contact that I came here. There were even maps for the neighbors on how to get here. And for me -- I almost live in front of the school.

Still others became involved because they were referred by friends and family who were involved in or benefitted from FRC programs.

My mom told me about this, because I live real close to here -- near the school.

Well, me too, because my father was interested in this center and he started bringing me to classes. So also by recommendation.

It's that my brother -- he started coming first for the exercise room. And when I came here I also got into the community.

I came through some friends and they told me this place could help me. It was through a recommendation.

The majority of members from the FRC, whose residents are primarily Latinos, became involved in their neighborhood council due to their participation in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. Providing a much needed service at no cost to students, ESL classes consistently constitute a successful source for providing some of the most active neighborhood council members.

I arrived in this country since last January, and in coming I wanted to study English. And over there at community college, I didn't like the programs they were offering. My interests were different. And it was recommended by the woman who takes care of my child, my baby-sitter. She had been to the other
college and she recommended this school. I've been coming since September, more or less. Uh, hmm.

A friend told me about this place. They told me that here, I could take English classes here for free. I came here, and I keep coming back.

I came to <the Family Resource Center> because a woman told me that over here they teach classes. Well then, I have to go to school to learn English because at work they told me I had to go to learn some things. And yes -- it's helped me enough. For not knowing nothing {English}, now I know enough.

I also came to <the Family Resource Center> to take English classes. I found out about them through a friend. In my work they speak a lot of English.

I was looking for a school. And by chance I ended up here and I like to help my people [40ish Latina].

Contrary to reported survey results in the literature review (Hodgkinson and Weitzman, with Noga and Gorski 1992a, 1992b), none of the members reported learning about the neighborhood council from radio, television, or printed sources. For the FRC serving the Latino population, this may be due to the lack of access to Spanish media. Except for flyers, this inadequate exposure -- for all the FRCs -- is probably due to a lack of funds to promote the neighborhood council. Finally, none of the members reported seeking participation in the neighborhood council on his or her own.

WHAT REASONS DO MEMBERS GIVE FOR CONTINUED PARTICIPATION IN THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS?

According to Wuthnow (1991) people volunteer because they believe it is "the right thing to do." In reported findings from the 1960s and 1970s (Ellis and Noyes 1990; Schram 1985; Anderson and Moore 1978), this prosocial or altruistic claim was one of the most often cited reasons to volunteer offered in self-report surveys (Schervish,
Hodgkinson, and Gates 1995). In this study, neighborhood council members' responses were consistent with previous studies as most claimed they continued to participate in their neighborhood councils due to altruistic motives such as "to help my people" and "to serve the community."

We have a buy-in because our children need it -- the children and the families.

I, I, I do have a vested interest in this community because a lot of my time and energy goes into the children of this place.

It's a real, uhm, it's a real (sigh) -- for lack of a better word, uhm, incredible neighborhood filled with incredible people. [other voices: With incredible problems; Yeah, with incredible needs]. And we are lucky to be able to serve the community. The more you work at it, the more you see how precious it all is here.

It's like we said a few minutes ago, you, you take care of your little corner of the world, you know, and you help the world one piece at a time. [other voices: And this is our corner; This is our little corner]. (laughter) [other voices: Yeah; Right].

... I've been to other meetings too where I see a bunch of, what they say? -- a "bowl of sunshine," and you don't see anything as a result. My neighborhood -- there's a lot of needs and when I tell them they can come here for a resource. And then when they come back with, you know, good results (smiles; gestures with two thumbs up).

I came here, and I keep coming back. Because there's a lot of people, that, eh, need help.

Another often related reason for volunteering to serve on the neighborhood councils was enjoyment of the voluntary "work we do and my buddies {neighborhood council members}". Although not the most frequently cited reason for participating in this study, nationwide surveys completed by the Independent Sector (1986) and the Gallup Organization (1987) reported that approximately 65 percent of volunteers cited "work and co-workers interesting" as a primary reason for continuing their volunteer activity. As
suggested by Sharp (1978), since volunteer activities can prompt social interaction, requests for volunteerism should stress the plurality of the activity. The ability to make social contacts is often a draw for individuals who want to expand their social network, as evidenced by the following responses:

And I enjoy just talking about the community and seeing what everybody wants to see happen in the community.

I really feel a connection, uhm, to the group and it's a, it's like a spiritual thing too. (pause) Because of -- it's not just one of those things where people get together and say, "Oh let's do tea." And they, (animates drinking) [other voices: laughter] and they just sit around and they talk about stuff, and they, it's just a feel-good thing for themselves [other voice: We don't like to drink tea]. Yeah, we have fun, but we also have a real purpose. And we, and we actually are doing something. I can't stand belonging to any group where all they do is talk and make themselves feel good. And it's just as something else to put on their resume that they belong to.

Locally, uhm it's very easy to be disenfranchised if you don't belong to the inner circle or have another way to get in there. So being part of <the Family Resource Center> you kind of can feel, like, "Hey, I belong too and I do have a voice." And this was a way to feel like I'm part of the community and make a difference. (pause) Because I would have quit after the first month if it would have been just, you know, just a little social gathering. Although it's part of the reason I keep coming back . . . And since I got involved in this <Family Resource Center> I am, I feel like I'm not so out of the community.

Another common response for continued participation had to do with instrumental gain (self-interest -- opportunities to learn or attain higher status (Naylor 1967)) for neighborhood council members. In the predominantly Latino FRC, this was the most often cited reason for participating in the neighborhood council. Meetings were held immediately following ESL classes.

Also I can come to this school {ESL classes} everyday from Monday through Thursday and I like that. But I should also help out.
I wanted to go to college, but a person I know knew about here, and they told me I should come before I go to school... And I do not mind helping, she {case manager} is very good to us.

I want to learn, so I come here. And it is good for my children, to help them, they see it is important to give to the community.

We come to learn. [other voice: So we can practice our English]. So they can help us. [other voice: Exactly].

I come back every week, because the moment we stop coming, we stop learning.

Me -- because I am working, and the place that I work they speak a lot of English. I didn't understand in the beginning. Now I have been living here in the United States for two years, and I did not understand before. But now, more or less, I understand. So this class has served a little. So I can now (pause) and I can answer a few questions.

I have been here for almost five and a half months... I can speak a little bit of English, but in reality I could not write it... And at work, all I work with is Americans. That is all there is, and I speak it. But I could not, in reality, write it -- a report -- and at work I had to. So I had problems. If I had to write something, I did not do it. Now I can do it. This class has helped me a lot.

In my work they speak a lot of English. There are a lot of Americans, there is like only three or four Latinas. And my first days at work I did not even know how to say "one." For example, I work in a restaurant, I could not even say "order"... And thanks to God, I started coming to this school and it has already benefitted me a lot. It has already been six months since I started coming, and already the words are falling out of my mouth, and I am already writing. It is a real blessing for us Latinos.

WHAT STRATEGIES CAN BE IMPLEMENTED TO INCREASE VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION IN NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS?

As stated previously, this final research question is the focus of this project. As discussed in the Chapter Three, area residents who accessed services, case managers, a center director, regional coordinators, and neighborhood council members emphasized the need for implementing strategies to increase resident participation in neighborhood...
councils. This concern was taken up by the Southern Nevada Family Resource Center Local Governing Board during their April 1998 and May 1998 meetings. "Neighborhood Council Issues and Strategies" and "Neighborhood Council Involvement Committee" were items on the agendas, respectively. After some discussion, only four of the eighteen southern Nevada FRCs were deemed successful in garnering general participation and retention of area residents in their neighborhood councils. A member of the board suggested the case managers of the FRCs with "successful neighborhood councils" facilitate a training session for other case managers "who are all struggling" with their neighborhood councils. One of the four councils deemed "successful" was included in this study. The following sections discuss seven dimensions that emerged concerning strategies to increase voluntary participation in neighborhood councils:

(1) establishing a foundation,

(2) role of the case manager,

(3) recruiting,

(4) training,

(5) facilitating a committed council,

(6) providing recognition, and

(7) providing benefits for neighborhood council members.

Each of these dimensions, along with their multiple indicators will be discussed at length.

Establishing a Foundation

Most of the indicators for this dimension did not emerge during the participant observation or focus groups. "Establishing a foundation" is included since it can facilitate
entry into a neighborhood as well garner overall support for the FRCs. Nevada's Family Resource Center Project (1997a) mandates all FRCs seeking funding must provide, "Evidence of support and active involvement of residents of the neighborhood and local businesses, including evidence on how program recipients are involved in providing input and/or feedback to the Family Resource Center" (p. 7). Such a mandate entails developing relations with people in the community and inviting them to participate in the process before seeking funding. A neighborhood council member shared her thoughts concerning the importance of extending a precise invitation:

So what I have discovered is that a blanket plea is not successful. So you can sit there, and you can send out newsletters, and you can stand up and say, "We need help, we need help, we need help!" It gets money. People will give money. But until you say, "I need you to help me." You probably, you'll never get them.

As suggested by Byron (1974) an invitation for an informal "morning coffee" may prove to be a useful first approach. By establishing rapport, FRCs can develop a sense of trust with potential members as suggested by these comments:

I think the first step that I think goes on is getting trust with the families. I think that was where the ground work that had to be laid. I think that now we are in a better spot for, now we have a rapport, a little rapport with many of the families, you know, that their kids have been coming, and so I think that a good possibility, I don't think you can go cold-calling, I think you have to start with people that you know and that you now have trust with.

As suggested by Ponzio et al. (1994), "Trust needs to be built between outsiders and locals. Trust is indicated with a sense of comfort between program staff and community which leads to partnership. Trust has to be built, and not taken for granted" (p. 61).
Nevada's Family Resource Center Project (1997a) also mandates that all FRCs conduct a needs assessment of the neighborhood. This can be facilitated by identifying and establishing rapport with community activists, business leaders, and housing managers. Inviting local school district personnel to participate may also prove fruitful as indicated by the statement of an elementary school principal during a focus group:

*And we did that* {needs assessment}. We did that, and we did have people tell us what it is they wanted and they needed. We did that through a survey of my school, and I'm sure that was just part of it.

The final indicator that emerged concerning this dimension is the possibility of merging an FRC neighborhood council with an already existing council. A neighborhood council in this study implemented this strategy during the spring of 1998. Concerning the collaboration of five entities into one neighborhood council, the president of the council stated:

So to me that's why I think it's going to work because we have DCFS {Division of Child and Family Services}, we have Family-to-Family, we have welfare, and we have <the Family Resource Center,> and the community policing. Well, these are all things that are happening right here in this community. So if there's something going on we would know it then (pause) because it's everything that's here. Do you see what I'm saying? With problems and stuff like that, we'll know it more this way.

Another member shared:

We put them all on the agenda. They're all able to address their issues and it's still a new thing, you know, it's still fairly new. And they're still feeling us out and seeing what they want from us. So in the end, it's going to work.
During their April 1998 meeting the Southern Nevada Family Resource Center Local Governing Board discussed these types of collaborations as a possible solution for overwhelmed council members who are often asked to serve on a multitude of boards and councils. This strategy may also prove useful if collaborations are developed with other newly forming councils.

**Role of the Case Manager**

As stated in the previous chapter, when I began my FRC internship in the spring of 1997, the case manager had just completed her second week of employment. The previous case manager resigned from the position he held since the FRC's inception in July of 1996. By the end of my internship the current case manager no longer held the position, and a month later, two part-time case managers were hired in her place. The original neighborhood council disbanded.

I do not know what happened. Just when we started to make a difference, it was over [former neighborhood council member].

One of the current case managers confided the difficulty of stepping into the position and establishing rapport with the community. Ponzio et al. (1994) suggest new personnel stay in the area to get a sense of "what is going on. Time is needed for learning, negotiation, and buy in" (pp. 60-61).

Although circumstances occasionally require a case manager be replaced, efforts should be made to avoid the high turnover of case managers, a condition that has plagued a few of the FRCs. A dynamic former case manager, from an FRC not included in this
study, was forced to resign when she fell ill due to the lack of insurance coverage. Other case managers move on to positions with higher-paying salaries.

The importance of having consistent employees, "familiar faces," cannot be emphasized enough as related in the following remarks:

I want to agree with the "avoid high turnover of case managers." Boy, these places are crazy. It's like if you call there's a new person, not even case managers, but a new employee answers the phone. Have you ever called here, and they get someone new?... They're [clients] just calling on the phone and they're like, "I have a problem. I need help," and that person on the phone might turn them off 'cause they don't have the knowledge.

One person starts to help. (pause) And then before you know it they're gone -- and nobody knows nothing.

Neighborhood council members from the newest FRC that became operational in the spring of 1998 offered many insightful comments about managerial skills that constitute an effective case manager.

I think a volunteer needs to be uh, needs to be, I don't know if the word "managed" is the right word, but I think the person has to be given a -- uh, a task, or a goal, or some involvement so that they feel that what they're doing is productive and meaningful. And I think if you don't do that you are not going to have the volunteer come back a second time. It will just be a one time -- the volunteer is just casing it, seeing what's out there, seeing if it's adventurous stuff... Now that seems simplistic enough, but it's difficult to do because it means the person who's managing really has to have a sense of what the person's talents or gifts are, and tap those, and make those blossom, so to speak.

I liked how you say that (gesturing toward the woman across the table) because with volunteers some people do have, you know gifts and talents. It's not just like show up and like, "What do you need?" or "Here go do that, go to that." I mean, I think if you can take the time to find out what there gifts are and what there talents are, I think that [other voice: So it takes someone who is very observant]. Yeah, and who has the time.
Observant, plus I think the manager has to be creative, and utilize whatever gifts come through the door in the form of a new person or a different person. That's a real art. And managing people — to become a manager is the art of dealing with people and managing them. You have to get them to cooperate, you have to get them to interact with each other — to be supportive and helpful. So working with volunteers shouldn't be taken lightly. If you're good at it then you'll get more volunteers.

So I guess, management is, which takes time, management is a big thing, like if you can, when you're talking about having stuff that's already here — like a volunteer job descriptions. Because otherwise people show up and they feel like, "Well, there's other people and you don't really need me." So to just clear up, "Here's what's expected, here's the time commitment that it's going to take when you come. Here's what we need you to do."

After I attended two of their meetings members of the neighborhood council deemed successful at the local governing board meeting approached me as to the nature of this project. When I stated, "I'm here to see what makes all of you such a successful council," the members directly attributed their success to the FRC case manager.

It's because of her {the case manager}. She's the one that makes us all successful.

The only reason I started coming was because of <the case manager.> She can get us to do just about anything [other voices: laughter].

She {the case manager} really listens to us and tries to find workable solutions to community problems.

She {the case manager} always has the community's interests at heart.

It is the members themselves that make a neighborhood council successful. In this council, the case manager has obviously earned the admiration of members. This may also facilitate the council's success as they know they have a dynamic advocate with an entrepreneurial spirit.
During the course of my internship, I spoke with many area residents who did not belong to the neighborhood council. Although all FRCs' neighborhood councils abide by Nevada's open meeting law, which includes posting a notice three days prior to any meetings, many area residents stated they were "not aware of any meetings for the community."

I think that (pause) if <the case manager> was to come more often {to ESL classes} and explain what she handles — it would be helpful . . . But I think if she were to give us handbills with the information that explains exactly what the meetings {neighborhood council} manage. Because, look what you saw happen here. There is interest. There is real interest, but in that moment in class you may not get. (pause) Once you go to your house, if you had a little piece of paper, and where it is a little more calm, something could interest you [other voice: Yes].

The case manager should let us know what she is doing. She should inform us more, pass out information. I do not even know what she does. We do not even know her. She needs to come to the {citizenship} classes more often.

Although the case manager spoke Spanish, there seemed to be a lack of communication. The following two quotes exemplify this:

The case manager does not necessarily have to come to class. We could get closer to her, get to know her. But sometimes we do not even know what programs are being offered, because the information when you enter the building — we are here to learn English. We do not know it and the information is all — the majority of it is in English. [other voice: It's in English!].

And other times we do not feel comfortable getting close, or we are nervous. [other voice: Yes, but it is her job]. That is true, they have to distribute the information in Spanish.

This problem was corrected as soon as it was brought to the attention of the case manager and the center director. These quotes illustrate the importance of not only speaking the
native language of area residents, but also making sure that all information is available in that language.

**Volunteer Recruitment**

The FRC that received monies during the second funding-cycle -- established in January of 1998 and held a "grand opening" in May of 1998 -- has had difficulties recruiting area residents to participate in the neighborhood council. The core participants include the former FRC case manager, who currently donates her time to coordinating the FRC's weekend children's program; the principal from an area elementary school, who lends her support, resources, and experiences while collaborating with many of the FRC's projects; and a female volunteer, who also coordinates the FRC's adult literacy program. Besides the one or two additional people who occasionally attend the meetings, the case manager, of course, always attends the neighborhood council meetings. When I first informed the members of the purpose of this project, a member stated, "It's something we really need help with." During the focus group I conducted with this neighborhood council, the following comments were made:

I don't know how you would get the public involved!

I mean, it's hard to get, I mean we got our neighborhood program that we've been doing for a year and a half, and we haven't even, these kids are here sometimes four or five hours (nervous giggle) on a Saturday and many of the parents we have not met, so. Which is just like, you know, I can't fathom that, but, uhm (clears throat), you know, except for when we go into the homes, we try to get into the homes of as many people as we can, but it's uh, it's hard to get the parents.

Yeah, it's hard to get parents involved [other voice: Absolutely].

And these neighborhood people won't come to you, you have to come to them.
The elementary school principal shared her thoughts concerning why there was a lack of participation from area residents, not only with the neighborhood council, but with FRC programs in general:

My school has a 67 percent transiency rate [other voices: Uhm, hmmm]. That means that 67 percent of my kids that are enrolled in September, are not there come the end of the school year . . . When you begin to look at people whose lifestyle is that way, who spend so much time working, and then just earning the money to survive to put them in a house or give them food or something . . . It's hard to bare the kind of courage and the needs that we have applied to middle-class America -- to apply to these lower-class people who are struggling, and who are overwhelmed with just the process of living, and then to ask them to come out for parent-training, ask them to come out to something else and have any allegiance to that -- is asking a great deal [other voice: Absolutely]. And I think that's the background that we have the problem to work with, with these kinds of people [other voice: Yes!]. And I do not say that in any derogatory way at all.

Although the neighborhood council members seemed unsure of what strategies should be implemented to increase participation in the neighborhood council, these dedicated members want to reach out to area residents. In the meantime, members are doing their best to serve the community. An important prospect for increasing the participation of area residents is embodied in the case manager, herself. She stated:

One of things we discussed in the last neighborhood council meeting, that I actually have just not had the time to follow-up on, is <the principal> and one of the counselors at <the elementary school> had said there is almost a little group, you know, a little meeting itself that happens in front of the school almost every day -- of mothers that drop their children off. And what a remarkable place to just sit there and network, and find out what is making them tick, and what they would want to see. I know and I take, and I take that burden squarely on my shoulders that that hasn't happened. I've just, I just haven't gotten out and done it [other voice: There is only one of you]. Well there is that (laughter).
Although overburdened with running a "one-person, one-stop shop," the case manager is willing to implement strategies to increase area resident participation to ensure the FRC is truly a neighborhood-based, community-driven program.

As suggested by the literature review (Byron 1974), a "group recruitment" is a helpful tool when trying to increase membership. Throughout this study, many neighborhood council members offered places and organizations that would be conducive to a group recruitment drive. As evidenced by the following comments, senior citizens were repetitively viewed as a "great source to get things going":

I suspect human behavior, if you have retired persons, they would love to be asked. Yeah, the AARP or whatever (pause) People will almost do anything if they're asked, because then they are immediately needed . . . Let's do something, let's build something, *let's create a program*!

Well I was just wondering if there are retired people out there that would just love an opportunity to be plugged into a program. And it sounds like this neighborhood, uh, council, organization has a need for more personnel. They don't necessarily have to be skilled personnel [case manager: Right]. Or maybe I'm wrong. But maybe you could focus them {retired persons}.

The problem is that it is so wide in scope that there are no single, easy answers. [other voice: Basically it's our little corner of the world and you know]. And that's all we can do. That's it. If we can help a few children it be better than, through the resources of the Chamber of Commerce, NALA, if there's some retired educators or something. There is a whole organization of retired educators.

Members also frequently suggested that the neighborhood council should recruit parents from area schools.

The group of women that gathers in front of the school . . . Sometimes that's where we need to take our meetings. If we could have a coffee [other voice: Sure]. Something in the morning at 9:05 and invite every single parent for that. At the school, I'd just tap into front of the school there. That school probably has
100 parents there. Would they come for a meeting? I don't think so, but would they pick up some information? Yeah, yeah they would [other voices: Uh, hum].

We're working on getting more participation through, like going to PTA meetings and trying to bring the community in, or we're going to start, (giggles) soon, going out to the public. More so then we are, where we're go into little entities and saying, "You know, we have a neighborhood council and we'd like you to become involved if you're interested in the community" . . . We're there to help 'em, and I think then we'll get more, more participation [president of a neighborhood council].

You have to find something in the community that the family identifies with and maybe that association can be used as leverage. The school's a classic example. Parents have children in school, there's an interest, a vested interest. They're going to do something to make their school better for their children. So if you can use the school as a stepping stone or something to reach. The school is probably going to be an excellent way to reach people.

One neighborhood council is preparing an informational flyer to send home with students from the area school. During a neighborhood council meeting, a member reminded the case manager:

Did you send informational flyers home with the students? [case manager: No, although they were there at the, uh {neighborhood festival}, but they haven't actually gone home with them]. Right, but I wonder could we, do you have one in Spanish? [case manager: (shakes head no) We could probably make one]. Could you translate? [case manager: We have counselors at school we just have to ask].

Three recipients of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (1996) National Excellence Awards for the City Summit maintained the most important strategy was to "sell the idea." Many respondents in this study also emphasized the importance of having a vested interest in the offered programs and neighborhood council.
You want them to buy into it too.

If you can tap into a passion [other voices: Yeah; Yeah; That's true]. Uh, huh, see, yeah, exactly. Some people are like with -- kids.

And you know, have more than one thing to offer them. I mean if, if, hey maybe if kids aren't their main passion, maybe, you know, drug abuse, or something like that is their passion. So they have that option as well. You can tap into that and not only that, but you can keep a good dialogue with them so that you know -- you're accessible to them. And you're keeping a dialogue with them so you can find out what it is they want to do. Are they happy where they are? Do they want to change? You know. Just basically listen.

The reason that keeps them coming back is that they care. They're really committed because their children are involved. They're more committed perhaps because of bigger ideals. They just think their kids are going to get out.

I'm into crime prevention -- that is my deal. The value of my house will appreciate if the neighborhood isn't burning down. So they could be motives that are self-centered motives, but if they have a vested interest, they would want Neighborhood Watch. Reach out for interests.

To stay in compliance with open meeting laws, all of the FRCs' neighborhood councils post a "notice of public meeting." Although members are instructed to post notices in conspicuous public areas, meeting notices and informational flyers should also be posted in area convenience stores, near apartment mail areas, laundries, and other spaces area residents occupy. The FRC serving a Latino clientele posts the notices in both English and Spanish -- language should always be a consideration.

The Neighborhood Council Program Handbook of Oxnard, California (1998) suggests neighborhood council membership forms be delivered door-to-door along with meeting notices. Research participants did not view this strategy favorably:

No. (laughs) No. I think it is better if a notice comes in the mail. Because most of the time we just want our privacy.
The case manager may not have the time to visit every person, and in that moment, we may be busy [other voices: Yes].

I do not think you should go door-to-door [other voice: No, I don't either]. It's too much of a negative [other voice: That annoys me]. It has too negative of a connotation. People think you're going to sell them something or you're going to collect money.

I never read them, anyways [other voices: No! (nodding heads in approval)].

Training

Although none of the neighborhood councils had an official policy assigning new members a neighborhood council mentor, the well-established council did create a familial atmosphere. A member related, "I think it's kind of like a family setting now. It's like we're all one big family just trying to help each other and help the community." Other members commented on the friendly atmosphere of the council:

Originally, the main person was <the case manager,> because I committed to her. And then as I started getting, uhmm well, <two of the members> were really warm right from the get go. So I felt connected too, because you can have one person that you connect with, and if the other group kind of is stand-offish, you can still feel like, kind of like the step child. But I always felt like one of the gang.

And uhmm, and the difference in going, 'cause I've been to other Family Resource Centers doing classes, the difference was that this one had more spirit and more genuineness then I had with some of the other councils.

But I think when new people come in too, you know, you make 'em feel comfortable. You know you don't feel like, 'cause I've been to groups where there's like this one clique of people you know, and I don't feel here . . . 'cause I don't feel like, I feel like I'm an outsider, but I'm not an outsider. Do you know what I mean? [other voice: Right]. Every time I go to the meetings I feel really comfortable, even though I may not live in the same neighborhood as, (pause) different people live in different neighborhoods [other voice: Yeah, we all do]. In <this area>, and yet, it's not a clique like that, you know.
In fact that's the nice thing about this council too, it's that it's not a stagnant group. It's fluid -- it keeps adding people. People come and go and then -- so far the main core has stayed. But other people come like, [gesturing to woman across] your fresh ideas and we keep our ideas fresh too. I mean we're not old and stagnant in our ideas [other voices: nervous laughter] 'Cause we all come from different points of view anyway, and different jobs, and that's what's neat. We're a complete mixture, but we gel.

Although members agreed on the importance of establishing an atmosphere of "team work" and "working toward solutions," the idea of assigning official mentors did not bode well:

Assigning new members a neighborhood council mentor, I mean those are kind of idealistic, because in reality we all have other lives and we don't have time to actually have additional meetings.

You can't have that on your role statement that I have to be outgoing and nice [partially in jest; president of the neighborhood council] [other voices: laughter].

A neighborhood council president informed me she provided new officers with a "working binder":

I had put together for the officers, (pause) I had a classification folder which would have a place for their memos, a place for the by-laws, and place for notes and things like that. I think everybody lost them. (laughter) I'm sure they were organizing more at home I'm sure, I'm hoping!

A working binder containing the neighborhood councils mission statement, by-laws, goals, and volunteer job description, may prove useful for some councils. A member inquired:

Do you have anything here about writing job descriptions? I know that as a rule, that is an important thing that people have a job description because it kind of makes you feel like you're connected.
In the literature review, many practitioners (Sears and Miller 1998; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 1996) and other experts in the field of volunteerism stressed the importance of providing an orientation and training sessions where appropriate (Pearce 1993; Bradley 1990; Brudney 1990; Watts and Edwards 1983). A volunteer in charge of a weekend children's program acknowledged that although there existed a need for training, "you can't ask too much more of people's time." She further stated:

I know what it's like . . . It would be great to have (pause) it would be great to have a sort of a weekly meeting or whatever and be, "Here's what we're doing." But sometimes it's like, beggars can't be choosers (laughter) [other voice: Yeah, that's true]. You know, beggars can't be choosers and it's like I'll take what I can get. Plus they are donating their time.

During the focus group at the same FRC, a volunteer in charge of coordinating 30 volunteers for an adult literacy program, informed the other members she was instituting mandatory training sessions in a specific technique:

We're going to have a training session. It's going to take three weeks. I've asked all my tutors to be trained. I kind of gave them an ultimatum.

By the end of the exchange that ensued, the program coordinator had softened her position. She said she would be more flexible and offer an alternative for volunteers: she would video record the training sessions and allow the tapes to be "checked out." The following comments are part of the discussion that led to this resolution:

There is no incentive for them {the volunteers} to participate in {the unification of teaching styles} . . . You have a uniform way to teach. They're one of the most dedicated groups. You don't want to lose them.
You don't want volunteers to quit [other voice: Especially when they're that effective]. You have to back off an ultimatum when you're working with people who are volunteering their time. You have to be flexible and bend over backwards, and be very happy that they're coming under their own volition and giving their own time. So I'd say you would encourage them, "Boy it would be nice, if we could standardize the teaching methods." [other voice: Making those tapes available so they don't have to be here for those four hours].

These are dedicated people. Of course, they're devoting their own time to this. And what you want to do is help them be more efficient.

Being someone who depends on volunteers for almost everything I do, I'd be real careful making ultimatums like that. Because it's hard enough to get them [volunteer in charge of children's weekend program].

Not only that, but the group of people are so dedicated and so conscientious of those students, that if they were aware of the fact that this is going to make them even more effective [other voice: I think that's the selling point].

Facilitating a Committed Council

To assure members will attend neighborhood council meetings, the case manager or a designated member should call members to remind them of upcoming meetings and/or send a reminder letter with an agenda, enabling members to come prepared to address the issues. The following comments suggest the importance of such a strategy:

Calling does help though [other voices: Uhmm, hmm]. It kind of jogs your memory.

You'd be able to remember about the meeting if someone called before it.

It would be helpful if someone called to remind us about the meetings.

The CWEPs {Community Welfare Employment Program participants} are good at reminding us of our meetings [other voice: They have agendas].

If you leave a message, and somebody else takes the message, and doesn't relay it to you . . . you need to send out letters.
An agenda. That is what is needed [other voices: Uh, hmm]. Yes, something with more information, so we can know what's goin' on.

Then you would know what to expect and could prepare {referring to receiving an agenda in the mail prior to the meeting}.

Post cards! I'm so papered out.

As a reminder to members, one neighborhood council decided to mail a letter containing the minutes from the previous meeting as well as an agenda for the upcoming meeting.

Due to different management styles, the case manager from this same FRC directed Community Welfare Employment Program participants to call neighborhood council members the day before the meeting. The other councils reached this conclusion during the focus groups:

I think you might need to do both, just because different styles of people. Because letters are nice, but then when you have a stack this high (gestures with hand), so I think it depends on what you do.

Some people have a hard time getting their messages. Like in my house (laughter). Then that's not any good, so maybe, that sounds like over kill, but it's almost like with different people, different styles.

I really appreciated that call the other day, last night -- I think it was. Also the {reminder} letter, I mean I got that in the mail and my husband said, "What are you getting into now? (laughs). You're involved with too much," but uhm.

During a monthly case managers' networking meeting, two case managers suggested holding neighborhood council meetings in more convenient locations such as in the club houses of apartment complexes. The logic behind this, a case manager explained, was, "This way if they {prospective members} don't have transportation, or don't have a baby-sitter -- they're basically at home." Another case manager suggested prospective
members would be less intimidated attending a meeting in "their own environment, until they feel comfortable in the center. After all, that, that's really, it should be their environment." When this indicator was discussed during the focus groups, except for one comment, the overall consensus was to continue holding meetings in the FRCs:

It is fine to have the neighborhood council meetings in the center. [other voice: Here is fine].

It's centrally located.

We can all get here {the FRC} fairly easy.

During my internship, I spoke with many area residents who accessed FRC services two to three times a week who had never attended a neighborhood council meeting. One person informed me he was always "on the job," during the set meeting times. "I would be more interested in participating if they had the meetings at different times," he stated. Neighborhood council members from other FRCs voiced the same concern:

Having meetings at multiple times is a really good idea. Then more people could attend. We had wanted to do that but it's hard sometimes because of people's work schedule but that is true. Because sometimes it's hard for people to make it at night. And that's a conflict you'll have regardless of who you are. [other voice: I agree with that].

Some of my trainings happened to coincide with the meetings so I had to miss four meetings in a row and it wasn't that, it was just always the same time. It wasn't like I was busy all the other times, but it was always that same day, and I ended up being threatened that I was going to be kicked off the council, not badly. (laughs) I was given a written reprimand, because I truly had another commitment, not because I wasn't interested.
Although some neighborhood councils meet during the morning hours, the majority hold their meetings after 5:30pm. Providing food during the meetings may increase attendance and the quality of participation. As one member stated, "Do you know what the times of the meetings are? It's like dinner time, you know." Members and nonmembers alike agreed food would be "greatly appreciated":

- It would be nice if they had food. (laughter) It would make it more familiar. [other voice: Yes, it would be more relaxed if there was food. Don't you think?]. Yeah, with food.

- Food. [other voices: robust laughter; I was just about to say that].

- Yeah, I'm like, I'm already going home because I'm hungry.

- Then it doesn't feel so much like a meeting. Then it's easier to listen. And you feel like you're participating and talking. [other voice: You pay more attention]. Yes, it makes it more interesting. Yes, food would be nice.

Much of the literature concerning strategies to increase participation in volunteer activities suggests developing a newsletter (Oxnard 1998; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 1996; Mesa 1993; Salt Lake County Administrative Services 1991; Brudney 1990). None of the four neighborhood councils in this study currently distribute a newsletter. Two of the councils showed interest in developing a quarterly newsletter. Concerning a list of strategies I distributed at the conclusion of a focus group, the neighborhood council president stated:

- I mean it -- I'm picking up somethings off of here that are good things. Like developing a quarterly newsletter, I thought, now wow that's a really good idea. And that would be something that we could send off that might bring other people in. [other voice: That's true].
Not only would the newsletter keep members and area residents abreast of council events and activities, and spotlight individual members' contributions, it may also be used as another recruitment tool.

One council is in the process of training volunteers to provide child care during meetings. A member stated, "We brought up daycare, we brought that up at our last meeting. I think the case manager is working on that -- yesterday!" During the administration of a focus group, a neighborhood council member brought her grandchild. The charming boy played quietly throughout most of the discussion. I did have an internal chuckle at the start of the focus group -- I did not follow the literature review on conducting focus groups that suggests the project coordinator provide child care!

Lastly, as suggested by the literature review (Salt Lake County Administrative Services 1991; Brudney 1990; Watts and Klobus-Edwards 1983) members must be given the opportunity to "take-on real responsibility." A case manager shared this account with me:

I had a volunteer come in today, and she wanted to do more than just file. So I showed her the neighborhood action plan and had her pick a program, and she chose the Displaced Homemakers' Program . . . Looking over the neighborhood action plan today with this volunteer -- realizing that the one program that actually has someone in charge, which is the adult literacy program.> Looking at the glaring difference of success, and also the weekend children's program,> that has a married couple> in charge of it. Those two are off the boards successful. Uhm, and the one's that don't have anybody specifically in charge of them are just stalled. That was one thing that was so glaringly obvious, was the success of programs when there is another person in charge, other than, you know, myself.

By allowing a person to take control of a program, not only will the individual feel good about him or herself, but the case manager can then concentrate on other programs and
his or her administrative role in the FRC. Indeed, volunteers are the greatest resource for case managers.

Providing Recognition

According to Brudney (1990), a "heartfelt 'thank you' can be all the acknowledgement many volunteers want or need" (p. 116). Only one person stated that a "thank you" was enough recognition:

For me that wouldn't, that's not what, for me it takes the inner feeling. I think it's nice to get a "thank you." But if I were a resident and I never helped out, I mean the people when they give there time and give for things like that, they've already gotten their reward. I think if you're teenagers or younger people, possibly. Yes then recognition is a bigger thing. But if you're talking about a group and we go and say, "Hey, we got 70 kids we got to get adopted for Christmas." You know, they just do it, and there it is, and boom!

After being acknowledged on stage during a neighborhood block party, a male who had been involved with a council for two years stated, "If a person will feel needed. (pause) It is the reward they feel internally that really matters." Another person, also a male, shared the importance of this sentiment of self-satisfaction:

If the volunteer can be rapidly plugged into something that is interesting, and they feel rewarded -- it feels rewarding. (pause) If the activity makes 'em feel good about themselves -- then I think they'll come back.

As indicated by the following remarks, other respondents stated that recognition, whether in the form of an "Appreciation Night" or the inclusion of their name on a flyer for an event, was always "a plus":

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Buttons, and pins, you know. That's cool [other voices: Yeah; Uh, hmm; Yes].

Yes, I think the people would be more motivated. [other voice: Uh, hmm].

That would motivate me, an Appreciation Night! [other voices: laughter].

Everybody needs that kind of stuff. It's only human nature.

I think when they {other members} say that {they do not need recognition} they're missing out on the human nature part of it. They're doing that as more of officials' statement. You know, like, "I don't need any recognition." But it's human, and it's nothing to be ashamed about, I mean it's a psychological need. We all could use a little recognition.

The FRC case manager of the neighborhood council acknowledged as one of four exemplary councils during the local governing board meeting hosted a banquet in honor of council members. Each member received a certificate of appreciation and a pin. During the focus group, members were eager to share their appreciation for the recognition they received:

We like that {recognition}. We did the, one time our <case manager> surprised us, uh, with a little banquet and we got little pins and certificate and applause. And we were like (gestures posing as a model) [other members: applause].

Yeah, and we did get applause, too!

We didn't have any idea. She said it was a banquet, that's really nice, just that. [other voice: It was a volunteer banquet]. Yeah, it was a volunteer banquet and then the rest was like, "Hey that is really nice." We didn't need anything, nothing big about it, but it was nice.

She's {the case manager} always so thoughtful, and I know, I know (pause) I know people notice what we do for this community.

I attended a Christmas party for this neighborhood council during early December 1998.

During the November meeting, it was decided the party would be a "potluck" without a
gift exchange. When members arrived, there was a small tree on a side table filled with colorfully wrapped presents. We played a "gift exchange" game, and when we unwrapped our gifts, one person received a balloon with a gift certificate inside. As she smiled in disbelief, the member placed her hand over her heart and said, "You don't know how handy this will come in. I could really use this, I could really use this." Finally, during my internship the case manager, our neighborhood council president, and I attended the Governor's Conference on "Nevada's Future: Building Communities by Strengthening Families." The president stated, "I have to work tomorrow and I will not be able to come both days. But I am so excited to be here. I am sure I am going to learn a lot." It is likely that such displays of appreciation by FRC staff are helpful in retaining council members.

Providing Benefits

As suggested by the literature review, "providing benefits" (Forrester 1992; Bradley et al. 1990, Watts and Edwards 1983; Tomeh 1979) was added as the final dimension to maximize recruitment and maintenance of a committed volunteer force. One of Bradley et al.'s (1990) recommended guidelines for a successful volunteer program is to "consider the range of benefits which can be afforded volunteers." Forrester (1992) offers specific suggestions: providing mileage reimbursements, meal reimbursements, clothing/uniforms for community events and activities, and liability insurance coverage. Tomeh (1979) notes the emergence of "fringe benefits" such as "transportation, conference fees, meals, or babysitting expenses" (p. 93). When I presented a summary of recommended strategies at the end of each focus group, the benefits dimension elicited the fewest responses. Perhaps this was due to respondents thinking such a possibility was too
"pie in the sky," as one participant stated. Other comments viewed the benefits positively such as, "I'd like a t-shirt!" or, "That would be nice if we could do that benefits thing, too."

REACTIONS TO QUOTE

At the closing of each focus group, I read a sentence to respondents and asked them to tell me the first thing that came to mind. The quote was a strategy used by the People's Organizations as an organizational criterion and instrument. It stated: "If I had my way, this is what I would do to make my city the happiest, healthiest, prettiest, and most prosperous place in the world" (Alinsky 1969:128). I substituted "neighborhood" for "city." This was a very effective way to end each session, and the range of responses was quite interesting. Most neighborhood council members' responses focused on children and had program-based solutions.

I'd have a tutor for everybody. Everybody has a tutor (waves hand in air -- whistles).

I'd have a mentor for the kids. I'd have more mentors for the kids! That's, I would have someone for all the kids in the neighborhood. Yeah, if I could wave my magic wand every kid would have a positive role model, a mentor.

Well, I don't have children, (laughter) but I have grandchildren. They need something to do besides just watch television. They need to go out and run and play . . . We got to do something to help them, and it's hard. Because so many of them are alone.

For me, I think there should be a medic that attends to the children and adults at lower rates. Because sometimes a person goes to a clinic and it costs so much. And then if they send you to a specialist, it is real expensive. Well then, I think we should have access to a doctor who charges a little less.
For the children to go to school more because, many times they get sick and if we can't take them to a doctor... We need more for the children, like parks, and something like a small clinic. Nothing big just so they could tell us what is wrong when we're sick. Most of us, in reality, don't have medical insurance for our children.

Security, parks, a doctor, a doctor. Police that understand what is an emergency and what is a report.

I would like to have more security, too. I would also like the police to be friendlier to the Hispanic community. Why don't they go and tell people not to drink outside? It's bad for the children to see... I would also like a medical center. We can't afford, the Hispanic community does not have the economic capacity to pay the high prices.

In the area that I live -- like how I have children -- when they go out to play the first thing that I think about is the security. Because there's a lot of vagrants. I wish there was more tranquility.

It would be nice to have counselors. Mental illness is real bad, just like physical illnesses. Counselors that would teach us -- marriage counseling, for our children --how to treat them, how we can help them with their problems in school. And counseling for couples. And there is not anything, we don't have any of those services to help us.

There is no school that teaches you to be a parent. And it is something so important, and there is nothing. A group of parents, in a type of program that could help us with our children, "You can do this, you could treat your child like this." They could give us ideas on when you can tell if they are doing bad, what you could do. So that the family will be better, and if the family is better, all of the neighborhood will be better. Because there are a lot of families, and a lot of families is what makes up a neighborhood [other voice: Good]. And if all of the families are good, then the neighborhood is going to be good.

Interestingly, only two members suggested increased funding as a solution:

I can't help, but what honestly came to my head would be more money. If we had more money we'd be able to do more, we'd be able to accomplish a lot of this stuff, plus all the things that we've been talking about since I started in council. And uh, we'd have a bigger building, and have more services, and so since that's idealistic
since I don't have access to that money . . . money, to infuse in with us so that we can have the resources to keep going. Particularly now with the cuts. We're worried.

Economic help!

Some responses focused on the neighborhood councils as tools to achieve "the happiest, healthiest, prettiest, and most prosperous" neighborhoods:

Become a member of the neighborhood council and change it (giggles).

Get people to care about our community by putting time in here {the council}.

Work good together as a team.

Finally, a few responses were idealistic -- calling for a more humane world.

I would have all the children be healthier, for people to be more friendly, for there not to be no conflict at all.

I'll say, uh, if people in the neighborhood could communicate with each other. Either there's a common language -- either they learned English or we should all learn Spanish or something. But I think there's a schism where you don't talk to people because you can't talk to them because they speak another language. So I think that's very destructive to having community cohesiveness if you underline these problems. So I guess if I was going to make a perfect community I would have everybody be able to talk to everybody -- a universal language.

This is weird, but if I'd give everybody a new heart and new eyes, you know just, uh, some how just get people to say, "Forget about what color you are. You know we all have the same color blood." Uhh, I just think that. A lot of the neighborhoods, for everybody to come together and everybody would be happy and you know sit here and be happy. Because it's never going to happen, but we see and feel the same. That's what I'd like -- to have a new heart and new eyes.
LISTENING TO RESIDENTS' VOICES

Throughout the course of my research I realized the importance of listening to the voices of neighborhood council members, area residents, and FRC employees. Their enthusiasm for this project opened my eyes to the many possible solutions targeting community renewal. Although this thesis focused on strategies to increase citizen participation, many research participants also shared their visions for the futures of their communities. During the past two years I have really come to appreciate the ideas of area residents: They hold the solutions to community renewal. As social researchers, we should cultivate and support their ideas. I believe the implementation of the suggested strategies is a positive step toward this direction.
CHAPTER FIVE

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AND POLICY

People in the community -- the neighborhood council -- they basically give me my directive. It's in order to see what the need of the neighborhood is, the community in the neighborhood. They let me know, and then basically -- it's my accountability group. Uhm, and also if someone has an idea on how to be successful on a particular program, there's the neighborhood action plan that has been set up by members of the neighborhood council in the beginning of the fiscal year. And then if there are situations that are difficult -- that they need help in order to make them successful -- then that's left up to the neighborhood council as well. So in essence, it could be considered a governing board in the respect that I take my directives from them.

The preceding quotation, from a case manager who participated in this study, was in response to a question on what the neighborhood council of a Family Resource Centers does. The purpose of this study was to develop strategies which would increase community participation in a neighborhood council -- the heart of every Nevada Family Resource Center. Seven dimensions emerged concerning strategies to increase voluntary participation in neighborhood councils: (1) establishing a foundation, (2) role of the case manager, (3) recruiting, (4) training, (5) facilitating a committed council, (6) providing recognition, and (7) providing benefits for neighborhood council members.
POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Wave of the Future? Collaborative Councils

Through the implementation of recommended strategies, it is my belief that the Nevada Family Resource Center Project (1998) can better fulfill its mission as stated in its cost-sharing resolution (emphasis is mine):

While it is the State of Nevada's legislative purpose for the Family Resource Centers Program to assist Southern Nevada families in obtaining the needed resources, services and programs that will improve their quality of life, and empower neighborhood citizen councils in determining neighborhood resident needs . . . NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Southern Nevada Family Resource Centers Neighborhood Councils to foster an atmosphere of collaboration and cooperation between all social service providers in our community (P. 1).

At the completion of this project, only one neighborhood council in the southern Nevada region had a neighborhood council representing different agencies. To date, these collaborations have proven successful as evidenced by the following comments:

As a citizen, you would want to know what's happening in your community. And as far as DCFS, which is the Division of Child and Family Services, that's what they're bringing to us is showing us the problems that's happening right here in our town. If we weren't in on this council together, we would be missing out on some good stuff.

I think I enjoy them {the collaborative meetings} more because I'm not involved with some of these other groups in my everyday life. And I also feel that they need to hear a little bit about the part that I live. And I'm not real proud to say that I live down there in public housing. I wasn't born in public housing. I'm there because of health problems right now. And it's a whole new world there, and it's real, it's real. When I come forward and say, "Let's find a place a little bit closer for these people to have food stamps," you know, I'm not saying, "Okay, let's give them more hand-outs." Uhm, they're facing some problems that normal people don't have everyday, and some of these get to be a life and death situation. You might read it in the paper, you might see it on TV, uhm, but when it's your next door neighbor, it's real. And then also to be able to come to a program like this, this meeting, and find out that, uh, there have been some good results.
I was uncomfortable at first because I really did like the grass roots feeling I got from our meetings before. And they started taking on this agency kind of feel and I was thinking, "If this is the way it's going to go," after I voice my opinion, if it would go that way then I would probably not come anymore if it was going in that, because I don't want to be, this is not my job. I didn't want it to be an extension of a social service type agency where people have that kind of feel. But after a couple of months of adjustment, it's like WOW! I can't even imagine how we did it before.

Finally, a statement from the president of this collaborative neighborhood council, although discussed in the previous chapter, is worth reiterating:

So to me that's why I think it's going to work because we have DCFS {Division of Child and Family Services}, we have Family-to-Family, we have welfare, and we have <the Family Resource Center,> and the community policing. Well, these are all things that are happening right here in this community. So if there's something going on we would know it then (pause) because it's everything that's here. Do you see what I'm saying? With problems and stuff like that, we'll know it more this way.

The findings of this study support the use of collaborative neighborhood councils, especially as more social service programs require input from citizen boards. By forming partnerships, we will not overburden our greatest resources -- concerned citizens working to make a difference in their communities.

Dissemination of Strategies

When this study was introduced at the southern Nevada Family Resource Centers Local Governing Board meeting, the case managers, regional coordinators, and board members showed tremendous interest in the future findings of this project. I was invited to present a workshop at the completion of this study during a monthly case managers' meetings. After speaking with the regional coordinator, I have tentatively been scheduled to present the findings during the May 1999 meeting. I will distribute a packet with
summary results to the case managers and supply copies for them to distribute to their neighborhood councils. I will also send a packet to the northern Nevada coordinators' offices for distribution to those neighborhood councils. Fortunately, a limited amount of funds for neighborhood council activities and events is allocated in the annual budgets of each FRC, facilitating the implementation of the recommended strategies.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Although there has been a resurgence of interest in volunteerism since the early 1990s, current research has yet to take into consideration the roles and motives of ethnic minorities and impoverished people. In order for voluntary organizations to benefit from the contributions that can be made by people of color and the poor, efforts must be made to incorporate considerations specific to these populations.

The worthy endeavor undertaken by this study must be expanded to include all the neighborhood councils of Family Resource Center throughout the state, or at least those in the southern Nevada region. I recommend a survey instrument be developed that can endure the rigors of statistical analysis and generalizability, and also obtain a comprehensive account of the demographic characteristics of each neighborhood council. A comparative analysis between demographically distinctive neighborhood councils could lead to a more effective implementation of strategies to increase participation by area residents.
THE PROMISE

"Man's [sic] chief danger" today lies in the unruly forces of contemporary society itself, with its alienating methods of production, its enveloping techniques of political domination, its international anarchy — in a word, its pervasive transformations of the very "nature" of man [sic] and the conditions and aims of his [sic] life (Mills 1959: 13).

In a world full of exploitation and oppression, Family Resource Centers strive to help those most in need in our society. By moving beyond an individual self-help model toward a community-centered model, Family Resource Centers transform what are seemingly personal troubles into public issues. It is through the dedication of employees and other concerned citizens that these centers are able to renew their communities. Although increasing citizen participation may not cure all of society's ills, in the words of Margaret Mead, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful citizens can change the world: Indeed it's the only thing that ever has."

This study contributes to the research on volunteerism by recommending strategies to increase voluntary participation in grass root's organizations. The acquiring of funds will facilitate the implementation of these strategies, which will ensure these organizations are truly neighborhood-based, community-driven initiatives.
APPENDIX I

HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTOCOL
DATE: December 21, 1998

TO: Merlinda R. Gallegos (SOC-5033)

FROM: Dr. William E. Schulze, Director
Office of Sponsored Programs (X1357)

REF: Status of Human Subject Protocol Entitled:
"Neighborhood Councils: A Family-Driven
Approach to community Change"
OSP #115s1298-160

The protocol for the project referenced above has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board Secretary in the Office of Sponsored Programs and it has been determined that it meets the criteria for approval under the Multiple Assurance Agreement for the UNLV Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. This protocol is approved for a period of one year from the date of this notification and work on the project may proceed.

Should the use of human subjects described in this protocol continue beyond a year from the date of this notification, it will be necessary to request an extension.

If you have any questions regarding this approval, please contact Marsha Green in the Office of Sponsored Programs at 895-1357.

cc: D. Carns (SOC-5033)
OSP File

Office of Sponsored Programs
4505 Maryland Parkway • Box 451037 • Las Vegas, Nevada 89154-1037
(702) 895-1357 • FAX (702) 895-4242

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
APPENDIX II

RESEARCH ANNOUNCEMENT
My name is Merlinda Gallegos (873-3647), please join me in a brainstorming session to share what makes a successful Neighborhood Council. Food will be provided. Thank you in advance for your participation.
APPENDIX III

ASSENT FORMS
NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
ASSENT FORM

Good evening. My name is Merlinda Gallegos and I am a graduate student from the Sociology Department at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. I am interested in learning your views and opinions on issues concerning your Neighborhood Council. I have gathered this group here this evening as part of a research project. You were selected for this study because you are active members in your Neighborhood Council.

The purpose of this research is to come up with an outline on how program directors can increase community involvement in neighborhood councils. This discussion should take between one to two hours. This is your time to discuss what you think is important concerning participation in your neighborhood council. I will only be here to ask a few guiding questions.

This session will be video recorded, and if this makes you real uncomfortable, I will use only an audio recorder. I am hoping all the neighborhood councils will benefit from your participation as your thoughts will be shared with program directors. In the mean time, I hope you enjoy having your voices heard and knowing that your opinions are highly valued.

Your participation is, of course, voluntary, and you may stop participating at any point during our conversation. Your answers to all the questions I will ask you will be kept strictly confidential. I will use pseudonyms for all of you, including the name of the Neighborhood Council. At the end of this study, all video and audio tapes will be destroyed.

Do you have any questions? If you have any further questions concerning this project, please feel free to call me at 895-0370 (work) or 873-3647 (home). You may also call my advisor Dr. Donald E. Carns at 895-0256 or the Office of Sponsored Programs at 895-1357, all of us can be reached on the University of Nevada, Las Vegas campus at 4505 S. Maryland Parkway, Las Vegas, Nevada 89154.

__________________________
signature

__________________________
date

Department of Sociology
4505 Maryland Parkway • Box 455033 • Las Vegas, Nevada 89154-5033
(702) 895-3322 • FAX (702) 895-4800
Buenas tardes. Me llamo Merlinda Gallegos y soy un estudiante graduado en el departamento de sociología en la Universidad de Nevada, Las Vegas. Estoy interesada a aprender sus contemplares y opiniones en puntos de su concilio de vecindad. Tengo este grupo aquí esta noche para ser un parte de un proyecto de investigación. Ustedes han escogido por este investigación porque son miembros activos en su concilio de vecindad.

El intención de este proyecto es para hacer un esquema por los directores de programas para aumentar el envolvimiento en su concilio de vecindad. Este discusión debe a tomar una a dos horas. Este es el tiempo para que ustedes puede decir que es importante con referencia de participación en su concilio de vecindad. Yo no mas voy estar aquí para preguntar unas preguntas dirigidas.

Voy a usar una grabadora de video para indicar este sesiôn, si este los hace sentir incômodo, no mas voy a usar una grabadora de audio. Espero que todos los concilios de vecindad beneficien con su participación como yo voy a compartir sus ideas con los directores de programas. Mientras tanto, espero que ustedes les ha gustado tener su vozes oído y también que sepan que sus opiniones son de alto valor.

Su participación, naturalmente, es voluntario, y pueden terminar su participación en cual punto de nuestro conversación. Sus repuestas vas estar confîdendaJ. Voy a usar seudônimos por ustedes, y tambien por el nombre de su concilie vecindad. Después de este investigación, voy a destruir todos los grabadônes.

Tiene preguntas? Si tiene mas preguntas con referenda de este proyecto, por favor llamen me a 895-0370 (trabajo) o 873-3647 (casa). Tambien pueden llamar mi profesor Dr. Donald E. Carns a 895-0256 o la Oficina de Programas de Patrocinio a 895-1357. Todos estamos en los terrenos de la Universidad de Nevada, Las Vegas 4505 S. Maryland Parkway, Las Vegas, Nevada 89154.

______________________________

firma

______________________________

fecha
APPENDIX IV

CORRESPONDENCE
February 19, 1999

Dear Jane,

Thank you for your participation in our group discussion concerning your neighborhood council. I learned much from our conversations. Please know the information gathered will be passed on to benefit other neighborhood councils. Your thoughtful input is greatly appreciated. You are an inspiration the way you take time out of your busy life to work toward a healthy community.

Good luck on all your future endeavors, especially on the continued success of your neighborhood council. I will provide a final list of all recommendations to the case manager at the end of this project in May 1999.

Yours for community excellence,

Merlinda R. Gallegos
August 17, 1998

Dear Family Resource Center,

I just want to thank you for allowing me to be a part of your 3rd Annual "Unityfest." It was inspiring to see all of the volunteerism — people working together to improve their community. I am honored to have been a part of such a successful community partnership. I look forward to future events and neighborhood council meetings. I know the success that took place August 8, 1998 could not have occurred without your hard work and high energy. Congratulations on your great success.

Yours for community excellence,

Merlinda R. Gallegos
January 5, 1999

Dear Jane,

Thank you for agreeing to be part of our group discussion. Your thoughtful participation will be greatly appreciated.

As you know, our group will meet in the conference room of the Family Resource Center on Monday January 11, 1999 at 5:30pm. Food and beverages will be provided. Please come prepared to have a good time and talk about your successful neighborhood council. I look forward to seeing you there!

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 873-3647 (home) or 895-0370 (office).

Yours for community excellence,

Merlinda R. Gallegos
REFERENCES


Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.


VITA

Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Merlinda Raquel Gallegos

Local Address:
7877 Mountain Man Way
Las Vegas, Nevada 89113

Degrees:
Bachelor of Arts, Criminal Justice, 1992
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Master of Arts, Sociology, 1995
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Special Honors and Awards:
Alpha Kappa Delta Honor Society
Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society
Golden Key Honor Society
Edwin Sutherland Award, Student of the Year

Dissertation Title:
Neighborhood Councils: A Family-Driven Approach to Community Change

Dissertation Committee:
Chairperson, Donald E. Carns, Ph. D.
Committee Member, Lynn T. Osborne, D. Crim.
Committee Member, Yanick St. Jean, Ph. D.
Graduate Faculty Representative, Terance D. Miethe, Ph. D.