

Report to the Pew Charitable Trusts

STUDY OF WORKING- AND MIDDLE-CLASS MINORITY NEIGHBORHOODS

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With support from the Pew Charitable Trusts, researchers at the Rockefeller Institute initiated a study in 1995 of working- and middle-class minority neighborhoods in large U.S. cities. This report describes three phases of this study: Phase 1, the pilot research; Phase 2, the current focus on the nine metropolitan areas in the U.S. with the largest populations of African-Americans; and plans for Phase 3 to expand and deepen this research.

1. RATIONALE AND PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH

The stereotype many people have of urban America is of predominately-minority neighborhoods characterized by high crime, joblessness, welfare dependency, and lack of educational attainment -- places isolated from the mainstream. This negative image is reinforced by stories in the media about inner-city problems and television coverage of urban violence. The proposition of this research program is that this stereotype view of urban minority neighborhoods does not represent the complete picture. There is more to the story.

The Rockefeller Institute's Urban Neighborhoods Study Group has received additional support for this research from the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation. The research program will examine urban working- and middle-class neighborhoods populated by members of racial minority groups; examine what factors make for stable working- and middle-class urban minority neighborhoods; identify characteristics that allow these neighborhoods to stave off problems often associated with inner-city life; and suggest, where appropriate, strategies to preserve and strengthen these communities.

2. PHASE 1 — PILOT RESEARCH

An area in Queens surrounding Kennedy Airport was selected as the pilot area for this research. In Queens, black median household incomes are higher than for whites. Using 1990 census data, geographic information systems (GIS) software, and input from social scientists, we identified twelve study neighborhoods in the southeast Queens pilot-study area. They consist of groups of census tracts with fifty percent or more black population. Total population for the pilot-study area is approximately 400,000. Based on consultations with officials of the New York City Planning Department, we devised boundaries for twelve study neighborhoods — Jamaica Center, South Jamaica, South Ozone Park, St. Albans, Springfield Gardens, Baisley-Rochdale, Hollis, Cambria Heights, Laurelton, Queens Village, and sections of Rosedale and Jamaica Estates.

A four-part income-based classification was used to sub-divide these neighborhoods into: (1) *distressed*, (2) *working-class*, (3) *middle-class*, or (4) *higher-income* areas. The classification of the twelve study neighborhoods was determined by the largest share of the population of its census tracts. Statistical tests were run using other variables besides income, such as home ownership, educational attainment, and marital status — to test the validity of this taxonomy. The tests demonstrated strong colinearity of the variables used.

3. NATIONAL SAMPLE

Building on the research techniques piloted in southeast Queens, a national sample consisting of 16 metropolitan areas was selected at the outset for this multi-year study of working- and middle-class minority neighborhoods.

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|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| ⊗ Atlanta | ⊗ Chicago | ⊗ Houston |
| ⊗ Philadelphia | ⊗ Baltimore | ⊗ Cleveland |
| ⊗ Kansas City | ⊗ St. Louis | ⊗ Boston |
| ⊗ Denver | ⊗ Los Angeles | ⊗ San Francisco |
| ⊗ Buffalo | ⊗ Detroit | ⊗ New York City |
| ⊗ Washington, D.C. | | |

Social scientists from each of these metropolitan areas have provided information on the geography, history, social, economic, and physical characteristics of minority neighborhoods in their metropolitan area. Their planning papers were used to generate maps of the metropolitan areas, subdivided into residential areas, using the income-based taxonomy described above.

4. PHASE TWO — CURRENT FOCUS

In Phase 2, the current phase of the research, we have narrowed our focus to concentrate on minority neighborhoods in the nine metropolitan areas with 500,000 or more blacks according to the 1990 census. The nine areas and field researchers are shown below.

- Atlanta:** *Michael Rich, Professor, Department of Political Science, Emory University*
- Baltimore:** *Robert Hill, Director, Institute for Urban Research, Morgan State University*
- Chicago:** *Charles Orlebeke, Director, School of Urban Planning and Policy, University of Illinois*
- Detroit:** *Robin Boyle, Interim Dean, College of Urban, Labor and Metropolitan Affairs, Wayne State University*
- Houston:** *Greg Weiher, Professor, University of Houston*
- Philadelphia:** *Elijah Anderson, Professor, University of Pennsylvania*
- Los Angeles:** *Ali Modarres, Professor, California State University — Los Angeles*
- New York:** *John Mollenkopf, Professor, City University of New York*
- Washington:** *Phil Taylor, Demographer, Maryland National Capital Parks and Planning Commission*

For these areas, we are doing statistical analyses based on Census data, in-depth field assessments, and using key informant interviews and local data sources. We are collecting local data, for example, on crime, education, health, property values, etc., depending on the availability of local data.

As part of Phase 2, we plan to hold a conference in Fall this year for researchers involved in this study. The conference will bring together the field researchers and the central staff for a discussion of findings-to-date and next steps, as well as for presentations by national experts, including Professor Elijah Anderson, who is studying Philadelphia in this research program. (We would be pleased if this conference could be hosted in Pew's offices and if representatives of the Trusts could join us.)

5. PHASE THREE

In Phase 3 of this research, we plan to publish a series of *short books* based on the case studies of the nine metropolitan areas. The books will be uniform on major topics and will treat special topics and issues depending on the interests and experience of the field researchers and the characteristics of the study area.

Phase Three will also broaden this study of minority neighborhoods by beginning the process of studying neighborhoods largely or predominantly populated by Hispanics and Asians. We plan initially to target mixed neighborhoods, including neighborhoods identified in Phase 2 as majority-black areas where the majority of other residents are Hispanic or Asian, and then add majority-Hispanic and majority-Asian neighborhoods selected from metropolitan areas in the national sample.

6. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Of all African-Americans living in metropolitan areas in 1989, 75 percent were not living in "extreme" poverty Census tracts, those where 40 percent or more of the population is in poverty. Looking at the poverty rate of the black urban population as a whole, the picture is similar — 73 percent of the metropolitan area black population was not in poverty in 1990.

We need to know more about the neighborhoods the *other three quarters* of the metropolitan African-American population lives in -- the types of areas, conditions, and trends. In many instances, urban experts view minority neighborhoods as a problem requiring public intervention. We need to be careful to avoid painting with a broad brush, relegating all minority neighborhoods to a category of deviance. In many cases, working- and middle-class urban minority neighborhoods represent, not problems to be solved, but opportunities to be taken advantage of. We believe if people had more knowledge about the character, types, and trends of minority working- and middle-class neighborhoods, both in cities and in suburbs, this would help policy officials develop strategies to further stabilize and strengthen these neighborhoods. We anticipate that these strategies would be in line with the aims and operation of the Pew Charitable Trusts' Neighborhood Preservation Initiative.



EVALUATION STUDY OF THE PEW CHARITABLE TRUSTS' NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION INITIATIVE

RESEARCH STATEMENT AND PROTOCOL

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Program Background

In 1993, the Pew Charitable Trusts established the Neighborhood Preservation Initiative (NPI) as a signature effort designed to form a partnership between the Trusts, selected community foundations and a set of diverse urban working-class neighborhoods threatened by decline and decay, yet with a potential for renewal and growth. The goal of NPI is to help the residents of such neighborhoods visibly improve their quality of life and at the same time learn how to sustain long-term neighborhood preservation efforts that will ensure community stability and vitality.

Twenty-one community foundations that focus their work in metropolitan areas of one million or more people sought to participate in NPI. Their applications included preservation plans developed by residents and neighborhood-based organizations in targeted communities that would receive technical assistance and training through NPI, in addition to their project grants. NPI central staff members and members of NPI's National Advisory Board made site visits to prospective neighborhoods during the course of 1994. In December of that year, the Trusts announced three-year project grants totaling \$6.6 million to promote the growth and stability of nine neighborhoods threatened by deterioration and decline:

1. The Boston Foundation — East Boston
2. The Cleveland Foundation — The Westside
3. The Indianapolis Foundation — The Far Eastside
4. Greater Kansas City Community Foundation — Blue Hills
5. Community Foundation of Greater Memphis — Vollentine-Evergreen
6. The Milwaukee Foundation — The Northwest Side
7. The Philadelphia Foundation — Frankford
8. The St. Paul Foundation — Hamline-Midway & The West Side
9. The San Francisco Foundation — Chinatown

At the end of the three years of the Neighborhood Preservation Initiative, the Trusts expect that the selected neighborhoods will be more stable and that residents will be better prepared to sustain preservation efforts beyond the time frame of the NPI grants.

Our evaluation team at the Rockefeller Institute has benefited from valuable interaction with representatives of the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Fund for Urban Neighborhood Development, with NPI staff, residents, organizers and community foundation representatives from each of the cities participating in NPI. We have visited each site, reviewed the substantial program documentation being created and gained insights from our field associates. Taken together, this input has contributed to a solid foundation for and understanding of the level and type of research needed to gauge an initiative as complex as NPI.

Approach to the Evaluation

The NPI evaluation study is a comprehensive assessment of what is accomplished in the NPI sites with the funds provided by Pew, local community foundations, and from other sources. The study will describe what was done, by whom, for or to whom, and what are the discernible effects on neighborhood preservation.

The evaluation will include a history of the Neighborhood Preservation Initiative and the site selection process, and an assessment of the structure and processes for program management.

The NPI evaluation study is also being coordinated closely with the Rockefeller Institute's Urban Neighborhood Study, a multi-year study intended to create a new conventional wisdom about the social conditions and economic prospects of predominately minority neighborhoods in large metropolitan areas across the U.S.. In particular, the project will afford more knowledge about the size, character and changing trends of minority working- and middle-class neighborhoods in cities and suburbs and will examine policy strategies that can further stabilize and strengthen these often overlooked neighborhoods.

Like the Urban Neighborhood Study, the NPI evaluation study is structured and operating as a field network — comprising a core, central staff and team of indigenous field associates based in the nine cities participating in the program. Dr. Richard P. Nathan, Provost of the Rockefeller College and Director of the Rockefeller Institute of Government, State University of New York, will serve as co-Principal Investigator for the evaluation together with David J. Wright, Director of Urban Studies at the Institute. Mark McGrath, also with the Institute, will serve as project coordinator. Field associates include:

- ⊗ *Boston: Alexander Von Hoffman, History and the School of Urban Design at Harvard University.*
- ⊗ *Cleveland: Claudia Coulton, Professor of Sociology at Case Western Reserve University.*
- ⊗ *Indianapolis: former Mayor William Hudnut, President of the Civic Federation.*
- ⊗ *Kansas City: Phil Olson, Professor of Sociology at the University of Missouri.*
- ⊗ *Memphis: Phyllis Betts, Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Memphis.*
- ⊗ *Milwaukee: Michael Barndt, Associate Professor of Urban Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.*
- ⊗ *Philadelphia: Ira Harkavey, Director-Center for Community Partnership, and faculty team at the University of Pennsylvania.*
- ⊗ *Saint Paul: Cecilia Martinez, Associate Professor of Political Science at Metropolitan State University.*
- ⊗ *San Francisco: David Tabb and Richard DeLeon, Professors of Political Science at San Francisco State University.*

Evaluation Methodology

A multi-layered evaluation strategy is essential to fully document and examine what is happening in the NPI communities, and to understand the meaning of the activity and effects being seen well enough to distill the lessons to be learned.

I. Case Studies:

Field staff are undertaking a case study approach to telling the story of what has happened in the NPI communities over the life of the program. The open, narrative format of a case study, telling the who, what, why, where, when and how of the undertaking, will be especially helpful in conveying the

full context for the human and organizational impacts that are observed. The case studies will highlight or profile particularly notable effects on individual residents or community organizations as well.

Case studies on the individual sites will be primarily written by our field associates, under close supervision by the co-principal investigators. These case studies will be used as an input to the central staff, who will rely on the studies, follow-up interviews and other sources of information in synthesizing and writing the cross-cutting, evaluative report for the Pew Charitable Trusts. We will draw vignettes from the individual case study reports to provide additional human interest and personality. We will also include abridgments of especially informative cases as an appendix to the evaluation report and make the full case studies available for use by the Trusts and for possible publication.

Field associates will also pursue answers to a set of preselected, major research questions developed in consultation with staff from the Trusts, FUND and NPI. These questions, enumerated below, focus on the underlying theories, design and implementation of the NPI program, including an analysis of both the individual preservation strategies pursued by each NPI community and the cross-cutting, capacity-building features of the Initiative.

Having a set of select questions and consistent approach will standardize the information gathered across the sites. This will give the NPI evaluation the benefit of having an open approach to capturing case-study type information within the confines of a consistent analytic framework.

II. Targeted Research Questions

The framework for the evaluation study will need to be somewhat flexible and fluid in order to address issues that emerge during the course of the evaluation — the open format of the case approach is well-suited for this purpose. Nonetheless, a set of research questions that serve as a guide for the researchers in the field and the central staff is vital. Major questions to be addressed include:

A. Underlying Theory:

The premise of NPI is, in part, that there are forgotten neighborhoods across the nation, overlooked by public and private intervenors, possessing considerable assets but facing significant threat of deterioration and decline, within which preventative intervention can make an especially meaningful and long-lasting difference. NPI posits, as well, that core strategies involving youth development, physical revitalization, economic opportunity and crime prevention are essential elements in preservation.

1. Is there evidence that urban working-class neighborhoods are a meaningful subgroup to target? Is there a solid definition of "working-class neighborhood" and a set of attributes or characteristics that are key to selection and/or success?
2. Are working-class neighborhoods, as represented in NPI, overlooked and forgotten or are they benefiting from public intervention in the form of public programs or other private foundation programs?
3. How reflective are the selected NPI communities of the potential pool of such places nationally?
4. What formed the basis for the selection of the four core areas of strategy and how did this "framework" influence the selection of activities by local actors?
5. Are the strategic plans launched and the activities implemented in the NPI sites "asset based" or more typically arranged to respond to perceived liabilities?
6. Are the "threats" to working-class neighborhoods less-intense variations of the syndrome afflicting distressed communities or something different?
7. Can the NPI program be replicated in other cities to help preserve vulnerable working-class neighborhoods?

B. Process Issues:

8. Do NPI program sponsors have a strategic plan and clearly articulated priorities and objectives? What are they?
9. How do these plans reflect the main elements of the Neighborhood Preservation Initiative — physical revitalization, economic opportunity, youth development, and community safety?
10. Was the neighborhood preservation strategy followed? Have priorities changed since the start of the Initiative?
11. How has the lead organization worked with the public, non-profit and private organizations they are supposed to collaborate with in the neighborhood? Are there differences depending upon who the NPI recipient organizations are, i.e., CDCs, Church-based organizations, etc.?
12. How has central NPI staff performed its role as monitor/facilitator of local site activity?
13. What procedures or mechanisms have been developed to provide technical assistance to the NPI sites?
14. What information sharing about “best practices” or “special challenges” (and the like) is conducted across sites?
15. What is being done to get the word out about NPI and the value of neighborhood preservation?

C. Effects:

As stated in program documents, the objective of NPI is to “learn how best to assist residents of working-class neighborhoods to strengthen the social, physical and economic assets that make neighborhoods healthy and viable, and help residents overcome factors that put their neighborhoods at risk of blight and deterioration.” NPI’s goals are to:

- ⊗ Determine what strategies are likely to work;
- ⊗ Build the long-term capacity of neighborhood residents to engage in neighborhood preservation; and
- ⊗ Stimulate future investments in working-class neighborhoods.

Running through all of this is a focus both on strategies and on capacity building. Consequently, the national evaluation examines individual strategies on a local level as well as capacity building efforts within and across the nine sites, and relates both back to the purpose of community preservation.

16. What are the effects of the programs and activities of each Initiative site? The effects included are:

- ⊗ *Programmatic* — what kinds of activities were undertaken, how big, how organized, how administered?
- ⊗ *Fiscal and economic* — what is the size and cost of the programs and activities undertaken, including consideration of leveraging and displacement effects?
- ⊗ *Distributive* — what groups or areas are affected?
- ⊗ *Physical effects* — what is the physical and visual impact of the activities undertaken in the neighborhood?
- ⊗ *Organizational* — what is the impact on neighborhood-based organizations and relationships among community actors involved in the effort?
- ⊗ *Managerial effectiveness* — how well have these programs and activities been carried out?

17. Are there any strategies among the local efforts that are new or a particularly interesting twist from known and current techniques toward neighborhood preservation and development?
18. To what extent do any of the individual strategies make an observable difference in neighborhood stability?
19. Are there any observable/definitive patterns that emerge about the relative effectiveness of different strategies within and between core areas, or in other activities pursued by local NPI partners beyond the four core areas?
20. Is there any evidence that programs and activities have had an effect on leadership capacity, strategic planning, organizational viability and volunteer development;
 - 20.a Are there signs of increased volunteer involvement in community-building activities?
 - 20.b Are there stronger individual leaders (demonstrated ability; received technical training; in the view of influential outside reviewers...)?
 - 20.c Are the neighborhood-based organizations stronger (budget/staff quality, size and stability; diversified sources of technical and financial support; plugged-in to city-wide/other actors; reputation)?
 - 20.d Are community strategic plans "better" (more sophisticated; grounded; etc.)?
21. What do the inter-organizational effects of the NPI intervention look like:
 - 21.a How and how well have the community foundations performed as a partner?
 - 21.b What do the collaboratives look like? Are there patterns? Does it matter if the lead organization is a CDC, a church-based neighborhood association or something else?
 - 21.c What ramifications have there been of a "lead" organization being picked among fellow neighborhood-based organizations participating in the collaborative? Have any conflicts been caused by inter-organizational jealousy over new financial/staff resources and publicity?
 - 21.d Is the lead organization well and widely regarded? What about the staff?
22. To what degree have the collaboratives and partnerships formed between and among neighborhood-based organizations and the community foundations been sustained?
 - 22.a How healthy are they?
 - 22.b What do they look like?
23. What internal organizational effects of the NPI have occurred within the neighborhood-based organizations that have taken part?
 - 23.a Has the institution of paid staff changed priorities within the organization(s) from a neighborhood agenda to a greater emphasis on fund raising and organizational sustenance?
 - 23.b Are gains in momentum short-term, followed by a let down, or ongoing?
 - 23.c Is there evidence of behavioral and capacity change in the organization? For example, are the NPI organizations responding to challenges and opportunities in a more sophisticated way? i.e. more coordinated in dealing with others; rising to meet new challenges in a collaborative way; not daunted nor fearful of taking on "big" things nor insistent on sticking to script?

24. Has the community's perception of preservation changed since the program?
25. Is there reason to think that the results will increase the long-term capacity of the neighborhood to sustain a preservation effort?
26. Did the program bring more local attention to the idea of community preservation?

III. Comparative Analysis:

The evaluation design for the NPI study also incorporates a comparative analysis in the 5 cities overlapping both NPI and the Rockefeller Institute of Government's parallel Urban Neighborhood Study: Boston, Cleveland, Kansas City, Philadelphia and San Francisco. It is important to acknowledge the challenge of finding comparable neighborhoods that match with the precision of scientific certitude, and the fact that such a comparison is not an experimental study with program and random control sites. Nonetheless, the evaluation will incorporate comparison neighborhoods selected carefully and methodically that match usefully and well for the purposes of the study. Perhaps of even greater value, we will also cross-fertilize more generally from what we learn from the Urban Neighborhood Study about moderate-income urban communities and their relative stability.

The objective of the comparative analysis is to provide some additional information with which to gauge the relative effects of NPI — to try to assess how much of an NPI community's success is due to the program elements provided through NPI, due simply to the attention or other attributes of being selected for the program, or due to what was there already that made the community special enough to get selected for NPI in the first place. The "match" of NPI and non-NPI communities will be based upon a combination of socio-demographic variables — including the three primary variables of median household income, median rate of home ownership and median employment as well as other census-type data on socio-demographic composition — and neighborhood assets deemed central to selection and, potentially, to success, such as community-based organizations of comparable quality and sophistication.

Generally, a comparative analysis between a given NPI site, as an organized community with a vision, to a non-NPI site without either or both — everything else being equal — would still gauge the program's underlying theory about the value of organization and vision and limited intervention, if not the literal value of the intervention per se.

Among the questions to be considered in this comparative analysis are:

27. Do NPI sites have and articulate a more developed holistic approach to neighborhood preservation?
 - 27.a How are these differences reflected in community programs?
 - 27.b How are they reflected in the operation of institutions and organizations?
28. How is this difference in approach, if there is such a difference, reflected in levels of spending and relationships of neighborhood groups with other public agencies and private organizations, especially those that have city-wide or county or state service areas?
29. Are there differences in the orientation, capacity and commitment and strength of leadership in the NPI neighborhoods and the comparison areas?
30. Are community groups in NPI sites organized differently than the comparison communities in terms of their capacity to assess and address community preservation needs and issues?
 - 30.a What are the roles of institutions such as churches, CDCs, block groups, community foundations in the NPI neighborhoods versus the roles of these institutions in the comparison neighborhoods?

Evaluation Reports

The Rockefeller Institute will report to the Trusts twice-yearly on the status of the evaluation and will issue a final report to the Trusts in mid-1998. The final report will provide a cross-cutting analysis synthesizing information about the experience and results in all the NPI sites. The report will include direct examples of personal and organizational effects in NPI neighborhoods, drawn from case studies. An abridged version of the cases will be included and the full case study reports on the individual sites will be made available for use by the Trusts and for possible publication.

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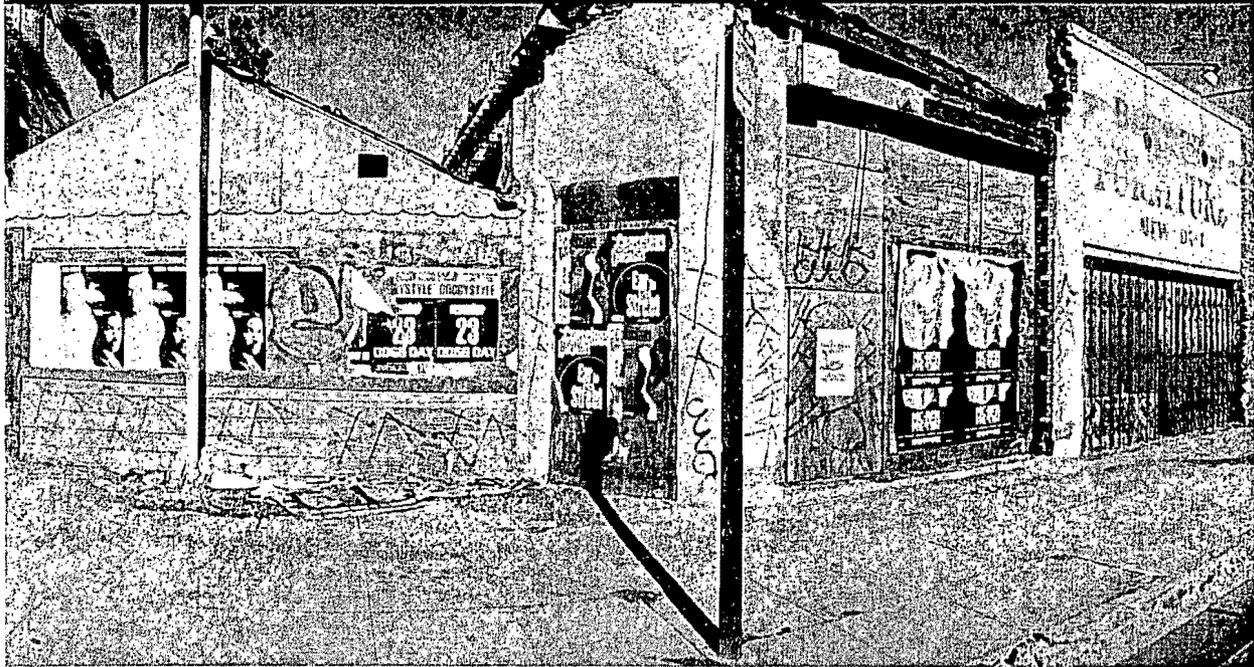
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