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Building an active citizenry: the role of neighborhood problems, readiness, and capacity for change

Pennie G. Foster-Fishman · Daniel Cantillon · Steven J. Pierce · Laurie A. Van Egeren

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Abstract Community-building initiatives strive to involve residents as the drivers of the change process, involving them in an array of activities including collective action efforts. Recent evaluations of many of these initiatives, however, suggest that developing the levels of resident involvement needed in such efforts is challenging. This study examines the neighborhood conditions that are related to whether and how much residents become involved in individual activism and collective action efforts. A random-digit-dial phone survey of 460 residents in 7 distressed neighborhoods suggested that while demographic variables were relatively unimportant, resident perceptions of neighborhood readiness (i.e., hope for the future and collective efficacy) and capacity for change (i.e., social ties and neighborhood leadership), and the level of neighborhood problems were strongly related to whether and how much residents were involved in individual and collective action efforts. Moreover, different elements of these neighborhood conditions were more or less important depending on the type and level of resident involvement. For example, while perceptions of neighborhood problems was the strongest predictor of whether an individual became involved at all, perceived strength of neighborhood leadership was the strongest predictor of an individual's level of activity. The implications of these findings for practitioners and scientists are discussed.

Keywords Community building · Community capacity · Community readiness · Resident participation · Neighborhood leadership · Collective efficacy · Social ties · Neighborhood problems

Introduction

Comprehensive community-building initiatives (CBIs[1]) have become popular vehicles for addressing significant social, health, and economic issues. Although these initiatives vary greatly in their designs and targeted outcomes, most strive to affect significant social issues by focusing on problems at multiple levels within the community, fostering partnerships between and among neighborhood residents and local organizations and institutions, engaging local residents in the work, and building local capacity to resolve issues (see Duran & Stagner, 1997, and Smock, 1997 for a more complete description of CBIs). Some recent examples of such efforts include the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Making Connections initiative and the United Kingdom's regeneration efforts such as the Health Action Zones.

P. G. Foster-Fishman (✉) · S. J. Pierce · L. A. Van Egeren
Department of Psychology, Michigan State University, 125 D Psychology Building, East Lansing, MI 48824, USA
e-mail: fosterfi@msu.edu

D. Cantillon
ICF International, 10530 Rosehaven Street, Ste. 400, Fairfax, VA 22030, USA
e-mail: dcantillon@icfcaliber.com

[1] Comprehensive community change initiatives have taken on a variety of forms and names, including comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs) and community-based participatory research (CBPR). We refer to them as CBIs in this paper given the emphasis of the initiative targeted in this paper and the preferences of the foundation funding this initiative.

A key tenet of these initiatives is that in order to build a healthy community, an active citizenry base is needed. In fact, these initiatives tend to emphasize broad-based resident or grassroots involvement in most, if not all, phases of the programming efforts (Chaskin & Peters, 2000; Smock, 1997). For example, in many of these efforts, residents (often in poor urban neighborhoods) are treated as architects of and participants in the change processes occurring in their own neighborhoods. While residents can get involved in these initiatives in a variety of ways, they typically engage on three levels: (a) involvement in governance, planning, decision-making, or design entities; (b) participation in designing and implementing neighborhood improvement projects or activities; and (3) involvement in collective action or mobilization efforts (e.g., Foster-Fishman, Nowell, Siebold, & Deacon, 2004).

This commitment to active resident involvement has emerged for several reasons. First, by involving local residents in the design and implementation of a community-based initiative, more effective solutions to local issues can be identified because they will be designed with consideration of local culture and concerns and will build upon local assets (Fawcett et al., 1995; Smock, 1997). Second, residents will be more likely to accept the changes that unfold because they themselves have played a role in constructing change (Duffy, 1991). Third, such collaborative approaches can also serve to build the skilled, knowledgeable, and active citizenry base needed to foster the creation of an empowered, healthy community (Smock, 1997). Overall, most initiatives pursue resident involvement because it is deemed essential to revitalizing poor urban areas and creating sustainable change (Smock, 1997; Traynor, 2002). Moreover, regenerating resident involvement in civic and neighborhood activities is viewed as the ''lifeblood of urban renewal'' (Murphy & Cunningham, 2003, p. 107).

However, CBI evaluations have often found that eliciting and maintaining the desired level of resident involvement is difficult (e.g., Chaskin & Peters, 2000; Gray et al., 1997; Taylor, 1997; Traynor, 2002). In fact, in their review of community-building efforts within small cities similar to the one targeted in this study, Murphy and Cunningham (2003) found that levels of resident participation were often inadequate for promoting serious resident mobilization and shifts in existing power bases. These challenges to resident participation in community-building initiatives occur for several reasons. For example, residents who are invited to participate in these efforts often live in neighborhoods experiencing multiple, deeply entrenched problems. These problems, coupled with the neighborhood conditions they often foster (e.g., weak neighboring and social ties, low informal social control, low collective efficacy), have been found to have a detrimental impact on resident participation (Chavis & Wandersman, 1990; Coulton, Korbin, Su, & Chow, 1995; Ross & Jang, 2000; Sampson, Morenoff, & Gannon-Rowley, 2002; Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997; Unger & Wandermann, 1983). In addition, many of the neighborhoods targeted in CBIs have a long history of commitments from ''outsiders'' that are often not fulfilled. This history can reduce residents' willingness to engage in new programs or opportunities.

The purpose of the current study was to examine the conditions related to resident involvement in neighborhood-based activities within the context of one comprehensive community-building effort. In addition to providing baseline data for the evaluation of this CBI, the study was also designed to provide funders, programming staff, and residents with insight into those conditions that could be leveraged to foster resident involvement within the initiative. Recognizing the challenges CBIs face in promoting resident involvement, we considered it useful to collect information around existing forms of resident participation in individual and collective change efforts across the seven participating neighborhoods. An important goal of the current study was to understand what contextual factors were associated with existing levels of participation within targeted neighborhoods, with the hope that such awareness could be used to design interventions targeted at promoting greater resident involvement within local neighborhood activities and larger community-building efforts.

The role of context in resident involvement

While many community-building initiatives ultimately work to shift community-wide policies and practices, they often start their efforts at the local neighborhood level, using a community-building framework to foster the neighborhood conditions needed to encourage active resident engagement (Kubisch et al., 2002). Because the success of these initial neighborhood efforts is a necessary step towards the goal of mobilizing the community to shift broader policies and procedures, it is important to understand how local neighborhood conditions facilitate and constrain resident involvement.

In this study, three types of neighborhood conditions and their relationship to resident involvement were explored: neighborhood capacity, neighborhood

readiness, and neighborhood problems. The emphasis on the first two conditions in this study came, in part, from the increasing interest in how a neighborhood's capacity and readiness to change can support efforts to promote increased resident involvement (Price & Behrens, 2003). In brief, both capacity and readiness refer to the conditions needed to support successful community mobilization around a particular problem (Goodman et al., 1998). Both frameworks have become increasingly popular in recent years, particularly among foundations and other funders who have found them to be useful tools for identifying community elements that should be developed to create more compatible, supportive, and sustainable conditions for the initiatives they pursue. For example, in the comprehensive community effort targeted in this study, the key funder, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, designed the first phase of programming with an explicit focus on understanding and building the targeted community's readiness and capacity to support the necessary levels of resident involvement. This programming emphasis seemed essential given the low levels of resident involvement that had historically characterized the neighborhoods targeted for this effort and the initiative's goal to build a powerful resident base of active citizens within the neighborhoods. As the evaluators for this initiative, it was our hope that by assessing neighborhood capacity and readiness prior to the start of this effort, we could better understand the current participation levels of residents as well as identify areas to develop in the community-building effort.

Because both the community capacity and community readiness frameworks include multi-faceted, overlapping elements (i.e., Goodman et al.'s 1998 model of community capacity includes 12 factors; Tri-Ethnic Center for Prevention Research's Community Readiness Model includes six dimensions [Plested, Edwards, & Jumper-Thurman, 2003], and both models include components of leadership and resources) researchers or programmers using them to inform their work are challenged to determine which dimensions within each framework to emphasize as part of a particular project. For example, the critical components of capacity or readiness for change may vary depending upon the goals of the project and the community's context and history of working together to create change. Because it is often neither practical nor desirable to develop or measure all elements within these frameworks, it becomes imperative to clarify ''capacity and readiness for what and where?'' Towards that end, we selected elements of capacity and readiness that were appropriate to the targeted intervention goals (i.e., research suggested they were critical to resident involvement) and to the specific context (i.e., key informants within the targeted community[2] identified them as relevant). In addition, though the concepts of community capacity and readiness are very similar, the current tendency in the literature to use them somewhat interchangeably ''minimizes important differences that each contributes to the development of community...initiatives'' (Goodman et al., 1998, p. 260). Below, we describe how we have distinguished between community capacity and community readiness and highlight those dimensions within each that were targeted within our study.

Community capacity for change

The concept of community capacity has been utilized to describe the extent to which a context has the structures and processes in place to help mobilize residents for action (Baker & Teaser-Polk, 1998; Goodman et al., 1998). According to Chaskin (1999), community capacity is ''the interaction of human, organization, and social capital existing within a given community that can be leveraged to solve collective problems and improve or maintain the well-being of that community'' (p. 4). Overall, most agree that community capacity includes the knowledge, skills, relationships, leadership, and resources present within a community, and that when more capacity exists, communities are better able to mobilize and support a specific change effort (Baker & Teaser-Polk, 1998; Garkovich, 1989; Goodman et al., 1998; Kubisch et al., 2002; Norton, McLeroy, Burdine, Felix, & Dorsey, 2002). In fact, community capacity is recognized as so essential to the success of comprehensive community change efforts that most, if not all CBIs, include some emphasis on building local capacity for change (e.g., Kubisch et al., 2002).

Because capacity is a complex, multi-dimensional factor (Goodman et al., 1998; Norton et al., 2002)—and thus difficult for any one initiative to target all of its elements—it is critical to emphasize those components most essential to the goals of the targeted change effort (Kubisch et al., 2002). For the purposes

[2] We collected key informant information in two ways. First, the first author participated in monthly meetings with W.K. Kellogg Foundation staff, local community organizers, and community development consultants who participated in this initiative. One hour each month was dedicated in these meetings to evaluation concerns, including identifying how to operationalize key constructs for measurement within this community. Second, focus groups involving 140 adult and 90 youth residents in the seven targeted neighborhoods were held prior to this data collection and implementation of the initiative to learn how readiness and capacity issues played themselves out in this community.

of this study, two elements of community capacity that have been found to be particularly important for fostering community mobilization and resident participation (and were emphasized in initial conversations with key informants) were targeted: social networks and ties and local leadership (Garkovich, 1989).

Social ties

Social ties refers to the type and extent of relational interactions that exist within a neighborhood, such as the extent to which neighbors socialize with each other or exchange favors or resources. Social ties are extremely important in developing trust and shared norms among neighbors, developing a sense of community, exchanging important information, and establishing informal social control (Cantillon, Davidson, & Schweitzer, 2003; Caughy, Brodsky, O'Campo, & Aronson, 2001; Elliott et al., 1996; Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003; Sampson et al., 2002). Social ties within a neighborhood provide a critical mechanism for connecting residents to their neighborhood and fostering the social networks needed to engage residents in change efforts and in collective action (e.g., Chavis & Wandersman, 1990; Norton et al., 2002; Perkins, Florin, Rich, Wandersman, & Chavis, 1990; Unger & Wandersman, 1985; Wandersman, Florin, Friedmann, & Meier, 1987). In fact, Kieffer (1984) found that individuals who became activists initially possessed a strong sense of connection and ties to their community.

Neighborhood leadership

Leadership is a critical tool for identifying local issues, initiating action, and mobilizing residents to respond to the work at hand (Norton et al., 2002). Local leadership has been consistently identified as an essential component of community capacity and is central to the ability of a neighborhood to mobilize for change (e.g., Chaskin & Peters, 2000; Easterling, Gallagher, & Lodwick, 2003; Goodman et al., 1998). Neighborhood leadership encompasses both representatives of neighborhood-based formal organizations, such as faith-based institutions, and of informal neighborhood-based groups, such as block groups or neighborhood associations. The ability of neighborhood leaders to gain access to resources both within and external to the neighborhood is vital to the success of any neighborhood or social change effort (Gittell & Vidal, 1998; Mesch & Schwirian, 1996).

Community readiness for change

Community readiness generally refers to the degree to which communities have accepted that change is needed and feasible and that the program or action that is designed to address a problem will succeed (Donnermeyer, Plested, Edwards, Oetting, & Littlethunder, 1997). Over the past decade, research has shown that communities differ in their levels of readiness and that communities with higher levels of readiness are much more successful in planning, implementing, and sustaining community initiatives (e.g., Brackley et al., 2003; Logan, Williams, & Leukefeld, 2001; Plested, Smithman, Jumper-Thurman, Oetting, & Edwards, 1999).

While some readiness frameworks include elements of community capacity, such as local leadership, knowledge, and access to resources (Edwards, Jumper-Thurman, Plested, Oetting, & Swanson, 2000; Oetting et al., 1995; Oetting, Jumper-Thurman, Plested, & Edwards, 2001; Plested et al., 1999), we have chosen to distinguish readiness from capacity by framing readiness as *the overall belief in the possibility of change* and capacity as *the local ability to implement change*. Thus, for the purposes of this study, readiness refers to the degree to which a community believes that a change is needed, feasible, and desirable (Armanakis, Harris, & Mossholder, 1993) and was assessed through the constructs of collective efficacy and sense of hope for change.

Collective efficacy

An outgrowth of prior work on the importance of *self-efficacy* (Bandura, 1986), the construct of collective efficacy taps into the shared belief that neighborhood residents have control over and can change important community characteristics—that residents' actions can and will result in meaningful and positive community change (Perkins & Long, 2002; Price & Behrens, 2003). Since the intent of comprehensive community initiatives is to create positive neighborhood change via the collective efforts of residents, assessment of the community's belief in the efficacy of this approach to change seems important. As with individual self-efficacy, if the shared perception is that change is not possible through collective action, residents are unlikely to become involved in neighborhood improvement and larger mobilization efforts.

Recent large-scale research has demonstrated the vital importance of collective efficacy in community life. In a seminal study, Sampson and colleagues (1997)

demonstrated that, controlling for neighborhood structural characteristics, communities with higher levels of collective efficacy experienced lower violence rates. They defined collective efficacy as ''social cohesion among neighbors combined with their willingness to intervene on behalf of the common good'' (p. 918). For the current study, given the focus on collective action as a possible tool for community building within the targeted initiative, we conceptualized collective efficacy as ''trust in the effectiveness of organized community action'' (Perkins & Long, 2002, p. 295). This definition corresponds to Sampson, Morenoff, and Earls (1999) extension of collective efficacy, where emphasis was placed upon an individual's sense of the potential for active engagement among neighbors.

Hope for change

Another critical element in a neighborhood's readiness to change is the belief that change is even possible. In fact, Kingsley and colleagues (1997), in their assessment of other community-building efforts to address poverty, noted that a central theme is ''rebuilding hope'' (p. 13). Hope for positive change and a better life is a critical motivational element and has been found to be strongly linked to individuals taking action to improve their lives (e.g., Hanna, 2002). Without the hope that one's life or neighborhood can actually get better, it may appear useless to engage in change pursuits or become involved in neighborhood activities. Within the context of this study, hope for change focused on one belief that may be central in getting residents involved in local neighborhood improvement activities—the belief that their local block or neighborhood can improve.

Neighborhood problems

The overwhelming majority of CBIs occur in neighborhoods rife with significant problems, including eroding physical conditions (e.g., vacant/dilapidated housing) and high levels of social disorder (e.g., crime, prostitution, and substance abuse). These problems can affect desire and willingness to become involved in community change efforts. For instance, in the case of crime, one of the main reasons many residents do not become involved is because they are afraid of retaliation (Furstenberg, 1993; Korbin & Coulton, 1997). Likewise, physical and social disorder in the local neighborhood can promote withdrawal from community life for residents, while at the same time these incivilities are seen by criminals as marking potential areas where crime will not be reported. In fact, *broken windows theory* postulates that these signs of disorder promote crime and subsequently further disorder in a downward spiral of neighborhood decay (Wilson & Kelling, 1982). However, neighborhood problems also have the potential to motivate resident participation in collective efforts to address these problems (Perkins et al., 1990). For example, Peterson and Reid (2003) found that awareness of neighborhood substance abuse problems served as a catalyst for residents to become engaged in neighborhood and other civic activities. Similarly, Perkins and colleagues (1990) demonstrated how awareness of neighborhood problems spurred resident participation in voluntary organizations.

Thus, neighborhood problems can serve as both a motivator and an inhibitor of individual activism and collective action. Awareness of negative physical and social conditions may result in fear of crime or retaliation and reduce citizen involvement (e.g., Skogan & Maxfield, 1981); but such conditions can also provide the impetus to act (Chavis & Wandersman, 1990). In this study, we were interested in exploring how perceived levels of neighborhood problems were related to resident participation within the community.

Resident involvement in neighborhood efforts

In general, resident involvement within a neighborhood can occur in a variety of forms (Smock, 1997). Within the context of a community-building effort, two types of indigenous resident involvement seem particularly important: individual activism and individual involvement in collective efforts. *Individual activism* refers to the actions of individual residents intended to express their concerns about specific problems within a neighborhood to groups or key decision-makers such as local politicians or neighborhood leaders. *Collective action* refers to an individual's participation in collaborative resident efforts to address issues or influence decision-making, such as engagement in neighborhood block groups, citizens' committees, or neighborhood organizing efforts. We chose to look at these two types of resident involvement because both would be targeted for development within this initiative; moreover, both are central to developing an active citizenry and an empowered neighborhood (Smock, 1997).

Overall, we were interested in which neighborhood conditions were related to each *type* of participation. For example, perceptions of collective efficacy may be more strongly linked to engaging in collective action than in individual activism, since the former involves

working with others to create change and may be preceded by a belief that such collective efforts would be effective. Identifying the different factors linked to each form of participation could significantly help to develop targeted programming efforts aimed at fostering one form of participation or another.

A second area of focus in this study was how neighborhood conditions are related to different *levels* of participation within the community. As evaluators of other CBIs have noted, resident participation in these efforts is uneven (Chaskin & Peters, 2000). In fact, practitioners in the community-building field are often challenged in two ways when they strive to build an active citizenry within the targeted community. The first challenge is simply to get residents involved at all. While it is neither practical nor necessary to have all residents involved in these efforts (Chaskin & Peters, 2000), reaching a significant level of resident involvement increases the likelihood that those participating residents are representative of the community and that a critical mass of participants has been developed to promote resident power and deal with issues of attrition and burnout.

A second challenge facing practitioners is the difficulty of fostering and maintaining high levels of involvement among residents who do become engaged. While an initiative may succeed at generating some level of participation within the local citizenry, creating and sustaining high levels of resident involvement often presents an even greater challenge. Yet the development of such highly engaged residents is critical, because they often become formal or informal leaders within their neighborhoods or become champions for the change effort. Having a large cadre of residents who are highly involved also reduces the likelihood of resident burnout because it reduces the burden of involvement on any one individual.

In addition to the above practical considerations, we believed that the processes and conditions that facilitate *whether* someone gets involved at all versus *how much* someone becomes engaged in such activities would be different and thus necessitated separate inquiry. This belief is rooted in the stages of change literature, particularly the Transtheoretical Model of Change (e.g., DiClemente & Prochaska, 1982; Prochaska, DiClemente, & Norcross, 1992) which strongly suggests that individuals move through stages of change as they shift their behavior (e.g., going from inactive to active to very active) and that the conditions and psychological processes that constitute each stage and motivate individuals to move from one stage to the next are quite distinct.

The current study

The current study assessed these three dimensions of neighborhood conditions (e.g., neighborhood readiness, capacity, and problems) and their relationships to current levels of resident participation as part of a baseline evaluation of a CBI. Specifically, we targeted the following research questions:

1. What neighborhood conditions are related to *whether* individuals are engaged? Are neighborhood conditions differentially related to individual activism as compared to collective action?
2. What neighborhood conditions are related to *how much* individuals participate in individual activism or collective action? More specifically, what factors differentiate highly engaged residents from those who are less involved?

Methods

Study context

This study was conducted as part of a broader evaluation of a comprehensive community-building effort called *Yes we can!* (YWC!) funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The stated goals of YWC! were to improve the economic and educational outcomes of youth and families living within distressed neighborhoods in the small city of Battle Creek, Michigan (population ~53,000). Key to the theory of change guiding the YWC! initiative was the belief that by increasing levels of resident involvement in civic activities and collective action, significant improvements in local policies and practices could occur that would result in reductions in racial inequities in educational and economic outcomes. The authors were members of the team hired to evaluate YWC!

Seven distressed neighborhoods, defined as an elementary school catchment area, or ESCA, within the city of Battle Creek were initially invited to partner with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation on the YWC! effort, in part because of the poor educational and economic conditions that existed within them based on public education records and 2000 U.S. census data. For example, over half of the children attending elementary schools within the seven neighborhoods scored below acceptable ranges on standardized tests, and approximately three-quarters of the children attending these schools qualified for free or reduced-price lunch programs. Across the seven neighborhoods, approximately 66% of the residents were Caucasian,

26% were African-American, and 7% were Hispanic. The population for each of the seven neighborhoods ranged from 1,930 to 4,500 people, with an average population of 3,393.

The data presented in this study were part of our initial baseline data collection effort and were collected approximately one month prior to the launching of YWC! within these seven neighborhoods. Because the funder and local community practitioners desired evaluation methods that were as unobtrusive as possible and because we needed to collect the baseline data reported here within a six-week time frame, we elected to conduct a random-digit-dial phone survey within the targeted seven neighborhoods.

Participants

A criss-cross directory was utilized to randomly select from the 3,301 households with phone numbers in the seven neighborhoods. A total of 5,347 calls were made to a random selection of these households. Of the 1,712 (52% of possible households) households reached, 30% agreed to participate ($N = 509$). Phone calls were placed at various times during the day to ensure that the variety of resident working schedules was accommodated. Households that could not be reached initially were called up to three times. Respondents who completed surveys were provided with $10 grocery store gift certificates to reimburse them for their time.

Missing data reduced the sample size to 460 residents. Table 1 presents the participants' demographic characteristics. Among these residents, the median length of residence was 10 years, and 85% owned their own homes. Sixty-eight percent of the participants were females, 16% were African-American, 79% were white, and 3% were Latino. Less than 1% were Asian or Native American, and 1% endorsed multiple racial/ethnic categories. Less than half (42%) of the sample reported living in a household with children under age 18.

Measures

Scale scores for each respondent were calculated as follows: First, raw scale scores were computed by taking the mean across the scale items for respondents who answered more than 80% of the items in the scale. Neighborhood means were imputed and used to replace missing raw scale scores for individuals who answered fewer than 80% of the items in a scale. Finally, raw scale scores were standardized to z-scores to adjust for differing response categories across constructs. Unless otherwise noted, the standardized scale scores were used for the continuous predictor variables in the analyses reported here.

Demographics

Several demographic variables were included in the current analyses, including gender, race, residential tenure, home ownership, and whether the household had any children under 18 years old (i.e., parenthood).

Table 1 Demographic characteristics ($N = 460$)

Characteristics	Total (%) or M (SD)	Neighborhood							Test statistic χ^2 (6) or F(6, 453)
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Gender									
Male[a]	149 (32)	26 (41)	20 (38)	22 (33)	39 (27)	13 (36)	12 (21)	17 (42)	9.39
Female	311 (68)	38 (59)	33 (62)	44 (67)	105 (73)	23 (64)	44 (79)	24 (59)	
Race									
African-American	72 (16)	10 (16)	7 (13)	5 (8)	4 (3)	5 (14)	28 (50)	13 (32)	79.71**
Other race/ethnicity[a]	388 (84)	54 (84)	46 (87)	61 (92)	140 (97)	31 (86)	28 (50)	28 (68)	
Homeownership									
Owner	389 (85)	49 (77)	40 (76)	58 (88)	132 (92)	31 (86)	47 (84)	32 (78)	14.03*
Renter[a]	71 (15)	15 (23)	13 (25)	8 (12)	12 (8)	5 (14)	9 (16)	9 (22)	
Parenthood (children under 18 in home)									
Yes	195 (42)	30 (47)	18 (34)	26 (40)	59 (41)	21 (58)	17 (30)	24 (59)	13.87*
No[a]	265 (58)	34 (53)	35 (66)	40 (61)	85 (59)	15 (42)	39 (70)	17 (42)	
Residential tenure[b]	15.7 (14.8)	12.8 (12.5)	14.3 (15.5)	16.6 (13.8)	17.8 (16.1)	10.6 (11.2)	18.0 (14.1)	13.9 (16.5)	2.11

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$

[a] Reference category in all logistic regression models

[b] Residential tenure was not standardized before use in the logistic regression analyses

These variables were included because previous research has found that some demographic variables are related to levels of participation, with more active citizens often having a higher socioeconomic status (Crenson, 1983) and greater access to resources such as the skills and time needed to participate (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). Residential tenure was a continuous variable noted by the number of years the respondent had lived at the current address; all others were coded as dichotomous variables, with race categorized as either African-American or non-African-American.

Community readiness measures

Collective efficacy

Residents were asked to rate their neighborhood's ability to collectively address neighborhood problems. Items were rated on a 3-point Likert-type scale of *no control* (1), *some control* (2), and *a lot of control* (3). Two subscales, one describing collective efficacy around neighborhood housing and social problems (4 items, $\alpha = .74$) and one describing collective efficacy around crime (3 items, $\alpha = .90$) were developed. Items asked residents about their perception of the degree of control that neighborhood residents, working together, could have on addressing housing and social problems (e.g., ''improving the physical conditions of your neighborhood'') and crime problems (e.g., ''reducing drug dealing''). The *z*-scores for the two subscales were averaged to create the collective efficacy scale score.

Hope

To assess the extent to which residents were hopeful that change was possible in their neighborhood, residents were asked to respond to the statement ''In the next year, I think that conditions on my block will improve'' on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). This single-item scale score was transformed into a *z*-score prior to use.

Community capacity measures

Neighborhood leadership

Three items measured neighborhood leadership ($\alpha = .67$) and asked about residents' perceptions of the quality of neighborhood leadership, neighborhood organizations, and faith-based leadership (e.g., ''There is strong neighborhood leadership in my neighborhood''). Residents were asked to rate how much they agreed that each statement accurately portrayed the current conditions in their neighborhood on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*.

Social ties

The social ties scale had seven items ($\alpha = .76$) that described common interactions with neighbors such as socializing, visiting, exchanging favors, and asking advice (e.g., ''People on my block socialize with each other''). Residents were asked to rate how much they agreed (on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*) that each statement accurately portrayed the current conditions on their block.

Neighborhood problems

Residents were asked to describe the extent to which their neighborhood experienced problems with housing and crime. Response categories were on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*. Neighborhood housing and related problems contained five items ($\alpha = .77$) that asked about issues such as vacant/abandoned buildings and lack of property and yard maintenance (e.g., ''Vacant or abandoned homes/buildings are a problem in my neighborhood''). Four items ($\alpha = .84$) comprised the neighborhood crime problem scale and asked about crimes and social disorder such as vandalism, drug problems, and ''youth hanging out causing trouble.'' The *z*-scores for these two problem subscales were averaged ($r = .52$, $p \leq .01$) to create the neighborhood problems scale score.

Dependent measures

Unlike the predictor variables described above, the two dependent measures were not transformed to *z*-scores. Instead, raw scale scores for these measures were each recoded into dichotomous categories. For one set of analyses, the categories represented *whether* the individual had participated in individual activism or collective action. Thus, the involved group consisted of respondents who had participated in at least one activist activity while the uninvolved group consisted of respondents who had not participated in any activist activities. In the second set of analyses, categories represented the *level* of participation. In this latter analysis, only respondents who had participated in at

least one activity were included (individual activism $n = 198$, 43% of the total sample; collective action $n = 162$, 35% of the total sample). Respondents who had participated in a single activity were placed in the low involvement group; respondents who had participated in multiple activities were placed in the high involvement group.[3]

Individual activism

Three items asked respondents whether (yes/no) they or anyone in their family[4] had in the last year: (1) Spoken to a local politician about a neighborhood problem, (2) Talked to a group causing a problem in the neighborhood, or (3) Talked to a local religious leader or minister to help with a neighborhood problem or with neighborhood improvement. The number of activities the respondent reported engaging in was tallied and answers categorized according to the guidelines above.

Collective action

Four items asked respondents whether (yes/no) they or anyone in their family in the past two months had: (1) Attended a neighborhood watch or block watch meeting, (2) Attend a citizens' committee or local political group, (3) Attended a meeting of a block or neighborhood group such as neighborhood partnerships, neighborhood planning councils, Weed and Seed, etc., or (4) Gotten together with neighbors to do something about a neighborhood problem or to organize neighborhood improvement. Many of the examples listed above, such as the citizens' committee and neighborhood partnerships, corresponded to citywide groups active in the city. Based on the number of collective action activities the respondent reported engaging in, scores were computed according to the guidelines above.

[3] We chose to use logistic regression for this analysis due to the skewed distribution of the continuous dependent variable. We considered a variety of transformations (square root, inverse, and natural log) that are often used to fix such violations of assumptions, but none of them produced acceptable results. Thus, we concluded that logistic regression technique was simply better suited to analyzing the data. For that reason we dichotomized the outcome variable as described.

[4] Other work with this data, not included in this paper, assesses geographic correlates of neighborhood readiness and capacity. "Anyone in your family" was included in the item stem to avoid underestimating the level of resident activism present among the set of *households* in the neighborhood.

Results

Baseline levels of neighborhood conditions and resident participation

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics. In the overall sample ($N = 460$), slightly less than half of the respondents (43%) had participated in individual activism, while only about one-third (35%) had participated in collective action. Among the 198 respondents who had participated in individual activism, 43% were in the high involvement group, while 46% of the 162 respondents who had participated in collective action were in the high involvement group.

Are neighborhood conditions related to whether individuals participate?

A series of multiple logistic regression analyses were conducted to examine the two research questions. Results of preliminary cross-tabular analyses and *t*-tests demonstrated that neighborhood of residence was associated with the variables examined here (see Tables 1, 2); therefore, neighborhood of residence was included in the first step, demographic variables in the second step, and the contextual variables in the final step. However, after including the demographic covariates in the initial logistic regression, neighborhood of residence was no longer statistically significantly associated with either dependent variable. Thus, neighborhood of residence was ultimately removed from the analyses.

To examine the first research question, "What neighborhood conditions are related to whether individuals participate in individual activism or collective action?" two logistic regressions were conducted with the neighborhood capacity, readiness, and problem variables as predictors and individual activism and collective action as the dependent variables. As shown in Table 3, both models were statistically significant (for individual activism, $\chi^2(10) = 79.34$, $p < .001$; for collective action, $\chi^2(10) = 97.28$, $p < .001$).

Demographic variables were largely unimportant as predictors; homeownership, residential tenure, and gender were not associated with either individual or neighborhood activism. Parenthood was a marginally statistically significant ($p = .056$) predictor of participation in individual activism but was not statistically significantly associated with collective action. Respondents who had children were 1.54 times more likely to be in involved in individual activism than were respondents without children.

Table 2 Descriptive statistics for dependent measures and contextual variables (N = 460)

Characteristics	Total (%) or M (SD)	Neighborhood							Test statistic $\chi^2(6)$ or $F(6, 453)$
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Individual activism									
No[a]	262 (57)	31 (48)	28 (53)	31 (47)	102 (71)	17 (47)	32 (57)	21 (51)	18.20**
Yes	198 (43)	33 (52)	25 (47)	35 (53)	42 (29)	19 (53)	24 (43)	20 (49)	
Low involvement[b]	113 (57)	14 (42)	14 (56)	20 (57)	35 (83)	6 (32)	15 (63)	9 (45)	21.24**
High involvement	85 (43)	19 (58)	11 (44)	15 (43)	7 (17)	13 (68)	9 (38)	11 (55)	
Collective action									
No[a]	298 (65)	36 (56)	26 (49)	43 (65)	107 (74)	21 (58)	39 (70)	26 (63)	14.79*
Yes	162 (35)	28 (44)	27 (51)	23 (35)	37 (26)	15 (42)	17 (30)	15 (37)	
Low involvement[b]	87 (54)	14 (50)	11 (41)	14 (61)	27 (73)	5 (33)	10 (59)	6 (40)	11.80
High involvement	75 (46)	14 (50)	16 (59)	9 (39)	10 (27)	10 (67)	7 (41)	9 (60)	
Community readiness									
Collective efficacy[c]	.00 (.87)	–.10 (.95)	.16 (.90)	.05 (.83)	–.15 (.84)	–.11 (1.00)	.34 (.88)	.00 (.66)	2.78*
Hope	.01 (.98)	–.04 (1.10)	.03 (.95)	–.05 (.99)	–.05 (.92)	–.10 (1.07)	.08 (1.07)	.31 (.87)	0.89
Community capacity									
Neighborhood leadership	–.01 (.99)	.10 (1.01)	.57 (.95)	–.27 (.88)	–.23 (.90)	.04 (1.05)	.13 (1.09)	–.01 (.99)	5.57***
Social ties	–.01 (.99)	–.07 (1.01)	.02 (.94)	.00 (.99)	.12 (.95)	–.41 (1.02)	–.02 (1.08)	–.06 (.99)	1.48
Neighborhood problems[d]	.01 (.88)	.53 (.89)	.12 (.78)	.28 (.90)	–.41 (.61)	.50 (.96)	–.42 (.80)	.28 (.84)	18.72***

Note: Missing values for continuous predictors were imputed with neighborhood means, then scale and subscale scores were standardized prior to use

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

[a] Reference category in the uninvolved vs. involved logistic regression models

[b] Reference category in the low vs. high involvement logistic regression models

[c] Collective efficacy was the mean of the standardized form of two subscales

[d] Neighborhood problems was the mean of the standardized form of two subscales

Table 3 Logistic regression models of individual activism and collective action (uninvolved vs. involved)

Predictor	Individual activism[a]			Collective action[b]		
	Wald	Odds-Ratio	95% CI	Wald	Odds-Ratio	95% CI
Constant	0.93	0.83		6.91	0.59	
Demographics						
Homeownership (1 = yes)	1.43	1.45	0.79–2.65	0.04	0.94	0.50–1.75
Race (1 = African-American)	1.51	1.43	0.81–2.54	0.03	1.05	0.58–1.91
Residential tenure	0.21	1.00	0.98–1.01	0.99	0.99	0.97–1.01
Gender (1 = female)	1.70	0.74	0.48–1.16	1.03	0.79	0.49–1.25
Parenthood (1 = yes)	3.65	1.54	0.99–2.40	0.22	1.12	0.70–1.79
Neighborhood problems	43.17**	2.49	1.90–3.27	28.13**	2.11	1.60–2.77
Community readiness						
Collective efficacy	2.44	1.22	0.95–1.57	9.46**	1.53	1.17–2.00
Hope	1.32	1.14	0.91–1.43	6.14*	1.38	1.07–1.77
Community capacity						
Neighborhood leadership	3.02	1.22	0.97–1.54	5.93*	1.34	1.06–1.70
Social ties	11.86**	1.52	1.20–1.93	22.23**	1.86	1.44–2.41

[a] $\chi^2 = 79.34$, $df = 10$, $n = 460$, $p < .001$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .21$

[b] $\chi^2 = 97.28$, $df = 10$, $n = 460$, $p < .001$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .26$

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Neighborhood problems was the strongest predictor of both individual activism ($p < .01$) and collective action ($p < .01$). The odds ratios in Table 3 show that residents who were one unit above the mean on the neighborhood problems scale were 2.49 times more likely to have participated in individual activism and 2.11 times more likely to have participated in collective action compared to residents who were at the mean.

Thus, residents who reported higher levels of neighborhood problems were more likely to engage in neighborhood activism.

The results for readiness (measured by collective efficacy and hope) and community capacity (measured by neighborhood leadership and social ties) were mixed. Social ties was associated with participation in both types of neighborhood change efforts ($p < .01$). Residents who were one unit above the mean on the standardized social ties scale were 1.52 times more likely to be involved in individual activism and 1.86 times more likely to be involved in collective action compared to residents who were at the mean. However, the remaining readiness and capacity variables were associated only with collective action. The odds ratios for collective efficacy, hope, and neighborhood leadership were 1.53, 1.38, and 1.34, respectively, indicating that residents one unit above the mean on each predictor were more likely to have participated in collective action than residents who scored at the mean on those scales.

In terms of classification accuracy, the model for individual activism accurately classified 81.7% ($n = 214$) of the uninvolved respondents and 51.5% ($n = 102$) of the involved residents, yielding overall accuracy of 68.7%. The proportional chance criterion (C_{PRO}; see Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1995, p. 204) is the percent of cases that would be accurately classified by chance if predictions were made by randomly assigning residents to the two outcome groups with probabilities based on the actual size of the groups. For this model, C_{PRO} is 51.0%. Based on Hair et al.'s suggested criterion (pp. 205–206) that a model's accuracy should be one-fourth greater than chance before the model has reached an acceptable level of predictive accuracy, the corresponding value is 63.7% for this individual activism model. This suggests that this model's level of predictive accuracy is acceptable. Cohen's kappa (κ), which measures agreement after adjusting for chance, can be applied to the 2×2 classification accuracy table to provide a statistical significance test. For the classification results associated with the individual activism model, $\kappa = .34$ (*asymptotic* $SE = .04$, $t = 7.52$, $p < .001$), indicating that the logistic model classifies respondents significantly better than chance.

The collective action model accurately classified 88.3% ($n = 263$) of the uninvolved respondents and 47.5% ($n = 77$) of the involved respondents, yielding an acceptable overall accuracy of 73.9% (C_{PRO} is 54.4%; Hair et al.'s suggested criterion is 68.0% accuracy). For the classification results associated with the collective action model, $\kappa = .385$ (*asymptotic* $SE = .045$, $t = 8.54$, $p < .001$), leading to the conclusion that the logistic model classifies respondents significantly better than chance.

Additional models investigating potential interactions among the collective efficacy, neighborhood leadership, hope, social ties, and neighborhood problems variables were statistically insignificant.

Are neighborhood conditions associated with level of resident participation?

To examine the second research question, ''What neighborhood conditions are related to how much individuals participate in individual activism or collective action?'' two additional logistic regressions were conducted in which the sample was comprised only of respondents who reported participating in at least one activity. The categories within the dependent variables represented low versus high involvement in individual activism and collective action.

As shown in Table 4, the model for individual activism was statistically significant, $\chi^2(10) = 24.71$, $p < .01$, as was the model for collective action, $\chi^2(10) = 31.97$, $p < .001$. No demographic variables predicted individual activism. However, race was statistically significantly associated with collective action ($p < .05$); African-American residents were 3.10 times more likely to be in the high involvement group than were residents who belonged to other racial and ethnic groups.

Neighborhood problems were significantly associated with individual activism (odds ratio = 1.70, $p < .01$,) but not with collective action (odds ratio = 1.27, *ns*,), indicating that residents who perceived higher levels of problems were more likely to be involved in multiple individual activism activities.

As with the first research question, the results for community readiness and community capacity were mixed. Neighborhood leadership, a measure of capacity, was statistically significantly associated with both individual activism (odds ratio = 1.42, $p < .05$) and collective action (odds ratio = 1.98, $p < .01$), indicating that residents who reported higher levels of neighborhood leadership were more likely to be in the high involvement group regardless of the type of activism. Hope, a measure of readiness, was statistically significantly associated with individual activism (odds ratio = 1.58, $p < .05$,) but not with collective action, indicating that residents reporting more hope were more likely to be in the high involvement group only with respect to individual activism.

The individual activism model accurately classified 76.1% ($n = 86$) of the low involvement respondents

Table 4 Logistic regression models of individual activism and collective action (low involvement vs. high involvement)

Predictor	Individual activism[a]			Collective action[b]		
	Wald	Odds-Ratio	95% CI	Wald	Odds-Ratio	95% CI
Constant	3.44	0.56		1.79	0.64	
Demographics						
Homeownership (1 = yes)	0.72	1.47	0.60–3.56	1.85	1.96	0.74–5.19
Race (1 = African-American)	1.66	1.68	0.76–3.69	5.47*	3.10	1.20–8.00
Tenure	0.55	1.01	0.98–1.04	2.27	1.02	0.99–1.05
Gender (1 = female)	0.92	0.73	0.38–1.39	2.37	0.56	0.27–1.17
Parenthood (1 = yes)	0.22	1.17	0.61–2.23	0.08	1.11	0.52–2.37
Neighborhood problems	7.53**	1.70	1.16–2.48	1.38	1.27	0.85–1.91
Community readiness						
Collective efficacy	1.42	1.27	0.86–1.86	0.00	1.01	0.67–1.54
Hope	5.35*	1.58	1.07–2.32	1.44	1.30	0.85–2.00
Community capacity						
Neighborhood leadership	4.49*	1.42	1.03–1.97	13.71**	1.98	1.38–2.85
Social ties	2.57	0.73	0.50–1.07	1.86	0.73	0.47–1.14

[a] $\chi^2 = 24.71$, $df = 10$, $n = 198$, $p = .006$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .16$

[b] $\chi^2 = 31.97$, $df = 10$, $n = 162$, $p < .001$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .24$

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

and 48.2% ($n = 41$) of the high involvement respondents, yielding an acceptable overall accuracy of 64.1% (C_{PRO} is 51.0%; Hair et al.'s suggested criterion is 63.7% accuracy). For the classification results associated with this model, $\kappa = .250$ (*asymptotic SE* = .069, $t = 3.57$, $p < .001$), indicating that the model classifies respondents significantly better than chance.

The collective action model accurately classified 74.7% ($n = 65$) of the low involvement respondents and 62.7% ($n = 47$) of the high involvement respondents, yielding an acceptable overall accuracy of 69.1% (C_{PRO} is 50.3%; Hair et al.'s suggested criterion is 62.8% accuracy). For the classification results associated with the collective action model, $\kappa = .376$ (*asymptotic SE* = .073, $t = 4.80$, $p < .001$), indicating that the model classifies respondents significantly better than chance.

Discussion

The findings from this study provide strong support for one underlying premise of CBIs: Neighborhood conditions matter and are significantly related to whether and how much an individual engages in individual or collective action. Overall, the residents within our study were more likely to be engaged in neighborhood activities when they perceived their surrounding context as ready and able to support such activity and when they noted higher levels of neighborhood problems to address. Interestingly, we also found that different elements of neighborhood conditions seem to be more or less important for different types and levels of resident involvement. For example, while we found that perceptions of neighborhood problems was the strongest predictor of whether an individual became involved at all, we found that perceived strength of neighborhood leadership was one of the strongest predictors of how active an individual was (low versus high involvement). Similarly, we found that perceptions of neighborhood readiness for change, including perceived collective efficacy and hope for change, were strongly related to whether respondents engaged in collective action, yet were unrelated to whether they were involved in individual activism. These results provide evidence for the influence of contextual variables on resident participation in community and civic life. Overall, residents who recognized the state of current problems, believed that neighborhood efforts could help alleviate these problems, had ties in the local community, and felt effective neighborhood leadership was available were more likely to be actively involved in neighborhood change efforts—both through individual actions and collective efforts.

These findings are consistent with prior research that has also found that residents who perceived both neighborhood strengths (community capacity, community readiness) and deficits (neighborhood problems) were more likely to participate in neighborhood change strategies (e.g., Perkins et al., 1990). These findings also highlight that even within the context of high levels of neighborhood problems, significant levels of capacity can exist (Cook, Shagle, & Degirmencioglu, 1997; Coulton, Korbin, & Su, 1996; Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000; Taylor, 1997).

Future researchers may want to examine more specifically the processes through which neighborhood problems affect resident involvement, such as exploring whether distinct types of neighborhood problems (e.g., crime, abandoned buildings) influence different types of resident action.

Implications for practice and science

Despite significant interest in community capacity and readiness across many disciplines and by foundations and federal funders, the measurement of these two constructs is still in its infancy (Norton et al., 2002). Our study highlights two important challenges that scientists and practitioners face when attempting to measure and nurture these factors. First, it is essential to clarify ''capacity and readiness for what?'' since the critical components of readiness and capacity vary depending upon the targeted outcome and relevant community needs. Specifically, in our study, we found that different components of capacity and readiness mattered for different types and levels of resident involvement. For example, we found that while capacity in general was related to both whether individuals engaged in individual activism and how much they pursued, we also found that different elements of capacity contributed to whether involvement happened at all versus how much involvement occurred. Specifically, while one dimension of capacity, perceived levels of neighborhood social ties, predicted *whether* an individual participated in individual activism behaviors, another dimension of capacity, perceptions of neighborhood leadership, mattered when predicting the *degree* to which residents who were involved in these activities participated. This suggests that what helps individuals move from inaction to action may be different from what helps them become highly engaged residents within their neighborhoods. In this study, initial levels of sense of community or social ties mattered more as individuals made the transition from inaction to action. This finding is supported in part by Kieffer (1984) who found that activists initially became involved in activities due in part to their strong connections to their neighborhood or community. On the other hand, our findings suggest that nurturing higher levels of activity seems to require more than just feeling good about or connected to one's neighborhood. Instead, the support of a strong neighborhood leadership infrastructure seems important to one becoming highly active in individual activist behaviors. This finding is not surprising, given that strong neighborhood leadership is a critical component of effective neighborhood associations or block groups (Perkins et al., 1990).

Second, attention to which elements of readiness and capacity are most important to target is also important when developing useful, cost-effective instruments. Because it is rarely possible or desirable to measure all of the potential components of readiness and capacity, it is important to develop a better of understanding of when and under what conditions different components of readiness and capacity matter. In this study, we highlighted two elements of capacity (e.g., social ties and leadership) and two elements of readiness (e.g., collective efficacy, and hope for change) and illustrated that when considering different types and levels of resident involvement, these four indicators assumed varying degrees of relevance and importance.

Overall, these findings have important implications for practitioners who are interested in fostering resident involvement in community-building efforts and in increasing overall levels of civic engagement. They suggest that instead of adopting generic models of community building or community development, practitioners should consider which elements of a neighborhood's readiness and capacity to change are the most important levers to target, given the outcomes desired. For example, given that the CBI targeted in this study—*Yes we can!*—is primarily focused on building resident involvement in collective action, our findings suggest that particular attention should be spent on fostering skills of neighborhood leaders and increasing awareness of neighborhood problems that could be addressed through collective action.

Limitations

The data for this study were collected as part of an initial information-gathering effort designed to guide the initiative's subsequent programming and evaluation and therefore were subject to a number of constraints that limit the generalizability of the findings. Foremost is the use of phone survey techniques to conduct the assessment. Anticipating more intensive programming and data collection efforts as the initiative progressed, YWC!'s designers sought to minimize intrusion and data burden for neighborhood residents at this early stage, resulting in the decision to gather baseline data through the use of a short phone survey. However, conducting a phone survey necessarily limited the sample to residents who had phones and was likely to have excluded not only residents without phones, who tend to be experiencing high levels of

economic stress and are a target of this initiative, but also those who rely primarily on cell phones or who regularly screen their calls.

Additionally, these data are comprised of individual residents' perceptions of neighborhood conditions and do not include objective assessments, such as observations or census data, that characterize the capacity, readiness, or problems present in the neighborhoods. Moreover, results are cross-sectional; although we consider it most likely that levels of capacity, readiness, and problems precede resident's engagement in citizen participation and community activism, activism may be an impetus to increases in capacity and readiness (although probably not to increases in neighborhood problems). This may be particularly true for individual activism; for example, individuals who become engaged for whatever reasons may increasingly take on neighborhood leadership roles, thereby building capacity and promoting others to become active residents. Research has indeed shown that involvement in community activities builds a sense of community (Levi & Litwin, 1986).

Conversations continue regarding the definitions of and elements that constitute capacity and readiness. Some theorists advocate for a broad view of readiness that includes infrastructural elements such as resources, skills, knowledge, social ties, and leadership (e.g., Donnermeyer et al., 1997; Oetting et al., 1995). We took the approach, however, of separating the capacity and readiness frameworks to reflect, on the one hand, infrastructure present in the community context, and, on the other hand, attitudes and beliefs that impel residents to work for change. We adopted this approach in an effort to identify specific leverage points that the initiative's programmers could target during the implementation phase. We recognize that others may hold alternative views of capacity and readiness and may have chosen to evaluate different elements.

Similarly, resident involvement is a multi-faceted concept. Here, we examined involvement in terms of efforts to effect change both through individual actions and connections and through participation in formalized groups. We do not know whether the community conditions found to predict resident involvement in this study would be similarly linked to engagement in other resident involvement opportunities. For example, Sears and Hughes (1996) found that different forms of citizen participation attract different types of people, who may or may not be interested in engaging in alternative forms of community action such as involvement in governance structures, programming decisions, or evaluation.

Conclusion

Critical to the success of CBIs is the development of an active citizenry that is engaged in a variety of efforts aimed at strengthening neighborhoods and rebuilding the local infrastructure. Through participation in the groups and organizations in their neighborhoods and communities, residents develop increased sense of control (Itzhaky & Schwartz, 2000) and increased personal mastery (Donlap, 1996). This study suggests that when community-building efforts want to promote resident involvement in such efforts, they need to attend to the types of involvement they desire and consider which neighborhood conditions are most likely to influence resident engagement in those efforts.

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