

**Concepts of “Community” in Community Economic Development:
The Social Dynamics of Community-Based Development in Winnipeg’s Inner City**

By

Sara Paige Stephens

**A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
The University of Manitoba
in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of**

MASTER OF ARTS

June 13th, 2006

Department of Anthropology

University of Manitoba

Winnipeg

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

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Abstract

Community Economic Development (CED) is an alternative form of development that assesses the social and economic needs of a community and engages community members in the creation of locally relevant development initiatives. Many communities in Winnipeg's North End are pursuing CED initiatives to address the problems of poverty, unemployment and violence.

Although the concept of "community" evokes images of unity and cooperation, communities are composed of diverse individuals, groups and agendas. CED organizations must understand the unique forms of community belonging in their target communities. This understanding will increase awareness of the factors that influence exclusion and inclusion in communities and their impacts on community development.

In this thesis I explore the meanings of "community" to North End community members and CED organization staff, and the ways in which CED organizations and community members negotiate these diverse concepts of "community" to imagine and implement constructive, communal and sustainable development initiatives.

Acknowledgments

I could not have completed this research without the contributions of many wonderful people. I would like to thank the community members and organization staff who participated in this project for sharing their stories and providing me with information and inspiration.

My thesis supervisor, Dr. Kathleen Buddle-Crowe and committee members Dr. Raymond Wiest and Dr. Julie Guard provided critical and constructive direction that enriched my research and analysis. Thank you for challenging and encouraging me. I would also like to acknowledge the financial support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) for this research project.

My parents, Alana and Carl are, as always, the foundation of love and stability that I start from, and they provided me with constant and unconditional support. Nevil and Deena offered sympathy and advice and provided much-needed distraction and entertainment with baby Liam. Samantha offered the fun, caring and counsel that only twenty-six years of sisterly bonding and insight can provide. Thank you all, I never underestimate what having such a wonderful family has enabled me to achieve.

I would also like to thank Amy Fay for her endless support, both humorous and serious, and for providing the rare, entertaining and inspirational perspective of both best friend and fellow anthropologist.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Healthy communities – in which education, health, recreation and employment are prioritized – promote the health of individuals within those communities and benefit society as a whole. However, the rights of many individuals to live in such communities are threatened by government policies influenced by a capitalist economic system that privileges economic profit and gain over social security and growth. Communities in struggle often employ Community Economic Development (CED) strategies as a way of combating these policies using locally relevant and beneficial development projects.

CED is a challenging form of development, in part due to its high degree of engagement with “communities.” Although CED generally focuses on particular geographic neighborhoods, there are many different concepts of “community” within those neighborhoods. These concepts of community are influenced not only by locale, but also by social relationships and imaginings. Communities are therefore dynamic, complex and adaptable, and demand shifting and flexible relationships with CED organizations. In order to offer progressive social development initiatives, CED organizations must understand the multiple and diverse concepts of “community” at work in their target areas. As well, CED organizations must develop an appreciation of the factors that lead to the creation and development of these diverse communities.

The focus of this thesis is Winnipeg’s North End, currently the site of serious social problems and opportunities for social change. My goal is to explore the meanings that North End community members and CED organizations ascribe to “community”, as well as how organizations and community members negotiate these meanings to imagine and implement constructive and communal community development initiatives.

The Global Context

The “culture of capitalism” (Robbins 2004:47) encourages individualism and competition for money, goods and resources. As many theorists across a multitude of disciplines have explored, capitalist systems, based on ever-increasing growth, require the predation of the environment and natural resources and the exploitation of human labour (Robbins 1999, Sachs 1997, Wallerstein 1999). Without conscience and without cease, capitalist growth drives “Western” countries to exploit and consume territory and resources that are outside their influence and reasonable access rights (Harris 2004). Often the poorest or “developing” countries are exploited for natural resources and are the dumping grounds of “developed” countries’ waste materials, while their citizens are exploited to provide cheap labour (Chodkiewicz 2004, Robbins 2004). The negative effects of capitalist enterprises are disproportionately visited on indigenous peoples (Niezen 2004) and women (Ghorayshi 2004).

While capitalist systems wreak such havoc in the pursuit of increased production at lower costs, they also attempt to convince developed societies to increase their consumption. A barrage of advertising messages attempts to convince mainstream Western societies not to consume responsibly or sustainably, but instead to consume recklessly and constantly, and to accumulate those goods that cannot be immediately consumed. The motivation and reasoning for this consumption is that consumer products promote emotional and mental health and are necessary for a happy and fulfilled life (Miller 1997). The success and meaning of human life within capitalist systems are being gauged according to economic rather than social measurements. This risks the commoditization of social relationships and other non-economic relations (Wiest 2004).

Some theorists assert that capitalist systems and the processes of globalization and economic development contribute to the breakdown of communities and the severing of social relationships (Nozick 1994). Many believe that the increased focus on global identity and relations will create a homogenous world, where cultural diversity and identities will vanish (Nozick 1994) or be replaced by a corporate monoculture (for discussion see Chodkiewicz 2004, Wiest 2004). In a world where relations are perceived as being increasingly global, identity is less connected to place (Cohen 1985), and individuals may feel rootless, transitory, dispossessed or alienated (Nozick 1994). This affects the ways in which they define their selves and their places in the world.

While human relationships *do* appear to be changing as a result of capitalist systems and policies, individuals have the capacity to define and interpret their experiences and relationships with a capitalist system (Rapport in Amit 2002, Ashcroft 2001, Escobar 1992, Wiest 2004, Mankekar 1993, Chodkiewicz 2004). Symptoms of discontent are evident, even among those people who may not recognize capitalist systems and cultures as the source of their dissatisfaction. Individuals and groups have emerged to challenge the makeup of mainstream capitalist societies and bring to light the futility of a system based on increasing growth on a planet with finite resources (Douglas 1994, Sachs 1997). They also expose the social and economic inequalities inherent in capitalism, which are based on parasitic and unsustainable practices and relationships. While small-scale communities are facing challenges and breaking down their old forms, this does not imply that communities no longer exist, but rather that they are adapting and changing in response to the global environment (Cohen in Amit 2002).

Canada is a “developed” country, and one that works to create and maintain discourses of equality, freedom, democracy, modernity, multiculturalism, inclusivity and opportunity. These discourses make it easy for many Canadians to overlook or ignore the people who are being excluded or abused by the capitalist system and mainstream Canadian society. The inequalities and abuses experienced by some people living in a so-called “developed” country must be investigated, as must the cultural, social, racial, gender, economic and political dynamics behind these experiences. My increasing awareness of the marginalization of individuals and communities in Canada leads me to focus on the effects of capitalism and economic development in Winnipeg, as well as some of the alternatives to capitalist development being explored by Winnipeg communities.

Alternatives to capitalist definitions of development are currently being investigated and implemented in “developed” and “developing” nations. These alternative strategies often attempt to counter the focus on global forces and processes by concentrating on small-scale, local or community contexts, connected to specific places and groups (Escobar 1992, Wiest 2004). Along with a more localized economic focus, many alternative development programs also attempt to reintroduce social relations and priorities into the economic field, by fostering individual and communal health and well-being, rather than encouraging individual profit and competition. Community Economic Development (CED) is one such form of alternative development, and one with a strong tradition and history in Winnipeg (Loxley 1986, Rothney 1992, Fernandez 2005).

Organizations working with a CED perspective in Winnipeg focus on areas of the city in which people are dealing with the challenges of poverty, unemployment or

underemployment, violence, gangs and addictions. Many people in these areas also struggle to deal with the history of inequality and colonialism in Canada, ongoing systemic racism, negative media representation, and the social prejudices and ignorance of mainstream society. CED organizations are often community-driven and adopt strategies that require high levels of community input and participation in working toward communal and person-centred development goals.

Many organizations are pursuing CED initiatives in the North End to encourage community development and vitality. In the following chapters I will explore the meanings of community to North End community members, their development priorities and goals, and the obstacles that prevent them from putting their visions of community into practice. This discussion challenges the meanings of both “community” and “development” in ways that are essential to creating and promoting progressive and socially beneficial CED initiatives.

Research Questions

With these issues in mind, my objective is to explore two main questions. First, how do local CED organizations and community members work together to assess and address community issues and needs? Secondly, how do community members and organizations define “community” and how do these definitions affect their participation and inclusion in CED? I address these questions using information obtained from interviews with twenty-two individuals who are involved with CED organizations in Winnipeg’s North End. The participants are organization staff members and community members, many of whom play extensive and multi-faceted roles in the lives of their communities.

Chapter Two: Background and Theoretical Context

What is Community Economic Development (CED)?

Community Economic Development (CED) is an alternative form of small-scale development enacted in areas or among groups that are struggling to meet their various basic needs. CED is difficult to define as it is meant to be flexible enough to respond to the needs and characteristics of diverse communities (Brodhead and Lamontagne 1994). While a concrete definition of CED is undesirable and impossible, there is a common ideology that informs and motivates CED practitioners and organizations to bring about social change.

CED is often described as a holistic approach to development (Bryant 1994, Douglas 1994) due to its focus on social as well as economic goals (Pell 1994). The unique social, cultural and political dimensions of each community are considered when creating and implementing CED programs and projects (Douglas 1994). This commitment to the overall well-being of communities requires CED programs to respond to short-term and emergency needs and issues, which are often influenced by economic factors, while creating long-term development programs that will meet social needs (Douglas 1994). CED generally recognizes that increasing economic growth does not always stimulate social development and therefore maintains a focus on advancing social goals (Brodhead 1994).

CED is also often described as inclusive (Brodhead 1994), as it attempts to enlist the participation of disadvantaged or marginalized groups and values the input of all community members. Since CED is premised on the importance of community, it is distinguishable from other forms of economic development in that it is directed “by the

community, *for* the community” (Douglas 1994:22). In contrast to many capitalist, profit-driven development projects, CED encourages individuals and communities to become more cooperative rather than competitive (Nozick 1994). Inclusivity and cooperation help to minimize hierarchical relationships of power, to create partnerships, to focus on goals and objectives that are communal, and to create projects that will benefit the people who are most in need (Bryant 1994). CED aims to benefit as many community members as possible, and creates partnerships between marginalized groups and the rest of the community (Brodhead 1994). Inclusivity in CED projects may also include environmental and ecological needs and concerns. This kind of CED builds an understanding of the role of human beings in the greater eco-system, and can help individuals and communities to develop an “ecological consciousness” (Nozick 1994:86).

Working with communities at the grassroots or ground level requires CED to adapt and respond to fluctuations in social and economic conditions (Pell 1994). This requires CED practitioners and participants to become familiar with the specificities of the community and its members, in order to design programs that will be truly appropriate and beneficial (MacNeil 1994). CED is therefore often described as being community-based or community-driven, and is premised on the belief that community members are the most knowledgeable about local conditions (Brodhead 1994). Therefore, CED should be small-scale, tailored to community needs and issues, and have a high degree of community participation in the creation and implementation of programs. One of the ultimate goals of CED is to increase the self-reliance of the community as a whole (Brodhead 1994, Loxley and Lamb 2005).

The ways in which CED is defined and practiced are not without conflict and disagreement. There are two CED ideologies – the conventional and the progressive. The “liberal local development” (Brodhead 1994:2) is more conventional and focuses on increasing employment and building businesses in a community. In contrast, the “progressive” (Brodhead 1994:2) approach focuses on changing the structure of the community altogether in ways that enable the community to actively control more resources, institutions and decisions. The conventional approach generally corresponds with the economic orthodoxy, which concentrates on market forces and is driven by profit, individual self-interest and competition. The progressive approach challenges economic orthodoxy to create alternative systems and programs. This progressive form of CED challenges capitalism and attempts to build a new system based on communal and cooperative economic strategies (Loxley and Lamb 2005, Fernandez 2005).

Types of Involvement

It is important to examine the ways in which CED theory and goals are translated into practice. While I have separated types of involvement into the categories of community, business, and government for ease of explanation, there is a great deal of interaction between the three groups.

a. Community involvement

In order to be truly knowledgeable about community conditions and character, CED must always have a great degree of close community involvement. Community members who participate in CED are generally those who can be considered “underprivileged” in some facet of their lives. This can include low-income earners; people who are unemployed or have low educational levels; or people who belong to a marginalized group, such as

women, Aboriginal peoples or street youth. Community members often become involved in CED by volunteering with non-governmental or other organizations, and are generally motivated by the desire to address a specific community or social issue (Bryant 1994). Volunteer work provides a crucial resource in CED and yet is often undervalued (Loxley and Lamb 2005). Volunteer work may include aid in delivering services with an organization, participation on boards, organizing meetings to provide feedback to a community group, or participation in fundraising events.

Community members may also join together to form community organizations, which serve a particular population and address economic and social issues (Bryant 1994). One such example is the neighborhood or residents association, whereby concerned community members gather voluntarily to discuss potential solutions to community issues and to fundraise for community projects. This is a type of community development corporation, which receives and distributes funds to communities for development projects (Nozick 1994). Community members may also become involved in CED by creating cooperatives. These are small businesses that attempt to create democratic employment relations by blurring the lines between owners, managers and consumers (Nozick 1994, Loxley and Lamb 2005).

b. Business involvement

CED is not synonymous with business or economic development, and the social and cultural aspects of development must be considered alongside economic factors (Brodhead 1994). The corporate sector can, and should, help communities to develop their own resources and should support local businesses in the community (Bryant 1994). CED organizations often operate on a not-for-profit basis as part of the “informal”

economy (Douglas 1994:31). As such, they often require economic support, which businesses can provide in the form of funding (Douglas 1994:31). Local financial institutions (LFIs), such as credit unions, often support community enterprises. Local training institutions (LTIs) play a role by partnering with businesses to provide training to community members for specific business positions (Brodhead 1994). The creation and maintenance of small businesses is also an important factor in CED (Douglas 1994). In contrast to large-scale corporate enterprises, small-scale production is more appropriate to support a local economy and is less taxing on the environment. It also provides a personal work environment and is appropriate to “local skill and employment levels” (Loxley 1986).

c. Government involvement

As a not-for-profit or non-market response to economic and social needs, CED requires government support, and governments are the primary form of funding for CED work (Pell 1994, Fernandez 2005). The government has largely controlled economic decisions throughout history, and this has led communities to feel helpless with regard to their place in economic decision-making. The ideal role of governments in the CED process is therefore to overcome this “learned helplessness” (MacNeil 1994) and to play a supportive rather than a decision-making role in the economic life of communities. This requires governments to change the way they design and implement general or remote development programs to account for local specificity and meaning (MacNeil 1994).

Governments must also recognize that economically unviable projects can be socially viable, and can become more economically viable over the long term (Loxley and Lamb 2005). This entails that governments reject a market-based approach to

development, in which economic growth is the primary focus and is believed to “trickle down” to people in poverty (Silver 2000:129). Increased economic growth has *not* led to a decrease in poverty in Canada and does not answer to the social needs of communities (Silver 2000:129). Instead, CED argues that governments need to increase economic investment in socially beneficial projects and programs and to recognize the ways in which social development can translate into long-term economic gain. For instance, the cost of providing employment training may be offset in later years by higher rates of employment and therefore lower expenditures on Social Assistance programs (Loxley and Lamb 2005). As well, by supporting and encouraging local rather than foreign businesses, and training local employees instead of importing workers, governments can support CED and the local economy (Pell 1994).

My Working Definition of CED

Faced with diverse and occasionally contradictory definitions of CED, I use a progressive definition of CED:

CED is a community-based and community-directed process that explicitly combines social and economic development and is directed towards fostering the economic, social, ecological and cultural well-being of communities (BC Working Group on CED, in Fernandez 2005).

A progressive definition of CED challenges mainstream development discourses and goals, and fits best with the organizations and communities involved in this project. This definition permits me to explore the social dynamics and relations of communities engaged in CED initiatives.

Theoretical Approaches to "Development"

In order to define and situate CED as a form of "alternative" development, it is necessary to understand what is meant by mainstream development. The concept of development has historic roots in the Enlightenment thinking of eighteenth century Europe. This realm of thought, also known as positivism, used science and rational thought to explain and explore reality and to reveal universal truths about the world (Harvey 1989:12, Parpart 1995:222). Development has primarily been viewed in a positive light, as "progress" toward modernity and civilization through scientific knowledge, economics and technology. As the society that produced these markers of modernity, the West was the model of developed, modern, civilized society (Harvey 1989). The West became associated with development technology and the "experts" who used their knowledge of this technology to disseminate their model of modernity (Parpart 1995; Banks and Mangan 1995). All non-Western countries were, by contrast, perceived as "underdeveloped" or "developing," using Western definitions, values and standards for these terms. The people in these "developing" countries were then defined as needy, illiterate, poor and ignorant, and were classified as being "traditional" as opposed to "modern" (Escobar 1995). These definitions turned "developing" countries into a homogenous group with identical concerns and needs, giving Western, capitalist projects the power to introduce homogenous, generic solutions in the name of development (Parpart 1995, Wallerstein 1999, Mohanty 1991).

The disastrous and devastating cost of mainstream development on people and the environment is increasingly recognized, and the sustainability, practicality and necessity of large-scale Western development come into question. Many critics of development

view development projects as a form of neo-colonialism, replacing the colonial pursuit of territory with the neo-colonial pursuit of economic growth (Spivak 1999, Taussig 1987). The greatest threat of this neo-colonial pursuit is that, like colonial projects before it, development uses discourse – powerful language and concepts – to characterize “developing” countries (Escobar 1992). The language and statistics often used by Western organizations to characterize levels of “development” and “underdevelopment” are misleading and misinformed (Ramanathaiyer 2000; Dreze and Sen 2002, Douglas 1994), and become a part of the hegemonic discourse used to justify Western interference and development projects.

Despite this oppressive hegemony, it is increasingly evident that the world is not becoming a homogenous global village (McLuhan and Powers 1989). Development has not had the effects that were expected and promised, and resistance to development hegemony has led to re-imaginings of development. Post-development theory exposes the discourse that motivates and accompanies mainstream development. It seeks to deconstruct the ideology and myths of development in order to bring to light the ways this ideological dominance has silenced “subaltern” (Spivak 1988) or alternative voices, explanations, ideas and approaches (Escobar 1992).

Some theorists focus on the ways development discourse permeates and colonizes the minds of people in “underdeveloped” countries by creating and using polarities, such as “primitive” and “modern” (Nandy 1997:170). This discourse also refers to non-Western countries as having “subsistence” economies, implying that people are surviving rather than living, and that development can offer a life beyond mere subsistence (N’Dione et al. 1997). This language and attitude depreciate the ability of

“underdeveloped” countries and individuals to be self-sufficient and to sustain themselves on local resources (N’Dione et al. 1997). Often this powerful discourse enacts “epistemic violence” (Spivak 1988) on non-Western cultures, resulting in the devaluation and rejection of indigenous ways of knowing and living in the world, in favour of “modernity” and “development” (Rahnema 1997).

At the same time, the development discourse blinds individuals in “developed” countries by allowing them to believe they are acting morally while participating in a lifestyle that is predicated on the immoral treatment of other human beings (Havel 1997). Capitalism and development, and their proponents and supporters, have no loyalty to people, and no nation but the “country of money” (Subcomandante Marcos, in Esteva 1997). Individuals in developed countries are often oblivious to the global injustices that make a middle-class lifestyle possible. Sachs sees the result of development being the establishment of a global middle-class lifestyle made up of “the majority in the North and small elites in the South” (1997:291). The lines between North and South are therefore increasingly socioeconomic, rather than geographical (Sachs 1997).

The exposure of this development “crisis” (Escobar 1992) through post-development theory also creates space for a discourse of alternatives. However, it is vital that these alternatives break with mainstream development altogether and redefine democracy, economy and society (1992). Therefore, these new forms should be characterized as “alternatives *to* development” (Escobar 1992:27). Awareness of the specific nature of development and its interpretations has led to a greater focus on the local when imagining alternatives to development. Many development practitioners and participants now advocate locally-based thought and action, as individuals’ needs and

realities are not uniform and cannot be expected to follow a predetermined path of development (Escobar 1992, Esteva and Prakash 1997, Prashad 2001). Local, case-specific development projects are often better equipped to deal with the social issues that accompany economic needs, and can create connections to other local efforts and broad social movements (Shragge 1997a, Escobar 1992).

Within this context, CED can be viewed as one of many alternative development solutions that have emerged in response to and reaction against mainstream development and the theory and ideology that informs it. CED can be an alternative to development only if it is progressive, as defined above. Where CED comes to focus solely on economic or business development (Fernandez 2005), it falls prey to the problems of mainstream development undertakings in that it attempts to address social issues without challenging the systemic causes of poverty, unemployment, job loss, environmental degradation and loss of community control caused by capitalist systems (Loxley and Lamb 2005). Instead, CED should create space for alternative voices of dissent and challenge to the dominant voice. This is a difficult task, especially where the dominant system designates disproportionate access to power and influence and represses even minor forms of dissent. Progressive CED work is therefore a process of endless struggle.

It is important to question the meanings of development, how it is practiced in CED projects and how it affects the kinds of programs and approaches that communities decide to pursue. Much CED literature focuses on the empowerment of individuals and communities through development projects that enhance or encourage the capabilities of the community so it can direct its own development path (Douglas 1994). CED should be constantly made accountable to the community and its members, an attitude that is

often not reflected in traditional development, which is accountable only to shareholders and profit (Douglas 1994). As well, CED theorists often advocate a convergence approach, wherein a community attempts to produce what it consumes and to consume what it produces. This keeps resources and money within the community and the local economy (Loxley and Lamb 2005).

The hegemonic discourse on development has led to the creation and implementation of many unsuccessful projects that have increased inequalities and reinforced the power of Western systems and countries. The existence of alternatives is encouraging, as long as they are truly alternative. There is often a gap between theory and lived experiences, therefore, it is necessary to question whether CED organizations are actually based in and led by community, and to explore the struggles they face against orthodox economics and development. CED's ostensible roots in "community" also necessitate an exploration of the meanings ascribed to this term.

Theoretical Approaches to "Community"

There has been a great deal of debate in anthropology surrounding the concept of community. Much of this debate stems from changes in the location of the anthropological "field" in recent years. While anthropologists once worked with relatively small-scale social groups that were more easily categorized and interpreted in the form of communities, these groups are now increasingly "incorporated into ever expanding systems of political, economic and cultural connections" (Amit and Rapport 2002:4), and fields are becoming more and more difficult to locate as concrete groups. The concept of "imagined communities" (Amit and Rapport 2002:17) took over from communities formed by social relations, a move that fit well with the increasing

anthropological focus on globalization, diasporic communities and the formation of connections between individuals and groups without face-to-face interaction (Amit 2002:9). It became more and more appealing for anthropology, as well as other social sciences, to define communities as ideational or imaginary, no longer rooted to a particular place (Amit and Rapport 2002:4,15).

The move from community based on locale and social relations to community as “an idea or quality of sociality” (Amit 2002:3), is generally attributed to Cohen (1985). Cohen divorced community from locale by defining it as an interpretive or symbolic construction (1985). He therefore defined communities as groups of people with collective imaginings, or a collective cultural consciousness, that led them to believe themselves part of a symbolic community, even without living in close proximity to one another. They were therefore also “relational” (Cohen 1985:12) communities, as they defined their identities in relation to other communities or other social entities.

Benedict Anderson later further severed the ties between community and place by stressing that the development of print culture allowed people from diverse and distant locations who had never met, or even interacted, to imagine themselves to be part of the same community. While the concept of “imagined communities” enjoyed long popularity, there is now a movement to reinsert social relations into community (Amit 2002). Community is made up of both a categorization as well the social relations pursued in its name, and these elements are often in tension, and may not correspond with one another (Amit 2002). However, it is individuals that create and make up communities, and communities cannot be treated as though they exist in themselves (Amit and Rapport 2002:7).

The term or category “community” is still often associated with cooperation, common beliefs and values, which is a romantic notion (Joseph 2002) that dismisses the “diversity and tensions” (Gilchrist 1994:166) that often characterize communities. Communities are not groups of “solidarity, boundedness and continuity” but rather of “heterogeneity, process and change” (Amit and Rapport 2002:8), meaning that they can be composed of diverse people and ideas. It is important not to seek out conveniently bounded groups or to ignore the ties and interconnections between that group and many others (Amit and Rapport 2002:15).

Cohen (1985:12) described community as being defined by both similarity – as most members of a community have something in common – as well as difference, as one group distinguishes itself from others. Boundaries shut out outsiders while enclosing insiders, and the people within the boundaries may have more in common with one another than they would with those outside the boundaries (Cohen 1985:14). However, it is problematic to assume similarity in communities, as the boundaries that define and include a population may be imposed from outside that community. When a category or grouping based on common experience is imposed on people, it can silence the specific and personal voices and experiences of the individuals within that category, and efface difference and diversity (Amit and Rapport 2002:19). The relationships that draw people together are fragile and changing, requiring constant work and reworking (Amit and Rapport 2002:24).

Individuals are capable of detaching themselves from the social, economic and political situations that surround them in order to challenge conventional practices, and imagine alternatives (Rapport, in Amit 2002:12). Perception of the flexibility and

changefulness of community has not greatly extended into CED theory. Many CED theorists use the concept of community that is concrete, geographic or with a life outside individuals (Nozick 1994). In addition, some define community as “a human group that shares a common interest” (Douglas 1994:3), which excludes and silences people who do not share that interest. A focus on the community “as a whole” (Douglas 1994:39) can falsely emphasize cohesion and solidarity, while neglecting intra-communal leadership and entrepreneurial conflicts, contradictory goals or visions of the future of the community, and the exclusion of some groups from decision-making, such as women (Anderson et al. 1994) or Aboriginal peoples (Fernandez 2005).

Where the concept of community and the social dynamics that accompany it become too treacherous or complicated a territory, some CED theorists shift to the use of the equally obscure category of “local.” For example, Loxley and Lamb (2005) are critical of CED that defines itself as any economic development taking place within a geographically bounded community, as this can justify any approach as technically being conducted within a “community”. However, when they attempt to create a more progressive definition of CED, they use the term “local” in many of the principles they list. This leads one to question how the word “local” is being defined, as it is clearly in reference to a specific geographic area, therefore leaving the definitions open to misinterpretation and abuse.

It is vital to bring the current debates in anthropology and other social science disciplines surrounding the concepts of “development” and “community” into the discussion and definition of CED. Within this context, community can be best conceptualized as a complex amalgam of social relationships and interactions. These

interactions are influenced partly by geography or place, as proximity influences the degree to which people interrelate, and partly by imagination, as a sense of belonging to a certain group leads individuals to pursue activities and relationships that reinforce and enhance that feeling. The role of CED in this construction of community is to create and enhance these connections and imaginings, and to adapt to changes in social, economic, political and cultural situations and relations. CED can play a role in building community culture by helping to increase a community's self-reliance and control, meeting individual needs, becoming ecologically sustainable and fostering and supporting local cultural expressions and experiences (Nozick 1994). The ways in which CED organizations and community members achieve these goals through development will be further explored in the following chapters.

Chapter Three: Research Methods

Location of Research

CED targets small-scale locations, and is therefore generally rooted in a geographic location, regardless of the shifting and elusive definitions of community within that geographic unit. As CED works in areas that are facing challenge and attempting regeneration, revitalization or development, many of the organizations I approached are located in the North End of the City of Winnipeg. Part of the “Inner City”, the North End faces the pressing issue of a concentration of poverty, and all the problems associated with it, including health, housing, education and violence (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives 2005). The geographic isolation of the North End, demarcated by the CPR tracks, reflects the socio-economic isolation that many of its inhabitants experience from mainstream society. However, the North End cannot be generalized as a community based solely on geographic location. Instead, the geographic focus of this research project provides a setting within which to explore people’s different interpretations, experiences and perceptions of the same location.

Recruitment Approaches

My approach in this research project was to interview staff members of several different CED organizations, and to then interview community members who participated in some way with those organizations. The diversity of CED organizations required flexible and variable recruitment approaches. In some cases, I approached the executive directors of organizations whose work I had encountered during initial research. In others, I met the staff of organizations through events, conferences and community meetings in the North End. Once contact with an organization was established, I introduced my research

project and interests in order to determine the organization's degree of involvement and whether they were willing to allow me to recruit participants from their organization.

I attempted to establish the kinds of community contact and engagement an organization used, in order to determine the best methods of connecting with community members. I introduced my research interests at community meetings and at organizations where community members had gathered for workshops and classes. The specific methods used for recruitment relied to a great extent on the levels of comfort and involvement of the CED organizations. Some organizations allowed me to ask potential participants for their contact information, while others preferred that I give community members my contact information in a letter of introduction (see Appendix One) enabling them to contact me. One organization acted as intermediary by giving community members my letter of introduction, gathering the names of those who expressed interest, and passing contact information on to me. In all cases, I contacted potential participants by phone to arrange an interview.

Interviews

Over the course of three months, from the beginning of December 2005 to the end of February 2006, I conducted twenty-one semi-structured interviews (Hammersley and Atkinson 1992, Bernard 1988) with twenty-two participants. I conducted twenty of the interviews on a one-on-one basis, and one with a married couple. I held the interviews in a location that was convenient and comfortable for the participant, which included offices, private areas in organizations, local coffee shops and restaurants, and participants' homes. I generally traveled to a location close to the participant in order to

reduce their travel costs, and reimbursed participants with bus tickets if they traveled to the interview location.

In order to enhance the comfort and spontaneity of interview participants, I did not use a list of set questions, but instead focused on areas of questioning including background information, community character and issues, intra-community relations, and relations between community members and organizations. Sample questions within these areas of questioning are provided in Appendix Two. I asked each participant for written consent to permit audio recording of the interview (see Appendix Three). In cases where the location of the interview was not conducive to recording, or where the participant did not wish to have the interview recorded, I obtained written consent to take handwritten notes during the interview. Fifteen of the twenty-one interviews were tape-recorded, and six were not tape-recorded. Transcripts from audio recordings and handwritten notes were created by me alone. These omitted any identifying information in order to protect the anonymity of the participants. Transcripts were coded with a number, and a key to this code was created and stored separately from the transcripts.

Participants

Due to the small size of CED organizations, in order to protect the anonymity of participants, I will not identify the organizations that participated in this research project. However, the types of CED approaches and the forms of community engagement being pursued by these organizations will be discussed and explored.

a. Organizations

This research project involves four organizations working in the North End, each with a different CED focus and a different form of community involvement. Two of the

organizations focus on employment or business development. Employment development organizations generally attempt to enhance the employability of community members by offering job training and placement, providing workshops on “soft” skills such as appropriate behavior, dress and language in the workplace (August 2005). The key to such development is that it focuses on finding people well-paying jobs, not just any jobs (August 2005). Business development organizations often offer small loans, bookkeeping and budgeting support and ongoing counseling and problem solving to entrepreneurs attempting to start up small businesses (Pell 1994). These two organizations interact with community members on a daily basis through classes and workshops, as well as individual counseling sessions.

The two other organizations address social issues within communities and mainstream society. One deals with broad social issues at the city level, in an attempt to integrate smaller organizations into larger movements of solidarity and activism. This kind of work can help CED to retain a progressive focus, and connect CED work with wider issues of social justice (Shragge 1997a). The other organization is a neighborhood association, which meets to discuss the community issues of a geographic neighborhood in the North End. Neighborhood associations can often act as community development corporations by applying for funding and directing the development of the community through social and economic programs (Nozick 1994). Community members involved with both of these organizations generally meet once a month to discuss relevant issues, and are involved in activist and fundraising activities on an ongoing and more informal basis between meetings.

All four organizations create and maintain ties with many other organizations in the area, creating a network of cooperation and communication. Many community members also have ties to organizations other than those involved in the research, either as employees or volunteers. The relationships between community members and organizations therefore involve many complex dynamics and roles. The lines between organization staff and community members are often blurred in CED work, as is the case with the neighborhood association, whose staff is made up entirely of community members working largely on a voluntary basis.

The division between organization staff and community members is therefore a false distinction, but is necessary for the analysis of the information given in interviews. I asked informants whether their participation in an organization was on a voluntary or mandatory basis, and classified them as community members and organization staff based on their self-identifications as either employees or concerned citizens. Taking this distinction into account, five of the twenty-two participants can be classified as organization staff. Three of the staff members are female and two are male, and all five are Caucasian. While all five were employed at the time of the interviews, two had received Social Assistance at a previous time in their lives.

b. Community members

Seventeen of the twenty-two participants are classified as community members, and all seventeen are involved with one of the four organizations on a voluntary basis. Of the nine female and eight male community members, ten are Caucasian, three are Métis, two are Aboriginal and two are of Eastern European descent. Seven of these community members live with a permanent physical disability. Five participants are immigrants,

having come to Canada from various countries in childhood or adolescence. The age range of participants is from early twenties to over seventy-five, but most participants are in their thirties and forties. Twelve of the participants live in the North End or Inner City areas, while the other five live throughout Winnipeg. At the time of the interviews, seven participants were receiving Social Assistance, seven were employed, one was a student, one was retired, and one was a stay-at-home mother. While I did not inquire specifically about the annual income of those who were employed, they ranged from mid-to-low-income.

Voice and Representation

In order to protect the identities of the participants, I will contextualize the stories and experiences shared with me in order to disguise personal details and identifying information. While this involves some degree of interpretation and choice, I will attempt to be as true as possible to the spirit and context of the information as it was offered. I also recognize the right and capability of the participants to theorize about their own personal lives and situations and the broader systems that influence them (Hammersley and Atkinson 1992). It is not my intent to present a conclusive or definitive interpretation of CED or the communities I worked with. My goal is to give a sense of the diverse negotiations, interpretations and experiences of CED and community in Winnipeg's North End.

It is extremely important to note the limitations of this research project. Due to the nature of my research and recruitment approach, I did not encounter or interview any of the many people who have been excluded from mainstream society, community development efforts and community life. As I realized with the aid of several astute

participants, there are vast numbers of people in low-income and other marginalized groups who have abandoned hope. These people are often excluded from, or drop out of community participation, and their existence is therefore easily overlooked. Despite several attempts to reach this population, I was not able to overcome this challenge, as these people by definition do not participate in social or community events. My research project would have benefited greatly from the inclusion of the input and perspectives of some of these people. However, in their absence, I can instead bring to light the very real problem, for both researchers and organizations, of reaching sectors of society that are perhaps in the greatest need.

Encountering the "Field"

My dilemma in reaching those people who are excluded from mainstream society relates to Spivak's struggle to come to terms with subalterity (1988). Subalterns, as Spivak defined them, are those people who have been "jumped over" (Lyons and Franklin 2004:210) by society, and have been so exploited and excluded that they cannot make their voices heard. This does not imply that subalterns do not understand or speak about their situations, but rather that mainstream and elite classes lack the discourse required to understand them, effectively silencing them (Spivak 1988, Spivak, Landry and MacLean 1996). Differences in social positions between the researcher and the participants can affect a researcher's ability to relate to and understand those participants, and prompt questions about the position and place of the researcher in the field.

Anthropology has traditionally involved travel to distant and foreign countries, and a return home to write up the research. However, of late more and more anthropologists are working in or maintaining connections with their own countries, and

note a weakening separation between the field and home (Amit 2000, Norman 2000, Hopkins 1996). In this context, my research can be perceived as being conducted “at home” for many reasons; I was not immersed in a foreign country or culture, but conducted research in my own city and language, and was able to continue with my normal daily routines and maintain my relationships at home while engaging with the field. This type of situation leads some anthropologists to suggest that home, work and family relationships have become “enmeshed” (Hopkins 1996:123) with field communities.

While the trend of doing fieldwork at home certainly has important implications for anthropology, to suggest that the divides between field and home are disintegrating or melding may be premature and heedless. While the field and home may be getting geographically closer, or less focused on place (Amit 2000), fieldwork still involves social and other forms of distance. The researcher may separate a “field” as such merely in his or her own mind, in order to clarify and bound the field in some way, even if imaginary (Pink 2000). I work with a clear distinction of field and home, due to the fact that my contacts and relations when conducting research were undertaken in a different spirit and context than my home relations. I was still very conscious of working in a particular area, and adopted a field-specific attitude, role and approach. In my researcher role, I had different experiences of my “self” when in the field (Pink 2000:99), that separated my self and my research from my “home.”

It is important not to ignore the fact that our experiences of “home” are as biased, subjective and partial as our experiences of the “other.” My experience of home is limited to my city, and to a particular area of that city. It is further contextualized by

social factors, such as the fact that I experience and explore my home as a middle-class, young, Caucasian woman. My experiences, memories, thoughts and feelings influence and create a multiplicity of partial or “situated knowledges” (Haraway 2003:393) that affect my perception and understanding of the world. Therefore, it is difficult for me to contextualize my research as being done “at home,” as it brought me into contact with territory that was geographically, socially, economically and culturally unfamiliar, and in which I was unsure of my place. While my treks into the “field” were not geographically distant, they were miles out of my experience.

The anthropological move towards reflexivity is helpful in uncovering and exploring the positionality of the researcher, the ways in which s/he encounters and interacts with the world, and how these embodied experiences influence his or her work (Ruby 1982, Behar 1996). However, it is an approach that also has its limits. Some personal biases can be so deeply rooted, and some experiences so far outside one’s realm of experience that they are unimaginable. It is problematic to assume that it is possible to gain an understanding of these experiences and perceptions without having direct experience, and using only self-reflexive processes to discover and deconstruct them.

I often only gained awareness of my own biases and limitations through experiences and encounters that exposed them, and this often involved other people, in a very public and interactive process. While self-reflexivity involves the exposure of deeply personal and emotional experiences, it gives the researcher the time and choice of what to reveal or conceal. In contrast, exploring these differences and biases with other people, or having them exposed by other people, can be incredibly embarrassing, challenging, upsetting and uncomfortable. It takes a great deal of effort to work with

other people to rethink one's own perspective and position, and to be exposed to new worldviews. Therefore, I often found fieldwork to be an uncomfortable, emotionally demanding and unsettling enterprise, which shifted the world under my feet and often left me with no firm ground to stand on. However, these experiences were also the most rewarding, and prompted me to challenge myself as a person and a researcher.

Writing up these experiences, as well as the experiences and perspectives of the people I worked with, requires a fine balance. Ethnography should attempt to be polyphonic, and include the voices of the researcher and subjects (Horwitz 1996). I cannot claim to identify with the life situations and stories of many of the people I spoke to, and do not want to appropriate their voices and experiences. However, this does not mean that I attempted to be objective or distance myself from what I saw, heard and experienced. My experience of the field was very emotional and subjective. I have been influenced by Behar (1996), who suggests that there is room for these emotions in fieldwork, where they are used to motivate writing and help to tell a story. While I was sometimes saddened, enraged, frustrated, or discouraged by many of the stories I heard, I was also touched by and appreciative of what people shared with me. Many of the experiences were enjoyable, and the participants humorous, hopeful, positive and encouraging. My goal with these myriad strands of information, emotion, experience and learning is to weave them together in a way that will hopefully most accurately represent my experience of the research and the stories and voices of the people who spoke to me, while protecting the identity of participants and respecting the sensitive and personal nature of the information they shared with me.

Chapter Four: Negotiating “Community”

Communities are created and reinforced by the awareness and expression of boundaries that define the inclusion or exclusion of individuals and groups (Cohen 1985). Rather than exploring a community based on a preconceived set of categories and boundaries, it is important to determine how community members create and maintain these boundaries (Cohen 1985). While CED theorists and organizations attempt to get community members' feedback by gathering information on a community's issues, struggles and strengths, they often ignore the different ways in which individuals define and experience community. In this chapter I will therefore discuss the participants' concepts of community, the boundaries that are created and maintained around them, and the reasons for identification with a community.

The boundaries that define and separate communities differ greatly depending on individual and group perceptions. Lines of boundary are highly mobile, personal and fluid, making community the site of tension and conflict. While the members of community may join in solidarity and interact with one another for some common goals, they also have “conflicting and competing interests” (Atkinson and Cope 1997:204). The challenges that arise from differences in defining community and inclusion are a part of the construction of community identity, and this tension and struggle should not be excluded from the definition of a community (Brent 1997).

Further adding to the complexity of communities is the fact that they often have “fluid and overlapping” (Atkinson and Cope 1997:203) memberships. Individuals can belong to many different communities with “different criteria of belonging” (Howell 2002:85), making community identification plural and complex (Nozick 1992). The

participants in this research project theorize, analyze and express their own experiences and feelings of identification or belonging to communities, and I attempt to capture the essence of these communities while expressing their shifting and complex nature. The types of community that emerge are named based on their key feature of community identification; however, these categories are not concrete, and community members often identify with more than one type of community.

Concepts of Community

a. Geography-based communities

Geographic location is a widely contested and debated component of community. With the growing focus on globalization and the perceived breakdown of the “local,” the relevance of geography or locality in defining community comes under scrutiny. While some argue that locale is no longer important to community (Cohen 1985, Anderson in Amit 2002), many participants locate their sense of belonging within a specific area.

For some, community is defined broadly, encompassing the city of Winnipeg and its surrounding areas. While one community member divides this city-wide community into areas, she still maintains a focus on the wider scale:

Obviously certain areas of the city need more support than others – there are more influential areas of the city where the people that are there and the businesses that are there are doing really fine, and they're more exclusive. But I mean, so, it's kind of like, I would look at it as Winnipeg and the surrounding area . . . I see Winnipeg as, as a whole as a community.

Another community member agrees that Winnipeg is a community made up of smaller units. She divides these units on a scale of size, moving from the family, to the neighborhood, to the city.

Some community members identify with smaller geographic areas. Many people living in the North End identify with it as their community, and have a strong sense of pride in the area. As one community member expresses it, these are “*hardcore North Enders*” who want to stay in the North End despite problems with violence in the area. While people in the North End move frequently, they often relocate within the North End. One organization staff member explains this phenomenon:

People do stay in the community; they just might not stay in the same house. But they still see it as their community . . . And there are quite strong, very strong ideas of ‘Okay, this is where we live, this is our place’ and they’re very proud of being a North-Enders.

Pride in the North End often becomes specific to an even smaller area, as at some neighborhood association meetings in which many people are from the same street and take pride in announcing where they live. This is the case with another community member, who identifies specifically with her own block, which she believes is a good one compared to some others in the area.

Identification with a geographic community can also encompass multiple locations. An organization staff member views the North End as one community, but because it encompasses a large geographic area, he also breaks it down into neighborhoods. He stresses that while the North End is a community, its neighborhoods are all different. A community member identifies her community as being both the geographic North End and her own specific neighborhood. As a volunteer with a neighborhood association, her involvement is area-specific, and this affects her perception of community:

Well I guess my community is the larger North End, but my, the community that I serve is within the boundaries I told you about. So, what’s good for this area is good for all of the North End. So whatever I

do here, and whatever impact our Association has here, it'll be good for all of the North End, I think.

Some participants experience the geographic boundaries of community as barriers. The Salter Street Bridge that crosses the CPR tracks also separates the North End and marks its entrance and exit. One organization staff member characterizes the bridge as a barrier to some North End community members' participation in organizations located in other communities. As many of them cannot afford transportation, they are geographically isolated. A downtown community member also expresses this sense of barrier, and believes that Portage Avenue forms a barrier between two completely separate communities, and people who live on either side of this barrier are wary of venturing across it.

For some, geography does not have such concrete meaning or impact on their sense of community. It is instead perceived as a "place" (Atkinson and Cope 1997:202), with multiple locations and meanings. As one community member reflects, upon hearing someone use the phrase "*wrong side of the tracks*":

. . . the thing is, those, those tracks are highly mobile, you know . . . So for me, the community is not necessarily defined by, by geographic boundaries . . .

Another organization staff member shares this shifting idea of place rather than geography, and identifies strongly with the North End community while living in the South End.

Two of the CED organizations are located in the North End, yet serve communities located all across Winnipeg. One staff member clarifies:

We primarily focus on the inner city or inner city neighborhoods, which could be in St. Vital or whatever . . . So we work across – as long as you're in the city of Winnipeg. We do get a lot of folks, you know, from this

neighborhood, but we do get them from every neighborhood. So yeah, we're not North End or Inner City.

While she identifies these neighborhoods as “Inner City”, she understands that they are not limited to one geographic area. Her definition of community in CED work encompasses more than geography.

b. Cultural communities

A sense of belonging to a community is often based on identification with a cultural group. While individual experiences and participation within these groups are different, they enhance and strengthen ties to a cultural community. Aboriginal and Métis community members often express a sense of belonging to cultural communities.

Aboriginal communities are sometimes explored with reference to the colonial history of Canada and the importance of understanding this history and its impact on Aboriginal communities. One Métis community member feels strongly that the Métis community needs the most work due to their historical and ongoing oppression. She speaks of the history of Métis people in Manitoba who publicly identified themselves as French rather than Métis, in order to survive racist and colonial belief systems and practices. However, this identification divided the Métis community:

... it's actually sad because some had to actually turn back – their back – on their own people, kind of like ‘we're here, and you're there’ and you know, so there was a lot – that's probably why they don't want to talk about it.

The division of this cultural community has generational impacts on Métis people, as elders have lost or are afraid to communicate their cultural knowledge to younger generations. Another Métis community member speaks of the implication of European domination in the destruction of Aboriginal community:

So I come from the real sense of once-upon-a-time community that was destroyed by Christo-European values, and now I'm on the outside because of those very values . . . I came from a community, I came from a family, I came from generations of disenfranchised people. So in this country you get disenfranchised because of who your family is, where they're from . . . you put up with the shit we put up with, in our own backyard, you know what I mean?

These Métis community members have not abandoned hope. One feels that the future and healing of Aboriginal communities is foretold in Aboriginal oral tradition:

Like even the elders said 'the seventh generation will be the one that'll come out' . . . but it'll be the one that'll bring the pride back to the people. So it is coming, but it has to come from them. And there's, you know, I see a lot of young people and they're being lawyers and doctors and, you know what I mean? And they're coming out and they're strong. And I think that – and it is time that kind of heals them all, but it has to come back from them, and they have to come back with their power, with their strength, you know what I mean?

The strength of the seventh generation is also captured by another Métis community member in his understanding that Aboriginal communities planned ahead to the seventh generation to ensure that their practices were sustainable for one-hundred-and-forty years, a practice that enabled them to maintain healthy and balanced lifeways.

Racist attitudes and practices occur within the Métis and Aboriginal communities as well, as was the case of a Métis community member who felt he was treated as either not Aboriginal enough or not white enough to get help from cultural organizations. However, many CED organization staff expressed sensitivity to historic injustices and Aboriginal issues and an understanding of Aboriginal communities. One organization staff member expresses his understanding of the needs of the Aboriginal population in the North End:

It's, it's the same needs as, as any group with barriers, as any group in poverty. With the additional, in lots of cases, the additional barrier of racism and discrimination . . . But, but I don't think you can sort of

diminish the importance of some of the historical wrongs that have been done, and how that is carried on from generation to generation, and doesn't – you know maybe it gets kind of blurry, as it gets distant, but it's not necessarily going away or improving, it's just maybe not as easy to directly say – because this family, you know these children were in a residential school and weren't raised by their own parents, 30 years later, 50 years later, what kind of effect is that having.

In response to the effects of this history, the organization addresses and is sensitive to the cultural needs of the Aboriginal community. The organization is building partnerships with Aboriginal organizations and designing programs with and for Aboriginal people.

Immigrants to Canada also often maintain connections to ethnic communities.

One immigrant community member expresses belonging to a cultural community made up of people from the same ethnic background, who gather to express their culture and language. His personal cultural community is made up of people from his home country that he met after his arrival in Canada. His involvement with this community includes social events and helping relationships in which individuals assist each other in finding apartments or houses, employment, and interpreters to communicate with English-speaking people on important occasions, such as doctor's appointments.

One community member, an American immigrant, is married to a Jamaican immigrant, and therefore identifies with multiple cultural communities. She finds Canada very different from the United States in that it has a multicultural perspective and society. She feels that ethnic communities are more readily expressed and identified in Canada as a result. As well, she attempts to balance her understanding of her cultural community with her husband's:

. . . you know – it's funny 'cause I have my sense of my community, and where I come from, and he has his, and they come together and it blends.

She feels that her family creates its own customs and traditions out of a blend of past customs and the combination of the cultures in their family. This blend is often expressed in little ways, such as celebrating both Canada Day and the Fourth of July, and cooking ethnic dishes that come from her grandparents in Eastern Europe.

Many non-immigrant participants view the involvement of immigrants as essential to the creation of multi-cultural and diverse communities. This multiculturalism is often perceived in informal or everyday ways, by simply walking down the street and seeing people from all different cultures, having neighbors from different countries, and noting the presence of various ethnic restaurants in the community. However, cultural communities are not always integrated into wider communities. One community member elaborates on the potential segregation and isolation of immigrant communities:

... I find it really hard on some of these, you know, communities and – and what happens is they become segregated. And that's what I'm seeing, is like – you're new to the city, are you gonna go join the general population, no, you're gonna go into the Sudanese community, and you're going to stay in that community because you're comfortable and safe there, and they'll tell you 'Ah, don't bother with that, don't bother with that, don't bother with that.' Even though our systems may be getting more inclusive, the communities that have dealt with that, maybe eight years, five years ago, they're going to say, 'Don't bother. They won't hire you. We tried that already. Do this, do that, do this.' So they become, yeah, little pockets of communities and, so that's not good.

While this isolation no doubt occurs, not all immigrant people experience identification with a cultural group and the resulting isolation from mainstream society. One community member, an immigrant with a diverse cultural background, does not identify with one particular ethnic community. As she explains:

So I always had a sense of belonging to the community at large . . . I have an affinity, I would say, for, for groups that, that are more – well, I'll use that old word again – that are more inclusive . . .

Therefore, the creation, maintenance and expression of a cultural community are complex, and personal experiences in those communities varied, making generalization or assumption of similarity based on cultural background impossible.

c. Issue-based communities

Many people identify with communities based on social issues that are of importance to their senses of belonging and identity. This type of community identification is often abstract, with a more general focus, and involves a different context of community. As one community member expresses:

It's hard sometimes when you're working at that level, where you're working just on a problem, and not really relating to the community, it's, it's a different – it's almost like you've taken the people, the people out of the equation, and you're kind of looking at 'This is the problem, and how do we fix the problem' and not the people that are affected by the problem. That's kind of just totally different – I guess it is, when you think about it – that's totally different. Totally. It's easier.

It is important for her to maintain her focus on the people affected by broader issues such as poverty, and she manages this by envisioning one woman living in poverty and how she can help to make sure it does not happen to every woman.

Communities that identify and mobilize around issues are often expressed as being very powerful and creating strong connections. As one community member points out, participation in social issues can build community. She speaks of the response of people in combating hunger in Winnipeg:

. . . it doesn't seem to matter whether or not there's been three international disasters during the year that people have helped to – responded to; they're still willing and able to respond to need within their own community, and I think that's what community is, it's about people

helping other people, no matter what setting it is, whether it's your work setting, or the apartment building you live in or whatever, you know? Sort of people joining together for the betterment of one another and you know, other people.

In this view, a common issue can unite people across other community or place identifications such as work, home or neighborhood. Another community member believes in the power of people to crosscut cultural and geographic communities when they join together around a key issue, such as human rights, and are determined to have their voices heard.

One community member identifies with an issue-based community above all other types of community. She feels a sense of solidarity with all people who are marginalized and excluded from mainstream society. As she comments:

I usually identify with people who are striving to overcome something . . . my community is not only the underdog, but people who are . . . who don't even define themselves along partisan lines. Because I think the partisan, partisan lines can be very, very vicious and people waste a lot of time promoting themselves.

Therefore, she identifies with and works with a community composed of what she refers to as the “underdog.” This community includes all people who have been excluded from mainstream society, regardless of their culture, race, gender or socio-economic status. These marginalized people form a community by ignoring partisan lines of boundary and gathering around the issue of inclusion in society.

d. Activity-based communities

Many community members state that becoming involved in activities makes them feel like a part of a community. The formation of groups around an activity highlights the significance of “communities of shared experience” (Howell 2002:94), in which diverse members are united by a common activity or occurrence. The activities that help to form

or reinforce a sense of community are sometimes quite structured and formal, and community organizations play an important role in creating these activities. Some community members say their participation with an organization influences their sense of belonging in the North End. As well, some organization staff members working in the North End feel like a part of the area through their work activities.

Participation in church activities also makes some people feel like a part of a community. One community member participates in ministry work, helping out with community suppers and childcare programs. These activities have personal relevance, but also help to build the social life of the community. As she explains:

I think it helps . . . with the community. Like, a lot of people, that's basically their, their evening out, you know? It's a place to go and like talk with other people from the community . . . 'Cause a lot of them don't go out anywhere. A lot of them are like, older people – I mean we do get some younger people who are just looking for a way to, to escape whatever situation they're in. And we just pray with them and . . . whatever we can to help them.

Community-building activities also occur on an informal and personal basis. One community member is active in his community at an individual level, mowing other people's lawns, cleaning up garbage and graffiti, and picking up people's mail when they are away. He also fixes bicycles and builds forts for neighborhood children. He hopes his activities will convince his neighbors to get involved, because he believes that when people help each other, it builds community. Another community member feels that the informal activities of cooking ethnic food and playing cultural games help to connect her family with their cultural communities. Another community member listens to local radio programs to stay connected to her neighborhood and to keep informed of community meetings and events that she wants to attend.

e. Organizational communities

CED organizations in the North End and throughout Winnipeg form partnerships with one another and often act as communities in themselves. In order to avoid duplicating services and misusing funding and resources, organizations communicate and cooperate to allow each organization to operate based on its strengths. Organizations provide one another with training, assist with funding and provide one another with board and committee members. This process unites the organizations in a cooperative community and ensures the most consistent support to community members who come to those organizations. One organization staff member elaborates:

The networking is critical, because it shows support and it shows solid support for the clients. Once they know they have the solid support, if they run into difficulty, it's like a family. If you know your family, you've got that kind of support, you know that you can go to your bigger sister or your bigger brother or your younger sister and get the advice that you need at that given point.

Community members may also feel like part of an organizational community.

One community member says that taking courses and going to counseling at various immigrant organizations makes him feel like part of an organizational community, along with other people who visit and work there. Other community members believe that organizations work hard to be places of safety and community. However, although organizations can help to form a community, they sometimes generate dependence in community members. One community member notes this as a potential problem:

. . . this is such an oasis for some people, who have a – for whatever reason – history that's made it very difficult for them to, to enter the mainstream of life. It could be serious abuse, it could be serious drug problems, all sorts of things in their life that make it really difficult, and this place becomes a haven for them, they become so bonded that it's very difficult for them to leave . . . they sometimes hold on too strongly here.

f. Low-income community

The ways in which some people speak of community makes it clear that economic factors can often overshadow other lines of boundary in defining a community. Organization staff and community members often speak of working with or belonging to a low-income community. One organization staff member explains:

But when I'm talking about the [organization's] programs and I use the word 'community' I'm actually talking about low-income families, wherever they happen to be in Winnipeg . . . when you're looking at the map there are patches of Manitoba Housing and low-income neighborhoods all over the place.

Some community members identify themselves as belonging to a low-income community on a broader level, throughout Winnipeg. One community member defines her community as being less advantaged compared to other communities in Winnipeg, and says that many of its members are unemployed, newly arrived immigrants and people on Social Assistance. Another community member states that his community is poor people, and refers to low-income people as “*my kind*”, identifying himself with a broader economic community.

The economic differences between organization staff and community members affect their relationships. One organization staff member feels it is important to share her past as a struggling single mother with community members:

I'm not ashamed of that – I think it's really, that self-disclosure is important; it helps to make clients connect with you and understand that you're human too. I don't walk on water when they come here; I get my feet wet just like you do. So I've been through the trenches, I've been there and done it and worked hard to get where I'm at now.

However, another community member who participates in community-based work believes that this economic divide is still difficult to overcome. He speaks of this distinction in the community:

So I feel a part and yet separate too. And then I leave – I go to my world, and even when [he lived in the same area he worked in], it's still a different world, than what a lot of these people - most of these people – are a part of. So a part but separate.

g. Comfort-based communities

One of the implicit and informal types of identification and belonging to a community emerges in repeated comments about comfort and familiarity. These comments are often embedded in participants' descriptions of community identification, and form an important component of their sense of belonging.

Comfort and familiarity often generate feelings of community through informal and deceptively simple interactions and experiences. One community member mentions the accessibility of the Inner City, and that she meets people just by walking on the street. Even if she does not know people, including her neighbors, they always say "Hi" to each other. Another community member says he enjoys living in his area because he has come to know and recognize people. He feels like a part of the community because when he walks down the street, people recognize and greet him. These comments reinforce the idea that communities can be partially composed of networks of people who are familiar to an individual, but who may not know the individual, or one another (Amit and Rapport 2002:23).

The process of becoming comfortable and familiar with a community is at times slow and progressive. One community member describes her family's initial nervousness when moving into the North End, and how they became more comfortable after speaking

to their new neighbors. However, when faced with the prospect of moving again, they became uncomfortable again. As she states:

... we don't wanna cross [a busy North End street], 'cause we kind of think, like 'oh, that's scary over there!' ... 'cause now we've expanded our little comfort zone from, from the other side, to like the first two blocks, now we're like 'Well, maybe one day we'd move over across that other side' but it's still, you know? Depending on who's living there and what the rentals and what the landlords are like, you just never know.

Each move requires them to readjust their “comfort zone” to feel at home in the area.

She also mentions the transformation of their new area from “*kind of foreign territory*” in the beginning to a community they are comfortable in:

... once you drive by it every single day and then it, nothing seems that strange or crazy anymore.

Another community member notes familiarity is important to community belonging:

... I don't know that community is more than that, really, but, but being comfortable and knowing some of the people on your street.

Developing a feeling of comfort in the community is important in the North End area due to some of its specific concerns and issues. Struggles with violence, gangs and drugs in the area make people in the neighborhood more dependent on one another.

Therefore, as one community member explains, being familiar with the area and people helps neighbors to readily notice strange or dangerous occurrences. She contrasts this sense of dependence and interrelation to her experience living in a middle-class suburb:

And so you make more of an effort and so it feels more like a community than it did in, in our other home because there, yeah, we were independent, we just came and went and we didn't really notice what was going on.

As well, when people develop a sense of belonging, they are more able to address community issues as a group or community than on an individual level.

Relationships between community members and organizations also help to build comfort and familiarity. One community member feels that the organization she attends is a part of the community:

. . . everybody basically in the North End is like okay, you know, you can walk by [the organization] and you know these people by name! And they'll say hi to you, not like some places where once you go there it's kind of like – they see you on the street and they don't even know you.

While developing a comfort level fosters identification with a community, there is also the danger that comfort and familiarity will make people complacent about community problems and issues. One community member stresses the importance of reminding herself that even if community issues do not affect her directly, other people in the area are still affected. As she states:

So you can almost forget and say 'You know, I live in a normal neighborhood and it's fine', so . . . again, thinking outside of your own boundaries and going, 'Yeah, okay my block's fine and my life is fine', but people who live on, you know, live five blocks away, they're having a really tough time, and how can we make it better over there?

The boundaries of comfort need to be challenged to ensure that individuals and communities make connections with one another and do not become isolated.

Lack of Community or Belonging

Any discussion of the factors that form and shape community belonging must also take into consideration those people who are excluded from community, as well as the basis for their exclusion. One participant feels like she is on her own and is not a part of any communities. She feels rejected by her family, as her mother and siblings are no longer speaking to her. She also does not feel like a part of the community where she lives, but has just become used to living there and cannot afford to move. She also feels disconnected from the Aboriginal community and says it is not important for her to

connect with other Aboriginal peoples. Another community member shares his feelings of a lack of belonging to any communities. He speaks of the area he lives in:

Sara: . . . I found it interesting that you were saying that this isn't a community.

Community Member: It's not. This is where people live and hide behind their blinds, okay? They spy on you, they watch your every single move, and they wait for you to make a mistake. That's what they do here . . .

Community is based on a bunch of people who want what you've got!

Some participants who personally feel included in communities can nevertheless understand why others feel excluded. One organization staff member notes the challenge of reaching some people in the community:

And the people who aren't already coming to things in the community might be the ones facing the most difficult or challenging social issues; single parenting, unemployment, addictions, you know, maybe family violence or, or whatnot. And so when people are faced with those issues, it's harder to even come out to a meeting and think about the broader issues, 'cause you're so caught up in your own stuff.

At least one community member agrees with this statement, and explains that when he was dealing with his own personal issues, he was in “*survival mode*” and was not concerned with community issues.

While only two of the participants directly express their personal exclusion from community, many others make statements that reveal their opinions about the people who do not belong to their communities. One organization staff member feels like a part of the North End community even though she does not live there. However, when asked about problems in the community, she elaborates that violence in the area generally occurs between people who know each other, whereas she is easily recognizable as someone from outside the community. As she states:

They just – they know, people know, right? Just by the way you dress, and walk and whatever. So they probably wouldn't bother you, so in that way I've felt safe.

This comment reveals that while she personally feels like a part of the community, she is not perceived that way by others, and is treated in a different manner, as someone who does not belong.

As well, participants often refer to street people, drug dealers, gang members and prostitutes as though their lives and activities are not part of the community. One community member noticed such hostility and division in a neighborhood she had lived in previously. A rooming house beside her apartment was widely known to be involved in the sex trade, and many community members were attempting to have the house closed and the people kicked out. She has mixed feelings about the situation; she does not approve of the sex trade, but wonders where the people will go if they are forced to leave the area. Conflict and trouble are often treated as though they exist outside the community rather than within it, perhaps due to the idealization of community as idyllic and peaceful. Communities often feel pressure to present a unified and uniform front, and must therefore deny the “unacceptable parts within” (Brent 1997:80).

The Meaning of Place

Communities are therefore formed by the creation and expression of boundaries. The boundaries around communities are flexible and individual, and are formed on the basis of diverse activities and perceptions. The participants' comments reveal some of the ways in which communities are formed – in organizations and meetings, in front yards and on the street. The factors that influence the creation and maintenance of communities are broad, and individual experiences of these communities are highly

diverse. However, while negotiating these personal experiences, themes emerge that have implications for community building and for CED work in these communities.

It is important to understand the processes involved in building community, and who is included and excluded in this process. Abstract social, political and economic processes often influence inclusion and exclusion from community, but these processes are linked to concrete experiences with real and sometimes tragic results. As Amit ventures in her defense of the concrete components of “community”, to claim that communities are imagined may allow society to ignore the social relations and issues that influence these imaginings, as well as their effects (2002:19). The current focus on transnationalism may oversimplify the movement of people and the dissolution of boundaries. A focus on community must take into account the boundaries that restrict people, and the struggles individuals and communities face when negotiating their relationships and identities (Amit 2002:19).

The participants' lived experiences lie between the two extremes of community theory. As the participants' comments and stories indicate, community is still tied to a geographic location for some people, as many identify with Winnipeg or the North End very strongly. However, there is still room for imagination in these concepts of community, as the meanings and experiences associated with a location differ greatly. This flexibility of the meanings of location is perhaps best expressed by the notion of “place”, for while geographic location is static, the “places” felt and navigated within that location are fluid and diverse (Gray 2002:40, Kempny 2002:60).

The creation and experience of a “place” or community also relies on social relationships and activities, and the importance of these social ties cannot be

overemphasized. Whether relationships and activities stem from cultural communities, organizations, families, or from familiarity with people on the street, these experiences help people to feel a sense of “belonging, home and social location” (Amit and Rapport 2002:24). Personal networks that form around informal activities and relationships are fragile and shifting due to the nature of human relationships. Therefore, while they involve some degree of imagination and perception of belonging, they also require continual effort, contact and activity (Amit and Rapport 2002:24). Therefore, community is tied to both a place, and to the social relationships and activities that give that place meaning. As evidenced in participants’ statements, these relationships and activities create an atmosphere of comfort and familiarity that are crucial in building community.

Knowledge of the importance of social connections and activities in forming community is important and relevant to CED work. By focusing on “community”, CED is required to define a target population. This, like community formation itself, can be an exclusionary process; those who are not perceived to be a part of the community will also be left out of CED. It is important for CED to understand the specific and unique forms of community belonging of their target communities, and to become aware of who is being excluded. Social networks and ties must be accounted for and fostered in CED work, in order to increase a sense of community belonging and caring. Sharing common experiences and interactions helps people to develop a local culture, and decreases their fear of one another. CED can aid in this process by providing more opportunities for relationships and activities to develop (Nozick 1992:90). As people become engaged in these communities, they can unite to address social needs and goals and exert pressure on governments and institutions to bring about social change.

Chapter Five: Community Concerns

Concepts of community are highly personal and unique, and individuals' experiences of communities in the North End are also diverse. Personal history, personality, economic status, social situation, race, age and gender are just some of the factors that influence the lived experiences of individuals within communities. Despite these differences, some common concerns emerge from discussions about North End communities. While these concerns define only one aspect of the identity of communities in the North End, they have an impact on issues of community formation and participation. This gives them relevance to CED work, as awareness of community needs is essential in determining directions for community development.

CED must meet a wide range of individual personal, social and physical needs. Such needs can be material, such as food and shelter, and non-material, such as social activity and affection (Nozick 1994). However, it is important not to restrict CED initiatives to identifying and addressing needs. CED can also examine and challenge the wider social, political and economic processes of power that produce and reproduce those needs (Loxley 1986). This chapter will explore the assessment of needs by community and organization staff members in the North End, and how these needs affect individual and community life.

Poverty

The existence and experience of poverty is often treated as a solely economic condition when in reality it encompasses many other social, political and cultural processes, systems, and repercussions. The social dynamics that create and aggravate poverty and the social issues that emerge from poverty must therefore be examined.

The North End is often perceived as a low-income community, struggling with high levels of unemployment and underemployment. An organization staff member explains:

. . . we get a lot of folks who have a hard time getting a job. . . or we get a lot of folks who cannot work a regular job, for maybe health reasons or other reasons, other challenges in their life, but they want to work. . . they have illnesses that . . . they might have to take a lot of time off, or a variety of different things.

Facing these issues, many people in the North End are forced to rely on Social Assistance to support themselves. In a 2001 Census, twenty-seven percent of people living in the Inner City, including the North End, were living on Social Assistance – almost double the city-wide rate (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives 2005).

Governments at all levels in Canada utilize an economic model of development and therefore devalue social development and social programs (Silver 2000a:17). Social policies and programs that provide the essential safety net for Canadians have been consistently de-emphasized or cut altogether (2000a:17). In 1996 the Canadian Health and Social Transfer (CHST) program was implemented to guide the transfer of funds from the federal to the provincial governments for spending on health, education and social assistance (Silver 2000a:19). Before the CHST program, funds were allocated in set amounts for these three areas. Now the funds are given in a block, and allocation of funds is left to the discretion of the province, allowing each province to apportion more or less funding to any of the three areas (2000a:19). As health and education are areas of high public interest and with “political clout” (Pulkingham and Ternowetsky in Silver 2000a:19), Social Assistance programs most often suffer funding cuts. This policy allows provinces to reduce Social Assistance benefits rather than keeping them in line

with costs of living. This exacerbates poverty and forces many people living in poverty to pursue low-wage labour simply to survive (Silver 2000a:20).

This program and the resulting funding cuts make Social Assistance increasingly unrealistic as a means of adequate support. As an organization staff member elaborates:

... the current reality is: a person, a single employable person, a person we'd consider employable – has to live on roughly \$450 a month in welfare, it's literally designed to starve him back to work. The problem is that it's so low, that if he gets a job, a half-time 20 hour a week, minimum wage job is getting him enough income to disqualify him from welfare, but it's still not enough to allow him proper housing, nutrition, transportation costs, all those things, okay?

As well, since 1996, governments have pursued what some call a “workfare” approach rather than a “welfare” approach (Shragge 1997b, Silver 2000a). This approach, now known as Employment and Income Assistance (EIA), purposely focuses on employment and includes strategies designed to force people back to work (MacKinnon 2000). EIA recipients must participate in employment and training activities determined necessary by the government, and must maintain an active employment search (MacKinnon 2000:55-57). Single mothers with children under six, persons with disabilities and the elderly are exempt from such requirements (2000:57). This program is based on the idea that if Social Assistance rates are too generous, it will create a disincentive to work (Silver 2000b:130).

In addition, people receiving Social Assistance face harsh and punitive regulations that restrict how much money they can earn while on Social Assistance. This restriction on income is often impoverishing and endangering. One community member provides a personal example:

Do you know how much I'm – as a disabled person – I'm allowed to make per month? . . . Hundred and fifteen dollars. After that, they take it off me,

dollar for dollar. Now, that doesn't affect me this month, but it affects me next month. Next month I may not eat.

The same community member provided a statement of his annual income, which was below \$8500. Another community member asserts that Social Assistance rates are “unbelievable”; a single, employable person receives \$5800 a year.

Many of the participants view government policy and strategies toward Social Assistance as cruel and intended to force people in poverty back into employment by ensuring that they cannot live on what the government gives them. This approach is inhumane and ineffective, as one community member powerfully expresses:

The problem they can't seem to get into their heads, and I've said this right to people in the bloody cabinet, is that when you reduce the benefits so low that people start experiencing malnutrition and inadequate housing and all the psychological effects, you render them incapable of working, so you're creating a new type of dependency cycle because if you no longer work, you're simply trying to survive on what you can get from the welfare system, you're increasingly incapable of functioning normally in society. So it's a whole new dependency cycle because of the inadequacy of the benefits.

Another organization staff member agrees that current Social Assistance policies create a “poverty cycle”, and offers her opinion on the government’s reason for such an approach:

... I think what it is isn't that they're not interested – it's a hornet's nest. If they open it up, it's got a ripple effect. Federally, they're accountable, provincially, they're accountable, municipally, they're accountable. And nobody wants to open it – whereas if we say there isn't a major problem here, then nobody has to touch it. But we know for a fact that there is a major problem – we have the highest child poverty rate in the country. This is a – we are not a Third World country! And in a province where the municipal government won't look at that there's a poverty issue here, I think that's criminal. I think it's really criminal. What about the kids?

Unfair and disempowering social strategies are based on, and are perpetuated by, ideological justifications for social and economic inequality. Government and societal perceptions and attitudes toward people in poverty, especially those living on Social

Assistance, are described by some as “poor bashing” (Silver 2000b:130). The structural and social causes of poverty, including government policies, are de-emphasized and the causes of poverty are individualized to recipients of Social Assistance (Shragge 1997b:20, MacKinnon 2000:52). This discourse blames people who receive Social Assistance for being poor by characterizing them as lazy and dishonest, people who do not want to work and who take every opportunity to abuse the system (MacKinnon 2000:53). Such a discourse has been described as “blame the victim” (Hunter 2000:113), holding poor individuals and families responsible for their own poverty. The focus of “workfare” social programs, for example, is to change the poor people, not the systems that have contributed to their poverty (Hunter 2000:113). As Silver (2000b:130) explains, this discourse places the blame for poverty on the behavior and values of poor people.

This ideology of blaming the poor and disguising social and economic inequalities is no doubt in part created and maintained by the interrelation of government policies and public sentiment (MacKinnon 2000). Public perception that people receiving Social Assistance are lazy and immoral enables the government to continue to ignore poverty and abuse poor people. This discourse has important implications for people who receive Social Assistance in the ways they are perceived and the challenges they face. One community member refers what he perceives to be the “*welfare mentality*”. While stressing that he is not trying to be biased or cruel, he believes that people on Social Assistance will often find an excuse not to pursue any opportunity to improve their lives. Another community member admits that she held a negative opinion about people on Social Assistance until her own personal situation changed:

... I used to like basically have that view too, it's kind of like 'Oh, get a job!' You know? And then when I lost my job because of medical reasons – I'm unemployed, I had to stop working – it was kind of like, 'Okay, so what do I do?'

She began to volunteer and to see people on Social Assistance who are in situations similar to her own, and her point of view therefore changed.

Another community member describes the effect of blaming discourse on his life:

... if Social Services would give people enough money to get by on – I don't wanna automatically be assumed that I'm a drug addict – I don't do drugs and I don't drink, I'm a good person, I pay my fuckin' taxes. But because someone else goes out, gets drunk, takes a cab, you know, doesn't buy food for their kids, whatever – I'm punished.

Another community member states that while some people abuse Social Assistance, it is unfair to judge everyone based on their actions, and being judged causes many people to feel helpless and allow Social Assistance workers to mistreat them.

The experience of living in poverty is demoralizing and stressful, and causes many people to experience feelings of low self-esteem and self-worth (Silver 2000b:148). Social Assistance caseworkers are often difficult for people to relate to and communicate with and contribute to emotional stress. One community member stresses the emotional impact of negligent and insulting treatment from her caseworker:

I mean ... you don't have self-esteem, then to have somebody sit there, look at you and say 'Well, don't you think you should get a job?' It's like, if I could get a job, I'd have a job, you know, I didn't want to come here and get abused by you.

She also elaborates on the social consequences of trying to live on Social Assistance:

... I have my friends, and they say 'Well, would you like to go out for a coffee? Or would you like to go out for, could we just go out to a movie or something?' It's like sure, that would be great – if I had the money – I don't have any money. I don't have anything, and I told him that, you know, I said, 'I can't do this; I can't go out because I don't have any money.' It's like oh, you know? And even that, I mean, to mean well, it's

kind of like 'Oh, that's okay, I'll, I'll pay for you.' . . . and even then, it's like, that hurts . . . I don't wanna like, let my friends like, take me out all the time, you know?

Combating this discourse and its effects on people living in poverty is incredibly difficult. One community member feels that personal experience of poverty is the only way to combat the perception of people on Social Assistance as lazy and dishonest. She suggests that government officials experience poverty and take the experience into consideration when creating social policy:

. . . Make them live with that, where they cannot find money to buy groceries or pay bills . . . When we were on Social Assistance, I'm like 'I can't see how people abuse this' or they, because I was barely paying the bills and putting food on the table when we were on Social Assistance, it was not nice.

She also feels that the public needs to understand that many people are dealing with circumstances beyond their control, and do not choose to be on Social Assistance. It is important to note that the majority of people living on Social Assistance are unemployed because jobs simply do not exist, or are too low-paying to be of benefit (Swanson 1997:152,153).

Welfare reform is greatly needed (Fernandez 2005), but Social Assistance is only part of the exacerbation of poverty. Many people in the North End are employed, but work in jobs that do not pay a livable wage (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives 2005). Poverty caused by these and other factors affects every other aspect of the lives and well-being of individuals and communities.

Safety

The North End has some special concerns with safety, due in part to the concentration of poverty in certain neighborhoods. The poverty of a community increases violence, prostitution and gang involvement (Silver 2000b). Bad press about these activities creates a particular social image that affects the perception of the area by outsiders. Unfortunately, many community members feel that attitudes of fear and apathy towards the North End are even held by police. Discussion of the issues that people face in their everyday lives is important to an understanding of the causes of these problems. This has implications for the city as a whole and for the wider systems by which it is governed.

Many community members characterize the North End as having a general lack of safety. One man feels nervous biking and walking in his North End community and is concerned that young girls often walk alone in the area at night. He has also personally experienced several break-ins at his house over a space of two years and is especially disturbed by the persistence of the burglars in trying to gain access to his home. Another community member attributes the lack of safety, including high numbers of break-ins, to bars located in the area. When people leave the bar, they often cause trouble in the surrounding neighborhood. These experiences make people apprehensive, sometimes even of their own neighbors. One organization staff member elaborates:

Just getting people together and getting to know their neighbors, it's going to create that sense of a positive community, of something good happening, you're not as scared of your neighbor anymore 'cause you get to see them, you get to know them. And that's a very positive thing, and that'll work on safety issues, you don't have that fear.

Dealing with problems such as safety issues within the community has a collectivizing effect, bringing people into relationships rather than simply pushing people and issues into other communities. As one community member explains:

I think there's a lot of people in our community who just would like it to just go away, period. And when you say 'Well, what about the next people along the pike?' 'Well then it's their problem, not ours.' Well, they deal with it, then it becomes ours again and you know, it's just a cycle that never stops. So we kind of have to deal with the problems right here . . .

This presents a challenge to many communities, especially where the low income of community members makes funding for group projects difficult. As well, many community members are dealing with immediate safety issues that prevent them from participating. As one community member pertinently asks:

. . . how do we get a community that cares when everybody's scared?

a. Violence

Violence is an issue for many community members in the North End, and affects their sense of safety. One community member witnessed a group of young people breaking into a van. While most of them fled when he approached them, one young man remained, and threatened to stab him. When the community member approached anyway, the young male eventually ran away. On another occasion, the community member saw a young man hide a wrapped package in a junkyard. The community member later discovered it was a foot-long machete. He feels that such incidents of threats, intimidation and violence contribute to a perception of the neighborhood as dangerous and that many people in the area live in fear as a result.

Women in poverty are often at a higher risk for abuse, and have fewer opportunities to escape domestic violence (Neal 2004). One community member who

came to Winnipeg from a Northern reserve tells of how her ex-husband was physically abusive to her nearly every day. Despite the fact that she has not seen her husband for many years, the effects of the abuse are ongoing in the physical ailments and emotional stress she still deals with. Another community member who has experienced spousal abuse in her past says it is important for the public to understand that women who stay in abusive relationships are not “weak.” Women often are not immediately aware that they are being abused, as abusers typically wear women down over time and trap them in relationships. An organization staff member who has seen many women in poverty who are abused notes that it takes a great deal for a woman to be ready to leave an abusive situation. She stresses the need for healing and counseling resources for women who emerge from abusive situations.

Women, especially those who are struggling with poverty and addictions, are also vulnerable to abuse in the form of prostitution (Silver 2000b:127, Neal 2004). As one community member notes, prostitution and drugs often are often linked, as women who are addicted to drugs often become involved in prostitution in order to obtain drugs (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives 2005). Prostitution is also a safety concern to North End communities because it occurs in public areas, such as in parks, where children are at risk of being exposed to it. One community member mentions that drug dealers and prostitutes often gather in large groups on the sidewalks and streets, and intimidate other community members.

b. Gang activity

The North End is also subject to problems with gangs, as they often target low-income youths with few other options or opportunities (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

2005, Silver 2000b). One community member says it is hard for her North End neighborhood to be expected to monitor or control crime in the area, due to the high concentration of gangs:

You know, Neighborhood Watch is a great program, but when half your neighborhood, on some blocks here – on some blocks three-quarters of the blocks – are gangs, gosh, it's just not realistic.

She mentions that there are concentrations of gangs in certain neighborhoods so gang members can act as a unit and cover for one another, and this makes them difficult to combat.

The prevalence of gang activity in their neighborhoods makes many people scared and insecure, and this affects their ability to participate in community events. One North End neighborhood is attempting to establish a community program for children, and at least one community member thinks it will be difficult to accomplish without having some youth gang members involved. The community is planning to establish a “no gangs” policy for the program, and young gang members will have to take off their gang colors if they want to participate. Another community member gives her perspective on why young people in the North End are attracted to gangs:

... it's kind of well, they want a place to belong, so they go, 'Oh, you know, I can get fast money here. I have friends, you know, and it's like I get to party all the time and I don't have to work.' And what kind of value is that? It's like, you're not being a really responsible person, and by the time you realize it, it's like you're either dead, or it's, it's really too late, you know, to really do anything.

She feels that young people become trapped in gang activity and do not see any other option, or do not know how to get out safely.

Some community members offer perspectives on gangs in the North End that challenge the common perception and the typical media portrayal. One community

member points out that gang activity should not always be associated with the North End, as gangs are prevalent all over the city. Another says that he sometimes encounters gang members while walking his dog in his North End neighborhood, and always says hi to them. While they do not respond to him, they never give him any trouble. He believes that gang members do not usually interfere with non-gang members, and both groups generally go about their own business without having much contact or conflict. Another community member focuses on the social aspect of gangs, as they give their members a sense of belonging to a community. Considering the conditions of poverty, isolation and addictions that often draw people to become involved, gangs can provide people with the support groups and social networks that are otherwise absent from their lives.

c. Police relations

The concentration of poverty and associated safety issues in the North End demand extensive and cooperative relations with the police. Many North End community members want to see the police take a greater interest in the area and are frustrated by police apathy. One says that the police often want specific details on a potentially dangerous situation before they will intervene, but community members have to risk their own safety to get these details. In one case, when community members called about gang activity in an apartment block, the police said there was nothing they could do unless they were given the names of the people, and what kinds of activities they were involved in. This lack of action is frustrating to people in the neighborhood and diminishes feelings of safety and trust for police in North End communities.

One community member describes her experience with police and their attitudes and approach to crime in the North End. She witnessed a stabbing from her house and

immediately called the police, but told them she wanted to remain anonymous for her own safety. Instead, they came to her house, which made her concerned for her safety, and told her that everything was fine even though she had seen someone being stabbed. Another community member saw police visiting a house on his street that he suspected was involved in drug deals, so he went to speak to the police officer. The officer told him that the house was a well-known crackhouse, then got into his cruiser and drove away, leaving the community member frustrated and angry.

Many community members offer insights on how to improve safety and make people feel more secure. One says that although some people want more community police officers walking the beat, tougher gun laws, or more police cruisers in the area, she personally believes that the police have turned a blind eye to the Inner City, and that the entire system will have to change in order to improve the situation. Two other community members mention the Manitoba Government's *Safer Communities Act* as a beneficial alternative to calling the police. Community members can call to notify them about non-emergency safety situations such as drug dealing and prostitution, and Safer Communities will investigate and take action.

Another community member believes that establishing a rapport between young people and the police will help to improve the law enforcement system. One such program introduces young immigrants from countries where the police are often corrupt and dangerous, to Canadian police officers and police stations. As she notes, this improves immigrant youth's perspectives on the police, and encourages some of them to join law enforcement. Strengthening these connections and increasing the diversity of the police force can improve community and police interactions.

Housing

Canada does not have a national housing policy or an organized federal approach to providing social housing (Skelton 2002). This is an issue in areas such as the North End, where nine out of ten households have incomes below the Low Income Cut-Off (LICO), or poverty line. (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives 2005). Many people cannot afford to own homes, and rely on the rental of subsidized housing units. However, there are not enough subsidized housing units to meet the needs of low-income people, and people are often forced to pay higher rents by sacrificing funds from their food budgets. The condition of subsidized housing is also an issue and, as an organization staff member describes, these units are often not properly maintained or ventilated, are infested with pests and moulds, and contribute to the poor health of many low-income people. Another community member notes that these units are often in areas that people feel are unsafe.

Low-income people who cannot find subsidized housing often end up renting apartments or houses from slum landlords. This is dangerous for the renters, and also drains money out of the community as the landlords live and spend their money outside the community (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives 2005). One community member experienced this first hand, as she rented room in a house with an absentee landlord who did not maintain the property or resolve any of her problems while she lived there. Upon leaving the house, she discovered that the landlord was growing and selling drugs out of the garage and making beer in the basement.

Many participants characterize the prevalence of rental properties in the North End as a challenge to forming safe communities. One organization staff member refers to the neighborhood she works in as a “*transient community*”, where people often move

several times within the same general area. Therefore, increasing home ownership is important to creating stable communities where people are familiar to one another and with the area. As one community member notes, when people own their own homes, they care more about the property and the community they live in.

Ironically, efforts to revitalize and improve housing sometimes have adverse effects on the lowest-income people in a community. When houses are renovated and sold, it increases property values in the area and puts home ownership out of many people's reach. As well, landlords make renovations and then charge higher rents, and one community member has seen cases where people received rent increase notices of up to fifty percent. This pushes the lowest-income people into other neighborhoods and presents a challenge to communities hoping to revitalize. One community member believes it is the government's responsibility to prevent the displacement of people in poverty by increasing shelter allowances and creating more subsidized units.

There are also concerns about the lack of transitional housing for homeless people needing temporary shelter. One community member points out that single men and families have the fewest options with regard to safe and affordable transitional housing. Another community member attributes this deficiency to stereotypes about the homeless, even among some other low-income individuals in his North End neighborhood. He explains that some of these "*elitist*" people associate transitional housing with people struggling with addictions and do not want them in the neighborhood. He strongly advocates the building of more transitional housing units and programs that help people to change their lives, rather than simply removing them from the community.

Education

Children living in poverty often do not receive proper nutrition, cannot afford the tools and technology required for school, and therefore cannot compete with their higher-income counterparts in school (Silver 2000a:13, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives 2005). A lack of education is devastating to children's future lives and contributes to the cycle of poverty. One community member believes that the education system sometimes misunderstands children from disadvantaged backgrounds, and labels them "*learning disabled*", a discouraging and demoralizing stereotype. She thinks the education system should investigate the true causes of children's struggles, including backgrounds of poverty, and learn to appreciate children's different approaches to learning and knowledge.

The education system may also disguise or ignore the cultural and historic elements of poverty, especially as they concern Aboriginal peoples. One community member is frustrated by the lack of education about residential schools and their ongoing effects on the marginalization of Aboriginal peoples. She believes that the history of Aboriginal peoples is vital in education, both for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Paternalistic attitudes in education, a lack of understanding of the effect of colonial projects on Aboriginal peoples and culturally inappropriate or irrelevant educational materials all contribute to lower levels of educational attainment among Aboriginal peoples (Silver 2000b:129, Loxley 2000:85).

One community member mentions the importance of cultural awareness training in workplaces, as many adults do not receive such education in schools. An organization staff member agrees that more education should be directed towards acquiring sensitivity

to other cultures and their systems of knowledge and behavior. She sees this as best being achieved in an exchange and provides the example that when teaching Aboriginal people about the importance of eye contact, she learned that for many Aboriginal people, eye contact, especially with an elder or person in a position of authority, is earned gradually. This interchange reinforces mutual cultural appreciation and understanding.

Health

a. Mental

The stresses of living in poverty, attempting to meet basic needs and facing unsafe and inhumane living conditions compromises mental health. Poverty is often an isolating and socially ostracizing experience. One organization staff member explains:

The whole sense I get of the large majority – not the overwhelming majority – is a sense of hopelessness, despair, frustration, opting out of the political process . . . So, with the ill health, depression, the inability to afford a social life, it does lead very much to, to a strong sense of isolation and lack of participation in the community.

A community member living on Social Assistance feels isolated because she does not go anywhere and has no social life, in an attempt to save money. She is bored being on her own during the day and wishes she had someone to talk to. At times she will go to bed in the early evening simply because there is nothing else for her to do.

Mental disabilities can be the main factor that causes some people to live in poverty. One community member believes that the mental health system is not working, and that people with mental disabilities are not receiving proper care:

I mean I – we've got people who are schizophrenic here, it's clear – they clearly are . . . And yeah, and other people are bi-polar and all sorts of situations that they shouldn't have to – they already suffer from a, something that's not their fault, and then they have to suffer on top of that by living on, you know, seven grand a year.

b. Physical

Living in poverty makes people more vulnerable to physical illness caused by malnutrition (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives 2005). While one community member recognizes the important place of food banks in providing for people's immediate needs, he stresses that this system is inadequate to deal with individuals' nutritional needs. A community member who also works in a food bank says that they try to follow the Canada Food Guide, but are restricted to non-perishables, and to what people choose to donate. Another community member who volunteers at a food bank in the North End illustrates such a situation:

... in the past two weeks we've gotten nothing but like junk food, like chocolate bars or cookies or cakes and stuff. I mean like, you can't give them that! Half of these people are diabetic – in that area . . . And you gotta feed them – and we're gonna feed them that?

She was so distressed that she and the other volunteers pooled their own money and went to buy potatoes and carrots to put in the hampers. As this case illustrates, people who rely on food banks face the reality that they may not receive adequate or nutritious food. This lack of food security has serious implications for their physical and mental health.

People with physical disabilities contend with setbacks to participation in community life that are related to their disabilities, in addition to those caused by living in poverty. One community member who was disabled in a car accident experiences difficulty having his disability recognized by Social Assistance. Social Assistance requires him to prove his disability again every time he moves to a new province. When his disability was finally documented in Manitoba, it still took a disability service organization five years to get him a computer so he could participate in courses. Such setbacks limit his ability to participate in community life.

Another community member who has limited mobility explains that her disability is not her fault and that she should not be limited from participation in daily activities. When her electric wheelchair broke, she was told she would have to wait a year to get another and was offered no other option than to stay in her home or have someone full-time to push her in a manual chair. She is also often turned away from public transit with the excuse that buses are too full to accommodate her chair, after people cut in front of her because they are too impatient to wait for her to board. However, she stays active in community life and refuses to be discouraged, as she wants to take a stand for accessibility and bring about change for disabled people in her community.

Racism

Poverty and its associated effects on health, well-being and opportunity are not equally distributed in society. Aboriginal peoples often feature disproportionately in the low-income sector of society (Henry 2000, Silver 2000b:128). Many Aboriginal people come to Winnipeg from Northern reserves and have no experience of an urban environment. They often lack the experience necessary to get well-paying jobs, and are denied opportunities for education and training (Loxley 2000:87). As one organization staff member elaborates, many end up in menial labour, or on Social Assistance:

And to me then that becomes a problem of systemic racism. Where an identifiable population is at a definite disadvantage – for whatever historical factors – if you don't allow the extra resources to be made available, to use the language of our capitalist societies, to compete on equal terms in the job market, you're condemning them to a permanent poverty cycle, and that will then pass on from generation to generation.

One Métis community member shares his experience of such systemic racism when he attempted to gain support from various organizations:

Yeah, that's what I mean – perception is everything. So if I'm perceived as being white, I have less of a hard time. But the moment that I'm perceived as being Native, 'Uh-oh!' – you don't bring up Native – 'Uh-oh! Uh-oh! It's one of them!' You know, then all of a sudden they get – oh what's that term – circled wagon syndrome.

In his view, systemic racism stems from people's fear of what they do not know. This fear causes them to exclude people and customs that are unfamiliar. Therefore, Aboriginal and Métis peoples are excluded due to the fear and ignorance of the predominantly Euro-Caucasian mainstream society.

Immigrants to Canada also face systemic racism that inhibits their ability to participate in Canadian society, condemning many to poverty. One immigrant community member stresses that although his personal experience in Canada is good, many other immigrants experience difficulty finding good jobs in Canada. He believes that Canada is wasting immigrants and their children by denying them jobs in their fields of expertise. He says that immigrants are told they do not have the proper Canadian qualifications or experience to get a job, and are denied the opportunity to get Canadian experience.

Aboriginal and Métis peoples and immigrants often internalize the discourses of systemic racism and discrimination. The emotional effects of this process are demoralizing (Harp 1994:49). When one Métis community member worked in a very poor North End neighborhood, she encountered many Aboriginal people who were alienated from their communities and from their own cultures. Her conversations with them reveal the emotional impact of racist attitudes and systems:

... and still to this day, 'What would you feel about being an Aboriginal person?' or whatever, and they'd say 'Ashamed. Ashamed. Ashamed.' You know, and to have that – you feel that way, and then you bring that to

*your kids, and to your kids and to your kids, and when does that leave?
When does that go away?*

Immigrants are also emotionally affected by their mistreatment and exclusion from mainstream Canadian society. As one community member describes:

. . . what ends up happening is that the frustration occurs; maybe someone will just say 'Forget it' and then they don't go through it, the education piece, and end up being a dropout or something, and it kind of all goes downhill after that. So the Canadian experience is not a good one after that.

For many, the “*Canadian experience*” is an exclusionary one, influenced by colonial oppression, historic injustice, and their ongoing effects in producing racist systems in which Aboriginal and immigrant peoples face discrimination and lack of opportunity (Henry 2000).

Social Issues and CED

Understanding the needs of individuals and groups within a community is essential to CED work and this understanding is best derived by engaging with the community itself. The struggles of people in poverty continue to be ignored and trivialized. Disempowered people continue to be vilified by powerful discourses that ignore structural inequalities and blame people living in poverty for their misfortunes.

The lived experiences of the participants reveal the realities of poverty to be quite different, initially caused by injuries and disabilities that prevent them from working, family situations in which they are responsible for the care of a relative and cannot work, and situations in which they fear for their personal safety and flee their past lives. Many are from poor households and families and suffer the effects of the poverty in lower levels of education, training and opportunity. The effect of such poverty in their lives exposes them to high levels of crime, violence and gangs, and the threat of poor health

and malnutrition. As well, they face the emotional consequences of isolation, low self-esteem and the lack of a sense belonging caused by living in poverty and the prejudice and misjudgment from Social Assistance workers, the government and society as a whole.

These experiences are also influenced by wider processes of colonialism, racism, and sexism, exposing Aboriginal and Métis peoples, immigrants and women, especially single mothers, to disproportionate levels of poverty and exclusion from mainstream society and community life. However, their experiences expose these processes and inequalities and make it possible to hold the systems, rather than the individuals, at fault. Discussing the concerns of individuals and communities in need makes it possible for those needs to be addressed. CED plays a vital role in addressing needs and ensuring that the voices of the poor are heard by mainstream society. The exchanges between communities and organizations as they navigate this process of consultation and planning are complex and challenging, often traversing uncharted territory in the attempt to recreate communities. These relationships, the strategies that emerge from them and the social dynamics that fuel this process will be explored in the following chapter.

Chapter Six: The Social Dynamics of Community Economic Development

CED must address a wide range of needs and concerns with a flexible array of community-based strategies. These strategies are developed through the exchange of ideas and information between community members and organizations, and depend on the formation of strong and collaborative community-organization relationships. While the process of forming these connections should be inclusive and community-driven (Campfens 1997), relations of power within communities, organizations and mainstream society make inclusion, collaboration and collective action as much political as they are social (Cooke and Kothari 2001:7-8). This chapter explores relationships of power in CED and their impacts on community engagement.

The community members and organizations involved in this research project interact in diverse ways forming a network that, as a whole, responds to different needs. While none of the organizations involved focus on meeting emergency needs, many community members are affiliated with other organizations that offer food banks, hold community suppers, sell groceries at cost, or provide temporary shelter and access to telephone, kitchen and shower facilities. The creation of such a social safety net enables other organizations to offer services that extend beyond provision for basic needs.

The first organization involved in this project, a neighborhood association, engages with the community through monthly meetings in which individuals voice their concerns and form committees to deal with those concerns. It is composed entirely of community members who live in the neighborhood and it operates for the most part on a voluntary basis. It addresses safety concerns by organizing community cleanups to remove brush and trim hedges in order to provide better lighting at night and to board up

abandoned houses so that children cannot play in them. It also operates a community patrol for safety concerns such as drug dealing and prostitution. The association keeps children off the streets by involving them in recreational activities on a drop-in basis, and it fundraises for community gardens and home improvements.

Organization two, an employment development organization, works with community members at varying levels of job readiness, many of whom are receiving Social Assistance. It aids in finding well-paying jobs, provides counselors to help community members deal with personal and occupational obstacles, and hosts workshops. Organization three, a business development organization, also holds workshops and classes to aid low-income community members in saving for home ownership or to start a small business. This organization helps in raising initial start-up costs, and provides ongoing operational support and counseling. Organization four brings community and organization staff members together in meetings on broader issues throughout Winnipeg. It focuses on issues of equality, poverty and racism, and mobilizes groups to apply pressure on governments to deal with issues at a policy level.

The relationships and interactions formed by all organizations and community members are challenging and complex, in part due to the high levels of engagement, commitment and creativity they demand (Silver 2000b:137), and due to imbalances of power between the organization and the community, and between community members (Cooke and Kothari 2001, Graydon 2004). Community participation in development initiatives does not guarantee that those initiatives will be democratic or community-based. As Cooke and Kothari (2001:3) stress, participation often results in the “tyranny” of organization staff and powerful community members over less influential participants.

Community – Organization Communication

a. Media

Community engagement begins with the formation of initial contacts and recruitment. Organizations often use print media and other forms of mass communication to connect with community members to discover their needs and to encourage their participation. Community members in a neighborhood association identify communication as a primary strategy to get people involved with the association. They communicate through a newsletter that advertises the ongoing projects of the association, and its meeting and event times. Volunteers contribute to the newsletter and distribute it throughout the neighborhood. Another neighborhood association in the North End uses newsletters to communicate with community members about meeting times and collects contact information from attendees. This enables the association to maintain contact with individuals with irregular attendance records to remind them of meeting times and to obtain community feedback on urgent issues. Therefore, the organization creates a new space for interaction and participation, one from which social and political action can be organized (Shragge 2002).

A community member who is active in various events in her neighborhood stays informed by reading a community newspaper, which is authored and compiled by people in the neighborhood. She also believes that attending church is a good way for people to hear about community events and organizations. As well, she listens to a radio show put on by the University of Winnipeg that showcases different Inner City neighborhoods and initiatives. These strategies help her to form connections to community life.

While these strategies for community outreach are successful for many organizations and community members, others feel that communication can be improved. One community member notes that her personal involvement with a neighborhood association is the only reason she knows about community opportunities. She believes awareness is an important issue:

But so there, there's a ton of stuff going out there that, you know, it's never in the paper, it's not in anybody's newsletters, it's not announced at meetings, so you just, you don't even know about all the positive things going on, or the things that if you had an interest, 'Oh, I could get involved in Aboriginal Girl Guides or I could coach soccer here', you know, they're doing all these things that are just very local too, very small distinct communities, right?

Newsletters are problematic in reaching those people who are not already engaged with the community. The relevance of newsletters relates to individuals' differential and "situated literacies" (Collins 1995:75), which are shaped by cultural, social, economic and educational factors. These literacies differ in the types of information and methods of dissemination that are valued (1995:75). Organizations must pursue multiple forms of communication that take these dynamics into account and reach a wider sector of the population.

b. Personal contact

When media strategies fail, many feel that personal contact is a very important, although challenging, strategy. As one organization staff member explains:

You had asked about you know how do you reach people that aren't already at the point where they're looking? And we found that the most effective way to do that is through the word of mouth. So if you provide a positive experience for somebody they're going to tell their family and their friends. And, it links back to kind of the connections that I talked about in the North End. That kind of word spreads and, and so sometimes that's, that's the only way we can, in a sense, afford to do, like we don't really have the capacity to have someone whose sole job it is to, to go and

do outreach. So you kind of count on the community to do a bit of that for you.

The community is therefore vital in informing people about opportunities to become involved with organizations. Once people are informed, they often approach the organization themselves. This initiative is clear in the comments of one community member, who notes that he sought out the help of a CED organization to develop his employability skills.

Another CED organization staff member agrees that word of mouth is the organization's "*biggest advertising form*". As she elaborates, the referral and support of a trusted friend or relative often give community members the courage to get involved and familiarize them with the expectations and roles of the organization:

The word of mouth, often somebody will say, 'Gee I went to the centre and this is what they did for me and it really helped' and so they already come in with some idea of what's going on and what we expect from them.

Another community member also works in an outreach capacity and relies on other community members as a network to pass on information on organizations. She stresses that a lack of funding often prevents many organizations from advertising, making social networks crucial:

So I'll know certain people that I know that they'll pass that word along to whoever needs to know it, you know? 'Cause it's really hard to get it, the word out, just to, directly to the – with only one person, so I kind of – I use everyone else, I use everyone else I know, to spread it around.

Going door-to-door is another method of personal contact used to establish rapport between community members and organizations. As one community member notes, people might simply throw out newsletters, and a personal visit shows effort and commitment to the community:

Door-to-door. Door-to-door is the way it has to be. Around and around and around with the rounds, just shaking hands and saying 'Hi, these are what the – what's available to you, to improve your quality of life.'

However, since many organizations rely on volunteer work, a lack of time and available volunteers are major obstacles to door-to-door contact.

While personal contact is important for all community members to encourage and enhance community engagement, there is also a cultural component to the need for a one-on-one approach. As one organization member emphasizes:

... that's a lot of time how people in this community relate, is much more on a personal basis. Especially with the Aboriginal culture too, people don't just read a newsletter, you know? They have so many other issues in their lives; they won't always read the newsletter to see what's happening. But if I would go up to the door or meet them on the street and talk to them and invite them, they're much more likely to come, rather than having a newsletter brought to their door for a whole year.

Another community member involved with CED work cites the importance of one-on-one contact when doing outreach in an Aboriginal community, in order to overcome the nervousness of community members who are not involved in community life and feel they have no skills. She feels that if personally encouraged, more community members will participate and will gain the confidence to increase their participation in the future.

Time, staffing and funding are the main barriers that community members and organizations cite to establishing initial contact and relationships between the two groups. As well, personal contact is necessary to reach those people who perhaps will not otherwise participate in community life or CED programs. In order for CED to be truly inclusive and holistic, these barriers must be overcome to ensure the participation and engagement of all community members.

Community – Organization Relationships

When initial contact is established, the goal of the interrelationship between community members and organizations, according to CED principles, is ostensibly to increase community control over resources and over the direction and design of community projects (Douglas 1994:4-5). However, power imbalances between community members, organizations and wider systems restrict and redirect many CED initiatives. The distinction between “doing with and doing for” (Dewey in Putnam 2000:116) is tenuous and there is often tension and struggle between these two approaches.

a. Charity versus development

The tension in CED initiatives often stems from the difference between community engagement in the form of charity, which focuses on immediate needs, and development, which focuses on changing ideas, behavior and systems. The “charity model” (Silver 2000b:131) responds to the symptoms of issues such as poverty rather than addressing the causes. Therefore, many CED practitioners and participants insist that when CED aims merely to meet basic needs it is not in fact CED, since it does not increase community capacity or resources.

The ideologies and motivations behind charity are questionable, as corporations, governments and individuals have self-interests in donating time and funds. These interests can include pursuit of a positive image, maintenance of social position and economic gain, and feelings of benevolence and altruism (Bryant 1994:192, Silver 2000b:131). Organizations and community members perceive such self-interests at work in their neighborhoods. One organization staff member is critical of a housing initiative

in a low-income community that failed to actively engage or aid community members and yet still garnered positive publicity. As he elaborates:

But all the propaganda that came out of those very small, isolated programs saying 'Look how great that is, look at the wonderful things we're doing', they tend to downplay or ignore all the people that wound up being displaced.

The organizations and government programs that funded the project gained public support and improved their social images. However, many community members were pushed out of the neighborhood when they could not afford to live in the new housing units that were created. The stories of the people who were actually harmed by this project were not covered in the media.

Another community member links the ineffectual nature of some organizations to their self-serving attitudes and questions their motives. As he notes:

. . . it's not just a bunch of people getting together to benefit other people. Other people are using that to climb, okay?

He believes that a great deal of organizations' funding does not go into the community where it belongs, but instead goes toward the operating costs of the organizations. He describes his perception of this approach:

So, if there's something wrong with community-based organizations, it's their purpose, it's their value . . . Collect as much as you can and give out as little as possible and pretend you're saving for a really bad thing that's going to happen.

While one community member believes that many charity workers are “good people” and “well meaning”, she is critical of the attitude of some helping institutions toward the recipients of help:

I am afraid that sometimes it reinforces a feeling of self-righteousness – you know, even when they say 'There, for the grace of God go I', well never mind all those, all those platitudes.

She also stresses the need for progressive initiatives offering more than charity and answering more than simply basic needs:

. . . Where at street level you can go in and you can have people – I don't mean it in a derogatory way, it sounds worse than I mean it – but you can still have friendly people who nod and smile and welcome you, and you still can offer people food, and you still can offer them spiritual assistance, without making them feel like wicked sinners!

This moralizing attitude can have degrading effects on the recipients of aid. As one organization staff member points out, while the intentions of charity givers are often good, the recipients of charity often feel robbed of their dignity:

There's a lot of truth – criticism made about charity work, charity work is designed more to make the giver feel good about themselves than to really help the person who's receiving. Because charity does tend to be a humiliating experience, a feeling of a sense that you have to beg or receive handouts . . . And don't bite the hand that feeds you.

Another community member involved with an organization that undertakes both charity and community development work is aware of the potential that some community members will perceive charity work to be humiliating. She also recognizes that some charities provide services that disguise poverty and need from the general public and absolve the government of its responsibility to provide these services (Silver 2000b). For example, the food bank at the organization she works with ensures that people have appointment times:

. . . so we don't have people lining up on the street, waiting to – you know what I'm saying? The only down side of that is, it's – hides the problem . . . 'cause you're not driving around the city and seeing all these people, yeah, you, you forget, you know? And the people – what they don't see, they don't think about.

Some community members are less concerned with the attitude and approach of charities than with the attitudes they foster in communities. One community member

fears that the distribution of Christmas hampers by his neighborhood association makes people in the community more dependent. He feels that some community members are not grateful for receiving one or two toys for their children. He links this kind of attitude to the Western obsession with consumption, and with the accumulation of unnecessary goods. He believes that although Canadians claim that democracy and freedom are important, people do not choose to be truly free, as they spend too much money, accrue debt and surrender to ongoing obligations to financial institutions.

Another community member, a Métis man, is tired of organizations thinking that Aboriginal people need their charity. His aim is to improve services to benefit Aboriginal people without simply offering a “*Band-Aid*” solution. He views charity as generating an attitude of dependence in Aboriginal and other low-income community members, which causes them to lose their dignity and self-worth and wait to be rescued by others. He believes that personal responsibility should be encouraged among Aboriginal and low-income communities to combat the attitude of dependence and to prepare people to develop individually and as a part of communities.

While these comments prove that some CED can be misguided and misnamed, delivering services rather than permanently addressing the sources of community concerns, it is often difficult to isolate charity from development approaches. Many organizations combine charity work with an “empowerment” (Hart et al. 1997:182) approach. As one community member points out:

Systemic issues of course are important, but people are still hungry . . .

This is a powerful endorsement of the idea that although basic needs are not generally included in progressive CED definitions, people’s immediate needs must be met before

they can begin to focus on long-term goals. He elaborates, however, that while some community members will build their capacity and become engaged in community issues; others, due to prolonged poverty or physical and mental illness, will never be equipped to enter the workforce or the community at a more engaged level. He therefore distinguishes between community *development*, which is more progressive, and community *formation*, in which people are given opportunities to gather and have their basic needs for food, shelter and companionship met.

b. Volunteers

Many CED organizations rely on community members for volunteer work in recruitment, outreach and project participation (Loxley and Lamb 2005, Douglas 1994). While this labour is essential to the success of many CED enterprises, it can also involve relations of power and can be the source of conflict (Bryant 1994).

Neighborhood associations are often composed entirely of volunteer community members. However, as one community member notes, this does not mean that all people participate equally. As it is often difficult to motivate and mobilize large groups of people, the same people often end up being the most engaged, and are left with the bulk of the responsibility. These volunteers are at a high risk of being overworked and experiencing burnout. As another community member explains, after she began to volunteer, she was asked to participate more and more, until she burned out and had to take time away from the organization. She reassessed her participation and limited it to programs that she felt were truly beneficial.

One community member stresses the need for volunteers to care for themselves as well as others. As she interprets the situation:

I've sometimes said to people that it makes sense when they tell you on the plane to put your own oxygen mask on first so you can help others, and I've sometimes warned, warned people not to over-identify with the people they're helping, because then you yourself start needing help, like when people burn out.

She also notes that it is often difficult for volunteers to diagnose or analyze their own motives or reasons for volunteering. The motivations and attitudes of volunteers are not always kind or beneficial (Bryant 1994:192). As one community member realizes, even when volunteers are also low-income community members and attend an organization for aid themselves, at times they abuse their positions as volunteers. As he states with regard to volunteers at a food bank:

. . . they were quite nasty to their peers who were coming in the lines. And, rushing them through, saying, 'Oh, you just take this, take what you get' and things like that and just being nasty with them. And, and the guests being very upset with them, and this is that whole dynamic of, they're in a position of authority or power that they normally wouldn't have and, and being kind of rude sometimes with each other.

The existence of problems and stresses between community members and organizations does not suggest that CED initiatives have failed, but is rather a testament to the challenge inherent in forming relationships that will translate into effective and alternative development. The honest acknowledgment and assessment of such miscommunications and power differentials gives CED insight and flexibility.

Organizational Relationships

The success or failure of CED initiatives relies to a great extent on close and collaborative relationships within and between organizations, in a kind of "organizational community" as discussed in Chapter Three. Connections and linkages between organizations and projects help to keep organizations running, and keep profits in the community (Loxley and Lamb 2005). However, CED is a diverse field and conflicts of

interest are inevitable both within and between organizations. As well, the limited resources available for CED often place additional stress and strain on organizational relationships and lead them to compete, rather than cooperate.

a. Conflict in CED definitions and strategies

One organization staff member notes that some CED initiatives do not fit with her definition of CED. In one case, an organization that was ostensibly community-based and community-driven was in reality being kept afloat by an outside funder. The lack of community self-reliance or the development of community resources led her to view the organization as operating outside the definition of true CED. She also believes that CED work involves a fine balance between challenging political systems and pushing the envelope, and ensuring that an organization does not lose support and funding when it takes too many risks. When CED organizations take risks, other organizations are often pressured to intervene, at the risk of breaching their own mandates and goals.

A community member also notices conflict among CED organizations in his community. He believes that some CED organizations feel threatened by others, and adopt a competitive and aggressive stance when pursuing resources. This leads them to unduly pressure and criticize other organizations. He is disturbed by the criticism the director of one organization faced from other organizations, including great pressure to accomplish projects in what he believes is an unrealistic amount of time. He sees a need for more support and encouragement for organizations' different priorities, resources and approaches. This support must begin with acceptance of multiple organizations and institutions with interests in CED and their rights to be involved in community initiatives (Bryant 1994:189).

b. Funding challenges

CED organizations most often struggle to increase their opportunities for funding. While governments are a key source of funding and will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter, other sources of funding are also important and a major factor influencing organizational relationships. As one community member explains, donations of equipment and transportation made to her community's neighborhood association are appreciated, but the community is largely low-income, and people cannot always afford to maintain the equipment. The neighborhood association applies for grants in an attempt to take some of the pressure of fundraising off the community members, but does not always receive the funds. The degree to which the community can get involved and respond to needs is limited by their low-income status and lack of funding.

Another CED organization in the area has excellent funding and can conduct far more programs, activities and outreach with the community and can research to discover future opportunities for CED work. As the organization staff member explains:

... overall the funding is really secure, and that gives us some freedom to, to experiment, to do different things, to get good ideas and try them out, knowing that people are still going to have their jobs and so you don't have to be so tied to numbers and reporting ...

He also attributes their success with funding to an excellent staff and strong leadership, which in turn makes funders more secure and comfortable in supporting the organization. Ironically, having good funding makes organizations more likely to receive future financial support.

This situation places some organizations at a disadvantage, and encourages organizations to hold on to their funding dollars and compete against each other even

when they are working with the same communities and neighborhoods (Bryant 1994:189, Rubin 2000:228). A community member involved in CED fundraising efforts explains:

. . . I went to a number of organizations in the city, and while they were very, very supportive and understanding, just, just wonderful – but they too were struggling for funding – which is understandable. And at that point . . . even though we all shared the same constituency, it seemed to me . . . that in some instances, if there were more cooperation than competition we could do more.

Her remarks point to the necessity of true cooperation between organizations to maximize the funding they receive and to ensure they do not duplicate services.

There are also disagreements within organizations as to how funding should be allocated and applied. One community member who was involved with a neighborhood association at one time claims it is the nature of people to disagree about money.

Individuals in the neighborhood association often disagreed about how to spend funding and often could not even agree on who was authorized to determine how funding would be spent. Another community member feels there is inadequate accountability for funding in his neighborhood association. He believes funding is being abused and is not going to the people who need it most, but cannot access the information to confirm his suspicions.

These issues cause contention within and between CED organizations and affect their relationships, as well as the types of CED programs they are able to design and implement within the community. While conflict is a part of any relationship and complete consensus in CED is undesirable and unnecessary, the ways in which conflict is dealt with is important and the causes of disagreement and disproportionate power of decision-making must be made known and explored.

Government Relationships with Communities and Organizations

The degree to which community members and organizations can identify and address community development needs and strategies is also affected by wider systems of government. While individual government relations are diverse, two areas of struggle are especially evident and pertinent to CED and community life and engagement.

a. Funding issues

Many CED organizations rely on government funding and receive support that enables them to make meaningful connections with the communities and develop programs that meet community needs. Without this funding, few CED projects would be able to succeed (Loxley and Lamb 2005). One organization receives funding from the provincial government that enables them to rent an office from which to run programs. They have also hired a coordinator and an outreach worker. This drastically increases their clientele and the range of programs they offer.

There is an important distinction between core and project-based funding. Project-based funding supports specific projects, and is therefore short-term, addresses one or two particular issues, and ends with the termination of the project or the end of the funding. In contrast, core funding is provided for a longer period of time to support an organization's operating costs, enabling it to pursue many different projects and hire staff to recruit for and direct multiple programs. Core funding is therefore essential to many organizations to accomplish progressive CED projects.

Despite some positive experiences with government funding, many participants feels that such funding is either unreliable, or comes with restrictions on the kinds of development that can be attempted. Such concerns are common in CED projects and

have led many communities and organizations to attempt to lessen their reliance on government funding (Brodhead 1994) and instead form ties to the non-profit sector for funding (Pell 1994). One community member believes that government funding has given the City disproportionate control over the direction and programs of the organization he participates in. He notes that a City representative often discourages or disbands projects that the community members propose, and believes that the City might use the information gained from the organization against the community.

An organization staff member feels that the government funds programs that provide them with good publicity while ignoring how these programs truly affect communities:

... if they can just put together a few model programs, it makes it look like they're doing something about poverty that is adequate to deal with the problem. They don't put anywhere near the resources needed into poverty ... You'll get the odd feel-good spin story about how wonderful this government program is because twenty people got into a nice home for it, but they tend to not report in a real consistent manner – except for very rare appearances here and there – why is it that almost 20% of the population of Winnipeg can't afford proper food, proper diet? In a society as rich as ours, why are so many people in sub-standard housing?

A community member shares this perspective and explains that the *perception* of helping communities is more important to the government than the *reality*, and they therefore provide funding to boards and associations, rather than directly to people living in poverty. The government often justifies and disguises such an approach by using “community” in program titles to give them “a more progressive and sympathetic cachet” (Atkinson and Cope 1997:202).

Some believe that the government misuse of funding shows a lack of commitment to or understanding of CED and the importance of strengthening the local economy. One

organization staff member notes that when the government planned to create thousands of new skilled trades jobs, it focused on hiring trained workers from outside the province, rather than training Manitoban workers for good jobs that would get them out of poverty. He thinks this short-sightedness on the part of government contributes to a lack of opportunities for community development. A community member mentions a city program based on community members' input that was almost cut. Had it not been for a strong showing of community outrage, the funding would have been removed and communities would have lost their opportunity to voice their concerns in a politically and socially active outlet.

b. Governmental attitudes

The attitudes and ideology that motivate and inform government involvement in and direction of CED are also an issue. One organization staff member describes this approach and the political ideology that motivates it. He believes the government has become aware that if they can gain the support of the top twenty percent of income earners in society and a majority of the middle sixty percent of income earners, they will have enough votes to obtain a majority government. Therefore, the lowest twenty percent of income earners – the people living in poverty – are completely ignored. He finds proof of this strategy in the fact that poverty was not mentioned as an issue in the 2006 Federal Election.

Some attribute the government's perceived lack of caring for people in poverty to government officials' lack of experience or understanding of poverty and their isolation from the consequences of the programs. As one community member explains:

... you have those who have, and those who have-not, and those who have, think they know what those who have-not need, and no, they don't.

They don't have a concept – in many cases they're isolated because of their wealth. Because of their social standing . . .

An organization staff member states that policy makers sit in their offices and never come into contact with the ways in which people in poverty live. She suggests that governments at all levels begin to deal with front-line workers who witness poverty and its effects every day.

Many community members feel that low-income citizens lack decision-making power to change government views and approaches that affect people in poverty. One community member notes that the government has final control over which policies and programs succeed:

And what their priorities are will basically make or break what will be getting put forward. Will it just be tossed and put on a shelf to be collecting dust, or will it actually be ran with and changed?

Another feels that because citizens vote for a party but cannot elect the Senate, they are not always represented by someone who shares their values, and the system becomes almost like an “*elected dictatorship*”.

Relationships with City Councilors are a source of conflict for one community member. He believes they do not communicate with community members about their opinions or concerns. As he says:

They're supposed to serve the public. They're not. The public is serving them.

He is concerned that he can never get in contact with City Councilors and has been marked down as a complainer so that none of his concerns will be taken seriously.

The adoption of a market-based approach to politics means that governments focus on economic growth and development while ignoring their responsibilities for

social development and well-being (Silver 2000b:129). One community member recognizes this approach and attributes the apathetic attitude of governments and the lack of community control to the wider economic system. As he comments:

You see, it's kind of like window dressing. Democracy is window dressing. Capitalism is the real thing.

He believes that governments cannot rein in the power of corporations, and that CED initiatives and small-scale local businesses cannot compete or succeed against large-scale corporate business.

Power in CED and Community Engagement

The complicated social dynamics involved in CED are demonstrated in relations of power at the level of the individual, community, organization and government. These relations of power have diverse effects on CED initiatives, the kinds of strategies that can be imagined and explored, and the degree to which community members can be engaged.

Community members do not always agree on their priorities and needs, and do not always have a wide range of options in fulfilling those needs (Hart et al. 1997). Some community members are excluded from community initiatives altogether. The methods that organizations choose to communicate with the community are often exclusionary, as they are based on dominant understandings of effective media and communication. Newsletters rely on a particular form of literacy that may not be relevant or helpful to community members who cannot read, do not read English, or cultural groups such as Aboriginal people that may prefer face-to-face relations. As well, reliance on word-of-mouth advertising excludes those community members with limited social networks due to age, poverty, limited mobility and serious life crises.

Many communities have basic needs for food and shelter that must be addressed before progressive CED (Brodhead 1994) can take place. CED and other organizations therefore deliver basic services that are essential to the life and health of many community members, but that can disguise the true causes of social problems and can be complicit with the governments' attempts to neglect their responsibility to provide social services and address social inequalities (Robbins 1999).

These restrictions on CED initiatives mean that relationships between organizations and community members are not always participatory or collaborative (Graydon 2004:100). Community members often rely on organizations for the provision of basic needs rather than engaging with organizations for personal and community capacity building. This reliance creates hierarchical relationships and may contribute to feelings of powerlessness and humiliation among community members. However, many community members who are living in poverty struggle against these power relations and exert their own power at an "everyday" level (Kothari 2001:141). Discussing their experiences and expressing their disgust with charity work and government apathy are everyday forms of resistance that allow community members to regain feelings of control (Scott 1985:xiv).

Collaborative relationships within and between communities and organizations therefore rely on communication, time and funding, and require the support of governments. The future of progressive CED initiatives demands that these needs are met to ensure that CED helps to build individual and communal capacity and encourages egalitarian community relationships.

Chapter Seven: Community Visions and Future Directions

CED demands ingenuity and strength from its participants to challenge existing power systems and imagine viable alternatives. The implementation of such alternatives is a slow and demanding process faced with powerful resistance and ignorance from governments and the mainstream society. The success of these alternatives depends on the creation and maintenance of relationships between community members and organizations and their ability to understand difference, to learn from mistakes and to act collectively. Theorists, practitioners and participants are evaluating CED in an attempt to assess the failures and successes of previous CED approaches and suggest new directions (Graydon 2004, Fisher and Shragge 2002, Rubin 2000). Such self-examination is a sign of CED's potential for learning and flexibility and keeps CED initiatives accountable to their original mandates and goals. The participants in this research project also envision the future of CED and suggest activities and approaches to bridge the gap between low-income and other communities.

The Future of CED: Suggestions and Hopes

Increasing political activism and the political presence of low-income sectors of society is important to make poverty impossible to ignore. As some have suggested, CED organizations can aid in this process by connecting with broader social movements against the forces that create poverty, including corporate globalization (Fisher and Shragge 2002, Shragge 2002).

An organization staff member notes that if even twenty percent of the people living in poverty in Winnipeg could gather together in organized protest on the steps of the legislature, it would have a monumental impact. As he elaborates, such social and

political activism is far more visible and therefore makes a greater impression than a few people sitting in a room discussing the right thing to do. However, he recognizes that such an approach is difficult to organize:

. . . I don't know what the answer is, but if you could find that chord you could strike with people that you could get them out there and start demanding, and the more they see – and that's also creating that sense of community. That, that – people understanding that you're not just one person in your little household, or within this block, a little community of two hundred or a few thousand people, that you're one of approximately 120-125,000 people in this city – working poor, people on welfare and so on who have very similar circumstances. That's a very much larger community that if people can start getting a sense of that strength, they could carry a lot of weight in society. 'Cause potentially it's a very strong force. It's how you overcome that, the isolation, the marginalization of that population.

The challenge of “striking a chord” with the low-income population can potentially be met by CED organizations. They can provide the motivation for collective action.

CED organizations can serve as sites for political education that inform community members about social and political issues (Graydon 2004, Shragge 2002). One community member stresses that it is important for people to speak out and become involved in their communities, instead of closing their doors and letting fear lead them to pretend not to see the problems. His participation with a CED organization encourages this activist attitude and helps him to mobilize around community issues. He believes there is an intense need for education around parenting in his community. This will prevent children from being socialized to accept that it is appropriate for children to be left alone. He suggests that an education can help the community to understand and overcome cultural and economic issues in order to build stronger families. CED organizations can play a role in breaking the cycle of child neglect by offering increased parenting education and resources.

It is impossible for all CED to overturn mainstream systems and create a new society, however, they provide meeting places and safe space for alternative ideas and behavior, regardless of the size and success levels of these meetings (Shragge 2002). Many participants feel it is important to remember that social change is a long and slow process. As well, the diversity of CED approaches and participants means that it can also be a very challenging process. Conflict in CED can be a positive sign that marginalized people are being included in the process and are speaking out to non-marginalized groups to address power dynamics (Graydon 2004). One organization staff member agrees with this view, and says that differences do not always create obstacles:

. . . there's always a conflict. Conflict can be good, it can, it can appear bad, I don't believe conflict is bad, it . . . it's there. We're all different, we're all human, it's very diverse, if you can handle it – it's how it's handled . . . a lot of times it's handled well, I'm sure there's times where it's not, but, you know, you get beyond that and move forward.

Another community member finds the “big picture” of social change overwhelming, and chooses instead to concentrate on individual successes. Recognizing that success can be small is important for her to maintain her motivation and focus.

As Fisher and Shragge (2002) state, movements for change occasionally lose momentum when they become tied to the creation of organizations. Organizations must have a degree of self-interest and work to maintain themselves, and this can divert their energies from community work (Shragge 2002). One community member stresses that it is important for CED and organizations to stay committed to the original goals and principles of CED. As he elaborates:

. . . I think they need to, to kind of remember where they came from, and what their values were in the first place. . .

Another community member offers her perspective on how organizations sometimes lose sight of the communities they worked with:

. . . it's almost a given that when people start out a little group, they have that client in mind, they really get together to help some people, and they might gather around a kitchen table, receipts in a shoebox and so on. But after a while, their original goals become diverted, or one could say subverted, to the maintenance of the organization. And the, and the client is almost forgotten – they're sort of members, and maybe they – maybe they're invited to the annual general meeting, you know, as well they should be.

Reassessment of goals and evaluations of progress are important to keep CED accountable to the community and to maintain its connections with social movements and progressive CED principles.

Community members and organizations believe that reaching out to and connecting with others is vital to the success of CED. These connections are envisioned in both formal and informal contexts. Bringing people together to discuss strategies for social change that have been successful or unsuccessful can help to create a direction for future movements (Rubin 2000). It can also create a “shared culture” (2000:218) among community members and organizations by keeping them on a common track and linking short-term tasks with long-term development goals. As a community member states:

But I would say that – that there are still many, many things that could be done to improve community – community efforts and so on, with more cooperation . . . I think just by interacting with other people and sharing, that that's an education in itself.

Another community member views interaction and sharing from the perspective of cross-cultural understanding. As an immigrant, he feels that the best way to help solve immigrant people’s problems in Canadian society is to bring immigrant and non-immigrant people together to talk to organizations and communities, and to use the media

to connect to mainstream society. He believes the solution will not be easy and will require the commitment of both Canadians and immigrants.

Another community member feels that CED organizations can play a role in joining together people from different socio-economic backgrounds:

It's bringing people together, from perhaps different lifestyles and socio-economic conditions, but helping them to join together, 'cause you need both people, unfortunately, for others to hear. You need to have both.

Such groups can provide a space for marginalized people to share their experiences of exploitation with one another. This can aid their realization that they are not alone, and can educate those from higher-income backgrounds about the ground level realities of poverty (Graydon 2004).

The role of governments in oppressing communities motivates CED organizations to identify new roles for government that will support social and CED initiatives (Torjman and Leviten-Reid 2003). Many participants also call for change in government systems and approaches and suggest ways in which the governments could be more supportive. One organization staff member criticizes the lack of caring in the government:

I wish some of the workers that work directly with them in other agencies – government agencies – had a little more human compassion. And I know they have to put up with a lot of garbage, there's no question about it, and I don't, I don't want to minimize that. But I still think human compassion goes a long way . . .

A community member also expresses the need for compassion in government programs, especially Social Assistance:

. . . you can have all the social programs you want and unless the people that are actually in there and saying okay – can actually see it and have compassion for these people, it's never gonna work. You know, and if

you're out there for yourself, don't even get involved with people, you know?

CED organizations often face the challenges of engaging and participating with the government for funding and support, while struggling to uphold social values that encourage them to reject or bypass governments altogether (Fisher and Shragge 2002). One community member feels that political systems should not be rejected or ignored in CED work, but that people should attempt to gain access to and power within those systems. As she elaborates:

. . . the systems are there, they'll always be there. Work with them, and get in there. And as much as possible, if it takes years and years and years, it's still worth it, it's still worth all the energies . . . I think it's important to do that, and not disregard sys[tems] - they're there. You can't remove, you know - they're there, and I think it's more important to try to be - yeah, just keep forcing your way in!

She believes it is important not to disregard even small changes in government policies and procedures, as they can create opportunities for larger changes in the future.

The Future of Community: Visions and Directions

In evaluating the role of CED in the future and the challenges it faces, it is essential to question whether the concept of "community" remains a valid site for conversation, imagining and action. Theorists are increasingly focusing on the diversity and power struggles within communities. Contemporary approaches to community include treating these social fields as sites of contest and of internal diversity and are better able to account for the impacts of CED initiatives. The participants offer new visions of community that form guidelines and values for the creation of CED initiatives that live up to the most progressive definitions of community engagement, inclusion and development for the future.

For some, creating communities based around ideals of simplicity will encourage the existence of progressive CED. Such communities will bring people together based on the adoption of a lifestyle that counters the dominant consumerist lifestyle. The consumption of goods and natural resources will be limited, and corporate control and tyranny reduced by encouraging more small-scale, local business and questioning the capitalist mentality of consumer “needs.” One community member is especially troubled by the accumulation and waste of consumer goods in his neighborhood. He is passionate about recycling useable materials by rescuing and restoring items that have been discarded. He builds fences and repairs roofs for his neighbors who cannot afford to do repairs themselves, using wood and shingles that have been discarded. Part of this mentality includes reevaluating what is truly necessary to live comfortably and helping others, values that correspond well with the progressive principles of CED.

When low-income communities are marginalized and separated from other communities, it can exacerbate a form of “spatial apartheid” (Hoggett 1997:12). Some participants feel that dividing the city of Winnipeg into neighborhoods or geographic communities allows people in mainstream society to remain ignorant of the struggles of some neighborhoods. They believe that what happens “somewhere else” affects everyone and cannot be ignored or isolated to one community, and therefore view Winnipeg as a community. As one organization staff member explains:

And there's been this undermining of a larger sense of community, and Winnipeg as a whole as a community, just a very . . . 'As long as it doesn't happen in my block or within a couple of blocks of my block, then it's not my problem'. I think that's one of the things that's been really seriously undermined over the past decade or two as well, that the sense of community has to go beyond your own immediate neighborhood . . . So it's trying to get a sense back to people that yeah, your community is the city as a whole, and its environment.

Another community member conceptualizes the city community as being like a body. As she comments:

... when you get into the Winnipeg and surrounding area, it's kind of like your body, right? Your body has different parts. But say, if you stub your toe, that's one part of your body you've hurt, but even stubbing your toe is going to affect the rest of your body, right? So when one area of Winnipeg is weak or suffering or struggling, even though mostly it's localized in that area, it is going to affect everyone, right? And I really, I guess it's the best analogy, so you know, I see Winnipeg as, as a whole as a community.

This concept of community reinforces the interconnection between all people, and can be adopted by CED organizations to encourage people to form a broader network of participation and solidarity.

Women have been disproportionately excluded from economic and political power while providing essential but often invisible and uncompensated labour (Graydon 2004). The high degree of participation of women in CED, both in organizations and communities, is sometimes attributed to an affinity between women and CED principles (Alderson et al. 1994). One community member attributes the success of women in CED to their ability and willingness to explore alternatives. As she elaborates:

Women will challenge things and push the envelope on many, many things. Which is good, because – sometimes – 'cause you get to ... see if, once you push that envelope, if all the contents fall out and they go scattering to the wind and you have a big mess, or if everything's just okay the way it is. And you pushing the envelope just made it a little bigger. And, but women will try.

She connects the important role of women in CED to their important historic role in the formation and maintenance of communities:

... if anything needs to happen, it's usually women making it happen. And so it's not such a strange leap to see women working in community development. Traditionally, in families, women stayed home and they did that kind of work in the community for the betterment of their children.

And the betterment of the community at whole, and they did bake sales, and they did stuff through the church and then, to a larger extent through the community club, and the women did all that . . . That's all women did that. So, they've always been the, the bread and butter of society. It doesn't matter what it is, it's the women that put it together. They're the ones that make the community.

Another community member also envisions communities based around women due to their historic involvement and responsibility for community life:

Well, I think that women are a very, very important, if I'll say, force. And especially in, especially now – and I don't mean women versus men, I mean women along with men, because women do have . . . women have been throughout history, responsible for the, for the cohesion of a community, through children and through men . . .

She believes that women have an important role in progressive and inclusive CED.

Some men also appreciate the important role of women-centred communities and community development. One male community member feels strongly that power should be turned over from males to females, a view partly informed by his cultural identity and Métis heritage. As he elaborates:

Women have the children. Men don't have children . . . But women, they bear the children; they bear the pain of the men's mistakes . . . Men are ignorant little boys; they don't know what they're doing. They are threatening the life – the very life that all of us depend on on this planet – so that they can collect their toys of doom.

He attributes the power of women in forming communities to their responsibility for children, which he believes leads them to have better skills of foresight and planning.

Some community members envision communities informed by traditional Aboriginal cultural values. Such communities are not made up solely of Aboriginal people, but form connections between all people. As one Métis community member notes, the lack of a respect system in Canada means that people will need to return to traditions of community formation and development from other cultures:

So you wanted, if you wanted to change community, you're gonna have to go backwards to go forwards. We can't go back to the land. The land's destroyed, it's poisoned, the water's toxic . . . So, that's the whole point, is generosity. Commitment . . . commitment to better the lives of other people. To take less for yourself and give more. To help out, you know? To be loved and to be respected. That's what community should be . . . You want to improve a community? You have to go to other cultures. Because it isn't in your own.

Another Métis community member agrees that many Métis peoples hold traditional values and beliefs that can be used to form communities and guide CED initiatives. His Métis spiritual beliefs give him hope for the future and guide his own involvement in community work. He particularly feels that because Métis people are often unaccepted by Caucasian and First Nations people, part of Métis belief is to welcome people, regardless of who they are. This combats the exclusion that many people face in society. The application of this concept of community to future CED work is essential for the recognition of the vital place of Métis and Aboriginal people and values in communities.

These visions of community challenge capitalist consumption and create links between neighborhoods that reduce isolation and increase awareness. They recognize and celebrate the role of women in community life and development, and include different perspectives to create culturally diverse communities and CED strategies. As such, they hold great promise for future approaches to CED that will challenge systems of power and become truly inclusive and progressive.

Observations and Conclusions

In the previous chapters I examine community formation and belonging, barriers to community participation, the complexities of community, organization and government relations, and the effects of these dynamics on the creation and implementation of progressive Community Economic Development. My purpose in examining these

dynamics is to question the taken-for-granted authority of dominant discourses and to expose the processes by which “truths” and knowledge are created and disseminated. Dominant discourses are created around development, community, poverty and CED, and become metanarratives, grand theories that are thought to be universally applicable (Harvey 1989). Such metanarratives must be challenged and exposed as biased and partial explanations that silence alternative voices and opinions. As CED is based upon two such complex notions, “community” and “development”, the meanings of these terms cannot be taken for granted.

My ethnographic approach involves presenting the lived experiences of people dealing with development, community, poverty and CED. The experiences of the participants connect these larger processes and the theory that surrounds them to the ground-level and personal specificities of their effects. This approach is informed by the movement in anthropology to focus on studies of local specificities, uniqueness and difference, in what Abu-Lughod terms “ethnographies of the particular” (1991). This method of ethnography does not aim to provide a coherent or cohesive answer to an ethnographic question, but rather explores the ideals and experiences within which the question can be contextualized.

By producing an ethnography that uses multiple voices, especially those of individuals with ground-level experiences of CED and communities under “development”, I hope also to contribute a different perspective on CED theory. Many CED theorists deal with ideal scenarios for the implementation of CED, without attention to the processes by which it will be achieved and without regard for local realities. Viewed from the ground level, where CED ostensibly has its roots, CED is a complex

web of relations, tangled in power differentials that affect access to and benefit from CED. The personal narratives shared by participants deconstruct dominant theories and produce alternate discourses (Spivak 1999). This process exposes the struggles inherent in CED in order to make it possible for issues to be addressed and for alternatives to be imagined.

In order to challenge the metanarrative of development as welcome and beneficial, I consult post-development theory, which challenges the aims and results of development. Using this theory and the comments of participants, I assess CED initiatives in order to discover whether they are promoting business-as-usual and maintaining the status quo, or are providing alternatives to development with progressive and challenging initiatives. When working with marginalized groups, there is a tendency to romanticize their resistance to mainstream society. However, I have drawn from Abu-Lughod's incitement to recognize that the existence of resistance implies the existence of hegemonic power and therefore should not be romanticized (1990). My purpose is therefore not to romanticize the resistance posed by CED, but to acknowledge the power systems that necessitate such resistance. There is a struggle in CED to meet basic needs and fill the role of social service provider that is rejected and ignored by the government. However, this role prevents many CED initiatives from focusing on community development and ties them to charity work. CED cannot succeed without government support, either in the form of funding, or in a complete overhaul of government systems, in which the importance of compassion, security, community, relationships and other social factors are recognized as the basic right of all people.

I also explore the multiple meanings and experiences of community, and challenge the metanarrative of unity and common purpose that surround it. This leads to the conclusion that community is a constructed place, often rooted in a particular location, but experienced through and built by social relationships and a sense of familiarity. I apply these theories and discoveries to CED – an undertaking that has not been widely attempted in CED theory – and explore the relationships between organizations and communities. Activities and relationships are essential to the formation and maintenance of communities, and knowledge of their importance can aid CED programs to maximize opportunities for social connections and to foster feelings of community while creating space for the expression of difference.

A sense of belonging to and participation in community, explored and defined through connections with other people, should be a basic right. However, many people live in communities in which the problems of poverty, violence, poor health and inadequate housing destroy their ability to participate in social relations and activities. Communities facing such struggles often lack the resources to overcome barriers to community revitalization and development. While CED plays a role in developing and strengthening these resources, governments must also be held accountable to the social well-being of all people, including those living in poverty. Instead, they often create and perpetuate a harmful discourse that casts poor people as lazy and unwilling to work. My intent is to present the voices of people living in poverty to challenge this discourse. The participants who are currently living in poverty are caring, intelligent, conscientious and insightful people. Their struggles and experiences help mainstream society and

governments to face the reality that many people are being denied the opportunity to build and participate in healthy communities.

The differential experience of community is also affected by racism and discrimination. I explore the metanarratives of multiculturalism and tolerance in Canadian society. These are loaded concepts that inform attitudes and strategies used to conceal the presence of racism and its effects in mainstream Canadian society. Multiculturalism is often emphasized as being one of Canada's positive social policies, so long as it remains superficial. The deep, even ontological differences that exist between cultures and classes, however, are threatening to those who police the status quo. They are generally "tolerated" only to the point where dominant society begins to perceive diversity as a threat to the dominant system (Henry 2000). CED must deal with these barriers to participation in community and community development. CED organizations can help by encouraging political activism. As well, organizations can offer a political education that challenges mainstream society to uncover the ideologies of dominance that affect the ways in which individuals are educated and socialized into dominant society.

I also address the ongoing debate regarding the importance of the global and local as sites for research and theory, and their impacts on CED. While theories surrounding globalization and transnationalism often claim to have slipped the boundaries of the local, CED remains rooted in the local and is subject to boundaries drawn by organizations and community members. CED also redefines development on a local scale in an effort to combat globalization processes and the pursuit of profit and the absence of accountability. Negotiating this conflict involves finding a middle-ground between the two poles of theory. While the boundaries around the local and community have not

been erased or transcended, it is important to challenge these boundaries and create connections across them. Local organizations, including CED organizations, can connect with global social movements and can forge bonds with local organizations in other countries to discuss and share failures and successes (Fisher and Shragge 2002). Global linkages can be balanced with relations at a local scale, and this balance is vital to the health and future of CED.

To conclude, the thread that unites these strategies, theories and issues is the ultimate importance of human relationships. Close relationships link actions to their consequences and challenge the remote or abstract relationships encouraged by capitalism to isolate consumers from the human and environmental impacts of their consumption. Social relationships create the potential for collaborative, small-scale development projects. They have the ability to create comfort and familiarity, and the sense of belonging so often threatened by capitalist demands for flexibility and rootlessness. They can connect government officials with the people affected by the policies and procedures they create. They enable communities and organizations to communicate and motivate for action.

While relationships should not be romanticized, and conflict cannot be ignored, it is a mistake to label all signs of optimism as “romance”, as they provide the feeling and spirit of CED. Faced with a challenging and sometimes discouraging process of social change, feelings of solidarity, caring and unity provide the motivation that inspires CED practitioners and participants to imagine a world where community-based relationships and development are the rule rather than the exception.

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Appendix One: Letter of Introduction for Participants

I am a student in Anthropology at the University of Manitoba, and am doing research on Community Economic Development (CED) for my Master's thesis. I'm looking for people who might be interested in speaking with me about their experiences and participation with [organization title].

I would like to learn more about how community-based organizations and community members communicate with each other to create programs and policies that are appropriate and helpful to their specific community. My research is based on two main questions:

1. How do local, community-based development organizations and community members work together to identify and address community issues and needs?
2. What are some of the meanings of the idea of "community" to community members and how do these meanings affect people and their participation in community organizations?

I would like to talk to community members about these issues, and any other areas that they feel are important. If you would like to share your opinion on your experience with [organization title], and your thoughts about your community, I would be very pleased to hear from you.

If you choose to participate, you will be asked for one interview, which will be half an hour to one hour in length, depending on your schedule. We can meet anywhere that is comfortable and convenient for you. I will pay for your transportation costs to and from the interview. All interviews will be confidential, and will not be shared with the organization. The information you give me will only be used in my thesis, and I will not use real names or other identifying information in my thesis.

If you are interested in participating, or if you have a question about this research project, please feel free to get in touch with me using the contact information listed below. Thank you for your time, I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Sara Stephens

Telephone:

Email:

Appendix Two: Sample Interview Questions

Questions for Community Members:

Background Information on Informant and Characteristics of the Community:

1. Can you tell me about yourself? (Your background, where were you raised)
2. How long have you lived in this community?
3. How would you describe your community? What do you think makes it unique?
4. What do you think some of the important issues are in your community?
5. Do you feel like a part of this community?
6. What kinds of activities or events make you feel like part of the community?
7. What kinds of activities would you like to see in the community? Why?
8. What do you have concerns about in your community?

Relationships between the Informant and Other Community Members:

1. How often do you meet with other people in your community? Are these informal or formal meetings?
2. Do you think most people in your community know their neighbours?
3. What kinds of problems or issues do you think are important to other community members you have talked to?
4. Do you see your community as being closely-knit?
5. Do you think members of your community help each other? In what ways?
6. Are there some disagreements in your community? What do you think causes these disagreements?

Relationships between the Informant and the Community Organization:

1. Can you tell me about your involvement with the organization?
2. Why did you choose to become involved with them? What did you hope for when you contacted them?
3. Has your experience with the organization met your expectations? In what ways has it met them, and in what ways has it failed to meet them?
4. What are some of your main concerns about your community?
5. Do you think some of the problem areas of your community can be solved? How do you think they should be approached?
6. What do you think are some of the barriers to communication between the community and the organization?
7. Do you think these barriers could be overcome? If so, how would you approach them?
8. Do you feel your involvement with the organization has changed any aspect of your life? If so, in what ways?
9. Do you feel that the organization has changed your community? If so, in what ways?
10. Are your concerns being addressed by the organization?
11. Has being involved with the organization changed the way you look at your community? If so, in what ways?

Questions for Community-based Organization Staff:

Background Information on Organization:

1. Can you tell me about your organization?
2. Do you feel that CED principles are important to your organization?
3. How do you define CED principles, and how does your organization use them?
4. Are these CED principles important to you personally?
5. What are the strengths of your organization? What programs do you think are the most beneficial?
6. Are there any programs that you feel are not working as well? How would you improve these programs?
7. How do you decide as an organization what issues are important and how you will handle them?

Relationships with the Community:

1. Are you a member of this community? Why or why not?
2. How would you describe this community? Who do you serve at your organization?
3. What do you think are the most important issues in this community?
4. How do you and the organization find out what the issues of the community are?
5. What are some of the special considerations in this community that you have had to take into account? How did you approach them?
6. What are some of the goals of your organization for this particular community?
7. How might your goals differ for another community?
8. How often does your organization meet with or talk to community members?
9. Are there community members that are harder to reach? Why or why not?
10. What do you see as some of the barriers to communication with the community?
11. What kind of impact do you think your organization has had on the community?
12. What achievements are you most satisfied with?
13. What programs do you think need further work? Are there issues that your organization has been unable to address? If so, what are they?
14. What kinds of praises do you hear from the community for your organization?
15. What kinds of criticisms do you hear from the community for your organization? How do you deal with these criticisms? Why do you think the community raises these issues?

Relationships with other Community Organizations:

1. Can you tell me about some of the other community-based organizations you work with? How did you get involved with them?
2. What are some of the challenges in working with these organizations?
3. Are there some fundamental differences between your organization and other organizations you deal with? What are they?
4. What do you feel is the common ground, if any, between your organization and other organizations you interact with?
5. How do you negotiate differences? Are there certain strategies you use with different organizations?

Appendix Three: Form for Informed Consent

Research Project Title:

Conceptions of "Community" in Community Economic Development (CED)

Researcher:

Sara Stephens, Master's Student in Anthropology, University of Manitoba

Sponsor:

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Canada Graduate Scholarship

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of Community Economic Development (CED). The general goal of CED is to create close relationships and communication between community-based development organizations and community members, in order to mutually create development programs that are socially, economically and environmentally appropriate and beneficial. Within this context, this study explores two main questions: 1) How do local, community-based development organizations engage with community members to assess and address community issues and needs? 2) What are some of the meanings of the concept of "community" to both community members and organization staff, and how do these meanings affect the programs designed for a specific community? This research project is being conducted by the principle researcher as part of her Masters degree in Anthropology.

Your participation in this study will involve one in-depth interview based on your opinions on your community and your experiences with a community-based development organization. This interview will take place at a time and location that is comfortable and convenient for you, and will be approximately one hour in length, depending on your schedule. In the event that I consider it important to consult you later on in follow-up research, with your approval I would contact you personally.

With your permission and consent, this interview may be tape recorded on an audiotape, and I may wish to take handwritten notes. Please mark your consent to either or both of these practices below. Please initial all those that apply:

_____ I agree to have my interview tape-recorded onto an audiotape.

_____ I agree to allow Sara Stephens to take handwritten notes during the interview.

Your participation in this study will present no risk beyond what people face in day-to-day living. The confidentiality and anonymity of your identity and personal details will be ensured throughout this research. Tape recordings of interviews will be made only with your explicit permission, and will be transcribed by me alone. Audiotapes of

interviews will be stored in a secure, locked location prior to transcription, and will be destroyed after being transcribed. Information provided in audiotapes and interview transcripts will be accessible only to me, Sara Stephens, and to my thesis advisor, Dr. Kathleen Buddle-Crowe. All interview transcripts, handwritten notes and research documents, including the thesis manuscript, will use pseudonyms, which I will assign. Research documents, including the thesis manuscript, will exclude any specific or personal information that might identify the participants in the study. I will create a number code that will link the participants' contact information to their pseudonyms, and this code will be stored separately from all other information. I will have sole access to this code.

Your input and views on this research project are valued and respected. Please feel free to contact me with any comments or questions you might have after the interview. If you would like an electronic or paper copy of the completed thesis manuscript, please inform me and I will provide you with one after completion.

There will be no monetary compensation for participation in this study, although personal expenses such as transportation costs directly associated with the interview will be reimbursed. I appreciate your time and effort in participating in my research project, and will do everything possible to ensure your participation is comfortable and convenient.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. Should you choose to withdraw your participation at any time, please contact me or my supervisor via telephone or e-mail.

Contact Information: Sara Stephens, Master's Student in Anthropology, University of Manitoba. Telephone: (204) . Email:

Supervisor: Dr. Kathleen Buddle-Crowe, Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Manitoba. Telephone: (204) . Email:

This research has been approved by the Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board, University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher and/or Delegate's Signature

Date