

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

**COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT IN THE
EMPOWERMENT ZONE: ATLANTA, 1994 - 2002**

By

Deborah A. Jackson

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE SCHOOL OF COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
OF SOUTHERN NEW HAMPSHIRE UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

I certify that I have read this dissertation and that, in my opinion, it is fully adequate in scope and quality as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to the residents of communities, both here and abroad, who continue to struggle to find ways to improve the quality of life for their families and themselves.

May their efforts not continue to be in vain. Ashe.

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PROLOGUE

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?

Or fester like a sore ---
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over ---
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

Langston Hughes (1951)

ABSTRACT

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Southern New Hampshire University, 2009

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The concepts of community participation and community empowerment have been the focus of several federal programs, such as the Empowerment Zone (EZ), purportedly designed to alleviate poverty in urban areas through the participation of residents. This research examines what effect those concepts had on conditions within targeted communities from the perspective of community representatives whose voice is not often heard. The study analyzes whether the EZ program strengthened the community's ability to take control of and/or influence decisions affecting its quality of life.

The research proposes a conceptual framework of community participation as empowerment and demonstrates the need for a more holistic approach to comprehensive planning initiatives. The framework identifies factors that are needed to make participation meaningful or effective – exercise of power; access to resources; and identification of results or benefits for the community. This dissertation uses a case study research design and qualitative data collection

methods to examine four neighborhoods of the Atlanta Empowerment Zone (AEZ) that were also part of the Model Cities program in the 1960's.

Although there was strong emphasis on the importance of community participation and community empowerment as key components of the strategy, no clear definition or guidance was provided as to how the participation requirement would be implemented. Likewise, it was unclear what was intended by empowerment. The research findings show the community representatives encountered significant barriers to their participation in the decision-making processes. Among these were the absolute control exercised by the mayor's office thwarting community recommendations; and the lack of adequate resources to support independent actions by the community. The research identifies that the real issue is about power and the need for a more equitable distribution of power. The overall findings also demonstrate that the institutionalization of the historic effects of racism, which is directly tied to the conditions of persistent poverty and the lack of power, must be addressed even when the factor of race is not an overt driving force. Otherwise, there will be no significant change in the conditions of communities affected by poverty.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Overview and Problem Statement

Over the years, there has been much discussion, debate and research around the significance and meaning of “community” or “citizen”¹ participation in programs and strategies that are focused on the alleviation of poverty, particularly in urban areas that are predominately African American.*² Additional questions have been

¹ It is interesting to note that generally throughout the literature, the issue of community participation focuses on the involvement in a program of ethnic groups, particularly African Americans; whereas, the references to citizen or public participation tend to refer to the broader community. For purposes of this research, the term ‘community’ shall refer to African Americans in urban areas, unless otherwise indicated.

** Editor’s note: Many documents from the period of the 1960’s and 70’s use the term “Negro”, “minority”, “ghetto residents”, or “Black” to refer to African Americans. The editor will use the terms Black and African American interchangeably. The terms “Negro” and “minority” will only be used in instances of direct quotes.*

² Abbott, 1995; Arnstein, 1969, 1972; Austin, 1972; Babcock & Bosselman, 1967; Blair & Carroll, 2007; Boone, 1972; Burby, 2003; Burke, 1983; Cary, 1970; Chapin, 1946; Chatman & Jackson, 1972; Chavis, 1990; Citizen participation recommendations, 1972; Cooper, 1980; Cotton, 1990; Cupps, 1977; Cummings, 1985; Cunningham, 1972; Dror, 1971; Florin & Wandersman, 1990; Fraenkel, 1977; Gilbert, Specht & Brown, 1974; Halpern, 1995; Hardina, 2003; Irvin & Stansbury, 2004; King, Feltey & Susel, 1998; Kramer, 1969; Kramer & Specht, 1983; Krumholz & Forester, 1990; Miller & Rein, 1969; Mogulof, 1969a, 1969b, 1972; Mollenkopf, 1983, 1989; Murrell & Schulte, 1980; Patterson, 2000; Pivan and Cloward, 1977; Riedel, 1972; Roberts, 2008; Skinner, 1972; Soen, 1981; The view from city hall, 1972; Thursz, 1972; Warren, 1972; Zimmerman, 1972.

raised as to whether, or how, community participation can or should lead to empowerment.³

In 1967, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. poignantly posed the question, “where do we go from here: chaos or community?” At that time, major civil rights legislation such as the 1965 Voting Rights Act had been enacted; yet, hundreds of cities across the country were ablaze. Policy-makers and lawmakers searched for answers to address the pressing problems of poverty that were devastating the lives of millions of citizens. Starting with President Johnson’s “War on Poverty” programs in the 1960’s, there has been a stated goal of dealing comprehensively with the economic and social challenges of urban areas (formerly referred to as inner-cities). Under these programs, large amounts of federal resources were allocated to provide for the development of comprehensive plans that required the involvement of the affected community as participants in the planning processes.

³ Aigner, Flora & Hernandez, 2001; Aleshire, 1972; Altshuler, 1970; Andrews, 2001; Barnes, Knops, Newman & Sullivan, 2004; Berger, 1997; Berryhill & Linney, 2000; Bezdek, 2006; Bond, 1993; Boyle & Silver, 2005; Bowen, 2005; Capraro, 2004; Chaskin, 2001; Checkoway, 1991; Constantino-David, 1982; Craig & Mayo, 1995; Dewar, 2002; Dreier, 1996; English, 1972; Gilbert & Faust, 1984; Gilbert, 2006, 2007; Graves, 1972; Haeberle, 1988; Herbert, 1972; Hetherington, 1971; Hetzel, 1971; Hickey & Mohan, 2005; Higgins, 1980; Jenkins & Bennett, 1999; Julian & Reischl, 1997; Lackey, 1992; McFarlane, 2001; Millett, 1977; Moynihan, 1966, 1970; Parisi, Grice, Taquino and & Gill, 2002; Passy & Giugni, 2000, 2001; Price 1990; Rocha, 1997; Schafft & Greenwood, 2003; Saegert, 2006; Speer & Hughey, 1995; Stone & Hughes, 2002; Unger, 1985; Unger & Wandersman, 1982; Verba, Schlozman & Brady, 1997; Walters, 1987; Wang, 2008.

The Model Cities and Empowerment Zone (EZ) programs are examples of such efforts. At the time, each program was heralded as a comprehensive initiative to eradicate poverty in urban areas with community residents playing a significant role. There has been significant research about the Model Cities and Empowerment Zone programs and their respective challenges and shortcomings. However, there has been little attention given to the underlying issues of community participation and empowerment and what impact they had on conditions within the community. Given the emphasis placed on community participation and empowerment as goals to help address the underlying issues related to poverty alleviation, there is a need for more research focusing on whether such participation has led to empowerment.

The City of Atlanta, Georgia (Atlanta) was awarded funds under the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966, better known as the Model Cities Program⁴, which called for “widespread citizen participation” in the program planning and implementation. The Model Cities program formally ended during the Nixon Administration in 1974. Fast-forwarding to 1994, Atlanta again was awarded funds for a major federal program that focused on developing a comprehensive plan with community involvement. The

⁴ Pub. L. 89-754. It is estimated that between 1967 and 1975, Atlanta received about \$32.7 million dollars in Model Cities funds, in addition to funds from other sources for capital improvements and social programs, for a total of \$173 million dollars (Weltner, 1977, p. 79).

Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Community Initiative (EZ/EC) had four key principles: economic opportunity; community-based partnerships; sustainable community development; and a strategic vision for change.⁵ Designated as one of the six urban Empowerment Zones, Atlanta received a commitment of \$100 million dollars in Title XX Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) funds administered through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Community Services.⁶ Additionally, the City had access to \$150 million dollars in employment tax credits, increased Section 179 expensing, and new tax-exempt bond financing. The funds and tax credits were to be applied over a ten-year period (1994-2004).

Research Question, Method and Significance

This research uses a case study method to focus on four neighborhoods that were part of the Empowerment Zone program in the 1990's as well as the Model Cities program in the 1960's. The primary focus is on the Atlanta Empowerment Zone (AEZ) program during the development of the strategic plan in 1994 to the end of

⁵ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (1995, July). The Clinton administration's national urban policy report (Clinton National Urban Policy Report). Retrieved on July 10, 2008 from www.huduser.org/publications/econdev. See also Rich and Stoker (2007, January), pp. 4-5.

⁶ In 1994, as a result of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993, 72 urban areas and 33 rural communities received designation as an Empowerment Zone or Enterprise Community. This study will use the term Empowerment Zone (EZ).

the EZ designation in 2002, when Atlanta became a Renewal Community.⁷ Information related to Model Cities is provided as background to increase understanding of changes that may have occurred within neighborhoods targeted for several massive federal funding interventions. The research design explores the answer to the question of what extent, if any, did participation by the community in the Atlanta EZ program contribute to community empowerment. Related components to the question are: (1) Identification of who participated; (2) Levels of participation; and (3) Results or benefits of participation for the community. In-depth interviews were conducted with key stakeholders in the targeted communities as well as other persons who served in leadership roles during the AEZ program. Information obtained from the interviews was triangulated with archival materials such as organizational documents; reports; evaluations and studies; videos; and news articles archives.

This research is significant in as much as there is a need to contribute to an increased understanding of how, or if, massive and comprehensive federal programs, such as the Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Communities, contribute to the alleviation of poverty through the participation and empowerment of community residents. Further, the research can inform the development of

⁷ In January 2002, the Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded the City of Atlanta Renewal Community (RC) status under the 2000 Community Renewal Tax Relief Act. The RC status provided tax credits for businesses that were located in, or employed residents from, the designated census tracts [Atlanta Renewal Community Coordinating Responsible Authority (ACoRA), Inc., 2004, rev. 2005, p. 1].

programs and policies that serve to strengthen the actual capacity and ability of community residents to play a significant part in the rebuilding of their communities. The research also intends to contribute to the literature on participation and empowerment by adding information and insights from the perspective of community residents who are the intended beneficiaries of these programs. They have a different vantage point that is not often considered since much of the research tends to focus on outcomes such as the number of jobs created, houses built, and businesses established. While those outcomes are important, they do not represent the whole story about what happens to communities.

The fields of psychology and social work have taken the lead in attempting to understand the roles of participation and empowerment. As Perkins (1995) points out

Focusing on citizen participation as a form of empowerment is valuable in research and intervention for three reasons. First, as a behavior, participation can be more directly, and therefore reliably, measured than intrapsychic dimensions of empowerment. Second, participation forces psychologists to consider empowerment at various levels of analysis (individual, organization, community)...Third, a focus on participation (i.e., people's direct interactions with their neighbors, the community environment, local organizations, and government agencies) highlights the need to understand how those factors affect and are affected by empowerment (Perkins, 1995, p. 768; citing Perkins, Florin, Rich, Wandersman, & Chavis, 1990).

The benefit of understanding the issues of participation and empowerment has important implications for practitioners in the field of community economic development as well as other fields (Dewey, 1950; Bhattacharyya, 2004; Blackburn and Holland, 1998; Dale, 1978; Dale and Mitiguy, 1978; Heller, 1992; Hustedde and Ganowicz, 2002; Mehta, 1969; Orfield, 1997; Wilson, 1998).

Summary of Findings

The research findings indicate that although the community was actively involved during the application process to develop the Strategic Plan for Atlanta, they were not as successful in gaining access during the actual decision-making and implementation phases once the official EZ designation was obtained. The establishment of a separate community organization did not make a significant difference in the outcomes primarily due to dependency on resources allocated by the Atlanta Empowerment Zone Corporation (AEZC), which was firmly under the control of the Mayor. Community participants did not have any meaningful independent support mechanisms to enable them to be full partners; they often lacked the technical capacity and experience required to level the playing field; the Mayor controlled all appointments to the AEZC Executive Board; and the community only had 6 out of the 17 representatives on the AEZC Executive Board which placed them at a distinct numerical disadvantage.

Future Developments

It is anticipated that there will be new programs to address the issues of urban areas and poverty under the Obama Administration. On February 19, 2009, President Obama signed an Executive Order establishing a White House Office of Urban Affairs “to coordinate all aspects of urban policy.” The Office will also

Engage in outreach and work closely with State and local officials, with nonprofit organizations, and with the private sector, both in seeking input regarding the development of a comprehensive urban policy and in insuring that the implementation of Federal programs advances the objectives of that policy.⁸

This action portends well for a new discussion about the alleviation of poverty and the role of affected communities in the process. The policy recommendations of this research are made with the hope of influencing policy-makers to seriously consider the long-term effects of community redevelopment programs and the need for new strategies to truly empower communities.

Research Study Format

Chapter 2 examines the literature on the concepts of community participation and empowerment, how they have evolved, and the context they provide for this

⁸ The White House, Office of the Press Secretary News Release (2009, February 19). Retrieved on February 23, 2009 from http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Executive-Order-Establishment-of-the-White-House-Office-of-Urban-Affairs/

research. Next follows Chapter 3 which establishes the theoretical framework for the analysis of the roles of community participation and empowerment in the Atlanta Empowerment Zone Program. A conceptual framework for a holistic approach to community empowerment is presented. Chapter 4 gives an overview of some of the political, economic and social conditions that underlie the comprehensive planning approach in urban areas. Chapter 5 provides background information on the conditions and demographics of the target communities. The methodology used to conduct this research is found in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 presents the findings of the research, and Chapter 8 outlines the conclusions and policy recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

THE SEARCH FOR MEANING: A LITERATURE REVIEW ON COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT

The concepts of participation and empowerment in federal programs are not new. They have a history that dates back to the early 1900's, beginning with efforts to have local governments decentralize decision-making and include community participation in the process (Lyden & Thomas, 1969; McFarlane, 2001; Friedmann, 1971; Schmandt, 1972). Halpern (1995) notes that many of the early neighborhood initiatives of the 1950's and 1960's to address problems related to poverty, such as the Ford Foundation's Gray Areas program, included the principle of "guided self-help" or "resident participation in community affairs" (Halpern, p. 91). Urban renewal programs of the 1950's have also been identified as promoting citizen participation (Burke, 1983; Hardina, 2003, 2005; Chapin, 1946/1947). Some of the underlying premises of participation are that it promotes democracy, egalitarianism and inclusion.

The literature in the areas of political science, public administration and urban affairs points to the ongoing ideological debate about the underlying theories of participation and the desired objectives to be achieved through participation. On one hand, there are arguments whether pluralism or elitism is the appropriate standard to be used in determining whether or not there has been adequate

participation (Gamson, 1968; Mollenkopf, 1983). Several authors have stressed the impact of governing regimes on who participates and how that participation occurs (Stone, 1989, 2001; Kilburn, 2004; Logan, Whaley & Crowder, 1997). There are also arguments about whether the approach of representative democracy is sufficient to handle the diverse interests of the public versus having participatory democracy in certain circumstances (Hart, 1972; Stringfellow, 1966). The issue of an appropriate balance between the right to participate and the need for efficiency in bureaucratic structures has also been argued (Aleshire, 1972; Cupps, 1977; King, Feltey and Susel, 1998).⁹

Burke (1983) provides a good overview of the evolution of citizen participation in the public planning process since the mid-1950s. Although many of the early mechanisms may have been informal in nature, there was some acknowledgment of the influence of community leaders. In a review of the development of citizen participation and the administrative state, Stenberg (1972) noted that the term “citizen participation” evolved without a consensus on who the “citizens” are and how, with what result, they participate (p. 190). He pointed out that, historically, citizen participation in federal programs has included different levels of involvement, from being informed to sharing in policy-making; as well as having diverse participants – middle- and upper-income to poor residents (Stenberg, 1972, p. 190; Hallman, 1972).

⁹ See also Lemert, 1999, pp. 104-110, citing Max Weber’s “The Bureaucratic Machine”, 1909-1920.

In the early initiatives to alleviate poverty, starting with President Johnson's War on Poverty, the focus was on involving the poor in the programs. At the same time, there was no clear agreement among the federal program administrators, Congress, local officials, program staff, and community members about how that involvement should be implemented. The Equal Opportunity Act of 1964¹⁰ created the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) with primary responsibility for the administration of various programs, including the Community Action Program (CAP). CAP was charged with ensuring the "maximum feasible participation" of the residents in the target area to be served. The following section provides a review of the interpretations and tensions that evolved around the phrase "maximum feasible participation."

Participation Model: Community Action Program

The issue of participation as it specifically relates to African American communities really emerged during the Johnson Administration's War on Poverty programs. The primary vehicle for community participation was the Community Action Program (CAP). However, there were different understandings from the initiation of CAP about what the specific intent was. According to Moynihan (1966), in outlining the history behind the idea, there were conflicting objectives:

¹⁰ Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, Pub. L. 88-452, §2, 78 Stat. 508, Title II-A, Section 202 (a)(3).

The question goes to the definition, meaning, and intent of the Community Action Programs. What are they supposed to do? Are they to make trouble – or prevent trouble? Create small controversies in order to avoid large conflicts – or engender as much conflict as they can? Hire the poor, involve the poor, or be dominated by the poor? Improve race relations or enhance racial pride? What is it Washington wanted? (Moynihan, 1966, p. 4).

In October 1963, President Kennedy's Council of Economic Advisors met to discuss strategies to address what they saw as the cycle of poverty. In December 1963, under the new Johnson Administration, it was recommended that Community Action Programs focus on: (1) "specific local areas of poverty;" (2) "well-organized local initiative, action, and self-help under Federally-approved plans and with Federal support;" and (3) "action programs to evaluate and coordinate existing Federal, State, local and private programs and to test and demonstrate new ones." (Moynihan, 1966, p. 4).

Moynihan (1966) further identified what he categorized as four distinct and incompatible understandings of the meaning of community action. The goal and guiding principal of each understanding is outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Meanings of “Community Action”

<u>CONCEPT</u>	<u>GOAL/GUIDING PRINCIPLE</u>
Bureau of the Budget	<i>Efficiency</i> – programs may cost in the beginning, but will save in the end
Alinsky	<i>Conflict or disruption</i> – need of the poor to acquire power, and a sense of power by means of community organization
Peace Corps	<i>Provision of services</i> – help for the “underdeveloped peoples of the United States;” expected “fall out” of enhanced local capacities for self-help
Task Force	<i>Political effectiveness</i> – provide jobs to the poor to reduce unemployment; provide benefits to rural Southern Negroes by requiring that the Community Action Organization be “developed and conducted with the maximum feasible participation of the residents of the areas” involved

Source: Moynihan (1966), pp. 5-6.

Moynihan’s (1970) assessment of the controversies that ensued over the interpretations of “maximum feasible participation” is indicated in the title of his book, *Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding*. However, Moynihan’s review is anecdotal based primarily on his recollections and personal involvement with various aspects of the development of the Community Action Program.

Kramer (1969) conducted a comparative case study of five community action programs in the San Francisco Bay area from 1965-1967 to explore how “maximum feasible participation” was interpreted and implemented. He offered yet another assessment of the differing goals of community action programs: (1) a way of breaking the cycle of poverty through social services and job preparation; (2) an effective tool to centralize planning and coordination of local services; (3) a compensatory device to give a greater political voice to the poor; and (4) a protagonist for “creative disorder” whereby an apathetic clientele would be moved to stimulate changes in the social service bureaucracy (Kramer, p. 262). He stated that:

Different, often incompatible strategies were required to achieve these various goals, in which the CAP was perceived as a social movement (a cause) or a social service agency (a function), or both, thus constituting a curious blend of professionalism, bureaucracy, social action, and reform. These strains were reflected in the continuing conflict around the *control* and *purpose* of the CAP, in which it became increasingly obvious that the CAP could not represent the interests of the poor *and* the establishment, nor successfully promote the development of social service programs *and* at the same time organize the poor effectively (Kramer, 1969, p. 262).

The differences outlined above reflect part of the underlying controversy that evolved around the Community Action Programs in different locations. For the most part, the statutory language of “maximum feasible participation of the residents of the area” became a rallying cry for some as “maximum feasible participation of the poor” in an effort to include those who had been traditionally excluded. A point worth noting is that at the time of the OEO legislation, some

representatives in the Johnson Administration were concerned about ensuring that African Americans, particularly in the rural South, were not completely excluded from any of the programs. The language focusing on the participation of residents in the area served was seen by some proponents as an indirect or 'back door' way of ensuring that some benefits would inure to African Americans (Hamilton, Olivarez and Krickus, 1972; Moore, 2005).

Some of the continuing arguments were, is it sufficient for the intended beneficiaries of the program to receive some benefit; or is it necessary that the intended beneficiaries have a role or some say in the program that affects them? There were also debates as to whether participation was to take place in the decision-making body, such as the board of directors, or through employment as the staff (Patterson, 2000, pp. 142-143). The results varied from program to program depending on the local conditions. In some instances, community representatives had a major role in the administration of the programs. In others, they had a more passive role as policy advisors (Kramer, 1969; Patterson, 2000).

Strange (1972a, 1972b) concludes that the inclusion of the term "maximum feasible participation" was "unplanned, and, for all practical purposes, undefined" (Strange, 1972a, p. 655). There was a continuous question whether

“maximum feasible” meant “some residents, poor people, blacks, or others, were to participate, or did it mean that at least one-third of those in decision-making positions should be from these groups?” (Strange, 1972a, p. 656; Rabb, 1966). However, the lack of a specific commitment to empower the poor through the Equal Opportunity Act (EOA) is reinforced by Boone (1972). He stated:

A commitment for participation of the poor did not get into the Act because Congress wanted it there. Nothing would suggest that congressmen examined the idea’s meaning. A search of committee reports and the *Congressional Record* verifies that practically no testimony covered this point. It just passed with the rest of the Act (Boone, 1972, p. 446).

The other area of contention related to CAP was the decision of the federal government to bypass the local political structures and have non-governmental agencies directly responsible for the delivery of services to residents. Boone (1972) described the program as an “important mandate for local community groups to obtain and administer federal resources” and an attempt “to move administrative authority closer to people directly affected by federal legislation” (Boone, p. 445). However, in 1967 as part of an effort to return control to local elected officials, Congress passed the Green Amendment to the Economic Opportunity Act requiring Community Action Program policy boards to be comprised of three equally represented groups: public and private agencies responsible for services or programs concerned with poverty, elements from the community as a whole, and the population to be served (Mogulof, 1969, pp. 204-205; Miller and Rein, 1969; Notes and Comments, 1966).

The requirement of proportional representation on CAP policy boards effectively meant that representatives of low-income communities would be outnumbered two to one. There was of course, the issue of how the representatives of the poor would be determined – would they be elected or selected, and by whom? (Kramer, 1969; Raab, 1966). The 1967 Amendment represented the beginning of efforts to reduce the ability of low-income community representatives to control or influence the direction of programs of which they were the intended beneficiaries.

The following section reviews the literature and context of the development of the Model Cities program which was the next comprehensive federal program with a strong, but undefined, participation requirement.

Participation Model: Model Cities Program

The controversy over the attempts by many CAPs to implement the power and social action concepts of community action on behalf of the poor, led to a modification of the participation requirement in the Model Cities program several years later. The applicant agencies were limited to governmental units that were held accountable and responsible for the Model Cities program. At the same time, there was a requirement for “widespread citizen participation” in the

planning process (Warren, 1969, p. 246; Brown and Frieden, 1976; Frieden and Kaplan, 1987).

Another issue that arose during the 1960's was that of community participation in the form of community control (Zimmerman, 1972). This was a demand that emanated from members of the Black community who advocated community control as a form of self-determination and empowerment. Altshuler (1970) noted that demands for greater participation in the political and economic affairs of the community included:

(1) devolution of as much authority as possible to neighborhood communities; (2) direct representation of such communities on the city council, the board of education, the police commission, and other significant policy bodies; (3) black representation at all levels of the public service in far more than token numbers; (4) similar representation on the labor forces of government contractors; and (5) the vigorous application of public resources to facilitate the development of black controlled businesses (Altshuler, 1970, p.14).

It is important to note that in the 1960's there was very little direct representation of the black community in any governing or policy-making bodies on the local, state or federal level (Browning, Marshall and Tabb, 1977; Millett, 1977; Silvers, 1969).

Millett (1977) explored the meaning of "widespread citizen participation" in the Model Cities program within the context of the growing demands of ethnic

minorities for an increased role in the decision-making processes of programs designed to benefit the 'poor'. In some instances, the term 'poor' was considered a "euphemism" for the Black community (Mogulof, 1969, p. 225).

The political education of the poor stimulated by the Civil Rights Movement and the War on Poverty changed the content of the phrase [citizen participation] for both citizens and public officials. Citizens who had suffered for generations from the effects of exploitation, exclusion, and poverty found new dignity, ambition, and hope through participation in planning and implementing programs. The social and political condition of minority groups in American society has prompted attempts for a more egalitarian democratic process, a more active and influential role in decision-making bodies, and increasingly, for more influence in implementation of decisions at the institutional level (Millett, p. 7).

Millett (1977) used the analytical framework of the sociology of knowledge to explore the issue of citizen participation as a vehicle of control. The sociology of knowledge framework included both a historical framework and the social system framework (Millett, p. 24). He stressed that understanding the issue of citizen participation and its various interpretations had to be viewed in the context of the black-white socio-historical relationship. He further noted the concept of "community control" raised several conflicts about meanings. These included the definition of "community", the role of racial identity, and the question of political power (Millett, p. 25).

The growing militancy within the Black community and demands for the right to self-determination represented a movement away from integration as a social

goal. This momentum contributed to tensions between those who sought some modification of the existing political system (the reform movement), and those who wanted to radically alter it (Black Nationalism) (Mogulof, 1969, p. 225). Millett posited that “citizen participation” is recognition that the weakness of the redistribution mechanism in American society is a crucial cause of poverty (Millett, p. 32). However, he noted the resistance that ensued regarding efforts to increase the participation of the “powerless” in the planning, operation and development of programs (Millett, p. 33).

Millett’s (1977) review of the HUD performance standards for implementation of “widespread citizen participation” revealed that they were “open-ended”, “permissive rather than restrictive, suggestive rather than perspective” (p. 42). His hypothesis was that the kind and level of participation allowed or attained would be shaped by a number of factors, such as “the political forces and administrative structure of the city, the political sophistication and cohesiveness of the model neighborhood residents (which might take into account their previous experience with the OEO war on poverty programs)” (Millett, p. 43). The performance standards had two implications – in the long-run, it related to the distribution of decision-making power and the allocation of resources at the neighborhood level. In the short-run, any impact was “greatly lessened by the absence of definite compliance regulations” (Millett, p. 43).

While pointing out the various shortcomings of citizen participation to date, Millett acknowledged that it would continue to be a dynamic force in planning efforts. He referred to Cahn's¹¹ list of values for citizen participation to support that premise:

1. A means of mobilizing unutilized resources – A source of productivity and labor not otherwise tapped.
2. A source of knowledge – Both corrective and creative. A means of securing feedback regarding policy and program and also a source of new, innovative approaches.
3. An end in itself – An affirmation of democracy aiming at the elimination of alienation, and the combating of destructiveness, hostility and cynicism.
4. Guarantee of a social contract – In as much as minority residents claim they do not have any basis for trusting white dominated institutions, real participation offers a mechanism through which trust can be developed. It is a guarantee, frail as it may be, that people will be willing to endorse the terms of the social contract – and to have sufficient faith in the system to work within its limits.
5. Guarantee (of sorts) for the Pursuit of Equality – In as much as the “system” gives the poor what “it” judges they should want, “it” is not structured to challenge the basic pattern of segregation and inequality. The “system” and “its” officials are charged with the delicate responsibility of appropriately allocating limited resources; they must set the priorities based on research, documentation and policy formulation. The important point residents emphasize is that the officials do not have to bear the burden of living with the choices they make, based on research, documentation and policy formulation.
6. Creating a Neighborhood power force – Given the character of powerlessness of minorities in urban areas, real participation offers a mechanism through which they can create a base of power to influence the distribution of resources.

¹¹ Cahn, Edgar S. and Passett, Barry, Eds. (1971). *Citizen participation: Effective community change*. New York: Praeger Special Studies in U.S. Economic and Social Development, pp. 15-16.

7. Vehicle for political socialization – Real participation provides access to interaction with governmental and community influentials, and thus contributing to the political education of minority groups.
8. Vehicle for positive role perception – The impact on the increased sense of self-identity and pride on [sic] minority is in and of itself a positive value of real participation (Millett, 1977, pp. 52-53).

In the final analysis, what remained was an “inherent conflict” between the approach to planning and coordination of resources and the goal of “effective” citizen participation (Millett, p. 54). On one hand, the creation of a new institution – the City Demonstration Agency (CDA) – expanded the leadership role of the mayor over the program. The CDA Director, who was appointed by the mayor, was also expected to be an advocate for the community. As the mayor’s appointee, the focus was on having a coordinated and efficient program. Often this focus was at variance with the community’s claim of the right to participate. This tension remained unresolved through the duration of the Model Cities program.

To understand what had been accomplished in the Model Cities program regarding citizen participation, Millett (1977) performed an analysis of the case studies data collected by MKGK¹² on eleven Model Cities programs, including Atlanta. Millett’s concept of “resident participation” was operationally defined as

¹² Marshall Kaplan, Gans, and Kahn (MKGK) were contracted by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to prepare a study of the Model Cities first-year planning period experience in Atlanta, Seattle and Dayton.

those activities undertaken by Model Neighborhood Area residents “to influence the program and its resources to meet their self-perceived needs” (p. 79). The factors examined were: the role residents played in the application for a Model Cities grant; the role residents played in the selection of the CDA director; and the role of residents in the design and development of the participation structure itself (Millett, 1977, p. 79). In summarizing the research results, Millett answered the question “How does the decision-making process which has evolved in the Model Cities Program relate to ethnic demands for increased influence in decision-making?” (Millett, p. 98). His empirical analysis found that residents were able to have significant decision-making roles in: the hiring and firing of Model Cities staff; the allocation of Model Cities budget resources; the initiation of Model Cities projects; and the operation of Model Cities programs when the intensity of resident participation was high” (Millett, pp. 98-99). The factors related to optimal resident participation were the following:

1. When residents participated in the application period for a Model Cities grant;
2. When residents participated in the selection of the CDA Director;
3. When resident participation structure was representative of the neighborhood constituency;
4. When the residents had actual substantive roles in establishing the administrative organization and prerogatives of the CDA structure and the resident structure;
5. When residents received continual and direct information on Model Cities matters from the CDA office;
6. When the Model Cities program was located in a small city (less than 325,000) which had a small ethnic minority population (below

15% of the total city population) and was governed by a city manager type of municipal administration; and

7. When the Model Cities program was located in a city which had experienced racial disturbances prior and/or during the Model Cities Program and which had a cohesive community organization base (Millett, 1977, pp. 99-111).

According to the MKGK study, the community in Atlanta did not have any significant participation in or involvement with the factors identified above. In fact, out of the 22 variables¹³ that Millett tested to determine whether there was any significant association between the variables related to the community's ability to participate, Atlanta was the worst performing (Millett, p. 83). In his conclusion, Millett noted that although there had been a de-emphasis by the federal government on the requirement of resident or citizen participation, nonetheless, "the problem of economic and political deprivation of the poor and

¹³ Millett organized the data into three sets of variables – intervening; independent and dependent. There were four intervening variables related to Environment I for a broad perspective of a city – size of city; type of municipal government; race and ethnic composition of city; race and ethnic composition of model neighborhood (MNA). Environment II had three variables to identify the degree of racial hostility – racial conflict in the city/MNA prior to Model Cities (MC); racial conflict in the city/MNA during Model Cities; and organizational cohesiveness. The 11 independent variables sought to measure program activities – resident involvement in the application period; resident activity for increase role in the MC process; resident participation in selection of CDA Directors; representativeness of resident structures of neighborhood constituency; Directors sympathy with community control; role of residents in designing CDA structure; structure of resident body; role of residents in establishing prerogatives of citizen participation (CP) structure; percentage of ethnic minorities on CP structure; information flow from CDA to resident structure; and extent of professional cooperation with residents. The four dependent variables sought to measure resident control – extent of resident influence in hiring and firing; extent of resident influence in allocation of budget; extent of resident influence in operation of programs; and extent of resident influence in initiation of programs.

ethnic minorities remains, and is perhaps the most critical issue in this society” (Millett, p. 123).

More recent research has continued to examine the role of citizen participation in federal redevelopment programs (Scruggs, 1995). Tigan (2005) explored the shift in citizen participation from the Great Society programs in the 1960s to the current participation requirements of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. He noted that the trend has been away from broad participation by community residents to a more narrow approach of representation through non-profits, generally, community-based organizations (CBOs) such as community development corporations (CDCs). Tigan concluded that the continuation of the trend away from broad-based citizen participation would not be a positive development. Gittell (2001) also acknowledged the movement to “development corporations” as a new approach to community activism that was more closely tied to the “private process of development rather than the public process of community organizing and citizen participation” (Gittell, 2001, p. 14).

Theories and Typologies of Participation

A wide array of literature has evolved about theories of participation (Langton, 1978; Roberts, 2008; Wolman, 1972; Woolcock, 1998). The theories have

variously addressed how participation occurs; what participation occurs or is needed; and the objective of participation for the community and government officials. For example, some of the theories have focused on the issue of political participation as a means of understanding the level of community or citizen participation in the development field. Political participation could include the following types of activities: “electoral involvement, protest and complaint activity, and various problem-solving behaviors” (Bingham and Mier, 1993, chap. 10, p. 214). Additionally, Bingham and Mier identify three types of theories regarding political participation:

(a) *psychosocial* theories, which emphasize individual attitudes and the social groupings that condition the development of individual attitudes, beliefs, and so on; (b) *rational calculus* theories, which assume that individuals are mobilized into group-based political action on the basis of their objective assessment of the impact of proposed policies or existing arrangements; and (c) *institutionalist* theories, which emphasize the importance of various institutional arrangements in either fostering or limiting citizens’ access to governmental decision-making arenas (Bingham and Mier, 1993, p. 215).

McFarlane (2001) identifies three general normative categories in discussing the types of justification for participation: “(1) instrumental theories stemming from bureaucratic rationalism and pragmatism that answer the question of how local governments benefit from participation, (2) democratic theories promising self-development and transformation that answer the question of what an individual citizen obtains from participation, and (3) empowerment or political control

theories on behalf of low-income black communities that answer the question of how a low-income black community can benefit as a whole” (McFarlane, p. 893).

Another theory related to the issue of participation and political control is that of urban regimes. Stone’s (1989) *Regime Politics* provides an assessment of the governing coalition from 1946 to 1988 in the City of Atlanta. The coalition, led by the White business elite, gradually incorporated the Black middle class as the latter’s electoral strength increased. Stone refers to an urban regime as

The set of arrangements by which a community is actually governed. Even though the institutions of local government bear most of the formal responsibility for governing, they lack the resources and the scope of authority to govern without the active support and cooperation of significant private interests. An urban regime may thus be defined as the *informal arrangements by which public bodies and private interests function together in order to be able to make and carry out governing decisions* (Stone, 1989, p. 6).

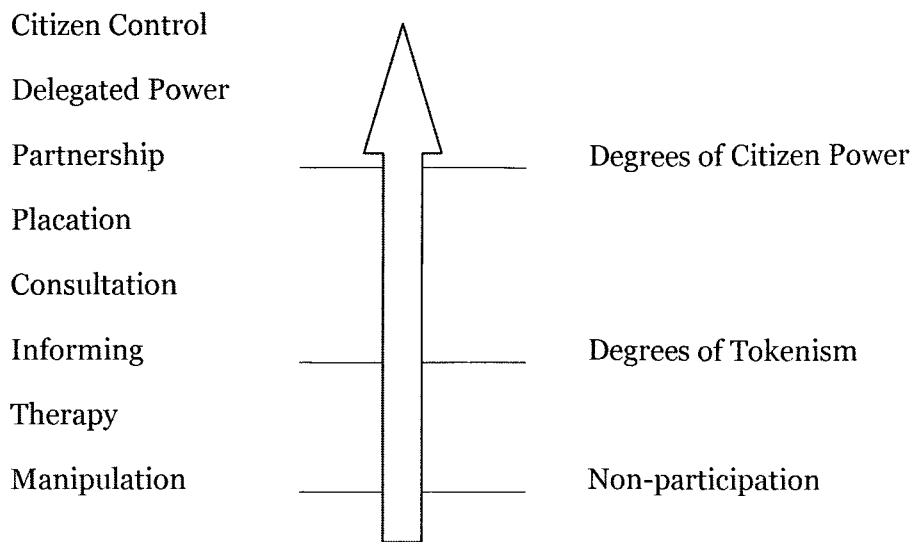
Stone further notes that historically the governing coalition has focused on the redevelopment of the central business district and the creation of a buffer zone between the low-income Black population and the downtown area (Stone, 1989, p. 202). In fact, during the ten-year period from 1956 to 1966, urban renewal was responsible for the displacement of 21,000 families and 67,000 people; eight out of ten persons were African Americans. Stone notes how the functioning of the

governing coalition in Atlanta has led to a system that perpetuates inequality (Stone, 1989, p. 241).

Hardina (2003) notes that the government programs that evolved during the 1960s and 1970s, partly in response to the Civil Rights Movement, gave root to the idea of the involvement of citizens in community planning efforts as a mechanism for social reform. Some viewed the involvement of citizens, particularly the representatives from low-income and minority communities, as a means of increasing the power of those communities. Others thought that involvement was only to ensure that members of the communities received benefits from the programs rather than increase their power (Hardina, 2005).

As a partial response to the debate regarding community participation, Arnstein (1969) developed the concept of a ladder of participation to explain and explore the different levels at which participation can take place. Arnstein's approach can be viewed as a continuum with a range of participation from low, "manipulation" of participants, to high, "full control of decision-making mechanisms" by community residents. Arnstein's ladder had eight levels of participation, as illustrated in Figure 1 which reflected the degree of citizens' power in the particular process.

Figure 1. Eight Rungs of Citizen Participation



Source: Sherry R. Arnstein (1969).

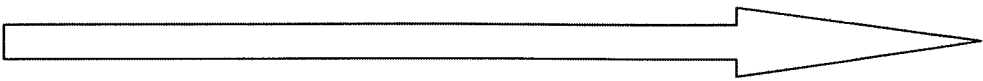
Hardina (2003), citing Arnstein, writes “the degree of citizen participation in organizations could be viewed as contingent on the values of the sponsor and the type of structure imposed on the decision-making process” (Hardina, p. 15).

Arnstein (1969) argued

Citizen participation is a categorical term for citizen power. It is the redistribution of power that enables the ‘have-not’ citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic process, to be deliberately included in the future. It is the strategy by which the have-nots join in determining how information is shared, goals and policies are set, tax resources are allocated, programs operated, and benefits like contracts and patronage are parceled out. In short, it is the means by which they can induce significant social reform which enables them to share in the benefits of the affluent society...participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless. It allows the powerholders to claim that all sides were considered but makes it possible for only some to benefit. It maintains the status quo (Arnstein, 1969, p. 216; see also Arnstein, 1972).

Since Arnstein initially developed the concept of the “ladder of participation,” groups have explored the various meanings of the levels of participation. One such entity, the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2),¹⁴ has developed the “Spectrum of Public Participation” outlined in Table 2.

Table 2. Spectrum of Public Participation



Increasing Level of Public Impact

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public Participation Goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the Public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations,	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and	We will implement what you decide.

¹⁴ Retrieved March 13, 2009 from <http://www.iap2.org>; site modified since initial retrieval on January 10, 2007.

		and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision	aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	
Example Techniques	Fact sheets Web sites Open houses	Public comment Focus groups Surveys Public meetings	Workshops Deliberative polling	Citizen advisory committees Consensus-building Participatory decision-making	Citizen juries Ballots Delegated decision

Source: International Association for Public Participation © 2007.

Another view of the ladder of participation is proposed by Jones (2003). In an article reviewing efforts to regenerate depressed urban areas in the United Kingdom, Jones (2003) outlines seven different types of participation based on models that have been utilized in rural development projects in developing countries. The types are outlined in Table 3.

Table 3. A Typology of Participation

Typology	Characteristic of each type
1. Manipulative participation	Participation is simply a pretence, with ‘people’s’ representatives on official boards but having no power.
2. Passive participation	Involves unilateral announcements by an administration or project management without listening to people’s responses. The information being shared only belongs to external professionals.
3. Participation by consultation	People participate by being consulted or answering questions. External agents define problems and information gathering processes and so control analysis. Does not concede any share in decision-making and professionals are under no obligation to take on board people’s views.
4. Participation for material incentives	People participate through contributing resources—labour or volunteering time—in return for incentives. It is very common to call this participation, yet people have no stake in it once the incentives end.
5. Functional participation	Participation seen by external agencies as a means to achieve project goals, especially reduced costs. People may participate by forming groups to meet pre-determined objectives related to the project. Such involvement may be interactive and involve shared decision-making, but tends to arise only after major decisions have already been made by external agents. At worst, local people may still be co-opted to serve external goals.
6. Interactive participation	People participate in joint analysis, development of action plans and formation or strengthening of local institutions. Participation is seen as a right, not just the means to achieve project goals, based upon seeking multiple perspectives. As groups take over local decisions and determine how available resources are used, so they have a stake in maintaining structures or practices.
7. Self-mobilisation	People participate by taking initiatives independently of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for the resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used. Self-mobilisation can spread if governments and NGOs provide an enabling framework of support. Such self-initiated mobilization may or may not challenge existing distributions of wealth and power.

Source: Pretty, J. (1995). Participatory learning for sustainable agriculture, *World Development*, 23(8), pp. 1247-1263, cited in Jones, P.S., 2003, p. 590.

The model referenced by Jones (2003), and similarly that of IAP2, parallel the Arnstein ladder. Each of the typologies provides a range from a higher degree to a lower degree of power. In each case, the highest degree of power focuses on citizen control, empowerment or self-mobilization. Generally, it appears that the emphasis is on the community rather than the individual as the focal point. A comparison of the different typologies is illustrated below in Table 4.

Table 4. Comparison of Participation Typologies

Types or Levels of Participation	Arnstein (1967)	IAP2 (2007)	Jones (2003) [Citing Pretty (1995)]
<i>Degrees of citizen power</i>	Citizen control	Empower	Self-mobilization
	Delegated Power	Collaborate	
	Partnership	Involve	Interactive
<i>Degrees of Tokenism</i>	Placation		Functional
	Consultation	Consult	Consultation
	Informing	Inform	Passive
<i>Non-participation</i>	Therapy		Material incentives
	Manipulation		Manipulative

Jackson, D. (2009)

The various typologies presented above highlight the importance of having a clear goal of what is intended or anticipated by citizen participation and public

involvement (Brokensha, 1974). There is a wide range in the possible results and outcomes based on the form and level of participation. The failure of the legislative process to adequately define what type of outcome is desired by citizen participation and public involvement has led to the competing interpretations. Additionally, Rosener (1978) notes the absence of research to determine the “effectiveness” of participation and the failure to realize the complexity of the concept. For example, the questions and answers to who, where, what, how and when; illustrate that there may be different points of view between different categories of respondents – elected officials, public administrators, and ordinary citizens (Rosener, p. 458).

International Perspectives on Participation and Empowerment

The literature on participation in developing countries provides another frame of reference to view the issue of involving the poor in community development in meaningful and empowering ways (Hickey and Mohan, 2005; Soen, 1981).

Ventriss and Pecorella (1984) examined the issue of how to integrate the concept of citizen participation and the growing “technocratic nature of modern organizations” (p. 224). Building on the work of David Korten and the “learning process approach” to organizational behavior, Ventriss et al. provide an analysis of the tensions that exist for community organizations in maneuvering between addressing complex urban issues and maintaining their relationships with the community. Korten’s (1980) learning process approach focuses on the

participation experiences in international development programs in the Third World. Some of the challenges identified in the various development assistance programs that have a participatory component include:

- (a) Reliance for the planning and implementation of “participative” development on centralized bureaucratic organizations which have little capacity to respond to diverse community-defined needs or to build from community skills and values;
- (b) Inadequate investment in the difficult process of building community problem solving capacity;
- (c) Inadequate attention to dealing with social diversity, and especially with highly stratified social structures, and
- (d) Insufficient integration of the technical and social components of development action. (Korten, 1980, p. 483).

In Korten’s assessment, successful projects using participation processes were ones that had “worked out a program model responsive to the beneficiary needs at a particular time and place and each had built a strong organization capable of making the program work” (p. 496). Essentially, the programs, through a participatory process, had “achieved a high degree of *fit* between program design, beneficiary needs, and the capacities of the assisting organization” (Korten, 1980, p. 496; Korten, 1984; Korten and Klauss, 1984).

The relationship between participation and empowerment has been recognized by various international agencies, including the World Bank, through

incorporation of the involvement of intended beneficiaries in the planning and implementation of projects and project management (Craig & Mayo, 1995). In a 1988 report of the World Bank's Economic Development Institute (EDI), five community participation objectives were identified for further review: project cost sharing; increasing project efficiency; increasing project effectiveness; building beneficiary capacity; and empowerment. The report acknowledged that one of the most controversial issues was "whether efficiency and empowerment should be considered as complementary or conflicting objectives" and that the answer would impact the approach to community participation (Bamberger, 1988, p. viii).

Jones (2003) highlights that "participatory techniques have been common to 'Third World' development programmes for almost two decades. Thus, these experiences represent a rich vein of critique and innovative practice which 'Western'-oriented researchers and practitioners would do well to engage with in order to produce a fuller and less restricted account of urban change..." (Jones, p. 582). The learning from those experiences can provide some useful insights for community development programs in the United States. The active engagement of communities as the intended beneficiaries of programs, throughout all stages of a planning process, is essential to ensure that participation is meaningful and serves the needs of the community that have been identified by the community (Vasoo, 1991; Chambers, 1997; Ellerman, 2001; Jones, 1987; Kent, 1981; Korten

and Klauss, 1984; Lyn, Leanne, and Leonie, 2003; Marsden, 1991; Schneider & Ingram, 1997; Rondinelli, 1983; Shaffer, Deller and Marcouiller, 2006; Smith, 1973; Stagner and Duran, 1997; Stegman, 1993, 1995).

Concepts of Empowerment

Similar to the literature on participation, the concept of empowerment has evolved in a number of different disciplines. They include social work, psychology, politics, management and community development (Florin and Wandersman, 1990; Speer and Peterson, 2000). Perkins (1995) attributes to Rappaport that “we do not know what empowerment is, but like obscenity, we know it when we see it” (Perkins, 1995, p. 766, citing Rappaport, 1984; Pigg, 2002; Peterson, Hamme and Speer, 2002). The use of the term empowerment in the political arena has increased over the years as illustrated by Perkins (1995) through a computer search of the root word *empower*. He found that empower had been used in 360 different White House press releases, speeches, and policy statements between January 1992 to August 1994; in 293 U.S. House and Senate bills introduced during the 103rd Congress; in 3,769 items in the Congressional Record between 1985 and August 1994; and in over 7,000 state house bills from 1991 through 1994. Yet despite this wide array of uses of the term empower in various forms of legislation, Perkins finds there has been little effort to provide

meaning to the term beyond its literal meaning “to give power or control to, to authorize, enable, or permit” (Perkins, 1995, p. 766; Polsby, 1959).

According to Perkins and Zimmerman (1995),

The various definitions are generally consistent with empowerment as “an intentional, ongoing process centered in the local community, involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring, and group participation, through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to and control over those resources” (Cornell Empowerment Group, 1989) or simply a process by which people gain control over their lives, democratic participation in the life of their community (Rappaport, 1987), and a critical understanding of their environment (Zimmerman, Israel, Schulz, Checkoway, 1992) (Perkins and Zimmerman, p. 570).

Perkins et al. (1995) further stress that “theories of empowerment include both processes and outcomes, suggesting that actions, activities, or structures may be empowering, and that the outcome of such processes result in a level of being empowered” (Perkins et al., p. 570, citing Swift & Levin, 1987; Zimmerman, in press).

A distinction between empowering processes and outcomes is critical in order to clearly define empowerment theory. Empowering processes for individuals might include participation in community organizations. At the organizational level, empowering processes might include collective decision making and shared leadership. Empowering processes at the community level might include collective action to access government and other community resources (e.g. media). Empowered outcomes refer to operationalizations of empowerment that allow us to study the consequences of empowering processes. Empowered outcomes for individuals might include situation-specific perceived control and resource mobilization skills. When we are studying organizations, outcomes might include

development of organizational networks, organizational growth, and policy leverage. Community-level empowerment outcomes might include evidence of pluralism, and existence of organizational coalitions, and accessible community resources (Perkins et al., 1995, p. 570).

In addition to recognizing the difference between processes and outcomes, the literature acknowledges that empowerment can occur at different levels – individual, organization, and community (Peterson et al., p. 337; Craig, 2002; Fawcett and Paine-Andrews, 1995; Zimmerman, 1989, 1990; Zimmerman, Israel, Schulz and Checkoway, 1992; Zimmerman and Zahniser, 1991; Zimmerman and Rappaport, 1988; Zippay, 1995; Maton and Salem, 1995; McMillan and Florin, 1995; McMillan, Florin, Stevenson, Kerman and Mitchell, 1995; Harley, Stebnicki and Rollins, 2000). Florin and Wandersman (1990) point out the advantages of examining the issue of empowerment through the framework of citizen participation and community development.

First, it connects empowerment to broad literatures, facilitating cross-fertilization and avoiding duplication. Second, it provides a multidisciplinary perspective on empowerment that has been found useful for prevention (Jason, Hess, Felner, & Moritsugu, 1987). Third, since citizen participation and community development are heavily involved in practice, they provide concrete settings to refine empowerment concepts (p. 46).

Summary and Conclusions

This literature review illustrates that the concepts of participation and empowerment have been examined and analyzed in myriad ways in different disciplines— political science, urban affairs, psychology, social work, and international development. Yet there is still to be developed definitions of participation and empowerment that all would agree to as representative of the concepts. Because there is such a broad range of possible definitions depending on one's perspectives and values, any program that purports to mandate participation and empowerment must delineate what is intended to be achieved. The failure of the federal programs to provide clearly defined mandates for participation and empowerment as part of the legislation process has resulted in confusion, frustration, and conflict.

According to Bamberger (1988), “the prioritization of community participation objectives is determined by what are perceived to be the overall goals of development: is it to improve the economic conditions of the poor or to bring about a more just society” (Bamberger, p. viii)? This remains a fundamental question that needs to be addressed in future policies and programs in community economic development designed to alleviate poverty and enhance empowerment. Chapter 3 will explore the development of a new paradigm or conceptual framework that begins to address that question.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: TOWARD A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT

Anderson (1994) in *Black labor, white wealth* posed several questions about the Empowerment Zone program. One was whether the term empowerment meant self-empowerment. Other questions were related to who was really being empowered; and how what was proposed to be done by the government would eradicate the deplorable conditions in the Black community. Part of this research objective is to understand what type of empowerment the EZ program created for the selected Atlanta neighborhoods. This is also related to the need to understand what change occurred, as well as why and how it happened, in order to identify ways of transferring the learning to similar situations.

Assessments of the Empowerment Zone Program

A number of evaluations have been conducted on the federal Model Cities and Empowerment Zone programs over the years (Abt Associates, 2001; Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2002; Dewar, 2002; Gilbert, 2006, 2007; Gittell, 2001; Gittell, Newman, Bockmeyer, and Lindsay, 1998; Kloman, 1972; Liebschutz, 1995; Madden, 1996; Marshall Kaplan, Gans, and Kahn [MKGK], 1970; Millet, 1977; Morrissey, 2000; Moss, 1995; Mossberger, 1995; Mwase, 2005; Nemon,

2002; Oakley & Tsao, 2006; Olken, 1971; O'Neal & O'Neal, 2003; Riposa, 1996; Rubin, 1994; U.S. General Accounting Office [GAO], 1996, 1998; U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2006; Weissman, 1978; Weltner, 1977). Both Model Cities and the Empowerment Zone programs emphasized the importance of community participation as an essential program component. The EZ/EC application guidelines stated that “the road to economic opportunity and community development starts with broad participation by all segments of the community...the residents themselves, however, are the most important element of revitalization” (p. 9). For the most part, the evaluations concluded that the programs were not successful in meeting the major goals, including providing a role for significant community participation.

Manning Thomas (1997) noted that while the Model Cities program had generally been maligned as ineffective, there was an unmistakable connection between that program and the Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Communities program. She argued that a “framework of inferential qualitative analysis” would be useful in reassessing the studies that had been done on the Model Cities program to determine what the benefits were for inner-city residents, particularly African Americans, and to provide guidance for the evaluation of future programs such as the Empowerment Zone (Manning Thomas, 1997, p. 145). Manning Thomas suggests the following as an alternative evaluation framework for analyzing those types of programs:

- *Citizen empowerment*, or more effective citizen influence, capacity, and self determination than mere “citizen participation”
- *People-centered development*, or reform of the physical planning agenda, and ability to create coordinated social, economic, and physical approaches to urban reform
- *Affirmative action* in city agencies and politics
- *Effective program product*, as measured by Washnis¹⁵, particularly as this concerned alleviating poverty and its effects among racial minorities
- *Cumulative improvement of inner-city communities*, perhaps the ultimate “outcome” measure, which meant simply that the programs should have led to better community life for target areas (Manning Thomas, 1997, p. 148).

Manning Thomas’s concept of citizen empowerment will be discussed further as part of the theoretical framework of this research.

Abt Associates (2001) completed a detailed interim assessment of the original six EZ sites for HUD based on a review of the achievements during the first five years of the program. Since each of the EZ sites had considerable flexibility in developing their strategies, Abt worked with the local programs and consultants to identify the “theory of change”¹⁶ that formed the basis of the specific approaches adopted. Generally, the pathway of change approach included the following:

¹⁵ Washnis, George J. (1974). *Community development strategies: Case studies of major model cities*. New York: Praeger.

¹⁶ The author notes that the literature refers to the concept as “theory of change,” however the term “theory” was modified to “pathway” to facilitate understanding by local participants during the assessment.

- the **problems** the intervention is intended to address;
- the available **opportunities** that the intervention can use to advantage;
- the **strategies and programs** being used to address the identified problems;
- the **interim and long-term objectives** that those strategies are expected to achieve;
- the **milestones** that will be used to chart progress toward those objectives; and
- the **assumptions or hypothesis** that represent the logical relationship among these various elements (Abt, 2001, pp. D-2 and 3).

Delays in starting the Atlanta EZ program due to political disagreements over control of the program; turnover of key staff; and administrative difficulties in establishing new organizations, affected the development of a pathway of change model (Abt, 2001, p. D-26). Overall, the interim assessment provided a progress report on the number of jobs created by zone employers; business formation and expansion in zones; employment of zone residents by zone businesses; and business ownership by zone residents for the six urban EZs and 12 ECs (Abt, p. 1-10). On the issue of the empowerment of zone residents in Atlanta “to take greater control over their own lives and the future of their community,” the Abt report examined the topic through the role the residents had in the governance based on information from the local research associates. The six community representatives on the 17-member Atlanta Empowerment Zone Corporation

Board of Directors were considered “active but not influential” (Abt, 2001, pp. 1-10, 6-9 to 6-10).

According to Gittell (2001), one of the underlying assumptions of the EZ program was that “expansion of participation among residents in the neighborhoods would have a positive impact on local services and environments as well as enhance civil society” (Gittell, p. 7). Additionally, the active participation of communities in the planning stage of the EZ application was an important selection criterion. The EZ application was required to specify the nature and scope of the community’s “role in and commitment to implementing the strategic plan” (EZ/EC application guide, 1994, p. 26). Gittel also points out that the “local governments implementing the Empowerment Zone program were expected to encourage strong community participation, build trust among groups and sectors, and develop and nurture a common purpose in reconstructing the city” (Gittell, 2001, p. 7; Gittell, Newman, Bockmeyer & Lindsay, 1998).

Research Focus

This dissertation examines, through a case study approach, the factors related to community participation that can lead to community empowerment from the perspective of community actors. The literature on empowerment theory acknowledges that the term has been widely used in a number of disciplines and a precise definition has not yet been developed (Zimmerman, 1995; Peterson,

Hamme & Speer, 2002). Boyle and Silver (2005) note that in the policy arena, policymakers on all sides of the political spectrum use the term without specifying the meaning which has allowed them “to occupy the moral high ground” while at the same time being “ambiguous about the feasibility of their actually producing meaningful changes” (Boyle and Silver, 2005, p. 233; Rocha, 1997, pp. 31-32). What is often missing is the voice from the perspectives of the intended beneficiaries. This component is necessary in order to enhance the level of understanding about what are the benefits of participation and what improvements may be required to increase them.

The Empowerment Zone program was part of a long line of many federal programs undertaken in Atlanta that emphasized the importance of community members taking an active role in addressing the problems of poverty – such as poor housing conditions; unemployment and underemployment; high crime rates; and underperforming schools, to name a few. Using the theoretical constructs of community participation and empowerment, this research examines how, and to what extent, the Atlanta EZ residents were able to make progress through the EZ governance structures on the vision they developed. The research further explores the obstacles encountered and makes recommendations to improve future policies related to community empowerment initiatives.

Definition of Concepts

The primary concepts of this research are community participation and empowerment. However, as outlined in Chapter 2, there are varying definitions of both terms depending on one's perspective, analysis, and field of study.

Throughout some of the literature, the terms have often been used interchangeably. For purposes of this research, the analysis is based on the paradigm of "community participation as empowerment" which proposes a holistic approach to address the alleviation of poverty. Community participation as empowerment recognizes that to meaningfully address the conditions and underlying causes of poverty, it will be necessary to significantly modify the approaches used to date.

McClendon (1993)¹⁷ wrote about the need for a "new framework for practice and a new paradigm that links theory and practice to results" in the field of planning. Citing Webster's Dictionary (7th edition), McClendon noted:

Theories are not facts but rather "the analysis of a set of facts in their relationship to one another." Theories are what make it possible to transfer a large number of factual observations into a logical system of ideas that explains the real world in a coherent and understandable fashion.

¹⁷ McClendon, B. (1993, Spring). The paradigm of empowerment. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 59(2), 145. Retrieved on March 1, 2009, from Academic Search Complete database, pp. 1-3.

...theories need to be based on an open, receptive analysis of competent practitioners and effective practice (McClendon, 1993, p. 2).

McClendon further pointed out that theories are shaped by paradigms.

A paradigm is a set of beliefs, rules, or regulations that defines boundaries.... Paradigms affect our judgments and decisions by influencing our perceptions and the way we are able to look at reality.... Too many in the academic community suffer from paradigm paralysis.... (McClendon, p. 2).

He proposed the use of a pragmatic theory of planning that incorporates “human experience, practical activity and democratic community participation” (citing Hoch, 1984).¹⁸ According to McClendon, this theory should be based on some of the following characteristics:

- Planning is part of a political process and this country is shifting from a representative democracy to a participatory, collaborative democracy;
- People must be trusted to make decisions for themselves and must be encouraged to solve their own problems and take responsibility for their conditions;
- Face-to-face collaborative problem solving is more effective than top-down decision making; the public should be the primary arbitrator of what constitutes the public interest;
- Logical incrementalism and strategic planning are much more effective planning techniques than traditional comprehensive planning; the rational planning theory is irrational;
- Implementation considerations do not constitute the last steps in the planning process; in fact, they are essential to each and every step along the way as planners try to help clients solve their most pressing problems (McClendon, 1993, p.3).

¹⁸ Hoch, Charles. (1984). Doing good and being right. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 50(3), pp. 335-44.

McClendon concluded “people with problems must be empowered to solve their own problems” (p. 3). This line of thinking is further endorsed by Manning Thomas (1997) who proposed using an analytical framework of “citizen empowerment,” which is more than mere citizen participation, to examine the impact of programs such as Model Cities and the Empowerment Zone on communities (Manning Thomas, p. 148).

Another development to support the concept of community participation as empowerment can be found in the work of Rocha (1997). Building on Arnstein’s ladder of participation addressing degrees of power and control, Rocha (1997) developed a “ladder of empowerment” as a typology “constructed with the intent of disentangling the web of conflicting empowerment theory” (p. 31). She delineates five types of empowerment based on an axis moving from individual to community empowerment. The objective was to provide a methodology to think about empowerment and was not intended as a how-to process (Rocha, p. 32).

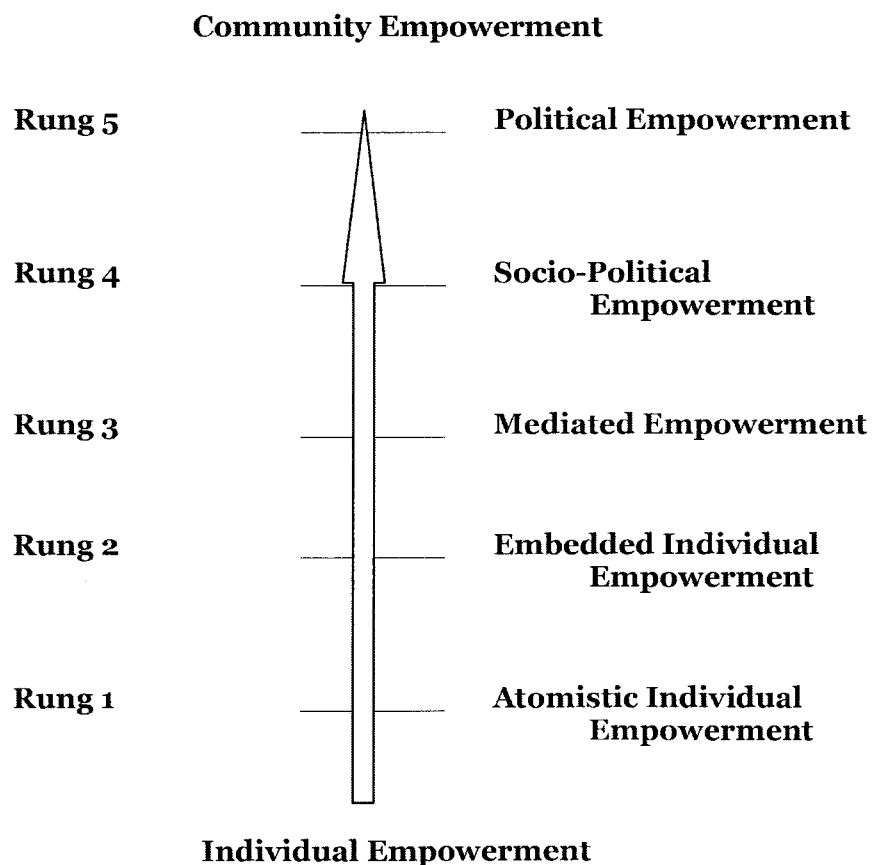
Rocha contends “empowerment is a form of power” (p. 32). She developed the typology by distinguishing the five types of empowerment based on four dimensions: locus, process, goals, and power experience.

The locus of empowerment – the intended area of change – moves from individual to community. The processes of empowerment refer to the actual methods used to obtain the desired results. They range from individual therapy to state-challenging political action. The goals, the intended outcomes, of each empowerment type are situated along a

continuum of intended change in skill or circumstance – from simply increased individual coping to altering institutional arrangements. Finally, the power experiences include all four stages in varying combinations (Rocha, 1997, p. 34).

Rocha notes the purpose of developing the models or types of empowerment is “to clarify their underlying assumptions and intentions as well as to illuminate their differences” (p. 34). Rocha’s ladder of empowerment is illustrated in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. A Ladder of Empowerment



Source: Rocha (1997), p. 34.

Rocha's definitions are derived from the empowerment literature and state:

Rung 1 – *Atomistic individual* empowerment is...empowerment intended to affect the individual as a solitary unit.

Rung 2 – *Embedded individual*...considers the embeddedness of the individual in larger structures or settings.

Rung 3 – *Mediated*, has application to both individual and community empowerment. It describes empowerment in the context of a mediating relationship between expert and client. In this model, empowerment is considered to be services (knowledge) rendered by the expert that are consumed by, and benefit, the individual or community.

Rung 4 – *Socio-political*, emphasizes the development of a politicized link between individual circumstance and community conditions through collective action, challenging oppressive institutional arrangements.

Rung 5 – *Political empowerment*, is a model of empowerment in which the locus of change is strictly community or group, operationalized through changes in, for example, public policy or increased access to community resources (Rocha, 1997, p. 34).

Unlike Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation which moves from less power to more power based on decision-making authority, Rocha's (1997) ladder of empowerment is arranged based on the intended locus of outcomes – from the individual to community empowerment. Rocha's typology of empowerment types is illustrated in Table 5 below:

Table 5. Five Empowerment Types

	Atomistic Individual (Rung 1)	Embedded Individual (Rung 2)	Mediated (Rung 3)	Socio-Political (Rung 4)	Political (Rung 5)
Locus	Individual	Individual	Individual Community	Individual Community	Community
Goal	Personal satisfaction Increased coping ability	Personal satisfaction Competence in negotiating daily environment	Knowledge & information for proper decision-making	Individual development Expanded access to community resources	Expanded access to community services, goods & rights
Process	Therapy Daily living skills Self-help	Organization participation	Professional/ Client relationship	Organizational participation Collaborative grass-roots action	Political action, voting, protest Political representation
Power Experience	Nurturing support	Nurturing support Direct & control self	Support Strengthen self Control by helping Moralized action	Support Strengthen self Influence, coerce others Togetherness	Influence, coerce others Assertion

Source: Rocha (1997), p. 35.

Describing the socio-political model of empowerment (Rung 4), Rocha notes

Community development is conceptualized as developing the people who comprise the community as the first priority, then attending to the physical development of the neighborhoods in which people live. Socio-political empowerment focuses on the process of change within a community locus in the context of collaborative struggle to alter social, political, or economic relations. It is developmental in nature in that it places theoretical importance on stages of growth through knowledge acquisition and collaborative social action (Rocha, 1997, p. 37).

This model includes the development of both the community itself and the individuals within the community through various phases. There are two levels of development taking place – 1) “the community is transforming itself from the inside into a powerful actor, capable of garnering resources for local benefit;” and 2) “members-of-the-community are transforming themselves from bystanders into actors in and through this process” (Rocha, 1997, p. 38).

The political empowerment model (Rung 5) involves “expanded access to group resources, e.g. in education, housing, employment, government benefits, health care, or political representation. The focus is not on the process of change within the individual or group, but on the outcome, thus equating empowerment with visible results” (Rocha, p. 39)¹⁹. Rocha acknowledges one of the critiques of this model is “it does not build community capacity with which to challenge local power relations, e.g., the power to control land use and to plan. The redistribution of housing, jobs, and other benefits may be a priority of a particular administration; however, when political winds change, the community

¹⁹ Rocha refers to the Alinsky model of organizing as a point of comparison (citing Alinsky 1947, 1969).

still lacks collective capacity to sustain momentum in seeking redistributive effects” (Rocha, p. 40). Rocha (1997) concludes that “at the heart of empowerment lie the needs of socially and economically marginalized populations and communities” (p. 42).

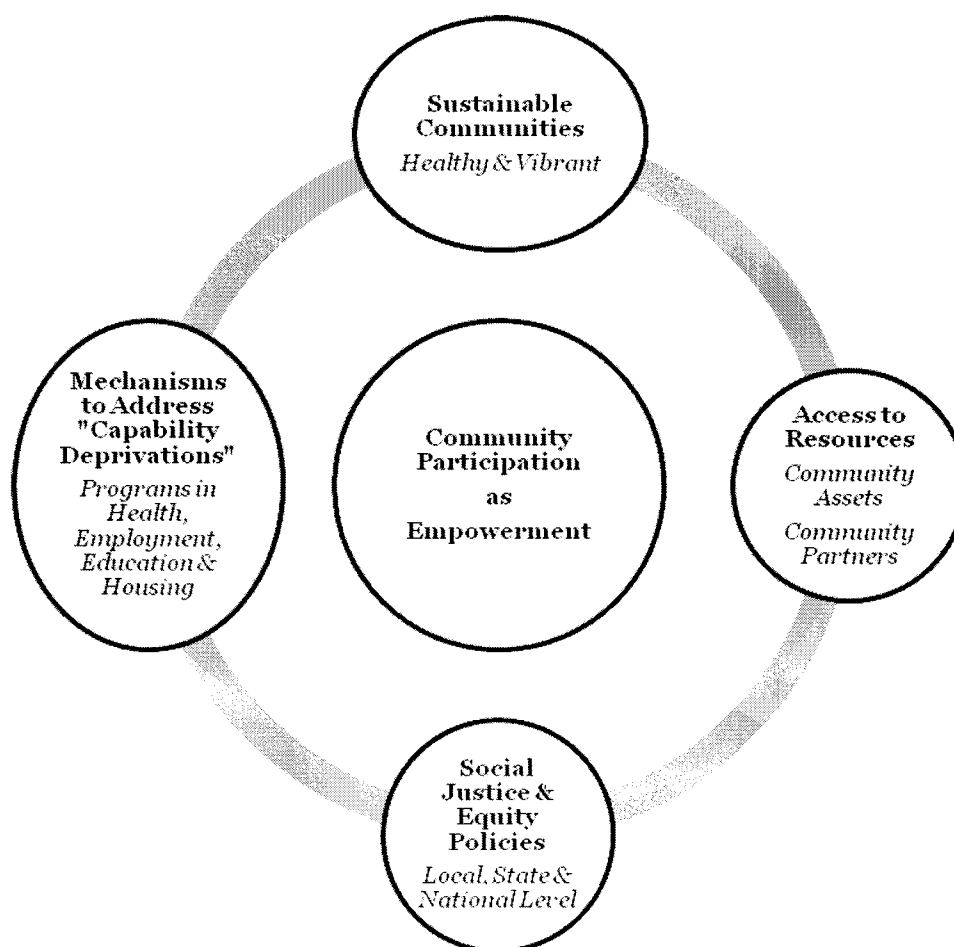
The analyses above support the argument that a new paradigm or conceptual framework must form the basis of future comprehensive urban initiatives. Based on the literature review in Chapter 2 and the additional theoretical discussions within this Chapter, a new conceptual framework is proposed premised on a holistic approach to community participation as empowerment. Taking the concept of community participation as empowerment as the centerpiece of the framework, the other components include the following underlying principles:

1. Meaningful participation is a cornerstone of democracy (Burke, 1968);
2. Community assets and partnerships facilitate access to resources both within and without the community (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993);
3. Social justice and equity policies are needed on the local, state and national levels (Oliver and Shapiro, 1995); and
4. Mechanisms are needed to address the issues of “capability deprivations” in the areas of health, employment, education and housing (Sen, 1999).

The contention is that the combination of all of the above principles is needed for the creation and development of sustainable communities that are healthy, vibrant, and empowered. This approach emphasizes participation as a

fundamental and essential right of all citizens. It eliminates the uncertainty as to whether participation should be viewed as a means or as an end in and of itself. Acknowledgement of community assets, rather than a focus on its deficits, is needed to facilitate the creation of partnerships. It is the development of partnerships on that basis that would enable the community to obtain access to resources that are within the community as well as resources available in the broader community. The issue of social justice and policies based on equity at all levels of government – local, state and national – is another important component. In the past the effort has been to legislate from the top down. For policies to be effective there has to be consistency at all levels of government, otherwise the interpretation is subject to the whims and fancy of the current officeholders. Finally, a focus on the alleviation of poverty based on Sen's concept of "capability deprivations" would increase the understanding that poverty is not just about the lack of income. It is also about the lack of the ability to enjoy adequate healthcare; to earn a living wage; to have access to quality education at all levels; and to obtain decent and affordable housing. Figure 3 provides a pictorial view of the proposed conceptual framework.

Figure 3. Conceptual Framework for Community Participation as Empowerment



Source: Jackson, D. (2009).

The past forty years of experience in comprehensive planning initiatives in urban communities have not produced the desired or intended results. Although this proposed model of community participation as empowerment was not the specific program theory or “theory of change” of the Empowerment Zone program, this research will explore the possibilities for its future use. To the

extent feasible, it will provide a lens for reviewing the Atlanta Empowerment Zone program.

Research Questions

The basic research question is to what extent did participation by the community in the Atlanta EZ program contribute to community empowerment? Related to the main question are the following components:

1. Identification of who participated.
2. Identification of the level of participation.
3. Identification of the results or benefits of the participation for the community.

The research questions will focus on what transpired during the period of 1994, when the application process started, to 2002, when the Atlanta Empowerment Zone Corporation (AEZC) ceased to function. The AEZC was administratively dissolved by the State of Georgia in 2004.

Statement of Research Goals

The research goals of this dissertation are to contribute to an increased understanding of how a massive and comprehensive federal program, such as the Empowerment Zone targeted at the alleviation of poverty, can serve to strengthen the actual capacity and ability of community residents to play a significant part in the rebuilding of their community. The research also intends to contribute to the literature on participation and empowerment by adding information and insights from the perspective of community residents who have a different vantage point as the intended beneficiaries; a perspective that is not often considered by researchers. By providing policy recommendations, the research hopes to inform policy-makers about the urgent need to design community redevelopment programs in a manner that leads to meaningful community participation and empowerment (Fainstein & Markusen, 1993; Damodaram, 1991).

The research will be guided by the principles of an empowering philosophy promoted in the literature on empowerment evaluations:

1. All people have existing strengths and capabilities as well as the capacity to become more competent.
2. The failure of a person to display competence is *not* due to deficits within the person but rather to the failure of the social systems to provide or create opportunities for competencies to be displayed or acquired.
3. In situations where existing capabilities need to be strengthened or new competencies need to be learned, they are best learned through

experiences that lead people to make self-attributions about their capabilities to influence important life events (Fetterman, Kaftarian, Wandersman, Eds., 1996, chap. 6, pp. 129-130; citing Rappaport, 1981).

Chapter 4 provides a brief historical overview of some of the political, economic, and social conditions that contributed to the development of comprehensive planning initiatives in urban communities.

CHAPTER 4

SETTING THE STAGE: AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING INITIATIVES

The long hot summers of the 1960's spurred national attention to the problems of America's urban areas. Despite the passage of significant legislation such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 which were designed to end racial discrimination in public education, employment, voting and governmental programs, Black communities across the country were consumed by racial unrest, frustration, and anger. The frustration and anger were the products of decades of segregation and discrimination which did not evaporate with the passage of laws. Additionally, there had been a series of attacks in different parts of the country against Black institutions, such as churches and local businesses, by White vigilantes in retaliation to the growing momentum of the Civil Rights Movement (Washington, 1986, pp. 556-557). By the summer of 1967, there was racial unrest in over 162 U.S. cities (Boger, 1993, fn 19). The City of Atlanta, often referred to as the "city too busy to hate"²⁰, had a number of incidents between the Black community and the police that resulted in several shootings (Grady-Willis, 1998; Harmon, 1993).

²⁰ Hein, Virginia H. (1972). The image of "a city too busy to hate": Atlanta in the 1960's. *Phylon*, 33 (Fall 1972), pp. 205-221.

In July of 1967, President Lyndon Johnson signed Executive Order 11,365 creating the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. The Commission was chaired by the then-Governor of Illinois, Otto Kerner, and charged with investigating and making recommendations about:

- 1) The origins of the recent major civil disorders in our cities, including the basic causes and factors leading to such disorders and the influence, if any, of organizations or individuals dedicated to the incitement or encouragement of violence.
- 2) The development of methods and techniques for averting or controlling such disorders, including the improvement of communications between local authorities and community groups, the training of state and local law enforcement and National Guard personnel in dealing with potential or actual riot situations, and the coordination of efforts of the various law enforcement and governmental units which may become involved in such situations;
- 3) The appropriate role of the local, state and Federal authorities in dealing with civil disorders; and
- 4) Such other matters as the President may place before the Commission.
(Kerner Commission Report, 1968, Appendix A, p. 534).

There was an underlying belief on the part of the Administration that the cause of the disorders was not solely the result of the conditions and frustrations of ghetto life. There was a suspicion that something else, such as ‘outside agitators’, was to blame. However, the Report of the Kerner Commission in March 1968 dispelled that notion and very methodically established that a “deepening racial division” was occurring in the country (Kerner Commission Report, p. 1). The Report further pointed out that “what white Americans have never fully understood – but what the Negro can never forget – is that white society is deeply implicated in

the ghetto. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it” (Kerner Commission Report, p. 2).

The Kerner Commission made a number of recommendations in several areas to address some of the underlying issues. The Report noted that “virtually every major episode of violence was foreshadowed by an accumulation of unsolved grievances and by widespread dissatisfaction among Negroes with the unwillingness or inability of local government to respond” (Kerner Commission Report, p. 16). To address that issue the Kerner Commission noted that city governments “need to improve their capacity to respond effectively to community needs before they become community grievances; and they need to provide opportunities for *meaningful involvement* [italics added] of ghetto residents in shaping policies and programs which affect the community” (Kerner Commission Report, p. 16).

In addressing the future of U.S. cities, the Kerner Commission stated:

By 1985, the Negro population in central cities is expected to increase by 68 percent to approximately 20.3 million. Coupled with the continued exodus of white families to the suburbs, this growth will produce majority Negro populations in many of the nation’s largest cities.

The future of these cities, and of their burgeoning Negro populations, is grim. Most new employment opportunities are being created in suburbs and outlying areas. This trend will continue unless important changes in public policy are made (Kerner Commission Report, 1968, p. 21).

The Commission outlined three possible options to address the racial divisions viewed as a direct threat to “basic democratic values” (Kerner Commission Report, p. 1). They were the “Present Policies Choice”; the “Enrichment Choice”; and the “Integration Choice” (Kerner Commission Report, pp. 22, 395-396). The Commission believed the best course of action was the “Integration Choice” that pursued a policy of combining “ghetto enrichment with programs designed to encourage integration of substantial numbers of Negroes into the society outside the ghetto” (Kerner Commission Report, p. 22).

The Commission sounded an alarm about the deteriorating conditions existing in the inner-cities and urged that action needed to be taken at the federal, state and local levels. Strong support was echoed for adequate funding and expansion of the Model Cities program as one of many efforts required to reverse the tide (Kerner Commission Report, p. 479). Legislation flowing from the Kerner Commission recommendations included the Fair Housing Act of 1968 which prohibited racial or religious discrimination in the sale or rental, in the advertising, and in the financing of housing. Another legislative milestone was the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968 to support low-income housing construction (Boger, p. 8).

However, Boger (1993) noted during the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Kerner Commission “overall higher rates of poverty have continued to plague African Americans communities, unemployment rates among blacks have remained

nearly twice those among whites, and significant wage differentials have persisted” (Boger, 1993, p. 10; Frieden, 1987).

The next major disturbance to capture national attention about the conditions in urban areas occurred in 1992. In March of 1991, the world witnessed a video showing the use of excessive force by several Los Angeles police officers against an unarmed African American male, Rodney King. The subsequent acquittal of the police officers sparked a massive eruption in parts of Los Angeles. Over 7,000 fires, 53 deaths, and hundreds of injuries were reported over a period of several days. The destruction of businesses and buildings in the area was estimated at over \$1 billion dollars.²¹ Many of the underlying causes of the violence seemed reminiscent of the conditions that existed in 1965 and pointed out in the 1968 Kerner Commission Report – lack of decent employment, adequate education, affordable health care and housing, or social welfare programs to meet basic needs (Boger, 1993, p. 2).

²¹ Los Angeles Riots of 1992. Retrieved on February 8, 2009 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1992_Los_Angeles_riots.

The Continuing Significance of Power, Race, and Poverty

The noted sociologist W.E.B. DuBois (1903)²², in the *Souls of Black Folk*, emphasized the need for power within the Black community which at that time was only forty years removed from the period of enslavement:

The power of the ballot we need in sheer self-defence [sic], –else what shall save us from a second slavery? Freedom, too, the long-sought, we still seek, –the freedom of life and limb, the freedom to work and think, the freedom to love and aspire. Work, culture, liberty, –all these we need, not singly but together, not successively, but together, each growing and aiding each, and all striving toward that vaster ideal that swims before the Negro people, the ideal of human brotherhood.... (DuBois, 1903, pp. 167-168).

More than sixty years later, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in his 1967 final address as the President of the Southern Christian Leadership Council entitled “Where do we go from here?” spoke about the issue of power:

Another basic challenge is to discover how to organize our strength in terms of economic and political power. No one can deny that the Negro is in dire need of this kind of legitimate power. Indeed, one of the great problems that the Negro confronts is his lack of power. From old plantations of the South to newer ghettos of the North, the Negro has been confined to a life of voicelessness and powerlessness. Stripped of the right to make decisions concerning his life and destiny he has been subject to authoritarian and sometimes whimsical decisions of this white power structure. The plantation and ghetto were created by those who had power, both to confine those who had no power and to perpetuate their powerlessness. The problem of transforming the ghetto, therefore, is a problem of power – confrontation of the forces of power demanding change and the forces of power dedicated to the preserving of the status

²² Double-Consciousness and the Veil from the *Souls of Black Folk*, cited in Lemert, ed., 1999, pp. 162-168.

quo. Now power properly understood is nothing but the ability to achieve purpose. *It is the strength required to bring about social, political and economic change.* [Italics added]. (Washington, 1986, p. 246).

Twenty-four years after Dr. King's speech and 88 years after DuBois' writings about power relations, another noted sociologist, James E. Blackwell (1991), pointed out "it is only through transformation or fundamental changes in how power is distributed that blacks can improve their status and overall life chances in American society" (Blackwell, 1991, p. 18). He further noted that "changing power relations becomes inordinately difficult when contending groups are so unequal in economic, political, and educational resources" (Blackwell, 1991, pp. 18-19). In defining the concept of power, Blackwell highlights that "power refers to the ability to monopolize economic, political, educational, and social resources within a given community or a society and to control the decision-making processes that determine the distribution of such resources among members of that society" (Blackwell, p. 19).

The calls for power in the Black community still remain unaddressed despite the fact there are more Black elected officials now than at any previous times.

Accepting the premise of urban regimes and governing coalitions as those who set the agenda and provide resources, helps to explain some of the limitations encountered. For example, in the case of Atlanta, Stone (2001) noted the weakness of the governmental sector is in part due to the "weak-state tradition in

the U.S.” (Stone, pp. 30-31). It is also due to the resistance by Atlanta’s business sector for a “strong and vigorous City Hall” and the placement of “a planning and development capacity not fully under the city’s elected officials” (Stone, 2001, p. 31).

Stone (2001) re-examined the concept of an urban regime in the case of Atlanta to understand the link between agenda and regime change in the political arena. Pointing out the interrelated elements of an urban regime, Stone identified the following:

- An identifying agenda
- Relatively stable arrangements
- A cross-sector foundation embodied in a governing coalition
- Informal arrangements
- Arrangements have a productive character (Stone, 2001, p. 21).

Stone concludes that “regime arrangements...vary along several dimensions – the scope of their identifying agendas, their strength in addressing these agendas, and the adaptability of their capacities to emerging issues” (Stone, 2001, p. 23). In the case of Atlanta, the African American middle class has primarily focused its involvement in the governing coalition on access to opportunity for itself rather than the amelioration of poverty, even as the levels of poverty have deepened within parts of the city (Stone, 2001, pp. 25, 27). There has been very little focus on addressing the growing levels of poverty in Atlanta by any part of the governing coalition. For the most part, the agenda of the governing coalition

to redevelop the downtown business district and provide a buffer between it and the Black community has been accomplished. As currently constituted, the Atlanta governing coalition has not worked to develop a new policy agenda that would serve the interests of a broader constituency.

Other insights about Atlanta and its mode of operating can be found in the Multi-City Survey of Urban Inequality.²³ Sjoquist (2000), one of the project researchers, noted:

Atlanta offers a sharply contrasting mosaic: the poverty of its public housing projects versus the sprawling riches of its suburbs; the mansions in Buckhead versus the weathered wooden row houses in Cabbagetown; the glistening office towers and glitzy shopping in Midtown and Lenox Square versus the abandoned stores on the Southside; the grocery carts filled with aluminum cans versus the BMWs filled with gray-suited executives; suburban jobs that go wanting versus a city black poverty rate of 35 percent.

These contrasts reflect the “Atlanta paradox”. It is a paradox of substantial racial segregation in a community with a reputation for good race relations and of high inner-city poverty in the face of substantial economic growth...In many ways, Atlanta personifies the problem of urban inequality (Sjoquist, pp. 1-2).

Acknowledging the longstanding impact of race on communities, Sjoquist concluded:

Urban inequality of minorities in Atlanta grew out of the mistreatment of blacks by the white community. The continuation of urban inequality can be linked to the continuation of structural arrangements and urban decisions whose historical roots are based on race. On the surface, these structures and processes appear racially neutral, but their operations

²³ The study was funded by the Russell Sage Foundation and the Ford Foundation and included the cities of Atlanta, Boston, Detroit, and Los Angeles.

prevent minorities from reaching equal status in employment and housing...until there are changes in white racial attitudes, it is unlikely that significant changes in urban inequality can be reached (Sjoquist, p. 282).

Shapiro (2004) reported “the enigma of racial inequality is still a festering public and private conversation in American society” (p. 7). Hacker (1992) also acknowledged the issue of race and the division of people into categories “have taken on lives of their own, dominating our culture and consciousness, coloring passions and opinions, contorting facts and fantasies” (Hacker, p. ix). The issues of race, power, and power relationships are directly related to the continuing disparity between black wealth and white wealth, which in turn affects the resources that are available for the development of the Black community by the community itself.

Oliver and Shapiro (1995), in *Black wealth/white wealth*, completed “a careful, factual account of how contemporary discrimination along demographic, social, and economic lines results in unequal wealth reservoirs for whites and blacks” (pp. 173-174). They acknowledged the:

Disparities in wealth between blacks and whites are not the product of haphazard events, inborn traits, isolated incidents or solely contemporary individual accomplishments. Rather, wealth inequality has been structured over many generations through the same systematic barriers that have hampered blacks throughout their history in American society: slavery, Jim Crow, so-called de jure discrimination, and institutional racism (Oliver and Shapiro, pp. 12-13).

They further recognized that the government policies “that have paved the way for whites to amass wealth have simultaneously discriminated against blacks in their quest for economic security” and that “these policies are not the result of the workings of the free market or the demands of modern industrial society; they are, rather, a function of the political power of elites” (Oliver and Shapiro, p. 174). The investigation of wealth also revealed “deeper, historically rooted economic cleavages between the races than were previously believed to exist” making the “interaction of race and class in the wealth accumulation process” very clear (Oliver and Shapiro, p. 176).

Shapiro (2004) pointed out that the

Federal Housing Administration, the Veterans Administration, and the GI Bill, for a previous generation, have been instrumental in guaranteeing long-term, low-interest mortgages, which put the American dream of homeownership within reach of most families...The vast growth of suburbs, where most new housing is built, is only possible with transportation policies that subsidize transporting people to residential suburbs in automobiles. However, the same federal housing, tax, and transportation policies that have been so successful in making America a land of homeowners also have traditionally reinforced neighborhood segregation by favoring economically and racially uniform communities over integrated ones” (Shapiro, pp. 107-108).²⁴

The result has been racial redlining which “encompasses declining to lend in minority neighborhoods, discouraging mortgage loan applications from minority

²⁴ Referencing Jackson, Kenneth T. (1985). *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press; Massey, Douglas and Denton, Nancy. (1993). *American Apartheid*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press; and Stuart, Guy. (2003). *Discriminating Risk: The U.S. Mortgage Lending Industry in the Twentieth Century*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

areas, and marketing policies that exclude such areas. Racial redlining reduces housing finance options for borrowers in minority neighborhoods and weakens competition in the mortgage market, which often results in higher mortgage costs and less favorable loan terms” (Shapiro, 2004, p. 108). The more recent phenomenon of sub-prime lending practices directed towards African Americans has further exacerbated the housing market in many communities through increased foreclosures and abandoned properties.

Shapiro further acknowledged that “residential segregation persists at high levels, and it remains a powerful force undermining the well-being of blacks, who are concentrated in communities with weak public services like hospitals, transportation, police and fire protection, with decreased housing appreciation, and with inferior schools” (Shapiro, 2004, p. 141).²⁵

Even with the election of the first African American U.S. president in 2008, there still remains a need to improve the discourse on race in America to fully understand its continuing impact on poverty and equality. Oliver and Shapiro (1995) recognized the need “to move the discourse on race in America beyond ‘equality of opportunity’ and toward the more controversial notion of ‘equality of achievement’, or what is known as the debate between “fair shakes and fair shares” (Oliver and Shapiro, 1995, pp. 177-178). After recognizing the “mutually

²⁵ See also Manning Thomas and Ritzdorf, 1997, p. 114.

reinforcing and historically accumulated race and class barriers that blacks encounter in attempting to achieve a measure of economic security”, they advocate support for proposals of asset-based policies for welfare, housing, education, business, and retirement; and stricter enforcement of anti-discrimination laws against banks and other financial institutions (Oliver and Shapiro, 1995, pp. 177-188). On the issue of “racial reparations”, they write:

Given the historical nature of wealth, monetary reparations are, in our view, an appropriate way of addressing the issue of racial inequity. The fruits of their labor and the ability to accumulate wealth was denied African Americans by law and social custom during two hundred fifty years of slavery. This initial inequality has been aggravated during each new generation, as the artificial head start accorded to practically all whites has been reinforced by racialized state policy and economic disadvantages to which only blacks have been subject. We can trace the sedimented material inequality that now confronts us directly to this opprobrious past. Reparations would represent both a practical and a moral approach to the issue of racial injustice (Oliver and Shapiro, 1995, p. 188).

Quoting the philosopher Bernard Boxhill to further expound on their position, Oliver and Shapiro noted:

One of the reasons for which blacks claim the right to compensation for slavery is that since the property rights of slaves to “keep what they produce” were violated by the system of slavery to the general advantage of the white population, and, since the slaves would presumably have exercised their libertarian right to bequeath their property to their descendents, the present black population, have rights to that part of the wealth of the present white population derived from violating black property rights during slavery...[Whites] also wronged [the slaves] by depriving them of their inheritance – of what Kunta Kinte would have provided them with, and passed on to them, had *he* been compensated – a

stable home, education, income, and traditions (Oliver and Shapiro, 1995, pp. 188-189).

While Oliver and Shapiro acknowledged that reparations have been based on similar types of rationale in the United States and other parts of the world, they surmised that “it may be a testament to the persistence of antiblack racial attitudes in America that the prospects for such compensation are minimal” and mention a few of the general objections that have been raised, such as, who is entitled to receive reparations and would it make a difference to improve the economic situation of African Americans (Oliver and Shapiro, 1995, p. 189). They question whether racial reparations is the correct political or economic choice since they may “inflame more racial antagonism” and they express some fear that reparations may be viewed as a settlement or payoff rather than what should be “the first step in a collective journey to racial equality” (Oliver and Shapiro, 1995, p. 189).

Given the historical overview that has been provided about the continuing impact of race, power, and power relationships in the United States, it is imperative that the role of race be included as “an independent variable” in any serious analysis of addressing the problem of poverty and possible solutions if there is to be any meaningful resolution (Bullard, ed., 2000, p. 4; Wilson, 1987; Wilson, 1998). Notwithstanding the concern about a settlement or payoff, the issue of reparations must be given fair consideration as part of the process to repair the

damage that continues to be wrought upon the Black community. Further research is needed to explore the appropriate mechanisms to include reparations as part of a community empowerment strategy.

The historical survey of the social, economic and political conditions that contributed to the development of comprehensive planning initiatives supports the premise for a holistic approach to address the alleviation of poverty. Chapter 5 provides background information on the conditions and demographics of the communities that are the focus of this research.

CHAPTER 5

A CASE OF DÉJÀ VU: A BRIEF HISTORY AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE ATLANTA EMPOWERMENT ZONE COMMUNITIES

Overview of the Neighborhoods

The neighborhoods of Summerhill, Mechanicsville, Peoplestown and Pittsburgh are among the oldest in the City of Atlanta and have rich histories.²⁶ Collectively, the communities are known as the “stadium neighborhoods” since they border what was initially the Atlanta Fulton County Stadium. The area is currently home to Turner Field, the ball field for the Atlanta Braves. Most of the communities were established after the Civil War as Atlanta regained importance as the Southeast railroad crossroad. Historically, the neighborhoods had some diversity in the population consisting of European Jewish immigrants, Greeks, native-born whites, and African Americans. However, the Pittsburgh neighborhood was established primarily for African Americans. Overall, the diversity of the neighborhoods began to decline by the 1950’s and they became predominately working-class African American communities.

The neighborhoods also make up part of what is known as NPU-V. In 1974, then- Mayor Maynard Jackson, the first African American mayor of Atlanta,

²⁶ Information about the neighborhoods is from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Atlanta Civic Site (AEC Atlanta Civic Site) found at www.atlantacivicsite.org/NPUV.html. Retrieved on October 3, 2008.

established the Neighborhood Planning Unit (NPU) system. The NPUs are Citizen Advisory Councils that address issues of zoning, land-use and other planning related issues for neighborhoods. A staff person from the City's Department of Planning is assigned to work with several of the NPUs and to serve as a liaison between the neighborhoods and developers. When the NPUs were first organized, each one had its own staff person to assist with planning issues which facilitated the neighborhoods becoming a powerful force in local issues during the Jackson administration. The influence of the NPUs and the neighborhoods waned during the subsequent administration of Mayor Andrew Young. It is reported that Mayor Young did not share the goal of grassroots involvement and was much more attentive to the issues of the governing coalition regarding the redevelopment of the downtown business district (Stone, 1989).

The location of the neighborhoods has been both a blessing and a curse for the residents. Strategically, they are to the immediate south of the central downtown business district, and north of the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. As a result of their location, the target neighborhoods have been subjected to a number of federal policies and programs – urban renewal; the development of public housing; and construction of highways – that have served to displace thousands of residents. The construction of Interstates 75/85 and 20 effectively divided the neighborhoods from one another. Additionally, public facilities have been constructed – a civic center, convention center and baseball

stadium. These facilities are within walking distance of the downtown business district and were designed to serve as a buffer between the predominately African American communities and the business district (AEC Atlanta Civic Site; Stone, 1989).

The neighborhoods of Summerhill, Mechanicsville, Peoplestown and Pittsburgh were selected for the case study out of the 30 neighborhoods that made up the AEZ because they were also part of the Model Cities program from 1967 to 1975. The Atlanta Model Cities (MC) program included a total of six neighborhoods (the target neighborhoods of Summerhill, Mechanicsville, Peoplestown and Pittsburgh, plus Adair Park and Grant Park; only a portion of Grant Park was included in the EZ and Adair Park was not included at all). At that time, the area had close to 50,000 residents with Blacks constituting 69%; 70% of the housing units were in substandard condition; an unemployment rate of 15%; and nearly half of the families had incomes under \$3,000 (Marshall Kaplan, Gans, and Kahn, 1970, p. 18). The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) guidelines for selection of MC neighborhoods specified that the areas “should be substantially hard core slums in which low income families are concentrated and which are characterized by overcrowding, poverty, unemployment, dependence on welfare payments, low educational and skill levels, poor health and disease, and crime and delinquency” (Mogulof, 1969, p. 209).

The following section describes how the Model Cities program was implemented in Atlanta and the role of the community.

Model Cities and Community Participation

During the application process for Atlanta, then-Mayor Ivan Allen, Jr. requested that the Director of Government Liaison establish an ad hoc task force.

Representatives from several city and state agencies were identified – City Planning Department, the Atlanta Housing Authority, the Community Council for the Atlanta Area, the Atlanta School Department, the Atlanta Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission, and the Georgia State Employment Service (Marshall Kaplan, Gans, and Kahn [MKGK], 1970, p. 16).

Other than some residents lobbying for their neighborhood to be designated as part of the Model Neighborhood area, there was limited community involvement in the preparation of the application. The ad hoc task force and writing group decided on the area to be designated and drew the boundaries to include both Black and White populations to avoid having the program seen as being “for Blacks only” (MKGK, p. 18). The designated area consisted of four Black neighborhoods (Summerhill, Mechanicsville, Peoplestown and Pittsburgh) and two White neighborhoods (Adair Park and Grant Park) adjacent to the central business district. City officials addressed the lack of citizen involvement in the

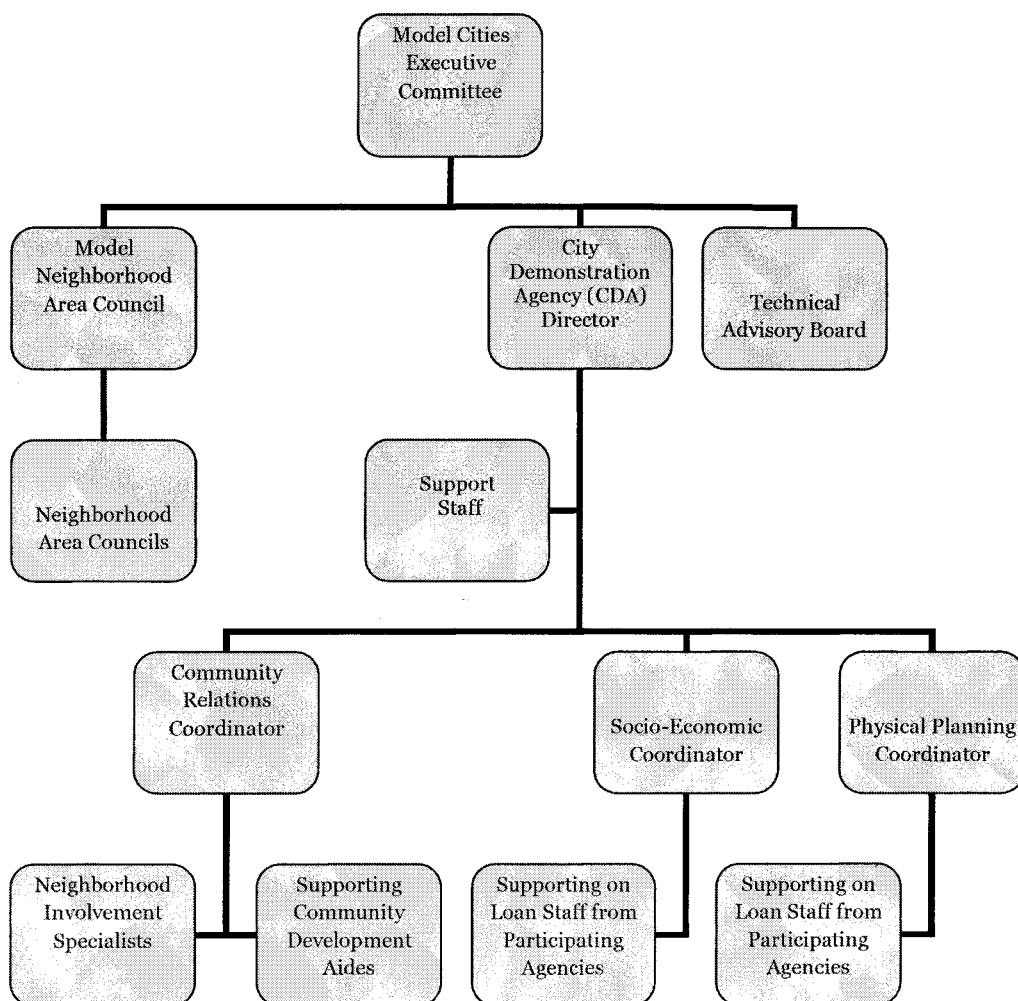
drafting of the application by stating that the “application is not a plan” and that citizens would be involved in the planning process (MKGK, p. 18). Although the initial application redrew the six neighborhoods of the proposed Model Neighborhood into four “to permit more efficient use of public resources”, the actual structure implemented was based on the six neighborhoods (MKGK, pp. 19, 22).

The Model Neighborhood application proposed establishing a Model Neighborhood Area Council composed of 24 residents, six from each of four Neighborhood Councils. Each proposal or policy question related to the Model Neighborhood area would be presented to either the Neighborhood or Area Council, depending on the issue, for “review and comment” (MKGK, p. 19). All plans and programs were to be submitted to the Model Neighborhood Area Council for “endorsement.” No provisions were made for either Council to have access to independent staff to assist with the review of policies, plans, and programs. In terms of the representativeness of the larger Model Cities Executive Board, after a riot in the Dixie Hills area of Atlanta, a resident from the Black community was added (MKGK, p. 21).

Once the city was designated as one of the Model Cities program, HUD sent a discussion paper raising a number of concerns about the application, particularly

the plans related to citizen participation. The initial organizational plan outlined is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Proposed Model Cities Program Organization, Atlanta



Source: Marshall Kaplan, Gans, and Kahn (1970).

The proposed organizational structure did not contemplate an active role for the neighborhood representatives even though the City officials stated that the Model

Neighborhood Area Council would be “deeply involved in program planning and development” (MKGK, p. 19).

In response to the HUD discussion paper, the City of Atlanta modified the proposed organizational structure. Six Model Cities residents were to be added to the Executive Board through election by area residents in a Mass Convention. The Model Neighborhood Area Council was eliminated and replaced by a 16-member Mass Convention Executive Steering Committee. The Mass Convention would be open to all residents of the Model Neighborhood and meet four times a year. The Executive Steering Committee would act as spokesperson for the residents between Convention meetings. Coordination of resident activity would occur through a Neighborhood Advisory Council in each of the six neighborhoods. Finally, there were to be 11 Operating Committees in each neighborhood for a total of 66 committees. The Operating Committees each focused on a programmatic area:

- Health
- Education
- Social Services and Welfare Assistance
- Crime Prevention
- Recreation and Cultural Services
- Public Facilities
- Physical Improvements
- Housing Supply and Choice
- Relocation
- Design and Historic Preservation
- Employment

In addition to the 11 Operating Committees, there were 11 Central Committees that reported directly to the CDA staff and included one resident from each neighborhood (MKGK, p. 22).

Despite, or because of, the elaborate structure that was established, all planning efforts were completed by CDA technicians or consultants. Very few of the 66 resident committees met on a regular basis and the Mass Convention only met four times. MKGK reported that most of the dialogue between technicians and residents took place during meetings of the Executive Board and Steering Committee (p. 27). Overall, MKGK noted that “direct sustained citizen involvement in Atlanta’s planning program was minimal” (p. 35). Further, they pointed out “an exceedingly complex citizen participation structure made ‘meaningful involvement’ of many residents in the Model Neighborhood Area, even on a limited review basis, quite difficult” (MKGK, p. 36).

The question is raised what impact the program had on improving conditions within the community. The following section will provide an overview of the conditions within the four study neighborhoods in the period following implementation of the Model Cities program.

State of the Neighborhoods - Twenty Years after Model Cities

In 1994, thirty neighborhoods within 23 census tracts were selected to be part of the AEZ.²⁷ The eligibility criteria for selection required that the area be “one of pervasive poverty, unemployment, and general distress.”²⁸ Based on 1990 U.S. Census data, the proposed EZ area had a total population of 49,998 with Blacks constituting 90%; the poverty level exceeded 35% in each of the census tracts; over 33% of the households were headed by females; 67% of female-headed households had incomes under the poverty level; 44% of the residents lacked a high school diploma; the unemployment rate was 17% compared to 9% for the city as a whole; and over 56% of the working-age population earned less than \$10,000 a year.²⁹

The four target neighborhoods, represented by 8 census tracts, account for 31% of the total EZ area population, and share the overall characteristics of the EZ area,

²⁷ Creating an urban village: Atlanta’s community-driven vision for the empowerment zone (1994). City of Atlanta Empowerment Zone Strategic Plan and application (AEZ Strategic Plan), Profile of the Atlanta Empowerment Zone, pp. 2-8.

²⁸ Public Law 103-66, August 10, 1993, Title XIV, Sec. 1392 – Eligibility Criteria. (EZ legislation).

²⁹ According to Tom’s Inflation Calculator at www.halfhill.com/inflation.html, the amount of \$10,000 in 1990, adjusted for inflation, would be approximately \$2,388 in 1960 dollars. Conversely, the equivalent of \$3,000 in 1960 would require \$12,564 in 1990 dollars. These numbers indicate that earning power declined over a 30-year period for these communities. (Data sources – U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Economic History Services).

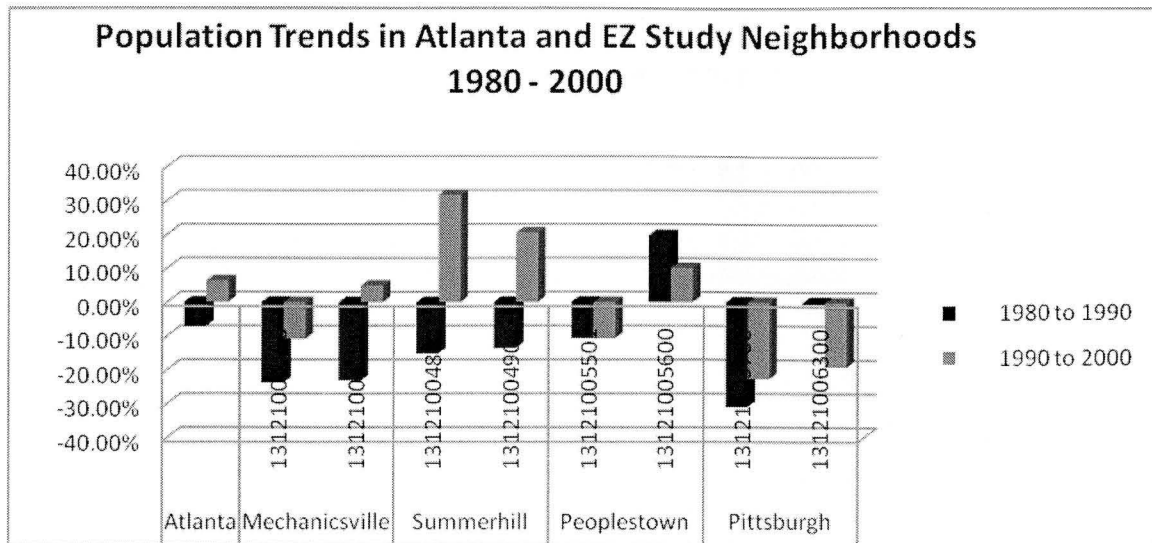
although in some instances they exceed them.³⁰ For example, while the entire EZ poverty rate was at least 35% according to the 1990 census data, the poverty rate in the census tracts representing the four neighborhoods ranged from 37.7% to 75.3%. The poverty rate for the entire city was 27.3%. In terms of educational attainment, the percent of persons 25 years old or more with no high school diploma or GED ranged from 33.6% to 69.5%; the unemployment rate ranged from 8.1% to a high of 33.3%. According to the 1990 U.S. Census, Atlanta, as one of the 75 largest cities, had the fourth-highest homeless rate and the fifth-highest poverty rate (Rich, 2003, p. 83; Cooke and Marchant, 2006).

A review of census data from 1980 to 2000 indicates that compared to the City of Atlanta, these neighborhoods continued to experience a decline in population for the most part. Figure 5 provides a comparative view of the population trends within each of the neighborhoods. The neighborhood of Summerhill experienced an increase of over 20% between 1990 and 2000 in its two census tracts.³¹ Part of the neighborhood of Peoplestown also experienced some increases in population. The City of Atlanta only experienced an increase of 6.3% during the period between 1990 and 2000.

³⁰ Although some of the census tracts cover more than one neighborhood, they provide a basis for overall comparison of data from the 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census.

³¹ The neighborhood of Summerhill was the focal point of several development activities between 1994 and 1996 due to Atlanta serving as host of the 1996 Summer Olympic Games.

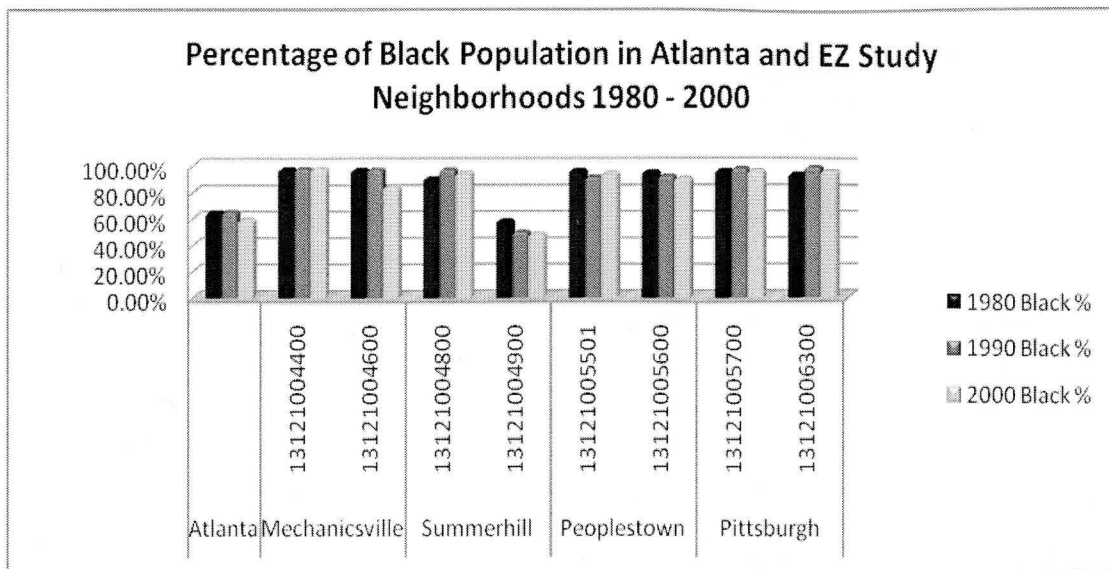
Figure 5. Population Trends in Atlanta and EZ Study Neighborhoods, 1980 - 2000



Source: FreeDemographics.com Report based on US Census data from 1980, 1990 and 2000.

Demographically, the City of Atlanta's population has been about 60% African American, about 30% White, and about 10% other ethnic groups (mostly Hispanics, followed by an increasing number of Asians). The racial make-up of the study neighborhoods reflects a very different reality. Figures 6 through 8 show the racial make-up in the City of Atlanta and the four neighborhoods from 1980 to 2000. Figure 6 reflects the Black population in the study neighborhoods has consistently been in the range of 90%, with the exception of one census tract in the Summerhill neighborhood.

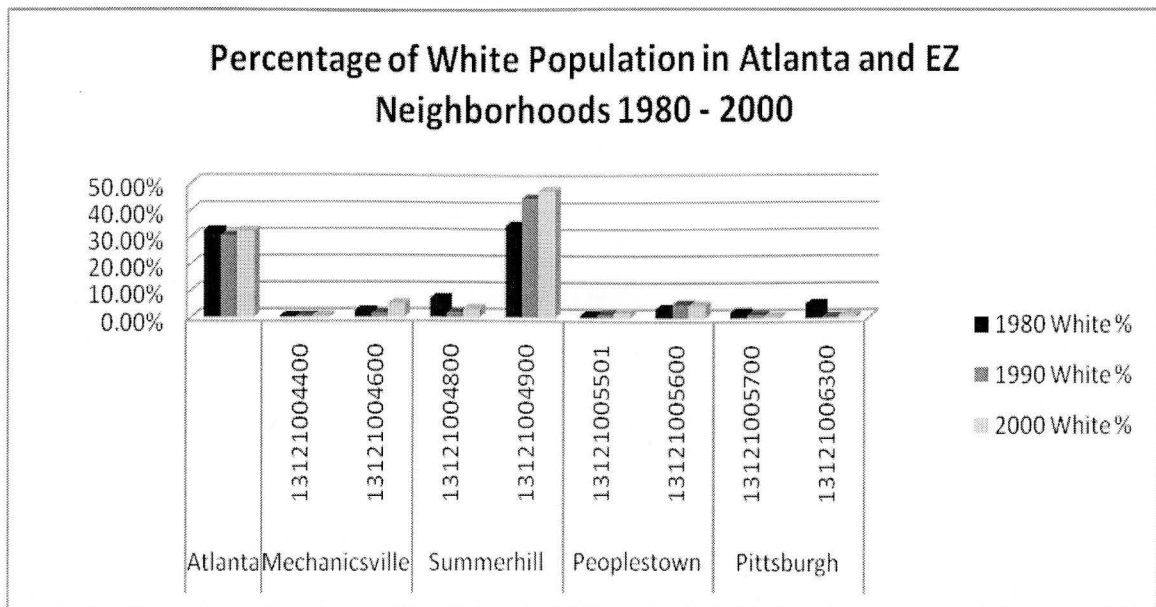
Figure 6. Percentage of Black Population in Atlanta and EZ Study Neighborhoods, 1980 - 2000



Source: FreeDemographics.com Report based on US Census data from 1980, 1990 and 2000.

The White population in Atlanta declined between 1980 and 1990, and experienced a slight increase between 1990 and 2000. The neighborhood of Summerhill witnessed an increase in the White population between 1980 and 1990, and 1990 to 2000. Mechanicsville saw a slight increase in White population. Figure 7 provides a graphic view of these trends.

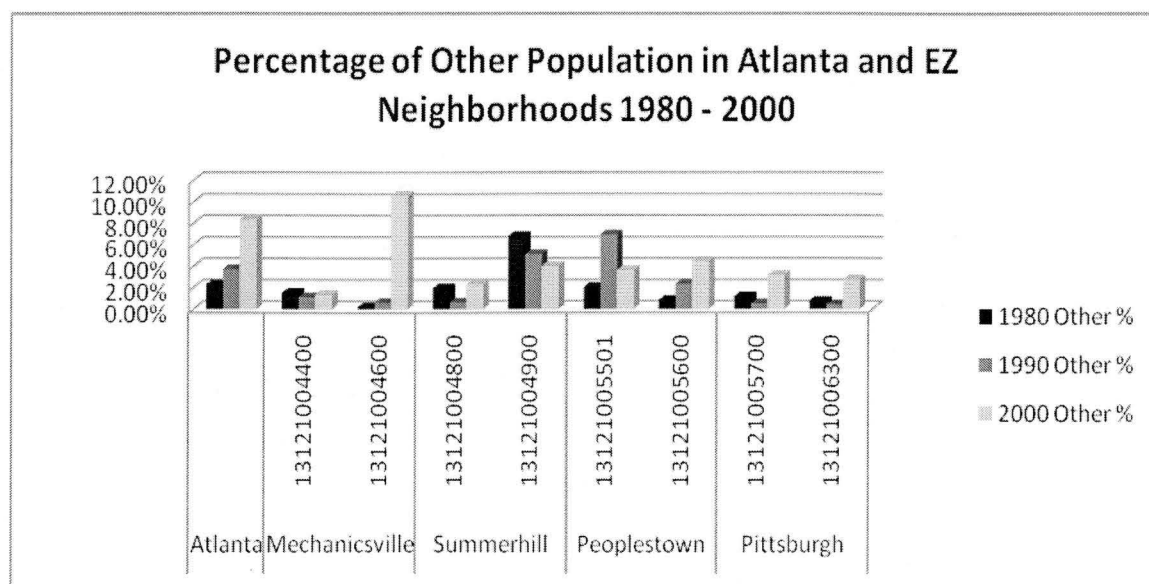
Figure 7. Percentage of White Population in Atlanta and EZ Study Neighborhoods, 1980 - 2000



Source: FreeDemographics.com Report based on US Census data from 1980, 1990 and 2000.

The Hispanic and Asian populations in Atlanta and the EZ study neighborhoods have been consistently increasing in all areas with the exception of parts of Summerhill and Peoplestown as depicted in Figure 8.

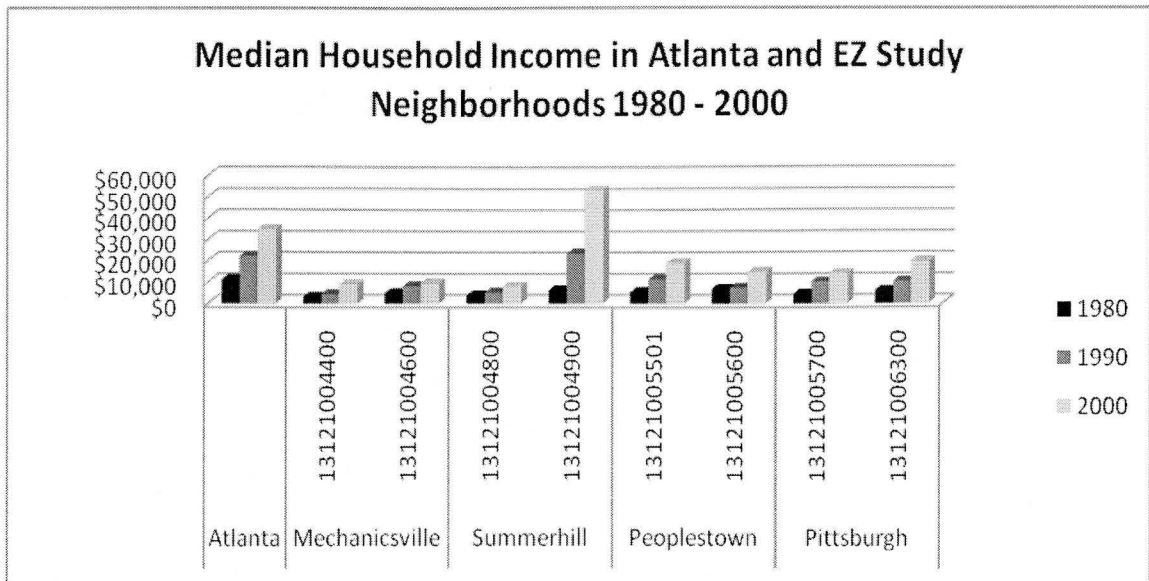
Figure 8. Percentage of Other Population in Atlanta and EZ Neighborhoods, 1980 - 2000



Source: FreeDemographics.com Report based on US Census data from 1980, 1990 and 2000.

The median income in the City of Atlanta, based on the 2000 U.S. Census data, was about \$34,800. The median income in each of the EZ study neighborhoods was significantly lower with the exception of part of Summerhill where the median income was over \$53,000. New housing developments for the 1996 Summer Olympics attracted higher-income residents to that neighborhood. While the overall median household income increased in each of the EZ study neighborhoods from 1980 to 2000, the income level was still significantly low (\$7,942 to \$19,603) compared to \$34,800 for the City of Atlanta. Figure 9 portrays the great disparity in income levels between the EZ study neighborhoods and the City of Atlanta.

Figure 9. Median Household Income in Atlanta and the EZ Study Neighborhoods, 1980- 2000



Source: FreeDemographics.com Report based on US Census data from 1980, 1990 and 2000.

Table 6 shows the poverty rates in each of the EZ study neighborhoods greatly exceeded the poverty rate for the City of Atlanta. The one exception was Summerhill that had a poverty rate of 20.5 % in 2000 compared to the City of Atlanta's rate of 24.4%. All of the neighborhoods experienced a decline in the rate of poverty between 1990 and 2000 except for part of Pittsburgh where the rate went from 40.3% to 43.4%. Portions of Summerhill and Peoplestown had significant decreases in the rate of poverty between 1990 and 2000. Summerhill's poverty rate went from 37.7% to 20.5%. The poverty rate in Peoplestown went from 58.0% to 46.3%.

**Table 6. Poverty Rates in Atlanta and EZ Study Neighborhoods,
1980 - 2000**

Community	Census Year 1980	Census Year 1990	Census Year 2000
City of Atlanta		27.3	24.4
Mechanicsville CT 44	67.0	75.3	67.9
Mechanicsville CT 46	50.5	64.6	53.9
Summerhill CT 48	73.8	69.2	65.4
Summerhill CT 49	27.5	37.7	20.5
Peoplestown CT 55.01	46.1	51.1	39.0
Peoplestown CT 56	53.5	58.0	46.3
Pittsburgh CT 57	50.0	47.4	37.6
Pittsburgh CT 63	35.2	40.3	43.4

Source: 1980 U.S. Census Report, Table P-9, Social Characteristics of Persons; 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census Reports based on data from DataPlace.org.

Not surprisingly, Table 7 shows the unemployment rates in the EZ study neighborhoods exceeded the rate for the City of Atlanta, again with the exception of a portion of Summerhill. In 1990, Summerhill's unemployment rate was 8.1% compared to 9.2% for the City of Atlanta. In 2000, Summerhill's unemployment rate was 2.9% compared to 14.0% for the City of Atlanta.

Table 7. Unemployment Rates in Atlanta and EZ Study Neighborhoods, 1980 - 2000

Community	Census Year 1980	Census Year 1990	Census Year 2000
City of Atlanta		9.2	14.0
Mechanicsville CT 44	37.2	19.8	34.5
Mechanicsville CT 46	32.6	24.0	17.1
Summerhill CT 48	40.6	33.3	33.2
Summerhill CT 49	28.6	8.1	2.9
Peoplestown CT 55.01	32.1	14.2	14.1
Peoplestown CT 56	26.1	17.6	30.2
Pittsburgh CT 57	41.1	13.9	19.7
Pittsburgh CT 63	22.5	15.8	18.2

Source: 1980 U.S. Census Report, Table P-9, Social Characteristics of Persons; 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census Reports based on data from DataPlace.org.

The 2000 U.S. Census data showed that the percentage of households that moved into the housing unit before 1980 was 17.4% for the City of Atlanta. In the EZ study neighborhoods the percentage ranged from 4.7% in Summerhill to 37.5% in Pittsburgh. However, again based on the 2000 census data, there was a dramatic shift in the percentage of households that moved into the housing unit since 1995. For the City of Atlanta, the percentage was 59.1%; for the EZ study neighborhoods, the percentages ranged from 44.7% to 71.2%.³² These figures indicate a significant population shift within the neighborhoods during the period of the Empowerment Zone program from 1994 to 2002. The next section will address the evolution of the Empowerment Zone program in the City of Atlanta.

The Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Communities Program

In 1994, the Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Communities program was initiated by the Clinton Administration as a major comprehensive effort to address urban areas (Gittel, Newman, Bockmeyer & Lindsay, 1998; Rich, 2003). It was the first effort of this type with direct federal resources targeted to specific communities since the Model Cities program ended in 1974. Up until that time, there had not been any concentrated federal attention on the urban areas. The Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Communities program was designed around four key principles: economic opportunity; sustainable community development;

³² 2000 U.S. Census Report based on data from DataPlace.org.

community-based partnerships; and a strategic vision for change (Clinton National Urban Policy Report, 1995).

The EZ legislation stressed comprehensiveness, coordination, and community involvement. To be designated as an EZ area, a strategic plan was required that described the coordinated plan and activities for economic, human, community and physical development. Additionally, the strategic plan had to describe the “process by which the affected community is a *full partner* [italics added] in the process of developing and implementing the plan” [EZ legislation, Sec. 1391 (f)(2)(B)]. The application guidelines published by HUD and the Department of Agriculture emphasized that the EZ/EC program was not “a typical federal program.”³³ The guidelines further noted the program is “designed to *empower* [italics added] people and communities all across this nation by inspiring Americans to work together to create jobs and opportunities” (EZ application guide, 1994, p. 6).

The EZ legislation and guidelines stressed that community involvement in developing and implementing the strategic plan was required, but did not provide any specific guidance or recommendations to ensure that meaningful community

³³ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and U.S. Department of Agriculture (1994). Building communities: Together. Empowerment Zones & Enterprise Communities Application Guide, p. 6, (EZ application guide). The Department of Agriculture had responsibility for EZ/EC areas nominated in rural areas.

involvement occurred. In many respects, the language about community involvement was reminiscent of Johnson's War on Poverty programs, Community Action and Model Cities. Similarly, those programs emphasized community participation but failed to provide any specific criteria.

The Atlanta EZ Strategic Planning Process

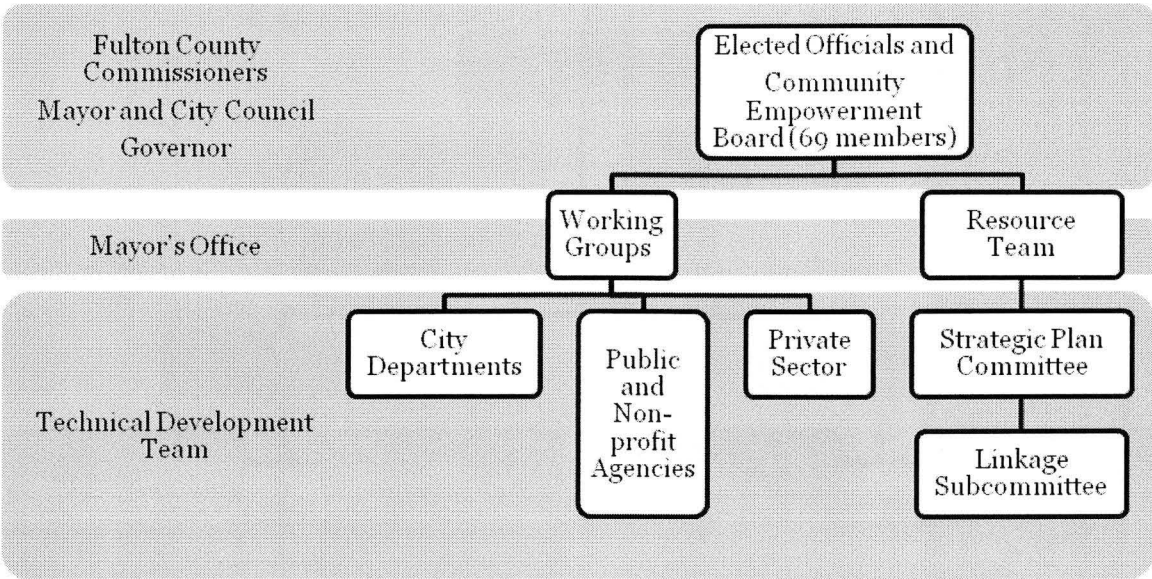
In August 1993, Congress passed the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993. By September, City of Atlanta representatives began to hold meetings with governmental agencies, non-profits, neighborhood representatives and others to explore preparation of an application for EZ designation.³⁴ An ad hoc Empowerment Zone Task Force was established and proposed an area to be designated. There was considerable interest in obtaining the EZ designation given the existing conditions of unemployment, inadequate housing, and low educational attainment within several neighborhoods. The Atlanta City Council adopted a resolution in November 1993 requesting then-Mayor Maynard Jackson to submit an application to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the EZ designation.

³⁴ The information is from *Creating an urban village: Atlanta's community-driven vision for the empowerment zone* (1994). City of Atlanta Empowerment Zone application (AEZ Strategic Plan).

In January 1994, a new mayor, Bill Campbell, as well as new council members came into office. In February, Mayor Campbell appointed a 28-member citizen-based Community Empowerment Board (CEB) “to oversee the development and submission” of the EZ Strategic Plan and application (AEZ Strategic Plan, 1994, p. 5). Several community leaders raised questions about the lack of sufficient consultation with neighborhood representatives throughout the process (AEZ Strategic Plan, p. 11). In March the CEB was expanded to include 69 members. The expansion allowed representation from all neighborhoods from a census tract that had a poverty rate of at least 35 percent. The new and expanded CEB had the task of identifying the proposed EZ area. The Community Empowerment Board created a Strategic Plan Committee and a Linkage Subcommittee to carry out its charge. The Linkage Subcommittee consisted of representatives from the neighborhoods that had poverty rates of at least 35 percent but did not fall within the proposed Zone boundaries due to population restrictions. Additionally, a Technical Team was established providing advisors from city, county and state government departments, public and non-profit entities, as well as the university community and private sector.

Groups involved in the initial planning stages attempted to put a structure in place to maintain a high level of involvement. Figure 10 shows the organizational structure that was used for the development of the Atlanta Empowerment Zone Strategic Plan.

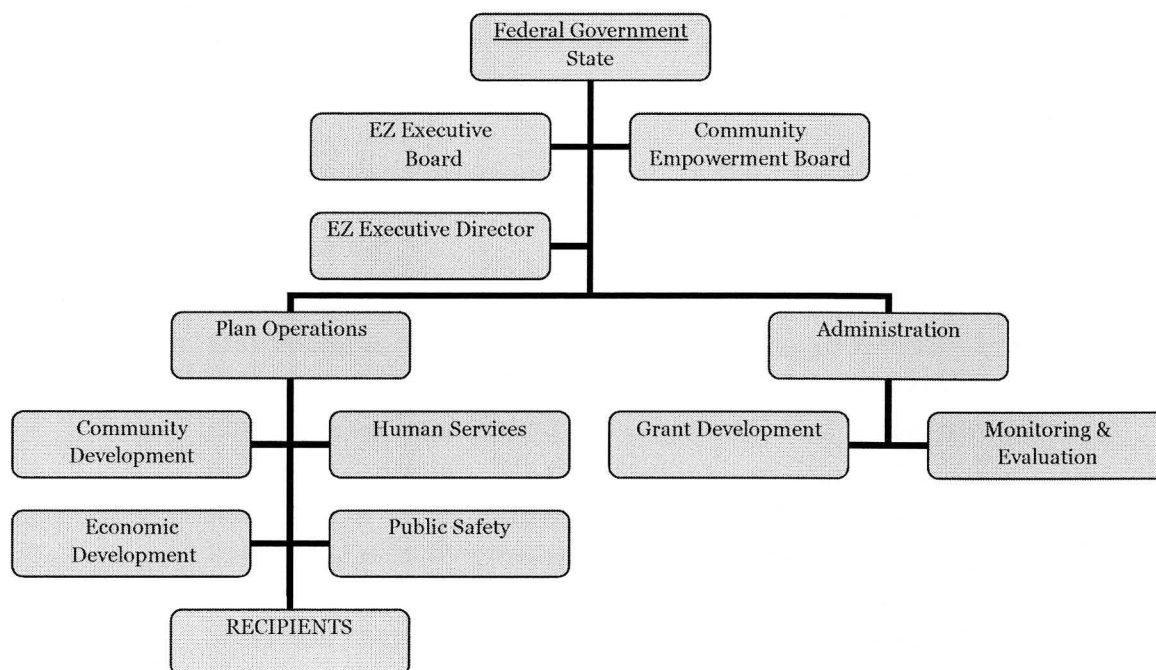
Figure 10. Empowerment Zone Strategic Plan Organization Chart



Source: AEZ Strategic Plan, Introduction, p. 10.

The organizational chart contemplates a co-equal role for the community with the various levels of elected officials. All parties involved in the development of the Atlanta EZ Strategic Plan agreed that a new organization would be established to oversee the implementation. The following Figure 11 illustrates the governance structure for the EZ Corporation that the Community Empowerment Board contemplated would be established.

Figure 11. Empowerment Zone Corporation



Source: Atlanta Community Empowerment Corporation Information document (n.d.)

This structure demonstrates that the community representatives were anticipating an ongoing central role in the implementation of the Atlanta Empowerment Zone Strategic Plan.

The CEB held a series of five townhall style meetings to present information about the proposed area, the Strategic Plan as well as the application process. It is estimated that more than 5,000 people from 69 of the poorest neighborhoods in Atlanta participated in 70 meetings over a three to six month-period to work

on a vision that would serve as the Strategic Plan for the EZ application (AEZ Strategic Plan, Introduction, p. v).

A collective vision statement developed as part of the EZ Strategic Plan and application process stated:

Our vision is of an 'Urban Village' working cooperatively to improve the quality of life and conditions of our neighborhoods, with an emphasis on "sustainable development" that is economically and ecologically sound. We seek to *empower* [italics added] and inspire members of our neighborhoods, especially our children and youth, to develop effective responses to the needs of our community and to promote cooperation, collaboration and partnership with social service agencies, government and the private sector to create livable communities. We also seek to positively impact the social, economic and spiritual development of our neighborhoods and city. A priority of our zone is providing safe, decent and affordable housing. Our vision can become a reality when our community becomes a cooperative village, an extended family, that is *self-reliant, self-sufficient and self-determined* [italics added] (AEZ Strategic Plan, 1994, Vision for Change, p. 5).

The vision outlined by the community for its hopes and aspirations was very broad and all encompassing. The Community Empowerment Board noted that some of the key elements that were part of its consideration were the following:

- Many neighbors have lost hope for a better future and have little control of their lives. The term "empowerment" is used to indicate the importance of restoring this hope and of building a sense that people can control their own destinies.

- To realize the community's vision, a permanent change must occur in the systems governing residents' lives. Another "one-time" program will not improve the inner-city areas and the lives of inhabitants. A substantial, ongoing restructuring is needed, not only of the delivery systems themselves, but also in the values which govern public and private decisions in the city of Atlanta (AEZ Strategic Plan, Vision for Change, pp. 5-6).

The strategic plan developed had the following priorities: expanding employment and investment opportunities; creating safe and livable communities; lifting youth and families out of poverty; and providing adequate housing for all (AEZ Strategic Plan, 1994, pp. 10-11). For each of the priority areas, the Community Empowerment Board, the Strategic Plan Committee, and other actors developed the following goals and activities listed in Table 8.

TABLE 8. AEZ STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Expanding Employment and Investment Opportunities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the number of meaningful jobs and community-based businesses. 2. Increase control of financial resources at the grassroots level and provide community-based boards to monitor/implement programs. 3. Establish a federation of Community Development Corporations, with special emphasis on the development of Youth Community Development Corporations. 4. Utilize and expand revolving loan funds. 5. Provide job training for Zone residents.
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<p>PUBLIC SAFETY:</p> <p>Creating Safe and Livable Communities</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create and strengthen “Auxiliary” police efforts consisting of citizens, e.g. Neighborhood Watch programs. 2. Utilize existing facilities in the neighborhoods (schools, community centers, churches, etc.) as conflict resolution centers. 3. Improve neighborhood infrastructure, especially streets, street lighting and parks. Target more public funds, especially bond funds, to improve the infrastructure and park systems. 4. Enhance environmental conditions throughout the Zone. 5. Increase participation of public safety officials in neighborhoods with citizens, including police, fire and corrections.
<p>HUMAN SERVICES:</p> <p>Lifting Youth and Families Out of Poverty</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a comprehensive human development program that focuses on the motivational, educational, moral, spiritual and physical development of male and female residents of all ages, with a special emphasis on support and development of Rites of Passage programs. 2. Reduce the number of drug and substance abusers through outcome-driven treatment and prevention programs. 3. Streamline access and improve the human delivery service system by establishing one-stop shopping for human services. 4. Improve learning opportunities for Zone students. 5. Expand access to food and food programs.
<p>COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:</p> <p>Providing Adequate Housing for All</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Redevelop vacant, abandoned or underutilized real property in each Zone neighborhood. 2. Make fit and affordable housing available to Zone residents who are not housed in safe, decent, sanitary and affordable dwellings. 3. Meet the special housing needs of Zone residents, e.g. teen mothers. 4. Improve access to credit for Zone residents 5. Increase home ownership opportunities for Zone residents.

Source: Atlanta Community Empowerment Corporation document outlining mission, vision and EZ priorities (n.d.).

The priorities reflected a broad and comprehensive understanding of the basic issues existing in the proposed EZ area.³⁵ In accordance with the EZ application guidelines, the Atlanta Strategic Plan included benchmarks for each of the priority areas as well as the identification of needed resources. The community participants recognized that many more resources beyond the \$100 million EZ funds would be required to seriously tackle the list of priorities. The Strategic Plan included an inventory of other available federal, state and local funding sources. Based on the proposed allocation of funding, the number one priority was the category “Lifting Youth and Families Out of Poverty” (\$36.3 million), followed by “Expanding Employment and Investment Opportunities” (\$32.5 million) (AEZ Strategic Plan, Vol. 2, Appendix).

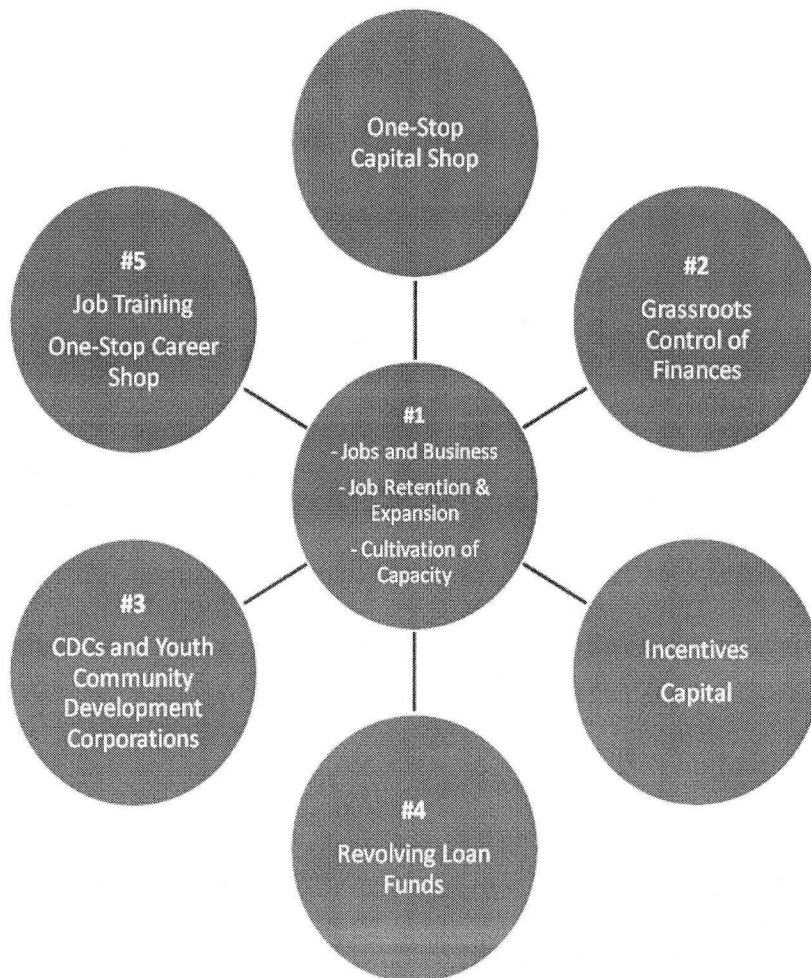
A careful reading of the AEZ Strategic Plan indicates that the community took the call to become empowered very seriously. Each of the themes was associated with specific priorities and benchmarks that included timelines, estimated costs, and proposed funding sources. For example, given the high levels of unemployment as well as underemployment in the EZ areas, the community participants focused on the development of job-creation tools that would provide opportunities for self-development. They developed a proposed “Community Economic Cycle” which is illustrated in Figure 12 below.

³⁵ The list of AEZ Priorities and Strategies adopted by the Community Empowerment Board in 1994 is attached as Appendix A.

Figure 12. Community Economic Cycle

People Cycle

Finance Cycle



Source: AEZ Strategic Plan (1994), Expand Opportunities, p. 9.

The Community Economic cycle had two components – one focusing on financial resources; and the other on human resources. At the core of the Community Economic cycle was Priority #1 - Increase the number of meaningful jobs and

community-based businesses. On the “finance cycle” side was Priority #2 – Increase control of financial resources at the grassroots level and provide community-based boards to monitor/implement programs; and Priority #4 – Utilize and expand revolving loan funds. Other components of the finance cycle included business development incentives and a one-stop capital shop. On the “people cycle” side, there was Priority #3 – Establish a federation of community development corporations with special emphasis on the development of youth community development corporations; and Priority #5 – Provide job training for Zone residents. This example is representative of the community’s comprehensive approach to addressing what they saw as the underlying issues affecting conditions within the community. It also demonstrates the community’s recognition of the power relationships and the need for self-empowerment.

Although the Atlanta EZ Strategic Plan ostensibly went through a process of community outreach and involvement, the Plan itself notes that there were at least four major issues that surfaced: 1) mistrust of city officials; 2) citizen participation in selecting the initial Empowerment Zone area; 3) the role of the Community Empowerment Board; and 4) modification of priorities and strategies (AEZ Strategic Plan, Vol. 1, p. 11). The Strategic Plan indicated that several steps had been taken to address each of the issues and find some resolution. In terms of mistrust of city officials, efforts were made to increase the

distribution of information about the EZ planning process to broader segments within the community. Citizen participation was expanded on the Community Empowerment Board from 28-members to 69-members with the opportunity to design the proposed EZ area. It was proposed that the Community Empowerment Board (CEB) have a continuing advisory role through implementation of the Strategic Plan. As to modifications of the priorities and strategies, consensus appears to have been reached by the various sectors of the community before the final plan was prepared and submitted to HUD (AEZ Strategic Plan, Vol. 1, pp. 11-13).

However, these issues of concern particularly mistrust of city officials and the role of the CEB, continued to be present even after the AEZ Strategic Plan was submitted and approved by HUD for implementation. The name Community Empowerment Board, for some, had the connotation that the community in fact would have some power over decisions related to the Strategic Plan and its implementation. In an effort to institutionalize its role in the process, several community leaders came together to establish the Atlanta Community Empowerment Corporation (ACE) in September 1994, even before the City of Atlanta was designated as one of the Empowerment Zones. This research examines, in part, whether the establishment of an independent entity was sufficient to ensure the meaningful participation of the community in the implementation and other phases of the Empowerment Zone program.

CHAPTER 6

METHODOLOGY

This research is an examination of the issues of citizen participation and empowerment based on a case study of the City of Atlanta's Empowerment Zone (AEZ) program. The focus is from the perspectives of representatives of three out of four AEZ neighborhoods. The concept of community participation as empowerment, that is, community participation viewed in the context of power relationships, is the conceptual framework of this research. Community participation and empowerment were considered key components of the EZ program to help alleviate some of the conditions of poverty. In Atlanta, the community itself sought to seize the opportunity to be engaged in all aspects of the EZ program from planning to implementation. The community understood that their participation was part of the requirement for designation as an Empowerment Zone. They attempted to put structures in place to ensure their participation.

The basic research question of this study is: To what extent did participation by the community in the Atlanta EZ program contribute to community empowerment? The following components are related to the main question in order to provide a fuller understanding:

1. Identification of who participated.

2. Identification of the level of participation.
3. Identification of the results or benefits of the participation for the community.

The research questions provide a format to inquire into the processes of how the community was able to participate in the AEZ program. There were several phases to the Empowerment Zone program. The initial phase was the planning and preparation of a strategic plan that included the identification of the EZ boundaries; identification of the community needs; development of appropriate projects to respond to those needs; and the creation of a governance structure to manage implementation of the strategic plan. These factors were important criteria for designation as an Empowerment Zone by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). As described in Chapter 5, the Atlanta community was very engaged in the development of the Strategic Plan for Atlanta. In fact, a community structure, the Atlanta Community Empowerment Corporation (ACE), was established even before the city received the EZ designation. However, the existence of a structure without sufficient independent resources and support can limit its effectiveness.

Chaskin and Garg's (1997) review of the issue of governance in neighborhood-based initiatives noted "governance entails the creation or adoption of

mechanisms and processes to guide planning, decision-making, and implementation as well as to identify and organize accountability and responsibility for actions undertaken. Thus governance is both process and structure, it attempts to structure action on the basis of the goals and assumptions of each initiative through the organized engagement of a range of participants both within and beyond the target neighborhood” (Chaskin and Garg, p. 631). Rich and Stoker (2007) further noted:

Effective governance contributes to the revitalization of distressed neighborhoods in two ways. First, a collaborative, cross-sector of governance can help to put into place a comprehensive plan for neighborhood revitalization. Many different state, local, and regional actors control resources that are vital to creating economic opportunity and fostering sustainable community development....Second, effective governance can make various aspects of a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization strategy work better. Governance systems can coordinate programs, increase the number of redevelopment tools available to stimulate business and job growth, enhance services, inform businesses about redevelopment incentives, solve collective action problems, and address market failures, all in a context tailored to the distinctive needs and opportunities that exist within local communities (Rich and Stoker, p. 36).

Since governance structures generally tend to be the primary format for participation in government programs, the Atlanta Empowerment Zone Corporation Executive Board and its operations provide the framework for the analysis.

Research Design

The case study approach is part of a “rich tradition of community studies, organizational research, and program evaluations” that “documents the illustrative power of research that focuses in depth and in detail on specific instances of a phenomenon” (Marshall and Rossman, 2006, p. 164). Yin (1994) notes that the case study has been used as a research strategy in the following fields: policy, political science and public administration; community psychology and sociology; organizational and management studies; city and regional planning; and of course, dissertations and theses in the social sciences (Yin, p. 1). Scholz and Tietje (2002) acknowledge that even though case study research has been used in teaching and research for decades in different disciplines, it is an approach that still raises questions by some when it is used as a research methodology (pp. 3-4). Nevertheless, they stress case studies “are considered an appropriate approach to real, complex, current problems that cannot be treated simply by one of the known analytical methods, such as experiment, proof, or survey” (Scholz and Tietje, p. 5).

According to Yin (1994), the case study approach is an empirical inquiry that “investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (p. 13).” Craig (2002) notes that “an evaluation of how community development

programs are designed and implemented and the way in which they relate to wider objectives of empowerment would typically rely more heavily on qualitative data” (pp. 134-135). He further points out that “case study work, drawing on a range of perspectives and methods, is usually the most appropriate approach for evaluating community development” (Craig, 2002, p. 135).

Research Procedures

The research plan included the initial development of a demographic profile for the eight census tracts corresponding to the four selected neighborhoods. Data was reviewed from the 1980, 1990 and 2000 Census to identify the socio-economic characteristics of the area in terms of racial make-up, educational attainment, household income, employment status, housing tenure, residency in the previous five years, gender of head of households, and level of poverty.

Although data from the 1990 census formed part of the basis for selection as an EZ site, the 1980 census data was included to determine what if any trends were identifiable in the targeted neighborhoods since they were the subjects of two major redevelopment programs – Model Cities in 1967 and the Empowerment Zone in 1994.

Qualitative data collection methods included archival records such as program documents, media reports, and interviews. The Atlanta EZ application and other

supporting documents were reviewed to identify the major program priorities and proposed benchmarks. The information gathered provided a framework to develop points of comparison between what the community formally identified as priorities and the extent they were able to achieve some or all of the priorities. The annual progress reports submitted to HUD also provided additional information about funding allocations in relation to the identified priorities. Other resources utilized to identify who participated, the level of participation, and the results of participation, included videotape recordings of AEZC Board meetings, evaluation reports, as well as in-depth interviews of key respondents.

The overall goal was to identify who, how and what factors facilitated participation in the formal structures of the EZ program and the attendant results. Where there were barriers to participation by community residents, the development of any alternative approaches and strategies by the community to attain the community priorities was explored. The evaluations to date of the Atlanta EZ program focused on the fact that the mayor and his appointees controlled the decision-making process and limited the involvement of community members in any significant aspect of program implementation. However, one of the underlying premises of this research was to explore the methods, strategies and techniques that could be employed by the community and their representatives to work towards the attainment of their priorities.

Case Selection

The Atlanta Empowerment Zone (AEZ) included 30 neighborhoods located around the downtown business district. It covered an area of 9.29 square miles with just under 50,000 residents. The AEZ focused on 23 contiguous census tracts with poverty rates in excess of 55% and an unemployment rate over 17%. An additional 39 neighborhoods covering 24 census tracts with poverty rates of at least 35% were designated by the City as Linkage Communities. The unit of analysis of this research is four of the EZ neighborhoods - Mechanicsville, Peoplestown, Pittsburgh, and Summerhill – represented by 8 census tracts, and constituting 31% of the entire EZ area population. These neighborhoods, also known as the “stadium neighborhoods” due to their proximity to the Turner Field baseball stadium, were also part of the Model Cities program in the late 1960’s.³⁶

Marshall and Rossman (2006) stated that the sample size in qualitative research depends on several factors and may be of a single person, or of roles, interactions, and sentiments (Marshall and Rossman, p. 62, citations omitted; Creswell, 1994). The selection of these four neighborhoods as the sample for this study was driven by the opportunity provided by the case study method to understand the “contextual conditions” of communities targeted by massive federal program

³⁶ There were a total of six neighborhoods that were part of the Model Cities program. In addition to the four study neighborhoods, the other neighborhoods were Adair Park and Grant Park. Since only a portion of Grant Park was included in the EZ program, it was not selected for this study. The neighborhood of Adair Park was not eligible for inclusion in the EZ program.

initiatives to improve the quality of life, and empower the residents through the process of participation (Yin, 1994, p. 13). The research questions focus on the role played by the various community representatives in the AEZ governance structure and their ability to influence the decision-making process after the initial planning phase. There have been other studies of the EZ programs that examine the issue of participation through the project selection process (Mwase, 2005); through the role of community developers (Filner, 2001); and through the process of policy change (Huh, 2003). The selected neighborhoods provide a rare opportunity to examine the long term effects of comprehensive federal programs designed to alleviate the conditions of poverty in urban areas.

Data Collection Methods

This research study utilized a number of data collection methods to increase the depth of information as well as the reliability of the results. The data collection included secondary data such as organizational documents, news reports, videotape recordings and information from interviews. A total of eight in-depth and semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants that were involved either directly or indirectly in the Atlanta Empowerment Zone (AEZ). The AEZ was administered by a newly created entity - the Atlanta Empowerment Zone Corporation (AEZC). It consisted of a 17-member Board of Directors with six members representing the Community Empowerment Advisory Board

(CEAB). The CEAB consisted of 30 persons each representing an EZ neighborhood and 6 representatives from the 39 linkage communities. At the time of this research, both the AEZC and CEAB had ceased operations.

Contact was made with the leadership of the Neighborhood Planning Unit (NPU-V) covering the selected study neighborhoods for assistance to identify key informants. Several of the former AEZC and CEAB members had relocated to other parts of the country; other members were deceased. Representatives of neighborhood associations and other community-based organizations in the selected neighborhoods were contacted for suggestions of available persons. Staff from the City of Atlanta Planning Department was also interviewed for background information and to gain access to available documents.³⁷ Staff from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, the state agency responsible for administering the EZ program funds, was contacted for available information and documents. The key informants interviewed included three former community members of the AEZC and CEAB; and five members of CDCs from three of the EZ study neighborhoods. Efforts to establish contact with the representative from the fourth neighborhood who was involved with the EZ program were not successful. The leader of one of the new community organizations in that neighborhood, founded in 2001, stated the focus at that

³⁷ It was reported the City of Atlanta decided to abruptly terminate the EZ program in 2002 after receiving the Renewal Community status and that all EZ documents and files were boxed and placed in storage. Because some of the documents contained personal information and were not organized in any identifiable way, it was not possible to gain access to those documents.

time was on building the organization rather than pursuing involvement with the Empowerment Zone.

Once the key informants were identified, they were provided with a copy of the Informed Consent Form that provided additional information about the research project. The interviews focused on the involvement of the key informants during the initial planning phase to develop the AEZ Strategic Plan; any role they may have had within the AEZC or CEAB; the organizational capacity they were representing; and their assessment of any benefits gained as a result of participation with the Empowerment Zone. The use of the Interview Guide³⁸ ensured that all respondents were asked the same questions although there was sufficient flexibility to pursue additional areas of inquiry. Information was gathered during the interviews by note-taking and the use of a digital recorder to increase accuracy and minimize researcher errors. The interviews were professionally transcribed, and then reviewed by a neutral reader for completeness. The transcripts were read to look for identifiable themes; notes were made; and codes developed for data analysis. The qualitative data analysis software NVivo 8 was used to organize the information. To increase construct

³⁸ The Research Interview Guide protocol is attached as Appendix B. The interview protocol is a modification of the Interview Guide developed by Mwase (2005). The Success Measures Data System (SMDS) developed by NeighborWorks® America (formerly the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation) was also reviewed to provide guidance in preparing the interview protocol.

validity, information was also utilized from archival records and documents, in addition to the interviews (Yin, 1994, p. 34).

The organizational documents that were reviewed and analyzed included the Atlanta Empowerment Zone (AEZ) Strategic Plan with the priorities and benchmarks; videotape recordings of meetings of the Atlanta Empowerment Zone Corporation; evaluation reports and studies of the Empowerment Zone program; annual reports prepared by the Atlanta Empowerment Zone Corporation; and news articles and summaries.³⁹

The AEZ Strategic Plan provided a comprehensive overview of the planning process that the community engaged in and the identification of the priorities and benchmarks. Although no written minutes of the AEZC meetings were available, over 11 hours of videotape recordings of meetings were viewed and notes taken.⁴⁰ Several of the key informants did share documents from their personal files which supplemented the research information.

³⁹ A search of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution online archives on the Empowerment Zone during the period from January 1, 1993 to December 31, 1994 produced 65 articles; from 1995 to 1996, 95 articles; from 1997 to 1998, 105 articles; 1999 to 2000, 74 articles; from 2001 to 2002, 18 articles; and from 2003 to 2004, 16 articles.

⁴⁰ The videotapes reviewed covered meetings between the years 1999 to 2001.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Review

This research study was approved after submission to an expedited review process. The nature of this research did not involve any risks to human subjects. Each respondent was provided a signed informed consent form before the beginning of the interview. Copies of all forms and other documents have been kept confidential to the extent possible.

Issues of Reliability and Validity

Efforts to ensure the reliability of the research and to minimize error and bias were attained through the use of secondary data from official sources, such as the Annual Reports submitted to HUD by the City of Atlanta and news summaries from the Atlanta Journal-Constitution online archives. The interview transcripts were reviewed by an independent party to confirm the accuracy of the transcription.

There is some threat to external validity in that this single case study may not have findings that are generalizable to other communities. However, given the unique history of these neighborhoods as part of two major federal initiatives to alleviate poverty, the research should provide some insight into the long term effects of federal initiatives to encourage and support community involvement

and participation that can lead to empowerment and the alleviation of problems related to poverty.

Analysis

Dreier (1996) noted “in order for America’s urban neighborhoods to be healthy, their residents must gain a stronger voice in shaping the physical, economic, and social conditions in their communities” (p. 123). This statement reflects the underlying premise of this study on community participation and empowerment. Rosener (1978) helped to outline the multifaceted and complex nature of the concept of participation. She stated “while citizen participation takes on meaning only within a value context, most citizen participation programs fail to acknowledge this reality” (Rosener, p. 457). As a starting point, Rosener posed the journalistic questions of “who, where, what, how, and when” to illustrate the complexity of the phrase citizen participation (p. 458). She proposed the development of a participation evaluation matrix to help measure the effectiveness of participation programs and policies (Rosener, 1978, p. 459). An understanding of these questions will help to frame the research analysis that follows in the next chapter.

In terms of “who,” there are at least three potential actors – elected officials, public administrators, and citizens – who may each operate under different

personal, organizational, economic, and political perspectives and constraints as well as have different values, expectations and goals. In terms of “where,” the question is what are the goals to be achieved? The goals could vary from changes in policy outcomes; changes in institutions; creating a more open political process; or improving citizenship. The “what” question relates to the objectives, and specific changes or conditions that should be expected to result from a particular program. Possible results include the dissemination of information; generation of alternative options for consideration; providing an opportunity to review and comment on decisions already made; or providing a safety valve that allows citizens to ‘vent.’ Related to the question of “what”, which can be seen as flowing from the ladder of participation by Arnstein and others, is the issue of sharing decision-making power versus expressing an opinion. The question of “how” can be understood in the context of “participation costs” in terms of the time, money, energy and expertise that may be required given the complexity, duration, scope and intensity of the issue. Finally, the question of “when” addresses at what point in the policy-making process is participation needed or desired – formulation, implementation, or evaluation (Rosener, 1978, p. 458). Again the answer to all or any of these questions will be influenced by the perspectives of who the actor is.

What has been missing in the evaluations of the Atlanta EZ program, to date, is an assessment of how the community from its perspective may have been

empowered as a result of participation in the different components of the program. An effort was made to identify key respondents from each of the EZ study neighborhoods who served in different capacities. Some of the respondents identified were directly involved in both the AEZC and CEAB at different points which helped to provide some insight into how the issue of participation evolved as the program developed over time. The other respondents were leaders of neighborhood associations or community development corporations that were in existence prior to the planning process for the AEZ Strategic Plan.

Because this is an exploratory case study, the results of the research from the in-depth interviews were examined for key themes that emerged. These themes were evaluated for their contribution to the understanding of what factors enable community residents to participate as well as what barriers impact the ability to participate. The information indicated who participated and identified the level of participation by different actors. Information from key informants was triangulated with the data obtained from archival records and documents. The results were organized in a descriptive framework to help identify any particular trends that emerged.

The following Table 9 depicts the measures that were utilized to operationalize the research questions.

Table 9. Operationalization of Research Questions

RESEARCH QUESTIONS	MEASURES	DATA SOURCES
Who participated?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Number and type of community representatives -Number and type of businesses -Number and type of government representatives -Number and type of other representatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Minutes* of Advisory Board and Board of Directors -Minutes of Committee meetings -Annual Reports -News articles -Other studies of Atlanta EZ
How did participation take place?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Attendance at Advisory Board and Board of Directors meetings -Attendance at committee meetings -Participation in project selection process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Interviews -Minutes of Advisory Board and Board of Directors -Minutes of Committee meetings -Annual Reports -News articles -Other studies of Atlanta EZ
What were the results or benefits of participation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Results produced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Interviews -EZ documents -Annual Reports -News articles -Other studies of Atlanta EZ

Source: Interview Guide modified from Mwase (2005).

* Paper copies of AEZC minutes were not available due to reorganization from EZ program to Renewal Community program under new mayoral administration in 2002. Videotape recordings representing several years were viewed and notes taken.

Limitations

There are several limitations to the focus of this research. Currently there are no existing uniform standards to measure or evaluate the effectiveness of participation and empowerment in community development programs.

Additionally, there is not a consistent definition of the meaning of participation and empowerment in the literature. Another limitation is that the research may not be generalizable to other types of programs with similar legislative mandates since it is a single case study that examines the implementation of a program from the perspectives of community members in one city. At the same time, however, this research and the findings do provide a synthesis of the various issues that can help to inform the development of future policies directed to the alleviation of poverty. Additionally, the findings demonstrate the need for a clear mandate regarding the desired outcomes of community participation in future programs.

CHAPTER 7

RESEARCH ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This research examines the underlying dynamics of the Empowerment Zone (EZ) program in the City of Atlanta as it relates to the issue of community participation and empowerment. Using the conceptual framework of community participation as empowerment, an assessment is made of several factors that are intricately connected to it. The factors include means or levels of participation; the exercise of power; access to resources; and identification of results. This research seeks to give voice to the perspectives of community members, as the intended beneficiaries of the EZ program, about these factors. It also seeks to explore the validity of pursuing a holistic approach to addressing the problems of persistent poverty that continue to plague urban communities.

The Empowerment Zone program was premised on the theory that the participation of residents in the community, in partnership with other sectors – elected officials, private businesses, community-based and non-profit organizations – was essential for the planning and implementation of programs to address the conditions of poverty. The language of the EZ program application emphasized “the residents themselves...are the most important element of revitalization.” However, neither the EZ legislation nor any of the supporting program documents provided a clear mandate as to how the residents or

community should participate. Also, the EZ legislation did not specify what was intended by empowerment. There was an apparent presumption that the governance structures established would facilitate that process.

The AEZ Strategic Planning Process and Community Involvement

Once the EZ legislation was passed by Congress in 1993, the City of Atlanta established an ad hoc Empowerment Zone Task Force to propose an area to be designated. A City Council resolution adopted in November 1993 requested then-Mayor Maynard Jackson to submit an application to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the EZ designation. Shortly after coming into office in January 1994, Mayor Bill Campbell appointed a 28-member citizen-based Community Empowerment Board (CEB) “to oversee the development and submission” of the EZ Strategic Plan and application (AEZ Strategic Plan, 1994, Introduction, p. 5). Several community leaders raised questions about the initial lack of sufficient consultation with neighborhood representatives (AEZ Strategic Plan, p. 11). In March 1994, the CEB was expanded to include 69 members, allowing representation from all neighborhoods from a census tract that had a poverty rate of at least 35 percent within the city limits.

The new and expanded CEB had the task of identifying the proposed EZ area and created a Strategic Plan Committee and a Linkage Subcommittee. The Linkage

Subcommittee consisted of representatives from the neighborhoods that had poverty rates of at least 35 percent but did not fall within the proposed Zone boundaries due to population size restrictions under the EZ program guidelines. Additionally, a Technical Team was established that provided advisors from city, county and state government departments, public and non-profit entities, as well as the university community and the private sector. Working group meetings were held once a week for five weeks around the issues of economic development, public safety, human services, and community development. It was estimated, in total, about 300 citizens attended those meetings.

The high anticipation by some within the community, that the EZ would make a difference, was reflected in the participation of over 5,000 to 7,000 residents over a three- to six-month period in at least 30 public meetings. During the planning phase, the following questions were considered:

1. Where would we like our communities to be in 10 years?
2. What is the nature of this vision of the future?
3. Given the resources available under the Empowerment Zone program, what is our Strategic Plan for obtaining this vision?

(AEZ Strategic Plan, Vision for Change, p. 5).

A Vision Statement for the AEZ Strategic Plan evolved from a consensus process and set out the broad framework intended to guide the activities once the EZ designation was obtained. The vision focused on the creation of an “Urban

Village’ working cooperatively to improve the quality of life and conditions of our neighborhoods, with an emphasis on ‘sustainable development’ that is economically and ecologically sound.” The statement also included references to the empowerment of the neighborhoods and establishing partnerships. The statement concluded: “Our vision can become a reality when our community becomes a cooperative village, an extended family, that is self-reliant, self-sufficient and self-determined” (AEZ Strategic Plan, Vision for Change, p. 5). An assessment of the efforts by the community representatives to implement the AEZ Strategic Plan is based on a review of the factors related to community participation as empowerment – means or levels of participation; the exercise of power; access to resources; and identification of benefits or results.

Background of Key Respondents

The key respondents have been long term residents of their respective communities. Most of them were raised in areas neighboring the City of Atlanta, while others relocated to the particular community from other parts of the country. The various respondents have been engaged in a number of community related activities for a major portion of their lives. One respondent noted that at the age of five she was “trying to get people out of turpentine camps” and “had the KKK breathing down our necks” (Interview 3A). Another stated that he was involved as the regional director for community development with a national faith-based organization (Interview 1A). Still another was involved in the

integration of schools in Florida (Interview 2A). Overall, each of the key respondents brought a wealth of community experience and understanding to the process of community participation in government and other programs. They each also expressed a strong desire to serve and represent what they believed to be the best interests of their communities.

Each of the respondents was serving in some leadership capacity during the time the EZ program was in effect. Either they were elected to serve on the Community Empowerment Advisory Board (CEAB) or were serving as the President/CEO of a neighborhood association or community development corporation. By virtue of service on the CEAB in a leadership capacity, they were also appointed to serve on the Executive Board of the Atlanta Empowerment Zone Corporation (AEZC).

Levels of Participation

The literature review has established that there are different levels of participation which impact the different levels of power between contending parties. For the most part, the community is cast in the role of 'have-nots' trying to wrest some level of control away from the larger power structure in order to exercise some decision-making authority in their own interests. Often, there is a premise that there are others with more experience, insight, knowledge, training,

etcetera, who are better able to make the appropriate decisions for the benefit of the community. However, in probing the level of participation within the community during the initial planning process, a high level of organization was revealed. In describing the process to engage the community in the planning process, one of the respondents directly involved with the preparation of the AEZ Strategic Plan provided the following information:

...we encouraged the demographics, which identified the proposed area for the Empowerment Zone. It turned out to include 39 separate neighborhoods in a 9.4 square mile area. That area was selected because the poverty rate was 54% in that demographic area. So, that more than satisfied the requirements of the RFP for the Empowerment Zone, that it had to be a depressed area, economically and socially depressed area.

In those 39 neighborhoods, we found out that most of them had some kind of leadership organizational structure. For instance, 42% of all of the public housing in Atlanta was located in the Empowerment Zone. So, what we did was tap into that leadership structure and designed a series of events where we had public gatherings to get the input from the people as to what that proposed program should do to change the quality of their life.

What allowed us to reach so many people was we used software that was unique at that time called Groupware. The software allowed you to have large meetings. I think we had 50 laptops per setting, and it allowed you to have large meetings to project issues up on a screen, allow participants to register their reaction to those issues and comments to those issues, and they could vote to prioritize those issues....

And, we were able to get public participation using that group software that we never would have been able to do if we were just a group of people in a room. And, we did that in all of those thirty-nine neighborhoods and finally the leaders from each one of those neighborhoods took that broad-based input and narrowed it down into the issues that became the target issues for the Empowerment Zone project (Interview 1A).

Other respondents acknowledged that they were aware of the strategic planning process and had some involvement by attending meetings; appointing a representative; or providing advice (Interview 3A, 1B, 2B, and 3B). One of the respondents that was not directly involved in the EZ planning process, by choice, indicated that she “knew that the grassroots people of the community were not involved” although “they did invite people to come and discuss some of the things that they were suggesting would happen” (Interview 4B). Another respondent stated “the meetings were open to the public but the public had no input” (Interview 3A). These points of view are not consistent with the information contained in the actual AEZ Strategic Plan and other studies that have been done on the Atlanta Empowerment Zone (Gittel, 2001). The passage of time may account for these very differing points of view about the extent of community involvement and outreach. Additionally, once the EZ designation was terminated in 2002, some of the respondents continued to be engaged under the new Renewal Community program.⁴¹

⁴¹ The Atlanta EZ program formerly ended in 2002 once the city was designated as a Renewal Community (RC). Atlanta’s application for RC status contained 60 census tracts and included 21 of the original 23 EZ census tracts. The city was able to retain any unspent EZ Title XX funds as long as the funds were used to “provide meaningful benefit to the residents of the original Empowerment Zone census tracts” (ACoRA Integrated Strategic Plan, 2005, pp. 1-2). The ACoRA Plan, covering the period of 2004 -2009, noted as of October 2004 approximately \$52.8 million remained in Title XX funds. It was anticipated that those funds would be expended “well in advance of 2009” (p. 4). In March 2009, it was estimated that there still was about \$43 million dollars in Title XX funds remaining.

When asked about the ability of the community to be involved or engaged in the planning process, one respondent stated:

My sense was that it's a natural urge in people to be engaged in what is impacting on their life, positive or negative...to be engaged in addressing those issues, just needing an opportunity to do it. Short of the model that we used, most arrangements that I had seen where participation was being sought, it was an opportunity for venting emotionally – not constructively addressing issues, but venting emotionally. The model we used kind of cut that out. But in all of those 39 neighborhoods, there was an eagerness to be engaged in what they perceived as a process that could literally change the quality of their lives (Interview 1A).

One respondent did note that there was some sense of power during the planning phase:

I wouldn't call them conflicts, it was rigorously debated. Those priorities came from the people. The main topic and their priorities was something that was produced during the application process by the people. That was the power of that group that allowed us to rank the order of those things people thought was important (Interview 1A).

Reviewing the issue of attendance at meetings of the AEZC or CEAB and the various committees as a factor of the level of participation, each of the respondents reported attending meetings all or most of the time (Interviews 1A, 2A and 3A). This would represent a high level of participation by the community representatives even if they were not able to influence the decision-making process. There was a level of determination and persistence that could have contributed to better outcomes related to decision-making authority, if the appropriate resources were in place.

Exercise of Power

To ensure that the community would be represented throughout the phases of the EZ program, the Atlanta Community Empowerment Corporation (ACE) was formally incorporated in September 1994 before the City of Atlanta was designated as one of the EZ areas. Because the community had taken steps on its own to incorporate, the Mayor was not able remove them from the process. One of the respondents noted:

After the announcement that Atlanta had been awarded a grant, the Mayor had prepared some letters dismissing us telling us thank you...that we had helped out. And to his chagrin, we told him we were not going anywhere because we had incorporated...His plan was to dismiss us (Interview 1A).

According to the articles of incorporation, this non-profit entity was membership-based and included representatives from 69 communities (30 EZ communities and 39 Linkage communities). The ACE Board of Directors included 36 members representing the 30 EZ communities and 6 from the Linkage communities. The organizational by-laws provided that each Director would be elected by the membership of the Neighborhood Planning Unit (NPU) covering that community.

ACE also established the following seven Standing Committees that covered the priorities of the AEZ Strategic Plan and organizational development:

1. Membership Services and Board Development

2. Finance
3. Human Resource and Administrative Services
4. Youth and Family Development
5. Community Economic Development
6. Housing
7. Public Safety

The community representatives expected that given their role of oversight for the implementation of the AEZ Strategic Plan, resources would be provided once the Atlanta Empowerment Zone Corporation (AEZC) was established. Several of the respondents noted that sufficient funding was not provided to support the work of the community organization. In fact one respondent noted that by the time the initial President of ACE stepped down from the position in 1996, no funding had yet been provided (Interview 1A). The purpose of the funding was to establish an administrative structure with staffing, office space, and other organizational needs (Interview 1A).

The main vehicle for the community representatives to maintain contact with the EZ residents was through ACE. “The ACE Board would meet prior to the Atlanta Empowerment Zone Corporation Board. We would always meet on the Saturday prior to the Board meeting to formalize our concerns and issues...and have it ready when we went to the AEZC Board meeting to place them on the agenda” (Interview 1A and 2A). There were plans to develop other means of communicating such as having a “website, newsletter, and a whole lot of other stuff” but ACE did not get the funding (Interview 1A).

Based on prior experiences with federal government programs, the respondents sought ways to avoid some of the same problems occurring again. One respondent noted the similarity of the EZ program with the earlier Model Cities program. He stated referring to some of the requirements:

Most of that came through the Model Cities; we knew we were developing the same thing, the Model Cities all over again. Because the board that we put together was similar to Model Cities. If you go back and read the Model Cities make up and compare it to the Empowerment Zone, you almost see a mirror of what happened with the Model Cities program (Interview 1B).

Another respondent said:

The main thing we were trying to see, how it was going to be a benefit to the individuals in the Empowerment Zone. Because from the previous federal government urban renewal programs and Model Cities Program all that stuff like that, a lot of time a lot of money is spent and nothing to show for it. And there are not that many people who benefit. So, we were trying to keep it from being a similar type program as the other federal programs had been before, like urban renewal program and the Model Cities program. We were hoping that we would prevent that type of set up from being put together (Interview 2B).

One of the strategies put in place to address this concern was noted by one of the respondents. Aware of some restrictions negotiated with the Department of Health and Human Services requiring the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to verify any requisitions by the City of Atlanta before the release of any funding, he stated:

One of the things that we heard from the Model Cities era to the Urban Renewal era is that supposedly funds were identified that were supposed to do certain things, and the funds got drawn down but those things never

got done. One of the things the citizens said to us was that we have to avoid that happening here. We have to avoid the \$250 million dollars vanishing and none of the things we say we need done and nobody knows where the money went (Interview 1A).

Although there was general agreement that there needed to be a new structure separate from city government to administer the Empowerment Zone funding, there was little agreement about what the structure should be in terms of size; the balance of power between EZ community representatives and other sectors of the community; the nature of the continuing role of the community; the authority to make appointments to the board; and leadership of the board. In the end, an Executive Board of 17 members was established. The mayor served as Board Chair and appointed the other 16 members, with 6 of the members being designated by the Community Empowerment Board (CEB) to represent the EZ communities. The CEB became the Community Empowerment Advisory Board (CEAB) with responsibility to serve in an advisory capacity to the Executive Board of AEZC and the EZ Executive Director. The CEAB was also to be the main link between the EZ neighborhood residents, the Linkage communities, and the EZ programs and initiatives.

Part of the discussion regarding the formation of the AEZC was to have an equal number of representatives from the EZ communities and the community-at-large. However, that recommendation was not accepted by the mayor (Interview 1A). Other respondents noted that the unequal distribution of representatives

between the community and the other sectors made it difficult to ensure that community concerns were addressed. For the most part, none of the respondents felt that the AEZC Executive Board was representative in its make-up. The one respondent who did state that it was representative, did voice concern about the smaller number of community representatives:

I think it had a good portion of neighborhood representation from the Empowerment Zone neighborhoods. But the thing about it was that the Corporation, the other people who represented the other partners like the City government and City Council, outnumbered the neighborhood representation...so that a lot of times, things that needed to be influenced by the neighborhood...those who represented those outside of the neighborhood, were the ones that had control... (Interview 2B).

During the initial planning phase, one of the areas of conflict that emerged was related to who should have control over the Empowerment Zone. Some community actors, such as the downtown business interests, were pushing for The Atlanta Project (TAP) to provide the leadership since it was an existing organization with experience. TAP was established in 1992 by former President Jimmy Carter to address some of the same inner-city problems targeted by the EZ program. The rationale was that “there was nothing that would suggest that community people would know how to handle something on that level. For it [the EZ program] to be successful, it had to be managed by an organization with capacity and accessibility to management experience to handle something on that level” (Interview 1A). There also seemed to be some underlying racial overtones since some saw TAP as “the white thing”:

It was almost like the Empowerment Zone was a conflict, not conflict but it was the black thing and the Atlanta Project was the white thing. One was headed up by City of the Atlanta which was the black thing, and the Atlanta project headed up by Jimmy Carter was the white thing (Interview 1A and 1B).

Nonetheless, there seemed to be an underlying assumption by some sectors that the community did not have the capability or capacity to oversee the program even if given the proper support.

Access to Resources

Having access to resources is essential to enable community residents to have meaningful participation. In response to the question what was needed to improve participation on the Board of Directors, one respondent said “Access to resources. We were organized and ready to go” (Interview 1A). Resources are not limited to funding, but include training opportunities and other support services. The fact that there was an expectation and requirement of funding is reflected in the following comment:

The RFP specifically said that it was understood that in order for citizens to participate they would need access to resources. And then we prepared an elaborate 12-month budget and submitted it, feeling that funding should really come off the top (Interview 1A).

The community’s need for resources is clearly related to the ability and capacity to participate in a meaningful way. One respondent stated “you put us on a \$250

million board without any training, that's a heavy burden. You've got to learn Robert's Rules of Order and we had to learn that quickly" (Interview 2A).

Another stated, "if you've never run a multi-million dollar corporation, it's very difficult for you to put people in positions to run a million dollar corporation who have never done it...and that includes me, I'm not talking about anyone else, me too" (Interview 5B).

Another issue related to access to technical assistance involved having a relationship with a university or educational institution. One respondent reported:

We thought it was an ideal move for the Atlanta University Center. They wouldn't come on board even though they were located in the Empowerment Zone. We could not get them to buy in. That was very upsetting. We thought that the spin off that would come from the Empowerment Zone initiative would raise the Atlanta University Center to a whole new level (Interview 1A).

Several respondents noted that there was a need to provide start-up funding for community groups. The current policy that requires a community group or small business to make expenditures first, then seek reimbursement, was not effective (Interview 3A, 1B, and 2B). One of the respondents saw this practice

contributing to the City of Atlanta's inability to disburse the remaining EZ funds over the last seven years (Interview 3A).⁴² Another noted:

That's going to have to be changed. That don't make no kind of sense. If you are going to get a grant or get allocated some funds, they at least need to give you some money to get started. You don't have to get it all at one time, but at least to get started with so you can start a project. If you are going to get funded for a project but then you have to have the money to spend first to get the project going, that don't make no sense (Interview 2B).

Identification of Community Benefits

Part of the process of community empowerment includes not only the ability to determine what the priorities are; but also the power to act on those priorities by having them implemented. The extensive process of community engagement or participation to develop the AEZ Strategic Plan has already been described elsewhere in this study. Numerous meetings were held to provide an opportunity for the community to express its 'strategic vision for change.' Based on the responses from the key informants, evaluations and other reports, the results of the Atlanta Empowerment Zone program had very little to do with the community's vision as set forth in the AEZ Strategic Plan.

⁴² See footnote 41.

When questioned whether there were any specific projects that would be considered a major accomplishment of the Empowerment Zone program, none of the respondents were able to identify one. Whether they had been directly involved as a member of the governance structure or indirectly as a community leader, the response was the same – “I am not aware of any specific projects” (Interview 1A, 2A, 3A; 1B, 2B, 3B, 4B, and 5B). When the issue was probed a little further, the respondents did identify a couple of projects they believed helped a few residents in the community. There was general agreement that the Mortgage Assistance Program (MAP) helped to bring new homeowners into the communities. However, these homeowners for the most part were from outside the EZ area. The challenge of creating homeownership opportunities for the EZ residents had to do with the increasing land values and construction costs, and the extremely low income of the residents. The following are some of the respondents’ comments:

I was able to convince the people who were renting outside Summerhill to come back and buy a house but the majority of the people were new residents (Interview 1B).

Most of these housing developments are not for people with low income people, it was mostly for middle or upper income people. They never developed for low-income people; they almost always put what was called mixed-use development....

The results of the mixed income, and the result of our efforts actually gentrified our own neighborhood, just in terms of our own development that we were doing. We were thinking that we were developing houses for people in the neighborhood but ended up really developing houses for people to come into the neighborhood; which was all right, but the

majority of the houses that we ended up building ourselves they ended up being New York residents (Interview 2B).

There was some realization that the formula that was promoted for homeownership by EZ residents was not realistic, a CDC developer commented:

I don't believe that people truly understand the true economic condition of the individuals that were living in these neighborhoods. What several of those individuals would have been able to afford would have been \$45,000 for a house instead of \$75,000 or \$80,000, so no housing existed that was truly affordable to them.

...In 1991, we able to get people to donate land or give land to us for nothing. They just gave it to us and we gave them a tax write off. Then we started acquiring properties. We acquired them between \$2000 and \$10,000. But in the last three years we had to pay up to \$50,000 to \$100,000 for that same lot. I can't build an affordable house for a person to buy who is making low income wages...where I paid \$50,000 just to acquire the lot (Interview 5B).

Although there were favorable opinions about the Mortgage Assistance Program, there were mixed reactions about the Senior Owner-Occupied Rehab Program (SOORP). The SOORP was to provide grants to senior citizens, who were homeowners, to help them bring their houses up to code. There were many complaints that the contractors hired by the City did shoddy work and made a bad situation somewhat worse. Another program that received high marks was the asthma initiative that received EZ funding to provide screening services to EZ residents. The children in the community had a high incidence of asthma (Interview 2A). The respondent also noted that there were plans to implement a scholarship program and reported:

...We wanted to do the scholarship program but the Mayor [Shirley Franklin] stole it from us...the Mayor's Scholarship Initiative. I'm glad it was activated but that was one of the first programs we going to do collectively with naysayers and we were real clear about how we were going to collaborate (Interview 2A).

One of the examples that several respondents mentioned in terms of EZ program excesses and disregard for the community needs, was the opening of a Rolls Royce car dealership. One comment was that "there may have been one person hired to wash the cars." However, once the EZ funds ended, the dealership left the community (Interview 4B and 5B).

A factor related to the issue of empowerment is the ability to establish relationships with others to achieve one's goals and objectives. All of the respondents did report that new relationships were established as a result of participation in the EZ program. Many of the community representatives had an opportunity to get to know one another and work together. Some of those relationships continued past the existence of the EZ program (Interview 1A, 2A, 3A; 1B, 2B, 3B, 4B, and 5B).

Overall, based on the available information, there was no program or project carried out on the scale required to address the needs that existed when the EZ program started in 1995. For example, Rich's (2003) review of Atlanta's 2001

Annual Report to HUD indicated the identifiable results of the AEZ were the following: less than 300 jobs created; 75 residents trained; 61 housing units rehabilitated; and 139 grants to assist families to purchase a home in the Empowerment Zone (Rich, 2003, p. 108).

Challenges of the AEZC

The challenges faced by the Atlanta Empowerment Zone program and its ineffectiveness have been well documented by a number of studies (Abt, 2001; Gittell, 2001; Rich, 2003). One challenge was related to the significant staff and board turnover during the life of EZ program. Rich (2003) reported there were six different executive directors during a seven year period, with one director serving twice. He also noted that regular meetings of the AEZC Board were often suspended during the absence of an Executive Director, which in some cases exceeded a year (Rich, 2001, p. 98).

Another challenge was the exhaustion of funds for administrative operations. The original AEZ Strategic Plan did not list the use of EZ funding to cover administrative costs in the belief that the application would be more competitive (Rich, 2003). Once the EZ designation was approved, the Atlanta City Council approved an allocation of \$4 million to cover administrative costs over the ten-year life of the program. It is estimated that the \$4 million allocated for a ten-

year period was expended in about 18 months (Rich, 2003, p. 100). This contributed to the EZ staff turnover and lack of continuity. Eventually the Annie E. Casey Foundation stepped in to help cover some of the administrative costs related to staffing and training assistance for the Atlanta EZ Corporation (Interview 1A and 2A).

Challenges of the CEAB

The representatives to the Community Empowerment Advisory Board (CEAB) faced two different sets of challenges. One challenge was related to their involvement as community representatives to the Executive Board of the Atlanta Empowerment Zone Corporation; the other as representatives of the community within the CEAB itself. First, in terms of involvement with the AEZC, the major obstacle noted by all respondents was the firm control exercised by then-Mayor Bill Campbell over all aspects of the EZ program. During the initial period of the EZ program, Mayor Campbell served as the Chairperson of the AEZC Executive Board. It has been noted that he was the only mayor of the six designated EZ urban areas to serve in that capacity (Rich, 2003). The AEZC by-laws provided that in the Chair's absence, the Vice-Chair would serve. The by-laws also provided that the President of the CEAB would serve as Vice-Chair of the AEZC. In an apparent effort to minimize the role of CEAB, the Mayor was able to have the AEZC by-laws amended to allow him to appoint a "mayor's designee" to serve in his absence rather than the Vice-Chair of the AEZC.

Each respondent noted that nothing would be approved if the Mayor did not support it. When asked which members of the Executive Board had the greatest influence, all responses indicated “the Mayor.” “He was the decider. Nobody really was making any decisions other than him. The Board meeting was not really a deliberative process” (Interview 1A). When respondents were questioned about what happened to community projects or recommendations that were not adopted by AEZC, one stated “Dead filed, and then you had to see if you could resurrect it” (Interview 2A).

The need to improve the process to participate in meetings and being prepared was reflected in the comment:

...You all are giving away millions of dollars and you tell me you have not read the proposal. I asked them who has not read the proposal raise your hand...and they....raised their hands (Interview 2A).

The issue of co-optation as a means of controlling the response by the community to different decisions was expressed by several respondents:

Between Board meetings people were contacted and told that if they really wanted something to get done they would really have to come through this way as opposed to the ACE Board. They were told people over there at the ACE Board were trying to cause trouble. There were some members on our Board that would succumb to some of that influence...then we had to adjust their attitudes (Interview 1A).

...You bribed the people in Grady Homes [public housing] and they thought if they came to the NPU and supported it...they brought them by the bus loads...You see the kind of games they played. It's so frustrating; it just brings up bad memories (Interview 2A).

Regarding the challenges within the CEAB itself, some of the initial issues were related to the question of resources and its effect on the community's ability to participate. It was noted that there was "pressure":

You imagine you are trying to participate in the management of a \$250 million dollar effort and you are volunteering your time. The ACE Board members were volunteers. We could not even pay gas stipends for people to get back and forth to the Board meetings. These were poor people. And then there were political efforts to pick us off, which is normal and usual in cases like that to pit us against each other (Interview 1A).

As the EZ program failed to make any real progress, the respondents noted there was tension and in-fighting. "Egos" were listed as a problem; there was litigation around incidents of assault and contested elections; there were intra-racial issues related to skin complexion, and educated versus uneducated; lack of board training and relevant experience; and divisions between those representing EZ neighborhoods and Linkage communities (Interview 2A, 3A and 3B).

Another issue was related to the lack of accountability by some of the representatives to the CEAB to their constituency. The community representatives were supposed to be elected by the local Neighborhood Planning Units (NPU) members. This was premised on the idea that the NPU was part of the formal community structure that allowed for input and feedback on issues of concern to the community. Some of the respondents felt that there was not much reporting back taking place.

I couldn't understand how we could have thirty communities represented but we didn't have any projects coming out of those communities....We started that process [of being strategic]; it was like they were just sitting around the table doing nothing and it was to get the stipend. Which was \$45.00? (Interview 2A).

Summary and Conclusions

One of the differences between the Empowerment Zone program and other comprehensive redevelopment efforts, such as Model Cities described elsewhere in this study, was the decision to concentrate revitalization efforts within a specific geographic area of a community. The geographic area of the AEZ was 9.29 square miles and included less than 50,000 people. Given the size of the community and the area, technically, it should have been possible to document the accomplishments of the EZ program in improving the conditions that made the area eligible for the program in the first place.

What started out as a powerful process that included large numbers of community residents in an effort to participate in and design their future petered out before it really had a chance to get off the ground. While some had very high expectations that things would be different this time, others maintained an 'I told you so' attitude that it would not be different. The concerted effort to have community participation in the initial planning phase to develop the EZ Strategic Plan did not carry over to the implementation phase. It is clear that the reason

for this failure was not due to the lack of interest or desire on the part of the community. In fact, the evidence suggests that despite the odds and obstacles, there were community representatives committed to advocating for benefits for the community.

A significant challenge to the role and ability of the CEAB representatives to participate in the process has to do with the issue of power. One respondent stated:

I was told, by the way, that one of the fears was that since the ACE Board was organized, and was representative of the people in the neighborhoods, the 250,000 of them, that when ACE got some money, they would become political. That was one of the reasons there was the effort to make sure that no money was coming over there. I was told that, not that it was true (Interview 1A).

Although there was no direct evidence as to whether the Mayor had a real concern about ACE becoming “political” and therefore limited access to resources, the literature supports the proposition that access to resources is part of the empowerment process. The community representatives organized their own structure as a means of exerting power, but without an independent means of obtaining resources, their efforts were stymied.

This research, as well as the various studies and evaluations that have been prepared about Atlanta’s Empowerment Zone program, demonstrates that in

order for the community to be able to effectively participate in such programs and become empowered, a fundamental shift will be required in how such programs are developed and implemented in the future. Chapter 8 will outline some policy recommendations in this regard.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

This research study about community participation and empowerment highlights the contorted path that has been traveled to explain what is meant by those concepts. The definitions vary depending on the particular discipline.

Sometimes the focus is on the individual; other times on the community; and occasionally, there is focus on both the individual and the community (Rocha, 1997). It has been noted that everyone is in favor of participation and empowerment, as long as no one really says what it means (Peterman, 2000; Boyle and Silver, 2005). However, because of the continuing trauma and devastation that is visited upon communities where the poor are concentrated, it is imperative that clear and unequivocal meanings be provided to the concepts of participation and empowerment. Since the goal to alleviate the conditions of poverty requires the active engagement of the intended beneficiaries in the process so that they will be empowered, the meanings must be designed to achieve that objective.

Preceding the early days of the Community Action Programs to the more recent Empowerment Zone program, the African American community has actively sought to exercise the right to control the institutions and decisions that impact its quality of life. Ironically, during the period of Jim Crow and segregation, the

African American community did in fact have significant control over institutions that contributed to the social, economic, and cultural life of the community (White, 1982, pp. 213-214). With the push toward integration and the attainment of political power in the broader community, the actual levels of political and economic control appear to have declined for many segments of the African American community, notwithstanding the recent election of Barack Obama to the U.S. presidency.

The events and conditions that have unfolded in the Atlanta EZ study neighborhoods in terms of the continuing deterioration of the quality of life – high levels of unemployment and poverty; low levels of educational attainment, even in terms high school diplomas or GEDs; and inadequate housing, to name a few – present a very disturbing and disheartening picture, particularly considering that the same neighborhoods were part of the Model Cities program over forty years ago. The situation clearly demonstrates that the approach of the comprehensive planning initiatives to date is a necessary but insufficient response to address the underlying issues related to poverty in this country.

In his introduction to the classic study of community power structures and decision-makers, Floyd Hunter (1953) wrote:

Power is a necessary function in a society....it is also a necessary function in the community, for it involves decision-making and it also involves the

function of executing determined policies – or seeing to it that things get done which have been deemed necessary to be done (p. 2).

Later citing John Dewey⁴³, Hunter notes the significance of social planning and the role of participation:

The keynote of democracy as a way of life may be expressed...as the necessity for the participation of every mature human being in the formation of values that regulate the living of men together: which is necessary from the standpoint of both the general welfare and the full development of human beings as individuals (Hunter, 1953, p. 234).

Without question, the fundamental issue that impacted the functioning and results of the Atlanta Empowerment Zone Corporation was the issue of power.

Who had power? How was the power exercised? And who benefited by the exercise of power? Based on the research conducted to date, the community residents were heralded as an essential part of the Empowerment Zone program and its goals. At least in the case of Atlanta, the community did not have power in its classical sense as described by Hunter (1953), and did not really benefit from the exercise of power through their elected officials. The results of the EZ program in Atlanta illustrates that the concept of representative democracy alone does not necessarily bring about benefits for the most vulnerable members.

Stone (1989, 2001) has highlighted the shortcomings of the governing coalition in Atlanta regarding its failure to address the very visible inequities and increasing levels of poverty.

⁴³ Dewey, John. (1946). *Problems of men*. New York: Philosophical Library, p. 58.

This research posited the question, where do we go from here? Similarly to when Dr. King raised the same question in 1967, the conditions in too many communities, particularly those where African Americans are concentrated, have continued to decline. The situation in Atlanta, unfortunately, is not unique and represents a microcosm of the results of policies and programs that have failed to adequately address the conditions of poverty. The events that unfolded in New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in August 2005 were a painful reminder to some, and a shocking wake-up call to others, about the extreme levels of poverty in the U.S. that exist side by side with incredible wealth. Even as the overall economic situation has recently declined with unemployment rising across the board, the impact is much more devastating in communities where there has been persistent poverty. For example, while the City of Atlanta's unemployment rate according to the 1990 census was 9.2%; in the EZ study neighborhoods the rate ranged as high as 33.3%. The 2000 census reflected an increase in Atlanta's unemployment rate to 14%; in the EZ study neighborhoods, the rate ranged as high as 34.5%. As we know, the unemployment rate does not take into consideration those persons who are no longer seeking employment.

The debates about why there is poverty and what, if anything, should be done about it, have raged on and on since at least the Middle Ages in the twelfth century (Geremek, 1994, 1997; Polanyi, 1944, 2001). Notions about the 'undeserving poor' and the 'culture of poverty', as well as other theories, have

continued to hamper any real progress taking place to address the fundamental causes of poverty. The historical role of the use of race from enslavement, Jim Crowism to claims of ‘reverse’ discrimination, is deeply ingrained in the political, economic, social, and moral fiber of this country (Blair and Carroll, 2007). The issue of race continues to cast a long shadow over policy decisions; it is rarely acknowledged in an honest way. The issue of poverty is also connected to the issue of wealth disparity which impacts the ability of a community to address its needs. Oliver and Shapiro (1995) acknowledged that the “racialization of the welfare state and institutional discrimination are fundamental reasons for the persistent wealth disparities” (p. 174). Yet, the mere mention of the word race or racism often sets off an avalanche of recrimination thereby stymieing any meaningful discussions of how to right the wrongs that have been and continue to be inflicted.

In response to the question of where do we go from here, a conceptual framework for community participation as empowerment has been proposed as a holistic approach to develop policies and programs that will seriously address the underlying causes and conditions of poverty. The framework includes a clear definition of participation as a basic right; acknowledgement of community assets as the basis of partnerships to facilitate access to resources; development of social justice and equity-based policies at all levels of government; and the establishment of mechanisms to address “capability deprivations.” The results

and findings of this research study confirm that a comprehensive approach to poverty alleviation must be much more holistic such as in manner outlined above; and it will require strategies different from those that have been developed in the past.

The community residents of Atlanta were active participants in the planning and development of Atlanta's Empowerment Zone Strategic Plan that formed the basis of the application for EZ designation. Taking the language from the EZ application to heart that "the residents themselves...are the most important element of revitalization," a separate legal entity was established by the community to serve as the mechanism to support ongoing community involvement. Although the language of EZ program and guidelines emphasized the participation of the community as a "full partner" in the planning and implementation of the program, it was not sufficient to ensure the community's participation. Also, the establishment of a separate legal entity by the community was not sufficient to ensure their participation at the level required to exert control and influence the decision-making process.

Once the EZ designation was in hand, Atlanta officials – primarily at the direction of then-Mayor Bill Campbell – proceeded to disregard the priorities that had painstakingly been developed through a process of consensus-building

by the community. The failure of the Atlanta Empowerment Zone Corporation (AEZC) to enforce the requirement to provide funding to the Atlanta Community Empowerment Corporation (ACE) seriously hampered the community's ability to be actively engaged in the program. Furthermore, the community's lack of access to independent resources made them dependent on the AEZC. The lack of resources meant there was no administrative structure in place to provide staff, office space, or equipment to support the community effort. The numerical disadvantage of the community representatives on the AEZC Executive Board, 6 out of 17 members, also affected their ability to exercise any meaningful control or influence over the decision-making process.

Overall there was a high level of participation by the community representatives in terms of attendance at meetings of the Atlanta Empowerment Zone Corporation Executive Board, the Community Empowerment Advisory Board, and the respective committees. However, the other factors that are needed to make participation meaningful or effective – exercise of power; access to resources; and identification of results – were not sufficiently available to the community representatives despite their best efforts.

As outlined in Chapter 3, the conceptual framework for community participation as empowerment is based on several premises:

1. Meaningful participation is a cornerstone of democracy;
2. Community assets and partnerships facilitate access to resources both within and without the community;
3. Social justice and equity-based policies are needed on the local, state and national levels; and
4. Mechanisms are needed to address the issues of “capability deprivations” in the areas of health, employment, education and housing.

An assessment follows of the extent to which each of these premises held in the EZ study neighborhoods.

The research examined the first premise of “meaningful participation” in the case of the EZ study neighborhoods and found that it was absent. The community representatives had a number of factors in their favor that would appear to support meaningful participation. For example, they were very engaged in the initial development of the EZ application that helped to secure Atlanta’s designation as an Empowerment Zone. They actively participated in the EZ governance structure through involvement on the AEZC Executive Board, the Community Empowerment Advisory Board, and the various committees of each entity. They were elected as a representative of the respective community through the Neighborhood Planning Unit (NPU). The community representatives also had prior experience in community development activities and programs. However, in spite of this background, the participation of the community representatives was not meaningful in the sense promoted by the

conceptual framework. The community representatives were not able to affect or influence any decisions related to the EZ program priorities. Their ability to have an impact on the decision-making process was undermined by their numerical disadvantage on the AEZC Executive Board (6 out of 17 members); and the lack of and access to any independent resources of a human, financial or technical nature.

The second premise of community assets coupled with partnerships to facilitate access to resources was not found in the research results. The community assets consisted of the experience of the community representatives as well as their commitment to advocate for the EZ residents. The community representatives did not establish partnerships on a level that would have increased their access to resources. A local foundation that became involved in the EZ program functioned in a mediating role between the community representatives, the AEZC Executive Board and AEZ staff. The community representatives needed to have their own partnerships with the private and public sectors that were created to focus on obtaining benefits for the community.

There was an absence of social justice and equity-based policies, the third premise, on all governmental levels. While the federal EZ legislation generally talked about community participation and empowerment, there was no clear

mandate provided for its implementation and enforcement. The federal legislation followed the earlier practices of trying to impose social legislation from the top down. Historically, that practice has not worked as evidenced by the results of the Community Action, Model Cities, and now the Empowerment Zone programs. Social justice and equity-based policies have to be developed and supported on the local, state, and federal levels of government. The development of such policies on the local and state levels can have a tremendous impact on the quality of life in communities.

It is at the local level that policies have the most direct and immediate impact. It is also at this level where the issue of power and power relations are most evident. Even though the City of Atlanta was governed by a majority of African American elected officials, there was no appreciable difference in the results of the EZ program for the affected communities than when the power structure was predominately White during the Model Cities program. This situation supports the observation that reliance on the political power structure to effect change without broader social justice and equity-based policies in place is ineffective. Further, there is evidence that the practice of representative democracy does not always adequately address the interests of those who have limited or no power. Miller and Rein (1969) noted the importance of this issue as the transformation of power whereby the focus is on challenges to “the relations between the

governed and the governors, rather than contesting who should be the governors” (Miller and Rein, p. 24; citations omitted).

Finally, the AEZ Strategic Plan as initially developed focused on ‘lifting families and youth out of poverty’ as the major priority based on the funding allocation. Several of the programs proposed by the community were designed to address what Sen (1999) refers to as “capability deprivations” which is a broader concept of understanding poverty and its causes than the traditional lack of income-based view. However, the research findings illustrated that no mechanisms were established to actually implement the programs supported by the community to address their needs. The failure to establish appropriate mechanisms is related to the community’s lack of meaningful participation in the decision-making processes of the EZ program once the official EZ designation was obtained; the lack of access to resources to address human, financial, administrative, and technical needs; and the absence of effective social justice and equity-based policies in place at any level of government.

This research contends, that if each of the above premises had been an integral part of the Empowerment Zone program and structure, then the results would have provided support for the creation and development of sustainable communities that were healthy, vibrant, and empowered. These premises are

not presented in a hierarchical manner but instead are viewed as interrelated components that serve to support one another.

Policy Recommendations

Rich (2003) outlined the requirements for sustainable community development: “vision, leadership, capacity and oversight” (p. 110). These requirements are part of the lesson to be learned for the development of future federal urban initiatives. It is important to note that these qualities are not limited to those serving in elected or official capacities, but are available in all segments of the community. One respondent provided the following example about broadening our understanding about who is qualified and able to address certain issues:

...a grandmother who is 70 years old, she’s qualified because she’s got crack babies. She knows her daughter or son needs some social services to address those issues so she would be qualified in the area...because you’re dealing with two social services, child care and health. Rehab,...she can speak to that truthfully (Interview 2A).

Using the conceptual framework of community participation as empowerment as the starting point, a model of future urban planning initiatives would start with the community, the intended beneficiary, as the principal decision-maker throughout the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation phases of the initiative. Adequate resources would be provided to the community from the beginning of the initiative in terms of administrative, technical, human and financial support. The collective assets the community brings to the process

would be acknowledged in spite of whatever perceived ‘deficits’ there may be. Collaboration at all levels of government would be guided by social justice and equity-based policies aimed at the alleviation of poverty. Each of these elements would support the establishment of mechanisms to address the “capability deprivations” that exist within the community. The mechanisms would consist of programs developed with community input and be provided sufficient resources to make a long-term impact (Patton and Sawicki, 1993; Korten and Klauss, 1984; Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993).

Some time ago, Alinsky (1965)⁴⁴ challenged the premise of the programs designed to empower the poor. Mogulof (1969) quoting Alinsky noted:

I have serious doubts about any really meaningful program to help and work with the poor until such time as the poor, through their own organized power, are able to provide legitimate representatives of their interests to sit at the programming table and have a strong voice in both the formulation and the running of the program (Mogulof, 1969, p. 228).

This research study began with a prologue containing the poem by Langston Hughes (1951), “What happens to a dream deferred?” The poem ponders that question raising various scenarios and ends with the question “Or does it explode?” Reflecting on the brief historical overview of comprehensive planning initiatives in Chapter 4, gives one pause to consider the amount of time that has

⁴⁴ Alinsky, Saul. (1965, January). The war on poverty – Political pornography. *Journal of Social Issues*, 21(1), 45-46.

passed without any real redress of the conditions that spawned the development of the various programs. How long will the dream of a decent and safe place to live, with access to adequate educational and employment opportunities, continue to be deferred for the 'least of these among us'? Let us not forget Fannie Lou Hamer's eloquent proclamation she was "sick and tired of being sick and tired."⁴⁵

The epilogue refers to Frederick Douglass's (1857) mantra of "If there is no struggle, there is no progress." Boone (1972) reminds us that "societies seldom *give* their have-nots enough of what they need" (p. 451). There is little doubt there will be a struggle to create the political will and obtain the resources necessary to seriously address the issue of persistent poverty in the United States. Often, there has been more of a willingness to look at problems of poverty abroad than at home. The community economic development movement can and must take a leading role to help forge a consensus around truly comprehensive initiatives that will lead to community empowerment to address persistent poverty and its causes. These efforts should be guided by the words of St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430 A.D.):

⁴⁵ Fannie Lou Hamer (1917-1977), the youngest of 20 children, worked as a sharecropper with her family starting at the age of six. She co-founded the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP). In 1964, the MFDP challenged the all-white Mississippi delegation to the Democratic National Convention; two MFDP members were given speaking rights and others were seated as honorary members. Retrieved on March 1, 2009 from <http://www.ibiblio.org/sncc/hamer.html>.

Hope has two beautiful daughters. Their names are anger and courage; anger at the way things are, and courage to see that they do not remain the way they are.

EPILOGUE

Let me give you a word of the philosophy of reform. The whole history of the progress of human liberty shows that all concessions yet made to her august claims have been born of earnest struggle. The conflict has been exciting, agitating, all-absorbing, and for the time being, putting all other tumults to silence. It must do this or it does nothing. If there is no struggle there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom and yet deprecate agitation are men who want crops without plowing up the ground; they want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters.

This struggle may be a moral one, or it may be a physical one, and it may be both moral and physical, but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will. Find out just what any people will quietly submit to and you have found out the exact measure of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them, and these will continue till they are resisted with either words or blows, or with both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress.

Frederick Douglass, August 3, 1857. "West India Emancipation" speech at Canandaigua, New York, on the twenty-third anniversary of the event.

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