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John F. Kennedy School of Government
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TOWARD A PROGRESSIVE BLACK AGENDA

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Class and Leadership Within 20th Century Black America
Christopher Tyson

Economic Salvation:
Homeownership and the Black Church
Wayne Thornhill

Federal Housing Dollars and the Demise of African American
Housing Community-Based Organizations:
How Racism Rears Its Ugly Head in a Government Institution—
A Case Study (Milwaukee, Wisconsin)
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Congressman Charles Rangel

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From Civil Rights to Constitutional Rights
Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr.

DEVELOPMENT POLICY ANALYSES

The Ouémé Child Survival Program:
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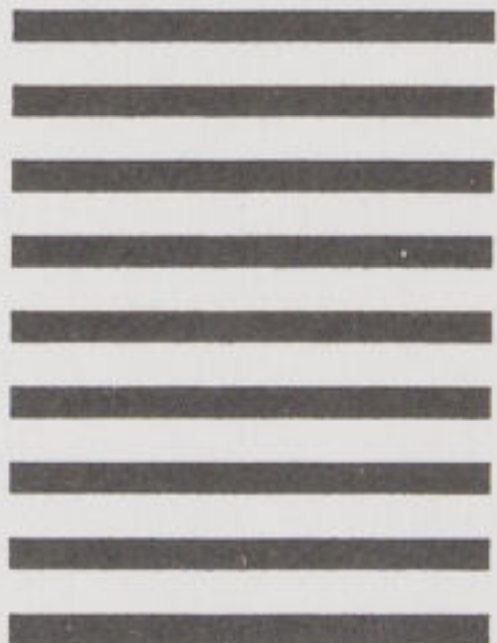
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PUBLIC POLICY**

**JOHN F. KENNEDY SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT
HARVARD UNIVERSITY**

SUMMER 2003

Cambridge, Massachusetts

Harvard Journal of African American Policy (ISSN# 1081-0463) is published annually by students of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. An annual subscription is \$20 for individuals and \$40 for libraries and institutions. Subscriptions will be automatically renewed unless notice to the contrary is received at the office. Additional copies of volumes 1-8 may be available for \$10 each from the Subscriptions Department, Harvard Journal of African American Public Policy, 79 JFK Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.

DONATIONS: Donations provided in support of the Harvard Journal of African American Public Policy are tax deductible as a nonprofit gift under the JFK School of Government's IRS 501 (c) (3) status. Please specify intent.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Harvard Journal of African American Public Policy, 79 JFK Street, Cambridge, MA 02138, or e-mail hjaap@ksg.harvard.edu.

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OF
AFRICAN AMERICAN
PUBLIC POLICY**

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HARVARD UNIVERSITY**

SUMMER 2003

Cambridge, Massachusetts

The editorial board of the Harvard Journal of African American Public Policy acknowledges the generous support and contribution to the publication of this issue.

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OF
POLITICAL SCIENCE

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

Published by the University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Ill., U.S.A.

Volume 1, Number 1, 1907

January, 1907

Price, \$2.00

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDITORS' REMARKS	11
-------------------------	----

ARTICLES	
Black Middle Class Poverty Consciousness: Class and Leadership within 20th Century Black America <i>Christopher Tyson</i>	13
Economic Salvation: Homeownership and the Black Church <i>Wayne Thornhill</i>	37
Federal Housing Dollars and the Demise of African American Housing Community-Based Organizations: How Racism Rears Its Ugly Head in a Government Institution—A Case Study (Milwaukee, Wisconsin) <i>Michael Bonds</i>	67

SPEECHES	
Shared Responsibility and Shared Sacrifice in a Time of War <i>Congressman Charles Rangel</i>	101
More Perfect Union: From Civil Rights to Constitutional Rights <i>Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr.</i>	107

DEVELOPMENT POLICY ANALYSES	
Explanation of Development Policy Analyses The Ouémé Child Survival Program: Sustaining Livelihoods <i>Kendra Blackett and Carmen Coles</i>	115
Case Study on the Role and Relevance of Human Rights Language in Combating Female Genital Mutilation in Egypt <i>Qiana Bradford and Kimberly McClure</i>	151

INTERVIEW	
Perspectives from Ron Kirk <i>Interviewed by Daniel Delk</i>	187

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Editors' Remarks

We are pleased to present Volume IX of the *Harvard Journal of African American Public Policy*. This has been a year when the nation's attention has turned toward international issues, most notably issues of security. Much of this volume is a bit closer to home—it covers a range of themes that are intended to encourage dialogue and action aimed at improving quality of life for African Americans. Those themes include civil rights, civic engagement, housing, the role of the black church, and leadership in an era of rapidly changing demographics. This volume highlights a broad range of work, including our traditional articles, an interview, speeches from distinguished black politicians, and submissions from policy students—the next generation of leaders in the African American community.

We hope that this volume encourages practitioners, academics, and both spiritual and political leaders of all races to embrace issues that deeply affect the African American community. We have incorporated several thought-provoking themes. Kennedy School student Christopher Tyson writes of historic forces that have shaped black middle class poverty consciousness and its implications for 21st century black freedom struggles. Two articles discuss the importance of housing in black communities. Kennedy School alumnus Rev. Wayne Thornhill writes of the potential of the black church to increase homeownership rates among African Americans. Professor Michael Bonds offers an assessment of the effect of federal housing dollars on black community-based organizations in Milwaukee, Wis.

Speeches from two notable members of the U.S. House of Representatives, Congressmen Charles Rangel and Jesse Jackson, Jr., provide perspectives on issues that not only demand the attention of our political leaders, but also our community leaders and grassroots organizers. Congressman Rangel suggests a controversial policy—bringing back the military draft—in order to address the inequality of sacrifice of Americans during wartime. Congressman Jackson makes the case that a constitutional right to education and health care is at least as important as the civil rights for which we have fought so hard. An interview with Ron Kirk, the former mayor of Dallas, Tex., focuses on the importance of civic engagement and leadership in the African American community in the face of changing demographics.

This edition is not just about domestic issues—there are two pieces that address international health in developing African countries. While we recognize the struggles on the domestic front, we also are also concerned about global human rights. Students Kendra Blackett, Carmen Coles, Qiana Bradford, and Kimberly McClure, budding leaders in the international community, have contributed pieces addressing international human rights and public health.

Volume IX is complete with issues that are relevant to today's changing social and political climate. Issues of housing, education, health care, and political participation are important to the future of African Americans as we attempt to recreate the black political agenda.

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BLACK MIDDLE CLASS POVERTY CONSCIOUSNESS: CLASS AND LEADERSHIP WITHIN 20TH CENTURY BLACK AMERICA

Christopher Tyson*

ABSTRACT

There is a growing discussion in Black America about intraracial class conflict. These discussions often rely too heavily on essentialist or fixed notions of socioeconomic class that preclude a more historically grounded discussion of the formation of class identities within the race. While the contemporary black middle class is unprecedented in size and character, its identity must be viewed within the context of past struggles against racial and class oppression within and outside of the black community. Since poverty is a constant variable in the black experience, how the black middle class has responded to black poverty is a key indicator of the class-consciousness within the group and its implications for future struggles. This article explores the development of the black middle class since emancipation and examines the complexities within black society and American society that shape black middle-class poverty consciousness.

INTRODUCTION

Statistics as well as social commentary all hail the ascendancy of black Americans with higher incomes and increasing levels of wealth. Articles in magazines such as Newsweek and Forbes complement a host of books celebrating, critiquing, and investigating the history, character, and consciousness of the black middle and upper classes. The case for celebrating this growing middle and upper class is not wholly unwarranted. The 2000 Population Study counted the highest percentage of Blacks with college degrees ever—17 percent. In Atlanta, Ga., for instance, more than half of black households earn between \$35,000 and \$75,000 annually.¹ Nationally, Blacks moved to the suburbs more than any other racial group between 1990 and 2000, and Blacks who moved to the suburbs received the largest jump in income—43.5 percent, compared to 25.7 percent for Whites.²

* Christopher Tyson is a graduate of Howard University and a 2003 Master in Public Policy candidate from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. A native of Baton Rouge, La., Christopher's professional background includes experience as a consultant and an entrepreneur. His written work has appeared in publications such as *The Black World Today*, *Urban Think Tank*, and on *Africana.com*. In his studies, Christopher has focused on race, social inequality, and racialized mass imprisonment. He is currently a volunteer teacher at Suffolk County House of Corrections, where he teaches a weekly class to male inmates. In the fall of 2003, Christopher will start law school and looks forward to a career practicing criminal law.

But the story of Black America has always involved persistent and crippling poverty, and while conditions have improved, the black poor remain in a state of crisis. While the percentage of Blacks living below the poverty line in 2001 was at a historic low of 22.7 percent, it is still almost three times that of white Americans' 7.8 percent poverty rate.³ Black poverty has moved from a majority to a minority condition in the black community: in 1959, 55.1 percent of Blacks and 18.1 percent of Whites were in poverty. But analyzing income levels does not allow for a true understanding of the impact of the social exclusion brought about by poverty on the psychosocial state of individuals and families. Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen defines poverty as capability deprivation: the loss of the ability to function in a society as the individual or group pleases and in a manner that contributes and extracts value in that society.⁴ Markets, legislatures, political parties, judiciaries, and media are all institutions that have over the course of the 20th century contributed to the exclusion of Blacks from the mainstream of American life. Industrial restructuring, racist housing policy in the public and private sector, and white flight have also contributed to the isolation of the black poor. Underclass status is generally defined by a weak connection to the formal labor market and a dependency on the social safety net. Middle class identity has historically been linked to socioeconomic factors as well as normative judgments on associations and behavior. In the black community, however, America's legacy of institutionalized racism moderates class identity. The shared experience of racial oppression deeply affects the class consciousness of all black people, and black solidarity and mass mobilization hinge on a collective acknowledgement of the pervasiveness of white racism. Essentially, black Americans feel a sense of linked fate and that life chances are primarily determined by race.⁵ Issues of workplace discrimination, civil rights, and racial profiling affect Blacks of all economic classes indiscriminately. The ability to cope with each of these problems differs depending upon one's level of education, access to support networks, and economic stability, but it does not diminish the scourge of racism on black life. Therefore mapping mainstream conceptions of class conflict onto the black experience is difficult because the interruption, devastation, and suppression of black income, family structure, and sociopolitical activity has been an essential component of the American racist/capitalist system of production—a system predicated upon the exploitation of free or low-wage black labor.

Class identity should not be thought of as "fixed"; however, the highly transitional class status of most of black Americans both between and within generations must be considered when analyzing black middle-class poverty consciousness. In *Black Corona*, Stephen Gregory gives definition to the special nature of black class identities:

This tendency to conceptualize Black class identities as transparent and as fundamentally moral reflexes of occupational status not only obscures the heterogeneity of African-American identities and communities, but it also depoliticizes the concept of class by treating it as a static category, unmediated by power relations, political struggles, and cultural practices.... Class identities and their constituent social mean-

ings and relationships are produced and reformed through power relations and practices that implicate a multiplicity of social locations, struggles, and relations both at the workplace and beyond.⁶

In this paper I will endeavor to understand the historic forces that have shaped black middle-class poverty consciousness and its implications for 21st century black freedom struggles. While historically black class identity is not fixed, the black poor constitutes a community that has been both exploited and protected by better-off classes of Blacks. Within the political economy of industrial capitalism, the strategies for racial upliftment employed by the black middle class and specifically black middle-class leaders have involved both collectivist and individualistic motivations. The belief that poverty and material deprivation could be ended has changed with concurrent trends in mainstream thought. By highlighting and analyzing key events in black history that intersect with race and class, I intend to show that black poverty consciousness is fraught with as many complexities and contradictions as the racist capitalist democracy from which it emerges.

The Origins of Class Stratification in Black America

Although all black people suffered immeasurable consequences from slavery and its subsequent institutions, understanding the different degrees of that oppression is instructive in considering the origins of class differences in Black America. Such an analysis should not minimize the deplorable effects of slavery, Jim Crow, and lynching on the psychosocial development of all black people. But there are notable differences in black life during slavery, Reconstruction, and under Jim Crow that correlate directly to economic class.

There was a small but functioning black elite in America long before the Civil War. By 1830 there were more than fifteen thousand free Blacks living in Philadelphia, and at least a thousand of them were economically prosperous.⁷ Some owned land, slaves, and other forms of property. Real estate owned by Blacks in New York City and Brooklyn in 1853 was valued at \$755,000 and \$79,200 respectively. By the 1840's, Blacks owned a variety of businesses in cities like Detroit, New York, Cincinnati, and New Orleans. In 1860 there were 348 free Blacks in Baltimore whose total property was worth \$449,000. By the outbreak of the Civil War free Blacks in New Orleans had wealth estimated to exceed \$9 million. In 1860 the total value of all free Black-owned establishments and personal wealth in the United States was at least \$50 million, and half was estimated to be in the South.⁸

In the French-influenced city of New Orleans, the *Gens de Couleur*—the free Society of Color—owned plantations with values ranging from \$40,000 to \$200,000 and containing more than one hundred slaves by 1860.⁹ Eight hundred fifty-five free Blacks in New Orleans owned 620 slaves and real estate worth \$2,462,470 in 1836.¹⁰ In New Orleans in particular, the survival of the *gens de couleur* depended upon the maintenance of the rigid color hierarchy that was secured by the existence of slavery. As mulattos, they lived socially and politically between the black slave and free white societies. The culture of skin privilege created by the *gens de couleur* is a defining factor of past and present New Orleans society, imposing a color-based caste system that correlated with economic privilege and opportunity.

The roots of the black elite are mostly based around the entrepreneurial enterprises and activities of black capitalists. Though distinguished by land holdings, trade skills, or income, many of these entrepreneurs lacked formal education and were completely illiterate—less than one-third of southern black artisans in 1870 were literate.¹¹ Little distinguished them as a separate class, even in the more established northern middle-class communities. Class stratification in the black community after emancipation was complicated because mainstream notions of socioeconomic class did not translate easily to the black experience, primarily because the Victorian-Protestant traditions of mainstream society were alien to newly freed Blacks and unattainable under Jim Crow. While the black middle class symbolically adopted many mainstream conventions and concepts, African culture heavily influenced their worship experience, language, and forms of social interaction. Additionally, the black capitalist could not assume an elite position comparable to the white capitalist since the former was limited mostly to producing goods and services for black markets. Consequently there was a ceiling on their wealth-creating abilities due to the relative inability of poor Blacks to support a separate economy. Under separate but equal—throughout the nation—black capitalists were relegated to exploiting local, regional, and national black markets. Certain industries such as hair care and newspapers allowed for lucrative business opportunities, but generally segregation hampered the success of black capitalism.

Another factor complicating class stratification in post-emancipation black society was the residual effects of slavery on family organization and the impact of economic exploitation on the transference of wealth within families. The intergenerational transference of wealth is a primary method of privilege reproduction in mainstream society.¹² Most black families at the turn of the 20th century were ex-slaves and desperately poor. They had little if any financial or social assets to pass on to children. Those who did lacked access to the institutions and investment opportunities necessary to grow and manage that wealth. This dynamic reproduced itself as Jim Crow conspired to constrain the earning potential and wealth accumulating ability of all Blacks.

Lastly, the day-to-day inhumanity of slavery and Jim Crow significantly diminished the culture of elitism within the black middle class. This is perhaps the most important factor limiting class stratification in the black community. The impact of Jim Crow on the black middle class was most profoundly felt in the politics of space. Within cities it was hard for the black elite to separate from the black poor. Nonetheless, attempts were made. For example, Striver's Row—a two-block well-to-do black enclave in Harlem—had strict rules about the upkeep of the homes on the block including restrictions on loitering and public gatherings.¹³ At the turn of the century Booker T. Washington had a private car available to him to shield him from the indignities of Jim Crow when he traveled on the railroad.¹⁴ But any spirit of elitism existing within the black middle class was tempered by the realities of separate but equal and by the fact that elite status in the black community brokered little if anything in the mainstream.

Jim Crow made the eradication of racial segregation the primary focus of black middle-class strivings. Therefore the leisure culture that is a defining characteristic of the mainstream elite—also unattainable due to Jim Crow—was secondary to

addressing racist aggression through organized resistance. The focus on racial advancement consumed the imagination and leadership of the black middle class. The black middle class was conscious of their position within the black community and the larger white supremacist power structure. Entrepreneurship, education, and social management through economic and political leadership were dedicated primarily if not wholly to the continued upliftment of the entire race.

Understanding early class stratification in the black community helps demystify the impact of class cleavage on an oppressed population. In the decades following emancipation, financial position may have altered or limited the exposure Blacks had with Jim Crow, but civic participation, financial opportunities, and social experiences were all defined by race. At the turn of the century, most of the south—Black and White—lived in a state of desperate poverty. But race moderated the class solidarity of the impoverished region. For the white working class and the white poor, their racial position allowed them to connect themselves—whether tangibly or superficially—to a structure of elitism. While cross-racial coalitions of working people were attempted during the populist movement of the late 19th century, there remained a clear and stark distinction between poor Whites and all Blacks. No matter how poor, Whites understood that they were still white and better off than the richest black man. The black middle class understood this dynamic, and, whether it hardened or softened their view of poverty, it represents the contradictions regulating black middle-class consciousness.¹⁵

THE ELITES AND THE NEGRO MASSES

In the decades following Reconstruction, poverty was a condition experienced by the overwhelming majority of black people. The black middle class was defined by specific occupations or community roles that only applied to handfuls of black people regionally and a relatively small number nationwide. Preachers, lawyers, doctors, and entrepreneurs were rare in the black community, and socially they were almost inseparable from the black poor.

During Reconstruction it was apparent that some black leaders preferred and pursued an elite-brokerage approach to the struggle for equality. There developed during Reconstruction and throughout the Jim Crow period a model of racial interaction in which black elites would broker accommodation and concessions with white elites in exchange for token advancement—more specifically the marginal advancement of the black elite. Early within post-emancipation black society, therefore, is the establishment of a social hierarchy rooted in the construction of the black “masses.” Black leadership’s relationship to the “masses” is important in understanding the ideological context for dealing with black poverty at the turn of the century and indeed for all of the 20th century. Adolph Reed highlights the consequences of an elite-driven notion of political identity:

The concept “the masses” is in fact a homogenizing mystification; it is a category that has no specific referent in Black institutional, organization, or ideological life. Unlike workers, parents, the unemployed, welfare recipients, tenants, homeowners, lawyers,

students, residents of a specific neighborhood, Methodist, or public employees, the term "the masses" does not refer to any particular social position or constituency. Nor is it likely that anyone consciously identifies simply, or even principally, as part of this undifferentiated mass. The category assumes a generic, abstract—and thus mute—referent. It therefore reproduces the non-participatory politics enacted by the mainstream Black political elite. The masses do not speak; someone speaks for them.¹⁶

Social patterns like the *gens de couleur* and the economic and political realities of black capitalism reveal the black middle class's dependency on a marginalized black lower class. Economically the dependence was clear: the black poor constituted the clients, patients, patrons, and congregations for black lawyers, doctors, entrepreneurs, and preachers—the traditional occupations of the black middle class. Politically the black middle class relied on the black poor to justify their position within the political economy of white supremacy. By mobilizing and directing the "black masses," the black middle class secured its role as a "buffer class" between the black poor and white elites. They depended upon the black poor for their leverage and power.¹⁷

While it is misleading to assert that the mobilization of the black poor by better-off Blacks was inherently exploitative and self-serving or that the black middle class/elite were consciously working to reproduce black poverty, there arose soon after Reconstruction a black capitalist movement that clearly saw the black poor as tools to broker a better position with their fellow white capitalists. There developed a relationship between southern capital, black accommodationists, southern labor market stability, and the black middle-class concept of racial uplift. In 1900, 90 percent of the black population lived in the south, 80 percent lived in rural areas, and 60 percent derived their living from agriculture. In the south, the only opportunity for clerical employment was in a black business or black school.¹⁸ Southern black leaders knew this and therefore saw the fate of the race linked to the ambition of white southern capitalists. The black elite became a crucial cultural component of southern industrialization. By promoting racial uplift through the employment of the "masses," they facilitated the exploitation of the southern black worker.

Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee machine was instrumental in developing the rationale for the suppression of black political and civil rights while advocating for the development of vocational skills among the black poor. These skills, he believed, would lead to opportunities for wealth creation; thus, proving the black poor worthy of the respect and equal consideration of white society. Washington's 1895 Atlanta Compromise laid the ideological groundwork for black capitalism and separate but equal. Washington's acceptance of black disenfranchisement and his heightened focus on the development of vocational skills and entrepreneurship mirrored the ambitions of white Northern and Southern capitalists eager to industrialize the South in the aftermath of the Civil War. Washington's call for economic mobilization over political rights underscored his cadre's belief that capitalist growth was more important for the liberation of black people than political participation and freedom.

This system of black and white elite cooperation was united under a racial essentialism nestled within the narrative of black inferiority. Assertions of black behavioral and cultural deficiencies were soon used to explain the work ethic of the newly freed black labor population. These criticisms revolved around charges of laziness, loose sexual morality, and a predisposition to leisure at the expense of hard work. What is remarkable about the emergence of these critiques is that they were being propagated by black as well as white elites. Through the National Negro Business League (NNBL), Washington and other black professionals unapologetically catered to white elite capitalists in selling the black poor as the greatest asset of the south. At the 1905 Sixth Annual Conference of the NNBL, Washington invited Oswald Garrison Villard, grandson of famed abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison to address the assembly of black businessmen. In introducing Villard, Washington remarked that Villard would speak on an issue black leaders had been too timid in addressing but one that vitally concerned the interests of the race. Villard went on to speak on the need for moral reform among black servants and their need to recognize the importance of providing servant labor for white homes. He used derogatory characterizations of the black servant class—dirty, slovenly, habitually lazy, and dishonest. He stressed before the businessmen of the conference the importance of household training for black women and men, stating plainly that the leadership was negligent in its duties of race management if it could not produce a class of mammies and house servants. The delegates never registered any complaint with Villard's remarks and reprinted the speech in its entirety. While the tone of the racist speech may have been unsettling to the crowd, their lack of opposition indicates an acceptance of its main premises.¹⁹

This "culture of poverty" thinking was not specific to Washington's more conservative approach. Initially both W.E.B. DuBois and Washington shared the view that, as DuBois wrote in his 1897 work *The Conservation of The Races*, the way to alleviate "the present friction between the races" was to correct the "immorality, crime, and laziness among Negroes themselves."²⁰ DuBois would completely change his tone by the 1903 publication of *The Souls of Black Folk*, but the cultural/behavioral critique remained popular in turn-of-the-century black elite discourse. It likely influenced DuBois's development of the historic "Talented Tenth" notion of black leadership that same year. By stressing the need for training a new cadre of "Negro leaders" who possessed "intelligence, broad sympathy, and knowledge of the world as it was and is," DuBois was anchoring his bet for the future of the race in a kind of pragmatic elitism rooted in an acceptance of the cultural and intellectual shortcomings of the "masses."²¹

Not all Black leaders preached accommodation or integration to the poor. Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (U.N.I.A.) was one of the first mass movements in the 20th century that garnered strong support from the black poor and working class. Garvey was heavily influenced by Booker T. Washington's teachings of self-help, entrepreneurship, and economic nationalism. Garvey, like many of the evangelical preachers of southern black Pentecostal tradition, offered a liberation proposal that was escapist in vision although pragmatically designed. He promoted back-to-Africa nationalism and a pan-African identity. Preachers like Bishop Henry McNeil Turner also promoted a return to Africa although from a more

religious perspective.²² There are interesting connections between the "other-worldliness" doctrine of southern evangelical preachers like Turner and northern back-to-Africa advocates like Garvey. These messages had little traction in the black middle class, but they were very seductive to the black working poor who likely saw little hope of their position improving within the existing economic and social arrangement. Leaders like Garvey and Turner who focused on an other-worldly/escapist vision of liberation were likely conscious of the attractiveness of such concepts to the illiterate but determined black poor.

Garvey's back-to-Africa nationalism was a capitalist enterprise dependent upon the sale of shares of the Black Star Line and other business ventures. He targeted the working and poor classes, a segment of the black population that socialist A. Phillip Randolph also drew support from. The growing attraction of socialism among young black intellectuals and activists during the post-WWI period exhibited an awareness of social inequality and poverty rooted in the Marxist critique. DuBois, Washington, Garvey, and Randolph advanced strategies that complicated the notion of a fixed class identity among them. They labored around different perspectives of the role of the black poor and the specific strategy that would improve their plight.

MIGRATION, URBANIZATION, AND INTEGRATION

Blacks had been migrating to the north in significant numbers since Reconstruction. The established northern black communities were more likely to have significant levels of Blacks living stable middle-class lifestyles, and many were ready and willing to receive poor Blacks migrating from the south. In 1905 black settlement houses began to appear in Chicago, undertaking the important task of helping recent black migrants adjust to their new surroundings.²³ Settlement houses exhibited the desire of established black communities to help poor southern blacks migrating to the city. Institutions like the *Chicago Defender* newspaper and the National Urban League were instrumental in selling northern opportunity as well as facilitating job and residential placement for individuals and families who made the journey. The Chicago Urban League was actually founded in 1917 to help migrants settle in the city. The *Chicago Defender* sensationalized the migration and used the media to fuel the atmosphere of exodus that was attractive to poor southern blacks in search of new opportunities.²⁴

The northern migration peaked during the two-year period 1916 to 1918, when four hundred thousand Blacks left the south. Spurred by the boll weevil's affect on the cotton economy, the WWI economic boom, and self-determination, the Great Migration dramatically altered the nature of black life. However, not all in the black middle class were as enthusiastic as the *Chicago Defender* or the Urban League about the mass arrival of southern Blacks. Despite the fact that migration brought new consumers for black businesses and despite the nationalist consciousness of autonomous black middle-class enclaves, there existed a perception of migrant Blacks as invaders perpetuating the myth of black inferiority.²⁵ In creating a black metropolis in Chicago, black leaders worked even harder to establish institutions to help recent migrants whose perceived crudeness and unrefined character, many

thought, would diminish the status of all Blacks in the eyes of the white community and exacerbate residential segregation. Philadelphia, home to an old and established black middle class, was also the site of class tensions related to the immigration of southern Blacks. "Old Philadelphians"—the black middle and upper classes—did little to help the increasing number of black immigrants, and this impacted their ability to further the larger causes of racial justice and equality. The city's black population increased 64 percent between 1916 and 1929. Middle-class Blacks fled the clusters of rural new arrivals and maintained a physical and cultural distance in a city that, unlike others of its time, saw black residents in nearly every section of the city.²⁶

But there was an activist contingent of the Philadelphia black middle class that broadly supported racial and social justice programs aimed at alleviating poverty generally and the situation of the black poor specifically. When the National Recovery Act of 1933 was formed out of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal initiatives, the city's black middle class showed strong support. But the praise turned to criticism when the Republican anti-Roosevelt faction of the black middle class attacked the imposition of a standard minimum wage—a move they felt would lead employers to replace lower-paid, unskilled, black workers with white workers. The *Philadelphia Tribune*—the city's Black-owned newspaper—dubbed the legislation the "Negro Removal Act." The black middle class of Philadelphia, while elitist in its social and cultural stance towards the black poor, was vigilant and progressive in its engagement of policy as it related to the broader goals of social, economic, and racial justice—a focus that undoubtedly held promise for the black poor.²⁷

The Great Migration is helpful in understanding the persistence of poverty among Blacks coming out of the south. The legacy of the southern plantation economy worked to perpetuate black poverty in that it deprived poor southern Blacks of the ability to own and profit from real estate. Also their late arrival in the northern labor market handicapped their ability to compete for well-paid employment. Their longtime status as dependent laborers meant that black income potential was disconnected from the asset income, a substantial component of wealth creation under capitalism. As late as 1971, the total black income received from all forms of asset-income was only 3.6 percent of income from all sources—its highest ever.²⁸ The problem of wealth creation and growth affected the black poor as well as the middle class. The migration of asset-poor Blacks into the northern industrial landscape helped solidify black poverty everywhere. Residential segregation limited the black middle class's ability to physically separate from the black poor and the impoverished black consumer market depressed opportunities for middle- and upper-class businessmen and businesswomen.

The development of the black church during the post-WWI period of industrialization reveals the role of the clergy in seeding class conflict. By the early 1900's, black ministers emerged as bona fide members of the black elite, serving also as politicians, businessmen, and educators. In these roles, some of the black clergy served as representatives of the black community to white elites. In the north, the relationship between the black urban working class and the black clergy was challenged by the some of the black clergy's close ties to white corporate power. Black

ministers in the north were selected by white politicians and businessmen to serve on municipal health and welfare boards. Some were on the payroll of Henry Ford in exchange for advising patience among working-class Blacks through the acceptance of low wages, rampant discrimination, and by discouraging unionism.²⁹

As the primary institution in black communities, the church was expected to play a role in organizing the struggle for equality. But it is possible that an elite-focused clergy at times hindered the church's ability to fulfill that need. In *The Negro's Church*, published in 1933, the Rev. Dr. Benjamin E. Mays and Joseph W. Nicholson analyzed one hundred black sermons at random and found that twenty were devoted to theological doctrine, 54 were vaguely "other worldly," and only 26 centered on contemporary secular affairs.³⁰ The image of the black minister as a bourgeois middle-man for white racist power was unacceptable to a black working class increasingly taken with socialist ideas. The black church was the most influential institution in black life and therefore was the logical nucleus for organizing against white racist violence. But if the leaders of the black church were preaching accommodation, patience, and submission in the face of violent, aggressive, and relentless racist terrorism in the south and economic exploitation in the north, many wondered if they could effectively advance the interests of the black "masses."

Those asking such questions about the black church were black intellectuals and cultural workers—themselves prominent members of the black middle class. During the mid-century, these groups flourished, drawing from all segments of the black community. In *Confronting the Veil*, Jonathan S. Holloway investigates the work of scholars Abram Harris, Jr., E. Franklin Frazier, and Ralph Bunche. Together, and with varying degrees of success, the three challenged the black elite orthodoxy that race should be the sole critical category for black liberation movements. By virtue of their positions as Howard University faculty and public intellectuals, their day-to-day adult life experiences were that of middle-class people. But in their elite roles they critiqued the black middle class specifically and American class inequality generally. They aspired to be more than "race men," and it helped that the radical economic critique was fashionable during the height of their careers. As scholar-activists of the black elite, they embraced a critique that had direct implications for the black poor.³¹ Frazier specifically interrogated the black middle class in his 1957 work, *Black Bourgeoisie*. Frazier's condemnation of elitist and assimilationist tendencies within the black middle class was complicated by his own position as a university professor of respectable financial means relative to the majority of black Americans at the time. Contrary to his own analysis, his career and that of his colleagues validate that a critical poverty consciousness existed within the black middle class.

Harris, Frazier, and Bunche were all present at the 1933 Second Amenia Conference, called by NAACP President Joel E. Spingarn, a follow-up to the first such conference for young black leaders in 1916. The Amenia conferences were inherently bourgeois, arising out of DuBois's earlier conceived idea that a homogenous "Talented Tenth" leadership class could effectively direct the race.³² The context for the second conference was the growth of the various communist and socialist organizations capturing the attention of young black thinkers and activists. The agenda of the conferences was sympathetic to economic issues, radical move-

ments, and focused especially on the plight of black workers. They targeted low pay, long hours, and job insecurity as key to reproducing inequality. They discussed organizing a multiracial movement of workers to triumph over the oppressive constraints of capital. The progressive yet elite-driven program of the Second Amenia Conference is significant in gauging the poverty consciousness of the black elite at a time when capitalism was coming under global scrutiny and attack.³³

The Second Amenia Conference produced little in the way of grassroots organization, most likely due to its elitist and top-down ethos. The progressive notions generated at the conference did little to sway the NAACP from its dedicated path of elite-brokerage-oriented civil rights liberalism. The NAACP continued on its course and ultimately had to make a definitive stance on the black working-class-supported communist and socialist movements. The decision of the NAACP to capitulate to the McCarthyism of the 1950's was a decisive moment in the relationship between the classes in the black community. Under pressure from the McCarthy regime, the NAACP expelled labor organizers and leaders—many accused of being communist—from its ranks. In doing so it damaged the connections between the black elite—the integrationist leaders of the NAACP; the activist black working class—the laborers involved in the union struggles and black radical movements; and the black poor—the worst casualties of white racism and capitalist exploitation.

Like many white elites, some Blacks saw organized labor as a destabilizing force in industrial capitalism at a time when industrial capitalism offered the greatest opportunity for the immediate employment of mass numbers of Blacks. They felt that collective organization among black workers fed into conceptions of black workers as unruly, complaining, and unproductive. There were exceptions, however, and many prominent Communist Party members were black lawyers, doctors, and professionals.³⁴ But to many in the black middle class, an organized working class was a threat. Without an economically viable labor pool, the black elite's position as stewards of the black masses and their ability to broker with white capitalists was compromised. This historic relationship between the black middle class and labor undoubtedly influenced the NAACP's decision on labor leaders. It is significant because it helped to set the trajectory of black poverty consciousness in the post-WWII civil rights movement.

In expelling socialists and unionists from its ranks, the NAACP made a departure from employing a dual race/class critique as an analytical orientation for black resistance. Race emerged as the sole critical category, effectively stifling the civil rights movement's ability to develop a rigorous economic critique. This was a blow to the visibility of a socialist critique—or any alternative economic critique—in the black community. Civil rights were critical for all Blacks, and the winning of basic citizenship freedoms advanced the state of all classes, although disproportionately so. Without the presence of a radical class-conscious economic critique, the civil rights movement arguably was headed for the logical dead end of brokering marginal benefits for Blacks positioned to take advantage of them—the black middle class. While winning the right to vote and other basic civil liberties should not be undervalued, the ability to exercise those liberties from a disadvantaged position in capitalism to some degree diminishes their importance. Viewing civil rights as more important than economic rights reflects an interpretation of the American system

that underestimates the role of capitalism in the organization of civil society and the limits it places on the exercise of civil rights. In a capitalist democracy the exercise of political rights is constrained by the maldistribution of resources, which in turn limits the power of expression. Additionally, in a capitalist democracy the exercise of political rights is directed toward specific interests. This affects the development of consent and skews it towards short-term material gain satisfied through the process of consumption essential to the maintenance of capitalism. The interdependence of capitalism and democracy, and the inequality produced, require a broader conception of inequality than civil rights can satisfy.³⁵

By 1950 only 16.3 percent of black men were employed as professionals, managers, craftsmen, or other major occupations. Of Blacks, 51.9 percent earned less than one thousand dollars per year.³⁶ But middle-class civil rights leaders were focused more on advancing educated and professional Blacks and less on the needs of the black poor. This was especially true in 1950's and '60's Birmingham, Ala. In addition to living under the daily repression of Jim Crow Birmingham, during the early 1950's, seven out of every ten black miners in Birmingham lost their jobs. Industrial flight to South America and mechanization effectively ended the need for unskilled black labor in the city. In the midst of a growing economic and social crisis in the city, the Interracial Committee (IC) was established in 1950 to administer to the needs of the city's black residents. But the middle-class black leaders on the committee were unconcerned with deindustrialization and rampant black unemployment. At the top of the committee's priority list was a nine-hole black golf course. The IC also proposed the development of a residential subdivision for high-class blacks, rather than low-income housing for the unemployed homeless. They put more emphasis on hiring college-educated Blacks in civil service and public relations jobs than improvements in wages and working conditions for the working poor. The IC was disbanded in 1956 after the Whites on the committee succumbed to constant terrorist threats, but its activity is valuable in understanding the poverty consciousness of 1950's Birmingham's black middle class.³⁷

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s focus on economic justice from 1966 to 1968 briefly changed the trajectory of the civil rights movement's poverty consciousness. Dr. King came to comprehend the limits of civil rights late in his life. After moving to Chicago in 1966, King realized that the civil rights movement had been middle class focused and was problematic for dealing with persistent poverty—especially in the growing ghettos of large urban cities. Despite his passionate commitment to this broadened perspective, Dr. King's Poor People's March was met with disapproval from a civil rights establishment married to a race-based critique of inequality. Columnist Carl Rowan attacked King for promoting the image that Blacks were disloyal—a reference to King's anti-war stance and the association of King's socialist flirtations with Cold War communism as well as a reference to long-held insecurities about black Americans' perceived misfit with the broader fabric of American nationalism.³⁸ In 1968 Dr. King was murdered while supporting black sanitation workers in Memphis, Tenn. He had realized, mostly through his experiences in Chicago and with northern racism, that ghetto poverty could never be eradicated with just the attainment of civil rights.

Dr. King's critique was unpopular because the civil rights movement was never

prepared to deal with persistent poverty or the real needs of the black poor. The close of the 1960's found well-to-do Blacks riding a wave of unprecedented opportunity that was two decades in the making. Educated and professionally skilled Blacks were in demand after World War II, and it was in large measure the rising ambitions of this group to solidify its middle-class position that led to the launch of the direct action phase of the civil rights struggle.³⁹ The corporate penetration of southern markets and the new opportunism among white elites towards the black consumer market played a significant role in sealing the fate of the era's elite-focused gains. A new black corporate class sought to build relationships with a relatively liberalizing corporate America. John H. Johnson, the successful publisher of *Ebony* and *Jet* magazines, created a role for himself as a consultant to major corporations. Johnson sold the black consumer as a lucrative, untapped market. Coincidentally, he owned two publications through which corporations could reach the black consumer. Johnson's "enlightened self interest" reinterprets some of the civil rights movement's motives and turned the page in the story of black and white elite cooperation in the commodification of black poverty.⁴⁰

Johnson was among many black entrepreneurs who sold the black consumer to corporate America. The civil rights movement and the pro-growth strategies of corporate capital were closely tied, and the black middle class continued to play the buffer role even as civil rights era activists.⁴¹ The role of the culture industry—television, entertainment, and the news media—supported the cultural homogenization which fuels consumerism and benefits corporate capital. The civil rights movement's campaign for social integration and cultural assimilation mirrored corporate capital's need for the eradication of all forms of "otherness" in consumer markets.⁴² Allegations of a conscious strategic alliance between the picket line and the boardroom are overdrawn, but the civil rights movement was a mobilization of working-class people around black middle-class conceptions of liberation. The gains sought from the civil rights movement's struggles did not and should not have been expected to have a major impact on the economic position of the masses of the black poor.

Black Power—the re-emergence of an influential black radical critique—in the mid-1960's complicates the notion of black middle-class one-dimensionality during the civil rights movement. On the one hand was Malcolm X, whose religious Black Nationalism and oppositional rhetoric earned little support from middle-class Blacks. Malcolm cared little, offering up his infamous "house Negro/field Negro" analogy to polarize black politics in a simplistic yet effective manner. He painted the gradualist, elite-driven civil rights agenda as an inauthentic sham antithetical to the liberation of the black masses. Malcolm X moderated his positions and his language shortly before his death, but the Black Power movement pulled from Malcolm X the most radical elements of his message to revive the radical critique. The leaders of the new movement, ironically, were young and middle class themselves. Activist/artist Leroi Jones (Amiri Baraka), political scientist Charles Hamilton, and writer/activist Angela Davis were aspirational, college-educated activists. Their career trajectory was undoubtedly headed away from the fates of unskilled laborers, those dependent on social services, or those vulnerable to inner-city strife. However, like many middle-class radicals before them, their social

position did not blind them to the exploitation of the working class and poor. Their critiques challenged the system and the positions they occupied within it. They benefited from a profoundly radical moment in American history and a social policy agenda that supported grassroots mobilizing. Through the Community Action grants of President Johnson's War on Poverty, black radicals were briefly able to support grassroots efforts at community uplift and political organization. By the Nixon administration, however, Community Action was restricted partly in response to its unintended support of Black Nationalism.

In 1972, the first of two National Black Political Conventions was held in Gary, Ind. The list of organizers and guests included Congressman Charles C. Diggs of Detroit; activist/artist Amiri Baraka of Newark, N.J.; and Richard Hatcher, then-mayor of Gary. All could be deemed members of the black elite, either for their middle-class backgrounds or their positions as political leaders. Despite their social position, however, the convention's agenda mostly proposed policy alternatives to benefit the black poor. Among the many positions advanced by the conference was home rule for Washington, D.C., a government minimum wage and minimum annual income guarantee, the creation of a new urban-based Homestead Act, and the elimination of the death penalty.⁴³

Whether those initiatives failed to gain popularity due to the shifting political culture of the nation or because of a lack of black middle-class support, the presence of a radical discourse within elite segments of black leadership is evidence of a consciousness of black poverty rooted in an alternative organization of society and the economy. But for most of Black America during the civil rights movement, Jim Crow was the beginning and end of inequality. For the black middle class, Jim Crow was an insult, an indignity and barrier to the full experience of citizenship their education, income, and lifestyles prepared them for. For the black poor, however, Jim Crow was part of a larger, self-reproducing, and unrelenting system of oppression unshakable in the face of quiet, peaceful protest, elite cooperation, or even the expansion of the black middle class.

THE NEW BLACK MIDDLE CLASS AND THE GHETTO

In 1977, nine years after Dr. King's efforts on behalf of Memphis sanitation workers, municipal sanitation workers in Atlanta, Ga., went on strike. Maynard Jackson, the city's first black mayor, a civil rights movement stalwart, and a supporter of labor, fired nine hundred low-wage city workers for going on strike. The overwhelming majority of them were black. The demand was a \$.50/hour pay raise for workers making \$7,400 a year.⁴⁴ The median black income in 1979 was \$10,133, and the national median income was \$16,461.⁴⁵ Jackson publicly expressed sympathy with the strikers but claimed not to have the money. He cited Atlanta's airport project and the need to attract businesses. Dr. Martin Luther King, Sr., the heads of the local NAACP and Urban League chapters, and black business leaders tied to the Chamber of Commerce all supported Jackson. While several factors complicate a simplistic reading of the strike, the event is instructive because of Atlanta's significance to the black middle class and the increasingly conservative sociopolitical climate of the late 1970's and early 1980's. Like Washington's National Negro Business League, black middle-class support for the poor was moderated by the

mandates of corporate capitalism.⁴⁶

When President Reagan entered office, he delivered the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981, slashing federal anti-poverty budgets and restricting eligibility rules for all but the “truly needy.”⁴⁷ With the 1960’s’ social upheavals still fresh on the American memory, there was a feeling that Blacks were largely a pathologically angry and belligerent community ungrateful and unfit for civilized society. Out of this growing conservative and hostile climate emerged the belief that the persistent problems of the urban ghetto signaled the failure of Great Society anti-poverty programs. The social sciences industry—the scholars and researchers responsible for much of the rationale behind social policy—became focused narrowly on black ghetto poverty. The work of sociologist William Julius Wilson is central to the direction of the social sciences where poverty was concerned. While Wilson’s analysis of the “truly disadvantaged” supported a more progressive policy agenda than either political party advocated, his presentation of the ghetto poor through the popularization of the term “underclass” indirectly reified the belief that cultural characteristics and behavior reproduced poverty in families and communities. Through the underclass debate, poverty had a place (urban inner cities) and a face (poor Blacks).

Wilson’s analysis charted the dramatic shifts in the economic superstructure that contributed to a deepening of black poverty. Income inequality in America increased in the last decades of the 20th century and those at the bottom—disproportionately black Americans—saw a decline in real wages. In 1998, the bottom fifth of American families received 4.2 percent of the total income; while families in the top fifth received 47.3 percent of all income. After adjusting for inflation, average income in the bottom fifth of families was about 3 percent lower in 1998 than in 1973.⁴⁸ Blacks felt the brunt of the growth in income inequality. The percentage of black men ages 25 to 34 earning below the poverty line for a family of four jumped from 20 percent in 1969 to over 50 percent in 1991.⁴⁹ In 1999, the 95th percentile of black Americans received \$108,800 in annual income—10.1 times the 20th percentile that earned \$10,626. In 1967, the ratio was 7.6.⁵⁰ In 2001, black suburban households had a median income of more than \$37,000—44 percent more than their city counterparts. For the same year the share of black households earning between \$25,000 and \$75,000 was 40.6 percent, while 42.9 percent earned less than \$25,000.⁵¹

Structural explanations for poverty like growing income inequality were unpopular in a media atmosphere driven by negative stereotypes and fear mongering. The emergence of crack cocaine in America’s inner cities legitimated for many their fear of the black poor. It fueled the attack on welfare as many felt that welfare “dependency” confirmed the deficiencies within black culture. *Fortune* magazine’s 1987 article “America’s Underclass: What to Do?” featured a picture of a 16-year-old, black, expecting mother next to her sleeping 13-month-old son. The article stated about poverty, “It is at least as much a cultural as an economic condition.”⁵² In many ways the “underclass” debate of the 1980’s and ’90’s was a revival of the “culture of poverty” framework employed to interpret the “underclass” and cited behaviors believed to be specific to the lives of the black poor. Teen pregnancy, out-

of-wedlock births, single parenthood, drug abuse, and domestic violence occur at all rungs of the social ladder, but the theory of the "underclass" deems them pathological only among poor black communities. The discussion of the underclass was essentially a discussion of black poverty, and in it could be found the true poverty consciousness of the nation and many in the black middle class.

Booker T. Washington helped to advance the culture of poverty thesis almost a century before, and it bubbled under the surface of mid-century class conflict within the black community—particularly where organized labor and the ghetto poor were concerned. By the mid-1980's Black America was fully on the defensive against Reagan-era conservatism. Strategically black leadership—mostly civil rights movement veterans—responded by championing the vitality of the black family in part through a co-optation of the Black Power-era cultural nationalism into a more acceptable mainstream message. This indirectly resulted in the commodification of black culture and the objectification of black history through the civil rights era nostalgia industry. Through Black History Months and Dr. King Days—necessary but rarely more than symbolic—the black elite propagated a vision of the black family specifically aimed to counter the "underclass" image. The culture industry—now an even larger, more pervasive force in American life, played a tremendous role. The *Cosby* Show, books about the black family, and public programs at the local level all re-emphasized an image of the black family that rejected the ghetto stereotype. In a 1993 *Ebony* magazine article entitled, "The Black Family Nobody Knows," the elite-driven defense of the black family is delivered in specific and direct language,

... contrary to widespread public perception—there are considerably more Black persons who were reared in stable, nurturing, and upwardly mobile families with firmly entrenched family values than in broken and dysfunctional homes. The vast majority of Blacks have never seen the inside of a police lockup, not to mention a prison or jail. There are more Black high school graduates than high school dropouts, and there are more than three times as many Black families who are "making it" as there are Black families that are destitute.⁵³

In some ways the *Ebony* article's ideological premise accepts the racialized notion of poverty promoted by the underclass debate and is deliberate in drawing clear distinctions between classes in the black community. This black middle-class image-management campaign was useful and sought to redeem the black family image in the mainstream mind. But ultimately it compromised the development of any meaningful alternative economic critique that could expose and challenge the growing racialization of poverty. It may be argued that the black elite came into being in part because they were successful in convincing White America that there were two Black Americas. But the anti-civil rights movement sentiment of the early 1980's and the cold shoulder approach of the Reagan administration to black leadership essentially implied that the problem of the black poor was in part the fault of an ineffective black middle class. Indeed it was. Thus the underclass debate not only

threatened the fate of the black poor, but the black middle class as well.

The reaction to hip-hop culture from black leadership was also a reaction to black poverty. Hip-hop, initially a New York-based cultural movement of inner-city black youth, defied the conventional wisdom of the polite, conformist, and apolitical tone of acceptable black mass culture. This was no Motown movement. Rap music provided the first structured medium for the social, political, and cultural expression of the post-civil rights generation. For the black middle class, however, making social integration work meant proving that Blacks could assimilate into white environments without disrupting the existing order. The black middle class was attempting to project another image of black life, one that would assuage the fears of White America and facilitate a smooth transition to integration. Hip-hop erased the lines between public and private culture, distinctions closely guarded by a black middle class defensive about any hint of revealing "pathological" behavior or airing dirty laundry. More than any other cultural movement of the late 20th century, hip-hop was a result of and a response to the residual effects of deindustrialization, changing residential patterns, white flight, and a growing class splintering in Black America. While hip-hop has never advocated any radical economic program, it depicts how urban life exposes the contradictions of mainstream culture generally and black middle-class ambition specifically.

The post-civil rights era response to black poverty was not all bad, and many successful Blacks organized to respond to rising black poverty. In Los Angeles in 1983 a group of black professionals announced plans to provide financial support and free services to poor black families for a year in an attempt to "break the cycle of poverty." The Adopt-a-Family Endowment was the idea of Dr. James Mays, who along with other black professionals attempted to provide poor black families with free services and \$200 a month for a year.⁵⁴ When interviewed a year later, Dr. Mays reported 25 poor families benefiting from assistance of 125 Los Angeles-area professionals. Dr. Mays reported, "The black professional has a chameleon-like personality; we can be as intellectual as any race of people and as soulful. Because we are able to switch, we can react on a more intimate level with people who need a boost."⁵⁵ Dr. Mays' DuBoisian double consciousness was an identity shared by many in the black middle class at the time.

The mantra "give back to the community" became a popular call to philanthropy and community service. It emerged from traditional themes of black authenticity and self-sufficiency, important in the face of an increasingly mainstreamed black middle class. Black elite social organizations, fraternities, and sororities built upon years of community service and the growing success of their membership to launch national and international service campaigns, develop subsidized housing, and fund college students through scholarships. The NAACP, the National Urban League, and various other organizations championed policies targeted at improving the condition of the black poor. Jesse Jackson's 1984 and 1988 campaigns were largely populist calls for massive redistributive reforms. Many in the black middle class saw their success as an opportunity to provide an example for the urban poor; thus, mentorship became an essential part of the collective black middle-class spirit. Contrary to popular belief, many remained tied to black communities and the black poor. While William Julius Wilson proposed that black middle-class flight was in

part to blame for the isolation of the ghetto, studies confirm that the black middle class remains in close proximity to the black poor and very connected to the day-to-day lives of poor Blacks through families, institutions, and communities.⁵⁶

Despite its fundamentally good intentions, the spirit of social and economic philanthropy toward the black poor is inadequate to concretely attack the structural determinants of ghetto poverty. In the absence of a popular and substantive structural critique of economic inequality, supposed differences in behavior or individual characteristics become the language for comprehending class differences. The logic is simple: There are certain types of black people who are just like "regular" people; then there are the others. Conscious of the transitory nature of black class identities, many employ the, "I made it, why can't they" logic to interpret black poverty, an adaptation of the American myth of individual effort as the sole determinant of social mobility. This logic unknowingly reifies the ahistorical, colorblind conservatism of the Reagan-Bush-Clinton era and its attitudes on the black poor as expressed through crime and welfare policy. It is also manifested through the ambivalent yet abiding support of black leadership and the black culture industry. For example, in his wildly successful 1996 televised performance "Bring Da Pain," comedian Chris Rock raucously jokes, "I love black people, but I hate n**gas." Greeted by a cacophony of boisterous laughter from a predominately black audience, he goes on to delineate the differences between the two classes of Black America. Rock's contrast is clear and his motives unconscious. Black poverty was something to be ashamed of, not something to rally around.

The failure to confront head-on the conception of a black ghetto underclass fraught with pathological behaviors that on their own reproduced black poverty was a fatal flaw of the black middle class/elite. The development of the underclass construct paved the way for the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), commonly known as welfare reform, in 1996. The act effectively ended the social safety net by imposing time limits on public assistance, bans for ex-felons, and tying benefits to employment without provisions for transportation, child care, or any mandates for living wages. While almost all of the Congressional Black Caucus opposed PRWORA, the logic of a necessary social safety net to account for the inherent inequity of capitalism was absent from the American consciousness—black Americans included. The black middle class benefited greatly from the 1990's economic expansion, and as long as affirmative action remained intact, there was little hope for an emergent alternative economic critique. Intellectuals and activists played their usual roles, but there was generally little sympathy towards socialist ideas in the gilded age of the 1990's.

CONCLUSION

In the seminal work *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon asks the question "Can the bourgeois phase be skipped in the process of national development?" Fanon of course is referring to the process of African liberation from colonial power, but his question easily applies to Black America—a community that has aptly been described a "nation within a nation." Fanon goes on to question whether the bourgeoisie of the underdeveloped country is actually a bourgeoisie class, or rather:

...a sort of little greedy caste, avid and voracious, with the mind of a huckster, only too glad to accept the dividend that the former colonial powers hand out to it. This get rich quick middle class shows itself incapable of great ideas or inventiveness. It remembers what it has read in European textbooks and imperceptibly it becomes not even the replica of Europe, but its caricature.⁵⁷

I have attempted in this analysis to paint a more complicated and sympathetic interpretation of the historic development of black middle-class poverty consciousness, but Fanon's timeless critique haunts any analysis of the interplay of race, class, and history. Fanon's own history as a product of Martinique's middle class gives an eye into the conflicting and often-deceiving consciousness of the middle-class products of oppressed peoples. Like many great black minds that were reared in middle-class settings, Fanon wrestled with the privilege and peril of that position, ultimately realizing his uncompromising responsibility to marshal his talents for the protracted struggle of black liberation.

History will judge the children of the new black middle class by their ability to bring about revolutionary change for the black poor and indeed all people oppressed by poverty. Universal health care, education reform, a return of the social safety net, living wage reforms, reparative policies acknowledging the collateral and intergenerational affects of systemic racism/sexism, or just wholesale socialist reform must be the crusades of the new black middle class. This requires an acknowledgement of its privilege, its linked fate with all oppressed peoples, and the inevitability of some sacrifice of that privilege for the betterment of poor. There will be no advancement on the race question in America as long as the critique employed is focused only on race.

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ENDNOTES

1 Williams and Pearson, 1A.

2 Whelan, 20.

3 U.S. Census.

4 Sen, 87-110.

5 In Dawson, the "linked fate" of black Americans is supported by the statistical recognition of patterns in black political thought that, while varying according to ideological orientation and social position, generally support a belief in race as a significant determinant in life chances for all black Americans.

6 Gregory, 140.

7 Johnson and Smith, 301-302.

8 Marable, 140-141. Marable draws most of his information about antebellum black capitalism from Harris, 4-24.

9 Frazier, 30.

10 Marable, 140-141.

11 *Ibid.*

12 In their paper, authors Darity, Dietrich, and Guilkey use historical labor data to understand the intergenerational transfer of discrimination and labor market inequality to future generations. The authors posit that the discrimination Blacks have historically faced in the labor market has a direct impact on the labor opportunities and experiences of Blacks today. This supports the claim that privilege and disadvantage are self-reproducing forces that perpetuate existing inequality.

13 Birmingham, 127.

14 Reed, 215.

15 A more detailed discussion of interracial unity during the populist period is provided in Zinn, 283-286.

16 Reed, 16.

17 Spear, 71.

18 Frazier, 44.

19 Villard.

20 Toler.

21 DuBois.

22 Mixon.

23 Spear, 168.

- 24 Marks.
- 25 Spear, 168.
- 26 Banner-Haley, 6.
- 27 *Ibid.*, 45-62.
- 28 Mandle, 99-100
- 29 Marable, 200-201.
- 30 *Ibid.*, 200.
- 31 Holloway.
- 32 Lewis, 319.
- 33 Holloway.
- 34 Kelley.
- 35 Cohen and Rogers, 47-87.
- 36 Frazier, 47.
- 37 Kelley, 78-83.
- 38 Rowan, 42.
- 39 Piven and Cloward, 233-235.
- 40 Weems, 73-74. Advertising revenue in *Ebony* tripled between 1962 and 1969.
- 41 For example, during the 1960's the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) stood in the forefront of the movement to force U.S. corporations to use black models in their print and television advertising. To CORE and other civil rights organizations, this was a "civil rights" issue. Weems, 74.
- 42 Reed, 63-64.
- 43 National Black Political Convention Collection, 1972-1973.
- 44 Scott, A3.
- 45 Smith and Johns, 461.
- 46 In *Stirrings in the Jug: Black Politics in the Post-Segregation Era*, Adolph Reed presents a one-sided account of the strike that supports his contention that the black political elite are one and the same as white racist capitalists. While the strike must be viewed within the context of interest-group-controlled municipal politics, democratically controlled public budgets, and constituency management—all of which played a significant role in Jackson's decision not to grant the pay raises—Reed is justified in his critique of the role black political elites played in the equation and their historic role where the black working poor are concerned. Reed, 5-6. Additional elaboration is provided in Scott, A3.
- 47 O'Conner, 242.
- 48 Danzinger and Haveman, 40-41.

49 Guinier and Torres, 46.

50 Daniels, 74-75.

51 "Diversity in America," 56.

52 Magnet, 130-150.

53 Massaquoi, 28.

54 "Successful Blacks in Los Angeles Plan to Assist Welfare Families."

55 Raspberry, A23.

56 In both *Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril among the Black Middle Class* by Mary Pattillo-McCoy and *Black Corona: Race and the Politics of Place in an Urban Community* by Stephen Gregory, the notion of black middle class out-migration as a variable contributing the isolation of the black urban poor set out in William Julius Wilson's work is demystified by presenting more variegated analysis of class identity in the black community.

57 Fanon, 175.

ECONOMIC SALVATION: HOMEOWNERSHIP AND THE BLACK CHURCH

Wayne L. Thornhill*

Abstract

This paper argues that the black church through its aggregate resources of more than \$50 billion deposited into financial institutions and its historical economic role in the African American community can help to increase the homeownership rates of Blacks. The black church has the economic influence, captive audience, and credibility to influence the homeownership rates of African Americans. The traditional benefits and risks are considered, yet the paper raises a unique psychological barrier by and by affecting Blacks that the church is uniquely positioned to address. Church members who give to the church could receive down-payment gifts from the church family; non-itemizers could receive homeownership credit for their charitable giving to the church, and ministers could integrate economic empowerment into the message of salvation to increase homeownership. The black church has a long and strong history of building wealth through landownership and education. Its legacy can be transferred to increase African American homeownership and contribute to the social policy discussion.

Introduction

America's homeownership rate, 67.8 percent, is at its highest with the following breakdown among groups: Whites 71.6 percent; Blacks¹ 47.7 percent, Hispanics 47.3 percent, and Asian/others 54.2 percent.² However, the homeownership rate of Blacks (47.7 percent) has not kept pace with other ethnic groups. The disparity between the largest non-immigrant minority groups in America continues to widen with respect to other group rates. Yet, the strongest and most influential entity in the black community—the church—has experienced phenomenal growth over the last decade with small congregations in the teens expanding to tens of thousands.³

[Figure 1. National Homeownership Rates By Race and Ethnicity, page 64]

Historically, policies and actions of the United States government prevented African Americans from homesteading, land acquisition, and homeownership.⁴ Homeownership has become an integral part of the American Dream. The ideal of

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homeownership involves shared values and beliefs and is often seen as the actualization of freedom. American democracy has been built upon the individual's right to obtain wealth through property ownership.⁵ Thomas Jefferson, the major framer of the Declaration of Independence, borrows from his mentor John Locke in referring to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" as Locke spoke of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of property."⁶ Even today, Americans believe that freedom and happiness are embodied in the ability to own property, as that ability provides individuals with an opportunity to control their own destiny.⁷

African Americans endured more than four hundred years of slavery in America and were once considered property themselves. Therefore, homeownership in the minds of African Americans may not be equivalent to freedom. If homeownership is the measure of success and freedom, then America has done very little to rectify the social and economic ills imposed upon and passed down through generations of African Americans. They were not only denied access to the economic opportunity of homeownership for wealth-building and financial security for their future, but were stripped of their investment potential. The precise economic value may be difficult to assess. However, Franklin Raines, chairman of Fannie Mae, puts the economic impact in context:

If America had racial equality in wealth, African Americans would have \$760 billion more in home equity value, and between the stock market, retirement funds, and in the bank it would total over \$1 trillion more in wealth. Homeownership is significant for African Americans because it has the power to help mend the broken promise of "40 acres and a mule."⁸

The black church is the anchor institution in the African American community with a strong history of helping Blacks to improve their plight spiritually, socially, politically, and economically. The black church also has the greatest potential to enable African Americans to share in the American dream and to leverage the economic and social benefits associated with "putting down roots in America."⁹ However, the black church has not collectively focused on using its influence and resources to aggressively promote homeownership and generational wealth in the African American community.

Economic and Social Benefits of Home ownership for African Americans

African Americans have historically been excluded from building generational wealth and have not had access to homeownership as an asset-building vehicle.¹⁰ Consequently, each generation starts further behind economically; however, their economic progress is often compared to Whites and other ethnic groups as though the playing field were level. The cycle repeats itself, as lower net worth translates into less money available to assist the next generation with down payments and closing costs.¹¹

Table 1 identifies some of the rewards and risks of homeownership and their significance to African Americans. Asset-building, wealth creation for future

generations, equity value, and tax savings are tremendous rewards associated with homeownership whereas property depreciation, foreclosure risk, and mobility limitations are the risks associated with homeownership.

Table 1. Rewards and Risks of Homeownership

REWARDS	SIGNIFICANCE FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS	RISKS
Asset Building	Generational Wealth	Depreciation in Value
Tax Savings	Money for Education and Entrepreneurship	Foreclosure
Social Connectedness	Revitalization of Communities	Decreased Mobility

Homeownership can deinstitutionalize the effects to the psyche of those excluded socially, economically, and psychologically by allowing Blacks an opportunity to shape a positive environment to rear their children, while developing wealth and promoting self-esteem. Homeownership represents a major accomplishment for African Americans because it validates their success in overcoming the psychological barriers and responding effectively to the “double consciousness” of racial pride and American values that they confront daily.¹² African Americans can own property versus being owned as property—a full circle for descendants of slaves.

Historically, homeownership results in accumulated wealth through appreciation. Homeownership not only provides the basic necessity of shelter, but in America it constitutes the primary investment asset and wealth vehicle of most households.¹³ This does not include Blacks, who regardless of income levels have found it difficult to build assets to pass down to future generations. The equity in the home can be invested in a business or education, or leveraged for other opportunities. Homeownership allows each individual to have a slice of the “American pie” and has been the single most important vehicle for asset building and wealth accumulation.¹⁴

The government subsidizes homeownership by providing tax benefits. From the founding of the nation, homeownership served to empower individuals through asset accumulation. Though the tax laws changed in 1986, the home interest deduction continued because it offered benefits to a significant portion of the population. The major asset-building features for those who itemize are the 30 percent reduction in tax liability through interest deductions and the capital gains exclusion from main home sales.¹⁵

Homeownership fosters neighborhood stability. When people feel or believe they are part of a community, both geographically and spiritually, they tend to identify with and protect it, thus promoting healthier communities.¹⁶ In 1932, a U.S. senator on the floor of the house chamber remarked “I have never seen a person throw a rock through their own window.”¹⁷ Homeownership then provides an impetus to maintain one’s property. It is not difficult to understand the difference between

homeowners taking care of their property versus renters who have no vested interest in maintaining the property.

Several scholars have argued that homeownership leads to enhanced self-esteem, perceived control over life, and an overall sense of psychological well-being.¹⁸ Since homeownership is still the ultimate "American Dream," when it is achieved, people experience a sense of satisfaction.

Homeownership Risks and African Americans

Structural disparities, de facto discrimination, and de jure racism have taken a toll, and Blacks have internalized the fear of failure to the extent that some have stopped trying. This has economic and emotional implications¹⁹ because Blacks often fail to see the economic value in homeownership in a depressed or developing community. A tenant in a distressed Baltimore neighborhood said, "I've been renting here for 16 years, but I don't want to own here."²⁰ The risk of losing one's home or its value affects the psyche of African Americans to such an extent that renting seems less stressful. Property ownership among African Americans receded dramatically throughout the 20th century. In 1920, Blacks owned approximately 15 million acres, but today they own less than 1.2 million.²¹

One risk associated with homeownership is the possibility of property depreciation. Homeownership is riskier for people who own in comparatively lower-value, underserved, urban neighborhoods because the probability of receiving a good return on their investment is lower. Many homes available to low-to-moderate income families may never appreciate in value because the property is older, and the homeowner lacks the savings to update or repair the property.²²

The possibility of losing one's home has increased because lenders are more likely to neglect underserved communities. The risk of foreclosure poses a challenge for homeowners, especially during economic recessions, and is a particularly traumatic experience that may take a toll on one's psychological health.²³ When a household encounters an unexpected financial emergency (e.g., job loss, home repair, etc.), the owners must choose between mortgage payments and other debt, in which case it becomes difficult to pay off their debt and work out of the credit hole.²⁴

Homeownership creates stability as a positive factor, but this translates into longevity for a person that may need mobility. Homeownership can limit the employment opportunities of low-skilled, low-income people because the low-skilled employment opportunities may not be in close proximity.²⁵ Consequently, homeownership can sometimes trap residents in distressed or deteriorating neighborhoods.

Table 2 outlines the barriers to homeownership, specifically noting general market responses and the church's competitive advantage in addressing these barriers. The home-buying process is complex, even though technology has assisted in making the process less cumbersome. Many view the process almost as a rite of passage for homeownership.²⁶ The church has the capacity to make the process less intimidating by disseminating information and educating the larger black community in the following areas: loan qualification, sales processes, and responsibilities of

homeownership. Many people are excluded from the home-buying process because of structural barriers, including discriminatory practices and functional barriers (e.g., no down payment). Although some barriers are interconnected, the church concept of stewardship and its relationship with financial institutions can address these barriers. Perhaps unique for many Blacks is the "by and by" mentality through which they internalize their fear of rejection (this phenomenon will be discussed later). Nevertheless, the church has the credibility and trustworthiness to penetrate the injustice and social ills that Blacks have been forced to endure.

Table 2. Barriers to Homeownership

BARRIERS FOR MEMBERS	GENERAL MARKET RESPONSES	CHURCH'S COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE
Complexity	Technology	Information Center for Captive Audience
Exclusion		
Discrimination	Legislation	Economic Influence
Lack of Down Payment and Closing Cost Funds;	More Flexible Mortgage Programs;	Matching Funds from Church Family
Credit	Sub-prime Lending;	Expand Stewardship Teaching to Include Theo-economics ²⁷
Internalized Psychological Limitations	Not Addressed	Credibility & Trust

Blacks are often the last hired and first fired and frequently find it necessary to take low paying jobs, especially in central cities where better jobs are less available than in the suburbs.²⁸ This spatial mismatch further challenges those who want to be homeowners because they lack mobility and cannot afford a car, much less a home. Despite the availability of new programs, homeownership seems out of their reach leaving renting as the only viable option.²⁹

Brokering through a complex system of financial institutions and understanding the roles of a broad range of mortgage professionals is a difficult process. The loan qualification process for homeownership involves working with a loan originator, a processor, and often an underwriter, which consumes considerable amounts of time and energy.³⁰ The closing is a particularly overwhelming process because more documents are signed than at any time during a person's life. For first-time homebuyers, it can be overwhelming because of the various items required, including tax returns, verification of employment, debt disclosure, and credit reports. A high percentage of first-time homebuyers go through alternative lenders, including brokers

(despite their higher fees) because of reduced paperwork and an inviting environment.

High transaction costs discourage many potential homebuyers from purchasing. The lack of funds for down payment and closing costs prohibit many people from owning homes.³¹ Although programs are available that offer 3 percent down payment and even 100 percent financing, the closing cost can still equate to 3-5 percent of the transaction and make the transaction cost-prohibitive for first-time homebuyers who are "cash poor."

The lack of knowledge of the process makes borrowers easy prey for predatory lenders and those who offer sub-prime products. Though more lenders are providing affordable mortgage products, there has been substantial growth in sub-prime lending. Understanding the credit process is essential to being able to access capital, and the fact that most individuals are not knowledgeable about their credit report is a major hurdle in the home-buying process. Although credit scoring has been an attempt to implement objective criteria, consumers still need to be aware of what factors affect credit scoring. Education can be a powerful tool for borrowers in obtaining better terms and avoiding default.

Problems Specific to African Americans

The mortgage process is often more cumbersome for Blacks, who may have to submit more documentation because of their limited access to traditional credit, their past credit challenges, employment history, savings, and family situations. This information may be used to deny the applicant because of the underwriter's biases. A greater percentage of Blacks still have limited access to capital—a method of withholding credit—that has been used to discriminate against minorities. Blacks are much more likely than Whites to fall into the sub-prime mortgage markets even though they could qualify for lower-cost loans. Alleviating this problem would mean challenging lenders in urban communities who provide only sub-prime products that leave an indelible mark upon borrowers' credit. Various laws including the Fair Housing Act were created to address specific forms of discrimination in the housing industry. Unfortunately, as recently as 2000, empirical data still confirm that Blacks are turned down for loans twice as often as Whites. Lenders, brokers, credit bureaus, and builders who have created barriers for black borrowers have practiced institutional racism. Consequently, there is still a need to enforce and revisit fair lending practices and the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) to ensure that Blacks are not excluded from wealth-building through homeownership. Black consumers continue to face the daunting challenge of obtaining a down payment or accessing capital because of limited generational wealth. The wealth gap in America has remained relatively stable for the last twenty years.³²

One barrier rarely mentioned is the "by and by" mentality, which is an internal psychological barrier that black communities have to deal with. Many Blacks have internalized their condition into a permanent position of waiting for their rewards in heaven because they do not see themselves being granted parity or the fruits of prosperity here on earth. They believe they are not worthy because they have struggled

so hard and endured for so long with so little structural progress. In the minds of many Blacks, the aforementioned challenges ultimately plant an internal psychological barrier to homeownership.³³ While homeownership has been a desire, the deep wounds of the past create a barrier in the minds of some. Blacks acquiesce to this barrier by hermeneutically bridging suffering and exclusion to declare "I will get mine's on the other side."³⁴

Four manifestations of this barrier exist: fear of rejection, lack of confidence, self-defeated mentality, and over-spiritualization. First, the fear of rejection occurs when they fear the lender checking their credit. Fear of borrowing too much money and feelings of unworthiness have crippled many Blacks and prevented them from considering long-term opportunities to build wealth. Second, the lack of self-confidence in understanding and navigating the mortgage process, like the literacy test of days gone, is a process that keep Blacks from believing homeownership is attainable. Third, the self-defeated mentality is embedded in the belief that credit rejection is likely even before applying. Fourth, they "spiritualize" the situation to declare, "Just give me Jesus rather than silver or gold or a *home*."³⁵ They internalize frustration with the process and think it will be better "by and by." Since Blacks have been discriminated against, a self-fulfilling prophecy is created, whereby renting is considered better because the system has traditionally excluded them. Since many Blacks view the process as too difficult and lenders as inaccessible, they have conditioned themselves to make something good out of something bad. This is similar to arguments by Rohe, Van Zandt, and McCarthy about good health, psychological benefits, and self-esteem, yet the long-term effects of marginalization influence the belief-modality of disenfranchised communities.

While many non-black potential homeowners face similar obstacles, there are other barriers that have excluded persons, in particular African Americans, from participating in homeownership. The internalization of marginalization—the concretizing of an oppressive state or the reification of their situation, similar to an employable unemployed person that stops seeking work—affects the habits of Blacks and is reflected in their blemished credit and financial habits as consumers. This is imbedded in the modern theology of the black church, compared to the historic praxis and proclamation of economic empowerment that identified the black church. Today, there is a tendency to think the church was only a spiritual conduit for Blacks when in fact it was the foundation to economic empowerment.³⁶ Though Blacks were excluded from wealth-building through homeownership, the black church demonstrated financial independence by acquiring land to erect houses of worship. Historically, the church addressed the economic and psychological barriers through advocating landownership as a wealth-building vehicle. A similar strategy could be implemented today providing new economic freedom for Blacks.

The American dream of homeownership and a better life not restrained by the color of one's skin remains a major goal and hope of African Americans. Yet, even after centuries of economic prosperity for America, the homeownership dream is complicated by the American quagmire of economic inequality. The black church is the institution that must expand its role because it can address and help remove the barriers to homeownership that have kept many African Americans in economic despair. Compared to other institutions focused upon economic justice and social

change (i.e., educational institutions and political parties), the black church is the oldest and largest Black-owned economic enterprise, holding the highest concentration of black wealth and social power.³⁷ The black church could influence the forward progress of urban communities specifically by focusing on homeownership to complement the “competitive advantages” of urban communities.³⁸

The History of the Black Church

The birth of the black church as a “visible” institution was created during the harsh reality of slavery and became the ideal of economic independence through the vehicle of faith.³⁹ The major historic black denominations, consisting of Baptist, Methodist, and Pentecostal organizations, were all formed after the Free African Society of 1787 as independent and totally Black-controlled denominations. Though connected to the Christian institution that condoned slavery and its economic gain, the black church played a pivotal role in transitioning Blacks from slavery to some semblance of freedom. It was one of the few stable and coherent institutions to emerge from slavery that continue through the present day.

Historically, the black church operated between the pressing need to survive and the liberating ethic of economic empowerment. The church as a liberator and survivor highlights the dynamic tension that it operates within promoting an economic ethic “forged in the crucible” of outhouses, field houses, and slave quarters. The ethos and spirit of survival and economic self-help emerged as slaves helped one another in the “family” survive.⁴⁰ The Christianizing of slaves in the 18th and 19th centuries provided the formalized structure for self-help and mutual aid that represented the formation of the black church.⁴¹ The survival of the black church is a major accomplishment when one considers the lack of legislative advocacy, limited economic infrastructure, and disproportionate financial support available to Blacks. Despite these limitations, the black church advocated full participation by Blacks in the American culture of landownership to ensure economic security for future generations.

The black church was the major entity that practiced a true liberation theology by becoming economically independent as an institution. The black community thought that after the Emancipation Proclamation and Northern victory in the Civil War, former slaves would be granted the same rights, privileges, and opportunities that Whites enjoyed, such as employment, entrepreneurship, and homeownership. The church believed that freedom was not just physical but had to encompass economic independence and well-being; therefore, the church promoted thrift, self-help, collective wealth-building, kinship, and landownership to promote wealth accumulation. The black church had to utilize capitalism as the tool because no other system existed. Like Jefferson and Locke, the black church believed that property ownership was important and could bring some happiness and real freedom. The public role of the black church was evidenced by economic activities that it influenced among Blacks.⁴²

Faith-Based Economic Role

Black churches, religious mutual aid, and fraternal orders created important economic institutions during the late 18th and 19th centuries, including burial societies, banks, insurance companies, and building and loan societies. DuBois called the building of these black churches the "first form of economic cooperation among Black people."⁴³ In most cases, the church created, was affiliated with, and provided the capital for these institutions; thus, there was a close relationship and interchangeability between the black church and these institutions.⁴⁴ The church created these societies out of necessity. They functioned as aid providers, political activists, and support in financial difficulty. Mutual aid societies were the forerunners to black secular organizations like black college fraternities and sororities, the National Association for Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the National Urban League, and to the birth of economic development ventures such as the Opportunities Industrial Commission (OIC) founded by Zion Baptist Church pastor Leon Sullivan.

The role of churches, lodges, and mutual aid benevolent associations in creating financial institutions did not begin en masse until after the collapse of the Freedman's Savings & Trust Company in 1874, which created major distrust among many African Americans toward banks.⁴⁵ Other financial institutions capitalized by members were formed, including the True Reformers Bank in 1888, Capital Savings Bank, Galilean Bank, and others. Members helped in acquiring land to erect buildings, business enterprises emanated from the church, and ownership promoted economic independence. However, distrust toward banks helped to intensify a focus upon one's earnings for immediate pleasures.⁴⁶

The black church led in spreading the message of economic empowerment through savings, prudence, and landownership during Reconstruction. In the post-Civil War era, articles in the leading black magazine published by the *A.M.E. Church Review* stressed the importance of economic development, and economic advancement.⁴⁷ Black ministers preached the message of economic "uplift," moral commitment, and education. Since there were no welfare agencies, the church galvanized the community and promoted economic sustainability. Economic empowerment was practiced out of necessity and provided the impetus to institutionalize an economic ethos for the upliftment of Blacks.⁴⁸

Economics and the black church have always been intertwined.⁴⁹ As DuBois pointed out more than fifty years ago, "A study of economic cooperation among Negroes must begin with the church group." It was in order to establish their own churches that Blacks began to pool their meager economic resources and buy buildings and the land on which they stood.⁵⁰ However, most economic studies of the black community tend to ignore the contributions of their religious institutions to black economic mobility and development.⁵¹

Lincoln and Mamiya correctly stated that the black church is a reflexive institution that moves constantly between the poles of survival and liberation in the political and economic arenas. On one hand, for its own economic survival it is an institution that has taken part in the financial and economic transactions of the larger society and has largely accepted capitalism as an economic system.⁵²

Alternatively, the black church is the most economically independent institutional sector in the black community. It does not depend on white patronage to pay its pastors or erect its buildings. Consequently, the creation of an independent black church was not only significant spiritually but economically because it created a new economic structure for Blacks collectively.

The black church has always operated as the political, economic, spiritual, and educational institution and instrument of social change for the black community.⁵³ Though this was always understood to be the mission of the black church, the focus upon education and political parity were emphasized to address the deplorable conditions of Blacks. The church shifted its focus to a civil rights agenda in the 1950's, which came at the expense or oversight of economic parity. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., did realize that a new economic strategy was required to make significant change in America; thus, his last campaign was economically focused.⁵⁴ After more than a hundred years since the end of slavery and more than thirty years after the passage of civil rights legislation, many Blacks continue to fall by the wayside in their march toward economic equality.⁵⁵

The black church is in a unique position to help create generational wealth, educate and inform its members, and revitalize its communities. The black church has operated in the public sphere to impact the community.⁵⁶ Evelyn Higginbotham, black church historian, says the black church functioned in a "discursive, critical arena—a public sphere in which values and issues were aired, debated, and disseminated throughout the larger black community."⁵⁷

The Black Church and Homeownership

Advocating homeownership through the black church is a logical progressive strategy that could be as significant as previous social reforms and political legislation and could offer an economic remedy to disparity. Homeownership can be the bridge that moves African Americans into the 21st century with the possibility for economic parity. The black church is the most significant historic yet socially sensitive and economically independent institution with the capacity to affect the black community and society today. Blacks are in a position to use their billion dollars deposited in lending institutions to create and leverage \$30 billion from financial markets. Business expansion, entrepreneurial enterprises, and community development can all take place through loans for homeownership.

The black church has operated in this capacity before and is strategically positioned to play a major role through its resources, captive audience, and credibility in the black community. The church also has the capacity and access to a captive audience through which it can expand its teachings on stewardship using the basic premise of landownership—homeownership as the impetus to asset building, citizenship, and self-empowerment. The black church has credibility within the African American community to address economic and psychological barriers and can use its collective economic resources to promote homeownership. The church itself has accumulated wealth through landownership, and that knowledge can be transferred

to advocate for homeownership as the vehicle for African Americans to generate wealth.

The black church congregation is a reflection of the diversity of the black community and represents a legitimate market and captive audience. They attract low-, middle-, and upper-income people with some membership rolls exceeding twenty thousand active members as they provide weekly supportive services.⁵⁸ The black church was solidified into a community because of the need for association. The purpose of its formation was greater than that of doctrinal confluence; thus, it is more than a religious organization.⁵⁹

No other entity has access to the larger black community and various market segments as a powerful information vehicle like the black church.⁶⁰ The black minister exercises a significant influence over church members and remains a trusted person in the community.⁶¹ Historically, communication from the pulpit has been more effective than flyers, radio ads, and other external marketing devices. The centralized gathering space offered by the black church can offer black congregations leverage to positively shape social behavior and values. The nexus of homeownership through the black church demonstrates a powerful connection and revives its historical role.⁶²

The black church has the credibility and trust of the community, yet many still espouse a belief that rewards will come later in heaven,⁶³ therefore hardships including racism and deplorable rental conditions were endured because members believed that God was with them in their struggle and economic deliverance was needed.⁶⁴ This "by and by" theology imbeds fear, second-class mentality, and inferiority that Blacks have internalized. The psychological barrier of the "by and by," wait-until-you-die theology has hindered Blacks and churches but can be removed through a focused effort.

The church has been the primordial institution for education but must include economic education in its spiritual mission and concept of stewardship to reach parity. Homeownership can provide members with tools for economic independence through equity, financial education, and values that counteract self-imposed barriers.

The church has social and economic capital that can be used to fulfill its historic role of moral and economic support system for people who have been historically marginalized and wronged. The black church must provide a new kind of leadership that emphasizes economics, as it affects the political, social, and educational culture. Reverend Mark Whitlock, executive director of First African Methodist Episcopal (FAME) in Los Angeles, said that "we believe in holistic ministry" and this holistic approach includes economic salvation to address the total needs of people in the community. The black church must be reestablished as the leading economic depository for the black community.

The black church's economic influence is paralleled to the national economy. The Montgomery bus boycott was an economic action that demonstrated the black church's economic influence.⁶⁵ The civil rights movement received its fire when it implemented an "economic boycott" and leveraged the economic power of Blacks by utilizing the black church.⁶⁶ The black community's economic pulse can be gauged by the black church's economic pulse.⁶⁷ The faith community has an obli-

gation to galvanize a spiritual awakening around stewardship and to use its collective wealth, especially when it deposits the equivalent of \$1 billion into white banks every Monday morning.⁶⁸ The black church could harness the collective buying power of Blacks and create the ninth largest economy in the world.⁶⁹ The church has substantial influence.

The aggregate wealth of the black church is the most substantial of any black institution. The revenues flowing through the black church collectively range between \$15 and \$50 billion, which is largely deposited in non-Black-owned financial institutions.⁷⁰ A study by Martin Larson and Stanley Lowell offers some estimates which underscore the idea that black churches are important economic institutions. At least 20 million black Americans are estimated to be religious, and Lincoln and Mamiyal⁷¹ found that over 80 percent of African Americans give charitably through their churches. In fact, it has been suggested that the black church generates enough income on Sunday to shut down any major financial institution on Monday morning by withholding its liquid deposits.⁷² Donald Burgs, president of Houston Mayoral Ministerial Alliance, stated, "If we [black churches] pooled our resources we could significantly impact communities."⁷³ The black church as a whole—irrespective of denomination, size (i.e., what would be called a "mega church" or a "small church"), or location—has the power to influence economic decisions in America based on the income it generates.

Most church assets consist of money in banks and ownership in land as opposed to money in stocks, bonds, etc. Land accumulation is the second largest generator of wealth for black churches. Landownership, like homeownership, allows owners to build equity and borrow against the equity because it is an asset. The cumulative property value of churches probably exceeds \$50 billion,⁷⁴ and this fact can help account for the church as the paradigm for property acquisition by members through homeownership.

TABLE 3. ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES

LOCATION OF ASSETS	CHURCHES	BUSINESSES	PUBLIC SECTOR
Banks	85%	20%	50%
Stocks, Bonds, Other	1-3%	75%	40%
Land and Building	80%	50%	25%
Return on Investments	2-4%	10-15%	5-8%

Source: Anderson, Mamiya, and Department of Housing and Urban Development

Since the largest percentage of the black church's liquid assets reside in financial institutions, this influence can and should result in a profitable relationship. In surveys and interviews conducted with church leaders and faith-based community development corporations (CDCs), 70 percent of those surveyed indicated that they have a depository relationship with a financial institution, but they are not leveraging this relationship for the benefit of their members. Of the churches citing a depository relationship with a financial institution, only 40 percent indicated that other services were offered to their members based on this relationship. Other findings suggested that institutions that churches bank with have a tendency to deny the

churches and their members all types of loans (i.e., church structure, mortgage, and business loans).

[Figure 2. Relationships with Financial Institutions, page 65]

Could leveraging these financial relationships assist churches in increasing the homeownership rates of Blacks? The surveys indicated that many pastors believe that the black church has underutilized its economic capacity and "must preach and teach homeownership and encourage wealth building to understand the impact and implications of CRA legislation."⁷⁵ Churches with CDCs do leverage banking relationships as good business, and they need CRA loans.

Current Economic Strategies and Policy Considerations

Churches can schedule meetings with financial institutions to discuss how members can benefit. Members of large churches in particular can benefit from banking services, such as free checking and savings accounts, interest rate discounts on loans, free retirement planning, or homeownership initiatives that are funded by the bank and implemented by the church.

Utilizing a ministerial alliance, the black church can combine wealth and knowledge. The Black Ministerial Alliance of Boston and the Texas Ministerial Alliance are two organizations that seek to leverage the collective wealth and knowledge of black church leaders for the benefit of the community. The Houston Ministerial Alliance represents 1,500 black congregations, and the alliance advises the mayor on issues affecting communities that the faith community then addresses collaboratively. The alliance's comprehensive mission includes community and economic development. Increasing homeownership was a key factor in an agreement between the alliance and a leading financial institution.⁷⁶ The effort has been successful, according to Pastor Burgs, because it "provides information on the mortgage process."⁷⁷

The Black Ministerial Alliance of Boston, led by Dr. Wesley Roberts, has a comprehensive focus on issues affecting Bostonians and particularly African Americans. Housing is a priority for the Boston alliance. Community and economic development is a major component because of the affordable housing challenge in America, especially in Boston.⁷⁸ In New York, N.Y.; Kansas City, Mo.; Phoenix, Ariz.; Los Angeles, Calif.; Atlanta, Ga.; and Washington, D.C., individuals and broad faith-based coalitions have influenced employment, contracting, and other services.⁷⁹ These programs have used developers; financial institutions; federal, state, and local housing finance agencies; public and private foundations; and non-profits to develop programs to increase homeownership. When black churches get involved in economic development, they make a significant difference.⁸⁰

The church can challenge financial institutions lending to African Americans and boycott those institutions that engage in predatory lending practices. Debate among lenders and housing advocates centers on the bifurcation of sub-prime lenders and predatory lending because marginalized borrowers have been

denied access to mortgage products. This acknowledges the historical disparities between mortgage lending and Blacks yet denies the symbiotic posture of the black church as an economic empowerment center. The black church can also mitigate some disparities through its understanding of all the players in the market and ultimately its participating at another level in originating mortgages, creating its own secondary market, and becoming a major investor in mortgages that represent a significant percentage of GNP. For those product markets that black consumers either dominate or control, the black church must develop its own distribution channels.⁸¹ Economic development can emerge from revitalized communities.

Today, churches can create a nonprofit 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization to address social services, housing, and job training for low-income persons in order to empower communities at the grassroots level; however, they engage in delivery of social services without the designation, as they did in the past.⁸²

Ninety percent of the respondents in the black church-homeownership study indicated that the black church could play a role in increasing the homeownership rates of Blacks. The surveys also revealed that most pastors believe the churches can make a difference because 65 percent of their members rent. Forty-five percent of the churches indicated that they focused on some form of community and economic development (i.e., housing, employment training, business development). Rev. Moore, executive director and pastor of a CDC near Durham, N.C., has been recognized for providing effective special needs housing.

[Figure 3. Community Development Focus, page 65]

The majority of the respondents emphasize social services. The survey suggests that economic development should be integrated into ministry and theology because wealth-building affects the spiritual life. The interviewees agreed with the statement, "The church has to be progressive" in the spiritual, educational, economic, and social components forming the comprehensive mission of the church. The interviews and surveys indicate that where ministries are progressive and community-oriented, the church grows as a result.

Anecdotal and recent Cnaan studies⁸³ corroborate the black church's role as an effective service provider. Progressive ministries have made significant contributions in their communities, including (the late) Leon Sullivan, Kirbyjohn Cardwell, Cecil Murray, Calvin Butts, Floyd Flakes, Gerald Bell, Sylvester Smith, and many others who have been equally effective. The church-affiliated CDCs West Angeles Community Development Corporation and FAME Community Development Corporation offer a model/structure of successful CDCs that churches can use to expand the housing and small business market.

One major barrier that the church's economic influence can address is the upfront capital that Blacks need to purchase homes. Since wealth is not generational in the black community, the church could play a pivotal role by producing down-payment assistance.⁸⁴ The idea of down-payment gifts by families could be expanded to include the church family. The black church network is synonymous with the extended family. Eighty percent of Blacks are "churched"—affiliated with or have attended a church.⁸⁵

Church pledges for the "housing fund" similar to the building fund can be effective. In the past, black church members literally pooled their pennies, thus providing evidence that the same opportunity is possible with dollars. Ministers in the black community possess the unique gift of being able to raise funds, and their success has been unparalleled in positively sustaining the independence of the black church. The same process can be used for homeownership.

Volunteerism is another asset. The government subsidizes homeownership for the middle class; thus, volunteer time given through black churches could subsidize down-payment assistance programs for those who do not itemize. Studies by the University of Pennsylvania indicate that churches provide volunteer time equivalent to billions of dollars.⁸⁶ Habitat for Humanity uses sweat equity for reduced down payment or interest rates to fund low- to moderate-income families. This could directly benefit those who have used their church as the vehicle for giving.

The black church can influence homeownership through matching funds to focus on homeownership, housing education, and credit counseling as a supportive service to the current programs they administer. A matching down-payment assistance fund could be created to focus upon asset building for African Americans, particularly for the low- to moderate-income, in the same way Individual Development Accounts (IDA) or employer matching funds have been created.⁸⁷ Many church members pay rents consistently, and a matching fund would allow the needed resources for saving a down payment to acquire a home.

The black church can partner with the Congressional Black Caucus to implement With Ownership Wealth (WOW). The WOW Initiative is another venue since 72 percent of surveyed churches indicated that the majority of their members do not own homes. The black church should create a homeownership campaign that encourages and assists in the process through credit report review, down-payment sources, and bank pre-qualifications. The church can reach members and the community through its worship services and work with existing nationally recognized organizations engaged in housing and community development.

The black church could promote stewardship through homeownership, effectively disciplining spending and creating systematic saving. The black church has historically advocated stewardship of "time, talents, treasures, and tithes." The secular concept of economics is equivalent to the biblical term for stewardship first mentioned in Genesis. Discipline in finances can lead to financial rewards and contains the familiar root word disciple, a familiar term for the church.⁸⁸ College tuition, retirement planning, and vacations are the result of discipline or good stewardship, and homeownership encourages better management of resources; therefore, homeownership requires stewardship while building upon spiritual and fiscal qualifications that benefit churches, members, community, and economy.

The black church can address the prevalence of sub-prime and predatory lending that occurs more often in ethnic minority communities. The relationship between credit risk and mortgage lending steers black borrowers to sub-prime products and impairs their future ability to borrow and their FICO-credit scores. Studies conducted have shown that African Americans have credit challenges regardless of their income.⁸⁹ Promoting homeownership does not necessarily compensate for poor money management, but stewardship helps address the credit challenges and offers

biblical principles that can be included in sermons, weekly bulletins or monthly money management sessions for the community. A financial plan will help members to distinguish needs from wants, to address compulsive spending, and to recognize that saving can be used for investing.⁹⁰

The black church is an information center. Homeownership education could be a sequential motif in the church's role of disseminating information and developing empowerment strategies even Hosea 4:6 states: "Without knowledge my people are doomed." Advocacy and education can complement one another through a *theo-economic* approach⁹¹ in which biblical principles are used to economically empower underserved communities (particularly black communities) through the institution of the church. Information on the home-buying process, credit, and wealth building can serve as the impetus to empowerment and address barriers created by lack of knowledge. When churches focus on homeownership, members benefit by reviewing their credit reports, which results in more members becoming homeowners. The Fannie Mae Foundation, Freddie Mac, and others offer home-buyer education, understanding credit seminars, and financial information that churches could use. Working through the black church can increase homeownership.⁹²

Challenges for the Black Church

Unity is a major challenge to the black church. Although it has been viewed as a collective, fragmentation is the norm. Historically, intentional "social engineering" kept black churches separated, and they needed a white minister to validate their church existence.⁹³ Today, the black church can play a far greater role in the United States, but splintering has hindered its success within most denominations: African Methodist Episcopal (AME), African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ) and Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME); National Baptist Convention (NBC), Progressive National Baptist Convention (PNBC), and National Baptist Church of America (NBCA); Church of God in Christ (COGIC), Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (PAW), Nondenominational Word of Faith (WOF), and Holiness movements are examples of the fragmentation. Most black denominations began from a separation.⁹⁴ At one time all seven major denominations were a part of a united coalition, but historically unity has not been sustained. Numerous theories have been posited for this situation, but the homeownership advocacy challenge is for the black church not as a denomination but as a community.⁹⁵ Homeownership could be a galvanizing issue for rallying black churches to transcend the individualism of some ministers and the status quo.

Another challenge for the black church is to recognize its economic influence and collective wealth. Whether from the legacy of slavery, meritorious manumission, or Jim Crowism, mistrust has been embedded in Blacks' communities, and they have not leveraged their collective resources.⁹⁶

The black church has funded its own social programs, therefore economic development has been placed on the back burner because other social services needs have continued to grow.⁹⁷ Respondents in the black church-homeownership study indicated that churches have to choose or prioritize which problems need immediate

attention. Homeownership competes with domestic violence, education, mentoring, food banks, and emergency assistance on the black church agenda.

Another challenge for faith-based organizations that are mission-driven concerns compromising their mission in order to receive funding. As Jacob sold his birthright (Genesis 25) and Judas (John 13) sold out his inheritance, faith-based organizations must maintain their uniqueness from secular organizations. Engaging in an economic empowerment agenda evokes criticism that the church has compromised its moral and social commitment. Feeding the hungry and serving the poor have been major parts of the black church's mission that could be reduced if homeownership is advocated, and the church could lose its autonomy by seeking outside funding.⁹⁸ The black church's current service delivery surpasses white organizations with more funding.⁹⁹

Some argue that financial acumen is lacking in the black community and in the black church.¹⁰⁰ In the biblical tradition, people are admonished "to count up the cost before you build the house" (Luke 14:28). When the steward in the parable managed his resources well, he was commended. The black church has to take responsibility for its financial recording in order to help others.¹⁰¹ Lenders will seek to establish relationships with churches that manage their finances well because these entities add value to the financial institutions. Churches that purchase or build large edifices and "tax" the members to pay for them may further keep members in debt or credit-challenged and cause them to forfeit homeownership opportunities. Members should be concerned with the spiritual edifice, yet they have a responsibility to care for their own families and not become enslaved to creditors (Proverbs 22).

Others argue that the black church was the major player but is no longer the major player because the minister's influence has diminished in the African American community, since there is a larger black middle class and other competing interests. Therefore, the dependency on the minister to assist with financial matters may not be the method of choice. Statistically, Blacks have made progress since the end of slavery and the ministers played a key role in developing progress as they were often the best-educated, politically astute, and official leaders of the black community.¹⁰² However, though some black ministers are progressive, astute shepherds, and business men who have created viable enterprises, CDCs, and credit unions, unlike their predecessors they are not the only people with access to information and the ability to empower the masses. Today, there are black mayors, city managers, congresspersons, CPAs, MBAs, CEOs, and entrepreneurs, and the black community is not limited to the minister for guidance. Larger churches may have trained ministers with certain skills. Yet the majority of ministers are not formally trained via seminary, business school, or policy institute, nor are they full time in ministry; thus, financial matters may suffer.¹⁰³

Policy Considerations

Social policy considerations include down-payment assistance gifts from the church family, homeownership credit to churches when a person does not itemize for church-giving, and black churches' receipt of homeownership funding vouchers for

delivery of social services and donation of member volunteer time. Focus on homeownership could position the black church strategically in promoting parity through an economic agenda. Farm subsidies, interest subsidies, and religious procurement subsidies do not necessarily benefit Blacks. However, black churches that provide social service delivery, black church members who donate their time and money substantially but do not itemize, and members who have lost their farm land can benefit from the church advocating homeownership. Instead of a yearly visit from politicians without any return, the church should proactively address an issue of major importance.

Current public policy limits the role of the black church. The black church is essentially the extended family of Blacks and should be allowed to provide down-payment assistance to its members who are interested in becoming homeowners. All policies should include faith-based organizations (FBO), which should clearly include the church not necessarily mandating the organization to be 501(c)(3).¹⁰⁴

Charitable giving as an itemized deduction for non-homeowners and tax savings can be used for a down payment on a home. Member donations can benefit those interested in homeownership since low-income households do not benefit from interest deductions if they do not itemize. Giving to the church could serve as an incentive similar to the mostly white middle-class mortgage interest subsidy and farm subsidy because black people would then receive a tangible blessing affecting affordable housing policy and leveraging black influence.¹⁰⁵ Blacks who donate money to the church and social service delivery surpass comparable donations to other organizations, but emphasis upon economic empowerment could incentivize the black church to collaborate more and become competitive regarding Charitable Choice.¹⁰⁶

Though the black church has responded to the dehumanization of slavery, it has not taken up the call for redress for the economic effects manifested in the psychological barrier. The black church has preached racial healing, integration, and self-help at the expense of actually confronting the past through an economic lens. Accepting second class status or renters' mentality can be challenged and changed by the black church advocating and implementing wealth-building initiatives. The psychological barrier has to first be acknowledged. Then, the black church can rise up with the courage of its calling and begin healing by pursuing economic empowerment through homeownership. The black church's existence attests to the determination, brilliance, and resiliency to survive such obstacles as redlining, racism, and predatory lending; however, the "by and by" theology impedes the progress in removing the psychological barrier that is at the foundation of numerous Blacks' belief systems. The black church can assist in restoring self-worth to Blacks who have been marginalized. Though disparity has been quantified economically, the psychological obstacle carries a high cost, as fear of success translates to being easy targets for sub-prime lenders and to negation of the possible opportunities for wealth building. Blacks have used the hermeneutic of liberation to understand their suffering as a redemptive vehicle.¹⁰⁷ Addressing the psychological barrier is a unique opportunity for the black church to embrace and empower members of the community through the spiritual and economic ethos.

Conclusion and Future Research

African Americans would likely respond to the economic engagement from the black church, and increased black homeownership is likely to result. The new economic paradigm for empowerment should be built upon the oldest and strongest entity in the community—the black church. Blacks have suffered more from economic discrimination than from any other form of discrimination. The history of property ownership has been at the locus of much of this suffering. The black church helped Blacks change their attitudes from being considered property into desiring property ownership. The church is deeply connected to economic development and can leverage its banking relationship to yield economic benefits to members. Black churches and pastors whose theology encompasses a focus on economic development, in particular housing and homeownership, have made positive contributions in their communities in increasing the homeownership rate of their members.¹⁰⁸ The black church has the capacity to teach on the spirituality of money and help members move beyond instant gratification and bad credit decisions.

Advocating homeownership brings a synthesis to the present reality and the eschatological hope utilizing a social gospel that demonstrates a hermeneutic of liberation and empowerment through participation.¹⁰⁹ It allows the black church to preach a gospel that speaks of abundance now, since the “earth is the Lord’s in its fullness and all who dwell in it” (Psalms 24). Reverend Ward of Abundant Life Church in Cambridge, Mass., noted that the church has to meet the total needs of the person, addressing the spiritual, social, and economical.

Future Research

There are few studies examining the role of economics in the black church. Further delineation can be made based on church size, location, and tenure of ministry. The literature review and interviews conducted offer several topics that warrant additional research in the following areas: (1) the role of the minister in increasing homeownership;¹¹⁰ (2) the relationship between consistent giving, pledgers or tithers, and homeownership;¹¹¹ and (3) the psychological barriers to homeownership for Blacks.¹¹²

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ The terms Blacks and African Americans are used interchangeably throughout the paper.
- ² U.S. Bureau of the Census.
- ³ "The New Mega Churches."
- ⁴ Oliver and Shapiro.
- ⁵ Hays.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁷ Johnson.
- ⁸ Raines.
- ⁹ Johnson.
- ¹⁰ Oliver and Shapiro.
- ¹¹ Johnson.
- ¹² DuBois.
- ¹³ Painter, Gabriel, and Myers; Sherraden and Gilbert.
- ¹⁴ Oliver and Shapiro.
- ¹⁵ McCarthy, Van Zandt, and Rohe.
- ¹⁶ Oliver and Shapiro.
- ¹⁷ Hays.
- ¹⁸ Rohe, McCarthy, and Van Zandt.
- ¹⁹ King.
- ²⁰ Interview with author, 2001.
- ²¹ Department of Agriculture.
- ²² McCarthy, Van Zandt, and Rohe.
- ²³ Rohe, McCarthy, and Van Zandt.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*
- ²⁵ Apgar.
- ²⁶ Rohe, McCarthy, and Van Zandt.
- ²⁷ Economic empowerment based on biblical principles.
- ²⁸ Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged*.
- ²⁹ JCHS.

30 Rohe, McCarthy, and Van Zandt.

31 Johnson.

32 Oliver and Shapiro.

33 Johnson.

34 Cone.

35 Interview with author, 2002.

36 DuBois.

37 Anderson, *PowerNomics*.

38 Porter.

39 Frazier.

40 DuBois.

41 Lincoln and Mamiya.

42 *Ibid.*

43 DuBois.

44 It is significant to note the interconnectedness and interchangeability in the symbiotic relationship because sometimes the mutual aid society started the church and sometimes the church created the mutual aid society. If the church did not officially start the society, a minister may have initiated it using resources outside of the church structure because ministers were also businessmen, morticians, politicians, bank presidents, and community leaders.

45 Lincoln and Mamiya.

46 *Ibid.*

47 *Ibid.*

48 *Ibid.*

49 Scholars such as W.E.B. DuBois, E. Franklin Frazier, C. Eric Lincoln, Booker T. Washington, Claude Anderson, and others agree that the church can play an economic role; however, Peter Paris correctly states that the black church has not placed the same emphasis on economic issues as it has on educational and political issues.

50 Frazier.

51 Paris.

52 Though a century has passed, the ideology of foreign observers like Max Weber and Alexis de Tocqueville and with Robert Belle have noted the predominance of economics in the United States. The black church has given birth to various economic enterprises and also is an economic institution. Weber also noted the connection between religion and economics. It is important to understand that the black religious experience has mostly demonstrated the nexus of faith and economics. DuBois, Cone, Frazier, Lincoln, and Booker T. Washington have connected on the basic understanding that the black

church's faith-based institutions have true connection to the black populous and nothing of substance can be done without the black church.

53 Lincoln and Mamiya.

54 Washington, J.

55 Oliver and Shapiro.

56 Habermas.

57 Higginbotham.

58 "The New Mega Churches."

59 Evans.

60 Owens.

61 Lincoln and Mamiya.

62 Frazier.

63 Branch.

64 King.

65 Morris.

66 Washington, J..

67 Lincoln and Mamiya.

68 Kunjufu.

69 Anderson, PowerNomics.

70 *Ibid.*

71 Lincoln and Mamiya.

72 Kunjufu.

73 Pastor Burgs represents one of the organizations that participated in the interviews conducted by the author in 2001-2002.

74 "The New Mega Churches."

75 Interview with author, 2002.

76 During my tenure with Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, I negotiated an unprecedented alliance with the Houston Mayoral Ministerial Alliance to promote homeownership. Member churches were provided \$300 for every member who obtained a mortgage loan with the company.

77 Interview with author, 2001.

78 JCHS.

79 Owens.

- 80 Reed.
- 81 Anderson, *PowerNomics*.
- 82 Reed; Hall.
- 83 Dilulio. Professor Ram A. Cnaan, University of Pennsylvania, has reviewed how different urban church congregations serve low-income residents in their communities.
- 84 Oliver and Shapiro.
- 85 Lincoln and Mamiya.
- 86 Dilulio.
- 87 Stegman.
- 88 Thornhill.
- 89 Freddie Mac, 2000.
- 90 Thornhill.
- 91 Theo-economics is a term I coined that demonstrates the nexus between economic principles and biblical text.
- 92 Two cases studies, Connecticut Banking Group and Atlanta Mortgage, have focused on homeownership, lending to Blacks, and marketing that confirm three things: First, that lenders needed to increase their lending to underserved communities, especially Blacks; second, they have not done a good job of reaching out to Blacks; and third, homeownership could be increased through underwriting sensitivity. The lenders were able to establish a relationship with black churches that provided access to persons who wanted to own. Also, the church was able to support members in the process and eventually became educated to provide pre-qualification screening. The lenders increased their portfolio lending, and black churches established CDCs that provided these services. In both cases they confirmed that the black church was the most effective way to reach community. Credit blemishes were mitigated, and lenders discovered that lending to African Americans was good business, not just CRA business. Further, corroboration was obtained through the in-depth interviews (typically forty to sixty minutes) conducted with church-based CDCs in ten cities. Interviewees indicated that the black church is an effective information provider and advocate. Often persons who desire to become homeowners need someone to support them through the process, and what appears to be a blemish on the credit report often is a mistake that needs confronting. "We never say no" was the response during one interview to suggest the church was providing more than mortgage information—they were changing people's attitudes.
- 93 Anderson, *PowerNomics*.
- 94 Montgomery.
- 94 Lincoln and Mamiya.
- 95 Anderson, *PowerNomics*.
- 96 Hall.
- 97 Owens.

98 Dilulio.

99 Brown.

100 Lincoln.

101 Branch.

102 Lincoln and Mamiya.

103 This could spur the churches to be a true source of down-payment assistance, which would help them to rebuild communities, especially when members use sweat equity and volunteer to help to revitalize the community. Funding normally comes from member donations including volunteering of time (see Dilulio, 2001). The black church has done the work yet has not been compensated; that could equate to billions (see Dilulio, 2001). When the FBOs help with closing costs, their efforts should be reciprocated in tangible ways through public policy.

104 Owens.

105 Charitable Choice procurement legislation was supposedly for faith-based organizations that provide quality services under the premise that they should not be excluded from government contracts. However, the current legislation continues to subsidize large white organizations and leaves black churches behind. Black churches cannot compete because they are fragmented and do not possess the structure necessary to compete with the larger white organizations. Catholic Charities, Salvation Army, Lutheran Services, and Habitat for Humanity contracts have exceeded \$10 billion (Dilulio). Nevertheless, the black church can leverage private dollars from deposits and continue to provide valuable services.

106 West.

107 Two poignant statements from interviewees—"Economic development is ministry," and "Bishop supports us to the fullest"—further confirm the need for the pastors' support of community and economic development. Educational systems, self-esteem, better services, and support systems are all benefits of increased homeownership rates among Blacks utilizing the black church as the modus operandi.

Dr. Kurlis from the Kansas City CDC also indicated the church has to put itself in a position to capitalize from the housing success, especially that of the Congress of National Black Churches, because they have been a leader in addressing economic development issues. Dr. Kurlis stated, "Homeownership provides access to wealth that has been denied African Americans." One interviewee responded, "We expect to be paid for providing CRA loans; this is business, they pay for access. They pay to market at football games, to brand their products on clothing, and they should pay the church for access; quid pro quo is standard, and the church is no exception; this is a business decision."

108 King; Dyson.

109 The purpose of the research would be to examine the influence of the pastor on increasing the homeownership rate of Blacks. While ministers may have the influence, they may not have the knowledge to educate their congregation. Also, the changing role of the church should be examined to determine if co-pastors (usually pastors' wives) could have a different impact by focusing on stewardship. The data would also look at existing homeowners and how they were informed.

110 The purpose of the research would be to determine whether those who give disproportionately to

the church (often the low-income) are likely to become homeowners. The research should include anecdotal evidence about how they benefit from subsidizing the church. The research would also examine whether increasing homeownership would increase giving to the church because of the tax savings. Also, finding the percentage of members who utilize services of the depository institution of the church will offer further insight into church's advocacy and teaching on stewardship.

¹¹¹ Additional research should be conducted to explore the psychological barriers to homeownership for African Americans to examine the underlying assumptions and ethnographic data examining spiritual beliefs that influence their financial decisions and the products consumed.

¹¹² In Thornhill's sermon, he explained, "God established fellowship, relationship, worship and stewardship with Adam... stewardship in the greek—*oikenomia*, house-resource manager, our idea of economics. God wanted the relationship and worship, but he lost his stewardship, and [Adam] was expelled from garden or home. It was the first recorded 'foreclosure.' Stewardship empowers and avoids foreclosure, as a principle first mentioned in Genesis."

Figure 1. National Homeownership Rates by Race and Ethnicity

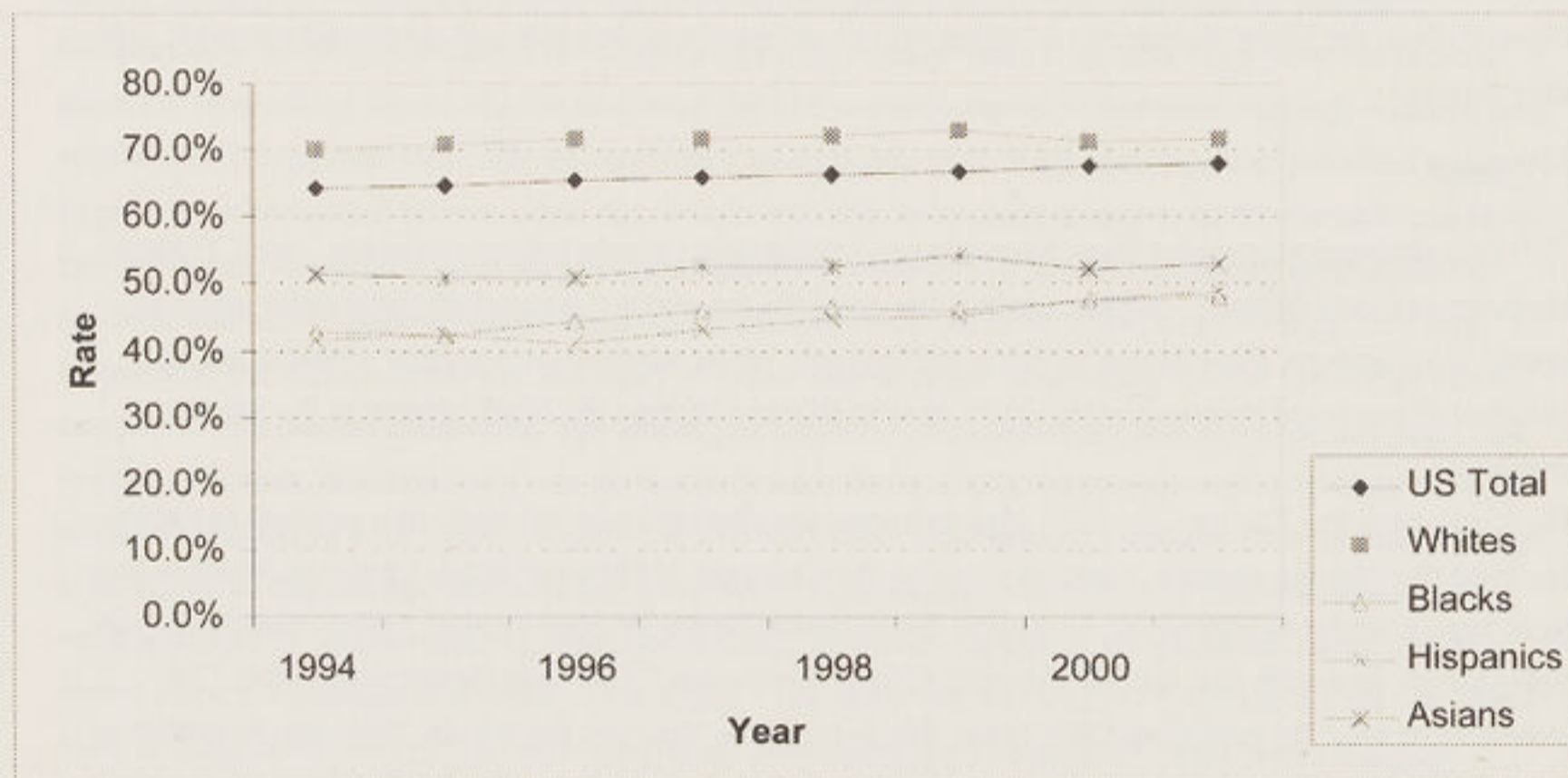


Figure 2. Relationships with Financial Institutions

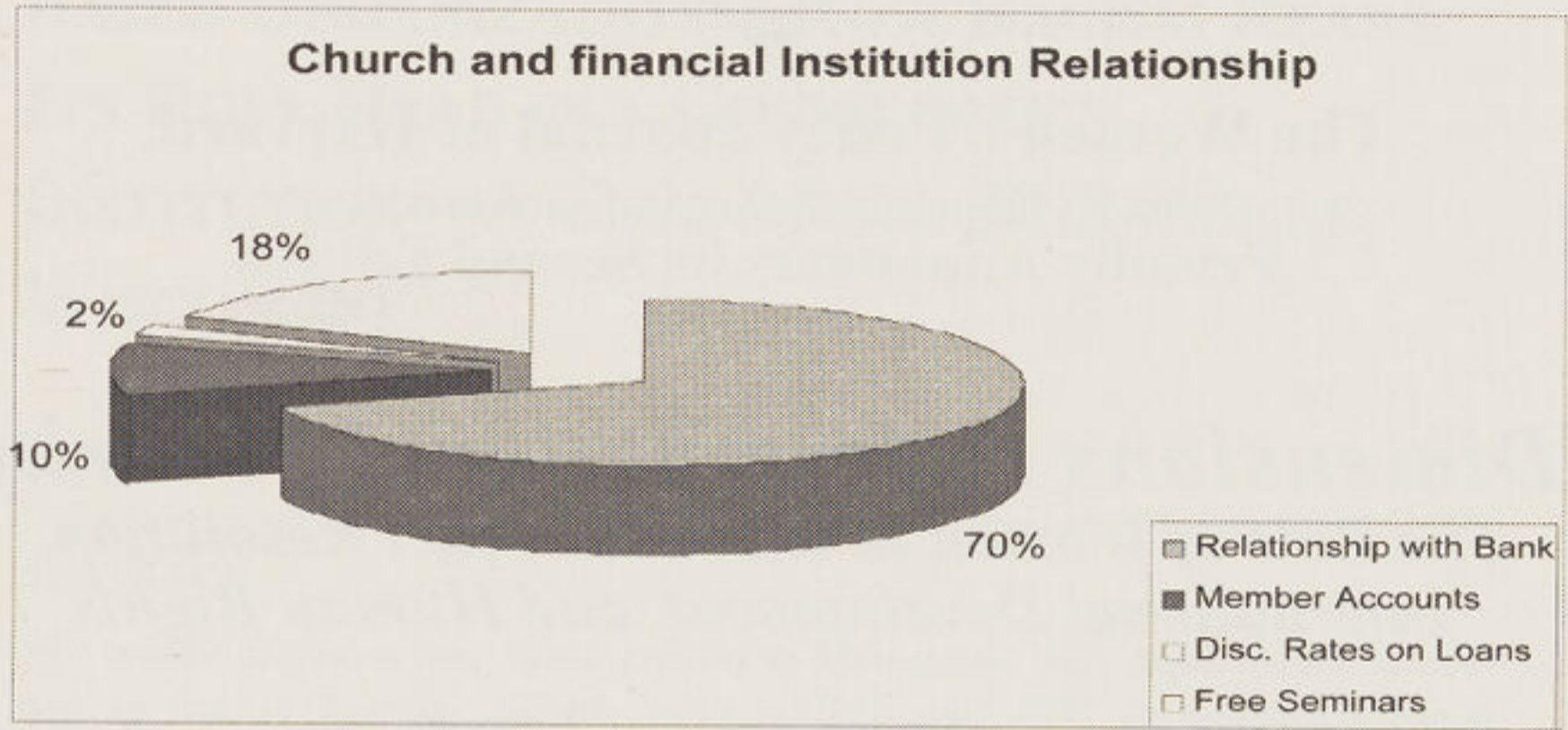
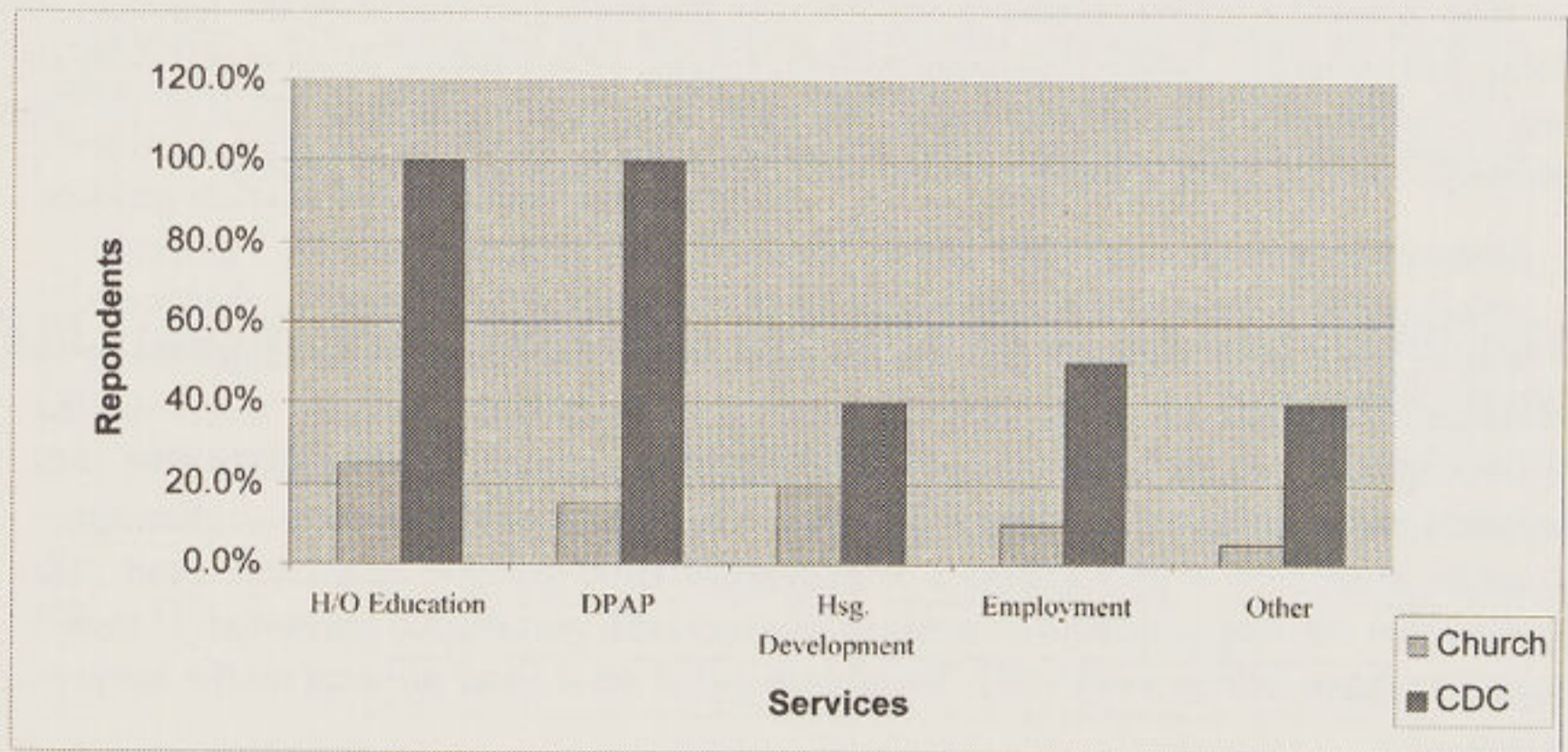


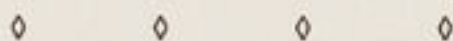
Figure 3. Community Development Focus





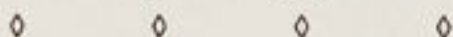
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FEDERAL HOUSING DOLLARS AND THE DEMISE OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HOUSING COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS: HOW RACISM REARS ITS UGLY HEAD IN A GOVERNMENT INSTITUTION—A CASE STUDY (MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN)

*Michael Bonds**

ABSTRACT

This article describes how racial politics in Milwaukee, Wis., impacted the allocation of federal housing dollars between 1988 and 1997 to community-based organizations (CBOs) by examining one public bureaucracy's practices to determine if they were applied fairly to African American and Caucasian CBOs. An analysis of public housing records found that African American CBOs suffered major cuts in all housing categories. They were held to higher performance standards than Caucasian CBOs, which penalized these African American CBOs. Finally, African American CBOs lost millions of federal housing dollars, and the jobs and subcontracts associated with them.

This study will investigate how the politics of race in one particular city, Milwaukee, Wis., impacted the allocation of federal housing dollars to housing community-based organizations (CBOs) between the years of 1988 and 1997. Housing CBOs are involved in the production, rehabilitation, and management of housing units in low-income communities.

Housing CBOs are valuable neighborhood assets. They have developed hundred of thousands of units of affordable and low-income housing in areas that the federal government and the private sector have abandoned. These CBOs have helped neighborhood residents to control development in their areas. Housing CBOs have also been credited with increasing neighborhood social capital by facilitating trust, reciprocity, cooperation, and a sense of community identity in neighborhoods where they have developed housing units for residents. Housing CBOs have been major forces in increasing community development projects and creating jobs for residents in areas where housing units were being developed. They have served as advocates

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for low-income housing by pressuring local government units to develop low-income housing in underserved communities. Finally, housing CBOs have served as links between the neighborhoods they work in and government institutions.¹

Although housing CBOs have proven themselves to be valuable assets to community revitalization efforts, they have encountered major problems in recent years that have caused some of them to close or reduce their housing production activities. These problems include the reduction in federal funding for housing programs; tenant management problems; internal management problems; poor quality of workmanship in housing units; operating in declining neighborhoods (crime, drugs, arson, etc.); budget shortfalls; project cost overruns; over-reliance on a single source of funding; lack of political support for these agencies; and increased competition from other housing CBOs.²

While the studies identified above highlight the problems that housing CBOs have encountered, they fail to address what role racism may have played in these failures. This study will fill that void by examining one public bureaucracy's practices to determine if those practices have been applied fairly to African American and Caucasian housing CBOs or whether those practices are tantamount to institutional racism. The research questions addressed in this study are:

1. What role does a public bureaucracy, specifically, the Community Block Grant Administration (CBGA), play in the funding of housing CBOs in the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program?
2. Are this agency's decisions based on racial consideration?
3. What have been the implications for African American housing CBOs?

Study Setting: Milwaukee, Wisconsin

The city of Milwaukee is the setting for this study. Milwaukee is an interesting site from which to examine the impact of racial politics on the distribution of federal housing funds for several reasons. Between 1975-1997, the city experienced major demographic, employment, and political changes that had significant implications for the city's African American population and the delivery of urban services. For example, while the city's overall population declined from 669,014 people in 1975 to 628,088 people in 1990, the city's African American population increased from 123,683 (18 percent) in 1975 to 191,255 (30.4 percent) in 1990.³ Further, Milwaukee lost a significant part of its manufacturing base. During the 1980s, Milwaukee lost 27,500 high paying manufacturing jobs, while gaining 19,000 low-paying service jobs.⁴ Deindustrialization has been shown to contribute to high African American unemployment rates in cities heavily dependent on manufacturing base.⁵ For example, African Americans, who were significantly concentrated in manufacturing jobs in Milwaukee, suffered major unemployment problems when those factories closed, downsized, or relocated to other states.⁶

On the political front, the number of African American Common Council members increased from 2 of 16 (12.5 percent) in 1975 to 5 of 17 (29.4 percent) by 1992.⁷ The city also changed mayors. Henry Maier had been the nation's longest-serving mayor (1960-1988) when he retired in 1988. Mayor Maier had been perceived as being hostile towards the African American community's concerns (open housing and scatter site housing, school desegregation, response to the 1967 riot, support for a white police chief that a large segment of the black community disliked, lack of appointment of Blacks, etc.).⁸ In 1988, Milwaukee voters elected Caucasian liberal State Senator John O. Norquist as mayor. Norquist won all three majority African American aldermanic districts, votes that his opponent had counted on.⁹ He appointed an unprecedented number of African Americans to cabinet-level positions and as administrators. Additionally, several Caucasian community activists supportive of policies designed to improve conditions for the city's African American population were elected Common Council members.¹⁰

Need Indicators

Milwaukee's African Americans ranked at or near the bottom of every socioeconomic indicator examined during this study period. They had some of the highest poverty rates in the nation,¹¹ with median household incomes that were less than half that of Caucasians.¹² African Americans experienced some of the highest unemployment rates in the nation, ranking as high as second in the country,¹³ and benefiting little from the major revitalization projects in the city's central business district in the 1980's and 1990's, despite the city spending millions of tax dollars on those projects. African Americans were mostly employed in low-paying jobs.¹⁴ Still the city continued to attract poor African Americans from other cities.¹⁵

African Americans were underrepresented in professional and managerial positions in the city and African Americans from other cities were not migrating to the Milwaukee for professional jobs.¹⁶ African Americans suffered because their businesses were struggling to participate in the city's marketplace. Several minority business studies provided statistical and anecdotal evidence of racial discrimination against African American businesses in Milwaukee.¹⁷

Housing in Milwaukee's African American Community

Many factors have been found to negatively impact housing choices for members of Milwaukee's African American community. Historically, Milwaukee's African Americans have resided in one of the most racially segregated areas in the nation. In 1980, 98.3 percent of metropolitan African Americans lived within the city of Milwaukee, with 97.8 percent living there in 1990.¹⁸ Massey and Denton found Milwaukee to be hypersegregated based on five measures of segregation.¹⁹ Other studies also noted high segregation patterns of African Americans in Milwaukee.²⁰ In the 1980's and 1990's, Milwaukee ranked tenth among the nation's fifty largest areas in the isolation of African Americans.²¹ Racial segregation has contributed to high isolation rates (areas having at least 90 percent African Americans) between Milwaukee's African Americans and Caucasians.

Housing realtors were found to limit African Americans' prospects of moving out of segregated neighborhoods by steering African Americans away from Caucasian areas when they were seeking to purchase homes.²² Insurance companies redlined African American communities, thus limiting their ability to obtain mortgage insurance.²³ In the late 1980's and the 1990's, Milwaukee led the nation in loan rejections for African Americans. In 1992, minorities were denied loans 19.8 percent of the time compared to 5.6 percent of the time for Caucasians.²⁴ African Americans had the lowest home value of any racial group in Milwaukee.²⁵ Insurance redlining has cost African Americans more than \$1.9 billion in lost assets resulting from their inability to purchase homes.²⁶

Finally, the availability of low-income housing decreased significantly in Milwaukee's African American community during this study period. "Within the boundaries of Holton to N. 35th streets, and W. Keefe Ave. to W. Walnut St., 3,314 housing units were demolished from 1990 through 1997. Only 185 new units were built."²⁷

Theoretical Perspective

Public bureaucracies have access to several sources of power that allow them to influence the allocation and distribution of urban services. One source of power is their use of non-legislative, regulatory rules and procedures, to either promote efficiency or determine service delivery. Jones suggests that these agencies use two rules, need and service conditions (characteristics of a community), to measure efficiency and effectiveness of their service delivery. He claims that these agencies match the principles of "rationality" and "satisficing" when deciding how to distribute services and allocate resources. The rational perspective indicates that these agencies adopt the most efficient method for a proportionate distribution of services. Satisficing indicates that these agencies create an acceptable distribution of services, which is not necessarily the most efficient one.²⁸

Public bureaucracies also make policy decisions on an incremental basis where policy decisions reflect marginal changes. Once established, existing practices are used to determine future decisions. The best indicator of a policy decision on expenditures in a community is the previous year's decisions.²⁹

Official discretion represents another method to determine service delivery patterns. Public bureaucracies use a range of decision-making powers to make public policies based on their expertise and technical capabilities. These agencies use their discretion to assist them in achieving tasks.³⁰

While rules are meant to be guidelines for official decisions, the fairness and consistency in how these rules and guidelines are applied to various racial and ethnic groups becomes a critical issue. This research will determine whether rules or practices that appear race neutral on the surface instead have negative racial consequences for the distribution of funds to support urban services. Several studies suggest that some public bureaucracies' practices are tantamount to institutional racism.³¹ Shirley Better defines institutional racism as "those patterns, procedures, practices and policies within social institutions so as to consistently penalize, disadvantage and exploit individuals who are members of non-white racial ethnic groups."³² Thus, institutional racism consists of policies and practices within

organizations that promote racial and ethnic inequalities. Institutional racism further prevents non-white racial ethnic groups from full participation in those organization benefits.³³

The role of these public bureaucracies in deciding resource and service allocation is directly related to the distribution of CDBG funds. They oversee the day-to-day operations of the CDBG programs. They are responsible for implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the performance of CBOs and city agencies that receive CDBG dollars. They also provide technical assistance and advice to CBOs seeking CDBG dollars. Finally, these public agencies make CDBG recommendations to elected officials.³⁴ While conceptually this case study focuses on Milwaukee, the institutional racism patterns explored are applicable to other cities.

Study Overview

This research will first describe the two federal housing programs examined in this study: the CDBG Program and the Home Ownership Made Easy (HOME) Program. Next, it will show funding trends related to housing programs in Milwaukee that received these federal housing dollars. Then this study will examine a public bureaucracy's practices and their impact on these funding trends. A discussion will follow on how African American housing CBOs were impacted by these trends during the study period, followed by a discussion of the experiences of Caucasian housing CBOs. Following that discussion, an analysis will be performed to examine the impact of these practices on the African American community. This study will then conclude with a discussion of the implications of these research findings.

While conceptually this case study focuses on Milwaukee, the institutional racism patterns explored are applicable to other cities. Also, while additional examples of both black and white CBOs (Wisconsin Housing Partnership, Southside Organizing Committee, North Division Neighborhood Association, Genesis, etc.) affected by the institutional practices outlined in this paper could be provided, this study will only highlight those CBOs that were most frequently cited by the respondents in this research.

Community Development Block Grant Program

The CDBG is a federally-funded program enacted in August 1974 as Public Law 93-383. The CDBG Program consolidated seven previously funded federal programs: 1) Urban Renewal; 2) Model Cities; 3) Water and Sewer Facilities Grants; 4) Neighborhood Facilities Grants; 5) Public Facilities Loans; (6) Open Space Land Grants; and 7) Rehabilitation Loans.³⁵ CDBG funds are awarded to communities based on a dual-need formula that uses housing, population, and poverty measures. The CDBG Program incorporated seven national objectives:

- 1 The elimination of slums, blighting influences, and the deterioration of property, neighborhood, and community facilities of importance to the welfare of the community, principally to persons of low income and moderate income

2. The elimination of conditions detrimental to health, safety, and public welfare through code enforcement, demolition, interim rehabilitation assistance, and related activities
3. The conservation and expansion of the nation's housing stock to provide decent homes and suitable living environments for all persons, but principally for those of low income and moderate income
4. The expansion and improvement of the quantity of community services, principally for persons of low income and moderate income, which are essential for sound community development and for the development of viable urban communities
5. A more rational utilization of land and other natural resources and the better arrangement of residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, and other needed activity centers
6. Reducing the isolation of income groups within communities and geographical areas, and promoting an increase in the diversity and vitality of neighborhoods through the spatial deconcentration of housing opportunities for persons of lower income, and the revitalization of deteriorating or deteriorated neighborhoods to attract persons of higher income
7. The restoration and preservation of properties of special value for historic, architectural, or esthetics reasons³⁶

HOME Funds

Other federal housing dollars awarded by the Community Block Grant Administration (CBGA) during the CDBG allocation process include funding from the HOME Program. This program awards funds using a formula-based method. The National Affordable Housing Act of 1990 created this program. It is designed to provide funding to expand the supply of decent, safe, sanitary, and affordable housing (primarily rental); to strengthen the abilities of state and local governments to provide housing; and to assure that federal housing services, financing, and other investments are provided to state and local governments in a coordinated, supportive fashion.³⁷

Community Block Grant Administration

The CBGA Office, created by Council Resolution #74-92, is responsible for implementing, monitoring, and evaluating Milwaukee's CDBG Program. This agency is under the control of the mayor, who appoints the CBGA director. The CBGA makes CDBG funding recommendations for CBOs and city agencies. Those recommenda-

tions are submitted to the Community Development Policy Committee (CDPC), a subcommittee of the Common Council, for action. The CDPC is composed of Common Council members, a representative of the Mayor's Office and a representative of the Comptroller's Office. The CDPC also makes CDBG funding recommendations, and it can modify the CBGA's funding recommendations. The CDPC's CDBG funding recommendations are then forwarded to the full Common Council for its recommendations.³⁸

Research Methods

This study explores the distribution patterns of federal housing dollars to housing CBOs under Mayor Norquist's administrations between 1988-1997 to determine what role race may have played in how those funds were distributed. This time period was selected because it represents a unique period of political empowerment for Milwaukee's African American community. Also, these years provide complete data that can be used for comparison purposes. Finally, this time period represents the last years that Milwaukee used the same system for allocating CDBG dollars that had been in use since the program's inception in 1975. In 1997, the CDBG Program adopted a new funding system for allocating CDBG dollars. Beginning in 1998, this new system made it impossible to compare data for the years prior to and including 1997 with the years after.

Several data sources were used in this study. The first source included a review of published CDBG proposals and city files (grantee performance reports; CDPC minutes; the Ollie Report, an internal document prepared by the CBGA that listed every agency receiving CDBG funds in a given year; etc.). A second major methodological approach included a survey of a variety of reports and data sources outside of municipal government, particularly articles from local newspapers and studies published in academic journals, books, and special reports. Participant observation represented the third source of data and information. In 1996, I was hired by the CDPC as an independent consultant (a position which later became a civil service position) to evaluate CDBG proposals, make CDBG funding recommendations to the CDPC, and conduct fiscal research and public policy analyses on CDBG-related issues. This position afforded me a unique insider's look at the CDBG funding process, one typically not available to outsiders, nor captured by quantitative outcome measures. It allowed me to observe the inner workings of the CDBG funding process and provided me with an opportunity to uncover hidden practices through which race may have influenced the patterns of the distribution of resources to support urban services.

A fourth source of data and information came from other city documents. For example, the aldermanic districts that CBOs resided in were identified by obtaining their addresses from CBGA records. The CBOs' addresses were then matched to aldermanic districts. The alderperson's race was identified either through my own personal knowledge of them, review of public records, or through discussions with other people who knew them. Milwaukee's Department of City Development (DCD) prepared reports listing the racial composition of each aldermanic district. The board of directors' racial composition was obtained from the board of director

reports submitted to CBGA. CBOs were classified as being African American, Caucasian, or other, based on the board of directors' racial majority. The racial composition of CBOs' employees was obtained from the staff roster reports submitted to CBGA. Subcontracting data were obtained from the subcontracting reports that CBOs submitted to CBGA.

Findings

During this study period, African American CBOs involved in housing production suffered drastic funding reductions. Housing production primarily involves the acquisition and renovation of foreclosed, boarded-up, or substandard housing units. Once these properties are renovated, they are sold to low-income and moderate-income families to encourage neighborhood stability and ensure the availability of affordable housing.

Table 1. CDBG Housing Production (Per \$,1000)

YEAR	CBOs' RACE			TOTAL
	AA	C	O	
1988	320	1,219	0	1,539
1989	441	1,641	0	2,082
1990	386	1,360	70	1,816
1991	186	1,394	56	1,636
1992	679	1,733	80	2,491
1993	180	1,083	0	1,261
1994	226	1,243	0	1,469
1995	229	1,629	90	1,948
1996	245	1,996	100	2,341
1997	0	1,626	0	1,627
TOTAL	2,893	14,924	396	18,231

CODES: AA=African Americans

C=Caucasians O=Others

SOURCE: CBGA

Trends for this category of funding indicate that:

1. Between 1988-1997, African American housing producers received an annual average of 15.9 percent of the CDBG funds awarded for this category.

2. The percentage of CDBG dollars awarded to African American housing production CBOs fluctuated significantly during this ten-year study period, beginning at 20.8 percent in 1988, increasing to a high of 27.3 percent in 1992, and then falling to a low of 0 percent in 1997.
3. Except for 1992, when funding reached an all-time high for African American housing CBOs at 27.3 percent of all available funding, the 1990's saw a fairly steady decline in funding for black housing CBOs until funding levels reached 0 percent in 1997. The exception occurred in 1992 when New Covenant CBO was provided a "one-time" funding of \$300,000 for the development of low-income housing units as part of a broader housing project the agency was developing.
4. Prior to 1997, Milwaukee United for Better Housing (MUFBH) was the only African American housing production CBO that had been funded each year.
5. In 1997, MUFBH was provided \$1 in CDBG funds to allow it to carryover unspent 1996 CDBG funds. This carryover funding was later denied, resulting in this program being defunded.
6. By 1997, all African American CBO housing producers had lost their funding and closed down.

African American housing CBOs also suffered significant CDBG cuts in the "Housing Production—Others" category.

Table 2. CDBG Housing Production—Others

YEAR	CBOs' RACE			TOTAL
	AA	C	O	
1993	150	0	0	150
1994	100	535	50	685
1995	606	281	0	887
1996	700	350	0	1,050
1997	0	75	0	75
TOTAL	1,556	1,241	50	2,847

CODES: AA=African Americans
C=Caucasians O=Others

SOURCE: CBGA

This category focuses on housing projects that address an urgent community need or that leverage significant resources for neighborhood revitalization efforts. The category "Housing Production—Others" provides CDBG funding for the rehab of rental housing for low-income families, providing loans to developers of low-income rental units, and assisting programs like Habitat for Humanity that rehab and sell homes to low-income residents. The trends for this category are summarized as follows:

1. The annual percentage of CDBG dollars for "Housing Production—Others" awarded to African American CBOs between 1993-1997 was 54.0 percent.
2. One CBO, New Covenant, accounted for the majority of the CDBG funds for African American Housing Production—Others in 1995 and 1996.
3. From 1993-1997, the percentage of CDBG funds going to African American CBOs under "Housing Production—Others" fluctuated from a high of 100 percent in 1993 to a low of 0 percent in 1997.
4. In 1997, no African American CBOs received new CDBG dollars during the regular CDBG funding cycle under the category "Housing Production—Others."

For the years 1988—1996, the percentage of funding received by African American CBOs for housing rehabilitation projects, known as neighborhood improvement projects (NIP), remained fairly steady. In 1997, however, the percentage of funding for African American housing CBOs suffered significant reductions. These funds provide home repairs to eligible homeowners up to a prescribed cost cap for the correction of housing code violations. They also provide housing security installation, accessibility, and/or maintenance support services for homeowners.

Table 3. CDBG Housing Rehabilitation—NIPs (per \$1,000)

YEAR	CBOs' RACE			TOTAL
	AA	C	O	
1988	1,822	1,675	0	3,497
1989	1,551	1,777	0	3,328
1990	1,771	2,027	0	3,798
1991	1,660	1,898	0	3,559
1992	1,788	1,917	0	3,706
1993	1,177	1,563	0	2,741
1994	1,336	1,369	0	2,705
1995	1,447	1,767	0	3,215

1996	2,140	3,144	0	5,284
1997	935	2,556	0	3,491
TOTAL	15,629	19,696	0	35,326

CODES: AA=African Americans C=Caucasians O=Others

SOURCE: CBGA

Trends for this housing rehabilitation category reveal that:

1. During this time period, African American housing CBOs involved in NIP projects received 44.2 percent of the total funds awarded in this category.
2. The percentage of CDBG funds to African American housing CBOs decreased from a high of 52.1 percent in 1988 to a low of 26.8 percent in 1997.
3. The number of African American CBOs involved in housing rehabilitation decreased from seven in 1988 to two in 1997.
4. Only two African American housing rehabilitation CBOs (OIC and Harambee) received CDBG funding each year during this time period.
5. In 1997, only two African American housing CBOs were awarded new CDBG dollars (OIC and Harambee). Even then, they received reductions of \$21,000 and \$375,000, respectively, from their previous year's CDBG allocation.
6. In 1997, SDC had its CDBG funding (\$205,000) vetoed by Mayor Norquist despite exceeding its program goals and not having any problems with its CDBG programs.

HOME Dollars Trends

Using a per unit formula, the city awards HOME funds to housing CBOs that receive CDBG funds. Each CBO receives an additional \$15,000 from the city for each housing unit that they propose to rehabilitate under their CDBG plan. In 1996, the city awarded more than \$7 million in HOME funds to housing groups for 1997 housing production activities. Table 4 shows that the share of HOME funds received by African American housing CBOs decreased significantly between 1993 and 1997, from a high of 29.4 percent in 1993 to only 9 percent in 1997.

Table 4. Milwaukee's CDBG HOME Funds (Per \$1,000)

YEAR	CBOs' RACE			TOTAL
	AA	C	O	
1993	1,655	3,967	0	5,622
1994	1,365	3,600	75	5,040
1995	1,275	4,345	80	5,700
1996	1,005	5,486	120	6,611
1997	405	4,065	0	4,470
TOTAL	5,705	21,463	275	27,443

CODES: AA=African Americans

C=Caucasians O=Others

SOURCE: CBGA

The demise of African American housing CBOs came about as a result of the following institutional practices: First, the performance evaluation process was used to eliminate African American housing CBOs' funding. Some African American CBOs that met or exceeded all of their CDBG performance goals were denied funding because CBGA's write-ups inaccurately and intentionally indicated those programs had "poor performance," when in fact they had solid performance records. Two examples illustrate this point. The Social Development Commission (SDC), the largest African American CBO in Milwaukee, was affected by this practice. It had met all its performance goals, yet the CBGA recommended no funding for this agency's four CDBG-funded programs, including its crime prevention program that provided housing security systems (listed under the housing rehabilitation category) for elderly residents because of alleged poor program performance. The Common Council was aware that SDC had met or exceeded its CDBG performance goals based on a report it received from its own staff using CBGA's data.³⁹ The CBGA could not dispute the analysis that SDC had met its performance goals. Instead, the CBGA director stated that "while there were some problems" at the programs and some "duplication of services" with other CBOs, "contract objectives were being met."⁴⁰

Carpenters Incorporated, another African American housing CBO, met all of its housing production goals in 1996 but was denied new funding and a carryover request because of alleged "poor performance" and concerns about neglecting to submit some CDBG cost reports showing CDBG expenditures. In testimony before the CDPC, the director of Carpenters Incorporated stated that the CBGA had suppressed the CBO's actual performance data. She maintained that the CBGA, prior to the CDPC's review of that agency's proposal, had been provided accurate and updated information that showed the group had met its performance goals. During the time period in question, Carpenters Incorporated had completed 29 housing units although it was only contracted to complete 25 housing units. This agency's

director provided the CDPC with a document that showed the agency had met its performance goals.⁴¹

The CDPC was not provided with accurate performance data on this group until after the CBGA's recommendations had been made and the director of Carpenters Incorporated came to the CDPC meeting with this data in hand. Even then, the CDPC did not award funding to Carpenters Incorporated. However, eight months later, in June 1997, this CBO was awarded \$370,000 in CDBG reprogramming dollars, unspent and excess CDBG funds. In 1998, Carpenters Incorporated lost its CDBG funding for alleged breach of contract (not filing legal papers with Milwaukee County, which costs less than \$30 per property). This CBO never spent all those CDBG reprogramming dollars.

These two cases provide some evidence that African American housing CBOs that had met or exceeded their performance goals were intentionally described in an inaccurate and negative light by the CBGA in its review of CDBG proposals and performance write-ups, resulting in African American housing CBOs losing federal housing funds. As one African American CBGA monitor stated in 1996, "This practice has been going on for years, and African American groups have been getting screwed as a result of it." A Hispanic CBGA monitor stated in 1996, "We are *told* to change our analysis of groups to portray them in a particular way."⁴²

Another institutional practice, the cash advance, available to CBOs, appears to have been used in a biased way against African American housing CBOs. Available through the Comptroller's Office, the CDBG Program offered all CBOs the option to request a cash advance on their CDBG funds. The cash advance was equivalent to 45 days of funding of an organization's CDBG funding for that program year. The cash advance option was important for African American housing CBOs, who typically had limited cash resources to support their operations. The cash advance enabled them to obtain cash advances during any point during the CDBG funding year to be used as "operating capital."

CBOs could obtain cash advances at any point during the CDBG funding year. Cash advance payments would then be deducted from future CDBG monthly payments to the CBOs during that contract year. The city's practice was to take away the cash advance option from any CBO with financial or legal problems. With good reason, the city believed that a CBO facing such difficulties could lose the cash advance as a result of a dispute with a creditor. While the practice to eliminate cash advances for CBOs in financial or legal trouble was initiated as a safeguard to ensure that CDBG funds served their intended purposes, it appears that the practice of removing this option was applied to CBOs in an inconsistent manner, which had negative consequences for black CBOs.

Several African American housing CBOs (Commandos Incorporation, O.C. White Soul Club, Milwaukee United for Better Housing) had their cash advance option and contracts terminated when it was revealed that they had fiscal problems, management problems, and other program problems. The Commandos Incorporation, involved in the construction of handicap accessible ramps, had its cash advance pulled immediately in 1995 when it encountered tax problems. The 1996 CDBG *Briefing Book* states, "The project is facing financial problems that jeopardized its viability. The Wisconsin Department of Revenue is owed about

\$11,000 in withholding taxes, and the Comptroller's Office has pulled the program's \$30,000 Cash Advance." This CBO reported that its former accountant incorrectly billed on the net pay instead of the gross pay, and that it owed \$14,000 in federal taxes and \$2,700 in state taxes. Those errors were corrected when they were identified, and all but \$1,947 in back taxes were paid.⁴³ When the Commando's cash advance was pulled, it was one of the better-performing CDBG-funded housing programs.

Table 5. Commando's Housing Performance Data, 1991-1995

HOUSING UNIT PERFORMANCE

YEAR	# COMPLETED	# PROPOSED	% OF PROPOSED
1991	31	32	96.9
1992	32	32	100
1993	24	24	100
1994	74	73	101
1995	49	60	81.7

SOURCE: CBGA

Based upon performance reports, in 1991, Commando completed 31 of 32 planned handicapped ramps. In 1992, the Commandos completed 32 ramps of a planned 32 ramps. The CBGA noted, "In each of the last four years, the program has met its production goals. In 1993, the agency completed 24 of 24 units. In 1994, it completed 74 ramps, slightly surpassing its ramp production goal of 73. As of June 1996, it had completed 21 ramps (24 planned), which was near production capacity."⁴⁴ This CBO would go on to complete all 24 of 24 units proposed that year. The only year the Commandos did not reach its production goals during this five-year period was in 1995, the year its cash advance was taken. Even then, it completed 49 of 60 (82 percent) proposed units that year.

The Commandos would later have its 1997 CDBG funds eliminated in 1996, when it received a tax levy notice in excess of \$189,000 for not withholding and paying appropriate taxes. The *1997 Briefing Book* noted other problems (poor filing system, accounting and administrative concerns, questions regarding the submittal of cost reports, missing invoices, missing canceled checks, etc.) with the agency. The agency was forced to close.⁴⁵ Its work for constructing handicap accessible ramps was later awarded to a Caucasian housing CBO, Milwaukee Christian Center, for \$160,000, via two contracts.

Milwaukee United for Better Housing (MUFBH), another African American housing CBO, lost its cash advance, when it encountered problems in 1993. Conflicting views were provided regarding this agency's problems. The CDBG *1993 Briefing Book* noted that cost claims were made for items not budgeted and there were some duplicated claims, which led to the reimbursement for two properties totaling \$39,000. The city paid another \$7,675 in duplicated costs. MUFBH eventually paid the city \$15,000 and still owed \$31,675 when its cash advance was

pulled. An on-site audit by the Comptroller's Office in 1996 found problems with the agency's accounting system, and the agency's general ledger had not been posted since May 1995. Documentation was missing for two checks totaling \$1,511. Finally, the agency submitted \$14,260 in cost reports from the city, but the checks had not been released to the vendors, which was contrary to the city's CBGA policies. Those checks were later replaced and released to the vendors.⁴⁶

The CBO's executive director provided a different view of the situation. He indicated MUFBH had its cash advance terminated for minor fiscal problems. In 1991, the agency had not turned in receipts to the city showing expenditures of \$150,000 in CDBG funds because of a bad record-keeping system. Those receipts for supplies related to the repair of housing units were eventually located and provided to the city in 1992. According to the agency's executive director, not only did the agency provide the city with those receipts, it provided an additional \$50,000 worth of receipts for which it was entitled to reimbursement from the city. MUFBH's executive director indicated that the Comptroller's Office later acknowledged that the agency provided the receipts, and it was entitled to \$50,000 in reimbursement. A review of city records shows this agency never had its cash advance restored, nor was it given the \$50,000 that it claims it was entitled to. MUFBH's performance declined drastically after it lost its cash advance in 1991, and it would later close down.

Table 5. MUFBH's Housing Performance Data, 1989-1995

HOUSING UNIT PERFORMANCE

YEAR	# COMPLETED	# PROPOSED	% OF PROPOSED
1989	7	9	77.8
1990	6	19	31.6
1991	12	15	80.0
1992	1	15	6.7
1993	5	20	25
1994	6	20	30
1995	1	22	4

SOURCE: CBGA

In October 1995, O.C. White Soul Club, another African American housing CBO, had its neighborhood improvement program (NIP) contract for housing rehabilitation terminated, effective in 1996.⁴⁷ This CBO had some administrative and program performance problems. The CDBG briefing books for the period 1993-1996 indicated the agency had the following problems: cash advances were consistently out of balance; there were inadequate accounting procedures and problems with its general ledger; tax payment withholdings were deposited late; and several thousand dollars of CDBG funds were used for ineligible expenses. The agency had missing checks and late bills. Its housing rehabilitation costs had been

higher than average. These problems contributed to the agency's demise. The agency lost its cash advance. "The decision by the Comptroller's Office to rescind the Cash Advance was pertinent to an IRS judgment of more than \$28,000 for the Soul Club's failure to pay employee withholding taxes from March through December, 1994 [*sic*]." ⁴⁸ The agency also had some performance problems. Between 1991 and 1993, the agency was contracted to complete 135 housing units, but completed only 67 percent. In 1993, the agency received a contract for 42.5 housing units, but finished only 25.5 (60 percent). Between 1990 and 1992, the agency had completed 75 percent (30 of 40), 69 percent (30.5 of 44) and 72 percent (35 of 48.5) of its projected goals. The agency already had its cash advance pulled because of these problems, but it was later reinstated in 1994. The CDPC provided the agency with an additional \$35,000 to hire an accountant to assist with the agency's financial records, and the CDPC provided \$30,000 for 1995 to balance its books. ⁴⁹ The next year the agency made some program improvements by meeting its 1994 housing production goal of 32 units as shown in Table 7.

Table 7. O.C. White Soul Club's NIP Performance Data, 1990-1994

HOUSING UNIT PERFORMANCE

YEAR	# COMPLETED	# PROPOSED	% OF PROPOSED COMPLETED
1990	30	40	75
1991	30.5	44	69.3
1992	35	48.5	72.2
1993	25	42.5	58.8
1994	32	32	100

SOURCE: CBGA

Despite showing some progress between 1994-1995, O.C. White Soul Club again lost its cash advance and CDBG funds in 1996 and was forced to close. ⁵⁰

Although O.C. White Soul Club and other African American housing CBOs had some notable problems, Caucasian housing CBOs also experienced problems. Three problematic Caucasian CBOs stood out during this study period: Westside Conservation Corporation (WCC), East Side Housing Action Coalition (ESHAC), and the Northwest Side Community Development Corporation (NWSCDC).

Westside Conservation Corporation (WCC) had numerous fiscal and management problems. For example, instead of spending \$22,000 per unit on a house, which was required, WCC spent at least \$33,000 per housing unit. In 1994, WCC spent an average of \$31,499 per unit; in 1995, this amount rose to \$35,640 per unit. WCC reported greater than expected costs in buying and maintaining properties, improper estimation of project costs, and city auditors found deficient systems for monitoring contractor invoices. Additionally, several firms were awarded court judgments against the agency or had filed liens against its assets. ⁵¹ The Comptroller's Office raised concerns about WCC's fiscal practices when it repeat-

edly questioned the CBO for inappropriate use of CDBG funds. WCC had more than \$200,000 in building code forfeitures and delinquent property tax bills during this period while still receiving new CDBG funds.⁵² The Comptroller's Office listed major concerns about WCC in the *CDBG 1997 Briefing Book*. Those concerns included payment of \$28,000 in HOME funds and \$11,000 in CDBG funds for work that was undocumented. Of the \$28,000, \$11,500 was related to voided checks, but no replacement checks were issued. Another \$16,300 was claimed for work completed on two different properties (\$32,600 total), but the work was done on only one property. Included was \$2,932 more than the actual check of \$29,662 for this claim. Some cost claims were not properly authorized. The agency did not submit a detailed schedule of cash balances for each funding source, and WCC consistently claimed ineligible costs relating to sales taxes or discounts. Its housing program's cost exceeded the \$7,000 expected for administrative expenses and \$15,000 for direct rehabilitation subsidies. While the average cost per unit was projected to be \$10,000, WCC's cost exceeded \$25,000.⁵³ WCC had six separate cash advances, five of which were not balanced during the Comptroller Office's site visit. Several months later four of the six cash advances remained out of balance.⁵⁴

The agency also had some program performance problems. WCC failed to meet its housing rehabilitation goals for several years. From 1993 through 1995, the agency was contracted to complete 145 housing units, but completed only eighty housing units, or 55 percent.⁵⁵ WCC did not meet its housing rehabilitation goals for three straight years (1993-1995), and it was not in a position to meet them in 1996.⁵⁶ WCC received numerous complaints of poor workmanship from the owners of the properties it repaired and complaints from residents who wanted the group out of its neighborhood for failing to complete its rehab properties.⁵⁷

In 1992, 1993 and 1994, the agency did not meet its performance goals as shown in Table 8. Yet, there were some contradictions in the CBGA's reporting of this CBO's program performance. The CBGA prepared a report that indicated this agency completed 40 of 40 housing units in 1994.⁵⁸ However, the *1995 CDBG Briefing Book* indicated that the agency was not on schedule to meet its 1994 goals. It had completed only nine of 18 units through June 1994. Similarly, CBGA prepared a report that showed that in 1995, the agency completed only 23 of 45 (51 percent) of its goals.⁵⁹ The *1996 CDBG Briefing Book* noted, "The project is experiencing some difficulty in 1995." The CBO's current inventory of projects was purchased several years ago, and it continued to deteriorate. The project exhausted its allocation of housing production funds on its first twenty housing units because of the high cost of property tax and maintenance. Finally, the former CBGA director stated, "The nonprofit housing agency failed to meet its rehabilitation goals from 1991 through 1996." Though city auditors sustained these findings, the city described WCC as having met 100 percent of its goals in 1994.

Table 8. WCC's Housing Performance Data, 1989-1994

HOUSING UNIT PERFORMANCE

YEAR	# COMPLETED	# PROPOSED	% OF PROPOSED COMPLETED
1989	20	20	100
1990	49	35	140
1991	38	35	108
1992	32	38	84
1993	46	60	76
1994	23	45	51

SOURCE: CBGA

Despite WCC's aforementioned problems, the city never pulled its cash advances and did not terminate its CDBG funding until 1996. The result was that the city lost several hundred thousands dollars of CDBG funds.⁶⁰ Instead of penalizing WCC, the city provided an additional \$1.4 million in CDBG funds to help it repair properties during the early 1990s. These funds were in addition to the \$3.8 million WCC received in new CDBG dollars between 1992-1996. The city reacquired forty properties from the agency—14 through tax foreclosure. Seventeen others were purchased, repaired, and sold by the city's Community Housing and Preservation Corporation (CHPC) and nine through the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee (RACM), which cost the city several hundred thousand additional CDBG dollars.⁶¹ Besides these forty properties, the city had to raze another 13 properties owned by WCC, thus costing the city even more CDBG dollars. The city expended an additional \$47,225 in CDBG funds for the CHPC to buy three properties formerly owned by WCC.⁶² As one Caucasian alderman stated to the outgoing CBGA director at the council's 1997 budget adoption hearing, "I personally informed you about Westside's troubles several years ago, and your office did nothing about them. Now it has cost the city several hundred thousand dollars, the agency has closed, and there are now vacant houses left still needing to be repaired. If your office had acted then, these problems could have been avoided years ago." City officials (Comptroller's Office, CBGA, Common Council) were aware of WCC's problems. WCC's CDBG funds and its cash advance were not pulled until 1996. Even then, the CBGA paid portions of the agency's bills to former employees and contractors.⁶³

The East Side Housing Action Coalition (ESHAC), another Caucasian housing CBO, also experienced serious problems with its CDBG-funded housing programs. ESHAC had a lien against it, had been sued, was operating with a significant budget deficit, had poor program performance, had major fiscal problems, and was facing bankruptcy. In spite of all of these documented problems, ESHAC kept its

cash advance and received several hundred thousand dollars of new CDBG funds.⁶⁴

ESHAC experienced additional problems. The Housing Partnership Corporation (HPC), a non-profit housing agency, sued ESHAC in January 1996 over a \$1 million mortgage payment dispute involving 28 single-family and duplex properties ESHAC owned. The suit stated that ESHAC had missed \$20,357 in payments in the previous year and had five outstanding mortgages, worth \$982,701, owed to HPC. In 1996, the Milwaukee Housing Assistance Corporation (MHAC) took over the management of eighty of ESHAC's properties.⁶⁵ In 1996, the HPC foreclosed on 28 properties ESHAC owned. ESHAC's property management was so bad that it was taken over by another CBO, Housing Assistance Corporation, under a court order.⁶⁶

Further, ESHAC's NIP cost reports contained numerous errors, corrections, and adjustments that made it difficult to process cost reports and to determine the correct amount to pay ESHAC.⁶⁷ Similarly, ESHAC had some problems meeting its housing production program goals. Even with its cash advance, the agency never met its housing production goals in any year during the period 1993-1996. ESHAC did not complete any of its housing units in 1993 (0 percent), and it completed only 20 percent in 1994. ESHAC's housing production program during this period did not fare much better than MUFBH, but it retained its cash advance status. Furthermore, in 1991, ESHAC's NIP completed 63 percent of its scheduled housing project. In other years, it completed 84 percent to 100 percent of its NIP projects.

Table 9. ESHAC's Housing Performance Data, 1989-1996

HOUSING UNIT PERFORMANCE			
YEAR	# COMPLETED	# PROPOSED	% OF PROPOSED COMPLETED
1989	6	6	100
1990	14	14	100
1991	11	14	78
1992	18	18	100
1993	0	35	0
1994	6	30	20
1995*	30	28	107
1996	7	10	70

*This number is misleading. In 1995, this project met its goals because the number of units that remained from 1994 were counted as part of the 1995 completion data.

SOURCE: CBGA

Table 10. ESHAC'S NIP Performance Data, 1990-1995

HOUSING UNIT PERFORMANCE

YEAR	# COMPLETED	# PROPOSED	% OF PROPOSED COMPLETED
1990	45	43	104
1991	24	38	63.6
1992	38.5	42	91.7
1993	44.5	52	85.6
1994	38	45	84.4
1995	40	40	100

SOURCE: CBGA

ESHAC had additional problems with its rental property management. In 1997, ESHAC allowed sewage to soak the basement of one of its rental tenants, resulting in a five-year-old youth becoming very ill with Giardia, a parasite transmitted by fecal matter in water. The youth spent a week in the hospital as a result of this illness. Renters' calls to ESHAC for property repairs went unanswered, and the CBO received 66 building code violations. Another rental tenant's property was flooded, which resulted in the destruction of personal items.⁶⁸

Besides continuing to receive CDBG funds, a subcommittee consisting of city representatives (Comptroller's Office, CBGA Office, City Attorney's Office, Common Council members and staff, and the Department of City Development) was established to deal with ESHAC and WCC's problems. A bailout plan was developed to assist ESHAC but was publicly presented as a "marketing plan" to help ESHAC sell its properties so that the city could meet HUD's regulations that those properties be sold to low-income and moderate-income residents. As a part of this "marketing plan," more than \$117,000 was approved for ESHAC to repair, market, and sell its properties, despite its extensive fiscal, legal, and management problems. ESHAC was allowed to keep its \$65,000 cash advance although the Comptroller's Office wanted ESHAC to return it. ESHAC later lost the \$65,000 cash advance.⁶⁹ The Common Council's staff and the Comptroller's Office raised concerns about the bailout plan and ESHAC's fiscal stability.⁷⁰ The CBGA and the CDPC were provided this information, and they were aware of ESHAC's problems yet approved more CDBG funding for this CBO. The Common Council staff's November 18, 1996, memo had informed the CDPC of ESHAC's fiscal problems and legal judgments against ESHAC, and it recommended that the CBO's cash advance be pulled immediately. Instead, ESHAC was allowed to use \$45,000 in "new" 1997 CDBG funds and a \$25,000 loan from a bank to repay the city for the \$65,000 cash advance it lost. Despite these problems, ESHAC was provided more than \$617,843 in new CDBG funds for 1997. ESHAC would later celebrate this bailout by holding an office party.⁷¹ ESHAC's housing production program was

never defunded. It withdrew its 1997 CDBG application. The next year, ESHAC received an increase in CDBG funds.⁷²

Northwest Side Community Development Corporation (NWSCDC) is another Caucasian CBO that experienced serious problems with its housing program. It owed more than \$89,000 in taxes, and it had unaccounted-for CDBG expenses. Yet, the CBO maintained its cash advance option and received new CDBG funding during the 1994-1997 funding cycles.⁷³ For instance, in 1993, NWSCDC was awarded \$40,000 in CDBG funds to acquire a building, demolish it, and pave the landscape at the site. NWSCDC was required to raise another \$40,000 in non-CDBG matching funds. It failed to raise the \$40,000 matching funds, and it did not complete the project. In May 1996, the CDPC waived the requirement that NWSCDC obtain matching funds and gave it another year to complete the parking lot, even though NWSCDC had been awarded the funds several years earlier and had not met its contractual goals.

CBGA noted that NWSCDC did not meet its performance goals on another CDBG project. This agency was funded for three years to repair houses, but it did not meet any of its housing production goals during that time period. The *1996 CDBG Briefing Book* noted, "The program faltered in its three-year history of unit completions. In 1993, 6 units were projected. In 1994, 8 units were projected. In 1995, 8 units have been projected. As of July 1995, a feasibility package has been submitted for eight units of housing. Two certificates of occupancy permit for 2 single family units were submitted by the applicant." These were the same eight housing units carried over from one year to another. Despite these problems, this agency continued to receive new CDBG funds, kept its cash advance, and grew into a multi-million dollar agency.

These findings on the status of African American housing CBOs have serious implications for the city's African American community. As African American housing CBOs lost their funding, African American employees lost their jobs (see Table 11). Based on the last program year of available employee-related data (1994-1995) for this study, 83.9 percent of the employees of African American CBOs were African Americans. African Americans constituted 41 percent of employees for Caucasian housing CBOs. With the closing of the Commandos, MUFBH, and O.C. White Soul Club housing CBOs, 29 employees, including 28 African Americans, lost their jobs.

Table 11. CBOs' CDBG-Funded Positions, 1996

CBOS' RACE	EMPLOYEES' RACE			TOTAL
	AA	C	O	
AA	89	20	5	114
C	227	234	72	533
O	2	7	23	32
TOTAL	318	261	100	679

CODES: AA=African Americans C=Caucasians O=Others

SOURCE: CBGA

With the demise of the Commandos, Milwaukee Christian Center (MCC), a Caucasian CBO, was awarded \$160,000 in 1997 to construct handicap ramps, a task previously performed by the Commandos. A review of MCC's staff roster report revealed it did not have any African Americans employed in its housing program. This point demonstrates the loss of jobs experienced by African Americans when African American housing CBOs lose their funding and Caucasian housing CBOs replace them. Similarly, the demise of African American housing CBOs limited their ability to subcontract with African American contractors. Table 12 documents the distribution of subcontracting dollars to African American, Caucasian, and other contractors by housing CBOs during 1995-1996 and 1996-1997:

1. In 1995-1996, African American contractors were awarded \$293,150, or 8.3 percent, of the total subcontracting dollars. Caucasian contractors were awarded \$3.2 million, or 91.6 percent, of the \$3,508,904 in housing subcontracting activities.
2. In 1996-97, African American contractors were awarded only \$1,681, or less than 1 percent, of the more than \$1,999,000 in housing subcontracting activities. Caucasian contractors were awarded \$1,989,733, or 99.9 percent, of all subcontracting activities that year.
3. Between 1995-1996, African Americans' subcontracting activities decreased from \$293,150 in 1995-1996 to \$1,681 in 1996-1997, a loss of \$291,460, or 99.9 percent.
4. Caucasian contractors' subcontracting decreased from \$3,215,754 in 1995-1996 to \$1,988,052 in 1996-1997, a loss of \$1,227,702, or 38.1 percent.

Table 12. CDBG CBOs' Subcontracting Dollars Awarded to Contractors (Per \$1,000)

SUBCONTRACTING DOLLARS BY YEAR

RACE OF CONTRACTORS	YEAR		PRIOR YEAR CHANGE
	1995-1996	1996-1997	
AA	293	1	- 292
C	3,215	1,998	-1,227
O			
TOTAL	3, 508	1,999	-1,519

CODES: AA=African Americans C=Caucasians O=Others

SOURCE: CBGA

These trends indicate that the defunding of African American housing CBOs had a major impact on their ability to subcontract and distribute business and jobs to African Americans. This further reduced the recycling of dollars in the African American community. Furthermore, the quality of housing in the African American community was left to decline when these African American housing CBOs closed. One executive director of an African American housing CBO stated in 1996, "Those properties (vacant and boarded-up houses) will remain vacant and a blight on the community instead of being a stabilizing force in the community. The longer those properties are allowed to sit, the more expensive it becomes to rehab them because of vandalism [and] deterioration, thereby reducing the availability of affordable and safe housing for the community." These abandoned properties become potential sites for criminal activities, and they contribute to declining property values in those areas. Finally, these vacant and boarded-up houses result in lost tax revenue because they are not included on the tax rolls.

CONCLUSION

My 18-month participant observation and my analysis of performance records, Ollie Reports, and other primary and secondary sources note several trends related to the defunding of African American housing CBOs. First, this study reveals that race does matter in the funding and support of African American housing CBOs. African American CBOs received inequitable treatment under the CDBG Program. During this study period, African American housing CBOs suffered drastic cuts in all housing categories funded by the CDBG Program. Second, the CBGA used practices that had race-based consequences that resulted in the elimination of contracts for African American housing CBOs. Problematic Caucasian CBOs were often assisted, provided new CDBG funding, and allowed to keep their cash advance status and CDBG contracts. However, African American CBOs with smaller scale problems were routinely penalized through performance evaluations that inaccurately and negatively portrayed their performance, resulting in the loss of their contracts and

cash advance privileges. Third, it appears that the CBGA held African American housing CBOs to higher performance standards than the Caucasian housing groups when it evaluated those groups. Fourth, Caucasian CBOs' problems did not receive the same level of scrutiny as African American CBOs, nor did they reach the full Common Council for public debate, as did African American CBOs. Fifth, the CBGA is an entrenched bureaucracy that is a part of the executive branch of government, and accountable to the mayor's office. It is not an independent agency, as one would expect of a public agency. Sixth, the CBGA bent its rules to assist Caucasian agencies, while penalizing African American housing CBOs, even when they met their performance goals. Seventh, this study shows that the failure of African American housing CBOs was not based on their performance record but was based on the CBGA's biased treatment of them. Finally, this study shows the significant loss of dollars and jobs when African American housing CBOs lose their federal funds, which has an inequitable economic impact on the African American community.

This study shows that the CBGA's practice of terminating problematic housing CBOs' CDBG contracts and cash advance privileges during this study period were applied in an inequitable manner that was tantamount to institutional racism. CBGA's actions were virtually unchallenged by the standing administration and, therefore, appeared to promote an unspoken administrative agenda of eliminating African American CBOs' CDBG funding. These practices will continue unless this public agency is held accountable for equitable treatment of African American housing CBOs. The inconsistent level of involvement and oversight by the administration and lack of public scrutiny have contributed to unequal treatment in the allocation and monitoring process, resulting in a declining share of federal funds for African American housing CBOs and, ultimately, their demise.

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SHARED RESPONSIBILITY AND SHARED SACRIFICE IN A TIME OF WAR

Forum Event with U.S. Congressman Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.) on February 10, 2003

DAN GLICKMAN: Thank you. I'm Dan Glickman, director of the Institute of Politics, and I want to thank everybody for coming to the forum on this beautiful winter evening here in Boston. Many folks of my generation, certainly who went to school and college in the 1960's, often wonder why students are not as passionate about political issues as perhaps we once were. And there may be some good reasons for that. I know that times have changed. But I have often said, perhaps not 100 percent seriously, that a surefire way to get students passionate again would be to get them all into military service. And of course, that is what Charlie Rangel is talking about today and has made a very significant contribution to our public debate about.

Tonight, we bring you one of the most distinguished speakers that I have ever heard speak, and a former colleague of mine in the United States Congress. His views are not only provocative, but extraordinarily timely, given the fact that a war may be imminent. We at the Institute of Politics have done some polling among 18- to 24-year-olds nationwide, and our data is interesting. While 90 percent of the students report that they are very or somewhat patriotic, 67 percent of those surveyed said they were opposed to the reinstatement of the draft. The issue of the draft has that effect on many people. In the '60's, the draft forced many students at Harvard and their parents to seriously think about whether the war in Vietnam was a just cause or not. The draft in the war in Vietnam forced students to question authority. They held teach-ins, sit-ins. Two hundred students even took over a university hall here at Harvard.

So tonight, our guest has a message many of you may not want to hear, and that's what makes this place and this forum very interesting. He thinks we need to bring back the draft, and he has unique credibility to speak on this issue, primarily because he is one of the most decorated veterans serving in the United States Congress. He served in the U.S. Army in the all-Black 503rd field artillery battalion from 1948 to 1952. He was awarded the Purple Heart and Bronze Star for leading several dozen men to safety after the infamous Chinese army's attack across the Yalu River, an attack that left 90 percent of its unit killed or wounded.

After his military service, he graduated from New York University and St. John's University School of Law, after which he spent his entire career in public service, first as an assistant U.S. attorney in New York, and later as an elected member of the New York State Assembly. His current support of the draft is tempered not only by his military service, but by his service as general counsel to President Johnson's National Advisory Commission on Selective Service in 1966 and 1967. He was elected as a member of the United States House of Representatives from the state of New York in 1970 and has served continuously for 32 and a half years.

Aside from his role on the House Judiciary Committee during the hearings on the articles of impeachment of President Nixon, he has extraordinary legislative accomplishments on a myriad of different issues. And one of the things he's best known for is his work to end apartheid in South Africa. He is of course the ranking Democrat on the very powerful House Ways and Means Committee. I am pleased to introduce to you tonight my friend, the dean of the New York Congressional delegation, the ranking member of the House Ways and Means committee, and a great American, the honorable Charles Rangel.

CONGRESSMAN RANGEL: Thank you. It's clear that my office sent you a piece of our pre-campaign literature for an introduction. Pretty good. I am so pleased to join the list of illustrious speakers that have been invited here to Harvard. And I am not here to really encourage you to become a part of the military or to try to sell that argument to you. I am here mainly to dispel a lot of things that people have said about me. There's no way for me to believe that people here at Harvard, or any place in America, are less patriotic than I am about a country that has offered so much opportunity for so many people. No nation offers more opportunity for more people than the United States of America.

And I can hardly believe—and neither can most Republicans—that I could have started from Harlem as a high school dropout and end up as a member of the United States Congress, serving on the Ways and Means Committee. It is a tremendous honor and opportunity for me. And if I thought that anybody or any country would jeopardize our great country in such a way that these opportunities could be denied to others, then taking a preemptive strike and wiping them out once and for all, to me, would not be an option. It would be something that has to be done.

What I have been concerned with, however, is that the question of war has to be understood as a question of sacrifice. We cannot have an administration that can concentrate on reducing our national budget, and talk about shared sacrifice, at a time that we're asking young men and women to attack a nation in a preemptive strike, without any evidence at all being submitted that this country was involved in the attack on the United States of America.

People are demanding that we take this demon out, that we send our troops over there, that we teach them a lesson. And yet, with all of this patriotism, there doesn't seem to me an interest in asking who will be doing the fighting, who will be doing the dying, who will be doing the sacrificing. And the statistical data would show that in our United States Congress, they can't find but one member that has a kid in the enlisted ranks in the service, and probably less than a half a dozen that have someone as an officer. I don't believe that everyone has to be a veteran, but when you talk about war, you have to talk to me about sacrifice.

Now, a lot of criticisms have been made of me, saying, "Rangel really doesn't believe in shared sacrifice. He wants to embarrass the president. He wants to stop the war. He really believes that this is a race issue. He's engaged in class warfare." Well, I think half of that is true. I would talk with the supporters of the war, and they would be critical of me for not supporting the president, not saying we should strike first. And I asked them the question, "Would your enthusiasm for this preemptive strike against Iraq be the same if it was your kid that was being placed in harm's

way, if it was your grandkid that you're talking about?" None of them had said, "Yes, I would ask my kid to volunteer to liberate Iraq." But if the mother was there, you can believe they would say, "Hell no, his position would be different on the war in Iraq if we were talking about our kids and grandkids."

I don't need a distinguished American like Colin Powell to prove to the United Nations that we're dealing with a bum, that Saddam Hussein lies, that he's a cheat, and that he was moving weapons around and trying to avoid detection. First of all, if we know where the weapons are and what he's moving around, if we see the tire tracks from one place to the other, if we have this information, for God's sake, why can't we share it with the inspectors? Why can't we tell them where it is?

And if this demon is spending so much time with an army that we believe is really not supporting him and a country that wants to be liberated, why don't we send more inspectors there, and let him spend all of his time moving stuff around, so he can't hurt anybody? If we really are concerned with weapons of mass destruction, Mr. President, we've got some people in North Korea that are telling you that 1) they've got weapons of mass destruction, 2) you can't get in, and 3) we are not pursuing a diplomatic solution by going to China, going to Russia, and trying to use economic sanctions. Why? And if we really just had a hit list for who is evil, how Saudi Arabia missed the list, with the exception of oil, I don't know.

So God forbid we start saying that the United States of America has to preemptively strike and bomb any nation we believe to be evil. How many lives would have to be lost in a preemptive strike in Iraq? At the end of the day, would we feel any more that we had done him in and hopefully done a better job than we're doing with Osama bin Laden? And if we took the preemptive strike because we just feel that we are in danger, do we lose the moral authority to deal with Pakistan and India if either one of them feels that they're in danger, or if the North Koreans feel that they're going to be struck by the South Koreans? If indeed it is an international problem, doesn't it demand an international solution?

But whether we attack Iraq or not, we are at war with terrorists. Our people are needed, whether they're my age at 73, or your age as youngsters. All of us have to feel a sense of responsibility, and the question should be asked, what can we do? And not everyone can do the same thing.

So for all of these reasons, and many, many more, I propose a mandatory service where everyone—men and women—would be eligible for the military between 18 and 26. Everyone will be called to serve their nation, but only a fraction of those that would be called will have to serve in the military because only a fraction of the military needs would be our young men and women. But after we fulfill the military aspect of the draft legislation, we ask our young people to serve this great nation at our airports and our seaports, at our hospitals, in our schools, on our borders.

Whether you go into the military screaming and scratching and demanding that you want to be excluded, at the end of the day you feel better as a person. You feel better as an American. You have a better understanding of the diversity that exists in our country. And so if they're saying that I'm only doing this to show my opposition to the war, that's not so. If we do in fact have to go to war, this legislation will be needed even more.

Am I raising the class issue? You bet your life I am. Am I saying that the affluent and those that are hooked up politically are excluded from serving? You bet your life. Am I raising the race issue? Well, that's a difficult question. I am saying that Blacks and minorities are overwhelmingly in the lower- and moderate-income levels. Therefore, when the incentives are to pay people to join the military, people who don't find better opportunities join the military.

And the racial question, I think, has been shattered by my friend and partner in this legislation, Senator Fritz Hollings from South Carolina. One, it's not just minorities that carry too much of the sacrifice. It's his people—his poor, rural people—that find themselves without job opportunity, that find themselves in the military, and that find this country is leaning on them to sacrifice more than the rest of the country. But he also includes in that number the people that are in the reserves. He comes from a state that has more military installations than most. There is a tendency for people who are discharged to retire next to the military installation of their last assignment and to join the National Guard and the reserves. They're being called upon each and every month to shore up the active members in our armed forces.

One of the reasons why you hear so many people in the Pentagon saying that we have to attack now is because if we bring back combat-ready troops that are already in the Middle East prepared to attack, we don't have a similar number of troops that are similarly situated to go back overseas. We are now exhausting our active military to such an extent that Secretary Rumsfeld has already extended by one year the enlistment period for those who volunteer. And by calling our National Guard and reservists to active duty, we are exhausting our families, our police departments, and fire departments—other institutions in which our reservists typically serve. And so if we cannot avoid this war—and God, I pray every night that we can—we still are going to have to be ready to serve in our national service one way or the other. This is the most equitable way for us to be able to fulfill this national responsibility.

I have heard criticism that military forces do not want draftees to serve with them. That's poppycock. When anyone is fighting, they don't ask how you got there. They don't ask you whether you're a draftee or whether you're regular. They want to know what I want to know. How the hell are we going to get out of this mess? How can we help each other, and how can we defend the flag?

Others have said, "Well, you don't expect the legislation to go anywhere." Well, they said that they didn't expect that apartheid would stop in South Africa, or that we ever would get the Voting Rights Act, or that we would end segregation. But legislation is not something that you put in today and you say it's got to be signed into law tomorrow. Legislation is something to talk about, something to discuss, something that people take back home. But ultimately, if we don't have this legislation, we're going to have to come up with something. I don't think anybody here would want to believe that we're going to continue to try to build up our military by giving money incentives. I don't think we want to believe that we are the kind of country that take those who need money to fight wars, and others don't have any sacrifices to make. In any event, the legislation has really caused an exciting review of who fights our wars and the unfairness of the sacrifice.

In conclusion, I would say this, too. One of the biggest struggles that I have been involved in is changing the voting age from 21 to 18. If older, inexperienced people in the Congress were supposed to declare the wars and say that 18-year-olds will fight, then 18-year-olds should be able to vote. What a disappointment. Because young people have decided not to participate. As we talk about going to war with the first president that's been appointed by the United States Supreme Court, we have to recognize that less than one-half of those Americans that were eligible to vote voted. So please register, and please vote. Let it be known that you're concerned.



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A MORE PERFECT UNION: FROM CIVIL RIGHTS TO CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

Forum Event with U.S. Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr., (D-Ill.) on February 24, 2003

DAN GLICKMAN: Good evening, everybody. Thanks for coming tonight. I'm Dan Glickman, the director of the Institute of Politics. I want to welcome everybody here, especially Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr., who has graced us with his presence tonight. The title of his speech is "A More Perfect Union: From Civil Rights To Constitutional Rights." That speech title matches that of the book he wrote two years ago, called, *A More Perfect Union: Advancing New American Rights*. In his book, he outlines eight new constitutional amendments that should be benchmarks for the well-being of our society.

His book and his speech are part of a debate that has gone on since our nation was formed, with the central question being, what is the essential role of government in our society. On the right are those who believe that government should do less. On the left are those who believe the government should do more. President Roosevelt had an opinion about this debate, and this is how he put it: "Better the occasional faults of a government that lives in a spirit of charity than the consistent omissions of a government frozen in the ice of its own indifference."

Our guest tonight, as you will soon realize, is anything but indifferent. He has dedicated his life to educating citizens on the importance of participating in government. And as those of you know, he comes from a very distinguished American political family. He earned his bachelor's in business management and graduated magna cum laude from North Carolina A&T University in Greensboro, North Carolina. He received his master of arts in theology from Chicago Theological Seminary, and his law degree from the University of Illinois College of Law. Prior to his Congressional service, he was a national field director of the National Rainbow Coalition. He was elected to Congress in December of 1995 and is now in his fifth term. He sits on the powerful House Appropriations Committee.

His legislative efforts are targeted towards many things, including the ending of the death penalty, curbing the scourge of HIV/AIDS, and expanding trade in sub-Saharan Africa. One of his key accomplishments is the establishment of the Center of Research on Minority Health and Health Disparities at the National Institutes of Health. But of course, one of the most prestigious items on his resume is that he serves on the Institute of Politics' Senior Advisory Committee.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is a privilege to have with us this evening the Honorable Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr.

CONGRESSMAN JACKSON: Let me begin by expressing my great appreciation to Secretary Glickman for that very kind and very warm, very generous, very

thoughtful, very provocative, very profound, and very truthful introduction. I am deeply honored and privileged to have the opportunity to return to the Kennedy School of Government and to see so many friends who have served with me on the Institute of Politics' Senior Advisory Board. Many years ago, I was asked to serve on that board by my good friend and dearly departed brother, John F. Kennedy, Jr. I am deeply honored and privileged every time I step in this building to think about him and the opportunities and the dreams that we shared for this nation.

Tonight I want to speak from the subject of a book that I have spent extensive time researching and writing. The title of my book is *A More Perfect Union: Advancing New American Rights*. I find it interesting and indeed fascinating that the two classes that I talked to today held a great interest in reviving democracy. They wanted to find new and creative ways to get people to vote as our democracy gathers new energy and vitalization from the process of participating in the political process.

In the last election, President Bush received about fifty million votes, and Vice President Al Gore received 50.5 million votes. Despite our democratic Constitution and the Supreme Court's logic, the person with the most votes did not become president of the United States. Only in America and our under-funded public education system could a loser become the winner and a winner become the loser. But such is the construction of the Constitution of the United States. And so, dealing with the depth and the profundity of some of these problems is the subject matter extensively explored in my book, *A More Perfect Union*.

The preamble of our Constitution begins, "We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union," with five basic criteria: number one, to establish justice; number two, to insure domestic tranquility; three, to provide for the common defense; four, to promote the general welfare; and five, to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and to our posterity, to ordain and establish the Constitution for the United States. I want to talk briefly tonight about the Constitution, a means towards building a more perfect union.

There are two fundamental views of the Constitution. It is viewed as a static, narrow, conservative, finished, and strict constructionist document. Or it is viewed as a living document—broad, liberal, unfinished, a broad construction. Obviously, I accept the second view. Why is it most important, I argue in *A More Perfect Union*, that there are two central issues that have been with our nation since its inception? The issue is who has the power—the federal government or the states. Since the very inception of our nation, the southern states were making the case that they did not want too much centralized power vested in the idea of a strong central government. After all, the early colonists in our nation had experienced central authority under British rule. And so they made the case that we must have not only a central authority, but the powers of that central authority must run concurrent with the idea of state authority.

I argue that from the inception of our nation, this issue of who has the power over people's basic human rights has been a problem. Should it be the federal government that has control, or should it be the state governments that have control? It was a problem at our inception, and it will be a problem long into our future. I believe this problem is the most central problem that confronts every single American.

The second problem that has been with our nation since its inception is the issue of race. I argue in *A More Perfect Union* that the issue of race has not been taught to the American people in a way that makes it digestible. It has been taught to the American people in an emotional way and not in an academic way. For if it is taught to the American people in an academic way, it will show us something about the evolution and the development of states' rights and federal power that will be instructive and illustrative for our generation, and what we must do to form and build a more perfect union for every American.

There are various perspectives from which one can view American history. It can obviously be viewed through the eyes of labor or capital. Whether markets are doing well or not doing well is a factor and an evolution of the history of our nation. Whether or not we will exist as a slave society or a free society, viewing the history of the United States from Wall Street and LaSalle Street, is a legitimate perspective.

But only the history of African Americans will show you how states are admitted to the Union, one free and one slave, between 1820—the compromise of Missouri—and the Compromise of 1850. Only the history of African Americans will show us how our nation sought at its inception to keep the balance between the federal government and the states.

One can choose to view the history of the United States from the perspective of women. The struggle for equal pay, equal work, and equal rights amendment, free from domestic violence, is a legitimate and a valid perspective. The history of women will not show you why 11 states between 1861 and 1865 chose to leave the Union. Only the history of African Americans will show you the great struggle to bring those 11 states back into our Union and why 620,000 Americans lost their lives in that conflict. The history of African Americans is instructive in the great struggle to overcome the limitations of states' rights.

One can view American history through the limits and through the lens, if you will, the prism of immigrants. "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses who yearn to breathe free." Immigrants have a legitimate and valid point of view. But only the history of African-Americans will show you how we moved from four political parties—the Democrats, the Whigs, the Federalists and, after 1854, the Republicans—to two political parties, the Democrats and the Republicans. You must come through the lens of African American history to see this profound point of view.

At the conclusion of the American Civil War in 1865, the question was, what do we do with the nine million freed slaves in the Southern states. The Democratic party of that era made the argument, since they had made the case for maintaining slavery in this nation, that the Negroes should pick themselves up by their own bootstraps. They did not want the federal government or the state government investing in the education, the healthcare, or the housing of the Negro. A hundred and fifty years later, when they argued that the federal government should not invest in the education, healthcare, and housing of all of the American people, they call that economic conservatism. Conservatism has its roots in the history of the Negro in America.

The Republican party made the case at the conclusion of the Civil War that if we are going to be a government of, for, and by all of the people, then the government has a responsibility, whether it is the federal government or the state government, to ensure that all of its people have education and healthcare and housing. Whether you're a Democrat or a Republican in 2003, the issues of investing in the education, healthcare, and housing are called liberalism.

So the profundity of the race problem in America, and its genesis shows us how 250 years later our nation has evolved into a body politic that doesn't refer to itself in racial terms. It simply refers to itself as Democrat who's liberal on economic issues but more moderate on social issues. It's a Republican who is conservative economically but more moderate socially. It's a Democrat who is conservative economically and conservative socially. It's a Republican who is moderate economically but moderate socially. In other words, the nation's race history and race debate defines who the body politic is through history.

The most profound moment in American history, from my perspective, occurred when the southern states demanded that a tenth amendment be added to the Constitution of the United States. That amendment says that those rights not written specifically in the Constitution of the United States are state rights. And therefore, in the last presidential election, it was the tenth amendment, the old slave amendment, since the slave states used the tenth amendment as the basis for justifying the institution of slavery. It was the old tenth amendment that came to haunt us in the 2000 election.

The Supreme Court looked at the Constitution of the United States for the word vote, and it first appeared in the 15th amendment, which said "nondiscrimination on the basis of race." It then looked for the word vote again, and it occurred on the 19th amendment, nondiscrimination on the basis of sex. It then looked for the word vote again, in the 26th amendment, nondiscrimination on the basis of age. And then they looked to the 14th amendment, and somehow construed that a fully punched chad has more protection under the Constitution than a dangling or hanging chad.

Then they looked to the slave amendment, the tenth amendment. Since the right to vote is not affirmatively protected in the Constitution of the United States, the right to vote in America is a state right. And therefore, what does the Florida state statute say? The Florida state statute says that Katherine Harris is in charge of this election. And there are five minutes left to count Al Gore's vote. And if you cannot count them in five minutes, George Bush is going to be the president of the United States of America. The old slave amendment, the tenth amendment to the Constitution, came back to haunt our democracy in 2003.

Lincoln understood this profound problem in 1863, when he signed the Emancipation Proclamation. He understood that it was a political document that he was signing, not freeing all the slaves. No president had the capacity to free the slaves by executive order because the tenth amendment still protected slavery within the states. Therefore, the only way over the limitations of the tenth amendment was specific language in the Constitution outlawing slavery in America—the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments to the Constitution of the United States.

It's really simple. In America, African Americans are free from slavery. Today, I stand here as the 91st African American to ever have the privilege of serving in the

United States Congress. Number 91 out of 11,700 Americans who have had the privilege of serving on this side of the 13th amendment. On the other side of the 13th amendment is a slave society. On this side, I'm in Congress, speaking at Harvard. Rejected my application when I sent it, and I serve on the board.

Because the Constitution has the power to divide time and space, it's not that complicated. The word education does not exist in the Constitution of the United States. Therefore, the right to an education in America is a state right. Fifty different governors, 3,067 different county education systems, twenty thousand different local municipal systems, 53 million kids stuck in a slave education system protected by the tenth amendment.

Why? Because the word vote isn't in the Constitution of the United States. The word education isn't in the Constitution of the United States. The right to an education in America is a state right. In Mississippi, the primary source for educating children in that state comes from that state's sales of catfish and cotton. In Washington state, the primary source of revenue for educating children in that state comes from the Microsoft Corporation, five billionaires, including Bill Gates, and tens of hundred-millionaires who work at that corporation and the Boeing corporation. In Washington state, children have laptops in public schools because of who they get to tax. In Mississippi there are no laptops because students at Harvard don't eat enough catfish sandwiches. Separate and unequal education in America is protected by its Constitution. The right to education in America is a state right, just like the right to slavery in America was a state right.

So I've advanced and argued that if we want to rebuild our nation for hundred million Americans who didn't vote for George Bush or Al Gore, for hundred million Americans who wanted to vote, who wanted to participate but don't believe in our democracy any longer, for hundred million Americans, not the 50.5 who voted for Gore, or the fifty million who voted for Bush, but the one hundred million Americans who voted for neither, it is time that we move this democracy forward for every American. Every American deserves the constitutional right to a public education of equal high quality. The 28th amendment—that's what I'm fighting for, and that's what we're talking about.

The right to healthcare in America is not your right. There's no language in the Constitution that says healthcare is your right. Therefore, healthcare in America is a state right. Fifty different governors, fifty different state legislators, 3,067 different counties, twenty-plus thousand different local municipal governments. They are separate and unequal, with no commitment from the federal government and, in some cases, no commitment from state governments to ensure that every single American has basic healthcare.

It's time to move our nation from a discussion over medical savings accounts from the Republican party and the Democratic party, which argues for universal and comprehensive healthcare, to whether or not we as Americans believe that the right to healthcare is a more important right in our country than the right to a gun. I don't know how the right to a gun got in the Constitution. In 2003 the right to healthcare in America is a more important American right than the right to a gun. We the people, the American people, must make the determination whether or not we believe in our basic rights. The things we are asking for should be elevated to fundamental

rights for all Americans, whether or not we are arguing for some special interest group.

I did a radio show the other day with Tavis Smiley and Tom Joyner, and they were asking me the question whether or not Frederick Douglass would have been fighting for affirmative action. I said Frederick Douglass would have supported affirmative action, but he would not be fighting for it. Frederick Douglass lived through the addition of the 13th amendment, the 14th amendment, and the 15th amendment to the Constitution. So, in 2003, he would have had the hindsight of the great progress of our nation—not just for Blacks, but for all Americans. He would have had the hindsight of progress under constitutional amendments versus progress under programs passed by presidents and Congresses.

Congress's programs are too slow. I say that as a member of Congress. We passed the No Child Left Behind Act, and then we don't fund it. President Clinton said he was going to fix every school. He didn't do it in eight years. President Bush ain't got no interest in fixing every school. He ain't going to do it in the last year or two he got left. When do our children deserve a good quality education? When Democrats get around to it? When Republicans get around to it? Or when the Constitution says it should be provided for them?

Equal and high quality. But I don't stop there. I challenge the entire civil rights movement in our nation. We must move beyond fighting for civil rights to fighting for human and constitutional rights for every single American. We must reinvigorate the struggle for equal rights for women, who still make 70 cents to the dollar of what men make. They cannot buy bread cheaper; they cannot pay rent cheaper; they cannot go to Harvard cheaper. They deserve an equal rights amendment to the Constitution, so that they can get equal pay for equal work. It is only fair. We need a constitutional rights struggle to get women there. It's not that difficult.

I said, "Dad, I want to fight, not for civil rights, but for constitutional rights." Civil rights are important. I'm with civil rights. We must defend and protect civil rights, but we must have a broader vision for America than just civil rights. We must boldly, as a nation, walk into a new nation together. I don't know a vehicle that has more power than the Constitution of the United States. Indeed, there are only two events in human history that have the power to divide time: the birth of Christ, from the Christian perspective, B.C. and A.D.; and the Constitution of the United States. On one side of the 13th amendment is a slave society. On the other side of the Constitution, I can read and it's not illegal. On one side of the 19th amendment, no woman can vote. On this side of the 19th amendment, there are women in the Senate, and Carol Moseley Braun wants to be your president. On one side of the 26th amendment, 18-year-olds cannot vote. On this side of the 16th amendment, at least there is opportunity for 18-year-olds to engage the political process.

I'm telling you, my friends, on that side of the Constitution is a separate and unequal education system, but on this side, an equal and high-quality education system for every American. There is a public high school north of Chicago called New Trier. Four Olympic-size swimming pools, ten tennis courts, a radio station, and a TV station at the local public high school. Every teacher has a master's degree. Not one class size more than 15 students. All of the students at New Trier are on their

way to Harvard, and to Yale, and to Dartmouth, and to the Ivy Leagues. Students in my Congressional district are on their way to jail, or worse, to Iraq.

Every child in America deserves the same high-quality public education that students get at New Trier. It should not stop there. Why do state lines keep us from getting a high-quality public education, or healthcare, or equality for women, or a clean, safe, and sustainable environment? Why not walk boldly into a new America for all Americans?

So Dad said, "Son, I'm sixty years old, and I believe in civil rights. And I understand what you're saying about constitutional rights. But I think amending the Constitution of the United States is impossible."

I said, "Dad, it's not impossible. It's been done 27 times."

He said, "Son, but it takes too long. One amendment did take 202 years."

Another amendment took ten months. Another amendment took one hundred days. So amending the Constitution of the United States is only a factor in our capacity to convince every American that we should.

Then Dad said, "Son, I still think it's impossible. I'm 61 years old."

And I said, "Dad, but I believe in the impossible."

I went to Sunday school where I was told to believe in a man who had the capacity, with God's help, to part the Red Sea, a man who had the capacity to walk on water, to give sight to the blind, to heal the sick, to raise Lazarus from the dead. He himself, a medical impossibility, had been declared dead for three days and on the third day rose from the dead. Dad, friends, Harvard, IOP, Kennedy School of Government, if we can believe in all of that, then why can't we believe in a new America and build a more perfect union for every single American, not just the moral right, but the legal right to make the union more perfect for every single American? I hope you will join us in the great struggle to make it so.

Thank you and God bless you all.

EXPLANATION OF DEVELOPMENT POLICY ANALYSES

The following two papers are products of student policy analyses conducted during their studies at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

The Master in Public Policy program requires students in their second year of graduate study to apply the analytical, quantitative, and strategic management skills learned throughout the program to a policy analysis exercise (PAE). The PAE requires students to identify a real-world client—community-based group, nonprofit, government agency, international organization, or private firm—with whom they will work to define a relevant policy question, develop a strategy for addressing the problem, formulate and evaluate options, and make policy recommendations.

The PAE integrates intellectual rigor, creativity, information gathering, and decision making and culminates in the publication of a policy paper and presentation for the client organization. The policy papers, approximately forty pages in length, are designed to meet the highest professional standards.

If you are interested in working with a Kennedy School student to address a policy issue relevant to your organization, particularly policies related to African Americans, please e-mail ksgpae@harvard.edu for more information.

THE OUÉMÉ CHILD SURVIVAL PROGRAM: SUSTAINING LIVELIHOODS

*Kendra Blackett and Carmen Coles**

ABSTRACT

This evaluation seeks to assess the sustainability of the Ouémé Child Survival Program (OCSP), a four-year pilot program (1997-2001), funded by USAID and administered by Africare, Benin. OCSP sought to improve the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of communities in the Pobè Health Zone through the selection and training of 54 community health workers (CHWs). After interviews with actors of the public health infrastructure, the CHWs, and their supervising committees, as well as a review of the malaria statistics for the Pobè Health Zone, the evaluators have concluded the following:

- *Procurement, supervision, and training relied heavily on Africare*
- *The centralized coordinating unit is dysfunctional*
- *Procurement is a major factor that links the community to the public health infrastructure*
- *Rates for simple malaria have consistently decreased*

As a result of these findings, the evaluators recommend that 1) CHWs should be fully integrated into the public health infrastructure; 2) NGOs should create a sense of ownership among community members; and 3) such projects, which rely on a synergy between local and governmental actors, should incorporate a rights-based approach to the training of community actors.

1. INTRODUCTION

This evaluation explores the sustainability of the Ouémé Child Survival Program (OCSP), a four-year pilot project (1997-2001), funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and administered by Africare's

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Kendra Blackett is a 2003 Master in Public Policy candidate at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. She has worked in the area of international health in Benin, West Africa, as an International Foundation for Education and Self Help fellow with Africare. Kendra has an interest in sustainable solutions for community-based projects.

Benin office. By training 54 community health workers (CHWs) in HIV/AIDS, malaria, and family planning, OCSP sought to improve the health of women of childbearing age and children under the age of five. Sustainability, defined by USAID as “the continuation of project outputs and benefits (outcomes) after funding is terminated,”¹ is an essential aspect of development programs. However, few organizations spend the time and the money to evaluate a program’s impact after funding is terminated and the final evaluation is complete.²

Purpose:

- To determine the key elements of sustainability for child survival programs that depend on CHWs
- To develop recommendations that will inform Africare’s current and future initiatives in child survival
- To contribute to the current literature on the sustainability of community self-help initiatives

Key Questions for Analysis:

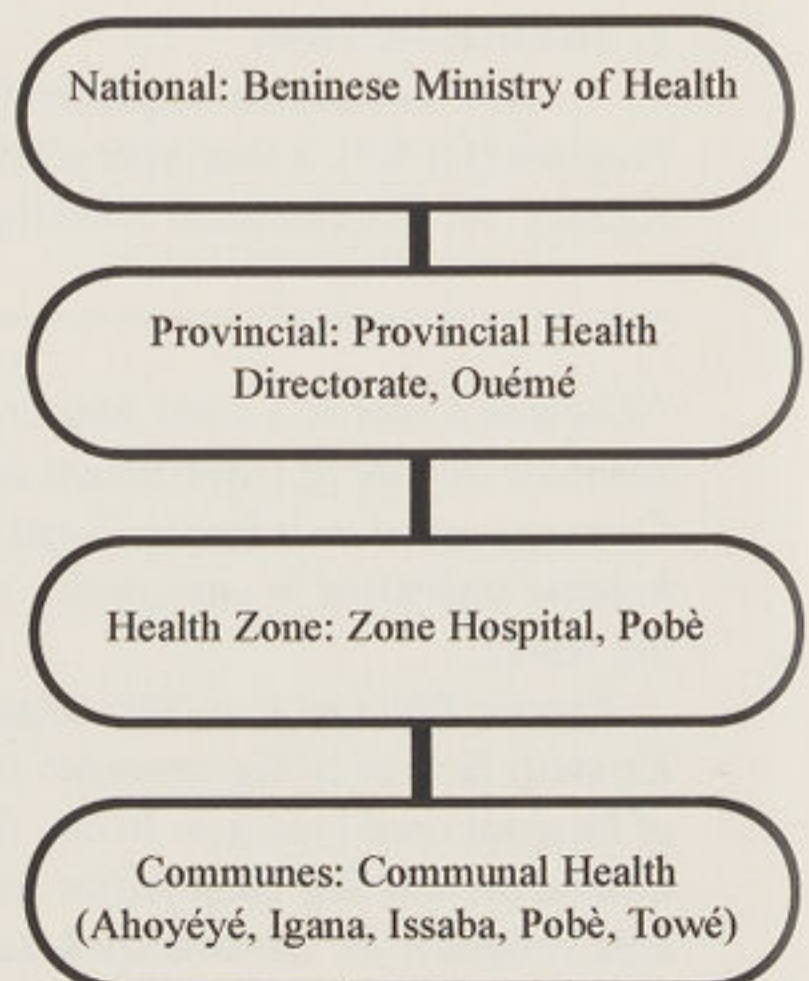
- Have the actors of the public health infrastructure continued to ensure procurement and provide support for the CHWs?
- Have the CHWs continued to perform information, education, and communication (IEC) activities and community-based distribution (CBD) of essential medication?
- What are the factors that influence whether a CHW has continued these activities?
- Have malaria rates continued to improve in the Pobè Health Zone since the departure of OCSP?

1.1 Background

OCSP was designed to “support one of the major goals of the Ministry of Health (MOH) in Benin, [by] reducing childhood morbidity and mortality and improving the health of women of reproductive age.”³ This program was implemented at the same time that Benin’s MOH began to decentralize the health sector into health zones. OCSP sought to improve the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of communities in the Pobè Health Zone through the selection and training of 54 CHWs.⁴ CHWs were trained in:

IEC activities⁵ on HIV/AIDS, family planning, and malaria prevention; and

Diagram 1. Decentralized Health System



CBD of malaria medication, condoms and other family planning products.

In the Ouémé Province, in which the Pobè Health Zone is situated, malaria accounts for almost one-third of all reported illnesses.⁶ OCSP intervened in each of the five communes of the Pobè Health Zone: Ahoyéyé, Issaba, Igana, Pobè, and Towé. Each village within a commune selected a CHW and a supervising committee (CDS) to participate in OCSP. Due to the impact the program had on reducing malaria rates in the Pobè Health Zone, OCSP is touted by USAID as a best practice⁷ in the field of child survival.

1.2 Post-Project Sustainability Plan

At the end of OCSP, project managers sought to integrate the network of 54 CHWs into the public health system. After several meetings with key community actors, Africare developed a sustainability plan by which they believed the CHW activities could continue. There are two central components to this plan:

- **Centralized Coordinating Unit (CCU)**—The unit consists of the following actors: the head doctor of the zone hospital, the zone sociologist, Association Béninoise pour la Promotion de la Famille (ABPF), Groupe d'Action pour l'Amour et le Bien-être familial (GABF), Comité de Gestion Sous-préfectoral (COGES), and the Centre de Promotion Sociale (CPS). The unit is supposed to provide the same level of technical support provided by Africare during the program. The unit's major responsibilities include training, supervision, and procurement of essential malaria medication and family-planning products. When Africare departed, the unit agreed to hold quarterly meetings to discuss developments in the field and solve any outstanding problems (see Box 1).

Box 1. Centralized Coordinating Unit

- **The Head Doctor of the Zone Hospital:** The head doctor is the supervisor of the CCU. He is responsible for organizing the quarterly meetings and the overall management of the unit. He is also a central figure in the Équipe d'Encadrement de la Zone Sanitaire (EEZ), which is responsible for providing technical support for the Pobè Health Zone.
- **Zone Sociologist:** The zone sociologist is appointed by the head doctor to supervise all 54 CHWs. He is also a member of the EEZ.
- **Association Béninoise pour la Promotion de la Famille (ABPF):** ABPF is the private sector partner responsible for supplying the CHW with family-planning products and providing training and support as they relate to family planning.
- **Groupe d'Action pour l'Amour et le Bien-être Familial (GABF):** GABF is a local NGO that trains community motivators throughout the Pobè Health Zone in nutrition education and counseling. At the end of OCSP, GABF incorporated 16 CHWs into their network of community motivators.
- **Comité de Gestion Sous-préfectoral (COGES) [Health Zone Management Committee]:** COGES is made up of members of each commune's Comité de Gestion Communale (COGEC), the body responsible for procuring the health centers and managing the center's stock of medication.
- **Centre de Promotion Sociale (CPS):** The CPS is the state-run social services center that provides nutrition information and health counseling to women and children.

Communal Public Health Infrastructure—These actors include the communal health center, Comité de Gestion Communale (COGEC), the village supervising committees, and the CHWs. Their responsibilities are to procure and to provide support for the activities of the CHWs (see Box 2).

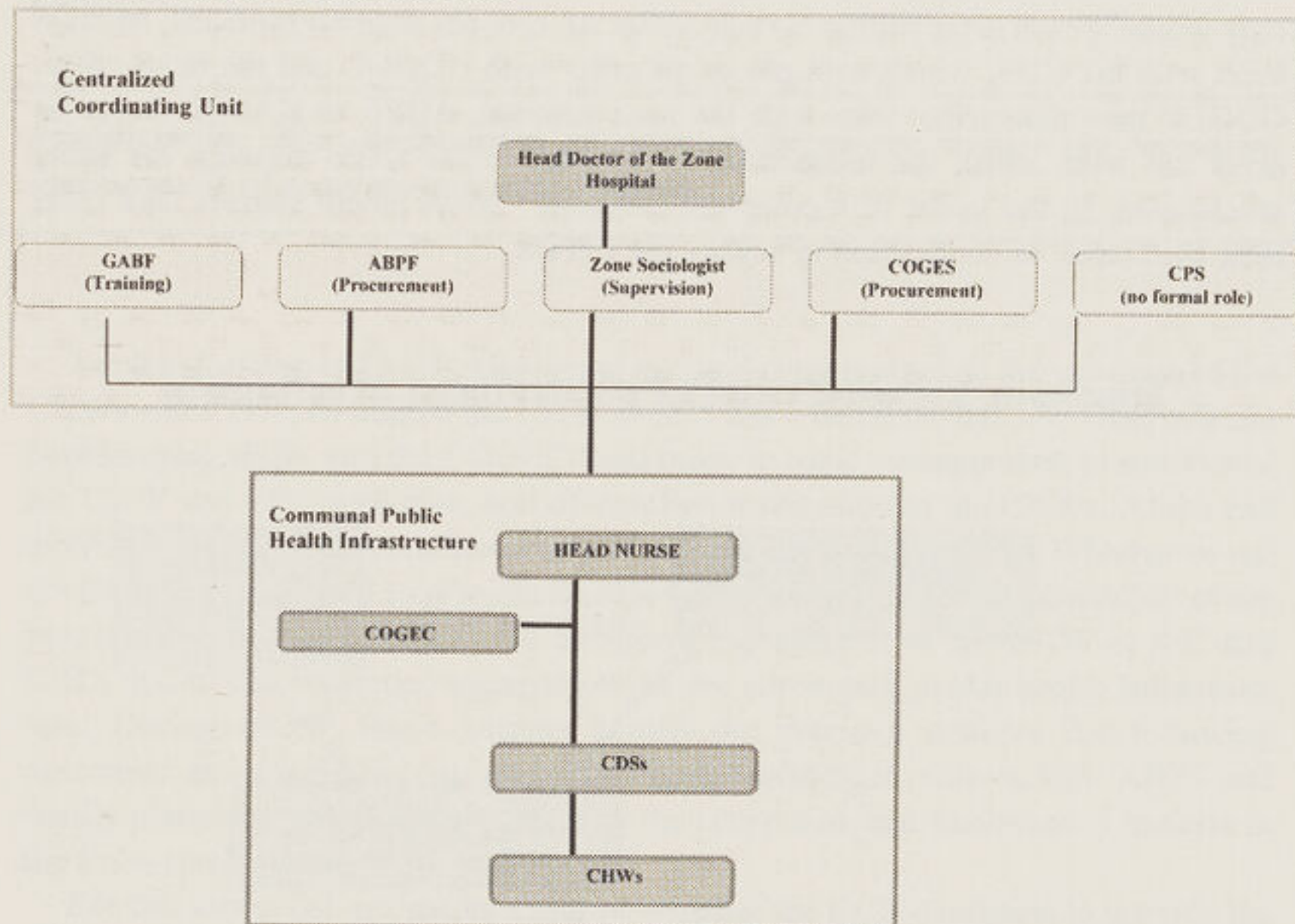
Box 2. Communal Public Health Infrastructure

- **Communal Health Center:** There are five communal health centers, one in each commune (Pobè, Towé, Ahoyéyé, Issaba, and Igana). The head nurse of the communal health center works within the decentralized system and is mandated by the MOH to supervise the activities of the CHWs. He is also responsible for the training of new CHWs. The head nurse collaborates with COGEC to submit product orders to the zone hospital, ABPF, and the Centrale d'Achat des Médicaments Essentiels (CAME) for the communal health center and the CHWs.
- **COGEC:** Commune-wide health-management committee consisting of volunteers from individual villages. COGEC gathers all product orders of the CHW and the head nurse and is responsible for sending the orders to the zone hospital or CAME. COGEC monitors the health center's use of medication.
- **Comité de Suivi des Relais Communautaires (CDS):** This is the village supervisory committee composed of members of the community. Their role is to supervise the CHW and to maintain the financial records of product sales. They, along with the CHW, are responsible for holding village assemblies in which they report on the activities of the CHW. Certain members of the CDS were trained in basic literacy to carry out supervisory duties.
- **Community Health Worker (CHW):** These individuals were chosen by their communities based on criteria agreed upon by Africare and the communities themselves. Each was trained in IEC activities related to malaria, family planning, and HIV/AIDS and in community-based distribution of essential malaria medication and family-planning products.

Procurement, supervision and training are the essential links between the CCU and the communal public health infrastructure (see Diagram 2).

Diagram 2. Health Zone Organizational Chart

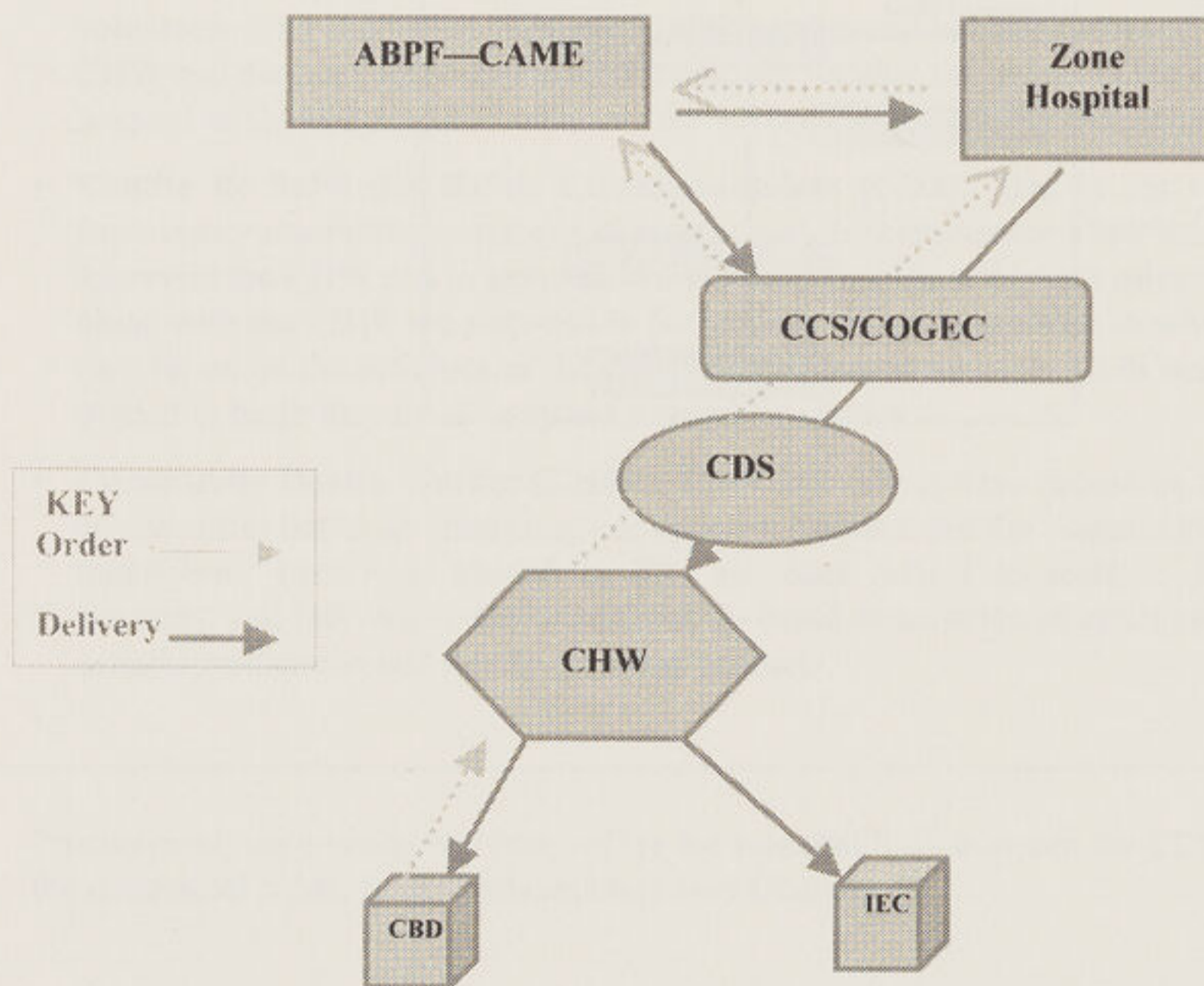
Diagram 2. Health Zone Organizational Chart



1.3 Post-Project Procurement Mechanism

Both the CCU and the communal public health infrastructure⁸ work together to ensure a consistent supply of products to the communities. The procurement system only works if each actor fulfills his role. After a CHW has sold his products, he must meet with his CDS, which then places an order with COGEC and the head nurse. COGEC then places the order with the zone hospital, ABPF, or CAME. Once the order has been filled, the medication is returned to the CHW through the same mechanism. In the event of a complete stockout,⁹ some health centers take from their own stock of medication to supply the CHWs.

Diagram 3. Post-Project Procurement Mechanism



2. Framework for Analysis

In order to evaluate the sustainability of OCSP, one must agree on what is meant by sustainability. Based on the literature, the evaluators arrived at the following definition:¹⁰

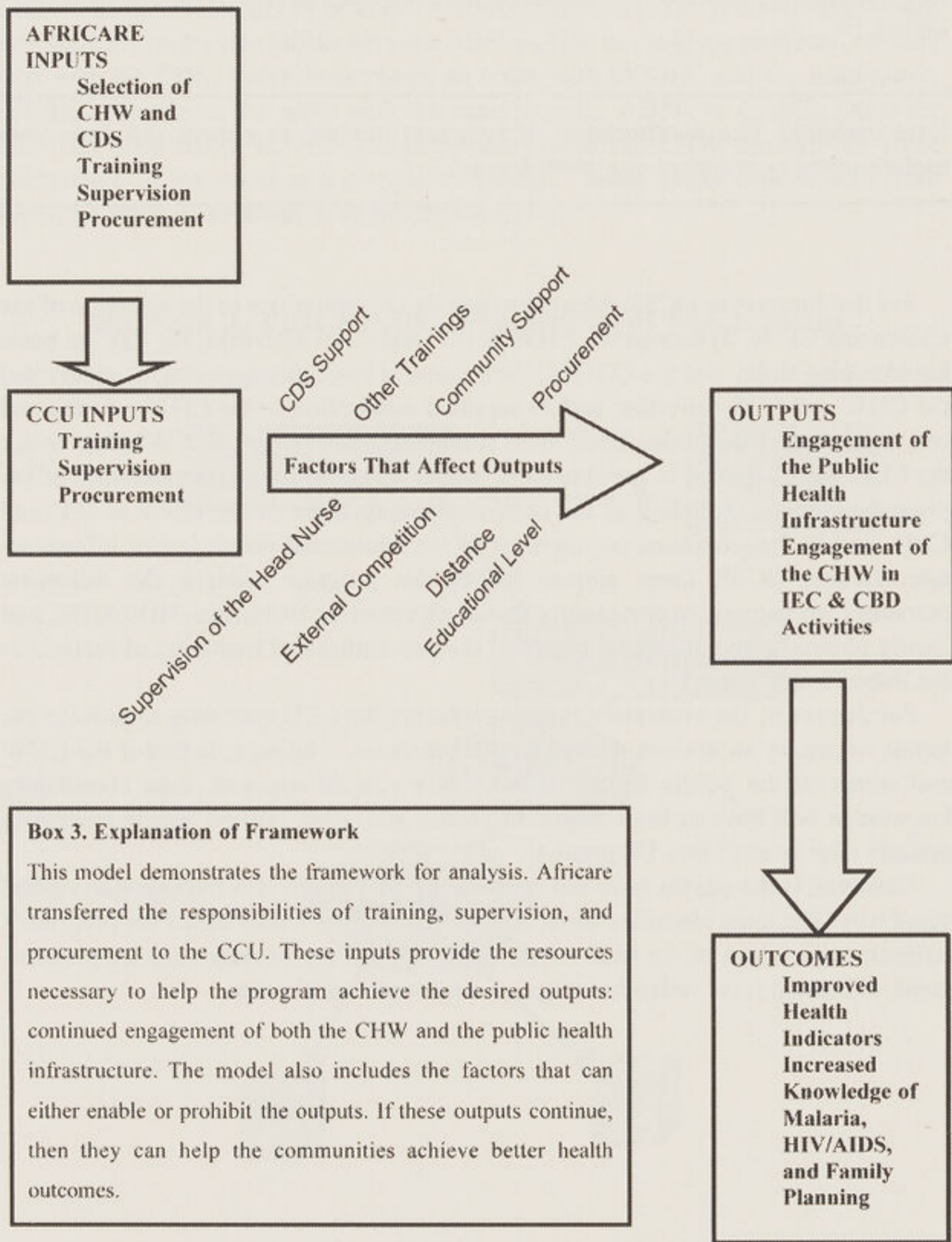
Sustainability: The continuation of program outputs to ensure the long-term maintenance of program outcomes/impact.

For the duration of OCSP, Africare a) assisted communities in the selection of the CHWs and CDSs; b) trained the CHW in IEC and CBD activities, the CDS in basic bookkeeping skills, and the COGEC/head nurse in basic management; c) supervised the CHW and CDS activities; and d) supplied medication to the CHWs. At the end of OCSP, project staff transferred these responsibilities to the CCU. Whether or not the CCU has continued to provide these inputs is central to the sustainability of the program outputs, including a) the continued engagement of the CHW in IEC and CBD, and b) the continued engagement of the communal public health infrastructure. During OCSP, these outputs helped the program achieve the following outcomes: an increase in community knowledge relating to malaria, HIV/AIDS, and family planning, and an improvement in the prevention and treatment of malaria in the Pobè Health Zone.¹¹

For this study, the evaluators examine whether the CCU continues to provide the inputs necessary to achieve desired health outcomes. The logic is that if the CHW and actors of the public health infrastructure remain engaged, then community knowledge will have at least stayed the same, and there will be improvements in malaria rates overall (see Diagram 4).

However, if the outputs have not continued post-project, it is important to understand why. The team identified eight factors that could possibly affect the program's outputs: supervision of the head nurse, CDS support, community support, procurement, education level, other trainings, and external competition.

Diagram 4. Framework for Analysis



Box 3. Explanation of Framework

This model demonstrates the framework for analysis. Africare transferred the responsibilities of training, supervision, and procurement to the CCU. These inputs provide the resources necessary to help the program achieve the desired outputs: continued engagement of both the CHW and the public health infrastructure. The model also includes the factors that can either enable or prohibit the outputs. If these outputs continue, then they can help the communities achieve better health outcomes.

Box 4: Methodology

The evaluation team interviewed 29 CHWs, five head nurses, four COGEC presidents, the head doctor and sociologist of the zone hospital, select staff of ABPF and GABF, and select mothers. While only 29 CHWs were interviewed, the evaluation team gathered information from a total of 41 of the 54 CHWs through conversations with local community actors (see Appendix B). Interviews were intended to gauge factors that affected CHW activity levels and the degree to which the linkages between the community and the public health infrastructure were sustained. For a more detailed description of the sampling strategy, please see Appendix C. In order to understand whether malaria rates have continued to improve, the evaluators analyzed data from Direction Départementale de la Santé de l'Ouémé (DDS-O) for the Pobè Health Zone and the Ouémé Province.

The questionnaires were administered in both French and Nagot, the local language, with the assistance of two former health development agents employed by Africare. The health development agents served as guides and interpreters from French to Nagot for cases in which the interviewees did not speak French. In the event that the interviewee spoke French, the evaluation team conducted the interviews directly in French. All interviews lasted between 30 minutes and two hours (see Appendix D).

2.1 Variables

CHW Activity Level¹²

Have the CHWs continued to perform IEC and CBD activities within their communities? What are the factors that influence the activity levels of the CHW?

The literature on CHWs reveals a number of variables that can directly affect the long-term sustainability of community-based initiatives. Based on the literature and information gathered during interviews, the evaluators have focused on the following eight variables:

1. Supervision of the head nurse

Has the CHW received adequate supervision from the head nurse? How often? Has the head nurse been active in procurement?

Research has shown that adequate supervision can reduce CHW attrition rates.

- In Guatemala, CHWs who were supervised by local health staff had attrition rates 50 percent lower than those who had a perfunctory relationship with local health centers.¹³

Supervision of the CHW by the head nurse is mandated by the MOH in order to ensure the integrity of the information that the CHW gives to his community. Frequent contact between the head nurse and the CHW demonstrates support from the public health infrastructure.

2. Supervision by the CDS

Has the CDS collaborated with the CHW? How often? Has the CDS been active in procurement?

In addition to supervision from the head nurse, support from the CDS is another influencing factor. The role of the CDS is to not only encourage the CHW to continue his work, but also to promote the use of his services to community members. The CDS also plays a crucial role in the procurement process. To ensure consistent procurement of the CHW, the CDS and CHW must meet regularly. This demonstrates support for the work of the CHW.

3. Community Support

Do community members buy medication from the CHW? Do community members seek his advice? Do they continue to attend IEC sessions?

Studies have shown that CHWs who have the ability to sell medication have more legitimacy in their communities and are therefore less likely to abandon their work.

- A study conducted in Nepal showed that CHWs who were able to provide treatment for acute respiratory infections gained increased credibility in their communities.¹⁴
- Furthermore, a report from Tanzania described village health workers as "feeling inadequate" because they did not play a curative role in treating illnesses. If the community feels confident in the ability of the CHW, this can also serve as an incentive for him to continue working.¹⁵

Questions were asked to determine how frequently the community uses the CHW and for what reasons. Frequent visits to the CHW by community members can also serve as a source of motivation for the CHW. Additionally, through frequent visits, he is able to gain profits from product sales.

4. Procurement

Does the CHW have difficulty obtaining medication? Are there persistent stockouts of essential medication?

Stockouts of essential products for prolonged periods can jeopardize the system of community-based distribution. If the CHW does not have any medication, he is unable to perform IEC activities. Irregular supply of medication negatively affects the CHW's credibility.

- In evaluating the CHW program in Tanzania, several CHWs cited that their job was made more difficult because they were unable to obtain the drugs necessary to continue treatment.¹⁶

Procurement is the variable that links the community to the public health infrastructure. Therefore, the public health infrastructure's ability to ensure consistent and regular procurement to communities is one way of assessing the sustainability

of this linkage.

5. External Competition

Does the CHW face competition from other vendors in his village?

The evaluation team found evidence of a black market for malaria medication. Moreover, there is a persistent problem of foreign medicine hawkers who sell drugs at a much cheaper price and on credit. These drugs are often counterfeit or heavily diluted, which can lead to serious health consequences.¹⁷ Whether or not the community buys medication from these hawkers is an indicator of the level of community support for the CHW. It can also lead to decreased sales and therefore decreased profits, which provides less impetus to participate in the program.

6. Distance

How far does the CHW live/work from the communal health center?

The distance of a CHW's village from the health center may influence his activity level. Those closest to the center may not have to travel long distances to submit product orders, while those farther away may feel isolated. Furthermore, those CHWs nearest to the health center may feel a diminished need for their services, as more people become used to seeking health care at the local health center.

7. Other Trainings

Have the CHWs benefited from additional trainings since the departure of OCSP?

For the duration of OCSP, CHWs benefited from a number of trainings in malaria, HIV/AIDS, and family planning. The trainings were designed to refresh and to increase the CHWs knowledge of these subject matters in line with MOH protocols. Since additional trainings could serve as an incentive to maintain activity levels, there could be a strong correlation between activity levels and the number of trainings attended. Additional trainings can motivate CHWs by expanding their own support network and by allowing them to become the first point-of-contact for health initiatives.

8. Education Level

What is the highest level of education attained by the CHW?

CHWs with higher education levels may be more inclined to remain active. A primary reason for this is that the CHW may feel more confident in filling out program documents or learning new information. On the other hand, higher education levels may also lead to increased attrition. For example, the CHW may have other employment opportunities that render him incapable of continuing to serve in a volunteer capacity. Lower education levels may be a reason why the CHW remains engaged in the program. He may not have other employment opportunities and may look to community-based distribution as a means of supplementing his income.

Box 5: Coding of Variables

The CHW activity level and each of the influencing factors (supervision of the head nurse, CDS support, community support, procurement, additional trainings, external competition, distance from health center, and education) were given a numeric value. The first four variables were numbered 0, 1, or 2 to indicate the extent to which the CHWs continue to perform program activities, the head nurse supports and collaborates with the CHW, the CDS works with the CHW and the CHW experiences procurement difficulties. A score of 0 was labeled "unsustained," 1 "moderately sustained," and 2 "sustained." The next three variables were numbered 0, 1, or 2 to differentiate among levels of education, kilometers from the health center, and number of additional trainings. The last variable, external competition, was numbered 0 or 1 to indicate whether or not the CHWs were affected by other vendors (see Table 1).

Table 1. Variable Codes and Interpretation

Variable	Score = 0	Score = 1	Score = 2
CHW Activity Level	No activity in last three months—no sales, no IEC	Minimal activity in the last three months—no more than one IEC session and some sales	Highly active in the last month—more than one IEC session and high sales
Supervision by the Head Nurse	Head nurse has no relationship with the CHW other than the national vaccination days; head nurse has not helped the CHW resolve problems of procurement; head nurse has not conducted any supervision of the CHW in more than six months; CHW orders have not been refilled	Head nurse collaborates with the CHW on other activities beside the national vaccination days; head nurse has shown some initiative to solve problems at the community level	Head nurse is very active with the CHW; CHWs report high level of support from the head nurse; head nurse actively solves problems of the CHWs; no evidence of stockouts
CDS Support	CDS and CHW have not met in more than three months; CDS not active in procurement	CDS has held no more than one meeting in the last three months and has discussed some problems with the CHW	Regular meetings (either formal or informal), including one meeting in the last month between CHW and CDS, and the CDS is actively engaged in problem solving; CDS demonstrates support in IEC and CBD activities
Community Support of CBD	No community support as evidenced by no sales of CBD	Some sales of products and minimal attendance at IEC sessions	Highly supportive community, high CBD sales, continued attendance at IEC sessions, and frequent consultation
Procurement of Essential Medications	Persistent stockouts; no initiative on the part of the local actors to resolve the situation; has led to the inactivity of the CHW and CDS; stockout of more than two products	Stockout of no more than two products; little action taken to resolve problems	No reported problems with procurement; CHWs' orders filled within a reasonable time frame (less than one month)
Last Level of Education Completed	Only participated in literacy training or no education	Received some primary school education	Attained high school education
Distance from Communal Health Center	Within 2 km of the health center (near)	Within 3-5 km of the health center (moderate)	More than 5 km from the health center (far)
Additional Trainings	No trainings received since the end of the program	Up to two trainings received since the end of the program	Three or more trainings received since the end of the program
External Competition	No reported problems with medicine hawkers	Problems with the medicine hawkers; evidence that the community buys products from them instead of the CHW	

2.2 ANALYSIS OF POST-PROGRAM INPUTS, OUTPUTS, AND OUTCOMES

Analysis of Inputs: CCU – Supervision, Training, and Procurement

To determine whether the program inputs have continued after the departure of Africare, the evaluation team interviewed the following members of the CCU: the head doctor of the zone, the zone sociologist, ABPF, GABF, and the president of COGES. All interviews were analyzed to determine the level of collaboration among actors and the degree to which they are fulfilling their roles as outlined at the end of OCSP.

Analysis of Output: Engagement of the Communal Public Health Infrastructure

The literature indicates that the linkage between the community and the public health infrastructure is key to the long-term sustainability of child survival initiatives.

Eric Sarriot, a leading expert on the sustainability of child survival initiatives, states that sustainability relies on the ability of individuals, communities and local organizations to

negotiate their respective roles in the pursuit of health...beyond a project intervention. The individual's communities and local organizations constitute a local system with their environment, and...their coordinated social interactions and efforts...lead to lasting health impact.¹⁸

To determine whether the engagement of the community actors has been sustained, the following three variables were used: supervision of the head nurse, CDS support, and procurement. In addition to these factors, the evaluators examined the level of community support reported by the CHW as an indicator of community engagement. These combined factors reflect the extent to which linkages between the community and the public health infrastructure have been sustained.

Based on these variables, the evaluators derived a sustainability score for each village. The highest point total a village can receive is eight. A score of eight indicates that the community linkages have been sustained. For example, any village that receives a score of eight has a score of two in each category, indicating high CDS support, no procurement difficulties, good collaboration between the head nurse and the CHW, and high community support. The numbers were totaled and then averaged to determine a commune-wide sustainability score. An overall score of 0-2 means that the commune-level linkages are unsustainable, 3-5 moderately sustained, and 6-8 sustained (see Table 1).

Analysis of Output: Engagement of the CHW in IEC and CBD Activities

As explained above, CHW activity levels were coded into three categories: unsustainable, moderately sustained, and sustained. To determine which factors are highly correlated with CHW activity level, numerous bivariate analyses were conducted. In these analyses, CHW activity level was the dependent variable, and each of the eight influencing factors were used as independent variables.

*Analysis of Outcomes: Malaria Rates*¹⁹

To determine whether malaria rates have continued to improve, the evaluation team analyzed data obtained from the DDS-O.

3. Findings

A thorough analysis of the data reveals four major findings:

- 1. Procurement, Supervision, and Training Relied Heavily on Africare:** Few of the linkages between community actors and the public health infrastructure established at the end of OCSP function as negotiated. As a result, a) CHW activity levels vary considerably by village and commune, and b) procurement, supervision, and training are effectively carried out in only two communes, Igana and Issaba.
- 2. CCU Is Dysfunctional:** Actors within this unit depend on the head doctor to organize meetings and to provide direction. Due to time constraints faced by the head doctor, he is unable to actively supervise the group. As a result, several actors are not fulfilling their individual roles and systemic problems with procurement remain unresolved.
- 3. Procurement Is a Major Factor That Links the Community to the Public Health Infrastructure:** Procurement difficulties render the CHW unable to perform IEC and CBD activities. For example, the CHW's credibility can suffer if community members who seek his services are unable to purchase products. Additionally, if any actor fails to fulfill his role in the procurement process, the sustainability of commune-level activities is jeopardized.
- 4. Malaria Rates Have Decreased:** Rates for simple malaria have consistently decreased in the 13 months following OCSP. Rates for severe malaria indicate increased frequentation of the health centers.

Although better health is the overall goal of the program, it is an insufficient indicator of a program's overall sustainability. Problems existing at the level of program outputs could negatively impact health outcomes in the future.

Community-based distribution gives communities an opportunity to maintain improved health. Therefore, any factor that prevents the CHW from performing his duties can jeopardize health outcomes.

The following two sections summarize the data collected on the CHW activity levels, the influencing factors, and the communal sustainability scores. The main findings are further developed under the recommendations they support.

3.1 Analysis of Sustainability of Post-Program Inputs: CCU

Actors of the CCU are charged with supervising the CHWs, providing additional training, and solving zone-wide problems. However, it is clear from the interviews that the CCU views OCSP as an Africare program. In the past ten months they have not held one meeting. Moreover, the head doctor assigned all of the responsibility for supervision and training to the zone sociologist, who was not present during OCSP. Interviews reveal that the head doctor failed to give the zone sociologist the project documents, which included a list of all the CHWs and their supervising committees. Moreover, the sociologist stated that he alone could not supervise all 54 CHWs. Technically, the zone sociologist is supposed to collaborate with other members of the CCU to fulfill his duties. However, at the time of the interview, he was unaware of these actors. Eventually, the sociologist admitted that he had "inherited something that [he] does not understand." Miscommunication and lack of collaboration among post-project partners has jeopardized the overall sustainability of the project. Problems relating to lack of products in the communes stemmed in part from the inaction of the CCU.

Furthermore, many of the actors within the CCU are no longer active. ABPF has closed their office within Pobè, and COGES has yet to meet. Failure of the CCU to provide the necessary inputs greatly affected the sustainability of communal linkages.

Box 6. Dysfunctional CCU

- No meetings in the past ten months
- Failure to transfer key program documents to zone sociologist
- Lack of coordination between actors in the unit and concerned communities

3.2 Analysis of Sustainability of Post-Program Output: Engagement of the Communal Public Health Infrastructure

Box 7: Communal Sustainability at a Glance

Thirteen months after OCSP, a majority of the communes were functioning at only moderately sustained levels. The evaluation team found the following:

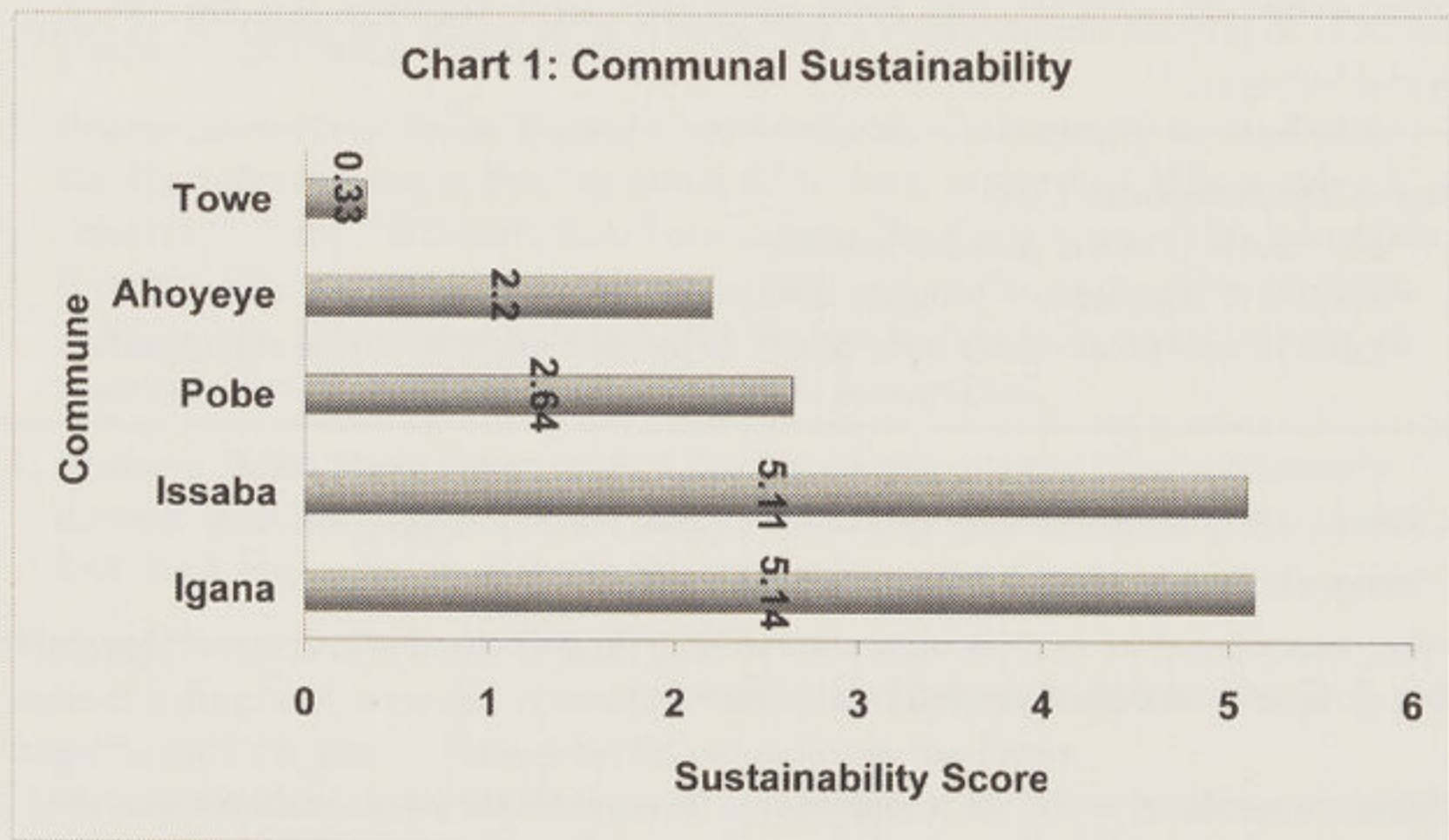
- 24 percent of the villages have highly functioning linkages; 90 percent of these villages are found in Igana and Issaba.
- 28 percent of the CHWs have high levels of collaboration/supervision from the head nurse. Lack of supervision/collaboration with the head nurse is concentrated in the communes of Towé, Pobè, and Ahoyéyé.
- 33 percent of the CHWs have high CDS support.
- 46 percent of the CHWs have procurement difficulties.
- 33 percent of the CHWs have high levels of community support.

The commune level linkages rely on the support of the CCU. Despite the lack of support from the CCU, the team did find two communes with “moderately sustained” linkages”—Igana and Issaba.

The evaluators ranked the communes based on the level of supervision from the head nurse, CDS support, procurement difficulties, and community support. The communes of Igana and Issaba received moderately sustainable scores of 5.14 and 5.11. Igana has three villages with highly sustainable scores of 7 or 8. However, their mean sustainability score was considerably lower due to a high level of CHW attrition in other villages.

The key to the sustainability of linkages in Igana and Issaba is the motivation of the head nurse. In these communes, there are fewer procurement problems and the CDSs are more engaged.

The linkages in Ahoyéyé, Pobè, and Towé have all been classified as “unsustained.” Towé received a score of .33, lower than both Pobè (2.64) and Ahoyéyé (2.2), because of persistent procurement difficulties (see Chart 1).



Sustainable linkages necessitate communication between both community and public health actors to ensure adequate health care and continued access to essential medication. Lack of collaboration could lead to adverse health outcomes for the communities involved. The findings cited above indicate a problem for the long-term sustainability of OCSP. The procurement problems, located at both the communal and zone levels, ultimately affect the overall sustainability of the program, which relies, at its core, on a synergy among all of the actors within the Pobè Health Zone.

3.3 Analysis of Sustainability of Post-Program Output: Engagement of the CHW in IEC and CBD Activities

Throughout the Pobè Health Zone, CHW activity levels vary considerably. Twenty-nine percent of the CHWs for which information was gathered have high activity levels, 41 percent have moderate activity levels and 29 percent have little or no activity. The following four factors have been found to most directly influence the CHW's activity level:²⁰

- 1. CDS Support:** There is a high positive correlation (84 percent)²¹ between the CHW's activity level and the level of CDS support reported. High levels of CDS support indicate that the CDS has a sense of ownership over the health of its community. In the communities where the CHW is no longer active, there are low levels of CDS support. In these communities, the evaluators did not find a strong sense of ownership.
- 2. Level of Procurement Difficulty:** There is a strong positive correlation (69 percent) between the CHW's activity level and procurement difficulties. Those who experience the most difficulties in procurement are on the whole less active.
- 3. Supervision of the Head nurse:** There is a moderate positive correlation (59 percent) between the CHW's activity level and the level of supervision/collaboration with the head nurse; those with good collaboration with the head nurse have fewer procurement difficulties and are more active.
- 4. External Competition:** Although there is a weak negative correlation (27 percent) between the CHW's activity level and the level of external competition from medicine hawkers and other vendors, many CHWs and CDS members report that the competition from other vendors has had an effect on their activity levels.

4. Recommendations

As indicated above, the four major findings of this evaluation are that a) procurement, supervision and training relied heavily on Africare and have not been sustained after Africare's departure; b) the CCU is dysfunctional; c) procurement is the essential element that links the community to the public health infrastructure; and d) simple malaria rates have continued to decrease since the end of OCSP and the increased number of severe cases indicate more individuals are seeking treatment at the hospital. In other words, the outcomes have been sustained, but the sustainability of program outputs vary greatly by village and commune. In order for Africare to implement programs with more sustainable outputs, the evaluation team has developed the following three recommendations:

Recommendation #1: Allow the CHW to be fully integrated into the local public health infrastructure. When implementing a program using CHWs, their full integration will not only allow them to become full partners in all public health

initiatives, but will also allow their role to expand beyond the mandates of the program intervention.

Recommendation #2: Create a sense of ownership among actors within the local public health infrastructure by decreasing material incentives and implicating public health actors from the beginning of the program.

Recommendation #3: Ensure that community actors understand the mechanisms through which they can reclaim their rights to good health. This includes full explanation of problem-solving mechanisms when Africare is no longer present. This recommendation is consistent with a rights-based approach through which communities gain access to institutions, information, redress, and complaint mechanisms.

4.1 Recommendation #1

Recommendation #1: Allow the CHW to be fully integrated into the local public health infrastructure. When implementing a program using CHWs, their full integration will not only allow them to become full partners in all public health initiatives, but will also allow their role to expand beyond the mandates of the program intervention.

Supporting Findings:

- CHWs have proven effective in helping to 1) reduce malaria rates through treatment of simple cases and referral of severe cases, and 2) increase community knowledge of HIV/AIDS, family planning, and malaria.
- CHWs closest to the health center are no longer active.

4.1.1 CHWs Effective in Improving Malaria Rates

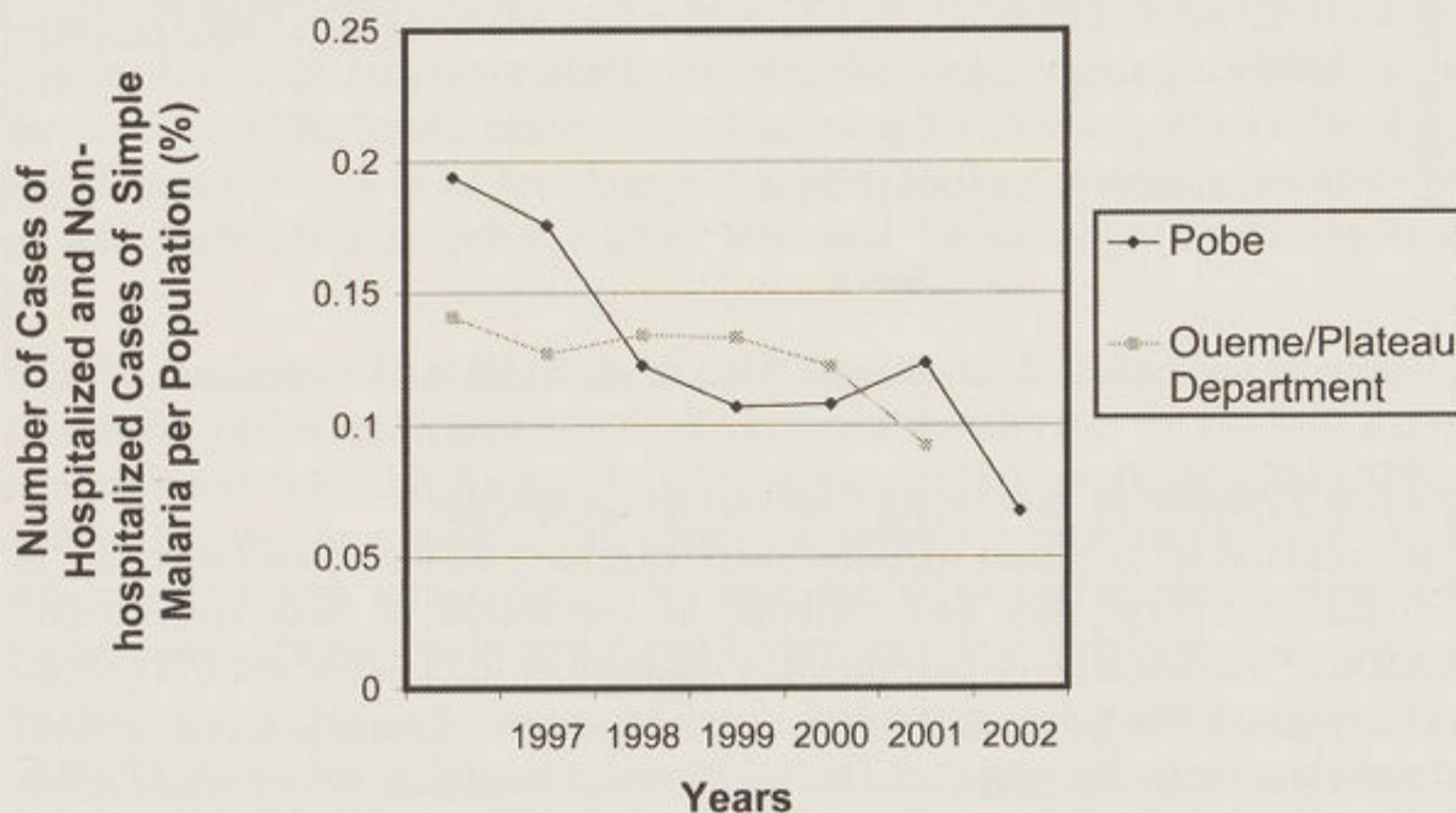
The evaluation team compared the number of reported cases of simple malaria in the Pobè Health Zone to the number of reported cases of simple malaria for the entire Ouémé Province,²² and found the following:

- During the years of the intervention, simple malaria rates in the Pobè Health Zone decreased.
- From the beginning of OCSP to October 2002, rates for simple malaria have decreased in the Pobè Health Zone by 12 percent, while simple malaria rates for the Ouémé Province have decreased by 5 percent.
- Rates for severe malaria cases indicate that more individuals are seeking treatment at the health centers.

One cannot ignore the fact that increased knowledge and access to drugs enable communities to achieve better health outcomes. Graph 1 demonstrates that during the intervention, Pobè's simple malaria rates are lower than the Ouémé's. The decrease in simple malaria rates during the intervention "suggests that cases of simple malaria [were managed] appropriately in the home and at the community

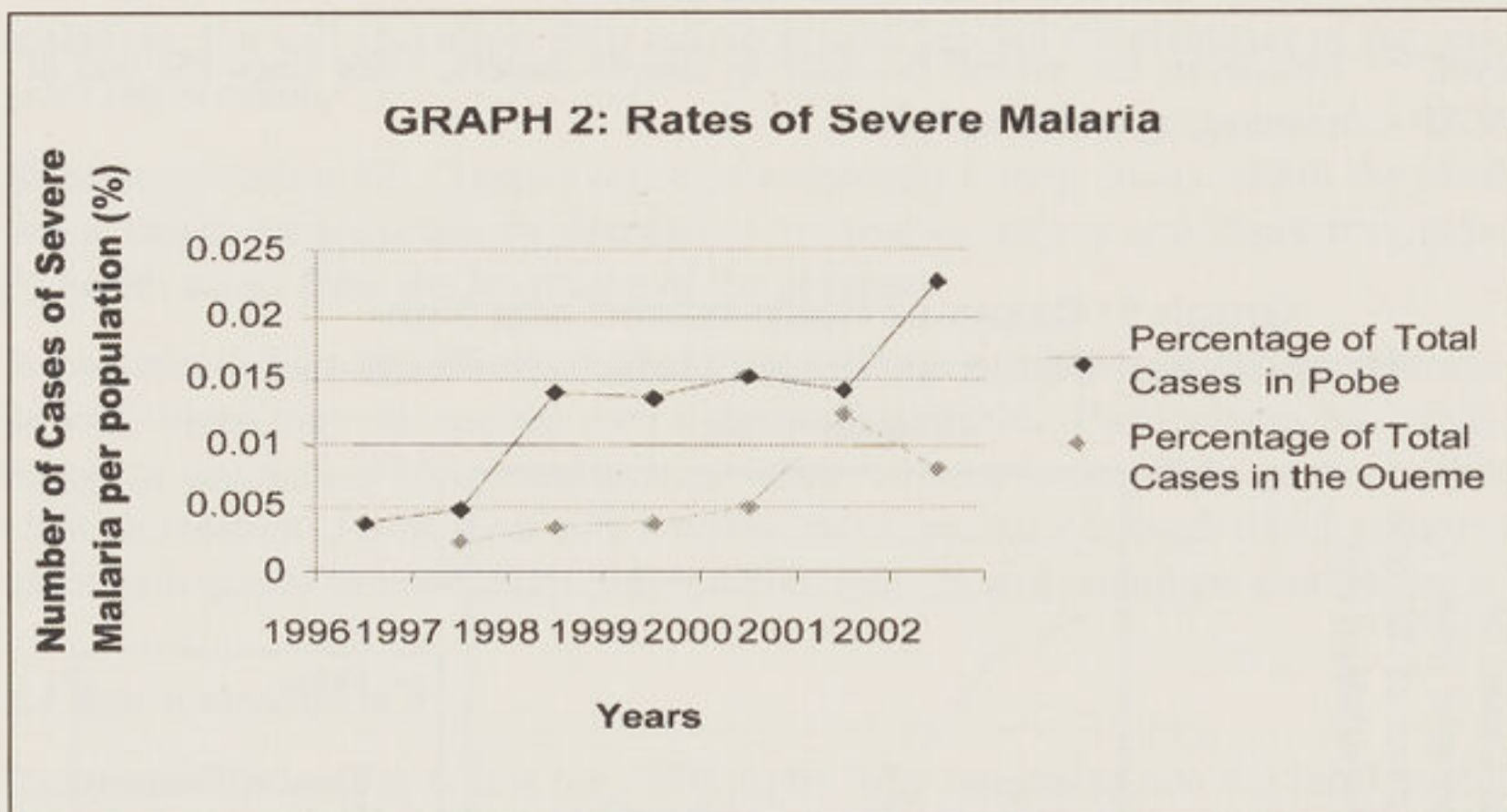
level.”²³ Moreover, the overall decrease in simple malaria rates since the end of OCSP is encouraging (see Graph 1).

Graph 1: Cases of Hospitalized and Non-Hospitalized Cases of Simple Malaria in Pobe and the Oueme



During OCSP, the data demonstrate that the percentage of cases of severe malaria was higher in the health zone of Pobè than in the Ouémé Province. The final evaluation asserts that the higher number of cases indicate an increase in the number of individuals who are seeking treatment at the hospital.²⁴ In other words, during the intervention, the CHWs and the communities themselves were more aware of the signs and symptoms of severe malaria, and, as a result, they went to seek treatment at the hospital. “Community-based agents in the program zone...increase[d] the number of serious and complicated cases referred to clinics and other health facilities.”²⁵

Even after OCSP ended, there has been an increase in cases of severe malaria treated at the hospital (see Graph 2). This could indicate an increase in the number of consultations due to the knowledge gained during the OCSP intervention and/or the construction of two new communal health centers. For cases of both simple and severe malaria, the trends found during the OCSP intervention have continued, thus health indicators have continued to improve.



4.1.2 CHW Effective in Increasing Community Knowledge

The communities in which Africare intervened have an increased awareness of the modes of transmission and methods of prevention of both malaria and HIV/AIDS.²⁶ Across all five communes, a majority of the CHWs and CDS members cite greater knowledge on the causes and treatment of malaria as a benefit of their participation in the program. One CHW mentioned that before OCSP, "My community thought malaria was caused by fetishes. Now we have the knowledge that malaria is caused by mosquitoes and this will enable us to prevent and treat malaria."

Moreover, several CHWs and their CDSs cite additional benefits to their community from improved family planning practices. Many note that during the time of OCSP, the availability of family planning products helped to decrease unwanted pregnancies and deaths from abortions. One CHW stated, "We wait for a child to be well before we have another," referring to the benefits of family planning.

As further evidence of the knowledge impact in the communities, many of the mothers are still able to recall the songs created by the communities about the benefits of family planning. During interviews, mothers would sing these songs to aid them in responding to knowledge-based questions on malaria, HIV/AIDS, and family planning. Furthermore, 91 percent of the mothers interviewed can cite the modes of transmission for malaria, and most cite using family-planning methods themselves.

4.1.3 CHWs Closest to the Health Center Are No Longer Active

Although there is a weak positive correlation (12 percent) between the CHW's activity level and distance from the health center, the evaluators found that in all five communes, the CHW who reside closest to the health centers are inactive. Three factors that could explain this phenomenon are a) construction of the new health

centers, which has led to increased frequentation, b) CHW perception that his role as CBD distributor has become obsolete, and c) education levels of the CHW.

Construction of New Health Centers: Both Igana and Issaba benefited from the construction of a new health center, complete with maternity wards and a motorcycle ambulance, after the departure of OCSP. The head nurse of Issaba stated that she has increased her revenue by more than 120 percent due to the increased frequentation by community members. Similarly, the head nurse of Igana reports that he is incredibly busy ever since the new center opened. According to the CHW of Issaba Centre, there is no reason for him to continue the work because the community uses the services of the health center instead of using his services. The CHW of Igana Centre was nowhere to be found, and, according to the community members interviewed, he has found a job in another town and "he no longer works like he used to."

CHW's Perception That His Role as CBD Distributor Has Become Obsolete: The head nurse of the health center of Issaba believes that the fact she sells the same medication as the CHW for less "might cut into the little profits that the CHW was making before." As a result of this inherent competition between the CHWs and the neighboring health center, the CHWs near the health center may be unmotivated because they can no longer earn a profit from the sale of products.

CHW Education Levels: The high level of attrition among CHWs closest to the health center can be attributed to their level of education. The data reveal that there is a low positive correlation between the CHW's level of education and his activity level (34 percent). However, the CHW of Igana and Issaba were among the few CHWs who had received some schooling. This could contribute to their ability to advance from the stature of volunteer to a paid employee. Ultimately, placing a CHW close to a health center does not make sense unless he expands his role beyond the mandates of the program.

4.1.4 From CHW to Health Extension Agent—Expanding the Role of the CHW

If CHWs were effective in OCSP, they can be useful in other MOH initiatives. Moreover, if the CHW were considered legitimate members of the public health infrastructure and were given other responsibilities beyond that of OCSP, perhaps those closest to the health centers would still be active.

Serving as a health extension agent, the CHW can be the "first responder" of the public health infrastructure. Beyond identifying and treating malaria, the CHW is also trained in a number of techniques such as *l'enveloppement humide*²⁷ for cases of high fever in children. If the CHW were trained in more first aid techniques, such as providing oral rehydration solutions for cases of diarrhea, they could help the health center care for more patients. This collaboration between the CHW and the health center therefore could lead to overall improvements in health indicators.

Additionally, in the Pobè Health Zone, there is an opportunity for a more rigorous integration of the CHW into the public health infrastructure through the Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI) framework.²⁸ Briefly, this

framework, created by the World Health Organization, was developed to use community mechanisms to reduce death, illness, and disability in children under five years old. IMCI relies on both health facilities and communities to adopt procedures and/or practices geared toward improving health outcomes. The IMCI framework could lead to further integration of the CHW into the health system. Many of the head nurses state that they are overworked with the mandates from the MOH to implement IMCI. Therefore, collaborating with CHWs to spread important health messages and to mobilize the community can reduce this burden. "CHWs of some sort are critical to the success of community IMCI [initiatives]. Implementation of IMCI requires a cadre of workers to...promote child wellness and link communities to health facilities."²⁹

In future projects, Africare should develop strategies to promote alternative uses of the CHW in collaboration with health agents and should train the CHW to assume these new and expanded roles. Africare should consider what motivates the CHW in the long-term. Once the CHW loses his or her sense of value in the community as a glorified health agent, the integrity of the community-based network falters.

4.2 Recommendation #2

Recommendation #2: Create a sense of ownership among actors within the local public health infrastructure by decreasing material incentives and implicating public health actors from the beginning of the program.

Supporting Findings:

CCU is dysfunctional and responsibilities were not given to engaged actors.

Africare's role in supervision and procurement limited sustainability.

CHWs who are supported by their CDS are on the whole more active, indicating that ownership at the community level is essential to sustainability.

Material incentives are unsustainable because they serve only to create dependency on Africare rather than create ownership over the community's health status.

4.2.1 Centralized Unit Does Not Provide Adequate Support

As stated in section 3.1, since Africare's departure, the CCU has not provided supervision, training, and procurement of the CHWs as planned. Many of the actors within the unit continue to view OCSP as an Africare project, and they do not feel ownership of the program.

At the same time that Africare developed its post-project sustainability plan, the MOH began to decentralize the health care system. Therefore, Africare had to implicate actors within the new decentralized administrative structure.

However, some of these actors are not engaged, as evidenced by their relative inaction after the departure of OCSP. The evaluators found that several of the problems relating to procurement stem in part from this inaction. Moreover, barely any supervisory visits have occurred by the zone sociologist.

Within the unit, there is one actor, GABF, who is engaged and ready to take on a more active role. However, at the end of the program, GABF was not well incorporated into the CCU. While they were implicated as a member of the unit, they were not assigned major responsibilities.

It is the opinion of the evaluators that OCSP could have been more sustainable had program staff sought to transfer technical and material resources to GABF. Instead Africare transferred these resources to the zone hospital, which has led to their inefficient use.³⁰

Use of community assets is essential to long-term sustainability. An assets-based approach to development is based on the skills and abilities of people and communities rather than their needs. Moreover,

An assets-based approach recognizes that knowledge about the skills of local residents; the power of local associations; the resources of public, private and non-profit institutions; and the physical and economic resources present in a community are vital to any effort to make and carry out a plan for change.³¹

One such local institution is GABF. GABF has a proven track record within the Pobè Health Zone. To date, they have incorporated 16 of OCSP's CHWs into their network of community motivators and trained them in nutrition and the preparation of a soy-based meal for young children. These community motivators have also been given a stock of soy-powder packets, which they can sell for profit.

While Africare did attempt to incorporate an assets-based approach through collaboration with the local kings and/or village chiefs and local organizations, project staff stopped short of transferring program responsibilities and necessary technical assistance to engaged actors (see Appendix M). Implicating these actors who are already engaged in the community contributes to the long-term objective of improved health. These actors could include either the local nurse who is well-integrated in the community or other indigenous NGOs. The actors should have proven track records and a commitment to work for improved health. Such an approach is more sustainable because the motivation to serve one's community does not arise only when a new project is being introduced.

4.2.2 Africare's Role in Supervision and Procurement Limited the Sustainability of OCSP

During OCSP, Africare focused primarily on the needs of the community. Since the communities needed drugs, Africare's strategy was to provide them directly to the communities. A focus on community assets could have ensured that actors within the public health infrastructure be implicated in procurement and supervision activities from the beginning of the program.

During OCSP, the head nurses and COGEC were not actively involved in the procurement and supervision of the CHW. Rather, Africare, through their health development agents, was primarily responsible for supervising the CHW and facilitating procurement. As OCSP ended, procurement was transferred to the public health infrastructure. Therefore, the CHWs, CDSs, COGECs, and head nurses have

had to become accustomed to a new system of procurement, in which they rely on one another, instead of on Africare.

The procurement system requires that the presidents of COGEC and the CDS collective³² and the head nurse be present for an order to be filled. In three of the five communes—Towé, Pobè, and Ahoyéyé—the CDSs and CHWs complained that the president of the COGEC and/or CDS collective are usually unavailable to refill orders. These difficulties are compounded by the lack of ownership felt by the head nurses in three of the five communes.

In the sustainability plan of OCSP, the head nurse plays a key role in both supervision and procurement. There is a moderate positive correlation (58 percent) between the activity level of the CHW and the supervision from the head nurse.

In contrast to the head nurses in Ahoyéyé, Pobè, and Towé, those in Issaba and Igana appear to have taken ownership over the community-based network. Not only are they actively engaged in supervisory activities relating to the CHW, but they have also taken the initiative to ensure regular procurement of their CHWs. Both are frequently in contact with the CHWs for other activities such as cleaning the health center and vaccination days. They know which communities are having problems, and they have actively tried to solve some of these problems. Moreover, because the head nurse of Igana has resided in this community for 14 years, he is well known and respected in the eyes of fellow community members. His level of engagement is to be commended as he states that he will “never leave Igana.”

Box 8. Good Relationships Between the Head Nurse and the CHW Essential for Sustainability

“I will never leave Igana. I started the health center here. Even if they ask me to go to another health center I will refuse.”

—Head nurse, Igana

In Benin, the head nurses are often transferred to regions of the country that are far from their own town. As such, it is difficult for the nurses to be well integrated into the communities they serve. In many cases the head nurses feel no connection to these communities, and they hope for the day when they are transferred to a larger city or region with which they are more familiar. The head nurse of Igana is an exception to this phenomenon. Fourteen years ago he was transferred to Igana, and since then he has made every effort to become a part of the community. He has learned the local language and has earned the trust of community members.

The head nurse of Igana is a problem-solver. Aware that there are often delays with the procurement orders left at the zone hospital, he is the only head nurse who circumvents the system by ordering directly from CAME. As a result, he makes sure that he has products available to the CHW.

Since he is so well integrated into the community, he is often pulled in many directions. Many of the CHWs and CDSs agree that he often does not have time to supervise their activities, but they also agree that he makes an effort to be available and to be of help to the community. The strong collaboration between the CHWs and the head nurse has helped to make the commune of Igana the most sustainable.

Although the head nurses of Igana and Issaba feel a higher degree of ownership, they share the sentiments of the other three nurses. The head nurses in each of the five communes view supervision of the CHWs as an added responsibility, one for which they do not receive additional compensation. Interviews with head nurses and other actors reveal:

1. Head nurses are overworked with the implementation of the IMCI framework, and they do not have time to take on procurement and supervisory duties.
2. Certain head nurses only use the CHW to the extent that it is mandated by the MOH for community mobilization.

Early integration of the head nurse into the program would permit him to assume program responsibilities as part of his normal routine.³³ In other words, supervision and procurement would not be viewed as additional responsibilities, but rather part of their normal duties.³⁴

4.2.3 Communities Where CDS Support Is High, CHW Activity Levels Are High

The evaluators found that there is a high positive correlation (84 percent) with CDS support and the CHW's level of activity. The role of the CDS is crucial to community-based distribution: they regulate problems, refer the community to the CHW, and facilitate procurement. In communities where the CDS is fulfilling its role, the evaluators witnessed a sense of ownership over the community's health outcomes. In the communities where the CDS is not fulfilling its role, ownership over the community's health outcomes is absent.

Interviews reveal that CHWs who are most active have a positive working relationship with their CDS. High levels of CDS support are demonstrated by regular meetings with the CHW and, in some cases, the opening of accounts at the local credit agency. One village in which the CHW has high activity levels, the CHW stated, "Every month I meet with my CDS and give them a report of my activities." He continued by stating, "To order my products, I meet with the CDS, and they calculate my profits and fill out the order, which I then take to the head nurse." Taking initiative on the part of these committees is an important factor in creating long-term sustainability. Those with good collaboration understand that the health of the community relies on their engagement.

Box 9: Good Collaboration between the CDS and CHW Positively Impacts Activity Levels

"It is my community that designated me to do this work. Even if I don't earn any money from it, it makes me happy to contribute to the health of my community,"

- CHW of Illèmon.

The CHW of Illèmon has the support of his CDS. His relationship with the CDS demonstrates a team effort. As a member of his CDS said, "The CHW cannot do it by himself, the [CDS] and the CHW are necessary to work together." Moreover, the members of his CDS stress that if the CDS continues to do the work everyone in the community benefits. The CDS is engaged with the work of the CHW, exclaiming, "If the CHW continues his work, [the CDS] has an advantage because we can participate in the solving the problems of our community."

In most villages the drugs are stored with the CHW, but in Illèmon, the drugs are stored at the house of a CDS member. The CHW sells a certain quantity of drugs, and then reports back to the CDS. The fact that the CHW has to report back to the CDS more frequently serves as an additional check and balance on the system of community-based distribution in his community.

Illèmon was also one of seven communities whose CDS has opened an account at the local micro-credit agency, CLCAM. The purpose of these accounts is to contribute to development projects in their respective communities. Although the village has yet to save enough money to initiate a project, if the CHW continues to sell products, eventually this will be possible.

While there are many examples of good collaboration between the CHW and CDS, there are also examples where CHWs cite lack of collaboration as the reason why they stopped working. In a Pobè neighborhood, one CHW has stopped working citing major communication problems with her CDS, "I have not continued my activities since the depart of Africare." She also stated, "A woman in my CDS used to sell the products as well. When I started selling the products and people started coming to me this caused some jealousy and she came to my house and insulted me... The President of the CDS refused to sign my orders. For the past eight months I have not had any products, none at all." This lack of engagement and willingness to put the health of the community at risk for personal problems has jeopardized the long-term sustainability of this project in certain villages.

Although it is difficult to determine what creates ownership in some villages and not in others, the interviews enable the evaluation team to propose two possibilities: *Social Capital*: It is possible that good working relationships existed between the community health worker and members of his supervising committee before the project began. In such cases, family relationships, or participation in other community groups help forge feelings of trust, which facilitates strong working relationships.

Leadership: The CDS members or CHWs could have been highly motivated and understand how to mobilize their communities. This leadership involves understanding the goal of the program and letting others in the community share in the achievement of those goals.

4.2.4 Material Incentives are Unsustainable

Material incentives replace the desire to work for improved health outcomes as the central motivation for participation in the project. During OCSP, the CHWs and CDSs frequently received per diem for attending trainings. As a result of this financial motivation, members of the communities in which the CHWs work view them as "employees" of Africare. This sentiment is evoked most clearly in the commune of Ahoyéyé, where one CHW commented: "Whenever I go out with my medicine sack, the villagers taunt me by saying 'you have already eaten for the day, now you can work.'"

Another CHW of Ahoyéyé also feels this antagonism. The CHW reveals that whenever she is called away for meetings, certain members of her community believe that she receives a salary from Africare. The CHW believes that this misperception has led to mistrust in the community of her motivation to serve as a volunteer.

In addition to financial motivation for the CHWs, Africare also disseminated t-shirts and other material goods as incentives for participating in program activities.

Financial/material incentives used during the program could be partly blamed for the current inactivity of certain CHWs and CDS members. Material incentives provided by Africare reinforced the idea that this program belongs to Africare, thus making it more difficult for community actors to feel ownership of the program.

During the interviews, CDS members stated that they no longer received neither financial nor material motivation to continue their work. One CDS member of a neighborhood in Pobè commented that he is no longer motivated because Africare is no longer present. Others stated that they no longer have the desire to be a part of the program because they did not get anything from their participation. One CHW commented that the little profits he makes from the sale of products is often a cause for jealousy among CDS members.

Additionally, a common sentiment among inactive CDSs and CHWs was a desire for Africare to return to help them overcome some of their difficulties. When asked why the CDSs have failed to hold meetings with their CHW, one CDS member stated, "Now that you (the evaluators) are here, we will call a meeting...It is good to see that Africare did not forget us." Several other CDS members echoed this sentiment. The desire for material incentives has led to a breakdown in the relationships between certain committees and their CHWs.

As a result of these findings, the evaluators believe that material incentives should be discontinued. One way to realistically achieve this is to work within existing community structures such as women's groups who fabricate soy, for example. These groups are known in the community and are stable. This is important because one of the community's criticisms of the CHWs who are no longer active is that they are unavailable even when members in the community want to purchase products. Finally, these groups would already be involved in some form of income-generating activity, which would not be threatened even after the program has ended. Africare has used this strategy in its other national malaria program, ProLIPO. Such a strategy limits the need for additional incentives for the CHW. Since the women's and/or other social groups are established and their activities are already centered on an income-generating activity, the probability of attrition is greatly reduced.

4.3 Recommendation #3

Recommendation 3: Ensure that community actors understand the mechanisms through which they can reclaim their rights to good health. This includes full explanation of problem solving mechanisms when Africare is no longer present. This recommendation is consistent with a rights-based approach in which communities gain access to institutions, information, redress and complaint mechanisms.

Supported Findings:

- CHWs/CDSs who have problems relating to procurement feel they have no recourse in solving these problems;
- The President of COGES believes that he is not authorized to call a meeting without the approval of the head doctor of the Zone Hospital; and
- The communities have not mobilized against medicine hawkers.

4.3.1 Rights-Based Approach to Improved Access to Drugs

According to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR), "rights-based approaches give due attention to issues of accessibility, including access to development processes, institutions, information and redress or complaint mechanisms."³⁵

In the case of OCSP, a rights-based approach ensures that the actors in the public health infrastructure are held accountable to the communities they serve. Moreover, a rights-based approach would also give communities the dignity of living a life in good health. Communities that are unaware of their right to hold public health officials accountable for their inaction, risk poor health outcomes.

For example, if a community does not have access to drugs for a prolonged period of time, and a public health official fails to intervene to solve this problem, then health outcomes could be negatively affected.

Moreover, if a community does not feel that they have the redress to solve this problem, the entire community-based distribution system is jeopardized. A rights-based approach to a project like OCSP, therefore, would ensure communities and individuals the right to access drugs when needed, and hold public health officials responsible for their inaction.

4.3.2 Perceived Inability to Solve Procurement Problems

There was a strong positive correlation (69%) between CHW activity levels and procurement difficulties. Many of the CHWs who were not active cited the lack of products as a driving force behind their decreased activity level. CHWs in all communes reported stockouts in family planning products and insecticide-treated mosquito nets (ITNs). One reason for the stockout of family planning products is the ten-fold increase in the retail price of certain products sold during OCSP.³⁶ Inability to purchase these products, according to certain CDS members, has led to an increase in close births. The CHWs in all communes state that the demand remains in the communities for family planning products, but because they are so

expensive, the communities cannot afford them. Though ABPF claims that they are working to reduce the price of the products, no progress has been made.

There is also a high demand for ITNs. The CHWs in all communes report that they have been out of ITNs for some time. The evaluators discussed this matter with the CCU who is currently working to resolve this matter with Population Services International.³⁷

The communities appear to have accepted the fact that they can no longer afford the family planning products and that ITNs are unavailable. Moreover, they seem to be unaware of the steps they can take to address Zone-wide procurement problems.

In addition to Zone-wide problems with family planning products and ITNs, additional procurement problems can be isolated by commune. In Ahoyéyé, 75% of the CHWs comment that they had problems with procurement. The CHWs have been without family planning and malaria medication for four months. While the communal health center has replenished its stock, the head nurse has taken no active steps to ensure timely procurement of the CHWs. An interview with the President of COGEC, responsible for ordering medication, reveals that he is quite aware of the fact that the CHWs are without products, but he feels as though there is nothing he can do. The head nurse, however, blames the lack of products on the CHW's motivation. The community members contradict her story. As one CDS member emphatically asked, "Where are our drugs?"

Another CDS member in Ahoyéyé stated, "The CHW cannot do the work because he only has chloroquine and he does not have paracetamol."³⁸ He cannot distribute one without the other, and as a result his activity level has dropped.

Towé is another example, where persistent stockout of medication has led to a decrease in activity levels.

In Towé, all of the CHWs reported persistent stockout of all medication, including chloroquine. When interviewed, the head nurse stated he had placed the order for more chloroquine in July. Six months later, he had yet to receive any of the products. The head nurse blames the stockout on the head nurse of the Zone Hospital who was gone for training for six months and "there was no one to replace him and fill my order."³⁹ In defense of the head nurse of Towé, the President of COGEC in Pobè admits that he failed to take two of Towé's orders during his last trip to CAME.

Although the COGEC President neglected his order, the head nurse has not been proactive in solving the procurement problem. Reports from the CHWs indicate that the head nurse himself is often unavailable and unwilling to help them solve this problem. "I have no chloroquine. [When my community members] are sick they do not want to buy the aspirin without the chloroquine. I have come to the health center three times... When Africare was here we were fully stocked. The head nurse has not helped us," said one CHW from Towé.

The fact that the commune of Towé has been without malaria medication could have led to an increase in malaria rates, especially during the rainy season.

In addition to head nurses who are not proactive, COGES, the body designated to solve problems regarding procurement, no longer functions. COGES has failed to hold a meeting since the end of the OCSP. As a result, they have not played a vital role in resolving procurement problems. Interviews with the President of COGES, who is also the President of COGEC in Pobè, reveal that he is afraid to call meet-

ings of this body because he does not want to give the head doctor of the Zone Hospital the impression that he is overstepping his authority.⁴⁰

In contrast to the CHWs of Ahoyéyé and Towé, the CHWs of both Igana and Issaba do not report such difficulties with procurement. In Issaba, the CHWs and the head nurse meet frequently. The head nurse seems very aware of the problems existing in some of the communities. In Igana, the head nurse has taken the initiative to order products directly from CAME instead of going through the Zone Hospital, which can cause delays.

4.3.3 Incorporating a Rights-Based Approach

Africare should incorporate in their training modules information concerning complaint and redress mechanisms especially as it relates to procurement. Throughout the Pobè Health Zone, the communities did not have the knowledge necessary to hold the agents within the public health structure accountable for their inaction. These mechanisms were not made clear to community-level actors.

Broken linkages across levels not only have the potential to overturn the community dynamic created at the end of OCSP, but could potentially lead to worse health outcomes.

There are certain cultural limitations to this approach. For example, because of the hierarchical nature of the society, many village farmers do not feel comfortable approaching public health officials about their inaction. However, by incorporating this approach, communities will better understand how to address problems that arise after the project ends.

4.3.4 Lack of Community Mobilization Against the Black Market for Drugs

If problems with procurement persist, more individuals will turn to the Black market for drugs. While the evaluators found a low negative correlation (27%) between competition faced by the CHW from medicine hawkers and market women, in both Ahoyéyé and Pobè, the CHWs have alluded to this as an increasing difficulty. Seventy-five percent of the CHWs in Ahoyéyé and 100% in Pobè cite external competition as a problem. One CHW stated, "My only real difficulty is medicine hawkers [who come from] across the border." In Pobè, the evaluators found that malaria medication is being sold in the market by local vendors—indicating that the population has easy access to the same products sold by the CHWs. The main issue cited here is that the hawkers usually give their medication on credit, whereas the CHW is unable to do so. The increasing use of medicine hawkers by community members could have adverse effects on the health of the community. The medicine hawkers have neither been trained to diagnose symptoms of simple versus severe malaria nor can one assume that they can prescribe the correct dosage.⁴¹ Without sufficient community participation and willingness to control the source of their medications, project achievements can become undone.

5. CONCLUSION

For many reasons OCSP was a successful intervention. Within the Pobè Health Zone, OCSP improved the communities' health outcomes and increased the communities' knowledge of HIV/AIDS, malaria and family planning. Moreover, OCSP worked with the MOH to allow community-based distribution of malaria medication. However, despite these successes, the essential components of OCSP—the continued engagement of the CHW and the public health infrastructure—have not been sustained. The broken linkages between the community and the public health infrastructure jeopardize OCSP's achievements. Although there is evidence that 13 months after OCSP, there are improved health indicators, procurement difficulties threaten the very fiber of the community-based network.

This, the evaluators believe, could lead to worse health outcomes in the future. As a result, when implementing programs, Africare should consider integrating CHWs into the local public health infrastructure, creating more ownership among community actors, and making communities aware of mechanisms through which they can reclaim their rights to good health.

Most sustainability studies are conducted two years after a project has ended⁴²; however, this evaluation was conducted only 13 months after OCSP. Even so, in less than two years, the dynamic created by Africare at the community level has begun to disintegrate. This is largely due to the disengaged actors at the centralized level and the systemic procurement problems. Failure at the centralized level to solve persistent procurement problems and at the communal level to hold these actors responsible for their inaction has led to increased attrition rates of the CHWs and the future possibility of poorer health outcomes. Actors at the centralized and decentralized level should be in constant communication with one another to resolve these problems. In addition, communities must understand that they have the ability to hold actors at the central level accountable.

In the final analysis, the evaluators recommend that Africare not only consider the political conditions under which community self-help initiatives are implemented, but also make a concerted effort to transfer post-project responsibilities early in the project timeline. To truly reduce childhood morbidity and mortality and to improve the health of women of reproductive age, development programs need to be sustainable: decreased reliance on external organizations should be the goal.

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- 1 West.
- 2 Sarriot, "Sustaining Child Survival," 34.
- 3 USAID Benin, "Saving Children's Lives in the Ouémé."
- 4 Bhattacharya et al., 2.
- 5 IEC training consisted not only of information on family planning, HIV/AIDS, and malaria, but also how to deliver these messages to the community effectively.
- 6 Africare, "Detailed Implementation Plan, Ouémé Child Survival Project," 6.
- 7 USAID Benin, "Community Experience Leads to National Policy Change."
- 8 The communal public health infrastructure includes the CHW, village supervising committee, COGEC, and the head nurse.
- 9 A stockout is when the drug is unavailable; the stock has been emptied.
- 10 There have been many articles written on sustainability, which give different definitions. It is from these definitions that the evaluation team created its own definition. Articles which helped shape this definition include: West, para. 3; Sarriot, "Sustaining Child Survival," 34; Africare, "Detailed Implementation Plan, Ouémé Child Survival Project."
- 11 Essama, 12 -33.
- 12 Since the final evaluation did not include a list of CHWs who were active, questions to CHWs were designed only to assess current activity levels.
- 13 Bhattacharya et al., 19.
- 14 Bhattacharya et al., 12.
- 15 Bhattacharya et al., 12.
- 16 Heggenhougen et al., 90.
- 17 USAID Benin, "Community Experience Leads to National Policy Change."
- 18 Sarriot, "The Child Survival Sustainability Assessment," 13.
- 19 Malaria rates were used to analyze program outputs. A formal survey was not distributed throughout the Pobè Health Zone to determine changes in knowledge. Ultimately, knowledge gained was assessed through qualitative data obtained informally from interviews with mothers and CDS members. However, the sample size was not large enough to assess changes in knowledge from the midterm and final evaluations.
- 20 The four factors cited here are highly correlated with CHW activity levels. The other factors mentioned above (education level, number of additional trainings received, and distance) are not highly correlated with activity levels although there is some evidence that they do play a role. Community support was highly correlated but through our interviews seemed less of a factor than CDS support and procurement.
- xxi Bivariate analyses were run to determine the correlation between the variables and the CHW's activity level. Chi-squared tests were conducted to confirm the exact relationship between the variables.
- xxii Since Pobè is located within the Ouémé Province, the evaluators compared the malaria rates for the Pobè Health Zone to the malaria rates of the Ouémé province rather than national rates on the assumption that rates within the Ouémé are more sim-

ilar to those in Pobè. OCSP was the only intervention in the Ouémé province from 1997-2001.

²³ Essama, 9.

²⁴ Essama, 12-33.

²⁵ USAID Benin, "Community Experience Leads to National Policy Change."

²⁶ This was evidenced in both the midterm and final evaluations of OCSP, which showed increased knowledge among the community members, and increased frequentation of health centers and CHWs to treat simple malaria.

²⁷ L'enveloppement humide is a technique in which a child is wrapped in a cold compress to reduce fever.

²⁸ WHO, "Integrated Management of Childhood Illness."

²⁹ Bhattacharya et al, 5.

³⁰ The evaluators found that the materials transferred to the zone hospital have not been used for hospital administration as intended by Africare.

³¹ CEHRC.

³² The CDS collective is made up of presidents of the village CDSs. There is one collective per commune whose purpose is to share experiences and problem-solve. Throughout the communes, the evaluators found that all five collectives had not met for a year.

³³ Incorporating program activities into the head nurse's job description can prove difficult because of the lack of additional financial incentives. The evaluators recognize this as a difficulty that can only be resolved with the overall economic development in Benin. This further supports, then, the asset-based approach to such projects. There are community actors who are engaged and would do this work; identifying them is the key challenge.

³⁴ Africare has already begun to take the steps necessary to implement the state health agents in its programs. In the proposal for the Mono Child Survival Program, the DDSP—Mono will be the main implementing partner. The DDSP will "be the main link between the program and other structures of the Department to ensure local ownership of the program." Additionally, from the beginning, the proposed program activities will be a part of their yearly calendar (Africare, "Mono Child Survival Program Proposal," 11.)

³⁵ United Nations Office for the High Commissioner of Human Rights, see "Participation," para 2.

³⁶ Prices for family planning products such as Koromex (contraceptive foam/spermicide) and Delfen (spermicide) had increased to the point that the community can no longer afford them. Whereas Delfen was sold at 200fcfa during the time of OCSP, it is now at 2,000fcfa. Koromex, which was sold at 200fcfa, is now sold at 1,700fcfa.

³⁷ PSI markets condoms and ITNs in Benin. They were a key partner of OCSP during the years of the program intervention.

³⁸ CHWs were trained to distribute chloroquine and paracetamol and/or aspirin but never chloroquine by itself.

³⁹ The evaluation later found that there was a replacement but that he was never introduced formally to the concerned communities.

⁴⁰ At the district level, it was said that the head doctor of the zone hospital would be responsible for calling the meetings of all actors of the decentralized system. However, this has not occurred since the second quarter after the departure of Africare.

⁴¹ USAID Benin, "Community Experience Leads to National Policy Change."

⁴² Conversation with Professor Thomas Bossert, expert on sustainability, Harvard University, School of Public Health, 21 November 2002.

CASE STUDY ON THE ROLE AND RELEVANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS LANGUAGE IN COMBATING FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION IN EGYPT

*Qiana Bradford and Kimberly McClure**

ABSTRACT

The Egyptian Demographic Health Survey of 2000 reveals that 97 percent of ever-married women between the ages of 15 and 49 have undergone some form of female genital mutilation (FGM). Since 1994, Egyptian activists have tried several approaches to eradicate the practice. Today, in 2003, activists and scholars continue to debate whether it is useful and culturally appropriate to frame FGM as a violation of human rights. While the international community heavily endorses the incorporation of a human rights angle into these campaigns, the use of human rights language is politically sensitive in Egyptian society, where the human rights framework is often criticized as a Western concept that would seek to compromise the integrity of Egyptian values. This research explores the effective and appropriate level of the human rights language that should be used when formulating FGM-eradication programs. It further investigates whether such an approach is either culturally insensitive or impractical, given villagers' level of education and understanding of rights language. Our research was conducted primarily through interviews, with emphasis on a case study on the residents of the village of Abu Hashem, who were exposed to anti-FGM programs implemented by the Coptic Organization for Services and Training (COST). Our analysis revealed that despite the beginnings of societal change, fear of social stigmatization through breaking a highly valued cultural norm is the primary impediment to villagers deciding against the practice. Moreover, most residents in our population sample were universally able to show an understanding of the concepts of "rights" and "human rights" and frequently linked the concept with that of "duties." In many instances, they asserted that the fulfillment of duties is a prerequisite for the recognition of rights. Finally,

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the villagers acknowledged that female circumcision does constitute a violation to girls' rights, as it is done without the girls' permission; however, they felt strongly that this right was trumped by parents' rights to make decisions regarding their children's welfare combined with parents' duty to protect their daughters' chastity and the family's honor. Thus, we conclude that a human rights framework for FGM-eradication programs is relevant to use, but not a significant factor to create change. Our research was funded by Harvard University's Carr Center for Human Rights Policy.

INTRODUCTION

Born and raised in the village of Abu Hashem, Farha (19), is the oldest in a family of 14 children. At a young age, Farha and her three sisters joined a silent sorority with the other women in her village, who have all endured the painful experience of female circumcision. Despite painful memories of what is commonly referred to as that "dark day" throughout countless generations, women in Abu Hashem have grown up to decide their daughters, too, must be circumcised. Unlike other women in her village, however, Farha today looks lovingly into the eyes of her three-month-old daughter with the firm conviction that she will not endure this brutal reality. Farha has made the conscious and potentially costly decision not to circumcise her child. Farha's move is an act of consciousness as well as a leap of faith. While seeking to protect her daughter, Farha knowingly puts herself and her entire family at risk of being socially ostracized. She also puts her daughter at risk of being deemed unclean and unacceptable for marriage, potentially denying her the chance to fulfill every woman's calling in her village: to be mother and wife. Despite these risks, Farha remains hopeful that her daughter's generation will be the first to witness the reversal of a societal norm that dates so far back that its roots are untraceable.

Farha's heroism does not end with this decision; her stance against circumcision was just the first in a series of norms she dared to break. She started with the women in her own family and, one by one, convinced them to stand against the practice as well. After learning about the practice's negative consequences from the Coptic Organization for Services and Training (COST), Farha broke the code of silence surrounding the issue by boldly challenging peers and, more surprisingly, elders to discontinue it as well. The reaction? She was told, "Girls your age should not know of such things, much less speak of them!" Her frequent trips outside the village to work with COST staff also raised many eyebrows and brought on disapproving stares from neighbors who did not condone young women traveling outside the village alone. Among other forms of mockery and taunting, she was admonished as a "girl doing a man's job," and neighbors warned her parents that the family's honor would be ruined. Yet Farha persisted. In the cornfields, at the water wells, she talked. She spoke of women's damaged genitalia and married couples' dismal sexual relations, linking both to the painful practice of female circumcision.

Despite their initial disdain, neighbors slowly but surely grew accustomed to Farha and her unusual ways. Farha's mentor and COST field worker, Naama, noted that within two years other young girls in the village began to approach her exclaim-

ing, "I want to be like Farha!" Unwittingly, Farha had transformed from a troublemaker into a role model.

Even so, her hard-earned credibility was almost dramatically shaken one day as the barber, who passes through her village at the end of each month to circumcise girls, made a fateful stop at the home of Farha's family. Neighbors were immediately outraged. They felt betrayed by Farha's blasphemy of the village's long-standing tradition and her attempts to convince neighbors to put their own daughters at risk, when members of her own family were still apparently upholding the tradition. As news of the barber's arrival at her home reached Farha, she too was shocked. She rushed home to discover that a visiting uncle had arranged for the barber to stop by her home and circumcise his daughter, Farha's cousin. As if Farha had not already crossed several impenetrable lines, she then did the unthinkable. After warning her cousin to run into the woods surrounding the village, Farha—still a young, unmarried woman—publicly confronted the barber, screaming at the elder and threatening to report him to the Ministry of Health for conducting the illegal procedure. The ruckus caused quite a stir in the village, and upon returning home from his day's work to hear the news, Farha's uncle was infuriated. He first resolved to put Farha in her place, chastising her heavily for speaking to the barber as she had. He also went after the barber, who had left the home humiliated after being publicly admonished by a young girl. Upon his return however, another unlikely event transpired: Farha's father stood up to his older brother in Farha's defense. That day Farha's cousin was spared the pain of circumcision. Farha's story, however, is not just one of an individual taking a private stance against an issue, but also is one that illustrates the deep social impact that such a decision has on one's entire family and community in Egyptian village culture. This understanding is key to grasping the challenges and triumphs of efforts to end FGM in Egypt.

While FGM is practiced in both African and Arab societies, its prevalence in Egyptian society is unusually high. The 2000 Egyptian Demographic Health Survey reveals that 97 percent of ever-married women between the ages of 15 and 49 have undergone some form of the procedure. Since 1994, Egyptian activists have been working in tandem with several international organizations to eradicate the practice. They have tried many different approaches and have experienced varying degrees of success.

Today, activists and scholars continue to debate whether it is useful and culturally appropriate to frame the issue as a violation of human rights. While the international community, including several financiers of the anti-FGM campaign, heavily endorse the incorporation of a human rights angle into the movement, it is a very sensitive approach to embrace in Egyptian society and political spheres. Timing is everything in a political environment in which the Egyptian government is struggling to define its stance on human rights. On the one hand, the government is skeptical of human rights activists, as evidenced by the multiple trials and convictions of human rights activist, Saad Eddin Ibrahim.¹ On the other hand, it is working to improve its track record in human rights, as evidenced by the two breakthroughs in 2003: 1) the appointment of the first female judge to the Egyptian equivalent of the supreme court, and 2) the decision of President Hosni Mubarak to recognize Christmas as a national holiday, a significant move in this country where

Muslims make up a 90 percent majority and the state operates under Shar'ia (Islamic) law.

In the middle of Egypt's struggle lies the issue of female genital mutilation. As international and local Egyptian activists alike fight to eradicate the practice, one distinction must be kept in mind: unlike most human rights issues which stem from a desire to *hurt the victim* or from simple *negligence to consider the victim's welfare*, female genital mutilation is performed and authorized by those who truly believe they have the victim's *best interests at heart*. Its biggest advocates are often former victims themselves. This distinction has significant implications for activists as they struggle with the fundamental questions of agency, consent, and collective action in addressing this age-old practice.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The international community and the Egyptian government have framed FGM as a violation of the UN Rights of the Girl Child, defined as follows:

All children share the right to survival, health, and education; to a caring family environment, play and culture; to protection from exploitation and abuse of all kinds; and to have their voices and opinions heard.²

At the village level, however, it may not be effective to frame FGM as a "rights" issue. Associating efforts to end the practice with human rights language may prompt more Egyptians to denounce the practice by raising the level of consciousness about women's and girls' rights. Alternatively, because the concept of human rights is often criticized as a framework for cultural imperialism by the West, use of this frame may work (as it has done in the past) to discredit the anti-FGM campaign as a Western-based conspiracy to undermine the Egyptian family and Egyptian cultural values. We will explore this question as well as whether the language of human rights is too complex and academic to be understood by Egyptians at the village level, where education and literacy rates are low. Thus, we seek to understand whether human rights can be incorporated into a framework that is both culturally sensitive and effective at the village level.

The controversy surrounding FGM in Egyptian society even complicates selection of the proper term to describe the practice, and one's choice of words often indicates one's stance on the issue. On one side of the debate, activists who oppose the practice use the term "female genital mutilation" (FGM) in an effort to underscore the brutal nature of the practice. They maintain that circumcision is *not* a simple medical procedure because it is not based on a sound medical diagnosis of the operation's necessity. Holding to the literal definition of the word, these activists assert that female circumcision is a form of mutilation, defined as follows: "to deprive of an essential part; to disfigure by damaging irreparably."³ On the other side, another group of activists, who also do not support the practice, believe strongly that the term FGM is culturally insensitive, as it implies that women who have

undergone the procedure are somehow imperfect, or not fully women, because part of their genitalia has been removed. Believing that such terminology only works to alienate women who would otherwise be persuaded to stop the practice, these activists prefer to use the term "female genital cutting" (FGC). Supporters of the practice most commonly refer to it as "female circumcision" (*khittan* or *khittan al-banat* in Arabic). Throughout this document, we will use the term FGM, as it is the term of choice for the Egyptian government and Egyptian NGOs working to end the practice while investigating the efficacy of framing the issue in these terms.

BACKGROUND⁴

1.1 Basic Facts on FGM in Egypt

Results from the 1995 and 2000 Egypt Demographic and Health Survey (EDHS) confirm that the practice of FGM is virtually universal among married women of reproductive age in Egypt. The procedure is usually done by either doctors or trained midwives (61 percent), but also by untrained midwives (32 percent), barbers⁵ (4 percent), or gypsies⁶ (3 percent). The practice is typically performed on young girls before they reach the onset of menses (ages 6-12) and is often done in the home. Before the 1996 ban (see "legal status" below), some procedures were done in private or government hospitals. It is likely that some physicians continue to carry out the procedure in their private clinics as well as in private homes. Among older women, the procedure was generally performed without any anesthetic. However, the same women reported that almost 75 percent of their daughters who were circumcised received either a general or local anesthetic. When a non-physician performs the procedure, the local anesthetic may or may not be applied effectively.

1.2 Types of FGM

A recent clinical study indicated that 19 percent of the operations in Egypt involved the excision (removal) of the prepuce (clitoral hood) with or without removal of a part or all of the clitoris (Type I). Sixty-four percent involved the excision of the prepuce and clitoris together with part or all of the labia minora (inner vaginal lips) (Type II). In 8 percent of the cases, only the labia minora were removed. Type III circumcision is the most harmful and dangerous form. It is rarely practiced except among a few groups in the southern part of Egypt. Type III involves the excision of part or all of the external genitalia (clitoris, labia minora and labia majora) and stitching or narrowing of the vaginal opening. Only a very small opening is left, about the diameter of a matchstick, to allow for the flow of urine and menstrual blood. Only 1 percent of the women in the study reported that the vaginal area was sewn closed at the time they had the procedure, and 2 percent of their daughters' operations involved a closing of the vaginal area. This most severe form of FGM is more widely practiced in parts of Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia,

and Eritrea, and it is unknown why Egyptians tend to be more conservative in performing the procedure.

1.3 Social, Political, and Legal Environment

The legislative background has evolved with the practice. In 1959, a ministerial decree forbade the practice and made it punishable by fine and imprisonment. A series of later ministerial decrees allowed certain types of FGM but prohibited others. Doctors were prohibited from performing the procedure in government health facilities. Non-medical practitioners were forbidden from practicing FGM in any form.

In 1994, due to public outcry over a CNN television broadcast of the procedure performed on a nine-year-old girl by a barber, the then-minister of health, Ali Abdel Fattah, decreed that the procedure may be performed one day per week in government facilities, but only by trained medical personnel, and permitted hospitals in Egypt to perform the operation for a fee of LE10 (approximately US\$2). Before performing the procedure, the doctor was required to attempt at persuading the parents against FGM by listing health risks associated with the practice. The 1994 directive was rescinded in 1995, however, after various protests and international outcry deploring the "medicalization" of the practice. Once again the practice of FGM in public facilities was forbidden, and a new directive was issued instructing general and district hospitals not to perform FGM and stated that the role of medical personnel be limited to providing counseling and guidance to limit the practice.

In July 1996, a new minister of health, Ismail Sallam, came into office and instituted a decree prohibiting all medical and non-medical practitioners from performing FGM in either public or private facilities, except for medical reasons certified by the head of a hospital's obstetric department. The Egyptian Ministry of Health and Population indicated that there are no instances where this practice has been certified. Perpetrators are subject to the loss of their medical licenses and can face criminal punishment. In cases of FGM-related death, perpetrators are also subject to charges of manslaughter under the penal code. According to the U.S. Department of State, there have been unconfirmed press reports on the prosecution of at least 13 individuals under the penal code, including doctors, midwives, and barbers, accused of performing FGM that resulted in hemorrhage, shock and death.⁷

Upon decreeing the universal ban of FGM, Minister Sallam was immediately faced with severe political opposition and several lawsuits by those who thought the practice should continue. However, in December 1997, the Court of Cassation (Egypt's highest appeals court) upheld the government ban on the practice of FGM. This practice has been illegal in Egypt ever since.

1.4 Attitudes and Beliefs

The historical roots of the practice date back thousands of years. According to the 2000 EDHS findings, the most common reason for supporting the practice of FGM was to "uphold an important traditional practice" (58 percent). About three in five women mentioned that a girl who is circumcised benefits from conforming to

tradition. These benefits included the reduction of sexual desire (32 percent), cleanliness/hygiene (29 percent), and social acceptance (4 percent).

The 2000 EDHS also found that a decreasing majority of women think this practice should continue. Eighty-two percent of women surveyed in 1995 supported its continuation, compared to only 75 percent in 2000. Though still low, there is growing recognition of the practice's potentially adverse health consequences. Women acknowledging that FGM can 1) lead to death increased from 24 percent in 1995 to 29 percent in 2000; 2) cause infertility increased from 7 percent to 8 percent; 3) lessen sexual satisfaction increased from 29 percent to 37 percent; and 4) complicate childbirth increased from 5 percent to 8 percent. In 2000, 75 percent of women believed that a girl would experience no benefits if she failed to conform to the traditional practice.

Another main factor behind the persistence of the practice is its social significance for females. In communities where it is practiced, a woman achieves recognition mainly through marriage and child bearing. Traditionally, many families refuse to accept a woman who has not undergone the procedure as a suitable wife.

1.5 Religious Considerations

Egypt's population is 90 percent Sunni Muslim and 10 percent Christian. According to the EDHS in 2000, 72.6 percent of women surveyed believe the practice is a religious tradition.⁸ In reality, there is no religious doctrinal basis for this practice in either Islam or Christianity. Pope Shenouda, head of the Egyptian Coptic Church, and the sheikh⁹ of Al Alzhar, Egypt's most distinguished Islamic school and reference center, have both spoken out against FGM; however, the new grand mufti, Egypt's highest religious consultative authority, has not taken a clear stand on the practice.¹⁰ Furthermore, many local religious leaders at the village level vehemently support the practice as an important part of maintaining female chastity, which is part of religious tradition. While neither the Bible nor the Quor'an mention the practice, there is an ongoing debate among Islamic scholars about whether the practice is mentioned in the Islamic Hadiths,¹¹ which are narrations of the life of the prophet Mohammed and things approved by him.¹² Because this debate exists among the Muslim community but not among Coptic Christians, some activists believe that efforts to end female circumcision are more successful among Egyptian Christians. This hypothesis, however, has never been empirically investigated and is not shared by all anti-FGM activists. At the same time, the only well-documented case of a village where the practice has been eradicated due to the efforts of anti-FGM programs took place in the largely Christian village of Deir El Barsha.

1.6 The NCCM 60 FGM-Free Villages Program

Egypt's National Council of Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM) officially began the "60 FGM-free Villages Program" on January 1, 2003. The stated goal of the project is to attain at least 40 percent eradication of FGM within each of the sixty villages (located among the six governorates—i.e., provinces—where prevalence of

the practice is highest) over a period of three years. Although NCCM is a part of the Egyptian government, additional funding for this project is provided by Canada, Italy, Denmark, the Netherlands, Finland, and Japan. Several international organizations—including UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, the Center for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)—are also involved. These advisory groups provide programmatic support through project design, provision of educational materials, and the training of smaller Egyptian NGOs to implement the plan.

All donor organizations have signed off on the stated goal of the NCCM plan. At the same time, one might wonder what the incentives are for these organizations. It seems that participation in the FGM-free Villages program allows these organizations to kill many birds with one stone by funding an effort that will simultaneously support several of their developmental interests: 1) promoting women's rights, 2) promoting public health abroad, and 3) increasing education. While not mentioned by any of the interviewed agencies, other motivations may include a need to use existing funds ear-marked for human rights to an internationally recognized agenda and appease what has grown to be a very vocal constituency in many Western nations—women's rights advocates.

At this phase of the project, NCCM is establishing a communications resource group (CRG) to coordinate media broadcasts across the six governorates. The role of the CRG will be to guide the project in developing timely and appropriate media products that are socially accepted and will generate maximum impact relevant to FGM advocacy and abandonment. This service will be useful to the NGOs, which will be coordinating and implementing the program. There are six levels of organization in the NCCM 60 Villages Program:

Coordinating organizations

Coordinating organizations are the Egyptian governmental organizations and international NGOs involved in the planning, national coordination, and monitoring of the project. In conjunction with the donor assistance group (DAG), they also provide funding for the project.

Focal NGOs

NCCM has identified six Egyptian NGOs in each of the six governorates where the project will be implemented. Each of these NGOs is a longstanding member of the National FGM Task Force. These NGOs, called "focal NGOs," will be responsible for tailoring program guidelines to the specific communities in which they work and training the smaller NGOs and community development associations (CDAs) in the villages. They will also be trained by NCCM on village profiling techniques and project management before and throughout the implementation, conduct classes every two weeks on functional literacy for NGOs, establish and maintain open dialogue with key figures in each village, conduct pilot tests within each village to determine attitudes of men, evaluate the project every six months (over three years), and monitor trends based on sociocultural analysis.

Implementing NGOs

NGOs and CDAs based in small villages and towns—called “implementing NGOs”—will be responsible for the village level execution of a program designed by them in consultation with NCCM and the corresponding focal NGO. In addition, they will seek out and train a core of community leaders in each village to advocate against the practice and ensure its sustainability after the NCCM project has ended.

As well as relying on the information provided by NGOs working in the villages, the NCCM will conduct its own focus groups to monitor progress. The fact that NCCM is a government organization will allow them to collect statistical data that NGOs are unable to collect. Thus, the results of even an unsuccessful project will provide more data on the prevalence of FGM in Egypt.

METHODOLOGY

We structured our research to investigate the issue at three levels of planning and implementation:

2.1 National Coordination and Program Design

Because both international and Egyptian government entities are involved in the FGM-free Villages Program—each having its own mission, understanding of the FGM issue, reasons for participating in the NCCM project, and expectations of the project—it is important to investigate how these differences shape the approach used.

We did this by

- Interviewing program directors at NCCM, UNDP, UNICEF, CEDPA, USAID, and the Population Council
- Gathering documents on the organizations’ missions and program evaluations

We sought to answer the following questions:

- What is each participating organization’s mission?
- How does that organization officially view the practice of FGM? (Is it a health issue? A violation of human rights? A form of gender discrimination?)
- What types of training do these organizations provide to local NGOs?
- What is each organization’s philosophy on how to introduce and frame discussions about FGM to villagers?
- What are each organization’s goals and expectations for the 60 Villages Program?
- How will success be evaluated?

- What other development and rights goals (besides FGM-eradication) does the organization have for the villages?
- What does the organization gain by participating in this project?

2.2 Implementation

At this level we sought to understand the perspectives of local activists and NGOs who have been heavily engaged in efforts to combat FGM since 1994. We also chose a case study—COST, located in Beni Suef—to gain more insights on the implementation of anti-FGM programs at this level.

We gathered information by:

- Interviewing coordinators of the National FGM Task Force and Egyptian NGOs that work on this issue
- Traveling to the governorate of Beni Suef to interview program directors at COST and the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA), which previously ran FGM • programs in Beni Suef
- Interviewing field workers who work with families and train community leaders to sustain their work once the NGO has pulled out of the village
- Interviewing community activists trained by COST staff to spread the anti-FGM message in their villages and serve as “positive deviants”—examples of local • residents who have deviated from the practice.

Specific questions we sought to answer at this level were:

What lessons have been learned from the evaluation of different programs to date?

What is the mission of COST and its history with Beni Suef communities?

How long has COST been involved in anti-FGM programs and how has it evaluated its success?

How do the organizations officially frame the issue of FGM?

How do the field workers personally understand the issue, and why did they decide to get involved in the project?

How are they and other community leaders trained to frame and introduce the topic of FGM to village residents?

Which arguments have been most accepted by villagers as reasons for not practicing FGM?

Which arguments failed to resonate with villagers?

How do local NGOs incorporate the concept of human rights into their work in the villages?

2.3 Assessment and Monitoring

Our analysis also required us to find out how local Egyptians understand the issue of FGM by assessing current attitudes towards the practice and other impediments to its eradication. We selected the village of Abu Hashem as a case study and investigated villagers' attitudes to COST's anti-FGM program there and to concepts of human rights.

We did this by:

Interviewing nine "positive deviants," who have decided against the practice and eventually went on to become community activists or to participate in a local girls' task force

Interviewing other residents of Abu Hashem who were exposed to COST's anti-FGM programs. These individuals included family members, religious leaders, and medical practitioners. For this phase of our research, we hired a trained medical anthropologist, Mrs. Sally El Mahdy, to travel to Abu Hashem to conduct on-site interviews with villagers.

Specific questions we sought to answer:

What were residents' attitudes towards the practice of FGM?

How effective were COST programs in Abu Hashem? Did residents notice any change in attitudes or rate of prevalence after the COST program?

What did residents think of COST's approach?

How do residents understand rights and human rights?

What language do they use to describe female circumcision?

Do villagers see a connection to human rights and female circumcision?

2.4 Challenges and Limitations of our Methodology

Language and Cultural Barriers

Neither member of the research team is Egyptian or speaks Arabic fluently. Most of the program directors in both Cairo and Beni Suef speak fluent English and have published documents available in English, so information-gathering at this level was not problematic. In the villages, however, most field workers and villagers do not speak English. Interviews with COST field workers and positive deviants were done by the research team through an accompanying translator whereas interviews conducted with other Abu Hashem residents were done by a hired medical anthropologist. Thus, some the information gathered and analyzed may be slightly biased by the translator's and field interviewer's language abilities and cultural lens or by the research team's limited cultural familiarity.

Abu Hashem Specific Biases¹³

Association Bias: From both an anthropological and epidemiological perspective, this research suffers from the fact that it involved only participants who have been approached by COST and who were a) responsive to such an approach or b) against change. Obviously, not all members in the village were approached. Consequently, the sample may not be representative of the wider population.

Locational Bias: Had this study been conducted in other villages, the results might have been different in ways that cannot be fully known. Thus, generalizing these findings to the rest of Egypt or to the rest of the Middle East must be done with great caution. For example, there may be some concern that because Abu Hashem is a predominantly Christian village. Thus, the extent to which findings from this research can be extrapolated to the rest of Egypt, which is predominantly Muslim, is limited (see Section 1.5 for explanation). However, because the hypothesis that FGM is easier to eradicate among Christian communities is unproven and because both Muslim and Christian residents were interviewed, we believe the findings presented in this study can still be applied to other parts of Egypt.

Class Bias: The sample was limited to the experiences of poor and some lower-middle class residents of Abu Hashem.¹⁴ However, homogeneity within respondents' class background was important to this research, as the practice is most widely supported among poorer Egyptians.¹⁵

Observer bias: The fact that the medical anthropologist who conducted the field interviews is an Egyptian from the same cultural background has strengths and weaknesses. Hiring a cultural insider allowed the advantage of attaching meanings to patterns easily and faster than would an outsider who is less familiar with the indigenous culture of the group under study. Hiring an Egyptian allowed respondents to confide in the interviewer with greater comfort and allowed us to include the interviewer's cultural insights in our analysis. At the same time, there is literature that suggests that data collected by interviewers who are too similar with the sample's lens may inhibit the interviewer's ability to note significant trends that would stand out to an outside observer. We believe, however, combining the insights of the medical anthropologist with the analysis of the research team allowed us to strike the appropriate balance between these tensions.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This section explores how the various entities at the level of coordination, funding, implementation, and monitoring of the FGM-free Villages Program frame the issue and whether their motivations for being involved are in line with one another. This section includes general findings and analysis at three levels of investigation:

Level 1: Coordination and Framing

Level 2: Program Design and Implementation

Level 3: Assessment of Case Study : COST and Abu Hashem

3.1. Coordination and Framing

Government

Though there is no monolithic governmental viewpoint on the issue, NCCM has defined FGM as a violation of the UN Rights of the Girl Child and claims the prac-

tice also violates the 1996 Egyptian Child Law, which addresses childhood issues including gender discrimination and violence. FGM is considered a violation of the Rights of the Girl Child because the girls' bodies are permanently altered in ways that have long-term physical, social, and emotional consequences without their consent.¹⁶ This language is significant because it indicates that NCCM explicitly frames FGM as a human rights issue.

International Organizations

While all of the international organizations involved in the 60 Villages Program agree that the issue needs to be tackled with a combination of approaches that emphasize health and women's education, they do not all agree on the degree of emphasis on human rights that should be included in the campaign. All nations that make up the DAG generally agree that the issue should be framed as a human rights violation.

Egyptian FGM Task Force

Although serving as a network of influential and experienced practitioners and activists since 1994, this group has never had an official role in the formation of national policy on FGM until now. The official position of this coordinating body is that FGM does constitute a violation of girls' and women's rights to bodily integrity. It maintains that the goal of the FGM-free Villages Program should be to spark a national dialogue about the practice and educate Egyptians on the facts, believing that through this approach, Egyptians will decide against the practice of their own accord. Several member organizations of the Egyptian NGO Task Force will serve as focal NGOs in the implementation of the FGM-free Villages Program.

COST

In interviews,¹⁷ COST staff indicated that it is important to frame FGM as a human rights issue. They maintained that although villagers do not generally understand the academic concept of human rights as a conceptual framework, they do understand the concept of rights. COST practitioners felt it appropriate to frame FGM within the context of "a girl's right to protection from physical and psychological harm" and to "a couple's right to enjoy marital life fully without the interference of decisions made without their consent or full knowledge of the consequences." COST staff found it useful to make the connection between rights and FGM when convincing villagers against the practice.

Girls' Task Force and Men's Group in Abu Hashem

In Abu Hashem, men trained by COST staff formed a "men's group" through the local Coptic church to discuss the issue of FGM with boys from the village. As a result of these meetings, men became aware of the differences between male and female circumcision, and several have decided they will not marry circumcised

women. They believe this stance combats the prevailing fear in the village that no one will marry uncircumcised women. They also made a decision, however, not to discriminate against girls who were circumcised before the group's decision to take this position. These men think it is important to involve fathers, brothers, and other males in the local debate about the practice and find that messages connecting female circumcision to the lack of sexual fulfillment within marriage resonate strongly with men. They also maintain that the practice is a violation of girls' and women's rights to bodily integrity and a couple's right to sexual fulfillment.

COST staff also trained and initiated a local "girls' task force" made up of girls within circumcision age (some of which have already been circumcised). This group works to teach girls to speak out against FGM to their parents and to seek help immediately from older community activists if they learn that a girl in the village is about to be circumcised.

3.2 Program Design

Our interviews revealed a slight lack of alignment among the various stakeholders involved in the planning, financing, and implementation of the 60 Village Program in three areas: 1) motivations, goals, and expectations; 2) the level of emphasis on health issues; 3) the usefulness of "human rights language" in framing the issue nationally and at the village level. At the time of printing this document, plans were still being drafted that would address beliefs that FGM is required of religion and is a useful way to curb women's sexual appetite.

Varying motivations, goals, and expectations: The international organizations involved in the project do not share the same expectations of the project's outcome. Some believe the goal should be simply to create a nationwide debate, while others define the goal as 40 percent eradication, and still others think the project should aim at 51 percent eradication in order to tip the balance such that the majority no longer favors the practice. A separate school of thought holds that the real goal has little to do with FGM at all and should instead be aimed at sparking national debate about the roles of women and discriminatory norms that govern socially acceptable female behavior. While interesting to note, in the grand scheme of things, this misalignment may not be particularly detrimental to the overall success of the project because these varying goals are not necessarily competing ones. Rather, they question how far the project can go without sacrificing expectations that are achievable.

Usefulness of human rights language: Use of the human rights approach has been criticized for several reasons, including: 1) being an abstract concept that is not easily understood by Egyptians at low levels of education; 2) being prone to great resistance because it associates FGM with more polemical discussions of the roles and rights of women in Egyptian society; and 3) being a foreign construct that is not culturally sensitive or respectful of Egyptian norms. As such, not all activists and practitioners agree on the most effective way of framing FGM at the village level. Some organizations have opted to take "rights language" out of their training materials, arguing that it is too complex for the largely uneducated and illiterate

population in rural villages. These organizations believe FGM should be explained to villagers in simpler terms that would be more easily understood by villagers. Proponents of this argument support using a different approach at each level: On the national level, they believe it is extremely important for the Egyptian government to frame the issue as one of human rights in order to create a productive environment in which the government does not inhibit activists' work on this issue. At the village level, they believe the introduction of human rights language only serves to confuse residents and to create distance between activists and residents by causing them to "speak different languages" to one another.

Degree of emphasis on health consequences: The "health approach" in previous anti-FGM efforts focused on educating Egyptians about the negative health consequences of the practice, including severe bleeding, anemia, increased risk of infection, hemorrhaging, severe abdominal and genital pain during sexual intercourse, as well as complications during childbirth, including the death of the mother or child. Though initially thought to be a compelling argument against the continuation of FGM and an easy one to combat, the Egyptian FGM Task Force found the approach to be problematic for several reasons. First, it did nothing to change societal beliefs about women's ability to control their sexual appetite. More importantly, the approach was ineffective. Rather than changing their minds about the necessity of the practice altogether, families simply chose to have it performed by medical doctors instead of midwives or barbers, thinking they could thereby avoid the medical complications. Indeed, the EDHS revealed that between 1995 and 2000 (when the health approach was at its peak), the percentage of circumcisions performed by trained medical personnel increased from 17 percent to over 60 percent. Activists also found this approach problematic because it left the decision to circumcise to the discretion of the medical practitioner, thereby implying that there are cases where the practice is medically sound. Finally, activists found the approach to be altogether unconvincing to many people because the horrific medical complications described to villagers did not match their personal experiences. One program director noted that information about the negative health consequences of FGM is often based on research performed on infibulated (third-degree circumcised) women, who experience much more severe consequences than those experienced by Egyptian women (who largely have undergone first- or second-degree circumcision). This person noted a need for greater studies that focus solely on the health implications of women who have undergone first- or second-degree circumcision.¹⁸ In Egypt, a reliance on data from more severe cases led to activists losing credibility in the eyes of many women whose own experiences did not relate to the activists' claims.

However, not all persons familiar with the issue at the coordinating level are convinced that the health approach is null and void, as discussions of the health

implications always grab the attention of the audience. Indeed, according to the 2000 EDHS, among the minority of women who acknowledged that there are some negative consequences to FGM, severe pain and medical complications were the most frequently cited (10 percent and 7 percent respectively).

No uniform approach: At the time of our interviews, the specifics of the approach to be used in the FGM-free Villages Program to changing attitudes about the practice were still being defined. Generally, the plan includes the use of the sociocultural approach, which targets all members of a given community, not just women. However, there appears to be little uniformity in how each local NGO will attack myths associated with the practice. Those heavily involved in the coordination of the plan maintain that this is because of a need to allow local NGOs the flexibility to design programs that meet the needs of each individual village rather than employing a type of cookie-cutter approach to that stipulates how programs are to be used in all villages.

Religious Approach: The religious approach to eradicating FGM appears to be one avenue that has not been fully explored. Between 1995 and 2000, the percentage of women believing that circumcision was an important religious tradition increased from 71.8 to 72.6 percent. This increase may seem small and insignificant, however, it is more significant upon noting that support for most other rationales for the practice decreased during this same time span. While this indicates that activists have not been effective in addressing religious justifications of the practice, it's important to realize that the religious angle appears to be the most politically sensitive given the reported return to religiosity in Egypt's recent history.

FGM as a tool to curb sexual desire: Even more significant is the increase in the percentage of women who agreed that circumcision helps to prevent adultery, which jumped from 41 percent of women in 1995 to 51.4 percent in 2000. This is a strong indication that efforts thus far have done little to change perceptions about women and their ability to control their sexual appetite. This opinion may be strongly connected to residents' religious beliefs, as female chastity before marriage and fidelity within marriage are valued within both the Christian and Muslim faiths.

3.3 Assessment of Case Study: COST and Abu Hashem¹⁹

Our preliminary interviews with the staff at COST revealed interesting findings on village structure and social attitudes in the governorate of Beni Suef:

Although our observations are limited in this area, it is important to put the following data within the context of existing power structures in Egyptian villages. In isolated, rural villages, there is usually a great connection between religious leaders and political power.²⁰ Elites who hold a great deal of land in the village also reportedly yield significant influence. Our research showed that most organizations seeking to make interventions in a village began by seeking to influence the reli-

gious leaders. The next level of interventions sought to sway the most highly educated members of society (i.e., physicians, university graduates, etc.). Only then did the organization feel it had enough credibility within the community to go directly to families with the anti-FGM message. Our research revealed that COST followed a similar approach while operating in Abu Hashem.

During interviews, COST staff (permanent field workers) noted that new knowledge of the health consequences of FGM, including the psychosexual complications, initially served as the most gripping reason for villagers to begin questioning the necessity of the practice. Based on interviews with COST staff, village activists, and other residents, it appears that there are three questions that must be answered negatively before a family decides against circumcising its daughters:

Question 1: Is everything about FGM good?

Y: If families can answer yes, then they will continue to practice FGM.

N: If families can answer no (i.e., they understand the negative physical, emotional, and psychosexual health consequences), they will begin to question the practice's worth.

Question 2: Despite having negative consequences, is FGM necessary?

Y: If the family can answer yes to this question, they will not change their minds.

N: If the family answers no to this question (i.e., they realize that FGM is not required of religion, believe it has little effect on marriageability, know it is not the most effective means of controlling female sexual desire, or do not fear social repercussions), they will question the practice even more.

Question 3: Even if necessary, is FGM just?

Y: If families answer yes to this question, there will be no change.

N: If, in addition to answering no to questions 1 and 2, families answer no to this question (i.e., they understand that FGM violates girls' and women's human rights), change may occur.²¹

Through the process of asking these three questions, families move through three of the phases of behavioral change described by Nahla Abdel-Tawab and Sahar Hegazi, whereby they go from precontemplation (where the family has never questioned the practice before) to contemplation (where the family starts thinking about alternate behavior) to preparation (where the family develops a negative attitude toward FGM and decides to change its stance).²²

3.3.1 General Observations²³

The following information is based on interviews with residents of Abu Hashem:

According to information provided through interviews with nine resident families, the village sheikh, one *daya*,²⁴ one physician, and eight positive deviants, the majority of women in Abu Hashem are circumcised. Moreover, according to respondents' answers, nearly all girls ranging in age between 9-14 years are circumcised. The only difference is in the type of circumcision: the older generation underwent second-degree circumcision, and younger girls underwent first-degree circumcision.²⁵

According to respondents' answers, over half of the families who were exposed to public awareness campaigns, seminars, meetings, and even home visits organized by COST still did not believe that FGM is harmful in any way. In fact, they believed quite the opposite—a belief that was further supported by medical and non-medical practitioners, as will be discussed later in this section. However, it is important to note that COST programs only targeted families with girls falling within circumcision age (9-13 years old) whereas the majority of families visited who supported FGM had very young girls. Thus, many families interviewed had daughters who were born or entered circumcision age after COST stopped its active participation in the village. (Only two families had girls aged between 9-11 years old.) Thus, some of the families interviewed were not fully exposed to COST programs and hence did not fully benefit from the project.

3.3.2 COST Successes and Shortcomings

It appears that several successes can be attributed to the work of COST in Abu Hashem:

Residents know FGM is not required of religion. Respondents, whether Muslim or Christian, universally acknowledged that the practice is not a prerequisite for religious observance.²⁶ Almost all respondents attributed this knowledge to COST's home visits and seminars, and most noted that it was very effective for COST workers to bring religious figures (the local sheikh and Coptic priest) along with them to home visits and seminars.

Residents know the health and psychosexual consequences. Respondents frequently displayed knowledge of (and could list) the medical and sexual consequences reportedly associated with female circumcision. While most believed these consequences did indeed exist for some circumcised women, not all respondents could relate to these consequences. Several women reported that they had no difficulties in childbirth or claimed to have no problems with sexual relations, finding their sex lives to be fulfilling even without an orgasm.

Dialogue about FGM is now more acceptable. Several respondents noted that while the issue is still somewhat of a private topic, conversations about FGM are more frequent and shrouded by less secrecy or embarrassment. Each respondent

who made this assertion attributed the change to the work of COST in the village. One villager noted that "holding seminars that involved both men and women changed perceptions [that women should not discuss the topic with men] that were deeply rooted in our society. I think this is a very important step that was achieved." It also seems that this dialogue has continued (although with decreasing frequency) since COST ended its FGM programs in the village.

Strong relationship and trust was built between COST staff and villagers. Perhaps COST's most significant achievement is the strong relationship it has fostered with village residents. Nearly all respondents spoke positively of the organization and its staff. Several villagers even referred to COST staff "as members of our family." A large group of villagers—both for and against the practice—also indicated an interest or hope that COST staff members would return to the village and resume their work on FGM in the future.

Abu Hashem residents show signs of behavioral change. Several respondents indicated that women are now delaying the circumcision of their daughter while waiting to see if the village's norms will change.²⁷ It is unclear whether this change is due solely to COST activities and the work of "positive deviants" in Abu Hashem since COST's departure, or whether this is also the result of rumors that neighboring villages have eradicated the practice (a factor corroborated by one of the village dayas who was interviewed).

There is very little negative feedback. Few respondents had anything negative to say about COST. Several observed that COST ended its activities in Abu Hashem too soon and that visits from local residents (positive deviants) who had been trained to carry on COST's work had declined significantly. One respondent did note that COST seemed to not understand the village's culture, referring to its attempts to persuade families against FGM as evidence that COST staff did not grasp the severity of the social pressure that keeps the practice going.²⁸

Activity of positive deviants is on the decline. Despite this initial success, families interviewed noted that local residents trained to carry on the work of COST were making rounds with decreasing frequency. Positive deviants themselves acknowledged this and attributed it to a lack of adequate training and resources. Furthermore, positive deviants may also feel discouraged by having had the same conversation with several families who have still not decided against circumcision. It appears that positive deviants now focus more heavily on convincing youth, who are more impressionable, to forgo the practice when they become parents.

3.3.3 Challenges to Verifying COST Data

While very committed to its programming, COST appears strapped for resources to institute adequate monitoring. One part of the problem is that within Egypt, organizations are required to get governmental approval to conduct certain demographic surveys, a factor which often impedes the ability of small organizations to collect data for monitoring. COST reports that instances of FGM decreased by 10 percent

in the village; however, villagers interviewed do not corroborate this information. When asked if they have witnessed any change in the prevalence of the practice, only villagers who were against FGM repeated the claim that it had decreased by 10 percent (a figure they may have learned through their training by COST). On the other hand, the majority of respondents, who supported the practice, claimed to be unaware of any changes in the frequency of FGM and made sweeping statements such as "everyone here circumcises their daughter," and "not a single family abandoned the practice." It is unclear how COST reached the 10 percent figure. Perhaps one explanation for the discrepancy is that those who are part of the 10 percent decrease have neglected to share their decision to not circumcise their daughters with neighbors. Alternatively, perhaps those counted as part of the 10 percent decrease are only delaying their decision to circumcise while still intending to do it at a later date. Such difficulties illustrate the need to supply dedicated organizations like COST with greater resources and training to assess their programs.

Although COST staff reported that there are no known instances of circumcision within the past two years and that families have stopped requesting the procedure, village residents reported that the barber continues to pass through Abu Hashem at the end of each month to circumcise girls in the village. One member of the girls' task force initiated by COST even reported to have been circumcised this year. Furthermore, while COST indicated the knowledge of only one *daya* in the village, several respondents reported that there are three village *dayas* who perform the practice. Perhaps the number has changed since COST ended its activities there.

3.3.4 Terminology

The terminology which people and organizations use to describe the practice is indicative of their attitudes towards female circumcision. There has been a long-standing debate about whether to call the practice female genital mutilation (FGM) or female genital cutting (FGC). In general, the Egyptian government, international organizations, donor governments, and the Egyptian FGM Task Force have decided to refer to the practice as FGM. USAID, which maintains that the term FGM is culturally insensitive by implying that mutilated women are not whole women, is the exception and prefers to use FGC. For the purposes of the FGM-free Villages Program, NCCM uses the term FGM.

Similarly, the FGM Task Force has taken a noteworthy stance on the issue by calling it FGM rather than FGC. It notes that although it is less culturally sensitive, the term FGM describes the outcome of the procedure and highlights its violent nature. Its literature also notes the significance of framing the issue in alignment with international donor agencies. Additionally, the term FGM denotes a certain consciousness or ideological stance on the issue; however, the Task Force is fully aware that most Egyptians customarily refer to the practice as *khittan al-banat* (a value-neutral term meaning circumcision of the girl) or *tahara* (purity/cleanliness). Because the Task Force believes this second term is particularly misleading and even dangerous, it has taken a strong stance on the term used in an effort to change community perceptions about the practice. Other activists have also noted that "female genital mutilation" is more appropriate than "female genital cutting"

because cutting denotes a mere surgical procedure whereas mutilation—more accurately—refers to the medically unnecessary removal of an organ that performs a significant function for the body. The Task Force maintains that its chosen terminology is more appropriate for its long-term goal, which is to change public perceptions of the practice. This stance is quite significant in that it illustrates local ownership on the part of Egyptian activists and the Egyptian government of what was initially a foreign term for the practice.

It is interesting to note how this debate plays out when implemented within the village of Abu Hashem. While Sister Joanna Salib (who heads the primary health care unit at COST, is fluent in English, and regularly interacts with activists and associates from various international organizations) referred to the practice as FGM in her interviews with us, her staff as well as positive deviants who work more closely with villagers refer to the practice simply as female circumcision (*khittan*). Notably, COST staff consciously chose not to refer to the practice as *tahara* (purification) or *mushahra* (a term used in Abu Hashem that refers to the time of month when the procedure is usually done). Both terms were commonly used by residents of Abu Hashem who support the practice. Terminology appeared to play an important role within Abu Hashem, as indicated by the following insights from Sally El Mahdy, who conducted the field interviews in Abu Hashem:

Respondents noted that FGM is considered a reinforcement of familial ties, not only because parents of circumcised daughters are automatically ascribed social status and respect, but also because of the “blood bond” created between girls of the same family who are circumcised together, known as *mushahreen*. When dealing with FGM in this context, females interviewed resorted to using the term “*mushahra*” to stress the importance of the practice for future familial bonds between girls of the same family. This explains why FGM is carried out in groups of five to seven girls from the same family.²⁹

This further illustrates just how deeply the practice is imbedded into the social fabric of this village. Furthermore, one respondent noted that the *daya* who circumcised her was the same woman who assisted in the delivery of her daughter and would eventually circumcise the daughter as well. Thus, in Abu Hashem FGM serves not only as a rite of passage, but also as a bonding ritual whereby the pain is superceded by the joy of a newfound connection with the other girls in one’s family and a cross-generational bond with other women in the village.

3.4 Analysis at Village Level

Among residents who supported FGM, most favored non-medical practitioners (the *daya* or the barber) for several reasons:³⁰

Convenience: The procedure is carried out in each family’s home, allowing girls of the same family to be circumcised together.

Cost: Dayas and barbers, who charge approximately US\$3 per operation, are less expensive than physicians, who charge approximately US\$4-5 for each operation.

Privacy: The operation is performed within the home, where neighbors cannot observe.

These benefits seemed to outweigh the health risks associated with using non-medical procedures, of which all respondents were aware. Thus, Abu Hashem is notable as an exception to the nationwide trend in which the percentage of Egyptians preferring to go to doctors for the procedure increased from 17 percent to 61 percent between 1995 and 2000.

All women in the study asserted explicitly or implicitly that they were circumcised out of the need to fulfill the social obligations of purity, marriageability, and honor. In fact, the majority of women in this study supported FGM and were astonished to learn that it was not practiced uniformly on women in other villages, nationwide, and even worldwide.

Despite the fact that women's own experiences with circumcision were very painful with prolonged physical, psychological, and sexual consequences, almost 85 percent of the sample was determined to circumcise their daughters. Reasons given for this decision included:

The need to follow a culturally entrenched practice in the community, wherein any violation of this norm is considered an intolerable form of social deviancy (90 percent).

The need to control girls' and later women's sexual appetite in order to protect the family's honor by ensuring that the girls remain chaste (80 percent).

The need to "purify" the genital region, as uncircumcised genitalia are believed to grow into a penis-like organ, hanging out of the vulva like leaves or a "rooster's comb," or possibly blocking the vaginal opening (90 percent).

The belief that men are repulsed by women's uncircumcised genitalia and will not marry uncircumcised women (75 percent), though discussions with men and husbands did not always corroborate this.

The belief that circumcision is necessary for girls to undergo puberty (80 percent).

The belief that an uncircumcised woman would have an abnormal sexual appetite and would place demands on her husband that he could not fulfill, making her more prone to commit adultery (65 percent).

3.4.1 Community Still Open to Change

It appears that residents of Abu Hashem increasingly question the value of the practice. Reports that women are now delaying the procedure (in an attempt to see if other villagers will renounce the practice) provide hope that future interventions in Abu Hashem may result in FGM eradication. Several respondents mentioned hearing rumors that other villages had denounced the practice. As a result, women

have reportedly begun using their decision-making authority on the issue to delay circumcision time. Respondents implied that this was not a widely discussed trend.

It is important to note that this "underground tendency" to delay the age of female circumcision may also be influenced by other factors.³¹

The delay in female marital age.³² As a greater number of girls in the village are given the freedom to continue their higher education, the average marital age reportedly jumped to the early twenties. As marriage age is postponed, perhaps so is female circumcision. However, this does not mean that increasing female secondary education will decrease the cases of circumcision, as some see the rising number of women leaving the village as underscoring the necessity of circumcision to ensure that these unsupervised women will remain chaste.

Positive deviants who are still carrying out awareness campaigns and meetings are influencing mothers' decisions to delay.

The girls' task force has created a type of "alarm system" whereby girls are encouraged to report to positive deviants if they hear that a girl is about to be circumcised.

As women delay the decision to circumcise their daughters, several noted that seeing at least one "model family" who did not circumcise its daughters would persuade them to discontinue the practice as well. Surprisingly, respondents who were interviewed claimed not to know of any families who decided against circumcising their daughters. This finding seemed odd given the existence of positive deviants in the village, verified by our own interviews and those of the medical anthropologist who conducted interviews in the village. This contradiction may be explained by one of the following: 1) families like Farha's are not known by all residents in the village (though this is doubtful among a population of only five hundred families); 2) families like Farha's have only shared their decision with neighbors with whom they have close relationships in order to avoid social stigmatization; 3) regrettably, it may be possible that positive deviants untruthfully told COST that they would not circumcise their daughters in order to gain favor in their eyes. This desire for favor may be an extension of the fact that COST (and programs like it) also engages in health education, nurse training, small business loans, and other programs that the villagers appreciate and want to benefit from. However, it is worth noting that on some occasions, respondents who were aware of positive deviants indicated skepticism towards the "younger, more educated" members of the village, who had declared that they would not circumcise their daughters. One villager noted that these positive deviants had very young daughters and perhaps would not stick to their declaration once their daughters got older and the parents were exposed to the social pressure ("curious looks and comments") of their neighbors. While it seems that villagers are aware of individual "positive deviants" in the village, the fact that most positive deviants are young and have young daughters made their stance against FGM less credible in their neighbor's eyes.

It appears that villagers remain unaware of cases where an entire extended family has decided against the practice and would require seeing at least one example before deciding against circumcising their own daughters. One mother noted, "I would love to leave my daughter without circumcision. I just need to know of any

family in our neighborhood that chooses not to do so. In our entire neighborhood, I have not heard of one!"

3.4.2 Insights from Practitioners

The interview conducted with one of the three village dayas was quite revealing. When initially asked if she supported circumcision, she responded, "Yes, because circumcision is something that differentiates between males and females. It is a process that has been carried out over generations. It is considered a beautification process whereby girls are prepared to enter the realm of womanhood." She later added that the practice also "harnesses female sexual desire." When asked how many procedures she performed per week, she refused to answer. When asked how and where she cut or how much she was compensated for the procedure, she again declined to answer. Upon being asked if she had been exposed to COST activities, she said yes and repeated the rationale that COST staff explained to her for not continuing the procedure. Surprisingly, when asked how she responded to such arguments, she noted that she had "stopped doing this practice ever since." She later went on to admit that she still did it occasionally for some family members when they insisted. She also noted that fewer villagers had asked for the procedure (this may be because instances of female circumcision actually decreased or may also be because villagers increasingly rely on the barber or the other two village dayas to perform the procedure).

Most interesting were the daya's responses to questions about the legality of the practice. When asked if she was aware of the ministerial decree that makes it illegal for health professionals to perform the procedure, she replied, "No, when I received my training, this was because the minister of health decided to train us to be able to operate under hygienic conditions. But I never heard that now this is forbidden...even doctors do this operation." Thus, it appears that health practitioners may get mixed signals from the Ministry of Health regarding the legality of the procedure because MOH training programs imply to practitioners that the procedure is acceptable if done hygienically.

3.4.3 The Importance of "Honor"

Respondents frequently noted that in spite of calling it a violation of girls' rights and knowing the possible consequences of FGM on women's health and sexual satisfaction in marriage, they could not simply stop this norm. This sentiment was expressed by one villager, who commented, "How can we not circumcise our daughters? This is a practice that we have been carrying out for ages and ages...we can not afford neighbors' disdain and disrespect." These women, by consciously opting to circumcise their daughters, chose to obey the socially constructed obligation to protect the girl's purity and the family's honor.

The fear of being socially ostracized appears to be the primary motivation behind the continuation of circumcision. Respondents repeatedly referred to "the need to protect the girls' honor and thus the whole family's." Thus, it appears that within the

village of Abu Hashem, a girl's sexual purity is an indication of the family's reputation for raising well-behaved and respectable daughters who will someday make acceptable wives and mothers. Families perceive circumcision to be a means of guaranteeing to future marriage prospects that their daughter is chaste. This "guarantee" seems especially necessary now that daughters are increasingly leaving the village in order to work and be educated. Without the "guarantee" of circumcision, neighbors will begin to question the family's reputation and standing within the village.

3.4.4 The Role of Men and Neighbors

While all respondents noted that the decision to circumcise daughters lies solely with the mother, it appears that men still play a critical role in the social acceptance of the practice. Almost all respondents noted that fathers make a point to know when their daughters are circumcised and boast to neighbors when the procedure has been done. This happens because when girls reach circumcision age, families (fathers in particular) are subject to curious looks and comments about the daughter's circumcision status up until the day she is circumcised. Such moments are reportedly mortifying for the father, as his reputation is being questioned about an event over which he has no control. By contrast, sharing the news that a daughter has recently been circumcised brings him praise and acceptance from neighbors, who then deem that his household is well run. While he has no control over this "domestic" affair, its enactment still reflects on him and his entire family. These simple exchanges between fathers and neighbors work to imbed the practice into the social psyche of the village, making fear of deviating from the norm the number one concern that keeps people from not circumcising their daughters.

3.4.5 Sexual Fulfillment for Women

Villagers recognize that FGM hinders the sexual appetite of women, and it is consistently cited as an important reason to continue the practice. In the 2000 EDHS, reduction of sexual appetite was cited as a reason for continuing the practice by 32 percent of the respondents.³³ In our own research sample, the need to control girls' sexual appetite (and consequently to protect the family's honor by keeping girls from engaging in premarital sex) was noted by 80 percent of respondents. Interestingly, despite the belief that the practice leashes women's sexual desire, women do not see FGM as a factor affecting their sexual fulfillment. Conversations with Dr. Magdy Helmy, a physician working to eradicate FGM in other parts of Egypt, confirmed that the majority of women do not experience a sexual orgasm after having been circumcised. He also notes that in many cases, sexual intercourse is a painful experience for circumcised women.

In some cases, female respondents indicated that sexual intercourse is a duty rather than an opportunity for marital fulfillment. Interestingly, marital status may have an effect on one's views of the practice, although this was not investigated in the Abu Hashem study. A national survey of Egyptian adolescents found stark differences in the level of support for FGM among married (88.6 percent supported)

and unmarried adolescents (57.7 percent supported), all of whom had been previously circumcised.³⁴ Furthermore, the Egyptian Society for the Prevention of Harmful Practices to Women and Children says that the incidence of promiscuity is higher in areas where FGM is carried out. Ninety-eight percent of prostitutes in Egypt have been circumcised. When told of this statistic, one father interviewed in Abu Hashem replied: "See then! What would have happened if they were not [circumcised]?"

3.4.6 Human Rights and Rights vs. Duties

The field research yielded fascinating insights about the context in which villagers understand rights, duties, and human rights in particular. Respondents were asked to define the terms "rights" and "human rights" separately. All respondents, even those who were illiterate, seemed to have a clear picture of what "rights" meant and were very analytical in making distinctions between men's, women's, and girls' rights. When asked to define human rights, respondents often listed "the right to live a decent life," "to be educated," or "to have food and clothing." While respondents most often cited third- and fourth-degree rights, they occasionally included terms such as "the right to have a say in what you are doing" (self-determination). It is interesting to note that typical first- and second-degree rights such as "freedom from harm" and "freedom of speech" were not mentioned by respondents. While respondents may indeed agree with these rights, they did not come to mind when asked to define "rights" nor when asked to define "human rights."

Another fascinating trend was that respondents repeatedly linked rights with duties. Indeed, it seems that for many of them, the fulfillment of one's duties is actually a prerequisite for holding rights. When discussing the subject, respondents universally made a distinction between the rights and duties of women (confined to the domestic realm) versus those of men (located in the public and "working" arenas). Within this patriarchal structure, the decision whether, when, and with whom to circumcise one's daughter is the right of the mother. Respondents universally acknowledged that *even if the father disagrees*, the mother still has the right to decide that the daughter will be circumcised. Thus, because circumcision is a responsibility that falls within the domestic realm, decisions regarding it are the sole prerogative of the mother. A mother's decision is mostly influenced by the other women within the extended family who gather at the end of the month to determine which girls in the family will be circumcised together.

Most intriguing was that nearly all of the respondents stated a belief that FGM constituted a violation of girls' rights because the girls do not consent to the practice. When asked why the practice then continued, many replied that "...it is done out of love and the need to protect girls from their sexual desires." Thus, parents almost unanimously implied that a girl's right to consent to such an event beforehand is trumped by the parents' right to decide what is in the child's best interest, including their obligation to protect her from the temptation of immoral sexual behavior or from being ostracized by the rest of society because she is uncircumcised. At least one respondent disagreed that the practice violated the girls' rights because "when [the girls] grow up, they carry [out] the same practice on *their*

daughters, which means they found it useful and beneficial and [realized] that when they were circumcised, they [would have been] too young [to make the right decision]." The men's duties concern the public realm, and their rights take precedence over others in the public realm. By contrast, women's duties are restricted to the home, and their rights take precedence there. So then, perhaps part of the explanation for why parents' rights trump girls' rights is that, unlike mothers and fathers, girls do not have their own autonomous space in which they have certain duties and, therefore, rights.

These phenomena indicate that village residents do indeed understand rights language, understand an implicit relationship between rights and duties, can differentiate among the rights and duties ascribed to some and not others (i.e., men and women), and even have an established hierarchy of rights whereby some rights trump others.

3.4.7 Collective Action Problem

Respondents repeatedly and universally asserted that the fear of social stigmatization is the main factor driving families' reluctance to end circumcision despite knowing that it has harmful physical, psychological, and psycho-sexual consequences, that it is not required of religion, and that it violates girls' rights. Respondents' insistence upon seeing examples of other families in the village who have abandoned the practice suggests that mothers—despite being entrusted as the sole decision-maker on this issue—feel powerless to make a decision against FGM on their own. This fear of isolation suggests that perhaps no families will be willing to publicly declare their opposition to the practice unless several other families are willing to join them. These findings support assertions that in Middle Eastern societies, autonomy is defined in terms of one's ability to mobilize or influence social relationships rather than an individual's ability to act independently.³⁵

During our interviews with organizations and activists, we referred to the Toastan movement in Senegal, in which villages signed community declarations to eradicate the practice, as a model approach for addressing this collective action dilemma. This method was successfully employed in the Egyptian village of Deir El Barsha, in which residents signed a village declaration stating they would no longer support the practice. While members of the Egyptian FGM Task Force thought such a discussion was premature given the current stage of the FGM-free Villages Program, positive deviants in Abu Hashem expressed hope that a community declaration would be possible within the year. Given data collected from field interviews, in which the majority of residents were unaware of families who had decided against the practice, such plans seemed somewhat premature. Nevertheless, the case of Abu Hashem suggests that a collective decision by the village to forego the practice would be an essential final step to securing abolition of the practice.

3.4.8 "Groupthink" and Social Denial

We have observed that although women in Abu Hashem accept that there is "some-

thing” inherently wrong about the procedure itself, they do not think that a wrong has been committed against them. When discussing this “dark day,” they initially expressed feelings of betrayal by their mothers, grandmothers, and aunts but almost immediately went back to the position that it was necessary because of tradition. It seems that another impediment to denouncing the practice is that to stop FGM would mean conceding that they were violated by the people they trust.

When I was circumcised it was the Eid time, and we were doing cookies. My aunt came and told me, “Come on to bake cookies with us.” We went to their home, and there I found something like five girls from the same age all from the family, and they put us in one room with the *daya* and women of the family were present. Before I was circumcised, I witnessed the operation being done on one of my relative...I screamed and knocked on the door trying to escape the scene, but with no success. I stayed bleeding for almost ten days [until] they took me to the hospital... After that, I was afraid to pass by in front of my aunt’s home [the place where she was circumcised]. Yet after I grew up, got married, and gave birth to my first daughter, I realized that they did so out of love and care. They wanted to protect me, and assure a better life.

As long as everyone else in the village is also refusing to make this link between circumcision and being violated by the ones they love, women are able to validate this denial through groupthink.³⁶ Groupthink is defined as a “concept that refers to faulty decision making within a group. Groupthink occurs when groups are highly cohesive and therefore do not consider all alternatives. These groups desire unanimity at the expense of quality decisions.” Symptoms of groupthink include rationalizing poor decisions, believing in the group’s morality, sharing stereotypes that guide the decision, not expressing your true feelings, and using tactics to protect the group from negative information. In the case of Abu Hashem, villagers exhibit groupthink and unconsciously perpetuate the practice by refusing to challenge the issue publicly and by maintaining stereotypical beliefs about women’s sexual behavior. Those who deviate from this are essentially “punished” by the group, as men refuse to marry uncircumcised girls and neighbors look upon the family with disdain.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the analysis of our findings at three levels of investigation, we suggest applying lessons learned in Abu Hashem to the “FGM-free Villages Program” as follows:

FRAMING RECOMMENDATIONS

Reframing the Rights-holder

The experience of Abu Hashem suggests that the decision to frame FGM as a “vio-

lation of the rights of the girl child" is ineffective because it does not resonate with parents. Even while acknowledging that the practice violates girls' rights, parents reason that such rights are necessarily trumped by a mother's right to make decisions about circumcision and by the parents' collective responsibility to protect the girl's chastity, the family's honor, and the village's traditions. Because the concept of "duties" is so intimately tied to (and may be more important than) notions of rights, perhaps it would be better to frame the issue as a parental (firstly) and societal (secondly) obligation (or duty) to get rid of a norm that hurts girls and families. Another approach would be to create the sense that girls have an autonomous space in which to exercise their rights and duties. Many NGOs, including COST, have programs to teach girls how to take care of their physical and mental health through programs focusing on basic hygiene, education, and gender equality. Such programs can be framed within the context of a girls' duty to protect herself. By performing her duty of caring for her body, her body becomes her realm of governance, where she will feel more entitled to exert her own decision on whether or not she will be circumcised. Perhaps creating a realm in which girls have their own duties will eventually lead to increased respect for girls' rights and voices within the village.

Donor Attitudes

Because some international organizations are involved in the national coordination and design of the FGM-free Villages Program, there is also a need to increase the awareness of donor organizations, so that they understand that the issue of FGM is not simply one of false consciousness or Egyptians' ignorance about human rights. While framing the issue as a violation of the girl child garners a great deal of international support, donors need to understand that this frame fails to resonate with Egyptian villagers not because they cannot understand human rights, but because the frame puts individual rights above the society's collective welfare. The current frame not only focuses on the individual, but also goes so far as to lift up the one person within the society who has the least clout: the female child.

Donor organizations and program designing entities alike must make greater efforts to understand the decision processes (discussed in Section 3.3) that villagers go through in determining whether to circumcise their daughters. Programs for each village should be designed after assessing at what stage in this decision-making process most residents are positioned.

Messaging: Right to Sexual Fulfillment

Future programs should incorporate a stronger message that circumcision is not the best means to ensure that women are chaste and that women, in fact, have a right to sexual pleasure or sexual happiness within marriage. This message must stress that women who experience sexual pleasure are not necessarily of loose morality and that their husbands will also be more satisfied if their wives see sex as a joy and not a duty. This is a very polemical message, but because it speaks directly to the heart of the issue, we defer to Egyptian experts on the best way to incorporate it into the national campaign.

Language

Using Abu Hashem as a case study, it seems appropriate to frame the issue as female genital mutilation (FGM) at the national level while simultaneously referring to the practice as circumcision (*khittan*) when initially working with village residents. This approach allows the movement at the national level to maintain a high profile that will continue to attract funding from international sources. It also shows Egyptian ownership of a political stance on the issue that will eventually quiet cries that the term is only a Western one. Simultaneously, referring to FGM as *khittan* when working in the village allows community activists and NGO workers to build relationships with villagers by first using their own language (rather than alienating them by asserting that their women are mutilated). After engaging villagers in a dialogue about the issue, it seems appropriate to introduce the term "mutilation," as villagers' level of political consciousness changes.

It is important to note, however, that community leaders and NGO activists working to combat the practice should not go so far as to use terms like *tahara* (purity) or *mushahra* (indicating the ritual is done monthly) so as not to perpetuate misconceptions about the practice's purpose. Sticking to a value-neutral term like "circumcision" (at least initially) allows activists to strike that careful balance between challenging villagers' beliefs about the practice and alienating them altogether.

PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Modification of the Positive Deviants Approach to Create Family Programs

The data from Abu Hashem suggest that rather than identifying and training *individuals* as positive deviants, the positive deviant approach should be modified to identify and encourage *entire families* to publicly declare their stance against FGM and to encourage other families to do the same. This approach would give positive deviants greater credibility by showing *cross-generational* acceptance of a changing norm. Such an approach would be a more adequate response to the "collective action dilemma" faced by villagers who are open to changing their minds about the practice but unwilling to subject themselves to social pressure from within and outside of their own families. By encouraging families to decry the practice publicly, this process will also necessitate that members of a family reconcile themselves with the idea that they participated in causing unnecessary harm to the girls in the family. Implementation of this recommendation will require that NGOs be well-trained to lead families through this process of reconciliation and forgiveness before they can publicly denounce FGM.

Several families should be encouraged to declare their opposition to the practice simultaneously, so that no single family has to face social isolation upon being the first (or only) to deviate from the norm. This is an essential step, given Egyptians' high regard for community values.

Collective Action Solutions

The ultimate purpose of using family models would be to eventually have enough families publicly opposing the practice and start a movement to create a village-

wide declaration abolishing FGM.

As shown by the Abu Hashem case, programs should not only target families with daughters within circumcision age but other families and community members as well.

Taking the hierarchy of village power into account, it seems that acceptance of a village declaration would also require the buy-in of influential figures such as religious leaders, medical professionals, and the educated and land-owning elites. Thus, the idea of a village declaration perhaps should be introduced to village residents by these local leaders rather than by NGO staff once the NGO program has successfully brought such leaders on board.

Raising the Profile of Successful Village Models

Several respondents referred to "rumors" that other villages had abandoned the practice as their impetus for delaying the circumcision of their own daughters (refer to Section 3.4.1). Helping village residents realize that such rumors are indeed true may be an effective way to further empower them to stand against the practice. This could be done by coordinating exchange visits, whereby residents of existing FGM-free villages, like Deir El Barsha or Deir El Meimoon,³⁷ come to Abu Hashem to speak of the process by which they changed village norms. Similarly, focal NGOs like COST could facilitate visits by families of Abu Hashem to these existing FGM-free villages to witness for themselves the existence of villages like theirs that have changed their traditions. Perhaps this would lead Abu Hashem residents to craft creative strategies to do the same in their own village.

If such an approach is successful, it could be replicated among other villages and governorates. NCCM could incorporate this approach into the FGM-free Villages Program by identifying one village in each governorate that is on the cusp of change (i.e., shows evidence of changing attitudes but is still held back by societal pressure) and creating such exchange programs between these villages and Deir El Barsha or Deir El Meimoon. Upon deciding against the practice, these villages would then serve as the model villages to facilitate an increasing number of exchange programs within the governorate.

Use of COST Approach as a Model to Dispelling Religious Myths

While there has been little success in dispelling myths that FGM is related to religion *across the nation as a whole*,³⁸ the work of COST in Abu Hashem is a notable exception. Thus, as Egyptian NGOs across the country design anti-FGM programs, they should refer to the methods used by COST as a model. NCCM should work to publicize the COST approach, which took religious leaders into residents' homes and neighborhood meetings to dispel myths about FGM being a religious requirement, to the other focal NGOs who are coordinating implementation of the FGM-free Villages Program within the other five governorates.

Encouragement of MOH to Clarify Its Stance

Recent efforts by the MOH to train dayas to do traditional practices more hygieni-

cally have confused the legal status of FGM. This is an impediment to NGOs ability to bring these local practitioners on board with the campaign to eradicate the practice. Activists should encourage the MOH to clarify that FGM is illegal and train dayas and barbers on hygienic methods only with regard to other traditional procedures.

Involve Men in the Activism

Data from our research suggests that if done on a wider scale, replicating the approach used by the men's group in Abu Hashem, in which men declare that they will not marry circumcised women, may be effective. In order not to punish previously circumcised women (who had no say in their families' decisions to circumcise them), this model should be tailored so that men simply declare that they *will* marry (and, in fact, prefer) uncircumcised women. Men and women must discuss their views on the practice together, so that they no longer hold misperceptions about how the other views circumcision.

NGOs must provide forums for women and men to discuss openly their attitudes about the practice and misperceptions about how the each other views or is affected by the practice.

Health Approach: Increasing Sexual Health Education

Within the program design of the FGM-free Villages Program, there still seems to be great need for increased sexual health education as it relates to FGM because several practitioners discovered through their work and discussions with villagers that although prospects for marriage seem to be an important reason for continuing circumcision, few men can actually tell whether their wives are circumcised or not. Furthermore, it seems that the Arabic words for penis and clitoris are quite similar, thereby adding to villagers' belief in the myth that an intact clitoris will develop into a penis. Thus, the FGM-free Villages Program should also create models to vigorously address the following myths: a) that an uncut clitoris will grow into a penis, b) that the clitoris is unclean, and c) that removal of the clitoris is required to curb women's sexual appetite or spur the onset of puberty.

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Interviews

Sally El Mahby conducted these interviews in person throughout Egypt. They are detailed in her report to the authors (see El Mahby in sources).

Adele Abadir, program coordinator for USAID's work with CEDPA and COST

Amal Abdu El Hadi, New Woman Research Center; wrote analysis of FGM programs in the village of Deir El Barsha

Aziza Helmy, program director at USAID

Dr. Dina Naggar, program coordinator for the National Council of Childhood and Motherhood 60-Villages Model

Dr. Magi Helmy, Caritas Egypt, who has done extensive field work on FGM programs and research.

Dr. Marie Assaad, coordinator of the National Egyptian FGM Task Force and long-time activists on this issue.

Dr. Nahed Matta, program director at USAID

Mariam, field worker for FGM programs in village of Kafr El Gezira

Naama , field worker for FGM programs in village of Ezbet Gergess

Program directors at UNICEF

Sarah Goltz, program director of reproductive health programs at CEDPA

Sister Joanna Salib, manger of COST's primary health care center

Peter Neslon. First Secretary, Embassy of Switzerland, Cairo, Egypt. Unofficial remarks of Swiss Embassy.

Several residents of Abu Hashem: nine family members, the village sheikh, one daya, the village physician, and eight community activists.

¹ Mr. Ibrahim was acquitted by the Egyptian Court of Cassation (Supreme Court) just prior to publication of this report.

² U.S. Department of State.

³ *American Heritage Dictionary*.

⁴ Various parts of the information in this section (particularly sections 1.1 through 1.4) were gathered from the U.S. State Department fact sheet on FGM in Egypt (U.S. Department of State), the 1995 and 2000 Egyptian Demographic Health Surveys (EDHS; see El-Zanaty et al., 1996, 2001), and interviews with Egyptian activists and professionals (and were verified by multiple sources where possible). Dr. Fatma El-Zanaty, who conducted both EDHSs, was also consulted with regard to this information.

⁵ Barber—One who cuts hair and shaves or trims beard for an occupation.

⁶ Gypsy—a nomadic person, usually female.

⁷ U.S. Department of State.

⁸ Women expressed more agreement with the statement that female circumcision is required of religion than they did for any of the other statements presented to them: that husbands prefer circumcised women as wives (67.1 percent), that the practice prevents adultery (51.4 percent), that it can lead to death (29.1 percent), that it causes infertility (7.8 percent), that it makes childbirth difficult (7.5 percent), or that it decreases sexual satisfaction (37 percent).

⁹ Sheikh—a Muslim priest.

¹⁰ Disagreements between the sheikh of Al-Azhar and the grand mufti have been famously publicized but, according to a 1995 report on religion in Egypt (Al Ahram Centre for Political Studies), are often exaggerated. Nevertheless, the level of consensus among the Coptic community appears to be greater and may be a factor in the ability to convince Copts that the practice is unnecessary.

¹¹ According to the Web site for the Islamic Organization for Medical Sciences, one of the *hadiths* often quoted on the subject is that of Umm Attia, a woman who performed female circumcision. It is said that God's Messenger, Peace Be Upon Him, told her, "Umm Attia, restrict yourself to a sniff and do not overstrain; (this way) it is more pleasant in appearance and more satisfactory to the husband." Al-Iraqi in *Al-mughni 'an al-asfaar* says, "The *hadith* concerning Umm Attia is quoted by Al-Hakim and Al-Baihaqi, on the authority of Al-Dhahhak ibn Qais. Abu Dawood mentions something similar to this *hadith* of Umm Attia, and both versions are lacking in authenticity."

¹² Azami.

¹³ Adopted from El Mahdy.

¹⁴ Definition of class type was primarily based on yearly combined income in line with the World Bank's recent categorization.

¹⁵ El-Zanaty et al., 2001.

¹⁶ Whereas male circumcision is also performed without the child's consent, there is no strong evidence that the procedure leads the child to suffer any long-term physical, social, or emotional consequences.

¹⁷ Personal interviews were conducted with the COST staff members in January 2003, Beni Suef, Egypt.

¹⁸ In March 2003, the Ford Foundation funded a national consultation led by the Egyptian Fertility Care Society that brought researchers together on the issue of types of FGM. This team identified six gaps where greater research is needed on the effects of first and second degree circumcision. (See Ford Foundation Web site: http://www.fordfound.org/grants_db/view_grant_detail.cfm?grant_id=110461.)

¹⁹ Information from this section includes a combination of the John F. Kennedy School at Harvard

University's students' own analysis and a report submitted to the students by Sally El Mahdy, the medical anthropologist who conducted the field interviews in Abu Hashem, that includes her insights and analyses based on her more intimate cultural familiarity with the field. Where possible, we have indicated where significant portions of the text were adopted from Mrs. El Mahdy's report.

²⁰ Claessen, 368.

²¹ However, a negative answer to question 3 will not necessarily lead families to abandon the practice if they cannot also answer no to question 2. This is explained in greater detail later in the analysis.

²² Include citation here.

²³ Significant portions of this section adopted from Sally El Mahdy's report.

²⁴ *Daya*—Arabic word for the midwife or traditional birth attendant who is present during childbirth and performs many FGM procedures.

²⁵ It is important to note that this information was not clinically verified and is based solely on statements from interviewees. There may, in fact, exist women who have not been circumcised but are unwilling to share this information with neighbors for fear of being socially ostracized.

²⁶ Among activists at the national level, there is debate about whether the practice is easier to eradicate among Christian populations than it is among Muslim communities. The experience of COST shows that by working with both sheikhs and priests, it is possible to have an equal degree of success in dispelling this myth among both Christian and Muslim communities.

²⁷ Discussed in more detail in section 3.4.1.

²⁸ It is worth noting that respondents may have known or suspected that the interviewer had also been in contact with COST staff members and therefore been more inclined to say positive things about the organization. However, it is our general feeling that villagers do indeed have positive feelings towards COST and its staff.

²⁹ El Mahdy.

³⁰ Adopted from Sally El Mahdy's report.

³¹ This sentence, the next three bullets and first subsequent paragraph are adapted from Sally El Mahdy's report.

³² El-Zanaty et al., 2001.

³³ This question has a different percentage than that indicated in section 3.2 on "FGM as a tool to curb sexual desire" because section 3.2 refers to a question that asked women to list the benefits of FGM (32 percent mentioned "reduce sexual desire") whereas here we refer to a part of the survey in which women were asked whether they agree with the statement that FGM prevents adultery (41 percent agreed in 1995 and 51 percent agreed in 2000).

³⁴ Population Council, "Council Research Counters FGC Myths"; The ASCE study on this notes that marriage is not the cause of this shift in women's attitudes towards FGM. Rather, those women who are more likely to be married by the age of survey respondents are also more likely to support traditional views on female circumcision.

³⁵ El-Gilaby, Ibrahim, Lee, and Mensch.

³⁶ Borchers.

³⁷ A closer village in Beni Suef was recently discovered to have abandoned FGM without NGO intervention.

³⁸ As noted earlier, according to the EDHSs (El-Zanaty et al., 1996, 2001), between 1995 and 2000 the percentage of women surveyed who agreed that FGM is required of religion *increased* from 71.8 to 72.6. This increase occurred *despite* six years of anti-FGM activity across the country. Several activists interviewed agreed that myths regarding the practice's association with religion were the most difficult to combat.

PERSPECTIVES FROM RON KIRK

*Interview conducted by Daniel Delk**

In 2002, Ron Kirk made history when he became the first African American to win a primary runoff for the Senate in Texas. Although Kirk did not win the election, he continues to build coalitions and advocate for improved education and economic opportunities for people across Texas.

Ron Kirk was born in 1954 to a family active in the Civil Rights Movement in Austin, Texas. He was born the youngest of four children to Lee Kirk, the first black postal clerk in Austin, and Willie Mae, a schoolteacher.

Following high school, Kirk moved to Sherman to study political science and sociology at Austin College. There he received a Bachelor of Arts in 1976 and returned to Austin to earn a Juris Doctor from the University of Texas School of Law in 1979.

After law school, Kirk worked as a legislative assistant to Sen. Lloyd Bentsen (D-Tex.). Since then, he has served as assistant city attorney of Dallas, secretary of state of Texas under Gov. Anne Richards, and two-time mayor of Dallas.

HJAAP

How did you get involved in city politics and politics in general?

Kirk

...I guess, age-wise, I'm a little more contemporary than the two recent mayors [of Atlanta], [current mayor] Shirley Franklin and Bill Campbell. But like [former mayor Maynard Jackson] and many of us, growing up black and in the south, civic activism for us was a matter of necessity. I mean, it wasn't a choice. You kids grew up on Saturday going to baseball and basketball. We grew up on Saturday making picket signs. It's just because our parents were involved. And I believe for me, growing up in Austin, the capitol city, you had sort of the unique convergence of our African American community within a stone's throw of the capitol. So all of that piqued my interest. And as a child, the issue of civil rights, voting rights, equal access to housing education had an immediate sense [of urgency].

I was the last of the baby boom generation. I define my brothers and I as kind of the test tube babies of the Civil Rights Movement because we were the first to integrate high schools—not because we were brighter, but we just kept that cycle. So I think all of that just sort of assimilated us into the civil rights political movement.

** Daniel Delk is a 2004 Master in Public Policy candidate at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. He is a 2002 graduate of Morehouse College. Mr. Delk will enter the United States Foreign Service upon graduation from the Kennedy School.*

As I became a young man and went through my education, I had the opportunity to work and do research in our legislature while I was in college. I was a bill analyst when I was in law school. When I started my law career, I went to work with the legislature doing legal business and helping manage [Sen. Lloyd Bentsen's] political office. So it was just something I've always been fascinated by.

But, still, I always thought I would be involved from the legal standpoint. My earliest hero I can remember was Thurgood Marshall. I mean, even as a young boy I knew who Thurgood Marshall was. I knew who C.B. Bunkley and Heman Sweatt were—I always envisioned I was going to go to law school to be a great legal crusader. And it was only later that I began to seriously look at using politics as a vehicle for change, and, admittedly, earlier in my career as a matter of kind of civic and social change, but later just looking at government of how you shape cities and use public investment to change attitudes and behavior and build communities that everyone can have an opportunity to succeed. Because at the end of the day, that's all government is about.

Government should be an equalizer in people's lives. It shouldn't play favorites, not based on income, not based on ethnicity, not based on anything else. Government should operate in such a way that it will provide the resources for people to live richer, and fuller lives, and hopefully, and obviously, at the most cost-efficient, least financially burdensome level to the people that we serve.

HJAAP

On that note of government being an equalizer, what role do you think that affirmative action plays in that? Do you think it's still necessary?

Kirk

What I told someone last night...was how I felt about affirmative action. And in a little longer form I made the point to them that I made to you, and people are surprised by the way I put [it]. It's not so much what affirmative action does. What I challenge people to is, what does discrimination do? What discrimination does, in any form, is to say that "Blacks or women or Hispanics or gays or whoever—take your talent somewhere else. We believe we're good enough without you."

So rather than me feeling compelled to defend the value of affirmative action, I try to flip it and put it on people and ask, "Is the state of Texas better off or not because of its segregationist, racist past that Maynard Jackson's grandfather felt compelled to take his family and leave Texas? Atlanta and Georgia reap the genius of Maynard Jackson. Is the state of Texas better off because Tom Bradley had to take his genius and leave Calvert, Tex., and go to California, and have Los Angeles and the state of California reap the benefit of his genius? Are we better off because Willie Brown took his genius somewhere else?"

I mean, cities like Atlanta, Chicago, and Los Angeles prospered because tens of thousands of talented, young, black, now-professional lawyers and singers and doctors didn't believe that they could lead the kind of lives they wanted in places like Texas and Georgia and Mississippi. The beneficiaries of that talent are other communities. Now, all affirmative action is about is saying what we want to do is have the biggest talent pool that we can. I mean, in short order, what I love to close with

is—there's a fabulous quote about Jackie Robinson's impact on baseball that's fairly short but provocative—somebody said baseball became a better game when everybody got to play. Affirmative action is a way of saying America will be a better nation when everybody gets to play. All of our states, all of our businesses, all of our communities are going to be stronger, more rewarding, more productive when all of our children get to contribute. That means, we have to invest in all of their education.

In a state like Texas, with not just an exploding Hispanic population, but an exploding first-generation Hispanic population, it's a matter of economic imperative that we invest everything we can in making sure for new generation Americans, because that's what they are. I don't care where they came from; they are Americans now, and it is in our economic self-interest to make sure that these children have the best education, so that they can be productive. The same thing goes for our young black boys and girls and others. Our prisons are full of statistics and anecdotes as to what happens when you deprive and deny people access to hope and education and opportunity. And there are too many examples of what happens when you give people good opportunities.

HJAAP

Regarding the relationship between black and Latino constituencies—and being in Texas, there's much more of that interaction than you would in other southern cities, say in Atlanta [where it is] growing, but very minimal at best—do you feel that there are competing interests between these two groups? And if so, how did you as mayor balance those interests and try to meet the needs of both constituents?

Kirk

Well, you go back to the one thing that I told you at the beginning about the government being an equalizer. The one thing I can control is how I conduct myself, how I behave myself. I did everything I could to gain the respect of the Hispanic community because they were anxious. They were worried that they would be left behind, that I would only speak for the black community. And the best thing I could do was by my actions.... Everything we did said we're doing this for everybody and that we were creating opportunities for Blacks and Hispanics. I caught as much heat by virtue of the fact that we had probably more Hispanic businesses participating in city contracts than we had African Americans. But I think that it wasn't my job to go in and say, "Only do this for black people."

The fundamental premise of everything Dr. King fought for and believed in was [that] we can't become the oppressor. We will have fought this incredible journey for nothing if we turn around and engage in the same sort of destructive, denigrating behavior that we were subject to for generations. So I'm proud of the fact that the ultimate manifestation of how I was perceived in the Hispanic community was when I ran for the United States Senate and my [opponent in the primary was Hispanic]. And at the end of the day, in south Texas, which is predominately Hispanic, depending on which polls you look at, I either equaled him in the Hispanic vote or surpassed him. And this was because people believed I was someone who cared about those issues.

But the other thing that helped me, and it goes back to your question on affirmative action. The point I make—I envy Bill Campbell, not because there's any hating between Dallas and Atlanta, but I envy Bill Campbell. And I know it can be a burden. On one hand, Bill Campbell was judged against the standard of Maynard Jackson and Andy Young. But the other hand, Bill Campbell had somebody to pick up the fault, that he could call. Now, my burden was still eased because of the fact that Maynard Jackson and Andy Young had run Atlanta and that Atlanta did prosper. But having a Maynard to call me, even once in a while, to say, "Look, you might as well get ready for the fact that no matter what you do, there will be a bunch of black folks that say, 'We might as well not had no black mayor. I can't tell no difference.' And there are going to be a bunch of white folks saying, 'All he does is talk about black folks.'" And the other hand, Henry Cisneros—they were great role models, great mentors for me—I mean, I don't want to overstate how much they did, but just having them each, on their own, call me immediately after I was elected and say, "Look, we've been there, done that. All you can do, brother, is do the best you can. Try to do right. Be fair. And just keep pushing, keep fighting."

Maynard hosted me in Atlanta two weeks after I won my election [for mayor], even before I was sworn in. Part of it was to introduce me to people in Atlanta, but part of it he just took the time to say here's the stuff. And that helps you, because when it comes, you get consumed in so many ways. You're just trying to be a mayor. Shirley is trying to balance the budget, keep the police happy, the potholes filled. Then you get over here, and a roomful of folk come in and go, "You ain't doing enough for us." And there are times when you feel like you're trying to hold your head above water, and everybody else is pulling you under. And just having that knowledge base can be of great, great value. But at the end of the day you have to listen. You have to be willing to rely on the best.

But it helps to have a vision of where you want to go. Have that vision be one that as many people as possible can buy into. And that's not race specific. That's not income specific. I said that ad nauseam when I was mayor. Better schools, safer streets, better jobs—it's not a black, white, Hispanic, or Asian agenda. The best I can tell, you can get everybody in the room nodding their head to that. And to the degree we focus on those common denominators, those things that become a great agenda for Atlanta, or for Dallas, or for Boston, for America, we give ourselves to kind of move beyond race, and look how much we have in common.

I am extraordinarily proud of the fact I was the first black mayor of Dallas. But as I tell everybody, had I not succeeded—we're harder on anybody than anybody. And I know in Atlanta, boy, you all are rough. People don't say, "Oh, he was a black man." They go, "He wasn't worth a you-know-what." So at the core, to the degree we're talking public policy, never lose sight of what your job is. You weren't elected to be a black mayor. You were elected to be a mayor. You were elected to make your city more dynamic, to get the bad guys off the street, to clean up the parks, to try to do what you can to create wealth and business opportunities for the people who live there. And, if you do that, you'll be okay. Everything else will take care of itself.

HJAAP

I understand that much of your impetus for entering public policy or for entering politics had a lot to do with the environment that you were raised in. There was somewhat of a culture of activism, a culture of civic participation, which is something that we really see a lack of in my generation, in the younger generation. How do you think that we can activate that segment of our society? How can we recreate that culture of participation and engagement?

Kirk

One reason that I'm here at Harvard is that I don't have an answer to that question. To some degree I was flattered that I was even included. *Business Week* began to focus on the generational change in politics. I think we listened to all of that. There are too many people willing to look at Cynthia McKinney's loss and write it off as saying, oh, the Jewish community did something. Cynthia McKinney lost touch of her constituents, who are changing....

You are of the first generation where you can say your parents went to college and your grandparents.... This generation won't assume that I'm a Democrat just because my momma and daddy were. I have different issues.

But we've got to learn—you've got to tell us... We [my generation] can see firsthand the frustration of our parents, the opportunities that were denied. But on the other hand, there was also an immediate dividend to our civic participation. What I'm saying is that for that generation that came after civil rights, we thought if we can get the right to vote, we can end discrimination in housing, in schools. And we had this whole laundry list of things that happened. So people saw there was a nexus between their involvement and a change in their lives. All of a sudden we could live where we wanted. We had access to better jobs. And I'm talking in the broadest sense. I know there are exceptions.

The problem now, as I do believe, you've got a generation of folks that go, "Well, I ain't got into Harvard on no affirmative action. I got in because I graduated from the top of my class at Morehouse." And they don't understand that that's the core of affirmative action. It isn't that you graduated the top of your class. Your grandfather graduated at the top of his class. There have always been black folks. But they got denied only because of their color. But still I think part of it is incumbent on those of my generation, but maybe this new generation of leaders like Harold Ford Jr., Kwame Kilpatrick, and others will help us make that bridge between the generation of African Americans that are now growing up, who, for the most part, go through their lives without anybody telling you you can't do something because you're black and thinking that everything is okay.

I think we have to have a paradigm other than one that just says somebody might. We still have to make them understand that the quality of life and the freedoms that we enjoy in this country could be eroded if we don't vote. And the biggest threat potentially is going to be what happens with the courts.

If you look at Republican efforts to pack the court with young, conservative judges, it's the greatest threat to the lives and freedoms that we as people of color enjoy in this country. Now, I hope it doesn't come to that, but we have to have a dialogue. You've got to help me to educate why it is that young people don't vote. I

just hear them say, "Nobody is speaking to us." One of the sad realities of politics, last night somebody did that old quote on Willie Sutton, the old bank robber. They asked him why he robbed banks, and he said, "That's where the money is." Well, in a political race, if only 34 percent of the people are going to vote, and if 60 percent of those who do are going to be people like your mom and grandmom, then that's who politicians court. And there are a lot of politicians I went to extraordinary lengths in my campaign. I had campus rallies, I had Web sites, I had tons of young people involved in my campaign, and I think they'll be involved.

But it's pretty disheartening to show up on college campus after college campus and have five or ten kids show up to tell you why they don't care. I don't have the answer to that one, but I think it's one that we need to address in a critical way, not just for the African American community, but I think for the future of this country.

Voting trends in this country ought to alarm you. If you use as a validator of our way of life the fact that every other country in the world over the last twenty years has rejected socialism and anarchy and government that doesn't give people a voice in their government, that's the story of Apartheid being abolished, and the Berlin Wall coming down, and the Soviet Union dissolving. And if you look at the fanaticism with which those people vote, that ought to say something to us. However flawed it is, this whole principle of democracy and civic participation and one man, one vote is something that the world was willing to fight and die for, just like our grandparents were. And it is something that we ought to take seriously.

HJAAP

You talked about supply and demand. There is a finite amount of capital or manpower that elected officials or people seeking elected office have, and therefore they have to concentrate on the communities that have the greatest potential to elect them. How well is the Democratic Party meeting those demands?

Kirk

Thank you for bringing that up. If you judge it on the last election cycle, not well. But politics is cyclical. We would be ostrich-like if we were to say, "Oh, we don't have any problems." But I also don't want to go stand up on the top of the highest buildings and start jumping. If you study presidential elections over the last one hundred years, they swing. Whether it's an eight-year swing or a 12-year swing is a little bit dependent on how the party out of power is willing to force itself to address its deficiencies.

There's a very crude saying that they had in Cleveland I'll never forget. We took a group up to look at Cleveland's renaissance and how they got their act together. They were very honest about the fact that twenty years ago Cleveland was larger than Dallas or Atlanta. Cleveland had a million and two people, and today Cleveland is the size of Atlanta. Atlanta is, I think, a half million people, and Cleveland is just barely a half million. They thought that suburbs could exist apart from the city; everybody was divided. What they realized was, once they went down, they all went down equally. But they have this crude, wonderful saying that nothing clears the mind like a public hanging.

Let me tell you, for the Democratic Party, that was as close to a public hanging

as we've had. If we're smart, we'll learn from that. We'll hold on to those things that make us good Democrats. The fact is that America doesn't question that this is really the party of compassion, the party that creates opportunity and hope and that fights for those who can't fight for themselves. It fights for average men and women.

What we have to do is to convince America that if we are the party that can lift you out of poverty and get you a good job, then we're also the party of prosperity, and that we can manage your money, and that we are the party that can be trusted with defending America's very livelihood. Somehow there's been a disconnect between America seeing the Democratic Party as the party of fiscal responsibility, even after an administration that produced the largest surplus in history.

So we have work to do. If we're thoughtful and strategic about it, then we have the ability to be viable players. The other thing is we cannot continue to do the business in politics the way we've done it over last sixty years. That's particularly a challenge in the black community. I am extraordinarily impressed with some of the thought and the challenges of Harold Ford, Jr., and some other young leaders I've seen. They are challenging the party to wake up and not take people for granted. We've got to incorporate technology. We've got to deliver different messages.

There's a reason I did the hip-hop summit with Russell Simmons and his group. I find a lot of the music offensive. But this is the generation that exists because they felt that their needs haven't been spoken to. It's also a generation with an extraordinary amount of financial power. It isn't enough to show them and say, "Oh, now that you all got money, we like you." We've got to understand the issues that are important to them. I am a Democrat, and I will be a democrat. One of my commitments is to help us try to cross the gap and find ways to make our message more relevant.

HJAAP

So will we see you on the ticket in the future?

Kirk

Maybe. One thing I've learned: as much as people say they hate politics, it's a drug. It's addictive. I love it. On the other hand, I really believe in balance in life. Politics is so addictive, you have to almost have self-imposed periods in which you go under asylum, to kind of get away from it. And I desperately want it. I honestly believe this was the best opportunity for me to win. I believe it may be the best opportunity that we'll have to elect a person of color in Texas to the United States Senate for a long time. Because, as you see in Georgia, the United States Senate seats just don't come open that often. But it didn't happen. One of my other lessons I live by is that there's no point in having a plan B if you're not ready to execute it.

Even though I love politics, I remind myself everyday that it's what I do, it's not who I am. Who I am is a father and a husband. I've got two small kids, and I'm up here enjoying this and thinking, "Man, this is a wonderful experience, and I'm proud of you all." Then I'm looking at these price tags and going, "I've got to get busy." Because I want my girls to—whether they want to go to Hampton, or whether they want to go to Spellman, or whether they're going to Harvard—if I'm

going to push my children to have the educational skills to do that, then it's my responsibility to make sure that finances make it an option. In the immediate future, the most responsible thing I need to be doing is creating some wealth for my family and being as involved as I can in raising up my girls. They'll be gone before I know it. Once you're gone to college, you're gone. Your parents' work is done. You don't go home anymore. When you go home, you don't even see your parents. You just go home, take your laundry, and disappear. You show up for Sunday dinner before it's time to go back to school and party all week. We've got to love them while we can.

But at some point, I'll stay involved [in politics]. It just remains to be seen whether it's in an elective capacity or whether it's advocacy.

HJAAP

Thank you so much.

Kirk

Thank you.

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