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Asian American/Pacific Islander Community Development Corporations and the Just City: The Relevance of a Race-Conscious Approach

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Nakaoka, Susan Jean Keiko

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Asian American/Pacific Islander Community Development Corporations
and the Just City: The Relevance of a Race-Conscious Approach

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Urban Planning

by

Susan Jean Keiko Nakaoka

2014
ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Asian American/Pacific Islander Community Development Corporations
and the Just City: The Relevance of a Race-Conscious Approach

by

Susan Jean Keiko Nakaoka
Doctor of Philosophy in Urban Planning
University of California, Los Angeles, 2014
Professor Leobardo Estrada, Chair

Asian American/Pacific Islanders (AAPIs), the fastest growing racial group in the United States, are of increasing importance to struggles for the right to the city. AAPIs have a rich history of participation in movements for labor rights, language rights and civil rights, and a history that includes the establishment of community based organizations that work to establish a justice in ethnic neighborhoods. In the current political economy, these organizations can offer insight as to how to address the effects of neo-liberal policies and the larger impact of globalization on low-income neighborhoods and community wellbeing.
This dissertation examines the intersection of place and race for community-based organizations that utilize a social justice framework for neighborhood development.

The study investigates the unique context surrounding the formation of three well-known AAPI Community Development Corporations (CDCs) to analyze their evolving strategies of transformational community development: Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC) in Los Angeles, CA; Chinatown Community Development Center (CCDC) in San Francisco, CA and InterIm Community Development Association (InterIm) in Seattle, WA. Through a case study approach, the dynamics of a race-conscious strategy are analyzed. The findings reveal that AAPI CDCs have evolved into complex community development organizations that rely on the moral legacy of the Asian American Movement. Characteristics of AAPI CDCs include: a commitment to the context and history of ethnic neighborhoods; a horizontal leadership approach that stresses communal values and coalition building; the articulation of social justice into values that include a critique of neoliberal economic policies; and a sophisticated use of “inside” and “outside” political power. The transformational impact of AAPI CDCs includes the reclamation of space to historic ethnic neighborhoods and the establishment of AAPI low-income communities as significant players in the struggle to the right to the city.
The dissertation of Susan Jean Keiko Nakaoka is approved.

Lois Takahashi

Jacqueline Leavitt

Daniel Solorzano

Leobardo Estrada, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2014
For the Community Development professionals that work
tirelessly towards racial and social justice in our neighborhoods

and

For my parents, Kunio “Sam” Nakaoka and Carol Toshiko Nakaoka
who exchanged their dreams for mine
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of figures and tables ........................................................................................................ viii

Acknowledgements ................................................................................................................... x

Author Biographical Sketch ..................................................................................................... xvi

Chapter 1: Introduction and Key Concepts ............................................................................. 1
  • Community Development Corporations – Community Builders or Housing Producers?
  • The Diversity of Asian American/Pacific Islander Communities
  • Developing an AAPI Model for Community Development Praxis
  • Assumptions and Goals of Research
  • Critical Race Theory Frame
  • Key Concepts
  • Organization of the Dissertation

Chapter 2: Literature Review on Transformative Community Development ....................... 20
  • Rationale for Community Development: The Importance of Place and a Cultural Home Space
  • Transformative Community Development and Community Empowerment
  • Focus on Community Development Corporations

Chapter 3: Critical Race Theory as Theoretical Frame .......................................................... 34
  • Critical Race Theory
  • CRT as Praxis: Education and Social Work
  • CRT and Urban Planning
  • CRT and AAPI Community Development

Chapter 4: Research Design and Methodology ...................................................................... 49
  • Overview of Methods
  • CRT-guided Research Method
  • Case Study Design and Rationale
  • Preliminary Research and Relationship Building
  • Data and Analysis
  • The Three Cases

Chapter 5: The History of Asian American/Pacific Islander CDCs ........................................ 67
  • Examples of Community Development in Early AAPI History
  • Place-based Development in the U.S.
• Summary and Implications for AAPI Community Development

Chapter 6: The Little Tokyo Service Center ................................................................. 76
  • Neighborhood Historical Context
  • Formation of the Organization
  • Strategies and Philosophy
  • Negotiating Power Relationships
  • Community Empowerment
  • Summary and Conclusion

Chapter 7: Chinatown Community Development Center ........................................ 112
  • Neighborhood Historical Context
  • Formation of the Organization
  • Strategies and Philosophy
  • Negotiating Power Relationships
  • Community Empowerment
  • Summary and Conclusion

Chapter 8: InterIm Community Development Association ...................................... 143
  • Neighborhood Historical Context
  • The Civil Rights Movement and the ID
  • Formation of the Organization
  • Strategies and Philosophy

Chapter 9: Summary and Recommendations ........................................................ 168
  • Summary of Major Findings
  • Implications for Practice: Developing a Model for a Race-Conscious Approach to
    Transformative Community Development
  • Implications for Existing Literature
  • Conclusion

APPENDIX A – Interviewee Information and Pictures ................................................. 190
APPENDIX B – Real Estate Portfolios of Organizations .............................................. 195

References .................................................................................................................... 197
List of Figures, Images and Tables

Figure 1.1 The trajectory of mainstream CDCs (p. 3)
Figure 6.1 Current map of Little Tokyo, Los Angeles (p. 77)
Figure 6.2 May 1979 Organization Chart (p. 89)
Figure 7.1 Current map of Chinatown, San Francisco (p. 113)
Figure 8.1 Current map of International District, Seattle (p. 145)
Figure 9.1 Developing a Race-Conscious Model of Transformative Community Development (p. 181)

Image 6.1 LTSC 2012 staff picture (p. 78)
Image 6.2 Map of CRA project area, 1970 Redevelopment Plan (p. 81)
Image 6.3 Protest for Affordable Housing (p. 82)
Image 6.4 LTPRO Labor Strike (p. 84)
Image 6.5 LTSC original staff (p. 93)
Image 6.6 Rally for the recreation center (p. 104)
Image 6.7 Dean Matsubayashi and Bill Watanabe (p. 111)
Image 7.1 Community Tenants Association Monthly Meeting – Super Sunday (p. 114)
Image 7.2 International Hotel protest (p. 119)
Image 7.3 Chinatown youth working in alleyway (p. 125)
Image 7.4 Opening of the Clayton Hotel (p. 127)
Image 7.5 Cover of 1980s CCDC booklet on Orangeland (p. 134)
Image 7.6 Chinatown residents lobbying (p. 142)
Image 8.1 Bob Santos (p. 150)
Image 8.2 Donnie Chin (p. 152)

Image 8.3 Kingdome Protest (p. 154)

Image 8.4 Jenny Li, Tomio Moriguchi, Andrea Akita and Sue Taoka (p. 159)

Image 8.5 Samaki Commons housing complex (p. 167)

Table 1.1 US Cities with highest numbers of AAPI Individuals (p. 6)

Table 1.2 Socio-Economic indicators for underserve AAPI groups (p. 7)

Table 4.1 Data Collection Plan (p. 59)

Table 4.2 Organization Profiles (p. 65)

Table 5.1 The context of AAPI community development (p. 73)

Table 6.1 LTSC Timeline of Community/Neighborhood Context (p. 85)

Table 7.1 CCDC Timeline of Community/Neighborhood Context (p. 117)

Table 8.1 InterIm CDA Timeline of Community/Neighborhood Context (p. 149)
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“Sam” Nakaoka worked long hours in retail, often during graveyard shifts, and my mother worked as a secretary to make sure that my education and other needs were always paid for. Even now, as I complete the doctoral program in my mid-forties, they ask me if I need money for school. My mother also provided constant educational support – from reading to me every night as I grew up to completing my transcriptions for the interview for this dissertation. I hope that the completion of this project makes some of their effort worthwhile.

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Finally, this dissertation would not have been completed without my love, Manuel Joe Lares. He has been the individual who has lived this project with me day in and day out. He has suffered my challenges and celebrated my success. He has travelled with me to interviews, helped to organize documents, read countless drafts, argued theory and
performed countless other tasks in support of my research. He has driven me to class when I was too tired to go it alone, he has told me to stop being a cry baby when I was about to give up and he has danced in doorways to make me laugh when I thought I could not type one more word. Thank you for being my partner in life and in this project. I hope that you can be proud of our final product. Now it’s your turn.
Author’s Biographical Sketch

Susan Jean Keiko Nakaoka completed her bachelor’s degrees in Sociology and History at the University of California at Los Angeles in 1991, and dual master's degrees in Asian American Studies and Social Welfare at the University of California at Los Angeles in 1999. Her professional career includes over 8 years of working with the City of Los Angeles and the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles to provide youth development and job training services to residents of public low-income housing in the Los Angeles area. While with a national Welfare-to-Work program, she worked with residents of private, low-income housing to provide job training and workforce development services in sites located across the country. She has also served as a Master of Social Welfare intern at the Little Tokyo Service Center, has worked as the Statewide Coordinator for the 2000 Census at the Asian Pacific American Legal Center, and as the Director of Family and Community Services at the Venice Community Housing Corporation.

Susan’s academic appointments include faculty positions at the University of Hawai‘i School of Social Work where she oversaw a grant-funded mental health training program and the California State University, Dominguez Hills Master of Social Work program, where she serves as the Director of Field Education. In January of 2015, she will begin an Assistant Professor position at the Myron B. Thompsons School of Social Work at the University of Hawai‘i, Manoa. Susan’s research interests include race and social justice, Asian American and Pacific Islander community development, Critical Race Theory and practice, and Japanese American History.
Chapter 1: Introduction and Key Concepts

This dissertation will explore the evolution of selected AAPI CDCs to examine how their approach has aided them in achieving a social justice agenda despite shifting demographics and the recent economic downturn. Mainstream CDCs have become highly professionalized and are realizing a need to return to their community organizing roots in order to regain power in the new political economy. AAPI CDCs, however, have tended to and cultivated their racial justice origins and are well poised to lead the movement for social and economic equity in the city. Thus, a commitment to racial and economic justice in place-based development is not only possible, but may be the future of community development work in the current political economy. The purpose of this research is to: 1. Analyze the current identity crisis in community development praxis; 2. Uncover the AAPI CDC story in the fight for the just city and 3. Gain an understanding on how to develop a race-conscious model of transformational community development.

This chapter situates this research project in the context of the broader literature on CDCs, provides background on the demographics of AAPIs and AAPI CDCs in the US, and outlines the assumptions and goals for the project. This dissertation will contribute to urban planning scholarship by using Critical Race Theory (CRT) and transformative community planning concepts to clarify how ethnic-based nonprofit organizations can simultaneously occupy spaces of grassroots resistance and professional planning and development. Specifically, the history of three AAPI community development organizations will be analyzed to determine how they have utilized power to develop a racial and social justice paradigm to transform their local neighborhoods. The remaining
chapters of the dissertation describe the study design, analyze the three case study sites, and summarize the major findings to provide implications for praxis and future research.

**Community Development Corporations – Community Builders or Housing Producers?**

The field of community development is at a critical juncture. CDCs are the main drivers of localized, place-based community empowerment, but they are facing an identity crisis with regard to their role in neighborhood change. Many local community practitioners have moved towards a focus on regional property acquisition and business development (DeFilippis, 2008). However, critics argue that CDCs have drifted too far away from their origins, which almost always included community organizing, political protest and strategies for transformational change (DeFilippis, 2012; Peirce and Steinbach, 1987; Stoecker, 2003).

DeFilippis (2008) defines the historical phases of the evolution of CDCs, with the contemporary phase consisting of “next generation” or “next gen” organizations that are characterized as part of “neo-liberal communitarianism” (focus on neo-liberal economic strategies coupled with a focus on civic engagement).
Determining the current capacity of these organizations to enact neighborhood change is important to racialized communities, since CDCs play an important role in filling gaps left by government interventions and market-based development. Stoecker (1997) suggests a new model for CDCs, one that utilizes collaborative organizing for a community controlled planning process and a “high capacity multi-local CDC” (p.13).

In critiquing community economic development interventions over the past few decades, Cummings (2001) details how opportunities for large-scale organizing for economic justice were passed up in favor of market-based approaches to developing local communities. In addition, he describes how current place-based development reinforces residential cleavages based on race thus preventing cross-racial coalition building. Rather than abandon market-based approaches, however, Cummings suggests advocates convert it to “a progressive political strategy that fuses legal advocacy and grassroots organizing to achieve broad-based economic reform” (p. 408). Such a strategy would apply legal advocacy to social justice issues; would be situated in the broader progressive movement and would be spatially decentered with coalitions across city and regional borders.
Stoecker (2003) refers to the “development-organizing dialectic” and describes the contradictory roles of community organizing and community building concluding that, although uncommon, certain organizations are able to develop a complex strategy to combine the two functions in one organization. He recommends that we learn more about this dialectic and assist organizations who want to utilize community organizing in their development efforts.

Bratt and Rohe (2005) describe several dilemmas facing the future of CDCs, one of which is described here: “CDCs need to be financially responsible, savvy developers, BUT these roles may conflict with community advocacy and organizing” (p. 70). In some ways, this shift shows promise, as well-intentioned community organizations, rather than large corporations, garner more real estate for affordable housing and develop social enterprise that can help disadvantaged members of the neighborhood. Those who reminisce about involvement in social protest are left wondering, however, if this focus on capital acquisition (through housing production and social enterprise) has diminished the original community building/social justice mission for local communities, thereby reducing chances for transformational neighborhood change (DeFilippis, 2008).

In the aftermath of the housing crisis and the Great Recession, CDCs and other nonprofit housing entities are slowly venturing to discuss the need for a social movement in housing and social equity reform. Thus, the imperative of a social justice agenda in community development has recently resurfaced. A 2013 industry blog post muses on the future of CDCs:

“The new, young, emerging CDCs that I’m thinking about should have an organizing/activist bent. But it’s not just about organizing. It’s also about commitment to a place and commitment to the people who make up the place and
make the place special. And about having an entrepreneurial/activist approach to work in their chosen place, to be innovative and try new things even while honoring and respecting those who have come before... “(Ishimatsu, 2013).

AAPI CDCs occupy a unique space in this shifting landscape of place-based development. Born out of anti-racist community organizing, a social justice approach to development is central to the identity of these organizations. Currently, these organizations are experiencing a changing of the guard – formed in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the agencies are losing founding board members and executive staff to retirement, other interests and failing health. New leadership brings new vision, yet an obvious question is whether these organizations are more likely (than non-ethnic-based organizations) to retain their commitment to social and economic equity for their local neighborhoods or if professionalization has moved them afar from their grassroots beginnings. To explore this issue, this project focuses on successful ethnic-based AAPI CDCs that have maintained over its history a social justice strategy for development: a focus on self-determination, local control, community organizing and transformational change.

The Diversity of Asian American/Pacific Islander Communities

As the fastest growing racial group in the U.S., AAPIs are experiencing rapid shifts in the types of neighborhoods in which they live. For example, the states with the highest growth in the Asian American population between 2000 and 2010 are Nevada, Arizona, North Carolina, North Dakota and Georgia (Asian Pacific American Legal Center, 2011). Although AAPIs are becoming integrated into communities that extend beyond the traditional ethnic enclaves in urban areas, they are still targets of social and economic discrimination. As a result of their growing geographic and economic class diversity, the
manner in which they can employ power to mediate discrimination and oppression has also shifted. These trends will be discussed later in the context of each case study, however, it is clear that issues of race, space and power intersect to form unique challenges for AAPI community development efforts.

The AAPI population in the United States is 14.7 million, a 46% increase from the 2000 to the 2010 Census (US Census Bureau, 2012). In 2010, 46.2% of the “Asian Alone or in Combination with other races” group live in the West Region, with the South Region a far second with 22.5% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Because the AAPI experience in the United States started in Hawai`i and the West Coast, investigating these regions provides a rich and complex set of variables based on history, context and racialization of immigrants over time.

Table 1.1 US Cities with highest numbers of AAPI individuals (West Coast/Hi cities are highlighted)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metropolitan Statistical Areas* with largest number of AAPI residents (2010)</th>
<th>Asian Alone</th>
<th>Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander alone</th>
<th>Total AAPI Population</th>
<th>Ranking (MSAs with highest AAPI population in US)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>533,000</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>536,000</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas</td>
<td>342,000</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>348,000</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honolulu</td>
<td>418,000</td>
<td>91,000</td>
<td>509,000</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>1,885,000</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>1,920,000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>1,878,000</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>1,887,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>1,006,000</td>
<td>32,000</td>
<td>1,038,000</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle</td>
<td>393,000</td>
<td>28,000</td>
<td>421,000</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
<td>517,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>521,000</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Metropolitan Statistical Areas with more than 750,000 Persons in 2010

AAPI groups have a history of experiencing displacement and exclusion from coveted neighborhoods coupled with strong resistance, community activism and
empowerment strategies that asserted their rights to the city. Because certain segments of the AAPI population have been experiencing shifts to more desirable suburban enclaves (or “ethnoburbs”), there is a perception that AAPIs no longer require affordable housing services. AAPIs are often perceived as one monolithic community, their “model minority” status infringing on the perceived need for anti-poverty programming (Chang, 1993; Wu, 2014). This widely held stereotype complicates community development efforts for low-income neighborhoods, as the general public, politicians and funders overlook poverty and disinvestment within AAPI communities. Due to the diversity within the community, various groups are often forced to compete for limited resources, as they try to justify which ethnic group is most in need, yet most capable of receiving, scarce funding resources (Le, 1993).

Recent statistics on the state of impoverished Asian Americans are shown in Table 1.2. Figures belie the stereotype of the “model minority” and point to areas of concern.

### Table 1.2 Socio-Economic Indicators for Underserved AAPI Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AAPI Group</th>
<th>Percent of linguistically isolated households*</th>
<th>Percent with high school degree</th>
<th>Per Capita Income</th>
<th>Poverty Rate</th>
<th>Households who receive cash public assistance</th>
<th>Percent who live in overcrowded housing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>4.1% **</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>$27,100</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>$21,542</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>$26,118</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese (Except Taiwanese)</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>$30,061</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladeshi</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>$16,784</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laotian</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>$16,585</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>$21,708</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hmong</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>$10,949</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodian</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>$15,940</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Asian Pacific American Legal Center, 2011
Pacific Islander communities also fare below average rates in terms of educational attainment and English proficiency as well as their per capita income ($19,051) and higher than average rates for poverty (15%) (Empowering Pacific Islander Communities and Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Los Angeles, 2014). An important distinction should be made with regard to Pacific Islander communities within the AAPI context. Although the case studies that follow are primarily Asian American models, I have chosen to include Pacific Islanders within the context of “AAPI” development in this study. The reasons for this are varied. First, the researcher’s perspective and values are shaped by experience and interviews within the Hawai`i context, which centers a Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian approach. Some of the interviews completed as a pilot study in Hawai`i have been incorporated here to inform my theory of AAPI community formation and development. In addition, one of the cases includes outreach and programming for Pacific Islanders in Seattle (InterIm CDA). Finally, the AAPI CDC movement includes Pacific Islanders in the conception of a larger national identity. Thus, the multi-ethnic approach of the community development field warrants the “AAPI” vs. “Asian American” label for this research.

The downfall of using this label is one of the major limitations of this project. A full discussion of the Pacific Islander context in relation to place, land and community building is not included. The history of colonization and complexities of being subsumed with the larger Asian American political identity is, regrettably, only minimally dealt with in this project. Future research will focus on models of indigenous development that center on reclaiming land, history and culture and the racialization of Pacific Islander communities.

**Developing an AAPI Model for Community Development Praxis**

AAPI community development organizations have a long history of utilizing
endogenous community empowerment strategies to achieve social justice. Characterized by a complex web of mutual aid (formal and informal organizations), early AAPI community development strategies incentivized social capital and attempted to strengthen civic participation for economic and political gains (Chan, 1991; Takaki, 1989). Some examples of community development are Chinese immigrant mutual aid societies in the mid-1880s (which provided social support, micro-business loans and cultural activities), Japanese Buddhist churches in the early 1900s and Japanese and Filipino labor rights organizations in the early 1900s (Chan, 1991; Ichioka, 1988; Takaki, 1993).

During the past century, these ethnic-based community development strategies have evolved and include formalized approaches that are integrated into city and regional planning systems. These organizations “play a critical role in meeting the community and economic needs of an underserved and diverse community” (Huh and Hasegawa, 2003, p.18). AAPI CDCs with over thirty years of history include Asian Americans for Equality in New York, CCDC in San Francisco, East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation in Oakland, InterIm CDA in Seattle, LTSC in Los Angeles, and the Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation. These organizations were formed to serve early immigrant groups (mostly Chinese and Japanese Americans) and their struggles with displacement in their ethnic neighborhoods. Over the years, the organizations have survived economic downturns, funding woes and demographic shifts in their communities.

More recently, in the past two decades, CDCs serving Pacific Islanders and other Asian immigrant/Asian American groups have formed and include issues involving environmental justice and social entrepreneurship. Chhaya Community Development Corporation in New York, Nanakuli Housing Corporation in Honolulu and Thai Community
Development Corporation in Los Angeles are examples. In 1999 the National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development (National CAPACD) was formed “to be a voice for the community development needs of AAPI communities and to strengthen the capacity of community based organizations to create neighborhoods of hope and opportunities” (National CAPACD, n.d.). These models have not been analyzed in the community development literature.

Questions remain as to how these community driven institutions are best able to move forward an AAPI agenda (or if there is one), how race, gender, power and privilege interact to support different populations and how the right to the city is managed in diverse communities. Central to these questions is the need to define the importance of place and space within the neighborhood context.

This dissertation addresses fundamental gaps in current community development and planning literature and develops a framework for social justice practice and policy in racialized communities. The analysis will provide examples of CDCs that have achieved success in the quest to balance a market-based approach with community-centered values. With a focus on AAPI CDCs with at least a 30-year history, the evolution of long standing organizations illustrates the manner in which practitioners rearticulate a social justice perspective in the changing political economy. The research questions are listed in the section below.

**Assumptions and Goals of Research**

There are several assumptions that underlie the research questions and methods of this project:
• US community development has been uneven, with privileged places and groups benefitting from policies that are race-neutral or blatantly racially exclusive (Squires and Kubrin, 2004).

• Residential segregation and urban ethnic enclaves create race-based realities for low-income communities of color. These realities include higher levels of crime, lower quality schools, high unemployment or underemployment and susceptibility to displacement due to gentrification (Massey and Denton, 1998).

• Ethnic-based community development organizations (not all of which are CDCs) have experienced major successes in transforming their local neighborhoods. These successes are evident in changes in the built environment, significant gains in affordable housing stock and access and engagement in local, regional and national politics (Gaston and Kennedy, 1987; Marquez, 1993).

• The transformational strategies of these organizations can offer important lessons in terms of the integration of social justice methods to solicit meaningful community engagement and socially and economically just development.

Key to understanding these dynamics are analyses of power within and external to these organizations. The following research questions and sub-questions are targeted towards examining AAPI CDCs and their potential to provide the basis for a new model of transformative community development practice.

The CDC movement started in conjunction with the civil rights movement, a logical next step in the fight for equity in African American communities. The calls for empowerment and community control led to the development of these organizations to provide the mechanism to facilitate neighborhood change. In Asian American communities, activists participated in the larger civil rights movement and then turned to their own neighborhoods to identify needs and expose inequities. By examining the uneven development in their neighborhoods, they began to question the distribution of resources and the impact of past racist policies on their elders.
As shown in Table 1.3, the research questions in this dissertation situate the role of AAPI CDCs in the larger CDC movement and examine the impact of the Asian American movement on their evolution over time. The first research question is: How does the legacy of the Asian American movement continue to motivate community development? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to examine how community-based practitioners conceptualize “neighborhood” and their commitment to ethnic places. Tied to these questions, are the early stories of injustices and resistance by early immigrants in these same spaces. Finally, answering these questions will uncover the community’s cultural wealth, consisting of coalitions and grassroots groups that steadily fought racist policies and actions, which also plays a role in motivating current work to preserve the historic ethnic neighborhood.

The second research question is: What were the sociopolitical conditions that necessitated the formation of the organizations? In answering this question, sub-questions explore the social justice issues during the early history of the CDCs as well as the organizational models used during the early years. The reasons that a group chooses a CDC structure are important because they can speak to underlying goals and theories of social change. This third research question is: How do key stakeholders of the organization define the values and mission of the organization and how is this communicated over time? Through examining the values during the formation of the organization, the philosophy of leadership and the manner in which these values were articulated, and how these values are reaffirmed over time, an analysis can identify the manner in which a commitment to social justice changes over time. Other sub-questions ask how the organizations respond to
growth and external demands and the role of race and ethnicity in formulating the strategies and organizational culture.

The final research question is: How do AAPI CDCs negotiate the balance between grassroots activism and collaborative approaches with the local power structure? Answering this question invokes a variety of sub-questions: Are the strategies of AAPI CDCs reformatory or transformative? How have their strategies moved beyond asset-building and/or social service provision to utilize power to initiate social change? How do they cultivate and maintain relationships with local elected officials and other power brokers? How do community-based planners engage and empower residents and stakeholders of their own communities? How is intersectionality utilized and experienced within the power relations of the organizations? Finally, what is their current role in the CD field? Uncovering the answers to these questions provides tangible examples of how practitioners remain true to social justice values and techniques while developing professional skills and relationships within the local and regional power structure.

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<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Sub-questions</th>
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| 1. How does the legacy of the Asian American movement continue to motivate community development? | a. How do community-based practitioners conceptualize “neighborhood” and their own commitment to ethnic places?  
b. How are the early stories of the injustices faced by early immigrants incorporated into neighborhood spaces?  
c. How does the community’s cultural wealth contribute to community development efforts?  
d. How do organizations utilize the stories of struggles for social justice to motivate new generations of community practitioners? |
| 2. What were the sociopolitical conditions that necessitated the formation of the organizations? | a. What were the social justice issues being addressed in the early history of AAPI CDCs?  
b. How did community-based practitioners organize themselves through advocacy and grassroots strategies?  
c. Why did they choose the CDC as a vehicle for social change and how did they modify this model? |
3. How do key stakeholders of the organization define the values and mission of the organization and how is this communicated over time?

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<td>b. What was the philosophy of leadership at the time of the formation of the organization and how was this articulated?</td>
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<td>c. How do they respond to growth inside the organization and to external demands from the community?</td>
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<td>d. How is a social justice mission reaffirmed over time?</td>
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<td>e. What is the role of race and ethnicity in formulating CD strategies and organizational culture?</td>
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4. How do AAPI CDCs negotiate the balance between grassroots activism and collaborative approaches with the local power structure?

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<td>d. What is their current role in the CD field?</td>
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**Critical Race Theory Frame**

A Critical Race Theory (CRT) framework is utilized to answer the research questions. Adapted from legal studies, this framework is useful to analyze the historical context of multi-ethnic neighborhoods and detail the intersections of power, privilege and oppression in place-based strategies to provide recommendations for transformational community development. The CRT frame provides for analysis on several levels – the history and context of these communities are mired in raced, classed and gendered oppression that led to spatial injustices. CRT centers this intersectional web of oppression and exposes the power and privilege driving the resulting inequities. CRT's origins in analyzing the impact of legal remedies are foundational to studying the impacts of laws, court decisions and policies that create spatial injustices as well as provide avenues for race-based remedies (Bell, 1976; Bell, 1979; Bell, 1992). CRT also provides a framework
for social change models in social work and education, which can be utilized to create a paradigm for transformative community planning.

An AAPI CRT frame centers the use of narratives and counter-narratives in telling the history of historic ethnic neighborhoods, it critiques the use of the neoliberal-constructed model minority trope in examining the reality of low-income AAPI groups and in determining policy solutions for poverty, and it supports race-based remedies, such as an ethnic-based, progressive organization to provide solutions for its own neighborhood.

This type of progressive community-centered planning focuses on systems change and community cultural wealth while centering on local knowledge and self-determination. This work is particularly timely given the race-neutral policies inherent in the neoliberal political economy that ultimately leads to forms of “color-blind racism” in attending to the needs of low-income communities of color. This dissertation shows that AAPI community organizations are implementing approaches that can be used as models to achieve neighborhood transformation with meaningful community engagement.

Planning theory and community development have evolved from models such as advocacy planning, communicative planning, radical planning and transformative planning. This dissertation focuses on principles of radical and transformative planning to investigate applicability to community development. These principles of transformative community development include attention to the following concepts: Social and racial justice, color-blind racism, a race conscious strategy, critical place-based strategies, and community cultural wealth.
Key Concepts

Fainstein (2005) asserts that social justice, or the “just city,” is the ultimate goal of urban planning. Diversity in terms of race, class, gender and citizenship must be incorporated into the distribution of power in order to create a just city (Sandercock, 1997). Harvey (2009) discusses social justice and spatial systems and defines social justice as “a particular application of just principles to conflicts which arise out of the necessity for social cooperation in seeking individual advancement...the principle of social justice therefore applies to the division of benefits and the allocation of burdens arising out of the process of undertaking joint labour” (p. 97). Marcuse (2009) speaks to the need to broaden the distributional perspective of justice:

“...distributive justice is a necessary but not sufficient aspect of a normative pitch in planning, which is badly needed. But, while necessary and needing buttressing, it fails to address the causes of injustice, which are structural and lie in the role of power. The Just City sees justice as a distributional issue, and aims at some form of equality. But a good city should not be simply a city with distributional equity, but one that supports the full development of each individual and of all individuals, a classic formulation” (p. 2).

Spatial justice and racial justice are paradigms within the broader context of urban justice theory that are especially pertinent to achieving a model of transformative community development. Spatial justice refers to notions of justice with an “assertive and explicit perspective” that centers space and geography (Soja, 2010). Although racial justice can be subsumed by the larger category of social justice movements, it can be succinctly defined as work “to secure equal rights and greater opportunity for racial and ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples” (Ford Foundation, 2014). Racial justice utilizes a critical lens to view oppression and hierarchies according to race, ethnicity and gender as opposed to frameworks that utilize a color-blind approach to social equity.
Movements focusing on racial justice are crucial in the contemporary age in which color-blind racism has become the norm. Bonilla-Silva (2010) describes this ideology that “explains contemporary racial inequality as the outcome of nonracial dynamics” (p. 2).

The four central frames of his concept of color-blind racism are: abstract liberalism, naturalization, cultural racism and minimization of racism. Pulido (2000), in discussing environmental justice, asserts that it is the invisible yet powerful dynamic of White privilege, rather than overtly racist acts, that need our full attention and analysis.

Deconstructing White privilege in spatial justice is a crucial component to a race-conscious strategy.

“A race-conscious strategy to community development would:

...identify how race continues to shape the policy decisions affecting political representation, housing location, transportation, social services, and access to jobs. It would move beyond the simplistic black-white dichotomy to investigate how racial barriers operate across ethnic, class, and gender lines. And it would make an explicit commitment to ending institutionalized as well as individual acts of racial exclusion” (O'Connor, 2012, p. 26).

The consideration of race and space in community development raises the notion of the importance of place. A critical pedagogy of place can connect these considerations, for example, Gruenwald (2003) discusses this importance in education: “place-based education’s call for localized social action and critical pedagogy’s recognition that experience, or Freire’s (1970/1995) ‘situationality,’ has a geographical dimension” (p. 9).

This dissertation analyzes how certain ethnic-based community development organizations have successfully adapted a critical place-based approach to community development.
When analyzing spaces that are associated with low-income communities, there is a tendency to view the deficits, and ignore the assets of the people and history of place. The concept of community cultural wealth utilizes a CRT frame to shift the focus from a deficit-based approach to community analytics to centering “the array of cultural knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed by socially marginalized groups that often go unrecognized and unacknowledged” (Yosso, 2005, p. 69). All of these concepts are important in developing transformative community development initiatives that create opportunities for community empowerment.

This dissertation highlights the stories and narratives of ethnic-based organizations to create best practices that are more reflective of diverse urban community settings. Their voices in this dissertation create a model of transformative community development practice, rooted in a critical place-based approach to social justice.

**Organization of Dissertation**

The dissertation is divided into nine chapters. The first chapter provided an introduction to the field of community development and the CRT framework. It also defined the key concepts important to the discussion. The second chapter provides a review of the planning literature on community development including a definition of community empowerment and transformative community development practice. Chapter Three is a detailed discussion on the CRT paradigm as it relates to practice and to AAPI communities. Chapter Four describes the case study method, the criteria for selecting the organizations, the study design and provides an introduction to the three cases. Chapter Five describes the history of AAPI CDCs as they fall within the context of national CDC policy and the broader CDC movement.
Each case is then presented in an individual chapter in the order that they were completed: Chapter Six on LTSC in Los Angeles, Chapter Seven on CCDC in San Francisco, and Chapter Eight on InterImCDA in Seattle. Chapter Nine provides the summary of the findings and recommendations for practice and further research.
Chapter 2: Literature Review on Transformative Community Development

The urban planning literature on community development includes research that establishes the importance of place and focuses on a social justice-oriented, transformative approach. Also important to review is the literature on community empowerment and the history of the CDC movement as a vehicle for transformative neighborhood development.

Rationale for Community Development: The Importance of Place and a Cultural Home Space

The important role that place plays in claiming rights to urban space has long been discussed in the urban theory and place-making literature (Anderson, 1987; Harvey, 1973; Hayden, 1997; Soja, 1999). Dolores Hayden in her often-cited The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History (1997) argues that cultural claims to space are often tied to the memory of marginalized and displaced communities. Moreover, she suggests that identity politics (around race, gender, class, and sexuality) are pivotal to issues related to urban design, history, and the built environment and cannot be separated from those discussions. The cultural home space furthers this notion of the importance of place for racialized communities and indicates emotional and historical ties to a neighborhood (Nakaoka, 2012).

The idea of spatial justice implies a definitive spatial perspective in discussions about changing geographies and politics (Soja, 2010). Jenks (2008) eloquently elaborates on this as it relates to Los Angeles: “Japanese Americans’ claim to Little Tokyo is essential not only to their collective identity as an ethnic group enduring the shifts of domestic racial relations and global political and economic flows, but also to their efforts to understand the national political significance of their own history and their contemporary responses to
questions of national belonging” (p. 242). The meaning and memory of place is especially salient for communities of color, often historically subjugated to segregation, displacement, and other types of involuntary movement.

**Beyond Chinatowns and the branding of ethnic space.** “Chinatown” is the most iconic image of the ethnic enclave in popular United States culture. Movies and folklore use “Chinatown” as a site of grimy crime scenes, immigrant culture and food and subpar housing. Often referred to and portrayed as a distinctive, exotic neighborhood, Chinatown connotes specific images within the American psyche. Chinatowns in New York and San Francisco are the largest, with visitors and local residents alike venturing into the neighborhoods for ethnic foods and other forms of cultural consumption. When discussing New York’s Chinatown, Lin (1998) explains, “in the public imagination...Chinatown has historically been inscribed as an overcrowded, dilapidated place, plagued with social wretchedness and vice...though many people comfortably tour the district for its visual exoticism and culinary delights, this voyeurism is often backgrounded by the persisting suspicion and insinuation of a mysterious clannish quarter” (Lin, 1998, p. ix). This imagery has consequences for the residents and local community development practitioners, “the local government, similarly, treats Chinatown as a neighborhood that requires cleanup, correction, and redevelopment” (Lin, 1998, p. x).

Peter Kwong (1979, 1996) has written extensively about New York’s Chinatown. In the face of virulent anti-Chinese sentiment, Chinese immigrants forged enclaves that provided essential services, housing and spaces for organizing. It also provided the location for a traditional social structure made up of regional and family associations. These social and mutual aid organizations were called “fongs” or “tongs” and provided job
referrals, rotating credit loans and opportunities for developing social capital for joint ventures (Kwong, 1979). Although these organizations provided valuable support for immigrants, they often suffered from rivalry and from elitism, in which the leaders were elders who were wealthy merchants and more conservative. Thus, they often excluded the low-income or working poor (Kwong, 1979).

As the Chinese community grew and subsequent generations moved out of Chinatown to establish “ethnoburbs” such as Monterey Park, California and Flushing in Queens, New York, the image of success for Chinese Americans obscures the poverty faced by those still living in Chinatown.

“However successful Chinese communities may appear to outside observers, most residents are actually not succeeding. Hong Kong investors are attracted to Chinatowns because they provide ample cheap labor. Residents in the Chinese communities are still mainly working-class. A typical waiter employed by a Chinatown restaurant works sixty hours a week, for $200 a month, with no overtime pay, no health benefits, and no job security. Chinatown families live in run-down, roach-infested, three-room railroad flats, with usually three generations living together.” (Kwong, 1996, p.6).

Wong (1995) discusses the manner in which portrayals of Chinatown in the US imaginary serve the sociopolitical needs of the framers of that imagery. As “contested terrain” in urban spaces, Chinatown becomes a concept that requires defense, as advocates are “put in the position of having to define what Chinatown was not, rather than developing a language in the popular discourse that could establish what Chinatown was” (Wong, 1995, p. 3). This dissertation contributes to the literature on what AAPI historic neighborhoods were, rather than what they were not.

Place and Development. In translating the importance of place to community economic development policy, Crane and Manville (2008) concisely sum up a central
debate – whether a place-based or people-based approach is most effective in resolving dilemmas in underserved neighborhoods. Place-based community economic development has limitations in effectiveness of coverage and targeting (does economic growth reach intended participants?) and mobility (does it discourage residents from moving out once they make economic gains?). Although increasing transfer payments to individuals (a people-based approach) may provide the quickest and most targeted approach to economic growth, Crane and Manville (2008) suggest:

“...even in a world of generous transfer payments, many low-income households are clustered in areas characterized by low levels of property wealth and high numbers of renters. In many such circumstances, vital local public goods are likely to be underprovided, and it is appropriate for policy makers to channel money to those places for schools, policing, and infrastructure. Even if our ultimate goal is the complete deconcentration of poverty (a goal toward which America has made real progress in the last twenty years), we should acknowledge that in the meantime much poverty is likely to remain spatially bounded. And so long as that is so, there will be a place for place based economic development strategies” (p. 7).

While describing the importance of place in relation to poverty and the plight of low-income, inner city communities, Teitz (1989) remarks that raising the human capital “of people living in ghetto conditions is a problem beyond the scope of local effort, and perhaps beyond any feasible program” (p. 119). He argues for larger scale reform versus an approach solely focused on providing skills to individuals living in low-resourced neighborhoods. Thus, he suggests that the effectiveness of localized development depends on political mobilization and coalition-building to effect long-lasting policy change on large scale employment trends.

In 1997, Teitz again examines the issue of scale as he examines the field of equity planning and community development in inner cities. He suggests that equity and progressive planners rely primarily on local organizations and CDCs to facilitate their
politically progressive approaches. Teitz uses Chicago, under Robert Mier’s direction, as an example of how these models can be translated to government interventions. Larger economic trends and failed government programs are gloomy indicators for economic development in distressed communities, thus some cities may “have to rely mostly on themselves for salvation. For that purpose, a doctrine of endogenous development may not be the worst basis for planning” (Teitz, 1997, p. 790). Thus, Teitz acknowledges the need for community development from the ground up alongside linkages, resources and partnerships with exogenous systems. Missing from the literature is a more complex notion of place within AAPI communities, one that moves beyond theories of ethnic enclave formation and discusses contemporary strategies of development.

**Transformative Community Development and Community Empowerment**

The defining characteristics of an empowerment approach to planning practice are unclear as the theory is spread across various disciplines. Freirian concepts of empowerment have been used in various fields of practice such as social work, planning, and community health (Busrstow, 1991; Perkins and Zimmerman, 1995; Wallerstein and Sanchez-Merki, 1994). Rocha (1997) explains the lack of a clear, agreed upon definition of empowerment for practice: “For planners, looking for answers in the empowerment literature provides little help. Due to its interdisciplinary nature, the literature is diverse and incoherent, obscuring its relevance to many facets of planning practice” (p. 31). A clear definition of community empowerment is missing from the literature.

Two important scales of empowerment, however, are useful for developing a more substantive community-centered approach in community development. Arnstein’s (1969) ladder of citizen participation provides a typology for community work that spans from
non-participation (manipulation and therapy) to tokenism (informing, consultation and placation) to citizen power (partnership, delegated power and citizen control). Rocha (1997) elaborates on Arnstein and describes the ladder of empowerment that defines 5 types of empowerment from individual (atomistic individual empowerment) to community empowerment (political empowerment).

Margaret Ledwith (2011) invokes empowerment as she lays the groundwork for the praxis of radical community development in the UK, stating that, “Radical practice has a transformative agenda, an intention to bring about social change that is based on a fair, just and sustainable world...Community Development is never static: its practice is always re-forming in dynamic with current thought, political contexts and lived experience” (p. 14). Ledwith suggests that theories of empowerment must create social change, working towards liberation and away from pathologizing communities. She defines empowerment as:

“People have their dignity and self-respect restored through empowerment, which is the consequence of critical consciousness: the understanding that life chances are prescribed by structural discrimination, an insight which brings with it the freedom to take action to bring about change for social justice” (p. xii).

Craig (2002) defines empowerment in the community development context as “the creation of sustainable structures, processes, and mechanism, over which local communities have an increased degree of control, and from which they have a measurable impact on public and social policies affecting these communities” (p. 2). Toomey (2011) defines empowerment and disempowerment in community development practice along eight roles that community practitioners play, with four roles that are in tune with an empowerment approach (catalyst, facilitator, ally and advocate). A full discussion of how
race, class, gender and citizenship interact with transformational community development in AAPI neighborhoods is missing from the literature.

**Focus on Community Development Corporations**

Community Development Corporations (CDCs) have a storied past in the accounts of U.S. anti-poverty policy and programs. The origins of the CDC movement were based on community empowerment and local control of resources, however, programs were to work with local governments, rather than around them as the Community Action Program (CAP) initiatives (DeFilippis, 2008). The federal government’s Special Impact Program and the anti-poverty and civil rights movement fueled the initial growth of CDCs (Liou and Smith, 1996). Emerging out of the 1970s, CDCs, by definition, were to include community empowerment at the core of their mission. As a result, some CDCs provided a vehicle for racial and ethnic groups that had previously been passed over, or pushed out, by federal policy and resources. Formed in reaction to some of the oppressive zoning and urban renewal policies of the 1960s, CDCs brought investment to distressed neighborhoods and attention to marginalized racial groups. The evolution of some of these CDCs, however, is taking an interesting turn. CDCs have increasingly adapted into professional organizations to gain access to government resources. Foundations, local businesses and HUD provide technical assistance and leadership development through intermediary organizations such as the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) and the National Community Development Initiative (NCDI).
Race and CDCs. Gaston and Kennedy (1987) describe how uneven development is often a result of racism and deliberate removal of resources from communities of color, however, discussions of race, power and privilege are largely absent from debates where capital acquisition is the goal. Shaw and Spence (2004) discuss the “paradox of race in community development coalitions,” by explaining that although community development efforts usually include a goal of multiracial cooperation (such as the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative), there are “still perceptible racial fissures” that can arise and impede progress (p. 126). For example, the majority of CDCs with large African American or Latino communities have White executive directors and White progressives often dominate the decision-making in these organizations, creating some frustrations for staff and residents of color. In discussing models of ethnic-based development, Shaw and Spence (2004) explain, “to confront the underdevelopment emanating out of racial segregation and economic dislocation, African Americans and other minority communities have used a race-centered (often church-based) community development model as a means of self-help” (p. 128).

Harrison, Hoggett and Jeffers (2008) discuss what they call the “complexity of the community development task within racialized areas” (p. 155). After completing case studies of community development organizations in three multi-racial localities in Britain, they identified nuanced themes such as: patterns of cooperation and competition between groups; issues of representation or “gate-keeping” (community members who have the ability to provide or prevent participation form the larger group) and the dangers of tokenism (having small representation by people of color to fulfill unspoken quotas).
Most notably, Harrison, Hoggett and Jeffers (2008) discuss two important concepts especially important to urban planners. First, they introduce “insiderism” as a potential downfall to having staff that are culturally representative of the community. Although they acknowledge the importance of having staff that share language ability and cultural characteristics staff with community members, they rightfully question the “restrictiveness” of the “insiderist” perspective and find that it can marginalize and polarize workers. Second, they discuss the importance of “image” and state, “Any community initiative, particularly if it is based around a building or centre, will project a certain image to people within the area where it is located” (p. 152). The image of a center (building, project, etc.) alone is enough to include or exclude potential targets of services if that image is not inclusive.

As part of the War on Poverty and the Office of Economic Opportunity, the CAP movement was the more politically radical precursor to CDCs. As some civil rights activists staffed CAPs, they called for a more grassroots approach that focused on community mobilization and redistribution of resources. “African Americans and Latinos, inspired by the separatist ethos of the Black Power and Chicano movements and encouraged and aided by labor unions, established separate War on Poverty organizations” (Bauman, 2007, p. 278). They used Saul Alinsky models of organizing communities that have favored White male methods of leadership and communication (Silverman, 2003). Some of these CAPs fulfilled community development functions, or evolved into CDCs.

Johnson (2004) provides a history of the Harlem Urban Development Corporation and the Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation, two “first-wave” CDCs. She states “The early history of an organization can tell us a lot about its later performance, the way it...
chooses strategies for neighborhood revitalization, and how it approaches the issue of community accountability” (p. 110). Her conclusion suggests that CDCs must be rooted in community to support political independence and accountability.

**Examples of Ethnic-based (Race-Conscious) Models.** Lee and De Vita (2008) define an ethnic organization as one that: “incorporates the culture of the ethnic group into their programs, offering support and enrichment through education, awareness, and celebration of the ethnic culture. The staff and founders of ethnic nonprofits typically share the same ethnic identity as the population they serve” (Lee and De Vita, 2008, p. 2). In addition, many CDCs were founded to combat the racial and socio-economic injustices faced by their communities, and thus they infuse the values of equity and political empowerment throughout their work. Although many CDCs focus on one ethnic group because of the racialized geographies of communities, most do not include the above-mentioned features of an ethnic-based CDC.

From the inception of the CDC model, there have been efforts to target certain racial/ethnic groups (primarily African American) in interventions and programs as well as in empowerment politics:

“The radical black power critique fit the terminology and rhetoric of economic power and local control. Ghetto residents were exasperated with the seemingly nonstop studies and demonstration projects sponsored by government and foundations. If power lay in the corporate structures, then communities should control and shape these corporate entities for themselves. The history of CDCs, at least in some black communities, shows that they were started in a context of tension, if not contradiction. On one hand, they were supposed to work with and within the preexisting economic and political structure. On the other hand, they were meant to act as a sort of a permanent opposition-a community's attempt to control its own destiny against "outsiders”” (Johnson, 2004, p. 111).
Marquez (1993) states that, “During the 1960s, the greatest hope on the part of minority activists was that CDCs would provide the first step toward revitalizing the moribund economies of minority neighborhoods” (p. 288). In 1965, the Watts Labor Community Action Committee (WLCAC) was formed to integrate ideas of Black Nationalism with community economic development. “Central to the philosophy of WLCAC...were the programs that focused on cultural enrichment and black pride...Events at Watts Happening included jazz concerts, folk and gospel sing-alongs, artist exhibits, and presentations of plays and poetry. Perhaps the most explicit example of black pride and the focus on Afro-American culture was the Watts Festival Summer Parade” (Bauman, 2007, p. 285).

The value of the cultural and political elements of the programming was crucial to long-term success. Although current programs have shifted to be inclusive of the increased Latino population in the area, the origins of the organization were Afro-centric: “Thwarted by the institutional racism of city politics in Los Angeles and disappointed by the failure of attempted interracial alliances, blacks turned to the WLCAC as the black freedom movement shifted its emphasis from integration to economic self-determination and black power” (Bauman, 2007, p. 285).

The Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation (BSRC) is often recognized as the first CDC. Begun in 1967 amidst political unrest and the Black Power movement and political maneuverings of the Kennedy administration, the BSRC provided housing, economic development and human capital development to predominately African American residents of the Bedford Stuyvesant community. Because of the highly politicized nature of the early years of BSRC, the organization has been criticized as being too insular and not representative of the community involvement that it sought to include.
A reliance on federal funds and on a corporate model, prevented BSRC to be a truly ethnic-based model (Johnson, 2004).

Mexican American CDCs emerged in the late 1960s amidst similar political awareness and community activism. TELACU, the nation’s largest CDC was formed in 1968 as part of the Special Impact Program funding. Chicanos por la Causa and Mexican American Unity Council are CDCs that have endured difficult economic and community conditions. However, these organizations have “redefined community participation to mean resident participation on their board of directors” (Marquez, 1993, p. 290). Marquez (1993) explains, “A dearth of outside funding for operating expenses has obliged community development corporations to become so profit oriented that the traditional goals of community control and empowerment have been abandoned” (p. 290). As they are currently constructed, CDCs can provide “important, but limited, solutions to the growing problem of poverty and joblessness in urban areas” (Marquez, 1993, p. 292).

Although there are many CDCs that have effectively served multi-racial communities, they are beyond the scope of this dissertation. Two deserve mention, however. The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) is a CDC that has organized multi-racial coalition of residents to revitalize a disinvested area of Boston. The broad-based group includes African Americans, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Cape Verdeans and other Latinos (Gaston and Kennedy, 1987). By organizing to secure the rarely used ‘eminent domain’ clause, the community was able to secure land to develop low-income housing and have continued to be at the forefront of development for the low-income area. They have been successful in pressuring the local government and demanding investment partially due to their work on bringing the groups together in meaningful collaboration.
Another example of a multi-racial organization is the Dunbar Economic Development Corporation (Dunbar), incorporated in 1988, focused on the economic revitalization of the historic Central Avenue corridor in Los Angeles (Popp and Baxa, 1999). The agency combines historic preservation with the provision of low-income housing as evidenced by its rehabilitation of the Somerville hotel. Since the inception of Dunbar, the demographics of the community have shifted to predominantly Latino, and the agency has worked deliberately to incorporate new residents of the neighborhood.

In the Los Angeles area, there are several well-known ethnic-based CDCs; Thai CDC, Search to Involve Pilipino Americans, Chinatown Service Center and the Little Tokyo Service Center emerged out of Asian American political awareness and community activism similar to the aforementioned African American and Latino CDCs. TELACU, CHARO CDC, East Los Angeles Community Corporation and Esperanza CDC are all successful CDC models that target the Latino community as evidenced by their history, mission and service delivery models.

Ethnic-based organizations, then, occupy a unique space in the current dilemma faced by the CDC movement. Founded on an anti-racist, social justice agenda, their values hinge on a commitment to a specific disenfranchised community. In reviewing two CDCs in two predominantly African American neighborhoods, Johnson (2004) articulates a concern for the future for ethnic-based CDCs: “There is a challenge in the world of community development to become more accountable to community at the same time that technocratic efficiency and effectiveness is reflected” (p. 122).

There are three key areas of concern for community development policy and practice in the U.S. moving into the 21st century. First, given the current political economy
and the impact of globalization on urban centers, the merits of localized, neighborhood-based development efforts are in question. Some advocates stress the need to move towards regional, national and global forms of development (Sampson, 2008). Second, critics question whether local community-based organizations can remain true to their history of community organizing and citizen engagement given professionalization and focus on capital acquisition (DeFilippis, 2008). Finally, the rapidly changing context of community, especially shifting demographics, is presenting new challenges for long-time ethnic-based organizations that are struggling to remain relevant to the “place” in their place-based strategy for social and economic equity. This dissertation examines AAPI CDCs in the context of these three areas.
Chapter 3: Critical Race Theory as Theoretical Frame

CRT was introduced above as the paradigm that guides this study. In this chapter, the history of the theory is described, along with examples of applying CRT as praxis within education and social work. The potential use of CRT in planning is described in a following section, along with an examination of key tenets as they apply to planning praxis. Finally, the applicability of CRT to AAPI community development is provided through an analysis of three key tenets within an AAPI context.

Critical Race Theory

CRT has emerged as a paradigm used to critique and deconstruct policies, literature and practice in fields such as law, education and social welfare. CRT is especially useful as praxis: it is meant to move beyond the analytic to instruct practice, thus building consciousness and inspiring direct action for social justice.

CRT emerged from the work of legal scholars of color who were frustrated with limited gains from the civil rights movement while being stunted in their own professional growth due to perceived discrimination in the legal academy (education and practice arenas). Derrick Bell, noted as the father of CRT, authored pieces that articulated some of the movement’s major tenets (Bell, 1976, 1979, 1992). Other scholars, such as Richard Delgado, Mari Matsuda, Kimberle Crenshaw and Cheryl Harris added work that further defines the movement known as CRT in legal studies (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991, 1995; Delgado, 1984, 2002; Harris, 1992, 2001/2; Matsuda, 1987).

In the introduction to an anthology of CRT writings, Kimberle Crenshaw (1995) describes several of the key assumptions underlying the scholarship. For example, regarding the notion that the law has contributed to structural racism she writes: “...we
began to think of our project as uncovering how law was a constitutive element of race itself; in other words, how law *constructed* race. Racial power, in our view, was not simply---or even primarily---a product of biased decision-making on the part of judges, but instead the sum total of the pervasive ways in which law shapes and is shaped by “race relations” across the social plane” (p. xxv). Crenshaw goes on to discuss how CRT is a political endeavor (“knowledge and politics are inevitably intertwined,” p. xxii) and that it is a paradigm meant to probe this dilemma: “Thus, we understood our project as an effort to construct a race-conscious and at the same time anti-essentialist account of the processes by which law participates in “race-ing” American society” (p. xxvi).

Leading scholars in CRT seem to agree that the “theory” is dynamic and consists of a generally agreed upon set of assumptions and themes that pervade the literature rather than one distinct definition (Crenshaw, 1995; Delgado and Stefancic, 1993). The assumptions include the ideas highlighted above (the mutual construction between race and the law and the normativity of Whiteness), but also the following concepts: race is a social construction, the need to move beyond the Black-White binary in oppression dialogue and the centering of racial realism (Delgado and Stefancic, 2012, Chang, 1993).

Another major assumption, which is instructive for the field of community development, is that a social justice framework purporting racial equity is critical of liberal political perspectives and the myth of meritocracy in U.S. society.

**CRT as Praxis: Education and Social Work**

A common question among CRT scholars is “how do we *do* CRT in our respective disciplines?” In other words, although CRT is seen as a strong analytical and critical framework, it is not seen as strong in terms of application to practice. Although CRT has its
origins within the law and the tenets mentioned above are derived from the legal context, the application of CRT to education and to social work is most instructive to its integration into planning.

**Education.** A body of literature in education explores the application of CRT within education as it relates to history, methodology and practice. The integration of CRT into education can instruct the creation of a CRT framework in planning. Much of the literature in education focuses on asserting that race is the central causal factor in educational disparities and/or in inserting the narratives of students of color to establish their voice into stories of school life (Solòrzano, 1998; Solòrzano, Ceja and Yosso, 2000).

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) were the first to apply CRT to education to “attempt to theorize race and use it as an analytic tool for understanding school inequity” (p. 48). They examine what they call limitations in the multicultural paradigm by assessing three CRT tenets as they related to education: 1. Race continues to be significant in the United States; 2. U.S. society is based on property rights rather than human rights; and 3. The intersection of race and property creates an analytic tool for understanding inequity (p. 47). They argue that race is the central causal variable of inequities for students of color (gender and class are intertwined, but not enough to explain the disparities) and conclude:

> “Thus, as critical race theory scholars we unabashedly reject a paradigm that attempts to be everything to everyone and consequently becomes nothing for anyone, allowing the status quo to prevail. Instead, we align our scholarship and activisms with the philosophy of Marcus Garvey, who believed that the black man was universally oppressed on racial grounds, and that any program of emancipation would have to be build around the question of race first” (p.62).

Bernal (2002) discusses the importance of a raced and gendered epistemology in education practice and research. In doing so she explicates the importance of the
experiences of students of color in the educational system and how these students become “holders of knowledge” that is key to a transformational approach to the field of education (p. 108). She summarizes: “CRT and LatCrit in education can be defined as a framework that challenges the dominant discourse on race, gender, and class as it relates to education by examining how educational theory, policy, and practice subordinate certain racial and ethnic groups” (p. 109).

Solòrzano and Yosso (2001) describe their incorporation of CRT into education by framing their work with 5 themes: 1. The centrality of race and racism and their intersectionality of other forms of subordination; 2. The challenge to dominant ideology (beneath the ideals of objectivity and meritocracy in education lie values laden with self-interest, power and privilege); 3. The commitment to social justice; 4. The centrality of experiential knowledge; and 5. The trans-disciplinary perspective (the need to understand race and racism in historic and contemporary contexts through knowledge from other disciplines).

Social Work. Like the legal and education traditions, social work has been complicit in the creation and maintenance of structural racism. From asserting the narrow-sighted perspective of Jane Addams’ Hull House as the birth of social work (neglecting other forms of social work and mutual aid in communities of color) to the realities of the vast racial disparities existing in the public child welfare system, social work practitioners often struggle with acknowledging the field’s cooperation with oppressive practices and institutions.

The appropriateness of a CRT-infused social work practice over the commonly accepted model of cultural competence and cultural sensitivity has recently been suggested
in the literature on social work graduate education (Abrams and Moio, 2009; Ortiz and Jani, 2010; Razack and Jefferey, 2002). Abrams and Moio (2009) describe the failings of cultural competence, which focuses on individual self-awareness and the building of skills to address diverse populations. Instead they suggest teaching a CRT perspective that encourages students to become self-critical practitioners while accepting the centrality of racism and becoming more analytical towards structural forms of oppression suffered by their clients.

Ortiz and Jani (2010) review the explicit and implicit curriculum common in social work master’s degree programs. They provide a model in which CRT informs the main curricular areas common to master of social work programs (Human Behavior and the Social Environment, Practice, Social Policy, Research and Field Education). The experience of students of color in the classroom, the lack of faculty of color and the ghettoization of race-based content to separate courses are aspects of the implicit curriculum that are analyzed. Concrete examples of how CRT can advance social work practice are: producing new frames for the spectrum of micro to macro practice (including new assessment techniques and emphasizing the social worker as “learner” in relationship to clients), a focus on social justice and centralizing the voice of the other (Ortiz and Jani, 2010).

The integration of CRT in education and social work provide guidance in developing CRT as an analytic frame within urban planning. Solorzano and Yosso’s model is informative due to its effective appropriation of major CRT tenets for use within a field other than law. Moving beyond multi-cultural practice, as has been done in social work, can inform planning practice with diverse populations. Both fields identify social justice, as the preeminent theme when utilizing CRT as an analytic frame in practice. Planning’s
unique spatial context, however, must be addressed in creating CRT as a potential analytic frame for studying cities.

**CRT and Urban Planning**

*Herein lies my concluding observation: that the work of planners in ‘managing difference’, is the work of negotiating fears and anxieties, mediating memories and hopes, and facilitating change and transformation* (Sandercock, 1997, p. 29).

Research on the intersection of planning and race has included works that: critique the history of planning practice; detail the racial impact of policies such as segregation, zoning and urban renewal; and those that call for an inclusive, community-based/transformational planning process that would liberate all communities. Gender, citizenship and class are often treated as separate markers of oppression. It is important to note that although there is a significant collection of planning scholarship that details race, gender, space and development, utilizing the framework of CRT moves the discussion in specific directions that revolve around specific tenets. Confronting racism, sexism and classism in planning requires political action and the transformation of traditional planning practice and existing structures (Sandercock, 1997). Employing a CRT analytic model in planning is one path to deconstruction of systems that privilege certain groups over others.

The following sections describe the existing literature on race and planning and elaborates the ways in which the discussion can be pushed forward in order to articulate a critique of planning and to develop CRT as an analytic frame for planning practice.

**Examining the key tenets within planning.** In developing a CRT-based analytic model for planning, it is first necessary to examine how the central assumptions of CRT can be applied to the field. Three tenets are central to an application to community
development and urban planning. The belief that racism is ordinary, Intersectionality, and the importance of counter-narratives and subversive histories.

Racism is Ordinary. Rather than a grouping of aberrant acts employed by a vicious few, racism is an ordinary and, in fact, everyday reality within cities. Harris (2001/2) further discusses this underlying assumption of CRT, that there is a “mutually constitutive relationship between race and the law” and “the law produces, constructs, and constitutes race, not only in domains where race is explicitly articulated but also where race is unspoken or unacknowledged” (p. 1217). Other scholars define how the legal profession has contributed to the creation and maintenance of oppressive structures in the criminal justice system, education and civil rights arenas (Crenshaw, 1989; Gotanda, 1996; Matsuda, 1987).

Analogous to the manner in which critical race legal theorists critique the law profession’s contribution to creating and maintaining racist structures, planners should become more comfortable with “calling out” their profession and each other in regard to the participation in systems that privilege Whites. Sandercock (1998) warns that “if we want to work toward a policy of inclusion, then we had better have a good understanding of the exclusionary effects of planning’s past practices and ideologies” (p. 30).

However, planners may be uncomfortable in examining the ways in which the profession has been complicit in housing segregation, economic disparities and civil rights infractions (Thomas, 1994). The combination of a more comprehensive planning education on these issues as well as a set of “practical tools for promoting equity” would make progress “to help break the historic linkage between urban development and racial oppression” (Thomas, 1994, p. 9). Examples of these practical tools include the use of
indigenous, community-based efforts, the Planners Network (which highlights progressive issues including racial equity) and targeted neighborhood improvement based on race, class and cultural preservation. Investigating the way in which the planning profession has constructed race would be an important contribution of the CRT framework.

Laura Pulido (2000) states that “a focus on white privilege enables us to develop a more structural, less conscious, and more deeply historicized understanding of racism...Hence, instead of asking if an incinerator was placed in a Latino community because the owner was prejudiced, I ask, why is it that whites are not comparably burdened with pollution?” (p. 13). Marable (1983) discusses the devastating impact of the overarching structure of capitalism on Black America by stating “America’s ‘democratic’ government and ‘free enterprise’ system are structured deliberately and specifically to maximize Black oppression” (p. 2). He goes on to state that: “Blacks have never been equal partners in the American Social Contract, because the system exists not to develop, but to underdevelop Black people” (p. 2). In defining the “underdevelopment” of African Americans, Marable writes, “Underdevelopment was the direct consequence of this [capitalist] process: chattel slavery, sharecropping, peonage, industrial labor at low wages, and cultural chaos” (1983, p.3).

Intersectionality in planning. Incorporating the intersections of race, class, gender as well as indicators such as nationality, ethnicity, citizenship, sexual orientation, disability and place of residence should be seen as central to planning practice and policy. Although most community development efforts include economic/class considerations, and some include the influence of gender or race, there are few examples that include an
Intersectional approach that includes a discussion of multiple variables to portray the unique context of development in certain communities and neighborhood spaces.

Community development scholarship in planning provides the best opportunity to incorporate gender, and has shown how women’s voices can portray a vastly different portrait of low-income communities, one that celebrates the agency, resilience, intelligence and resolve of low-income women of color (Leavitt, 2003; Leavitt and Saegert, 1990; Sandercock, 1998; and Stack, 1974). Valentine (2007) addresses the omission of the intersectionality paradigm in feminist geography. By exploring her interest in LGBT, disability (deafness) and age (young and older adults), she felt disconnected from the feminist literature since it had ignored the interaction of these multiple identities.

In analyzing the incorporation of race and class in the environmental justice movement, Burgos and Pulido (1998) contend that the role of gender has been ignored. As they discuss the Los Angeles’ Bus Riders Union, they state: “...despite this emphasis on race and class, environmental and urban problems are distinctly gendered, and women have emerged as important leaders” (p. 75).

Marable (1983) discusses the sexism inherent in a capitalism system and discusses the “‘coercive glue’ that holds the patriarchal order in balance is systemic violence against women: rape, involuntary sterilization, ‘wife beatings,’ and the constant threat of physical punishment...under capitalism, patriarchy reinforces and converges with racism in numerous ways, affecting the daily lives of all Blacks and all women” (p. 9-10).

Counter-narratives/revisionist history. A view from the bottom, as CRT would purport, would provide a very different picture of many of the complex problems in urban planning. For example, in looking at poverty, Albelda and Tilly (1998) assert that single
mothers who work (in and out of the home), use Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC, now Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, or TANF) as a temporary means of support and have fewer children than other mothers, challenging many of the myths of the preferred culture of the underclass. Leavitt and Saegert (1990) describe the crises of housing abandonment in New York City (Harlem) and tell the stories of the tenants as active participants in organizing improved living conditions. Narratives include the lives of elderly and young single mothers who are working hard to maintain a safe place to live and helping each other to create "community households." These studies portray a community of hard working individuals who are family and community oriented.

Similarly, despite the prevailing negative characterization of low-income families, Stack (1974) studied low-income African Americans in the Midwest and concluded, “The black urban family, embedded in cooperative domestic exchange, proves to be an organized, tenacious, active, lifelong network” (p. 124). She found “highly adaptive structural features of urban black families” that “comprise a resilient response to the social-economic conditions of poverty, the inexorable unemployment of black women and men, and the access to scarce economic resources of a mother and her children as AFDC recipients” (p. 124). When viewed from the voices of the low-income families, the kin networks that were relied upon provided for lifelong bonds, social controls, co-residence, and the domestic authority of women. These kin networks provided capacity for addressing in a limited way the fallout of racial segregation in African American enclaves.

Sandercock (1998) discusses the centrality of power in relation to the telling of history. She defines “insurgent planning histories” that create a desire to “go beyond the modernist planning paradigm, to present alternatives to it, as ways of both understanding
the past and imagining a different future for planning” (p. 2). In deconstructing and revisiting the history of planning, she describes “the most conspicuous omission” as the absence of any non-white, non-male, or non-heterosexual subjects and/or objects in the history of cities. She asserts questions that we should ask of history that would center the stories of the “other.”

**CRT and AAPI Community Development**

*The collective experience of day-to-day life in a country historically bound to racism, reveals something about the necessity and the process of change.*

Matsuda (1987, p. 346)

**Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders and CRT.** Scholars such as Chang (1993), Gotanda (1995), Matsuda (1987), and Yamamoto (1997) have inserted an Asian American presence in the foundational CRT scholarship. Asian American exclusion (through citizenship and immigration policy), anti-Asian violence and the dangers of the model minority myth are prevalent themes in the growing CRT literature (Buenavista, 2010; Sue, Bucceri, Lin, Nadal and Torino, 2007; Teranishi, 2002).

Chang (1993) calls for an Asian American moment in legal scholarship. Citing the violence against Asian Americans, nativistic racism and the model minority myth, he explains the dangers of the myth, which “The portrayal of Asian Americans as successful permits the general public, government officials, and the judiciary to ignore or marginalize the contemporary needs of Asian Americans” (p. 1259). Chang calls the model minority label a tool of oppression that not only erases the impact of discrimination on Asian Americans but legitimizes oppression of other disempowered communities for not working hard enough. In responding to this moment, he puts out a call for narrative, for the
perspective of Asian American voices in telling their experiences and in legitimizing an epistemology centered on these narratives.

An analysis of the myth of meritocracy as it relates to the racialization of AAPIs is one of the underlying themes of this dissertation. Buenavista, Jayakumar and Misa-Escalente (2009) utilize CRT to deconstruct the model minority myth and expose the manner in which White dominance is perpetuated through its existence. The model minority myth, resting on the notion that AAPIs have played by the rules and thus “made it,” is examined in this dissertation via the study of racialization and community development struggles in low-income neighborhoods.

Because CRT is unclear in deciphering the conflation of ethnicity and race, scholars have questioned the application of CRT in LatCrit and Asian American jurisprudence (Chang and Gotanda, 2007). Highlighting the impact of racialization, which is invoked under a similar system of domination as with other groups, can be utilized to create coalitions between Asian Americans and other communities of color, despite differences in ethnic experiences.

Attacking the model minority narrative is an extension of the CRT challenge to dominant liberal ideologies. There are three other areas in which CRT is especially instructive in an analysis of AAPI community development: 1. Attention to the laws and policies that were discriminatory towards Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders based on race, class, gender and citizenship (racism is ordinary); 2. Critical multi-racial coalition building (intersectionality); and 3. The importance of narrative and voices from the AAPI community (counter-narratives and revisionist history).
Legal Exclusion of AAPIs. Asian Americans have been inextricably tied to colorblind forms of racism since their arrival in the United States. Policies such as the Foreign Miner’s Tax (a fee applied only to Chinese and Mexican miners), the Alien Land Laws (targeted at Japanese immigrants ownership of land) and even Executive Order 9066, which led to the incarceration of Japanese Americans did not specifically name Asians or a specific ethnic group in relation to implementation, yet were enforced only on specific Asian ethnic groups. Thus, there is a well documented a history of being legislated by policies that did not name them, but were constructed to target only the Asian other. As “Aliens Ineligible for Citizenship,” the state could legislate their exclusion without continually reproducing the notion that Asians were targets of racism and oppression. A series of laws created barriers in relation to zoning, property ownership, citizenship and immigration were enforced throughout the 1900s.

Critical Coalition Building. Su and Yamamoto (2002) discuss the need for CRT to move from theory to practice by using the example of critical coalition building in discussing the case of Thai and Latina women garment workers. CRT praxis can be used in coalition building in order to create transformational change for clients from subordinated communities and can inform the complexities of forming connections between the two groups. Su and Yamamoto point out that intersectionality is a key paradigm that asserts the need to recognize the multi-faceted nature of low-income, immigrant women’s issues. They also outline other ways in which CRT can inform social justice law practice, and critique the applicability of CRT to real life pressures by elaborating upon the difficulties of the pressures faced by underserved communities, how coalitions “explode” when formed
within the colorblind civil-rights paradigm and whether the CRT analytic framework is accessible to the communities it claims to serve.

The need to build coalitions may enable dismantling of racist structures against and within groups. In “Beyond Racial Identity Politics,” Marable (1993) describes how racialized groups need to overcome barriers towards building coalitions when abandoning the politics of racial identity: “The prism of a group’s racial experiences tends to blunt the parallels, continuities and common interests which might exist between oppressed racial groups, and highlights and emphasizes areas of dissension and antagonism” (p. 118). Gaston and Kennedy (1987) describe a coalition between African American and Latino residents of the Roxbury area of Boston as they struggle and organize and create a “fountain of hope” in the face of land development. Lessons can be drawn for other communities facing similar disinvestment and political/demographic shifts.

**Importance of AAPI Voices.** Matsuda (1987) in her foundational CRT article, “Looking to the Bottom: Critical Legal Studies and Reparations,” attributes Japanese American redress and the Native Hawaiian Claim for Reparations as legal remedies that can be informed when “voices from the bottom” are heard.

**Specific planning practice interventions that reflect the CRT paradigm includes:** forging coalitions that acknowledge and confront racialized interactions, developing policy that addresses intersectionality within communities and revisiting community histories (through focused narratives and community-based stories) to inform historic preservation and ethnic continuity. The research questions in this dissertation are designed to showcase the voice of community practitioners and to uncover interventions and strategies that are utilized in an ethnic-based organization working towards social justice. In order to answer
the research questions in this dissertation, a case study methodology will be utilized and is described in the next chapter.
Chapter 4: Research Design and Methodology

Overview of Methods

This dissertation is a multiple-case study using grounded theory methods to analyze data collected from interviews, documentation, and artifacts. Field notes from attendance at various organizational activities (board meeting, community-events, community programs) provided insight and context for the researcher, although time limitations in the field prevented the use of direct observation as a data source.

Yin (2014) describes the case study method as most appropriate when the researcher has “how” and “why” questions, when the focus is on contemporary events and when data is collected in the real-world context of the phenomenon. There are six common sources of evidence in case study research: direct observations, interviews, archival records, documents, participant-observation and physical artifacts (Yin, 2014). Although case study is often seen as lacking in credibility and generalizability, when done with “systematic data collection and analysis procedures” findings can be applied to other situations through “analytic generalization” (p. 6). Case study research has also been criticized for a perceived bias towards verification, the difficulty in summarizing specific cases, and limits in usefulness for theory building (Flyvbjerg, 2006). However, thick narrative descriptions, rigorous methods and the use of multiple sources of data can serve to counteract these potential downfalls (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Yin, 2014).

The three organizations and sites that serve as cases are CDCs that have been in existence between 35 and 45 years. The early history of each organization is the focal point of the analysis. Johnson (2004) discusses the importance of the early history of CDCs in assessing the effectiveness of an organization: “The early history of an organization can tell
us a lot about its later performance, the way it chooses strategies for neighborhood
revitalization, and how it approaches the issue of community accountability” (p. 110).

In the field of AAPI community-based development, the definition and embodiment
of “social justice” principles are not clearly defined. This dissertation investigates the
manner in which social justice was important in the organization’s founding and how the
staff and board continue to infuse a social justice framework in the daily operation of the
organization to determine how this framework impacts neighborhood change. The primary
hypothesis is that a strong commitment to a social justice framework (defined by the
incorporation of social justice in the mission and values, a consistent insertion of social
justice concepts into program planning and goal-setting and an agenda that includes
progressive policy change) leads to transformative community neighborhood outcomes.

**CRT-guided Research Method**

A CRT framework was utilized in the research design and methodology of this project.
Creswell (2008) describes the use of CRT in research methods in the following statement:
“In research, the use of CRT methodology means that the researcher foregrounds race and
racism in all aspects of the research process; challenges the traditional research paradigms,
texts, and theories used to explain the experiences of people of color and offers
transformative solutions to racial, gender, and class subordination in our societal and
institutional structures” (p. 28). CRT concepts such as community cultural wealth,
intersectionality and counter-narratives were principles that guided the validity and
generalizability of the study.

In furthering the definition of community cultural wealth, Yosso (2005), uses CRT to
establish the concept that communities of color have been traditionally viewed from a
deficit perspective, and instead, “CRT shifts the research lens away from a deficit view of Communities of Color as places full of cultural poverty disadvantages, and instead focuses on and learns from the array of cultural knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed by socially marginalized groups that often go unrecognized and unacknowledged. Various forms of capital nurtured through cultural wealth include aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial and resistant capital” (p. 69). Thus, a CRT approach to research recognizes the community cultural wealth within each neighborhood and shifts the perspective away from deficits towards the strengths of communities of color. The findings from this study helps to define the community cultural wealth for AAPI historic neighborhoods by investigating how their history of resistance and resilience continues to impact their mission and how they negotiate power to gain community control over development strengthens organizations.

When used as a research paradigm, the CRT concept of intersectionality can "emphasize the interaction of categories of difference (including, but not limited to race, gender, class, and sexual orientation)" (Hancock, 2007, p. 64). Utilized mainly in qualitative research, the use of an intersectional lens "considers the interaction of such categories as organizing structures of society, recognizing that these key components influence political access, equality, and the potential for any form of justice” (Hancock, 2007, p. 64). This project focuses on the issues of race, class, gender and immigration status as they pertain to the community development issues of the “importance of place” and “the right to the city.” By investigating the historical context of each neighborhood at the inception of the organization, the intersectional dynamics of ethnic places are revealed to shed light on development efforts within. By identifying commonalities based on class, gender and
immigration status in the trajectory of these organizations, further collaboration and coalition building can be fostered within AAPI groups and with multi-racial communities.

Finally, this study also assumes the importance of narratives and “counterstories” as central to constructing the history of ethnic spaces. Within Latino Critical Race Theory (or LatCrit), Bernal (2002) uses life history interviews and focus group data to create counterstories within a raced-gendered epistemology as she uncovers the experiences of Chicano/a college students. She suggests:

“...adopting a Chicana feminist epistemology will expose human relationships and experiences that are probably not visible from a Eurocentric epistemological orientation. Within this framework, Chicanas and Chicanos become agents of knowledge who participate in intellectual discourse that links experience, research, community, and social change” (p. 113).

A critical raced-gendered epistemology, grounded in CRT and LatCrit, also supports methodological and pedagogical approaches that affirm experiences and responses to different forms of oppression and validates them as appropriate forms of data. By incorporating a counter storytelling method based on the narratives, testimonios, or life histories of people of color, a story can be told from a nonmajoritarian perspective—a story that White educators usually do not hear or tell (Bernal, 2002; p. 116). Thus, a CRT-infused research methodology must include the retelling of history from the perspective of people of color, center the community voice by incorporating narrative, empower a critical consciousness and move towards transformative change and social justice. These CRT-influenced principles were applied to the case study approach. Grounded theory strategies allow for development of an analytic model of AAPI community development organizations.

CRT and intersectionality are also important when collecting data. One measure of
validity according to these principles is the ability to equalize the researcher-participant relationship. Creswell and Miller (2000) describe validity through a critical perspective or lens to qualitative research: “…researchers engage in validity procedures of self-disclosure and collaboration with participants in a study. These procedures help to minimize further the inequality that participants often feel” (p. 126). During data collection, specific information was communicated to each participant to further the trust and rapport while deconstructing power dynamics: the background of the researcher that revealed a history of social work in low-income communities, researcher’s active membership and participation in the Little Tokyo (Los Angeles) community and researcher’s commitment to member check the data when completed with the study in order to provide accurate reporting and analysis.

Case Study Design and Rationale

This is a multiple case study of three AAPI CDC organizations: CCDC, InterIm CDA and LTSC. Preliminary research was conducted from November 2012 to March of 2014, while the interviews, archival research and direct observation activities occurred during March to September of 2014.

The multiple-case design follows a replication logic, in which the cases are selected because they are similar - they showcase ethnic-based approaches to development that are attached to the importance of place, they have been in existence for over 30 years, and they have incorporated a CDC structure. Race, class, gender and the social location of each group create unique dynamics in the evolution of neighborhood development organizations. Given the history and context of the neighborhood, the dynamics of
racialization and the power relations within the local and regional context the cases represent varied examples but shared the following characteristics:

- Founded within the context of an ethnic-based social justice movement internal to the target community;
- Targets an Asian American/Pacific Islander community;
- Utilizes a place-based approach to community development;
- Is a Community Development Corporation (develops housing and offers a comprehensive array of social services).
- Recognized as a “successful” organization by multiple sources;
- Maintains ethnic continuity (Asian Americans) in key leadership positions;
- History of serving the community for at least 30 years.

Case selection was aimed at illustration and theory construction, not representativeness. The goal of selection was to achieve replication in terms of the criteria listed above, while providing maximum variation in location, target group (ethnicity), original program focus (social services, community planning, housing) and development strategies. This variation is set within the context of organizations that began as a result of a social justice movement and have at least 30 years of operation and articulate an AAPI focus. Because cities with large AAPI populations are predominantly on the West Coast and in Hawai‘i, these locations were identified as important to the story of community development and will provide a portrait of development representative of these locales.

Identifying key organizations that met all of the criteria and were willing to participate was achieved during the preliminary period of the study.
Preliminary Research and Relationship Building

Pilot case studies improve the design of the case study, as “the dual sources of information help[s] to ensure that the actual study reflect[s] significant theoretical or policy issues as well as questions relevant to real-world cases” (Yin, 2014, p. 97). The pilot case can also improve rigor and validity: “Methodologically, the work on the pilot cases can provide information about relevant field questions and about the logistics of field inquiry” (Yin, 2014, p. 97). Preliminary work guided the design of this project and the research questions. This work also provided opportunities to build relationships and trust with community members and community development practitioners. Research leading up to this project included: a Photovoice project in Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo during 2012-2013; a pilot case study in Wai`anae, Hawai`i with the community development organization Ma`o Farms and conversations with experts in the community development field.

During the fall of 2012, the researcher began meeting with community organizers from the Little Tokyo Community Center and attended meetings of the Little Tokyo Community Council in order to conduct a Photovoice project in Los Angeles. The project focused on the issue of transit-oriented development in Little Tokyo, motivated by the “regional connector” project that cuts directly through Little Tokyo. Organizers had identified key issues of community concern (potential displacement of community institutions and small businesses) and had begun organizing community members to attend meetings related to the transit project. Along with other graduate students from UCLA, the researcher recruited a diverse group of 11 community stakeholders (youth, elders, low-income residents, market-rate residents) to take photos in order to document their most valued community assets. Findings revealed the most valued assets to be: community
institutions (the Japanese American Museum, the Japanese American Community and Cultural Center and Little Tokyo Service Center); low-income housing (including LTSC’s Casa Heiwa building), and people (owners and operators of small businesses and staff of non-profit or organizations).

Ma`o Farms of the Wai`anae Community Re-development Corporation is a youth development and social entrepreneurship organization located on the West Coast of Oahu, Hawai`i and served as a pilot case for this study. Although Ma`o Farms did not meet the criteria to be included in the formal case study, the interviews with their staff provided examples of how a community-based organization could insert social justice principles into everyday operations. The mission of the organization includes methods that instilled a critical consciousness among staff and youth.

Conversations over the phone and in person provided insight into the context of the national AAPI community development field and assisted in developing the research questions and theoretical concerns of the study. Lisa Hasegawa, Executive Director of the National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development (National CAPACD), provided clear recommendations for relevant lines of inquiry as well as recommendations for potential case organizations. National CAPACD was founded in 1999 and is the intermediary serving community development organizations on the national level. Brent Kakesako and Bob Agres of the Hawai`i Alliance for Community Based Economic Development (HACBED) provided much needed context for indigenous development models as well as the challenges and opportunities for CDCs in the current political context.

Potential case organizations included a list of AAPI CDCs across the nation. Long-time organizations on the East Coast were viable candidates, but availability and accessibility
proved to be too difficult to include in this analysis. Smaller organizations in the Midwest and South were also considered. These organizations would have been useful in providing the experiences of Southeast Asian community development issues. However, once the case parameters were defined, these cases did not meet all of the criteria and thus could not be utilized as a replicable case organization. A series of phone calls and meetings provided enough information to conclude that these organizations were not appropriate for this study, although are worthy of investigation in the future.

The selected case organizations were confirmed through a series of in-person meetings, phone calls and email communication with key informants. Dean Matsubayashi, Executive Director of LTSC was the first to confirm participation, based on the prior relationship with the researcher and the pilot Photovoice project. Having been a Master of Social Work intern at LTSC (during 1998-1999), the researcher has extensive knowledge of the organization and a positive working relationship with former Executive Director, Bill Watanabe. Thus, LTSC was a logical and accessible choice to serve as the first case. Dean Matsubayashi and Lisa Hasegawa, then referred the researcher to Chinatown CDC and InterIm CDA. Those referrals provided legitimacy and trust based on the researcher’s connection to well-respected professionals in the field. In one case, the researcher attended a National CAPACD event in Los Angeles in order to be introduced by Dean Matsubayashi to Malcolm Yeung of Chinatown CDC. After a subsequent phone call to confirm site appropriateness and availability to participate, Malcolm was able to confirm CCDC as a case organization. InterIm CDA was confirmed next through a phone call and series of emails with the new Executive Director, Andrea Akita. Staff from all three organizations and from National CAPACD expressed remarks that confirmed the appropriateness of the other
organizations. In other words, staff and community development professionals from each organization and from the national scene heartily agreed that LTSC, CCDC and InterIm CDA were industry leaders with complex histories and program successes, and thus would provide worthy cases for study. The process for selection was important in order to obtain data pertinent to the research questions and to the larger CDC movement. The months leading up to data collection allowed for the pilot study, literature review and refined section of cases which all add to the validity and rigor of the study.

**Data and Analysis**

**Introduction.** The research methods utilized draw from case study methodology, but include grounded theory techniques and a CRT lens for historical analysis. The data consist of interviews, documentation, archival records and physical artifacts. Direct observation was also utilized as a technique but the scope of the project and time limitations prevented prolonged observation at each site.

**Data Sources and Collection.** The data utilized in this study are listed in Table 4.1 and elaborated upon below. Detailed accounts of the data collected (dates and locations of interviews and listing of archival documents cited, etc.) are provided in Appendix 1. Yin’s (2014) four principles of data collection were utilized as a guide: 1. Use multiple sources of data; 2. Create a case study database; 3. Maintain a chain of evidence; and 4. Exercise care when using data from electronic sources.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Type</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Technique for collection</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Interviews   | Semi-structured interviews with key leaders within each organization  | • Length: 1 – 1.5 hours each  
• Number per site:  
  LTSC – 8  
  CCDC – 9  
  InterIm – 8  
• Location: Organization offices, coffee shop or home of participant | • Targeted information that relates to case study topics  
• Provides voice of community members and narrative accounts |
| Documentation| Organization’s documents: newsletters, reports to funders, real estate portfolios, annual reports and other. | • Staff and leadership of organization provided copies of documents or opportunities to digitally scan  
• Review of materials in organization’s archives | • Specific accounts of programs and outcomes  
• Broad array of information covering time span of organization  
• Reliable information regarding names and dates of program operations |
| Archival records | Organization’s notes, sign-in sheets, meeting minutes, and other.      | • Multiple visits to sites allowed for collection of data  
• Systematic review of materials  
• Digital scanning of materials that pertain to mission, formation of organization and strategies for development | • Precise accounts of program components  
• Reliable information regarding names and dates of program operations and meetings  
• Specific information on history of organization |
| Physical Artifacts | Program brochures, program flyers, pictures and awards.        | • Multiple visits to sites allowed for collection of data  
• Systematic review of materials  
• Digital scanning or pictures of materials that pertain to mission, formation of organization and strategies for development | • Insightful for cultural features of organization  
• Record of certain events or programmatic elements  
• Specific information on history of organization |

A total of 25 in-depth interviews were conducted at the three site locations (See Appendix A for listing and pictures of interviewees). The three current Executive Directors...
were interviewed, as well as three current board members (two from InterIm CDA and one from LTSC). In addition, four previous Executive Directors were interviewed (Gordon Chin from CCDC, Bill Watanabe from LTSC, Bob Santos and Sue Taoka from InterIm CDA). Ten other interviewees occupied various roles in the leadership of the organization (program managers, supervisors). Most participants were interviewed at the main or satellite office of the organization. A few preferred to walk to local coffee shops and one was interviewed in his home. Interviews lasted between 1 and 1.5 hours and were audio recorded and later transcribed. One interviewee (Bill Watanabe) was interviewed twice. Content of the interviews consisted of a series of set questions, but followed a guided conversation format in which follow-up questions were tailored to each person’s role or previous response to a question.

The documentation, archival records and artifacts were collected in a number of ways. First, each organization provided access to their “archives,” which consisted of boxes and folders of various time periods. The organizations varied in the amount of material that was accessible. The records were not complete, and with the exception of LTSC, there was no systematic record keeping nor were there a chronological account of all years of the organization. However, key documents were obtained through a review of the boxes and folders that were provided. Second, program staff and participants offered other documents for review. For example, LTSC’s founding Executive Director Bill Watanabe had indexed and catalogued his papers that spanned the entire history of the organization. This collection proved to be the most extensive collection available for this project. Third, other documentation and archival records, web videos, such as pictures, newspaper articles, special event programs, were found in the local library and online newspaper databases.
Finally, published books and articles as well as web-based material such as online blogs, the organizations website, community history websites and related articles were also systematically reviewed. When reviewing online sources, a selection process occurred in order to follow Yin’s principle of “using care” when accessing data from electronic sources. Websites that are administered by well-known and reputable community development entities (for example, Shelterforce published by the National Housing Institute) were utilized to determine national trends or the dominant narrative in relation to the case organizations. In other words, these sources provided information as to how the organization is viewed within the larger field of community development. Community-based websites may have a more pronounced bias, and thus were utilized to focus on the internal perceptions of the organization and the political context of the neighborhood.

As mentioned earlier, direct observation was utilized as a technique, but a systematic use of this approach was not possible due to time and resource constraints. Observation informed the analysis and provided insight to the organization’s space, location in community, vibrancy and “feel” of daily operations and community-based programming. For example, in San Francisco the youth-led Chinatown Alleyway Tour provided information about the history of the neighborhood as well as insight into why youth from the community become involved in the organization’s programs. In Seattle, the opening of the “Danny Woo Community Garden Cookery” (an educational cooking station in the garden) provided exposure to how the organization frames it work when talking to potential funders and outside community supporters. In Los Angeles, the organization’s participation in the Nisei Week festival shed light on how the organization interacts with cultural activities that attract a broad Japanese American audience. Field notes from these experiences were
utilized in the data analysis process.

A major characteristic of strong case study research is the triangulation of data that is achieved in this study through the multiple sources of data analyzed (Yin, 2014, p. 119). Although the interviews are the most relevant evidence for the research questions, the documentation, archival records and artifacts serve to substantiate the oral accounts and provide more specific information when memories are not as clear (for example, dates of events or programmatic features of the organization). This triangulation strengthens the construct validity of the study and follows Yin’s first principle of data collection.

**Analytic Procedures.** The cases were analyzed one at a time, with the first case (LTSC) providing a base that guided analysis of case two and three. The material collected (including interview transcriptions and recordings, field notes, documentation and archival records) were indexed in an excel sheet that served as the study database. This provided an initial level of review and assisted in creating initial coding of study themes. The systematic coding and use of constant comparison provided the basis for creating the chain of evidence, which was articulated through the case report.

Grounded theory methods were utilized in the process. Interviews, field notes, documentation and artifacts were coded using a three-pronged method: open coding, axial coding and selective coding. This process provided a systematic process for developing theory from the ground up (Corbin and Strauss, 1990).

After listening to recordings of the interviews and reviewing transcriptions, open coding was performed in order to identify key concepts and labels for ideas presented by the participants. Quotes from each participant were identified and assist to exemplify each concept. Axial coding involved the review of these concepts and development of themes
related to groups of ideas. These themes were compared across interview subjects within each site, and then across the case studies. Finally, in selective coding, a core category was developed and analytic themes and concepts were organized within that core variable.

The review of documentation, archival records and artifacts followed the same process of coding and were integrated into the themes and concepts derived from the coding of the interview data. Utilizing constant comparative analysis, the data were compared against each other, both within and across case organizations.

A major function of the case report was to further analyze the data to construct the narrative or story of the organization. With the CRT frame, the voice of the participants was valued and was utilized, whenever possible, to tell the story of the organization. Although the coding process provided the framework for the case report, the program participants reviewed and checked the data (member check process) in order to affirm accuracy or to clarify certain assumptions.

The member check process was also important to increase validity and reliability and to allow the participants to contribute to the narrative history of their organization. Although researcher bias is present in every study, the participants were asked to confirm or correct the accounts reflected in the report and they were also given the opportunity to approve direct quotes, thereby reducing the likelihood of misperception and bias in reporting their perspective.
The Three Cases

Three sites were utilized: Chinatown Community Development Center (CCDC) in San Francisco, CA; the Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC) in Los Angeles, CA; and InterIm Community Development Association (InterIm CDA) in Seattle, WA. By showcasing three different ethnic-based approaches (two focusing on a single ethnic group, and one that targets a pan-ethnic community) the richness and diversity of AAPI community development was highlighted while investigating the varying implications of race and power for these groups. The resulting analysis did not attempt to define a singular AAPI method for community development, but identified common patterns and themes tied to the successes of race-conscious strategies for community transformation.

All three organizations were founded during a time of community protest and movements for social change, they all originally served specific Asian American groups but now serve a multi-ethnic/multi-racial community, they all have undergone a leadership change due to the retirement of long-time leadership in the last 3 years and they have all grown and developed as major players in city politics and housing development. See Table 4.2 for more information on each case organization. Appendix B provides a listing of each organization’s Real Estate Portfolio.
Table 4.2 Organization Profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization Name</th>
<th>Year Founded</th>
<th>Annual Budget</th>
<th>No. of Staff</th>
<th>Number of Housing Units Developed ***</th>
<th>Programmatic Areas</th>
<th>Primary function when founded</th>
<th>Original Target Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinatown Community Development Center</td>
<td>1977; 1998*</td>
<td>$7 million</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>2100</td>
<td>- Resident Services - Planning - Organizing and Advocacy - Youth Leadership Development - Property Management - Real Estate Development</td>
<td>Community Planning (transportation, tenants rights, housing)</td>
<td>Chinese Americans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>InterIm Community Development Association</td>
<td>1969; 1979*</td>
<td>$2.2 million</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>- Advocacy - Youth Development - Affordable Housing Development - Housing Stability and Homelessness Prevention - Danny Woo Community Garden - Community facilities</td>
<td>Support for small businesses</td>
<td>Pan-ethnic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* indicates year in which Community Development Corporation was founded
** indicates year in which organization combined with another group.
*** See Appendix B for listing of Real Estate Portfolios for each organization.
**Chinatown Community Development Corporation (Chinatown CDC):** One of the most iconic ethnic enclaves in the United States is Chinatown, San Francisco. With over 150 years history, the neighborhood has retained a significant Chinese resident population. In 1977, after a well-known anti-eviction battle known as the “I-Hotel,” the Chinatown Community Development Corporation formed in order to consolidate five grassroots organizations. Today, Chinatown CDC has a budget of $7 million and houses over 4,000 seniors and low-income families.

**Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC):** The Little Tokyo neighborhood of Los Angeles, CA emerged in the early 1900s as an entry point for contract laborers that were recruited from Japan to work on the railroads and in agriculture. LTSC was founded in 1979 as an outgrowth of community activism against the displacement effects of urban renewal. Currently, LTSC has an annual budget of $9.2 million and provides a wide array of social services as well as 800 units of low-income housing.

**InterIm Community Development Association (InterIm CDA):** Founded in 1969 to save and revitalize Chinatown in the International District in Seattle, WA, InterIm CDA has survived through numerous battles over displacement of Asian immigrant and refugee communities. With a current annual budget of $2.2 million, InterIm CDA operates close to 600 affordable housing units, two community centers (the Japanese Cultural and Community Center and the Lao Highland Community Center) and advocacy and planning initiatives facing the diverse Asian and Pacific Islander community.
Chapter 5: The History of Asian American/Pacific Islander CDCs

This chapter outlines the history of community development within AAPI communities by providing examples of community institutions over time. Next, the context of national policy and trends is provided to situate the AAPI CDC movement within the broader field of place-based development in the U.S.

Examples of Community Development in Early AAPI History

Early models of AAPI community development can be found in examples from Hawai‘i and the West Coast. Mutual aid associations, labor unions, voluntary organizations and religious institutions all flourished and provided varied services for immigrant groups. Chinese immigrants in Hawai‘i and most West Coast urban areas relied heavily upon family and regional associations, a few of which are still in existence, including the well known Chinese Six Companies in San Francisco, which was started as the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association in the 1850s (Hing, 1993). By creating social capital based on hometown or surname, these associations provided social support, small loans, business support and fulfilled other social service functions (Hing, 1993; Ichioka, 1988). Japanese immigrants in Hawai‘i, benefitting from the arrival of women (and thus families), created community institutions such as Japanese language schools, Buddhist temples and boarding houses (Fujimoto, 2007; Ichioka, 1988). Because services could not be found in traditional settings, these organizations often fulfilled a comprehensive array of social needs, such as cultural activities, counseling, domestic violence support, childcare and employment referral (Hazama and Komeiji, 1986; Ichioka, 1988).

Self-help organizations dealing in civil rights and civic engagement were also prevalent for early AAPI communities. In the early 1900s, labor organizations in Hawai‘i
and the West Coast provided support and advocacy for plantation and farm laborers who were being exploited by large companies (Ichikawa, 1990; Takaki, 1983). Native Hawaiian grassroots organizations began in the 1900s, and became more effective in raising awareness of the political struggle for Native Hawaiian rights the 1970s (McGregor-Alegado, 1980). Two well known instances are examples of multi-ethnic collaboration: Japanese, Chinese and Filipino labor organizing in the Salmon industry in the Pacific Northwest (during the early 1900s) and the farmworker strikes of 1965 which Filipino and Mexican American workers joined forces (Friday, 1994; Scharlin and Villanueva, 2000).

Although early AAPI history is one of exclusion, exploitation and disenfranchisement, community development efforts from within have been at work. Investigating how these efforts have evolved within the context of U.S. place-based development will be described below.

**Place-based Development in the U.S.**

*Timeline.* The history of U.S. community development is depicted in the timeline below (Figure 5.1). The “U.S. Historical Context” row represents the broad social policy issues of each time period, while the “Asian American Community Formation” row describes the Asian American community experience during these times. For instance, the era leading up to the 1950s was one in which uneven development characterized neighborhood growth (Squires and Kubrin, 2005). Comprehensive city planning sought to join the efforts of architects and city officials with the needs of small business and residents (O’Connor, 2012). The Progressive Era and New Deal provided social service support and needed attention on the country’s poverty-stricken communities, but often neglected communities of color (O’Connor, 2012). The Settlement House movement is recognized as
the birth of social work and provided an avenue to serve immigrant populations on the East Coast and Midwest, but did not adequately address African Americans (O’Connor, 2012). Asian immigrant communities were experiencing extreme Anti-Asian sentiment on the West Coast. Until the 1924 Immigration Act ended virtually all Asian immigration, residents from China, Japan, Korea and the Philippines came to Hawaii and the West Coast in large numbers, fulfilling cheap labor needs and creating their own community structures. Considered “Aliens Ineligible for Citizenship,” Asians were excluded from rights to the city, and suffered from restrictions on owning land, marriage and other benefits afforded to citizens (Takaki, 1993). The World War II incarceration of Japanese Americans was arguably the culmination of decades of racializing Asians and Asian Americans as the national “other” (Chan, 1991; Ichioka, 1988; Takaki, 1993).

Asian immigrants and their Asian American children developed communities within this hostile context. Mutual aid organizations, rotating credit associations, regional associations and religious institutions were created within their segregated spaces, and an ethnic enclave economy provided growth for some community members to rise above otherwise dismal circumstances (Chan, 1991; Ichioka, 1988; Takaki, 1993).

The 1950s and 1960s saw the growth of suburbanization for privileged citizens, while the policies of Urban Renewal and redevelopment cleared so-called blighted areas by displacing low-income communities of color (Squires and Kubrin, 2005). One major critique of Urban Renewal was of the underlying assumptions of the framework: “slum conditions were the cause rather than the consequence of poverty, that private profit could be made to work for public ends, and that communities, left to their own devices, would voluntarily create plans that would represent the interests of the poor” (O’Connor, 2012, p.
The War on Poverty spawned three community development programs. The Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) established the Community Action Program (CAP), which provided a mandate for the “maximum feasible participation of residents,” thus this program became controversial as local politicians felt threatened by the potential power of the organized poor (Green and Haines, 2011). CAPs began to question the distribution of resources allocated to low-income communities and thus critics began to insist that they were responsible for inciting riots. Funding for CAPs quickly disappeared, and the less threatening Model Cities program (which worked with local government, rather than around them like CAPs) was initiated. The Special Impact Program was the third program that emerged out of this period. It provided funding for the first CDC in 1965, the same year that the Department of Housing and Urban Development was created (Green and Haines, 2011).

This period could best be characterized for AAPIs as one of displacement and resistance. The most infamous Asian American housing rights battle against urban renewal policies is the fight for the I-Hotel in San Francisco, CA. Young activists, mainly college students, joined elderly Filipino and Chinese low-income residents to protest evictions of their single room occupancy building (Habal, 2007). Witnessing this fight and the loss of Manilatown in San Francisco, activists in Seattle, WA wanted to be proactive in protecting their space, and created the International District Improvement Association (later shortened to InterIm CDA) in 1969 (Santos, 2014).

Policies from the 1970s and 1980s were characterized by a withdrawal of federal funds in favor of a focus on local “responsibility” for community initiatives (O’Connor, 2012). In 1973, President Nixon abolished the OEO amidst criticism that the CAPs were
cultivating power structures that were in opposition to local government officials (Green and Haines, 2011). The largest growth of CDCs happened during this period, as funding stressed local programs and community-based organizations that worked collaboratively with local government. Thus, the growth of the CDC movement could be seen as a conciliatory alternative to the more radicalized CAPs (O’Connor, 2012).

The AAPI community, like other racialized groups, evolved their social protests of the 60s and 70s into more formalized neighborhood-based organizations. CCDC was formed in 1977, combining four grassroots organizations that had been established between from 1968 to 1974 (Chin, 2014). LTSC was established in 1979 in the aftermath of anti-eviction protests emanating from the displacement of the city’s new police station, Parker Center (Nishio, 2014).

The 1990s through 2000s continued to force responsibility on localities as Empowerment and Enterprise Zone programs initiated by the Clinton Administration provided the main thrust of funding to blighted communities (O’Connor, 2012). Low-income communities were hardest hit by the impact of the global economy. Foundations and intermediaries became instrumental in the survival of community development nonprofits since housing production became highly specialized, which excluded some small, ethnic-based organizations from success (O’Connor, 2012).

Present challenges in the broader context include the need for the federal government to re-engage in localized community development, the need for political coalitions fighting for local control of development and comprehensive policy to create the economic conditions in which community development efforts can be successful (O’Connor, 2012). The AAPI community organizations followed the trend to professionalize, as young,
educated co-ethnic practitioners flocked to ethnic neighborhood spaces to participate in growing the movement (Santos, 2014; Fong, 2014). Transnational issues for some communities became complex, as capital from Asian countries sometimes spurred further displacement of Asian American low-income residents and family businesses (Sze, 2012).
### Table 5.1 The Context of AAPI Community Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Community Development Policy and American Community Formation</strong></th>
<th><strong>Broader US Historical Context</strong></th>
<th><strong>Timeline:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Present Challenges</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comprehensive City Planning</strong></td>
<td>• Progressive Era</td>
<td>Pre-1949</td>
<td>• Role of AAPI CDCs in future of CD?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Progressive Era</strong></td>
<td>• Settlement House Movement</td>
<td>1950-1969</td>
<td>• Incorporation of diversity of AAPI groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Settlement House Movement</strong></td>
<td>• Public Housing</td>
<td>1970-1989</td>
<td>• Transnational issues pose opportunities and threats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anti-Asian sentiment</strong></td>
<td>• WWII Incarceration of Japanese Americans</td>
<td>1990-2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suburbanization/Sprawl</strong></td>
<td><strong>Decentralization</strong></td>
<td>1965 Immigration Act</td>
<td>• Community Development Corporations Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Urban Renewal and area redevelopment</strong></td>
<td>• (Community Development Block Grants, federal withdrawal from housing construction)</td>
<td>Department of Housing and Urban Development</td>
<td>• Professionalization of practitioners and organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Action Program, Model Cities/Special Impact program</strong></td>
<td>• Emphasis on local initiatives</td>
<td>Fastest growth period of CDCs</td>
<td>• Model Minority concept embraced by some, while exposed as myth by others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1965 Immigration Act</strong></td>
<td>• Foundations and intermediaries become leaders in the CD field</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Transnational issues pose complex situation for Asian American communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Department of Housing and Urban Development</strong></td>
<td><strong>Global context</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Empowerment/Enterprise Zones</strong></td>
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**Asian American Community Development**

- Displacement from urban area ethnic enclaves
- Ethnic-based organizations formalize
- Second Generation college students become active in Civil Rights
- Model minority myth emerges
- 1969 – InterIm CDA established in Seattle, WA
- Protest
- Awakening
- Non-profit Organizations
- Birth of Asian American – Pan-Ethnic Identity
- Diversity of Asian American population grows
- 1977 – Chinatown CDC established in San Francisco, CA
- 1979 – LTSC established in Los Angeles, CA
Summary and Implications for AAPI Community Development

AAPI CDCs are no exception to the dilemmas facing ethnic-based organizations. Social protests of the 1960s and 1970s led to the formation of some key community institutions that have been successful in achieving some asset-based outcomes (acquisition of property, development of social enterprise, and cultivation of local leaders) and transformational change (increased access to political power, role in decision-making over development issues and policy, and centering community the community voice). Because AAPIs have a long history in the U.S. and are the fastest growing population in the U.S., investigating their struggles and successes in community development are crucial to understanding the current state and future of CDCs.

In regard to AAPI communities, Huh and Hasegawa (2003) lay out an agenda for community economic development, which centers the networks and social capital approach through local, regional and national organizations. Given the diversity of APIA community-based organizations, much work needs to be done to build capacity for smaller, local groups. National Coalition for Asian Pacific Community Development (National CAPACD), founded in 1999, has a mission that reflects this goal: “National CAPACD’s mission is to be a powerful voice for the unique community development needs of AAPI communities and to strengthen the capacity of community-based organizations to create neighborhoods of hope and opportunity” (National CAPACD, n.d.).

Although community development from the ground up would imply that control and empowerment from within neighborhoods are the primary drivers of transformational community planning, symbiotic relationships with “outside” power structures are needed. Access to political power, technical assistance and material resources are crucial elements
that can be facilitated by urban planners. O’Connor (2012) suggests:

“A race-conscious strategy would identify how race continues to shape the policy decisions affecting political representation, housing location, transportation, social services, and access to jobs. It would move beyond the simplistic black-white dichotomy to investigate how racial barriers operate across ethnic, class, and gender lines. And it would make an explicit commitment to ending institutionalized as well as individual acts of racial exclusion” (p. 29).

LTSC provides a rich case to examine a race-conscious strategy to community empowerment in the Los Angeles Japanese American community.
Chapter 6: Little Tokyo Service Center

Los Angeles provides a rich historical backdrop for discussing the impact of the civil rights movement to community formation. The site of uprisings in the African American and Chicano movement, Los Angeles was also the site of an Asian American movement that was focused on college campuses and ethnic neighborhoods such as Chinatown and Little Tokyo. Koreatown served as a point of uprising during the 1992 civil unrest, in which race relations were played out in local politics and the media. Since Los Angeles also serves as the largest concentration of AAPIs in the nation, community development efforts are instructive for those in other areas with growing AAPI populations. This chapter analyzes the impact of the movement on the evolution of LTSC and uncovers the strategies and philosophies that characterize their approach to neighborhood development in Little Tokyo. The current mission of LTSC is: “The mission of the Little Tokyo Service Center, a Community Development Corporation, is to meet the critical needs of people and to build community. We improve the lives of individuals and families through culturally sensitive social services. We strengthen neighborhoods through housing and community development. We promote the rich heritage of the ethnic community” (LTSC, n.d.).

Little Tokyo is located adjacent to downtown Los Angeles, within blocks of City Hall and Los Angeles Police Department headquarters. To the east the trendy Arts District and other pockets of new development have created a rise in the market rate for housing. The regional connector, a new transit station under construction on First and Alameda, provides hope for new business and exposure for a Little Tokyo capital infusion, but fear on the part of small businesses and low-income residents due to potential displacement (Nishio, 2014).
LTSC was formed in 1979, after a group of social service providers and community activists realized the need to consolidate services and create a “one-stop” center to meet the social service needs of the Japanese and Japanese American community. Today, LTSC has 121 staff members with an annual budget of $9.2 million (Nakano, 2014). They have developed over 600 units of affordable housing, are important players in the national community development scene and are leading the way in regional affordable housing development in neighborhoods of color.
This chapter will present data showing how LTSC is situated in a timeline that includes the Asian American movement and its impact on the evolution of ethnic neighborhood development. The following section describes the neighborhood context for the case, followed by sections that explain the formation of the organization, the strategies and philosophy and how they are re-integrated over time, the negotiation of power relationships and community empowerment.

**Neighborhood Historical Context**

Little Tokyo, located just east of downtown Los Angeles, is one of three remaining *Nihonmachi*, or Japantowns, in the United States (San Jose and San Francisco are the other two). Established (starting with the first Japanese business that opened) in 1884, Little Tokyo continued to grow through the 1930s, providing needed services and housing for the Japanese laborers that were excluded from owning land and from living in more desirable spaces. Smith (2005) discusses the creation of these “racialized spatial places” as a matter of exclusion, rather than cultural preference, “involuntary spatial outcomes” rather than
the desire to create an ethnic enclave (p. 17). By the early 1940s, Little Tokyo was the largest Japanese community settlement in the United States with boundaries from Main Street and the 1st street Bridge (West to East) and 1st Street to 5th Street (North to South) (Little Tokyo Planning and Design Guidelines Joint Task Force, 2005).

Community activists and scholars have conceptualized the history of Little Tokyo by describing eras of displacement, each followed by a period of redevelopment (Umemoto and Toji, 2003). The first era is the forced removal of Japanese and Japanese Americans during the months of April-June of 1942. Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 in February of 1942 establishing exclusionary zones and legislating the creation of concentration camps to house the so-called enemy aliens. During the time between E. O. 9066 and the “evacuation” orders, Japanese American sold their possessions, closed down businesses and transferred or sold their land (in most cases using their American born children’s names, given that Asian immigrants were not allowed to purchase land). Virtually overnight, Little Tokyo became a ghost town that was soon filled by incoming African Americans that were migrating to fulfill jobs associated with the war effort (Jenks, 2011). Known for this brief period as Bronzeville, the Little Tokyo area became a stopping place for another racialized community that also experienced displacement and housing discrimination.

The period of resettlement for Japanese Americans from concentration camps after the war was slow and consisted of the movement of some Japanese Americans back to the Little Tokyo area. Although about 60% of pre-war Japanese Americans returned to Los Angeles, a smaller percentage of pre-war Little Tokyo residents returned to live in the neighborhood (Jenks, 2011). Their housing patterns were a result of housing
discrimination, economic class and the War Relocation Authority’s policy of dispersal, “An engineered scattering would help to mitigate the wartime labor scarcity, but more important, deter the reconstitution of the ethnic enclave, seen as the grand impediment to assimilation” (Wu, 2014, p.157). Little Tokyo was still a draw to some, however, “After the multiple uprooting of the internment experience, many Japanese Americans longed to regain a measure of security and permanence and looked to the familiar environs of Little Tokyo, with its churches and temples, as a key refuge during the crisis of resettlement” (Jenks, 2011, p. 211).

The second era of displacement occurred as a result of federally funded urban renewal and city orchestrated redevelopment programs. During the mid-1950s, the construction of Parker Center (Los Angeles Police Department’s new headquarters) and the new Civic Center displaced over a thousand residents, as well as businesses that were serving the local community (Toji and Umemoto, 2003). These development projects also served as the final push from the area for the remaining African American residents from the Bronzeville era (Jenks, 2011).

In the 1970s, the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) adopted Little Tokyo as a redevelopment “project area” and issued its community plan covering a 9 block area
Although the CRA designation provided much needed attention and resources to the neighborhood, priorities shifted during the planning process away from a focus on community interests. City officials negotiated with a Japanese firm, the Kajima Corporation, to develop a new hotel and shopping center to anchor their development efforts. Thus, this period of “redevelopment” was seen as another form of displacement of the neighborhood residents and businesses in Little Tokyo. Erich Nakano (2014) explained,

“In the first period of redevelopment, the emphasis was on commercial investment for high-end developments, which would increase property tax revenues and generate tax income for the project and there was little attention given to the residents, small businesses and cultural groups that had a home in Little Tokyo.”

The plans would eventually displace more low-income residential hotels as well as the Sun Building, home to many non-profit agencies and a “cultural hub for community activity” (Murase, 2014). This project would strain relationships between local Japanese
American community interests and the international Japanese corporate machine that was at its height during the 1980s (Nishio, 2014). The image of Japanese Americans as the model minority was also prevalent during this time. Community activists and social service providers in Little Tokyo worked to ensure that the low-income, elderly and mentally ill Japanese Americans were recognized as a disenfranchised population worthy of social service resources. Mike Murase (2014) explains “In February 1977, the LA City Council affirmed the CRA’s decision to vacate the Sun Building despite a vocal opposition by LTPRO members who called for a moratorium on evictions of local tenants and cultural instructors. On June 17, 1977, when we learned that a moving company was coming with LA County Marshals to evict the last of the tenants from the Sun Building, a 24-hour watch was set up to prevent the evictions. The picture is of the early morning shift waiting to turn away a squadron of marshals.”

Image 6.3. Protest for affordable housing. Standing from left, Joanne Sakai, Alan Kondo, Evelyn Yoshimura, Qris Yamashita, Duane Kubo and Mike Murase. Squatting are Lucy Kubota, Dean Toji and Bruce Iwasaki. Photo courtesy of Mike Murase.
In 1972-73, the Little Tokyo Anti-Eviction Task Force convened to resist the evictions that were a result of redevelopment projects. The Little Tokyo People's Rights Organization (LTPRO) was created “to unite tenants, small business owners and community supporters to defend the community from government sponsored corporate takeover” (Liu and Geron, 2010, p. 49). It was this eviction and the subsequent organizing of non-profits and grassroots groups that led to the formation of LTSC. As mentioned above, the Sun building was home to many non-profit and volunteer organizations serving the Little Tokyo community. Thus, the evictions also catalyzed action for these groups. As early as November of 1977, the Japanese Community Pioneer Center passed a board resolution that included the need for social service agencies to work together and “that the JCPC will work with the other agencies towards the establishment of a one-stop service center and other programs of a direct service nature” (Takei, 1977). The fight against displacement and its impact on the low-income and elderly residents of the neighborhood was also recognized as a consistent threat to community survival.

International Japanese capital investment continued into the 1980s and led to a transfer of land parcels to foreign ownership, which created further challenges for Japanese Americans. Progressive Japanese Americans, mainly Sansei (third generation), raised concerns about labor disputes against the internationally-owned Japanese corporations and the gradual, but steady, demolition and replacement of low-income housing. Murase (1980) explains one example, “In the winter of 1980 about 150 workers at three Japanese food distribution companies (Japan Food Corporation, Mutual Trading and Nishimoto Trading), mostly Japanese and other Asian immigrant workers, went on strike to demand
higher wages (comparable to truck drivers and warehousemen in other companies.

Members of Little Tokyo People’s Rights Organization (LTPRO) provided support.”

Photo courtesy of Mike Murase.
Table 6.1 LTSC Timeline

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<td>&quot;Regional Connector&quot; project brings transit-oriented development threat to Little Tokyo.</td>
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<td>Displacement due to WWII Incarceration of Japanese Americans</td>
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<td>Model minority myth emerges.</td>
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<td>Diversity of Asian American population grows</td>
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<td>New Otani and Weller Court Construction forces closing of Sun Building</td>
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<td>Foundations and intermediaries become leaders in the CD field</td>
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<td>Second Generation college students become active in Civil Rights protests</td>
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<td>1980 LTPRO Labor Strike</td>
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<td>LTSC Acquires San Pedro Firm Bldg.</td>
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<td>Transnational issues pose opportunities and threats</td>
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Formation of the Organization

Those of us that came together in Little Tokyo wanted to form a multi-purpose service organization...that's how we saw our mission, to be a multi-purpose and comprehensive social service agency that could serve anybody who comes to us with a problem or need and to be able to serve them.

Bill Watanabe (2014).

Within the context mentioned above, community members were organizing on a variety of levels to provide services to low-income residents, maintain a sense of ethnic continuity and to protest displacement when it occurred. A cadre of social service agencies and grassroots advocacy organizations were active in the neighborhood by the late 1970s. A unique feature of community involvement in the area was the inter-generational layers of participation. Issei (immigrant, first generation Japanese and Japanese Americans) were considered elders and were an important part of the community power structure as well as the focus of many of the social service programs. Nisei (second generation) were established leaders and headed many of the long-time organizations and mutual aid associations. Sansei (third generation) community members were younger, college age or recent college graduates, who brought a renewed interest in the community and the lens of the civil rights movement and political activist strategies from college campuses into the local neighborhood. This interplay of generational differences was key to the organizing efforts of the community.

Threats and Unmet Needs. LTSC was formed directly as a result of displacement threats related to the influx of Japanese corporate interests and urban renewal policies. Organizations such as the Pioneer Center, the Japanese Chamber of Commerce, Japanese American Community Services and Japanese Welfare Rights Organization were housed in the Sun Building, which was demolished to make way for the Kajima Corporations' New
Otani hotel and Weller Court shopping plaza. Both developments catered to the purchasing power of international Japanese tourists rather than the needs of the local Japanese American community.

Social service providers in Little Tokyo were focused on the lack of resources for several underserved groups: Japanese-speaking monolingual, low-income, immigrant and elderly residents. This target population needed bilingual social services, and help with evictions and housing and immigrant rights. For example, government aid offices did not have the language capability or cultural sensitivity to work with the Japanese immigrant population. Yasuko Sakamoto remembers, “Their eligibility workers were not trained enough like they are these days. They were very, very insensitive and I remember some of the Issei or Japanese newcomers never wanted to go back to the Department of Public Social Services or Social Security offices because of the way they were treated after a long wait [for services]” (2014). There were other gaps: there were a few organizations that provided services for elderly residents, but there were no services for the families that lived in Little Tokyo (Watanabe, 2014). In addition, services were disjointed and residents had to travel to different offices to access resources for their varied needs.

After losing the space at the Sun Building, the organizations planned a move to the future JACCC building (a CRA-supported project), but the move included a significant increase in rent. In order to share costs and look for new funding, the organizations realized the need to come together. Thus, in 1978, Paul Tsuneishi, a local Japanese American businessman, suggested the organizations think about forming a one-stop service center that could provide more coordination for services and secure more funding (Watanabe, 2014).
Key Players. From early 1978 through 1979, a core group of eight organizations sent representatives to meet about the need for a one-stop service center. The Atomic Bomb Survivors, The Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), the Japanese American Community Services (JACS), the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center (JACCC), Japanese Community Pioneer Center (JCPC), The Japanese American Cultural and Community Center (JACCC), Japanese Social Services (JSS), Japanese Welfare Rights Organization (JWRO) and LTPRO (Little Tokyo one Stop Service Center, 1979). Other organizations, such as Counseling Services for Asian Americans, Maryknoll Church and Union Church also participated in some meetings (LTSC, 1979). Eventually, 25 people from 10 different groups came together to work together as a joint social service federation. Early members during this time was Paul Tsuneishi (JACL), Mike Murase (JWRO), Hiroshi Saisho (JCPC), Jill Ishida (LTPRO), Gloria Uchida (JACS), Paul Oda (Union Church), Helen Okamoto (JSS) and Kats Kunitsugu (JACCC) and Bill Watanabe (JCPC) (LTSC, 1979).

The group met consistently through 1979 to discuss the foundation and structure of a one-stop social service center. By April of 1979, the names “Little Tokyo One Stop Service Center” and “Pioneer Multi-Service Center” were used as working names for the project (Watanabe, 1979). By May of 1979, “Little Tokyo Service Center” was adopted along with the following stated purposes:

a. To develop a forum of community organizations for greater service coordination;
b. To develop a centralized and comprehensive array of services attuned to the needs of the Little Tokyo community;
c. To coordinate and improve Little Tokyo community fund raising for social services;
d. To seek and disburse grants on behalf of itself and/or member organizations; e. To interface with other public and private entities as a united voice.
1. It should be noted that the term “grants” in #d refers to monies received from funding sources other than individual donations from the Nikkei community.
2. *It was also stated that a key issue is the goal of groups working together, and to let go of some group independences in order to coordinate efforts for the good of the whole.* (Emphasis added. LTSC, 1979)

The coalition was focused on the need for a collective body, in which any community organization could participate by paying membership and attending the meetings (Figure 6.2). The pressing need for survival (based on their experience of displacement and the higher rents at the new JACCC building) and the value of shared leadership for the greater good was apparent in the stated purpose above – “a key issue is the goal of groups working together, and to let go of some group independences in order to coordinate efforts for the good of the whole.”

Figure 6.2 May 1979 Organization Chart.

An early setback for the coalition occurred as the result of a strained relationship with City Councilman Gilbert Lindsay. Government grants that could have funded LTSC were diverted by Lindsay to programs in South Central Los Angeles (LTSC, May, 1979). The group continued to move forward, however, and Japanese American Community Services (JACS) provided funds for incorporation and start-up costs that enabled the official incorporation of LTSC on June 15, 1979 (LTSC, November, 1979). JACS also provided an
initial service grant so that in January of 1980, Bill Watanabe, who had been the representative for the JCPC and had served as the main convener of the planning meetings, keeping minutes, and writing funding requests thereby facilitating the coalition's work, was named Executive Director and the first paid staff of the new organization.

The first significant funding, with the blessings of Councilman Lindsay, came through from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and in October of 1980, a city grant of $60,000 enabled LTSC to employ Yasuko Sakamoto as a Case Manager and Evelyn Yoshimura as the Office Manager/Receptionist. Watanabe and Sakamoto had Master of Social Work degrees, and Yoshimura was an established community activist. These three staff members articulated the philosophical foundation for the organization, as well as the personification of the mission.

The Early Years. Thinking back on that time period, Watanabe remembered, “All three of us did everything together – we met at Evelyn’s house to talk about the goals and staff for this new organization. We came up with a few basic values: 1. We would work together as a team and not let our roles prevent us from helping each other; 2. We would accept all people with respect and equality and not look down on them; and 3. We would put on a quality service program that’s professional...This meeting put us on the same page. We were all social activists but coming up with the core values put us on the same page.” (Watanabe, 2014).

Evelyn Yoshimura described the initial years of the organization:

“I think it’s no accident that the three of us [Bill, Yasuko and myself], were to various degrees, active with people’s rights organizations previous to that because development was having such an impact, especially on long-term people living in the hotel, Isseis and the very elderly, who were getting pushed around badly, those were the clients who needed services and sort of brought social workers and
activists together at that time. That’s why Yasuko, Bill and I coalesced in a way” (2014).

Though conceptualized as a multi-service, one-stop center, LTSC evolved to serve social service needs that were not addressed by the existing Japanese American organizations. The first foundation funded program was the escort program that provided rides to doctor appointments and bilingual translation for older adults who were monolingual Japanese-speaking. Another early program was a stroke survivor support group. As the years went on, the organization identified service needs within the Japanese American and/or AAPI community and then worked hard to create a program around those needs. For example, staff became aware of an underserved population – women who had married members of the United States military who were stationed in Japan and then brought to America to live. Many of these so-called “Japanese war brides” ended up in divorce and were suffering from social isolation and in some cases domestic violence. Because of language and cultural differences, they were virtually unnoticed by mainstream social service organizations, and LTSC became involved to identify resources for counseling, domestic violence and support group programs for this unique population.

The social justice mission of the organization was not explicit in these early years. LTSC was seen as a “well-meaning group of social workers” and not necessarily a political threat (Nishio, 2014). Sakamoto states that she felt she was not a “real activist” but that her role as a social worker provided her with work that could make a difference. She also mentioned that LTSC, under the leadership of Bill, supported her participation in movements such as Japanese American Redress (Sakamoto, 2014). LTSC would provide office space, and Sakamoto provided the translation needed to work with Issei on their testimony for hearings during the reparations movement. The “activist orientation” of the
people involved, however, ensured that the values of equity, racial and class justice were underlying themes in the operation of the organization (Nishio, 2014). In addition, the values undergirding the social service provision were centered in the shared belief that the target population were victims of social injustices, for example, displacement, social isolation due to discrimination or domestic violence, underserved due to lack of linguistic and culturally appropriate services. Watanabe described the importance of the values and personalities of the founding staff members:

“I would say I was more the administrator and grant seeker. Yasuko was more the heart, feelings, compassion and Evelyn was more the social justice, political, economic justice person. We all had those different strengths that when we combined it, it was pretty good. It worked out well.”

Alan Nishio, long-time LTSC board member describes the team:

“The combination of El, Bill and Yasuko was critical as they complemented each other in skills, areas of interest, and personality. Within the traditional Japanese American community at that time, there was somewhat of a chauvinistic culture so having a male in leadership was important. Bill brought his leadership skills and expertise in social work as well as his previous work in the community. Yasuko was the bedrock in providing critical services to the Japanese-speaking Issei with her background and language skills as well as her skills as a counselor and connections to the community. Evelyn in many ways was the political edge and the consciousness of the organization with a strong background in community organizing. I think they made a good team. There were challenges in building this team but they brought their common commitment to community in building the core that would enable the growth and expansion of LTSC. (2014).
Formation of the Community Development Corporation (CDC). City plans in the late 1980s included more civic center expansion into Little Tokyo. A proposed development on city-owned land on First Street threatened more displacement of low-income residents in favor of a new hotel, apartments and a plaza. Plans for the civic building were described by the Los Angeles Times with racial imagery: “a third Civic Center annex of City Hall, joining City Hall East and City Hall South. It would lie to the east of the present city buildings, prompting officials to suggest it may become known as City Hall "Far East"” (1988). Despite the attempts by paid lobbyists (representing commercial developers), the community organized to save the San Pedro Firm Building, a building with 28 residents, 15 office and 4 commercial storefronts (Masaoka, 2004). The City of Los Angeles had been operating the building since 1972, and had let the building fall into disrepair. LTPRO had dissolved by this time, as the one-time young college activists had moved on, so a housing
advocacy committee of LTSC was the only group actively working on issues related to preservation of low-income housing. Judy Nishimoto, a legal aid lawyer, became the most ardent activist demanding the preservation of the building. Kathy Masaoka, Nishimoto’s sister, recounts this important story:

“They [the committee], along with the tenants, began a campaign to Save the San Pedro Firm Building (Firm Building). What followed was a five-year campaign of lobbying the Mayor and City Council, petition signing and community support that changed Judy’s career and the future of housing in Little Tokyo.

To make the Firm Building more livable, the San Pedro Firm Building Tenants Association, the LTSC Housing Committee and the Little Tokyo Tenants Association [residents of hotels in Little Tokyo and former residents of the Alan Hotel] sponsored a “Painting Day.” Supervised by skilled construction people from the Japanese American Contractors, who had plastered and prepped the walls, about 100 students, tenants and community people came out to paint the Firm Building on June 13, 1988. A determined group of UCLA students had mobilized student groups from different campuses. It was an amazing show of community support with funding provided by the Pacific Southwest District of the Japanese American Citizens League and manju from Fugetsudo” (2004).

After LTSC engaged in more lobbying and political maneuvering, the City Council passed a resolution in February of 1987 to save the building. By December of 1989, LTSC and the Los Angeles Community Design Center became co-owners of the building. Lisa Sugino, described the process of joining LTSC as a Project Manager on the San Pedro Firm building, “I was volunteering for the housing committee when Judy Nishimoto went on maternity leave, so when they needed someone to take on this live project I quit my job. They were only willing to pay me half time, the other half time I worked at the LA Community Design Center. In the fall of 1990, they were starting construction on the Firm building, so I just jumped in” (2014). Although acquiring the Firm building was a direct result of protest and activism, once the project went “live” they needed someone like Sugino, who had just graduated from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, to
oversee its development. Thus, although LTSC was not known as an “activist” group, the gap left by the diminished civil rights era groups were filled by the only viable candidate – LTSC.

By this time, the demographics of the board of LTSC had also shifted. There were more Sansei on the board than Nisei, and the core focus of helping the Issei was changing with a rapidly aging population. Although the social service functions of the organization remained a core function of the agency, the board and the community development staff and volunteers became a more vocal and visible component to the organization. LTSC became more actively involved in seeking affordable housing, participating on Little Tokyo-based organizations, and in local organizing and challenging redevelopment plans to ensure inclusion of low-income and Asian American interests. Membership on the board, and inevitably the conversations in board meetings also shifted to confronting the underlying system of racial and class oppression and to tactics that would confront that system. When the CDC was formed, it gave LTSC “more edge, clearer purpose to the efforts that were going on” (Nishio, 2014).

Contesting City of Los Angeles planning on affordable housing, claiming space, and then taking on a development project were key moments in the history of LTSC. These mark the instance in which LTSC went from a well-respected social service agency to important players on downtown development. Invoking the tenant organizing and college student activist techniques from the 1970s, these efforts demonstrated the willingness of LTSC to pressure city government for the rights of low-income residents (of all ethnicities) in Little Tokyo. It also signified that the staff and board of LTSC were willing to participate in direct forms of social action when an issue threatened the key constituency of low-
income, elderly, and/or Japanese American residents of Little Tokyo. Nishio described the evolution of LTSC’s reputation as a social service provider to a key player in City politics:

“I think at the point when Judy Nishimoto came on during the San Pedro Firm building project we began to be seen as more of a player in Little Tokyo because politically we were challenging the City regarding affordable housing and the needs of the poor. Then, Casa Heiwa, which was built 5-6 years after that expanded LTSC’s footprint and impact. The mission became more about social justice with a class focus, while continuing to provide social services to the Japanese American community, there was an expanded effort toward other Asian Pacific Islander communities and other low-income communities through an expanded affordable housing focus” (2014).

Casa Heiwa. Now that LTSC, in partnership with the Los Angeles Design Center, was responsible for developing and managing the San Pedro Firm Building, the formation of the CDC was the next logical step. In 1996, the CDC was incorporated with Lisa Sugino appointed as the Deputy Director. A new board was formed although Watanabe served as Executive Director to both LTSC (the social service arm) and the newly formed LTSC CDC. Alan Nishio and 3 other members of the LTSC board, plus Judy Nishimoto (who had left staff to become an administrative law judge) and several others more attuned to the needs of a community development corporation were appointed. Certified Public Accountant Ken Toma, real estate developer Tony Nobuyuki, political staffers Jeri Okamoto-Floyd and Barbara Miyamoto and others were added to the new board. The next project for development focused on the limited amount of family housing available in Little Tokyo.

The Casa Heiwa project reflected LTSC’s prioritized values for racial and economic justice. With this project LTSC challenged individuals and groups within Little Tokyo that were not supportive of affordable housing. Some in the Japanese American business community felt that it would be better to bring in Japanese corporations (creating a “gateway to Japan, a Rodeo Drive for Japanese visitors”) rather than bringing in low-income
families, many of who were not Japanese American (Nishio, 2014). LTSC’s vision for Little Tokyo clashed with these views – low-income seniors and families were the priority in housing development and inclusion was a main value of defining “worthy residents.” The naming of the project reflected these values – Casa, meaning home in Spanish and Heiwa, meaning harmony in Japanese, was a deliberate enforcement of LTSC’s intent for an inclusive and multi-racial Little Tokyo. Murase describes how this was a function of the strength of LTSC’s mission:

“When they built Casa Heiwa not everybody in Little Tokyo was in favor of it because it was going to house Mexicans. People talk about Little Tokyo and talk about ‘Koreans taking over.’ That sort of language existed but I think the progressive principles of helping people, won out. LTSC never said ‘help Japanese people only,’ because even in the 60s and 70s this was not a Japanese-only community. There has always been some diversity to it. I think trying to walk that line between respecting all and also preserving the essential Japanese American history and experience, that in a way is the most difficult thing – but it’s kind of the hallmark of what LTSC is” (2014).

**Strategies and Philosophy**

By centering the community voice, identifying unmet needs and seeking diversified funding, LTSC has organically developed programming that continually evolved with the shifting needs of community. Although the organization was originally focused on the provision of social services to Issei residents, the social justice underpinnings of the mission and the constant awareness of the historical context of the neighborhood guided the organization to its CDC structure.

Rather than an activist-oriented mission, the social justice values and direction of the organization was molded by staff who participated in progressive political movements outside of their work at LTSC. Murase explained how role differentiation was important:

“There were unionization efforts that took place, there were strikes and other things that happened. The Japan Food Corporation had a warehouse down the street
where most of the workers were Japanese immigrants. At the time there was a unionizing effort there so these class differences within the community did become sources of tension sometimes. But we didn’t insist on LTSC endorsing, supporting or taking on those things, but individually we did. I would be involved, Evelyn would be involved. Yasuko might provide translations, maybe Alan Nishio would participate in picketing. Bill would be involved, but I think we tried to keep that separation” (2014).

Because LTSC attracted staff that wanted to “do social justice work,” the organization was impacted by those values. LTSC became an organization that young, politically aware AAPIs wanted to work when they graduated college (Nishio, 2014; Sugino, 2014). LTSC benefitted from a workforce that had a variety of skill sets (urban planning, public affairs, policy, etc.) as well as a strong commitment to the ethnic neighborhood. Thus, as the staff became more oriented towards policy advocacy and a critical perspective on social change, the programming and projects followed suit. The CDC board was similar in this way. The original board of LTSC was more Nisei than Sansei and more focused on social service provision rather than political action. As the CDC board membership shifted to more activist Sansei, it reflected more politically progressive leanings in its value set. Watanabe noticed a different shift in the board of LTSC, Inc. (the social service side of the organization) as it started to attract members with more financial resources and connections. A more professionalized board was less likely to be enthusiastic about issues such as union organizing, since it could mean offending people in the business community. Although this shift in the board meant more caution when supporting progressive political issues, it did not block the staff or organization from work in these areas.

**Critical place-based approach.** This commitment to the ethnic neighborhood and the importance of claiming space was one value that was strong from the inception of the organization. In the initial meetings leading up to the formation of LTSC, the decision was
made to focus on a place-based strategy to community development. When deciding on a name for the organization, some advocates felt it should include an ethnic designation, such as the “Japanese American Service System.” Watanabe remembered Paul Tsuneishi’s (2014) reasons for suggesting the name “Little Tokyo Service Center”:

“He said ‘Little Tokyo is not just Japanese, I mean it’s obviously tied to that, but there’s a lot of people who live here, come here, who are not Japanese. So it’s geographical and Little Tokyo is going to change over time,’ so he felt that’s a more encompassing name. Everybody thought about it and they said, ‘You know, you’re right,’ so there was a conscious choice to call it Little Tokyo and not Japanese American. I think that proved to be one of the wiser decisions we made at that early stage because Little Tokyo is still changing and I think the name allows us to do a lot of things where we’re not confined by an ethnic group or language or something.”

Watanabe suggests that when LTSC agreed to take on the Union Church renovation project in the mid-1990s, the commitment to place was solidified,

“It wasn’t necessarily about helping poor people but it was an economic development project that I thought would be invaluable for Little Tokyo. Little Tokyo was still suffering from economic blight and the riots of ’92. People weren’t coming Downtown after dark. To me it [the Union church project] was part of our seeing Little Tokyo as a primary mission, not the poor people, but just the neighborhood itself” (2014).

The formation of the CDC was a natural extension of this work and was seen as necessary in order to bring on “real estate people” who knew how to do development projects. With the CDC in place, the Union Center for the Arts was developed and opened in March of 1998 to house Asian American arts organizations and a theater showcasing Asian American productions.

The connection to place, however, rests on the importance of the historical context of the neighborhood to the people. The staff, board members, and volunteers believe in the maintenance of the ethnic space. Whether due to an ethnocentric claiming of space (as in the case of some early supporters), or due to social justice values born during the Asian
American movement, the people involved in operating LTSC possess an understanding of a critical approach to place. The professionalization of LTSC during the formation of the CDC was important in developing the expertise and drive for claiming space, but professionalization in this case meant that board members and staff had technical skill along with an educational foundation in Asian American movement history that furthered the commitment to maintaining the cultural home space of Little Tokyo.

Incorporation of the Mission- An Inclusionary vision. The concept of “like-mindedness” was mentioned frequently by leadership as the reason for the strength of the mission in guiding the organization’s decisions. Assembling staff, board members and interns that had a commitment to the neighborhood based on an awareness of the historical context of the community has been key to maintaining the values of the organization. Although recruiting people with this mindset was not deliberate, it was cultivated by practices such as the marketing of the agency, community education (workshops and outreach to colleges, community meetings, etc.) and networking within spaces that attracted the people that had a similar commitment to the cultural and historical place.

Nishio and Matsubayashi suggested that LTSC is one of the organizations that young professionals who want to “do” social justice work in the AAPI community can come to once they get their education and want to remain connected to community. This connection to youth is cultivated by connections to many of the local Universities (UCLA, California State Long Beach, USC, Occidental College, etc.). Student interns from many disciplines, class service projects and presentations on the various campuses help LTSC staff engage new generations of youth.
To orient those that may not have this background, Watanabe provides a “History of Little Tokyo” tour about twice a year to new staff and student interns. Currently, he and Alan Nishio still give the tours, but Nakano also has a PowerPoint presentation for new staff orientation that provides a brief history of activism in Little Tokyo and the formation of the organization. Recently, a monthly “staff breakfast” provides another time in which leadership and staff come together to discuss issues. These more formal and deliberate practices to inculcate the mission becomes important to those staff recruited based on skill sets rather than alignment with the mission.

**Negotiating Power Relationships**

*I think we just know how to play well with others.*

Dean Matsubayashi (2014)

As mentioned earlier, LTSC and its leadership relied on the strong reputation and consistent programming to develop key relationships and consistent funding. Watanabe recalled his naiveté in regard to developing political relationships in the early years, he believed “If we do it well, we don’t have to talk about it, that’s all we have to do” (2014). This solid track record and a reputation for non-radical activity to city officials and funders (public and private), continues to this day. An advantage of this reputation is that LTSC was not seen as rabble-rousers, although members of the LTSC staff and board were still able to participate in more radical political activism outside of LTSC. Internally, LTSC was seen as a meeting place – activists from the more radical groups such as LTPRO or NCRR would meet in the office, or utilize some staff time in organizing work. But to outsiders, this political action was seen as the work of the other groups. By keeping LTSC separate from this type of activity, LTSC was able to garner political favor on the one hand, yet pressure the power structure when necessary through its members or affiliated groups. Watanabe
assessed “Politicians began to see us as good people, but harmless” (2014). This reputation allowed LTSC to quietly maneuver around sensitive issues, yet developing expertise and political savvy to fight for issues when a louder voice was necessary.

LTSC worked to gain access to funding streams and opportunities that were previously closed off to the API community. Branching advocacy out to regional and national intermediaries is a strategy that is still an important part of the work. Leadership has established strong relationships with intermediaries such as the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) that started an office in Los Angeles in 1987. As LTSC evolved from a small, grassroots coalition to a professionalized organization with varied staff and resources, its political savvy also grew. Initial strategies were utilizing those activist groups more “outside” of the system, utilizing visible protests and traditional community organizing as the main source of power for the community. After learning from past mistakes, acquiring staff with political expertise and learning from other models, LTSC’s strategies transitioned to “inside” tactics (meeting with city officials, negotiating deals and building relationships with funders and national community development players). This did not mean a complete abandonment of the outside tactics, as projects like the San Pedro Firm building and the gym project necessitated the use of these techniques.

Inside/Outside voices: The gym. One of the more contentious issues faced by LTSC was the battle over land use for its gymnasium project. Since the late 1970s, LTSC had been meeting with community members about the need for a community gymnasium. Baseball, basketball, and martial arts have been enabled community-building for Japanese Americans since before WWII, and leagues that include “pee wees” (4 years old) to “over 40” (for players over 40 years old) teams boast large participation numbers across the
state. This participation in basketball, specifically, has been a mechanism in which community ties are built despite the geographic residential dispersion of Japanese Americans. Although families continue to make the weekly trek to Little Tokyo for participation in Little Tokyo religious institutions, this practice has waned over the years. However, it is not unusual for young Japanese American families to travel from Altadena, Huntington Beach or the Fernando Valley to meet up at school gyms located in San Gabriel, San Pedro or Hollywood so that their children can participate in “JA basketball.” A gym located in Little Tokyo would not only be more geographically central, but would bring families back to the neighborhood as a central site of building community.

In the late 1990s, LTSC was vying for land adjacent to the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) and the Japanese American Museum (JANM). JANM, the impressive museum that houses a permanent exhibit on the history of Japanese immigrants in the United States, has become a powerful player in Downtown Los Angeles. Their ability to fundraise and their impressive facilities mark them as one of the three big community cultural institutions in the neighborhood (along with JACCC and LTSC). Both JANM and MOCA opposed the siting of the gymnasium in the plot adjacent to their property, stating that youth basketball would become a nuisance and would be counter to an “arts” environment. Especially tense was the dynamic between JANM and LTSC, since both cultural institutions were seen as fighting against one another for community space. Irene Hirano, President of JANM and Watanabe were engaged in bitter conflict for the first time in the long history of their working relationship. The Japanese American World War II veterans eventually joined the fight, since their “Go For Broke” monument is located next to the museums and they chose to align with JANM and MOCA. A series of tense community meetings and a
march to City Hall elicited community participation from Japanese Americans who had previously been uninvolved in Little Tokyo development. To many observers, however, witnessing the veterans (dressed in military uniforms) poised against youth in basketball uniforms, was an unfortunate image of intra-ethnic conflict. Yoshimura remembered some of the fallout from the actions:

“It was pretty amazing, we had a rally around First St. and there were like 500 people who came out from basketball teams, the martial arts people in uniforms, it was a mass march! Gilbert Cedillo from the State Assembly came out and spoke at the rally and was a strong supporter for whatever we needed. Rita Walters, our City Councilwoman got so upset that we did that so she actually cut some funding from another area. But people are never the same after something like that happens. It affects people and it percolates and germinates” (2014).

Image 6.6 Rally for the Recreation Center, 2000. Photo courtesy of LTSC.

When the contested site near the museums fell through, the new Councilwoman, Jan Perry, promised to find a site that would work. In 2011, the City Council approved a 25-
year ground lease for a site adjacent to St. Vibiana, a result of inside negotiating with Councilwoman Perry. To date, LTSC has raised about half of the $23 million needed for construction, and groundbreaking is planned for summer of 2016. Although the gym project, now known as Budokan of Los Angeles (BoLA), is not yet complete, the siting struggle exemplifies how LTSC’s strategies are fluid, flowing between boundaries of inside politics and outside community organizing. It also provides a land use battle that complicates simplistic notions of race and space, since the biggest, or rather more hurtful, struggle was “against” another Japanese American institution.

Coalition building. LTSC was founded as a coalition of service providers who wanted a more strategic approach to challenging increased rents and addressing disjointed services. Thus, the idea of a coalition and shared access to leadership and power was present from the start of LTSC. The formation of LTSC was a coalition in which values were inclusion, group identity and maintaining a voice for all participants.

The importance of local collaboration has expanded for LTSC to regional and national coalition-building. Regionally, LTSC has been asked to develop projects with Chinatown Service Center, Chinatown Youth Center (CYC), Korean Immigrant and Workers Alliance (KIWA) and the Filipino Worker’s Center. LTSC collects less fees than the average developer, and sees the importance of the collaboration in two ways. First, the fact that agencies want to continue to work with LTSC in project after project is significant and adds to the reputation of the organization. Second, LTSC sees this as in line with past history and values. Staff recognize that past successes were possible due to “support, mentorship and guidance of others” (Matsubayashi, 2014). The value of community-based development and preservation of low-income housing in the face of displacement, are
other reasons why LTSC would collaborate with other organizations. A recent collaboration with the Coalition for Responsible Community Development (CRCD) in South Los Angeles, which focuses on the African American community, has proven to be a rewarding experience. Matsubayashi imagines that LTSC has built trust, respect and a reputation for solid business practices, which is why CRCD sought out the organization as a partner, rather than another organization closer to them in South Los Angeles. Matsubayashi (2014) stated, “I think that says a lot...I think it’s just the overall vibe that LTSC has out there and the kind of people we have working here. For me, it’s like having the right team in place is so key, it’s THE most important thing.”

LTSC received a grant in 2014 from the Bank of America Foundation to support the Affordable Housing Collaborative, which is a coalition of 15 community-based organizations. The collaborative will build 24 projects with 844 units of affordable housing in various Los Angeles communities including the Arts District, Historic Filipinotown, Little Tokyo, Koreatown and Cornfield Arroyo Seco (LTSC, November, 1979). Matsubayashi also sits on the board of LISC, Los Angeles, an intermediary that works with CDCs and funders for equitable development.

Nationally, LTSC has been at the forefront of Asian Pacific Islander American community development coalition-building. In 1999, Watanabe, along with Gordon Chin from Chinatown Community Development Corporation and Chris Cui with Asian Americans for Equity in New York met and agreed there was a need to establish a national presence for Asian Pacific Islander American community development professionals. The three leaders spearheaded the formation of National CAPACD. Watanabe, after noticing that AAPI communities were being bypassed by funding opportunities for historic preservation,
started organizing to create the national coalition, Asian and Pacific Islanders Americans in Historic Preservation (APIAHIP).

**Community Empowerment**

*Defining Community.* Conceptions of the target population for LTSC have remained somewhat static in terms of certain categories of individuals: Little Tokyo low-income residents and elderly and Japanese monolingual/immigrants are priorities (often, these categories overlap) and the broader Japanese American and AAPI community are also important stakeholders. Characteristics that have shifted are the race/ethnicity of low-income residents and the degree to which the importance of preserving place is a focus for the agency.

Engaging the community has included community organizing techniques such as knocking on doors and building relationships with residents, maintaining a presence in community events and meetings, and holding community education workshops to remain connected to community needs while building relationships. The core work of LTSC is still social work – the provision of services to underserved populations through community outreach and engagement. This function is often overshadowed by the development projects. Reasons for this are varied. Culturally and professionally, the LTSC social workers do not talk about what they do. Confidentiality prevents workers from boasting about client “success stories,” or introducing clients at large events. In addition, board members and certain funders tend to get more excited about a new building rather than providing counseling services (Nishio, 2014; Sakamoto, 2014).

Community engagement, then, has always included an on the ground approach to assessing needs and developing service-based projects to fill gaps. Staff work with
individuals and families and conduct needs assessments in the senior housing. Community organizing, is often seen as separate from the service-based projects, as staff work on the LTCC, facilitate meetings for the regional connector project, and conduct community education workshops to involve residents and the greater Japanese American community.

Little Tokyo Community Council. In 1999, Watanabe and Irene Hirano, President of JANM, discussed the need for a community council. Watanabe called Hirano about the sudden appearance of a large chain store that had opened about a block away from JANM on Central Ave. Watanabe and Hirano were at odds on the siting of the gym project, but could still work together on other issues of community importance. Both agreed to take action and in 2000, the Little Tokyo Community Council (LTCC) began having regular meetings. By 2014, the LTCC has gained a significant amount of power influencing city planning decisions and policy decisions that impact the Little Tokyo neighborhood.

LTSC as a “Community Institution.” To most observers, there are three clear community and cultural institutions in Little Tokyo – LTSC, JANM, and the JACCC, which focuses on the arts and cultural maintenance. For LTSC, this adds a unique layer to their role as a CDC. Staff feels a responsibility to represent and advocate for the Little Tokyo community when there are issues that can impact the neighborhood or the larger ethnic community. The reputation of LTSC extends beyond the borders of Los Angeles. When investigating an issue related in the issue of Korean comfort women (sexual slaves used by Japanese military during World War II) gained local headlines in the nearby city of Glendale, the Foreign Correspondents Club of Japan cited LTSC “as a sounding board for the Japanese community in Southern California.” When the Metro in Los Angeles proposed the regional connector, a transit project that will establish one of the busiest light rail stations
in the county in Little Tokyo, LTSC and the LTCC were the logical community organizations to address the community-related concerns.

Summary and Conclusion

An analysis of core themes in relation to the research questions will be provided in Chapter 9. Findings in three areas are important to developing a model of transformative practice. First, a commitment to shared leadership was exhibited through the horizontal leadership style and communal values. Interviews described “like-mindedness” as important in relation to recruiting staff and board members. They also mentioned “trust” as a valuable value in terms of the openness of the board and administration to allow staff to develop ownership over programs and relationships with funders and the community.

Second, the articulation of the mission and values of the organization provided a counter-narrative to the liberal political ideologies that were prevalent in urban development. By critiquing the myths of meritocracy and the model minority, LTSC framed social service provision, housing development and historic preservation as social justice issues.

Third, the connection to place included a critical race consciousness, an understanding of how policies constructed uneven development in the neighborhood. The importance of the Asian American movement and resistance to displacement is replayed to connect new generations of AAPIS to the ethnic space. Thus, students who have a critical perspective of history, those in ethnic students and planning departments, for example, are more likely to develop a passion for working in and for the neighborhood.

As the initial case for this study, LTSC provided a rich history and unique evolution to its current status. The organization is unique in a variety of ways – it is the only
organization in the study that started as a social service agency and evolved to address housing and historic preservation. This evolution was attributed to the forward thinking of the founding staff as they saw the social service needs directly tied to the historical context of the neighborhood and to the oppression faced by low-income residents of color.

Bill Watanabe, as the leader of the organization for over 30 years, is well known amongst community development professionals, and thus LTSC may be seen as a leader-driven organization. However, by all accounts LTSC's leadership philosophy was unusually horizontal, with staff feeling empowered to develop innovative programs, cultivate their own relationships with the board, funders and government agencies. Watanabe was seen internally as a facilitator - a visionary leader who allowed staff and board members to pursue initiatives and expand projects on their own. Thus, the success of LTSC relies on the development of key staff and the vision of a broad group of practitioners that often forego individual recognition, but rely on the reward of doing good work for the right reasons.

The two current development projects (one internal and one external) pose new threats to the neighborhood – how will transit-oriented development transform the build environment, and demographics of the neighborhood, the cultural institutions and the community structures like the Little Tokyo Community Council and the Little Tokyo Business Improvement District? Will BOLA be the flagship community institution that LTSC has hoped for? When it is built, will young Japanese American families and the broader AAPI community come to Little Tokyo to play, eat and shop? If they do, what does this mean for the remaining low-income residents of the neighborhood?
Image 6.7 Dean Matsubayashi, current Executive Director (left) and Bill Watanabe, founding Executive Director (right) holding a picture of the architect’s initial rendering of Budokan of Los Angeles (2012). Photo taken by Daniel Ichinose.
Chapter 7: Chinatown Community Development Center

We were born out of the activism of the sixties and seventies when five community associations sponsored the creation of the Chinatown Neighborhood Improvement Resource Center. -1992 Past, Present, Future: Fifteen Year Report

This section provides the context and history of the formation of Chinatown Community Development Center (CCDC). Because San Francisco served as the location for the heart of the Asian American student movement and the famous International Hotel (I-Hotel) battle, analyzing the legacy of this history and its connection to the development of CCDC is informative for clarifying how community development corporation institutional shifts overlap or not with social justice imperatives. As an example, many key stakeholders involved in the creation of CCDC were active members of the San Francisco State University student strike and the I-Hotel anti-eviction battle, thus, their influence on the mission and strategies of CCDC were integral to the formation of the organization. The current mission of CCDC is: “The Mission of the Chinatown Community Development Center is to build community and enhance the quality of life for San Francisco residents. We are a place-based community development organization serving primarily the Chinatown neighborhood, and also serve other areas including North Beach, Tenderloin, the Northern Waterfront, the Western Addition, Japantown, Polk Gulch, the Richmond, Civic Center and the South of Market area. We play the roles of neighborhood advocates, community organizers, planners, developers, and managers of affordable housing” (CCDC, n.d.)

Today, Chinatown’s proximity to the financial district, trendy North beach and the waterfront prove to be overwhelming forces in the fight to maintain affordable housing. Average rents have skyrocketed, which has provided for a heated political climate over contested spaces for affordable and low-income housing.
The precursors to CCDC, The Chinatown Resource Center (CRC) and the Chinese Community Housing Corporation (CCHC) were formed in 1977 and 1978 respectively. The organizations merged in 1998 to form the Chinatown CDC. The CRC 1992 “Fifteen Year Report” includes a statement that refers to their success as a community-based institution:

“We were able to strengthen our base not only within the community but throughout the City of San Francisco, proving ourselves as a vociferous community advocate, savvy land use planner and adept nonprofit housing developer. By the nineties, both CRC and CCHC were well-established as solid organizations with capable and committed leadership and staff. Even as we add new projects to our drawing board every year, we never lose sight of our original intent to serve the Chinatown community.” (CRC Fifteen Year Report, 1992)

Today, CCDC has 130 staff members with an annual budget of $7 million. CCDC has developed over 2100 units of affordable housing, and played a key role in development projects in San Francisco and in AAPI community development initiatives nationally. In addition to housing development CCDC does youth leadership development (through their
Adopt-an-Alleyway project, Chinatown Alleyway Tours program, Youth for SROs program and Campaign Academy), organizing and advocacy (through housing counseling and policy advocacy), planning (around issues such as transportation, open space, economic development and livable streets) and resident services (empowerment and social/recreational activities) (CCDC, n.d.). The following section describes the community context of this case, the formation of the agency and how the organization conceptualizes its social justice mission.


This chapter outlines these dynamics and shows how these events have continued to influence the mission and practices of CCDC. Especially interesting is how the power of the organization is shifting due to the recent election and appointment of Chinese American allies in local politics.

The rest of the chapter is organized into the following sections. First, the impact of the racialization of Chinatowns is discussed, as well as the specific spatial realities of San
Francisco’s Chinatown. The need for and creation of CCDC is then discussed followed by the strategies and philosophy of the organization. When possible, the voice of the key stakeholders is used in order to insert their voices in presenting this story.

**Neighborhood Historical Context**

*So, home matters, right? For the Chinese community, we’ve been excluded for so long.*

Norman Fong (2014)

San Francisco’s Chinatown grew from the mid to late 1800s as a ghettoized section of the city that provided some of the only spaces in which Chinese laborers could live (G and Nee, 1986). Although initially greeted eagerly for their cheap labor, Chinese immigrants were quickly racialized as “other” and were scapegoated for issues ranging from the economy (they were blamed for accepting low wages and thus driving the economy downward), overcrowding and disease (Chan, 1991; Lin, 1998; Takaki, 1989; Trauner, 1998).

The dynamics impacting community development in Chinatown include those of the Chinese Family firms and associations, known collectively as the “Six Companies.” These organizations own approximately 30% of the property in Chinatown and are influential in political developments for the area (Soo, 1999). Gangs and flows of immigration and capital from China, a full discussion of all of these elements is beyond the scope of this project. All of these elements, however, are important in understanding the context of building community and defining the ethnic space.

**Site of protest.** The Bay Area in California is well known as an important space for radical political development (for example, the Black Panthers in Oakland) and student protest (the free speech and anti-war movements at UC Berkeley and San Francisco State
University). The connection between student protest and community involvement is foundational to the start of CCDC.

In October of 1967, the Intercollegiate Chinese for Social Action (ICSA) was formed and provided volunteers to Chinatown social service agencies (Umemoto, 1989). In 1968 the group had established an office in Chinatown and became more militant as a result of involvement with other student groups at San Francisco State University (SFSU). In what became the longest student strike in United States history, students in the Third World Liberation Front staged protests and battled with police and university administration to demand self-determination and content relevant to their communities. These demands accompanied a new political consciousness, “[f]or Asian American students in particular, this also marked a ‘shedding of silence’ and an affirmation of identity” (Umemoto, 1989). What accompanied this identity, for youth from Chinatown and for those from the more affluent suburbs, was a connection to Chinatown as a cultural home space and site of social injustice and political action:

“Power to the People” for ICSA implicitly meant power to the working class of Chinatown. This is clear from their attacks on the landlords and power brokers including the Six Companies. Frustrations had mounted over the latter’s resistance to youth programs, including those of Leways and the Hwa Ching to develop jobs and programs. On 17 August 1968, ICSA members and community leaders including Reverends Larry Jack Wong, Ed Sue and Harry Chuck led a peaceful march through Chinatown in support of ‘education, employment, health, housing, youth, senior citizens and immigration” (Umemoto, 1989).

In addition to ICSA, the Philippine-American Collegiate Endeavor (PACE) simultaneously worked on the SFSU student strike and the anti-eviction protests occurring in Manilatown and Chinatown. This history of student protest and connection to San Francisco’s Chinatown proved to be instrumental in fights against urban renewal that culminated in the fight for the International Hotel (I-Hotel).
## Figure 7.1 Timeline of CCDC Formation and Neighborhood Context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street Context</th>
<th>Neighboring Anti-Asian sentiment</th>
<th>Earthquake</th>
<th>Displacement due to Urban Renewal Projects (Fillmore district)</th>
<th>First eviction order delivered to I-Hotel residents</th>
<th>1977 I-Hotel Eviction</th>
<th>Influence of Hong Kong capital (Orangeland development)</th>
<th>Ellis Act 1986 spurs evictions</th>
<th>Low-income housing production becomes highly specialized</th>
<th>Foundations and intermediaries become leaders in the CD field</th>
<th>Market Rate housing development proliferates</th>
<th>Ellis Act evictions remain an issue</th>
<th>Privatization of public housing</th>
<th>2011 Appointment of Mayor Ed Lee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community response:</td>
<td>Chinese Six Companies</td>
<td>SFSU student strike</td>
<td>Fight for I-Hotel begins</td>
<td>Ping Yuen Public Tenants Strike</td>
<td>1977 I-Hotel anti-eviction strike</td>
<td>1977 Chinatown Neighborhood Improvement Resource Center formed (CNIRC)</td>
<td>1978 Chinese Community Housing Corporation (CCH) Formed</td>
<td>1979 – CNIRC renamed as Chinatown Resource Center Formed</td>
<td>1982 Consorcio Hotel developed</td>
<td>Community 1987 Tenants Association formed</td>
<td>1991 Adopt an Alleyway Youth program begins</td>
<td>1998, the CRC and the CCH merge to become the Chinatown Community Development Center.</td>
<td>Multi-racial, multi-neighborhood coalitions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Formation of the Organization

In the late 60s and early 70s, activism and social justice almost became a lifestyle.

Gordon Chin (2014)

Gordon Chin, the founding Executive Director of CCDC points to the student strike and the environment of political action during the time period as the origins of the organization, “even though we cite April 1, 1977 as the beginning of the organization, the seeds of the organization really predate that by a decade, where many Asian American activists were involved in the civil rights movement and the anti-war movement” (2014). The formation of a community development organization occurred within the context of the political organizing around issues related to urban renewal, ethnic studies, community control and self-determination.

By the late 1960s, the context of political action tied to ethnic identity and student involvement was headquartered in the area that contained Manilatown and Chinatown. Volunteer, grassroots groups had emerged that worked on issues related to open space, community facilities and transportation. As urban renewal and gentrification had already overtaken most of Manilatown, the I-hotel remained as one of the last single room occupancy hotels for elderly Filipino and Chinese bachelors.

The International Hotel. Arguably the most well known incident in the history of Asian American community development is the urban renewal-spurred displacement of residents at the International Hotel (I-Hotel) on the corner of Kearny and Jackson streets in San Francisco. A documentary and a book describe the devastation related to the displacement of long-time, elderly residents and the fight against eviction that was largely
waged by Asian American college students (Habal, 2007). In 1968, the tenants received the first eviction order to leave the I-Hotel. For the next 9 years, tenants, community activists and politicians fought to retain the building for its elderly occupants. After months of protests (with some attracting up to 7,000 participants), the fight dramatically culminated in the early hours of August 4 of 1977, when approximately 2,000 protestors formed human barricades to prevent the police from evicting the tenants (Habal, 2007). Although earlier attempts to block the eviction had been successful, this was the night that the elderly residents were carried out by law enforcement, leaving their units for the last time, some with no place to go, although activists and community members had worked hard to find housing for the displaced elders (Habal, 2007).

Because of the galvanizing effect of this movement, the I-Hotel represents the politicization of many young Asian American activists and was a cornerstone of the Asian American movement. Even for those that never lived in Manilatown or Chinatown, the opportunity for on the ground political battles and the images of elderly Chinese and Filipino elders being carried out of the I-hotel was a motivating force that stays with those involved until this day. Chin (2014) describes the scope of the movement and its impact on
community consciousness:

“The I-Hotel was the genesis for a lot of other activism. It wasn’t only about power. It was about Filipino empowerment, it was about understanding the importance of place, spiritually. This was our place in this country and it was being taken away. It was all kids of other social justice issues entwined in saving the housing: small businesses, community services, a lot of the arts organizations were getting started...so it became much more than just a housing issue. It was an environment in which a lot of activism got started that then branched out into all kinds of issues.”

Threats and Unmet Needs. In addition to the I-Hotel, during the decade preceding the formation of CCDC, community groups had been organizing around five issue areas in the Chinatown area: 1. Rights of public housing residents; 2. Amount and quality of affordable housing; 3. Lack of open space; 4. Lack of neighborhood facilities; and 5. Access to public transportation.

The Chinese Newcomers Service Center in Chinatown reported that their constituency (recent immigrants from China or Taiwan) tended to be: non-English or limited-English speaking, come from rural areas, have large families, have low levels of formal education, and have few marketable job skills. As a result, recent immigrants who reside in Chinatown suffer from social isolation, underemployment or unemployment, domestic violence, juvenile crime and financial hardship (Chinese Newcomers Service Center, n.d.).

Norman Fong (2014) recalls, “most people live in single room occupancy hotels, so they live in 8 by 10 rooms, jam-packed families, so open space parks becomes important.” Since Chinatown was characterized by high residential density, the Chinatown Better Park and Recreation committee focused on the need for open space and the Chinatown Coalition for Better Housing (CCBH) organized for more housing (Fong, 2014). Fong explained, “So
Chinatown CDC began in response to transportation, open space, housing, and facility needs – Chinatown just didn’t have enough space. If there is one big thing we need is space. If you go into one of our buildings you know why. There's just no room. Everyone has a different type of poverty, but the poverty in Chinatown its outrageous. People live in closet-like spaces. Even though all the tourists come, volunteers come, they see the stores in the bottom floors, but above that is all Single Room Occupancy (SRO) housing.

Housing in Chinatown has remained the preeminent issue for residents. Preservation of affordable housing for elderly and the creation of new housing for incoming families is a consistent need. During the mid-1980s, the San Francisco Department of City Planning estimated that 1,200 to 1,800 immigrants annually were seeking housing in Chinatown (San Francisco Department of City Planning, n.d.). The quality and safety of housing is another issue area – most of the housing stock was built just after the 1906 earthquake, thus the threat of another earthquake and state-mandated retrofitting provided a need for community education and advocacy so that residents were not displaced during renovations.

Key Players. CCDC was officially created as the Chinatown Neighborhood Improvement Resource Center (CNIRC) on April 1, 1977 by five volunteer grassroots groups. The five groups were: the public housing Community Tenants Association, The Chinatown Better Recreation and Parks Committee (CBPRC), Chinatown Transportation Research and Improvement Project (TRIP), CCBH and a group who worked on facilities that was fighting for a new neighborhood center. In 1978, the Ping Yuen public housing projects instituted a rent strike – established the Ping Yuen Residents Improvement Association
(PYRIA) as one of the most active public housing groups in the City. CRC had been providing technical assistance to PYRIA since 1977.

The CNIRC was eventually renamed the Chinatown Resource Center and in 1978 founded the Chinese Community Housing Corporation (CCHC) as a new nonprofit housing development firm to collaborate with other neighborhood-based developers in a citywide campaign to preserve and produce affordable housing for low-income residents with CDBG funding (Chinatown Resource Center, 1992). Chin (2014) remembered that when they started, they did not necessary have a strong plan for the neighborhood: “We had no idea what community development was in a theoretical sense. We had no theory of change, what we did have was a strong base, a commitment to organizing, and a view that the community was an important place to preserve...an idea that the whole was bigger than the sum of its parts, so we need to coordinate so that we would not be fighting with each other over sites.” However, the momentum and passion emanating from the I-Hotel battle provided direction and a mission for the community work happening in Chinatown during this time (Yeung, 2014).

Although Chin was the only staff member at first, the organization added an organizer (Sue Lee), a planner and an office manager, all women. A lot of the early work was spent on building relationships and doing projects to establish legitimacy within the community:

“[W]e developed a lot of relationships. We worked to establish relationships with the business community. We did community-building activities like getting the streets paved, street lighting, to develop credibility. You know, with a pretty conservative community who were property owners, we needed to show them we weren't just a bunch of trouble makers” (Chin, 2014).
The “conservative community” that Chin refers to consists of the small business owners and the property owners, the most influential of which were known as the Six Companies. Remaining a community institution that remained true to low-income residents while balancing relationships with the sometimes conflicting views of the business interests of longtime Chinatown players, was a dance that Chin managed well.

Community organizing was the main strategy of the organization, although this type of engagement on community issues was developed in different ways over time.

**Strategies and Philosophy**

*If we did nothing else, we did organizing.*

Gordon Chin, 2014

During the first few years, the five founding groups made up the board, and their agendas became the mandate for CNIRC. Current Executive Director Norman Fong (2014) explains the organization’s core value, “We have always been accountable to the community. Not all CDCs are like that. But we have these five groups who are the boss. We still have tenants on our board that keep us going. Base-building is one thing we’ve always been faithful to. In our movement for social change, we always do it with the residents leading the way. People who live in the community should direct the way it should go.”

The organization offered housing counseling as one of its core services. Tenants facing eviction or residents experiencing other types of rights violations related to their housing were able to get help at CNRIC and the CCHC. This service remains one of the main vehicles for the organization to develop relationships with residents as a crucial entry point for residents to become involved in the organizing activities. (Chow, 2014; Kwan, 2014; Yeung, 2014)
As the CNIRC, the organization published a monthly newsletter that was often dedicated to community education around issues such as safety, gentrification, and other housing related issues. The August 1980 issue was a special issue on residential hotels and included this introductory message:

“This special edition of our update outlines some of the residential hotel issues. We will describe the historic development of residential hotels, the mode of hotel living in Chinatown, and our efforts in maintaining this valuable housing source. The preservation of these hotels is crucial to Chinatown’s future as a residential community. The Resource Center is convinced that people should be able to live, work, and shop in Chinatown, and this goal is reflected in all our activities.” (CNIRC, p.1)

In 1991, Fong, surprised that CCDC did not have any youth programs, started the Adopt-an-Alleyway (AAA) Youth program. The program, which is still ongoing, has served over 400 youth and has its own mission: “The mission of the Adopt-An-Alleyway (AAA) Youth Project is to have high school students monitor and organize cleanups to beautify Chinatown’s forty-one (41) alleyways, provide services to the Chinatown community, and to help these youth develop leadership skills” (AAA, n.d.). This program led to the development of an organizing-focused Youth Leadership Development department, which today includes the AAA program, the Chinatown Alleyway Tours Program, Youth for SROs program, Campaign Academy and Advocates for Community Change, Empowerment and Social Services.

Angelina Yu (2014), a Community Organizer at CCDC started as a youth volunteer with the program. Even though she had a personal connection to Chinatown, she obtained a different connection through her service learning hours in the youth intergenerational SRO program:

“My grandparents lived in Chinatown, that was always my connection – you come here, you eat food, you get babied by grandparents. When we did the
intergenerational program with residents – I didn’t realize what an SRO was, I’d never stepped inside one – so for a dozen teenagers to be elbow-to-elbow in a community room, it was kind of a shocking experience for me. I always thought my space was cramped...it was something that was super simple, but the seniors were super ecstatic to spend one hour time with us. It was a way to give back by just having conversations with folks. For high school I need community service hours, so it [the commitment] started that way, but I stayed for other reasons.”

Image 7.3 Chinatown youth working on a mural in an alleyway. Photo courtesy of CCDC.

CCDC’s most well-known effort, however, is the Community Tenants Association (CTA). Formed in 1987, the association boasts 1200 members, mostly seniors who live in Chinatown and beyond. The members pay $15 per month and between 600 and 1200 attend the “Super Sunday” tenant meetings facilitated by CCDC staff and youth from the Adopt an Alleyway program. It is through this mechanism that residents are heard, elect leaders and vote on issues related to the community. Anglea Chu, an Organizing Manager
explained, “Chinatown CDC is a source of information for the groups that are working in the neighborhood, particularly because grassroots groups here are usually monolingual. A lot of information may not get to them as readily...we work together, so if there is any trouble in the community, we can see what's happening and the grassroots people could let us know what’s important in the community. We work together in a good way. We have built a trust between us, so the relationships are there” (2014). The meetings have become a source of neighborhood power, as state and local politicians attend to make their case to residents on issues related to safety, housing and social services. Previously excluded from housing advocacy due to language barriers and limited access to decision-makers, the CTA facilitates these bilingual meetings at the local elementary school and publishes a bilingual tenants rights newspaper.

Chu (2014) explained that the community organizing staff has branched out into civic engagement. “Some of our Community Organizing staff have become our Civic Engagement Team. We also do disaster preparedness and fire prevention. We work on legislation that might affect the community...we have been quite effective in terms of pushing for legislation at the policy level, particularly for these few years” (2014). Over the years, she feels the agency has broadened in the area of work “the strategy has been tapping into grassroots [groups] to form larger organizations so they can take part in many community issues, become independent and truly represent the community. The leaders are coming from those organizations, we support them through technical assistance and support - that has been a way for us to organize the community (2014).

Deputy Director Malcolm Yeung (2014) describes CCDC’s approach to organizing:

“We have an approach to organizing that I think tends to be a little bit different and we hope deeper than other organizations. We have always believed that organizing
doesn’t just happen during ‘hot’ issues, during critical periods or during emergencies. In fact, that’s when it’s easy to organize. Organizing happens when there aren’t issues gong on, when there isn’t stuff to get people excited around. Those are the moments when we invest very deeply in relationship building, just having a meal with folks, helping community-organized meals. Just to hang out for no actual reason or to celebrate a holiday. You know, just doing simple things like driving folks to the doctor or anything that builds up the relationship. We’ve found over the years that that kind of investment is really what pays off in moments where you do need to mobilize quickly, where you do have hot issues and you need to be able to respond quicker than the sort of relationship building from the ground-up would really would allow you to do.”

Housing development serves as a crucial way to empower the community and also serves as a point of engagement for community organizing.

CDC formed. Developing new housing and preserving existing housing became an important function of the organization by the mid-1980s. In 1982, the Consorcia building on Mason Street was the first property acquired, rehabilitated and managed by CCDC. The first residential hotel owned and managed by CCDC is the Clayton Hotel on Clay Street. The CDC structure was ideal for the organization since it allowed for the focus on low income housing preservation and production, which provided developer and manager fees that could be used for the programmatic side of the organization (Yeung, 2014).
New development projects were evaluated by CCDC in relation to CCDC’s mission.

In a November 20, 1990 memo from Chin entitled "New Project Planning," he reminds staff to be deliberate in selecting a project: “CCHC Development must be clear in outlines possible development and CCHC role options for each project, addressing first and foremost of the question of ‘Who should live in this project?’ and the reason why” (Chin, 1990).

When deciding on housing projects, Whitney Jones (2014), the Director of Housing Development explains how CCDC is different than other developers:

“I think every organization does their things. They say what they want to do and maybe do it or maybe don’t, and so it’s easy as a housing developer to be doing this thing where it’s all about a building, that we could do it, we could build it and we have the public's trust in doing a building. But with Chinatown CDC the focus is on questions like ‘Who’s living there? Who’s going to live there? Why are we doing it?’"
Thus, the direction from the 1990 memo still guides development decisions today.

The tension between the community organizing focus of CCDC and the property development functions are sometimes expressed in management meetings. CCDC has implemented a horizontal structure, with numerous managers at the table. Jones (2014) describes the inherent conflicts in the use of resources, since the developer fees often gets shifted to services and community organizing. Although at first he may have questioned those decisions, he know views them as “brilliant,” since “that commitment [to organizing] is why we are who we are – if we didn’t do that, we wouldn’t be who we are...some think the core of our organization is planning, I think its wrong, the core is organizing.” Gen Fujioka, Policy Director, stated “you have organizations that are housing developers that do organizing, and its often the dog wagging the tail. Well, it’s not always clear for CCDC which is the dog and which is the tail – the organizing tail was wagging the dog a lot of the time” (2014).

The large management structure, however, allows for individuals to develop leadership, pursue their interests and have a continued investment in the daily activities of the organization. They also hold each other accountable to the mission. Malcolm Yeung (2014), Policy Manager explains:

“To Norman’s credit, he’s maintained a management team structure that’s really quite large. I think we’re unusually large in the sense that I think we have close to twenty people on our management team and half of the folks on the management team are the managers of program side teams. The Organizing Manager sits at the table, the Community Planning Manager, our Civic Engagement Manager, they all sit at the Table. I think that may be unique…I think we have a much more democratic management team process and actually ends up in a level of interchange that kind of holds this organization to its values.”
Critical Place-based approach. Identifying Chinatown and the former site of Manilatown as the site of contested space and the emergence of Asian American identity in San Francisco is crucial to the maintenance of the commitment of community-based practitioners. In recalling his involvement in the I-Hotel eviction and in his own family’s eviction from another building, current Executive Director Norman Fong (2014) reflects:

“At the International Hotel eviction, I cried like a baby, let me tell you. It reminded everybody that housing is something you fight for. You have to preserve it. Don’t take it for granted. Personally, this is why I’ve been here so long: 24 years with Chinatown CDC and 11 years with another community center. It’s because my family got evicted, and I thought it was wrong. The sheriff came and gave us the notice. I had to interpret the letter for my mom. I go, ‘we gotta get outta here in one month! It’s a 30 day notice.’ So, for me it’s personal. Now I’m the Executive Director, continuing to fight, which I learned from the I-Hotel experience, my personal family and my church, the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown, which fought for the first redevelopment project for housing in our community.”

Tan Chow is a community organizer who has been with CCDC since 1995. He came to San Francisco from Vietnam in 1980, and although he never lived in Chinatown, he considers it to be his community: “I went to church, shopped, played, eat, see doctor, bought the latest vinyl records (now DVDS) from Asia, cut my hair, file my taxes, fix my watch, in Chinatown. I took the bus a lot and would transfer and walk through Chinatown, I read the Chinese newspapers and meet and talk to residents, merchants and community members in Chinatown. It’s my neighborhood” (Chow, 2014).

Chin (2014) describes the importance of place as central to the mission and the continued commitment of the work of the organization. In reflecting upon the connection between the years preceding the formation of the organization he recounted:

“In that decade, 1968-1977, there weren’t any CDCs, there was just activism, but that formed a strong base for many of the San Francisco CDCs, particularly in people of color neighborhoods, who understand, that we did not get started to serve our identity, it’s not about that, it’s not about us and we were formed to serve this place, whatever it took. And since we came out of that history, we knew that we could not
forsake organizing and advocacy and public policy to just become developers. That would be counter-productive. Cause, what’s the point, and we learned this at the I-hotel 25 years ago, what’s the point of working hard on developing a new project that takes you ten years, when in the meantime, landlords have displaced ten projects, affecting thousands. So there always had to be a balanced perspective of preservation, and that took organizing and policy, while you were doing new construction and new development to expand the housing. So I think we started the organization already having that philosophical frame, I’ve said many times, if we did nothing else, if we did only one thing, we do organizing.”

The longevity of key leadership speaks to this commitment and the personal connection with place. In addition to Chin (who served as Executive Director for 34 years) and Fong (24 years with the organization), other key staff have served for over 20 years: Cindy Wu, Community Planning Manager; Wai Ching Chow, Planning Coordinator; Angela Chu, Community Organizer; and Whitney Jones, Director of Housing Development.

Incorporation of the Mission and the Historical Context. In the environment where social activism was common across many different groups, CCDC has deep roots. The culture of activism has been supported through a variety of formal and informal mechanisms. Much of the organizational culture was embodied by Executive Director’s Chin and Fong. Their long history of working with the community was well known, and the legitimacy that goes along with such credentials may motivate others. Chin would write memos that outlined his thinking on a particular issue, and this process included reference to the mission and values of the organization. As the current Executive Director, Fong is known for his weekly staff meetings where he utilizes his time to connect a current issue to the larger social justice implications for the community. Yu (2014) describes the importance of staff meetings:

“I think the Norman update is the most raw or spontaneous expression of social justice values. He’s also a reverend on the side as well as a musician, he wears many hats, he kind of blends it all when he does his updates. He’ll manage to frame the housing issue we are working on as a human rights issue or a social justice issue, it’s
a very Norman characteristic. I don’t think every ED manages to inspire folks to have a grander vision of everything.”

For new staff, an orientation provides the history of the community and the organization, and it is often done inside of the I-Hotel so that staff can experience the building as it was in the 1970s (on the walls they can see the pictures of the residents from that historic period). Wai Ching Kwan (2014), Programs, Administration and Youth Manager, describes the process: “we have an orientation that Norman does and he’s amazing, so I think some part of our organization’s culture is really influenced by the leaders. Gordon was amazing, he was doing all of the tours and he worked in sync with a lot of other communities and activists.” Kwan feels this also impacts staff retention “Norman is so supportive and he has so much heart and compassion for the community. I think that’s why a lot of staff stay is because of the leadership, because they know their heart’s in the right place, they’re really committed, there’s a lot of energy and there’s a lot of creativity in our organization” (2014). Once a year, staff meet to do a work plan to establish how the programs attach to the mission statement, Yu (2014) explains the meetings “make sure whatever we are doing matters deeply to either our constituents, our youth, or its aligned with our organization.” Strategic plans, newsletters and annual reports provide other avenues for the mission and values to be revisited and rearticulated.

The tours, given by Chin or Fong, also serve as a recruitment strategy for staff and volunteers. When Yeung was an intern with the Asian Law Caucus, his orientation included a tour led by Norman,

“I didn’t know who he was, but he comes in and starts pointing everywhere in Chinatown. There’s a struggle here, there’s a struggle here, there’s a fight here. He gave a tour about the political fixed view of the community and really laid down the sense that nothing is here by accident, everything is fought for, everything is intentional, everything was product of struggle, good things and bad….it was an
amazing introduction and I was like ‘I know what I’m going to do with my life’” (Yeung, 2014).

In addition to these formalized mechanisms, Chow (2014) explains that learning about the history and mission of the organization was an organic process that occurred through watching leaders such as Chin, Fong and Gen Fujioka. “I did a lot of shadowing of Gordon and Norman. I learned about nonprofit community development advocacy. Norman and Gordon (and also many committed organizers and grassroots leaders) are the heart and mind of the organization. I learned about the mission from them and Gen Fujioka. No one came up to me and said ‘hey, you need a mentor.’ I don’t believe anyone has asked me that.” He refers back to these experiences as he does his work: “I hold myself accountable to the community, ultimately, what guides my work is that I’m accountable to the community, the people, the history, the mission of the organization. When I make tough decisions or I’m facing challenges, I always look back to our community development and housing struggle history – l-Hotel, Ping Yuen rent strike, Orangeland, fight against shadow over Chinese playground, etc. and Gordon’s collection of inspirational, visionary and practical memos on Chinatown.”

**Negotiating Power Relationships**

*Although we are so proud to have the first Chinese American Mayor in San Francisco, sometimes it’s hard to have one of your own up there, in power.*

Norman Fong, 2014

As mentioned earlier, CCDC maintains that its organizing is the key to its success. Lobbying elected officials, negotiating deals with community partners and conducting large scale political actions with large numbers of residents (elderly, families and youth) are all common strategies of the organization. The Super Sunday meetings, due to the numbers of residents that attend, is an exhibition of CCDC’s power, as local and state politicians visit
the meetings to gain support for initiatives. The role of CCDC has become complicated over the past 30 years, as many individuals involved with CCDC have emerged in city-wide politics.

Orangeland. During the early 1980s, the development known as “Orangeland” (named after one of the stores in the building), was one of the key battles waged within Chinatown. The dilemma occurred when long-time owners, the Georo Corporation, owned by George and Rose Yee, planned to develop their property into 35 luxury condominiums and market-rate shops at 1019-1055 Stockton Street (Agnos Office, 1984). A 1984 article in Asian Week referred to the development as the “Hong Kongization” of Chinatown, meaning “Hong Kong money” was pushing out working class Chinese living in the neighborhood.

Image 7.5 Cover of 1980s CCDC information booklet on Orangeland. The proposed project would displace 195 residents, 71 units of affordable housing, and 14 small businesses, but the developers negotiated with another social service agency and promised them units of senior housing if they signed on, thus pitting the displacement of families against the need for more senior
housing. CCDC took the side of the current tenants of the building, believing that eliminating the existing units would mean an overall reduction in affordable housing stock in Chinatown, in addition to the permanent loss of longtime small businesses.

Although Chin was not a visible leader against the development, behind the scenes he organized the opposition and gathered the political support necessary to defeat the development. He helped to strategize and place ads in the local papers. In 1985, the San Francisco Examiner published a story that included an impassioned plea from a resident: “If I have to leave Chinatown and my friends, my life will be meaningless” (San Francisco Examiner, 1985). California state Assemblyperson Art Agnos signed on and issued a statement that included the acknowledgement of the importance of personal relationships in the community: “I believe that the Orangeland development is a serious threat to the Chinatown that is so important to the people who live there and to the services they rely on.” (Agnos, 1985). In some notes to community partners, Chin provided specific advice on media on the issue, “it should be an appeal for support with a reasonable tone (not harsh rhetoric)....the ad should include pictures.”

The project went to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. CCDC created a coalition with the families, residents, businesses and the local chamber of commerce, whose efforts contributed to the project’s rejection by the city in 1987. Chin (2014) reflected on the nature of the struggle, since the conflict was internal to Chinatown, “It was very personal, because it involved a lot of people who knew each other on both sides.” There were two consequences of the struggle that had long-lasting impacts for CCDC. First, the Community Tenants Association was officially formed. Second, CCDC established a relationship with Asian Law Caucus attorney, Ed Lee.
Role delineation evolved. Although Chin had an unquestioned reputation as a community activist, his personality is more laid back than Fong, who is more animated and direct in delivering a message. Thus, when Fong came on board in 1990, Chin was freed up to explore different roles: “I became more of an “innie,” I was appointed to a couple of city commissions, for example. Norman could play more of an advocate role and was the public face of organization on social justice issues that were not directly part of the organization, but related” (Chin, 2014). Examples of these issues included anti-Asian violence, marriage equality, and labor unions. Chin felt that Fong’s role in these issues strengthened the reach of the organization to have a presence in city-wide politics.

Internal to the organization, this role delineation between Gordon and Norman also played a role. In regard to having the program side keeping the “business side” (housing development) accountable to the social justice mission, Yeung (2014) explained:

“Because we have both tenant organizing and ‘landlord’ functions in-house – most people would think that this creates a huge conflict. And I can’t lie, on many occasions, it has. But the flip side is the creative tension that emerges from both sides trying to hold each other accountable to the same mission – improving the quality of life for low-income community members and our residents. Program side, namely Norman, has never held back in pushing the “business side” when they were messing up and vice-versa. And some pretty nasty arguments have ensued. But ultimately Gordon has been able to shepherd these tensions into value – based, problem solving exercises rather than full blown ideological conflicts. I think we’ve been able to do this because Gordon and now Norman have always been able to get the right people on the bus in the first place.”

This role definition was at times a delicate balance, at times a point of discussion and usually an effective mode of multi-faceted leadership. This shared leadership in which different stay play the more visible radical while others negotiate has shifted since Chin’s retirement, however, it is still an important part of their strategy. Although Fong, as the current Executive Directors, has to be more of a “peacemaker” on certain issues, other staff
such as Yeung will step up to be more radical in the public perception on an issue (Yeung, 2014).

The context of San Francisco politics is also key to note here. The progressive nature of local government, relative to other big cities, and the significant percentage of Asian American residents, have created positive streams of support for CCDC initiatives and for the organization as a whole (Fong, 2014; Fujioka, 2014). Fujioka (2014) reflects, “The citywide progressive movement, of which we were a part, resulted in gaining city funding of certain organizing programs. This has enabled us to support and expand our work organizing SRO residents and youth. Our work in SROs and with youth long pre-existed city funding, but without funding would we have the voice and impact that we have now? I think not.” The significant number of Asian Americans in the county also contributes to the favorable political climate. Although not all are politically progressive, have supported Asian American candidates for office who support CCDC.

**Inside/outside voices: The Mayor and Board of Supervisors.** CCDC’s reputation as strong community organizers (Fong states he can get a few hundred residents to a city council meeting at a moments’ notice) is well known. CCDC’s continued focus on mobilizing and strengthening the base creates an uncontested form of power that CCDC has used in lobbying for legislation, fighting real estate speculation (Ellis Act evictions) and fighting for tenants’ rights. Thus, their “outside game” is stronger than most CDCs. Yeung (2014) summarizes, “the inside/outside strategy, you know, sort of an ability to do outside organizing and use that to shape inside negotiations...I would say we’ve been particularly effective at that over the last 5-10 years. Gordon and Norman are the ultimate example of inside/outside.”
One exceptional characteristic of their community organizing strategy is its intergenerational nature. The tenant organizing focusing on seniors is well established. The youth-focused Campaign Academy trains high school youth to be community organizers. They encourage them to choose an issue, do research on the issue, do a power analysis and then conduct a mobilization based on their analysis. Yu (2014) discussed a disaster preparedness guide that the youth produced for elders living in SRO buildings:

“Our youth program captures the 1.5 generation, teenagers who are starting off in the US in the 8th or 9th grade. We are able to get youth to use language as their asset. Its pretty astounding they are able to produce all of this on their own, down to the handwriting, they are able to connect culturally as well as linguistically with the painting and the handwriting in Chinese. So they’re able to connect culturally as well as linguistically with the residents. I think that’s what makes them want to come to the program. Their identity becomes a resource.”

In a recent successful battle, they youth worked for two years with a coalition of youth from other communities to get free muni passes for low-income youth. Combining the youth issues with transit justice, a focus of CCDC programming, is an example of their new strategy to more deliberately align the issues that their organizing is targeting.

CCDC’s inside voice, however, is also stronger than most CDCs, given the extent to which CCDC supporters are within the city and county power structure. The 2011 appointment of Ed Lee as Mayor of San Francisco (Lee was subsequently elected to a full term), along with two County Supervisors with CCDC ties (David Chiu, President of the Board of Supervisors was a CCDC board member and Jane Kim, a former CCDC youth organizer) provided an infusion of political power for the organization. In February of 2012, Cindy Wu, CCDC’s Planning Manager was appointed to the San Francisco Planning Commission. Although having friends in high places can facilitate some negotiations with the city and county, these relationships are complicated. Executive Director Gordon Chin
retired in October of 2011 in the midst of negative media attention criticizing his visible personal support in Ed Lee’s election campaign. Although Chin’s activities for the Lee campaign were during his personal time and were legal, CCDC was questioned about the potential conflict of interest as a 501C3 (Begin, 2011).

Staff agree that although these new connections to key players in government are helpful, they come with the need to act more cautiously on certain contentious issues. Fujioka (2014) says that maintaining the relationship with the Mayor and fighting for policy change is harder now, “a closer relationship with City Hall can make it easier to be effective in certain things. But because of that relationship, taking a critical position today can appear more provocative and controversial, whereas if when we were on the periphery, we were one voice amongst many” (2014). Staff move a bit slower, careful to check in with leadership on sensitive issues to ensure they are not going to upset city officials or worse, the mayor. All seemed to agree that the environment was so new that everyone was still trying to figure out strategies. Fong (2014) sums it up, “So it’s kinda weird for us, because as a CDC, we’re the social justice side of the shop and sometimes it’s hard to have one of your own up there, in power. It raises different issues for us, how we organize when we do have some institutional power. Working externally and internally is a difficult balance.”

Coalition building. Although neighborhood coalition building was central to the formation of the organization and it continues to be a major priority for the organization, city-wide and national coalition building is a more recent focus for the staff. In 1999 Chin was one of three Executive Directors to form National CAPACD (Watanabe from LTSC and Christopher Kui from Asian Americans for Equality were the others).
CCDC’s position as a major player in city politics means that other agencies see CCDC as power brokers and are interested in collaborating. City-wide collaboration has always been a strategy used by community organizations, but CCDC has brought this to a high level of influence. With more political power than ever before, CCDC is an attractive collaborator for other organization looking to leverage resources and form coalitions for issues around low-income housing and community self-determination (Fong, 2014).

Community Empowerment

**Defining Community.** The target population for CCDC has remained consistent as the area remains a hub for Chinese immigrants and their families. The highest priority for CCDC is the low-income residents of Chinatown, which remain monolingual or limited English-speaking, families and seniors. Other priority groups are Chinese Americans outside of Chinatown and other low-income communities of color. Every informant interviewed mentioned the focus on base-building and community organizing as the key defining feature of CCDC.

**Base building.** Maintaining the base is done through several strategies. First, the CTA and the Super Sunday meetings are crucial to maintaining the lively, engaged process for low-income tenants. Second, by providing housing counseling (help with evictions) and other services related to housing (advice regarding retrofit, etc.), new tenants are drawn in and organizers develop relationships with them so that they are interested in participating in important issues. Third, the youth leadership development has evolved to be an
important way to engage the Chinese American youth that live outside of Chinatown to re-insert them into the community and orient them to the history and context of the cultural home space.

**CCDC as power brokers.** Occupying CCDC’s new role within local government has been complicated, and remaining a voice for the local residents while gearing up to take on the facilitation of public housing will add to the complexity. Staff feel confident that the transfer of management is a positive one, as the Housing Authority has been rife with issues for decades. As CCDC youth leaders move on and emerge in positions of power throughout the city, it provides new opportunities for even more connections and access to resources for Chinatown initiatives.

**Summary and Conclusion**

Occupying the role of city power broker is sometimes awkward, sometimes troublesome, yet it’s an influential position for the 37 year-old organization. Negotiating the power that comes along with these personal relationships includes confronting racism, “This is new; the negative part is that some people don’t like Asians in power. The racism part is real...it’s subtle. With Ed and Asian supervisors in office, it’s a new phenomenon and I don’t know how it’s going to be taken. Because of that, it affects us as Chinatown CDC” (Fong, 2014).

As the second case for this study, CCDC provided a model of an organization that maintains community organizing as its central method. The organization’s history closely paralleled that of LTSC in many ways, however, the radical political environment of San Francisco in the 60s and 70s provided the rich soil within which the roots of the
organization could be firmly planted. The communal-style of leadership by Chin and Fong continue to fertilize the strong sense of mission, even 37 years after its inception.

The current projects related to the privatization of public housing could serve to again place the agency in the position to be a model for national policy. But, can a non-profit maintain and manage “public” housing and what happens once the government support is gone? The larger question is more complex: although the transfer of public housing to neighborhood CDCs, what some have called the “non-profitization of public housing” is in line with the civil rights goals of self-determination and community control, is the elimination of public housing an acceptable outcome for neighborhoods without a trusted organization to take over as landlords.

Image 7.6 October 6, 2014 Tweet from CCDC - residents mobilize for a ballot measure. Norman Fong in foreground, right. https://twitter.com/chinatowncdc
CHAPTER 8: INTERIM COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

The Asian activists started to gather here and meet to plan about what we should do to preserve this neighborhood built by our pioneers, our elderly, our seniors, our grandfathers and fathers.

Bob Santos, 2014

This section provides the context and history of the formation of Interim Community Development Association (InterIm CDA). InterIm CDA is unique amongst the cases since it is the only organization that was founded as, and continues to be, a pan-Asian American organization. Founded by business owners, its evolution into a social service and social justice organization is also a unique feature of its history. The pan-ethnic enclave known as the International District (ID) of Seattle is also unique amongst the cases. Previously identified sections that were ethnic-specific (Manila Town, Japan Town, Chinatown) are now all subsumed under the ID, although there is still some contention amongst some old timers that the area should be referred to as Chinatown. It is because of the activists and community practitioners devoted to social justice and collaboration, that the ID, which now has a “Little Saigon” section, has remained a cultural and historical homespace for diverse Asian Americans.

To outline the history of the ID and the origins of InterIm CDA, the rest of the chapter is organized into the following sections. First, the racialized experiences of Asian immigrants in Seattle is discussed, as well as the specific pan-ethnic, spatial realities of the ID. The need for and creation of InterIm CDA is then discussed followed by the strategies and philosophy of the organization. When possible, the voice of the key stakeholders is used in order to insert their narratives in presenting this story.
The International District Improvement Association, later shortened to Inter*Im, was established in 1969 by a group of business and community leaders. In 1975, Inter*Im created the International District Housing and Social Services (IDHSS) to preserve affordable housing. In 1979, Inter*Im was established as a nonprofit Community Development Corporation named InterIm Community Development Association (Interim CDA). In 2012, InterIm CDA and IDHSS was merged into one organization. The current mission is “InterIm CDA promotes resiliency in Asian, Pacific Islander, immigrant, and refugee communities through culturally and linguistically responsive community building” (InterIm CDA, n.d.).

Today, InterIm CDA has 26 staff members with an annual budget of 2.2 million. Interim CDA has developed over 420 units of low-income housing, and along with the Seattle Chinatown/International District Public Development Authority (SCIDPDA) are the leading organizations in development in the area. The current mission of InterIm CDA is: “InterIm CDA promotes resiliency in Asian, Pacific Islander, immigrant and refugee communities through culturally and linguistically responsive community building” (InterIm CDA, n.d.). In addition to housing development InterIm CDA provides advocacy for the homeless, the Danny Woo Community Garden and Children’s Garden, the Wilderness Inner-City Leadership Development program for youth and elders, and advocacy on issues pertaining to housing, immigrants, and economic development. The following section describes the community context of this case, the formation of the agency and how the organization conceptualizes its social justice mission.
Neighborhood Historical Context

This is the most successful experiment in pan-Asian Americanism on the U.S. mainland, where the development of Asian American identity and character has made great strides.

Chin, 2009

The area between 12th Avenue South (east), Fifth Avenue South (west), South Dearborn Street (south) and Yesler Way (north) is now commonly known as the International District (ID). Some longtime residents may refer to the area as Chinatown or Chinatown/International District, although others remember when there was a separate Manilatown and Nihonmachi (Japantown). In the late 1940s to early 1950s the Jackson Street Community Council, a multiracial grassroots group, lobbied city officials to designate the neighborhood collectively as the “International Center.” Seattle Mayor William Devin responded and declared Chinatown as the International Center in 1951, but the name did not catch on until later in the 1960s as the International District or the “ID” (Santos, 2002).
Like Little Tokyo in Los Angeles and Chinatown in San Francisco, the ID was formed in the late 1800s as Asian immigrants were recruited as cheap labor, yet were restricted from purchasing land and from living in most neighborhoods. Chinese worked in the lumber mills, public works, small businesses and factories. Leading up to the 1882 exclusion of Chinese immigrants, the anti-Chinese movement became strong in Seattle as White laborers viewed them as competition. The racialization of the Chinese as “gamblers, convicts and murderers” who were socially undesirable to the city prevailed the political and social realm of the city (Chin, 2001, p. 25). Culminating in the 1885-1886 Anti-Chinese riots, a series of murders and mob violence led to the forced removal of virtually all Chinese from Seattle. As Chinese immigrants were excluded, Japanese and Filipinos began to fill the labor void and entered diverse industries such as farming, railroads, lumber (at sawmills and logging camps) and the fishing industry (working in salmon canneries) (Santos, 2014; Takami, 1999). Although Chinese eventually returned to the area, the backdrop of anti-Asian sentiment was still prevalent in the memory of the neighborhood.

Other examples of the forced segregation of Asians were the racial restrictive covenants excluded Japanese from renting or purchasing homes in West Seattle, Magnolia and other neighborhoods (Takami, 1999). Women often worked as domestic workers, seamstresses, and worked alongside their husbands in restaurants, hotels, fields and the canneries (Takami, 1999). By the early 1900s, the Nihonmachi section was a central space for the Japanese immigrant community, “on weekends, laborers flocked to the district for baths, haircuts, and entertainment, chiefly gambling and prostitution” (Takami, 1999).

In April of 1942, people of Japanese ancestry were forcibly removed from Seattle to “assembly centers” before being moved to concentration camps. In the weeks preceding
the Japanese removal, the community started to be divided from the outside and within. One example is the porters at the King Street station were replaced with Filipinos that wore buttons saying “Filipino” (Takami, 1998). Bob Santos recalls “…a blonde sixth grade boy with lots of freckles grabbed me and yelled, ‘Are you a Jap, huh?’ Crying, I answered, ‘No, honest I’m a Filipino.’ These kinds of incidents were common and not too long after, kids in our neighborhood had to wear badges printed ‘I AM FILIPINO’ or ‘I AM CHINESE.’ At the age of eight, I had my first real personal experience with racism” (2002, p. 27).

In the opening sentence of Hum Bows, Not Hot Dogs!, his memoir that focuses on the land use battle surrounding the King Dome, Santos (affectionately known as the unofficial mayor of the district or “Uncle Bob”) states the following as a descriptor for the neighborhood:

“Located in the heart of the city, the International District as been the historical, cultural, and political center for Seattle’s Asian American communities. The International District was one of the few places in Seattle where Chinese, Japanese and Filipino immigrants could live. For first generation immigrants, it was their first home in America. For their children, the second generation, it was the neighborhood which gave them their identity as Asian Americans and the opportunity to repay their elders. For me, the International District became a central part of my life, beginning with the times I spent as a child in my father’s hotel room, and in the restaurants, barbershops, gambling parlors, and pool halls of the area. For all of us, the International District meat a sense of community” (2002).

**The Civil Rights Movement and the ID**

The population in the ID grew dramatically after the war, and by 1950, the population had increased by 30% including African Americans who settled in the district to find wartime jobs and establish businesses along Jackson Street (Chin, 2001). The area became known as a “racial ghetto” where city resources were not responsive to resident needs (Chin, 2001; Chin, 2014).
In response to the poor living conditions of the area, the Jackson Street Community Council was a grassroots, neighborhood improvement association formed in 1946 to support businesses, social services and community development in the ID and surrounding areas (Chin, 2001; Santos, 2002). The organization was a model of multi-racial resistance to city and state policies that neglected the areas in which people of color resided. African Americans, Chinese Americans, Filipino Americans and Japanese Americans were represented in the organization, which rotated leadership to ensure ethnic groups shared in power and leadership. Phil Hayasaka was the Council’s Executive Director in the 1960s, which was a precursor to his position as director of Seattle’s Human Rights Department (this became important to Interim CDA’s later development) (Chin, 2009). Other community leaders active in the council included Don Chin, Ruth Chinn, Fred Cordova, Frank Hattori, Val Laigo, Dr. Henry Luke, James Mar, James Matsuoka and Ben Woo (Chin, 2009; Santos, 2002). The Council was instrumental in providing a voice to oppose the construction of the Interstate 5 freeway in the 1950s and succeeded in getting the Yesler/Altantic neighborhood designated as an urban renewal area in 1959 (Chin, 2009; Santos, 2002). In 1965, despite community protest, the freeway was built and physically split the ID in half. This incident remains a point of tension in the history of the ID, since the split still provides a tangible division within the neighborhood. In1967, the Jackson Street Community Council was merged with the Central Area Community Council and became focused on the central district rather than the ID.
### Table 8.1 InterIm Community Development Association and Community/Neighborhood Context

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<td>- Wing Luke elected to City Council</td>
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<td>- Model minority myth emerges.</td>
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<td>- Fastest growth period of CDCs</td>
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<td>- Diversity of Asian American population grows</td>
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<td>- King Dome Construction</td>
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<td>- HUD designates ID as Neighborhood Strategy Area</td>
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<td>- Low-income housing production becomes highly specialized</td>
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<td>- Gary Locke Elected Governor</td>
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<td>- Safeco Field completed in 1999</td>
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<td>- 1998 The official designation becomes Chinatown/International District</td>
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**Community response:**

- Mutual Aid Societies, ethnic-specific religious and service organizations
- Jackson Street Community Council Formed, 1946
- Second Generation college students become active in Civil Rights
- *Merchants Parking Association Formed, 1969*
- Breaking down of ethnic barriers
- *International District Improvement Association established 1969*
- Birth of Asian American – Pan-Ethnic Identity
- Students Disrupted groundbreaking ceremony of the Kingdome
- *InterIm CDA Form 501.c3*
- *Bush Hotel purchased for Renovation*
- Activists marched to HUD office to demand housing
- Little Saigon grows and is established as a section of the ID
- Danny Woo Garden remains as center of sustainability efforts
- Role of AAPI CDCS in future of CD?
- Incorporation of diversity of AAPI groups
- 3 new development projects (including Hirabayashi place)
- Work closely with National CAPACD for policy advocacy
Santos became involved in the civil rights movement, which in Seattle focused on housing, job opportunities and education. Santos was asked to sit on the Seattle Human Rights Commission but also remained active in grassroots organizations and civil rights groups. Often times his role in city-sanctioned activities were at odds with his connections to more radical politics. After getting arrested at a labor dispute at a construction site (where African Americans were not hired on various construction sites), Santos was confronted by the mayor who questioned his role in the demonstration “‘You’re a human rights commissioner! How in the hell did you get arrested?’” (Santos, 2002, p. 52). It was during this time that Santos developed key relationships across racial lines, which would later lead to the “Gang of Four,” a multi-racial coalition that fought for more resources and political power for the African American, Native American, Chicano and Asian American communities.
Formation of the Organization

Threats and Unmet Needs. The number of residents in the ID dramatically declined from the post-war spike by the late 1960s as conditions in the area deteriorated (Santos, 2002). Much of the housing was dilapidated and/or did not comply with new stringent fire and housing codes. Families moved out, leaving mostly elderly, single, low-income persons (Chin, 2009). Health care and other social services were needed in the area.

As a middle school youth, Donnie Chin, whose father was a well known community activist and member of the Jackson Street Community Council, helped to form the Asians for Unity Emergency Squad (now known as the International District Emergency Center) to respond to medical and other emergencies in the ID since the fire department and paramedics lacked adequate translation services and were slow to respond to calls from the ID. Chin, who still operates the center, recalls that healthcare, housing and youth programs were the dire needs of the community “We [Asian Americans] piggybacked off of what African Americans were doing during the Civil Rights Movement. We were facing poverty, racism... we should be doing the same things...there was a need for community controlled, local services, since we were not getting any services from the police and fire departments” (Chin, 2014).
After the freeway construction split the neighborhood (in addition to the 5 freeway, the I-90 was being planned and eventually cut off the neighborhood to the south), the small businesses began to suffer. In 1968, a group of business owners and activists formed the International District Improvement Association (Inter*Im). Santos (2002) describes the group involved in the beginning:

“In 1968, a group of business owners and activists, some of whom were former JSCC members such as Don Chin, Alex Bishop, and Ben Woo, formed the International District Improvement Association (‘Inter*Im’) to revitalize and promote the commercial potential of the International District. The original Inter*Im board was made up of a diverse group including Don Chin, a small business owner from the Chinatown Chamber of Commerce; Carlos Young, a civil engineer with his own firm on Jackson Street; Shigeko Uno, a manager of Rainier Heat and Power Co.; Hong Chin, a property owner, Abie Label, a low-income housing developer; Ben Woo, an architect; Alex Bishop, a local pharmacist and owner of Bishop Drugs; Welsely Tao, an insurance man; Donna Yee, a graduate student; and Tomio Moriguchi, chairman of his family's business, Uwajimaya” (p. 77).

Although the mix of businessmen and community activists was often contentious, the status of people like Moriguchi provided resources as well as legitimacy: “By 1970, Tomio was in charge of the family business. Uwajimaya became the largest Asian grocery and gift store in the Pacific Northwest. Tomio’s presence gave Inter*Im credibility with both the downtown business establishment and City Hall” (Santos, 2002). Inter*Im received funding from the Model Cities program and opened an office in a storefront at the N.P. Hotel. By 1971, Santos was recruited to become the Executive Director of Inter*Im.
Although his reputation as a political activist made some nervous, activists pressured the Model Cities and Mayor’s office to support his appointment.

Sue Taoka (2014), Executive Director of InterIm from 1985-1990, describes the mission and underlying values of the organization,

“What attracted me was that it was an agency that was really involved in community organizing. That it was about the people who lived here, it had very, very strong values and very strong commitment to the community and that was very enticing. Part of it also was Bob, as a charismatic leader, very principled charismatic leader. Being able to work with somebody like that was quite enticing, and so it’s one of those offers you just can’t pass up.”

Unlike LTSC and CCDC, InterIm CDA has had eight Executive Directors. Donald Chin and Tomio Moriguchi were Executive Directors when the focus was on the business community. Santos was the longest running Executive Director, with two different periods of leadership. Others in the position were Ken Katahira, Elaine Ko, Sue Taoka, Hyeok Kim and currently, Andrea Akita.

The Kingdome. In 1971, the King County Council approved the siting of the Kingdome stadium to be built adjacent to the ID. A group of activists began to infiltrate the Council meetings of Inter*lm to demand attention to issues of displacement and economic justice in the area with a focus on the threat of the Kingdome (Santos, 2014). The opposition to the Kingdome was energized by young student activists who wanted to draw attention to the living conditions in the ID, while Inter*lm focused on getting concessions from the county and city in exchange for the foreseeable negative impact of the stadium on the ID. Although some business owners thought the crowds coming to the sporting events would frequent their establishments, some community members were worried about the displacement that could accompany the crowds brought in by the stadium. The issue was
divisive and further split the support for Inter*Im as more business owners pulled away for fear of being seen as sympathetic to the activists who were increasingly viewed as “anti-business” (Santos, 2002).


At the groundbreaking ceremony for the Kingdome on November 2, 1972, young Asian American activists disrupted the program by slingling mud and chanting “Stop the stadium” (Chin, 2009). The press coverage of the ceremony provided impetus for more protests, as the protesters were energized and proud that their action had challenged stereotypes of Asians as passive with no social problems. Since the stadium was inevitable, the activists turned their attention to mitigation and pointed to the lack of housing as one area that should receive resources in light of possible displacement. Since Inter*Im was the recognized agency that represented pan-ethnic interests, the agency was at the forefront of the issue and Santos was one of the leaders who suggested an action to be directed at the HUD office (Santos, 2014). On November 14, 150 demonstrators marched to the local HUD office demanding that resources be allocated for senior housing in the ID (Santos, 2002). Santos also testified frequently at city and council public hearings to bring light to the social service needs in the ID – he used the visibility of the Kingdome battle to shed light on the needs of the neighborhood (Iwamoto, 2009).
Protestors against the Kingdome fight for more housing.
Photo: International Examiner

Strategies and Philosophy

The staff at Inter*Im is primarily composed of young activists from the Asian community who are dedicated to the improvement of the ID for elderly, low-income Asian and non-Asian residents.

- Inter*Im CDA, 1980

Santos saw the Kingdome battle as an opportunity to negotiate for resources. HUD and the city were willing to meet with Santos and Ben Woo (an Inter*Im board member and longtime activist), to discuss community development. Although Santos had a history of political activism, he also had a history of working “inside” and had strong political relationships. Thus, although Inter*Im was present and supportive of the Kingdome and HUD protests, they were seen as the “legitimate” partner that could negotiate with the City for resources. Gary Iwamoto (2014), longtime Inter*Im CDA board member described the philosophy:

“Inter*Im has never been a militant organization, it’s sort of been like a reliable, credible organization. It’s been viewed with pretty good credibility by the city government (it’s like, you’re not taking a chance by giving money to Inter*Im), but when you talk about social justice and ways of preserving the community, when you equate serving a community with social justice, then absolutely it’s a social justice agency. I think when you look at it from outside, that is what Inter*Im does. If you want to describe the mission in three words, it’s ‘preserving the community.’”
Santos lobbied the local power structure to gain more support for low-income housing. The Inter*Im board split due to the disagreement on the Kingdome issue and the focus on low-income residents.

"Many businesses left Inter*Im. They didn't want to deal with the activists and branded them Sandinistas and communists. But the business people that stayed with Inter*Im were the more powerful business people and landowners in the District. This included Tomio Moriguchi (President of U wagimaya), Shigeko Uno (manager of Rainer Heat and Power Co.), and Don Chin (present of the Chinatown Chamber of Commerce). They stayed at Inter*Im because they liked the energy and the smarts of the young people. They said ‘these guys are smart, we might not agree with them but we should stick around so that maybe together we could get things done’" (Santos, 2014).

Concessions from the stadium battle included resources for developing an Asian cultural center and childcare center. Also, Inter*Im organized and formed a nonprofit organization called International District Housing and Social Services (IDHSS) to preserve affordable housing. Another concession won from the stadium negotiations was a parking lot located under the freeway that was built through the ID.

The Parking Lot. Although most CDCs venture into housing as their first revenue-generating project, the Inter*Im board moved forward to acquire space for a parking lot. The business side of the board felt that the lot would provide spaces that visitors to the stadium would use, then walk through the ID to the games (thus, patronizing businesses along the way). The activist members of the board were not happy with the stadium, but agreed with the plan to build the parking lot if it would help the local businesses. It was the first decision that achieved consensus since the shifting of the board composition.
Although the parking lot was not successful at first, Inter*Im pressured the City to include the ID in their new “Magic Carpet” bus service. In 1973, the City established the Ride Free Area in the Magic Carpet Zone that would take riders to downtown. The original zone stopped shy of the ID, so Santos organized elderly residents to extend the zone:

“We went to the Mayor with a bunch of elderly and said, “You’re discriminating against our elderly, the magic carpet boundary area was excluding our elderly who live near 8th and King St. and Jackson.” So we asked the Mayor to extend the boundary of the service to 8th and Jackson where our parking lot was. So, we invented the first ‘Park and Ride!’ You can park in our lot and take the free bus service to town. Half of the parking spaces were taken up almost immediately and the parking lot took off. That was pretty good revenue for a non-profit because there were no restrictions about how we could use that money. That money was used for lobbying. I would go to D.C. and lobby on behalf of the district” (Santos, 2014).

Housing Development. Community practitioners in the ID became savvy in utilizing their political clout within local and federal politics. The establishment of a strong Asian American electorate, which produced several influential political figures (Wing Luke, Gary Locke, etc.), gave the community confidence and access to the formal structure. Santos became a regular on the Hill, which lead to the ability to secure funds for large developments:

“We were starting to learn this political process. We started building housing using the offices of the senators to open doors for us so we could meet with staff members of HUD (housing), OEO (economic opportunity), NIMH (mental health). Some of members of city council staffs and legislators got to know us very well, they were hired to be on Senator Magnuson’s staff in D.C., so I had a direct line with his office. It was fun for me to go to D.C. in the 70’s, go into Alan Painter’s office or Jerry Johnson’s office (who became Senator Magnuson’s chief of staff), and they would say “Oh, Uncle Bob, what are you in town for?” and I would say “I’m here to try to get a meeting with HUD, and they’d get on the phone and say, “This is Jerry Johnson at ‘THE’ Chairman’s office (chairman of the Appropriations Committee) and we have a constituent who needs a meeting with someone over there.” In twenty minutes I had a meeting set up with HUD and this was how we got started using our contacts in government, not only federal government but local government” (Santos, 2014).
Inter*Im became the gatekeeper to development in the ID. Outside developers would work with Inter*Im to streamline community acceptance of projects and to fill buildings with residents. Developers were aware that Inter*Im could access seniors and other low-income populations. “We had all these developers who were hovering. They wanted our assistance in filling their buildings” (Santos, 2014). The Inter*Im board members realized that Inter*Im should get into the housing business, so in 1974 the agency began a working group to start the International District Preservation and Development Authority (Santos, 2002). The Chong Wa Benevolent Association, a long-time and powerful family association in Chinatown fought this initiative and asked the county to create the “Chinatown Preservation and Development Authority.” This move was supported by King County council member Ruby Chow, who was wary of Inter*Im. Santos (2002) stated, “I’m sure she viewed us as a bunch of wild-eyed radicals up to no good. In reality, it was our intention to make the entire District, including the King street core, a better place to live, do business and enjoy each other’s cultures” (p. 112). A compromise led to the formation of the Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation and Development Authority (PDA).

Andréa Akita (2014), the current Executive Director of InterIm CDA explained that creating the PDA “was a way that the organization could take on more mainstream channels while we could still be rabble rousers.” Although the PDA was successful in securing funding that Inter*Im could not, the limited reach of a quasi-public agency led Inter*Im to form its own CDC, so in 1979 the InterIm Community Development Association (InterIm CDA) was formed as a 501(c)(3) CDC so that other funding sources could be
pursued for community-driven development in the ID. Their first housing project was Gee How Oak Tin in 1991, a SRO with 21 units.

Taoka (2014) explained the direction of the organization at that time:

“It’s this long term plan of how back in the 60s and 70s and even into the 80s, it was about we needed to stabilize the community, make it strong, that we weren’t going to allow the gentrification to happen, we worked to support so that there was this pact in the community of pretty significant community leaders who are willing to say no, we’ve agreed that we’re going to do this and yes, we’re going to do more low income housing. Whereas business people in other places were saying no, we don’t want it, but here it was ‘we’re going to secure the low income housing for the seniors, and then we’re going to do other things.’”

Among the stated purposes in the new articles of incorporation was a specific mention to “promote a Pan-Asian approach to community development in the International District and in King County” (InterIm CDA, 1979). Listed as the primary purpose is: “to raise the economic, educational and social levels of underprivileged residents and groups in the Seattle International District as well as underprivileged Asians living in Seattle and King County, Washington, and to foster and promote community-wide interest and concern for the programs of such community to the end that: (a) racial tensions, prejudice and discrimination, economic and otherwise, may be eliminated…” (InterIm CDA, 1979).
Incorporation of the Mission. Values around sustainability, working for the underserved and reclaiming space are articulated as crucial to the mission of InterIm CDA. Im (2014) explains that their work falls within a social justice context “if social justice is the distribution of wealth and power, do we deal with issues like that? With our housing, advocacy and issues of racial justice – I think we do. Our services are targeted at low-income, in that sense we are. We don’t necessarily address issues like police brutality, the criminal justice system, some issues on race, but we do deal with social justice.” Im (2014) also described how Akita incorporates the mission, “Andréa brings it back - ‘let’s talk about what our mission is about, who are we trying to serve?’ These moments are when we have time to reflect and have a general ‘what's the purpose?’ moment.”

Other ways that the mission is reinforced is through the commitment to the history and the pan-ethnic identity of place. Santos continues to give historic tours that outline the previous existence of a separate Manilatown, Japantown and Chinatown (explaining the former vibrancy and scope of the neighborhoods, not the separation).

Negotiating Power Relationships

Because Interim CDA was the leading pan-ethnic organization in the ID, it received the benefit of being seen as the legitimate advocacy group for the area. In addition, Santos and other colleagues occupied some important posts that provided access to key people and resources. For example, in 1994, President Clinton appointed Santos as the Housing and Urban Development secretary’s representative for the Northwest-Alaska area.

Santos (2014) described his philosophy of supporting young people and encouraging them to obtain positions within the city and county, so that he could call on them later:
“If a young person came to me and wants a letter of recommendation to an opening as a legislative aide and I would do that and that person got the job, and if we have to deal with a city council issues, I would take the aide to lunch separately, to discuss the issue. At one point in the 70s and mid-80s we had 6 Asian legislative aides for 9 Councilmembers. We wouldn’t have to arm ourselves with signs and all that for every event because we had people on the inside.”

Donnie Chin remembers the protest at the HUD office as “the only way to get things done back then.” Now, with more Asian Americans with political power, things are different, he laughs, “the difference now – I can call someone on the phone, I can call you on the phone – but if you don’t meet with us, we can still kick things down” (Chin, 2014).

The strategy of using the inside and outside political tactics was most skillfully employed by Santos, who served in several capacities outside of his activism within the district. These posts included: President of Seattle’s Catholic Interracial Council in 1969, Regional Director of the Department of Housing and Urban Development from 1994-2001, and aide to congressman Mike Lowry from 1984-1988) (Santos, 2014). Santos never lost his reputation as a political activist who was willing to get arrested and rally his community when the need arose. In 2000, the community rallied Santos back to the neighborhood to assist in a protest against McDonald’s opening a restaurant on the Western boundary of the district.

Tom Im referred to the McDonald’s fight as one of the periods in which InterIm CDA devoted resources to community organizing, since his time was largely devoted to the issue. Im (2014) remembered, “We got Uncle Bob on board and brought back a number of the old activists. We also unearthed a number of younger student activists who wanted to get involved, and we protested in front of the McDonalds in downtown and continued attacking until McDonald’s realized that it was not the time to build this neighborhood.”

In a press statement, the activists wrote “McDonald’s decision not to locate in the
International District was a major victory for all of us who want to preserve the historical pan-Asian character of the area and to make it a safe place to live, shop, visit and work. It is a win for the International District community, neighborhood self-determination, cultural pluralism, historical preservation, diversity, and a progressive Seattle” (Chin, 2009).

**Coalition Building.** InterIm CDA began as a multi-ethnic coalition of business owners, and continued a multi-ethnic coalition of political and community activists. Thus, the idea of compromise, negotiation and forecasting solutions that benefit the “greater good” were central to the organization’s existence. Joel Ing (2014), a long-time board member whose mother was a community activist stated “when we say ‘Asian,’ there is not exclusivity in that. Bob Santos (Filipino American), my mom (Chinese American), Tomio Moriguchi (Japanese American), Ruth Woo (Japanese American married to a Chinese American) and Shigeko Uno (Japanese American), Wing Luke (Chinese American) -these names I mention are early pillars of the community. That’s when people really pushed for advancement, but these people were Filipino, Chinese, Japanese and there was never ‘we got to push for our own community,’ [it was always for the greater Asian community].”

Santos, having been known for his cross-racial organizing in the civil rights movement and with his involvement in the Gang of Four, created the culture in which coalition building was central to doing business. As he mentored young professionals and activists, and as his relationships across town proved beneficial for InterIm CDA’s projects, this commitment to working across racial/ethnic lines, public/private and organizational lines became one of the defining characteristics of the organization.
Community Empowerment

Known in the community for visibility on certain issues, InterIm remained responsive to resident concerns. In a funding proposal in 1980, staff refer to a 1973 and 1978 survey of residents that identified the needs of housing, nutrition and health services. Also in the proposal is a statement reflecting resident accessibility to the organization:

“We are frequently contacted directly by residents who come into our offices for legal services of nutrition assistance or who are familiar with our activist role.

Inter*Im has always placed a high priority on appropriately responding to concerns brought to us in this fashion:
- We successfully lobbied the City for four-way stop signs at an intersection where an elderly Asian was struck by a car.
- We successfully lobbied the Metropolitan Transit Authority to expand its downtown “free ride” area to include the ID when ID residents told us they couldn’t afford the bus fares.
- The Children’s mini-park and day care center, which are described above, were pushed by us after we heard complaints from ID families.

Our efforts to save the Milwaukee Hotel from closure were in response to pleas from tenants” (InterIm CDA, 1980).

Taoka (2014), talks about the maintenance of the focus on community advocacy and community engagement throughout time: “I know there was a period where there were a lot of people who were very concerned that it had lost its advocacy responsibility. I think it’s moving back towards that now. When you concentrate so much on development projects, we got to raise this money to do this development...[other roles diminish].”

Building partner organizations. InterIm CDA spawned organizations that were meant to branch out on their own, rather than stay under InterIm CDA umbrella. For instance, after Interim CDA submitted an application to the mayor to form an ID Public Development Authority (PDA), Santos continued to work on projects assigned to the PDA. Santos eventually became the PDA’s Executive Director for a brief time, but it remains a
separate entity from InterIm CDA. Taoka (2014) described this type of capacity building as one of InterIm CDA’s strengths:

“InterIm was really good at being able to define a problem, help organizations get started, then send them off... InterIm’s ability and willingness to partner and collaborate with those organizations has always been really important, whether it be organizations within the district or outside of the district. Probably one of the most important that I thought was with the PDA, the preservation and development authority, because when InterIm actually helped birth it, and then the way development was working at least for a while was that the PDA would be the developer, InterIm would be the advocate, and the PDA would also do property management.”

Although the organizations worked closely together, when InterIm CDA started doing housing development, there was a need to clarify roles when a development opportunity arose. Taoka (2014) explained how the partnership worked:

“Then when Interim started to do real estate development, the PDA became the property manager. It was the theory of you can help direct the community by how much property you manage and control. Between Interim and the PDA, lots of property was being controlled and could actually then help provide them directly to the community. As long as the PDA and Interim were working together, that became a really positive way to provide direction without having to beat up people. That was a really important thing. It was about partnerships and relationships were really important” (2014).

Maiko Winkler Chin (2014), current Executive Director of SCIDPDA, discusses how she works with current Interim CDA Executive Director, Andréa Akita, and how the boundaries of the two organizations were sometimes blurred:

“Originally Interim did the planning and did some of the real estate development, but at a certain point the PDA here is doing our own real estate development...within this neighborhood we have coordination, so if one says, ‘I’m going to go for this land’ or ‘I’m going to bid on it, what about you?’, I think we are trying to figure out what purpose do we both have and how we will work collaboratively. So we’ve applied for a couple of grants together and I think it’s really incumbent upon our staff to try to work together as much as possible, I think that would work to everyone’s best interest. I also think that there’s a level of trust that needs to be build between staff, because Andréa and I get along just
swimmingly, but that’s not necessarily to say that our organizations are going to get along.”

Other organizations that were started as the result of an InterIm CDA initiative are the: International District Community Health Center, the Asian Counseling and Referral Service, the Denise Louie Education Center, and the International District Housing and Social Services (IDHSS). Similar to the relationship with SCIDPDA, the IDHSS and InterIm CDA often had blurred boundaries. The IDHSS, which later changed its name to the International District Housing Alliance (IDHA) merged with InterIm CDA in 2012 into one organization now known as InterIm CDA.

Summary/Conclusion

As the third case for this study, Interim CDA provided the only pan-ethnic model and the only model that was founded by business owners as key partners in community development. In contrast to the Little Tokyo and San Francisco cases, Seattle provided a smaller, and at times more manageable political terrain that InterIm CDA was able to navigate. Inter-ethnic and multi-racial collaboration was also more possible, and more necessary, given the smaller size of communities of color in the Seattle region (as compared to the other large cities).

The current housing projects aim to increase the stock of low-income units for families. In January of 2014, the groundbreaking for Hirabayashi Place attracted city officials and community members alike. The development will provide 96 units of affordable housing for low/moderate income workers, and a child care center. Also established was the Gordon Hirabayashi Legacy of Justice Committee that oversees activities and public art in the building so that it is in line with the spirit of Hirabayshi, who,
as a college student at the University of Washington, defied the 1942 removal and incarceration order for Japanese Americans. Current Executive Director Andréa Akita stated “Naming the project after Gordon Hirabayashi brings us full circle. It’s a meaningful statement for the community and we are very excited” (International Examiner, 2014). In describing the importance of the new development, Board Member Gary Johnson describes his personal connection to the World War II experience, as his wife’s father was incarcerated during World War II and was a classmate of Gordon Hirabayashi.

Ron Chew (2014), Director of International Community Health Services, recalled that he became involved in InterIm CDA as a college student who was attracted to the activism in the ID. He asserts that now, “we have a population of folks with low-income living in the neighborhood, coupled with other folks from other backgrounds and small businesses. It’s really important for those people to serve as the core of the neighborhood its important for them to have a voice. InterIm provides that continuing voice.” However, questions arise about the grassroots origins and community advocacy as InterIm CDA has transitioned to a development and social service agency. As Iwamoto (2014) states:

“In the very beginning it was really a grassroots organization, now it’s developed like most social service agencies. They have their fundraising committee, their galas and their fundraising events, which has become really crucial to getting additional funding. In the early days it was living hand-to-mouth. Part of it now is the times, the technological advances….we’re connected more. That includes social service agencies like InterIm. That is the biggest change I’ve seen. I don’t know if you could truly be a totally grass roots organization now. Through its reputation, I think it’s been able to survive, it’s more proof of its endurance.”

Akita described the perception of InterIm CDA of the past as “stormy activists” who collaborated with business leaders on projects like the community garden. These collaborative projects gave them legitimacy to evolve into their present state. Their
current role in civic engagement is a question for staff and board members. “[when an issue arises] people in the community see us and want to know what are we going to do? What we can do has changed, at 45 [years in existence], we have become a more established organization, a different kind, but hopefully we are still seen as community activists. Hopefully.”

Image 8.5  Samaki Commons. 41 unit complex for low-income residents (InterIm CDA, n.d.)
CHAPTER 9: SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Those who are oppressed in the present world can speak most eloquently of a better one. Their language will not be abstract, detached or inaccessible; their program will not be undefined. They will advance clear ideas about the next step to a better world. The experience of struggling against racism has taught much about struggle, about how real people can rise up, look power in the eye and turn it around.  


At the writing of this dissertation, the country is once again forced to face the consequences of the history of structural racism on low-income communities of color. On November 26, 2014, a grand jury in Ferguson, Missouri failed to indict police officer Darren Wilson in the shooting of unarmed African American teenager, Michael Brown. While angered community members protest this as an issue of racism and injustice, others question the continued use of race as a frame for U.S. economic inequality, arguing instead that our society, in the age of Obama, has become color-blind.

In the 2014 Critical Race Studies conference at UCLA, Neil Gotanda expressed the importance of the “genealogy of ethnic spaces.” By examining the process of racialization in neighborhood construction, the lingering impact of racism can be uncovered and work can focus on the remedy. This genealogy, however, must be explored by listening to those who live and work within the ethnic neighborhoods themselves. It is within these voices that the stories of resistance, resilience and transformation are uncovered. These narratives expose some of the more insidious forms of racism (for example, Donnie Chin’s stories of the city’s neglect and exploitation of medical and other emergencies in the International District), but also uncover the strength and assets inherent in low-income communities.

These narratives and counter-stories, then, uncover the community’s cultural wealth, which is key to developing asset-based approaches to anti-poverty programming.
Such approaches develop leaders from within, include multi-racial relationships and coalitions, and recapture physical assets (historic sites, low-income housing units and cultural institutions) to revitalize the neighborhood.

The intent behind this study was to add the voices of community-based practitioners to the urban planning literature by examining successful endogenous interventions in community development that were born out of the Asian American movement. Although the organizations highlighted vary in their perceptions about their connections to the social activism of the 1960s and 1970s, it is clear that the context of sociopolitical critique of the constant displacement and neglect of Asian American historic neighborhoods were highlighted during the movement. Also evident is the importance of constructing a critical attachment to place, which was fostered by the people involved in creating these organizations. Virtually all of those interviewed mentioned their commitment to the ethnic neighborhood based on the battles that had been waged on behalf of the elders and families that had once relied on these spaces for social and political survival. By examining the intersection of their social justice history along with the connection to place, a model for a critical place-based approach to community development can be constructed.

To review, the research questions guiding this study were as follows:

1) How does the legacy of the Asian American movement continue to motivate community development?

2) What were the sociopolitical conditions that necessitated the formation of the organizations?
3) How do key stakeholders of the organization define the values and mission of the organization and how is this communicated over time?

4) How do AAPI CDCs negotiate the balance between grassroots activism and collaborative approaches with the local power structure?

Below the research findings are interpreted as they relate to these main research questions. The CRT framework is applied as it pertains to developing a new race-based model for transformative community development. Finally, recommendations for practice and research are offered.

**Summary of Major Findings**

The CRT frame for this study provides the lens through which to analyze the findings. One issue in regard to utilizing a CRT frame for AAPI communities is the issue of “race” versus “ethnicity.” Since ethnicity tends to be an organizing feature of AAPI communities, the use of race as a paradigmatic concept could be conceived as incomplete. However, this study has shown that AAPI communities have been similarly racialized over time, and that dominant society has used race as concept to corral AAPIS into segregated neighborhoods, concentration camps and to model minority status. Thus, the CRT frame is still relevant for an analysis of these communities.

The findings presented below should be viewed with the following overarching CRT themes as guideposts. First, the interviewees recognized the persistence of racism as an organizing feature of their communities. Because of a critical understanding of the genealogy of their neighborhood with respect to race and oppression, they rejected liberal ideologies that favor property rights over human rights. Second, the organizations valued counter stories in the construction of a new narrative of their neighborhood’s history.
Much of their work in engaging the community and constructing the commitment to place revolved around the narrative of social justice struggles for the right to preserve their neighborhood. Third, the organizations utilize intersectionality to form critical coalitions at multiple scales. Fourth, by challenging the dominant narrative, they reject the myth of meritocracy and the model minority label and work towards social justice for all low-income residents of their neighborhoods. Finally, the organizations work to reclaim land and property for the community and for low-income residents, a subversive strategy that knocks down the privilege that links Whiteness with property.

The Legacy of the Asian American Movement. Virtually all of the foundational leadership of the AAPI CDCs were involved in the political activism of the late 1960s and 1970s. After the Asian American movement, a leadership vacuum allowed for the nonprofit organizations to fulfill a vital role. When the masses of young activists faded away and secured traditional employment, some continued working for these CDCs and became leaders in roles such as Executive Directors of community-based organizations. When the more radical political organizations of the 1970s dwindled away, the individuals and their organizations became recognized as the principal spokespersons for their ethnic communities.

The three organizations in this study were founded between 1969-1979, during the height of the Asian American Movement. The founding staff members and board of LTSC and CCDC were involved in activities such as the student strikes, anti-Vietnam war protests and the Japanese American Redress movement. Although the original board and staff of InterIm CDA were business-oriented, the staff and board who took over the organization in the early 1970s were political activists who were involved in similar Asian American
struggles in the Pacific Northwest. In all three cases, key staff and board members were inspired by the movement to return to their ethnic neighborhoods and fight against the gentrification that was displacing the low-income elders of the community.

The history of the Asian American movement and the battles that were a part of its history form the basis for the critical attachment to the ethnic places. The insurgent histories of the I-Hotel, student activism, and other battles over land use and displacement are interspersed with the value of respecting the elders that have lived and continue to live in the low-income hotels and apartment buildings. These stories are presented as part of Asian American identity, and thus social injustice and activism are conflated with “culture” and are utilized to maintain a strong commitment to the historic ethnic neighborhood as a cultural home space for all AAPIs.

Tours of the community provide countless individuals with the history of the movement in connection to the neighborhood. Watanabe and Nishio in Little Tokyo, Chin and Fong in Chinatown and Santos in the International District all continue to provide neighborhood tours that emphasize the history of oppression and struggle in order to orient a new generation to the connection to the space.

Staff and leadership of the organizations point to the legacy of the movement as a main reason for their commitment to doing the day-to-day work of organizing residents and claiming and preserving neighborhood space.

**Racialized Harm as the Motivation for the Organizations.** The motivations for the formation of the organizations were varied, yet there were certain aspects of the sociopolitical conditions of each neighborhood that were prevalent. Preservation of low-income housing, access to social services and public safety were the key areas that guided
the formation of the organizations. Those interviewed for this project shared the common understanding that racism was pervasive in the history and context of their neighborhoods. Asian exclusion and discrimination were seen as the reason for the creation of these “separate” ethnic spaces, but was also seen as a reason to work together, solidify identity and affirm the right to place. Anti-Asian violence, employment and housing discrimination, the lack of educational opportunity (and the lack of curriculum addressing Asian American histories) and all other forms of racialized harm were in the forefront of discussing the needs of these communities.

Housing was the central need that was identified by the organizations. Although they did not start with housing as a main “service” need, it emerged as a central focus of the organizations over time. Thus the need for the formalized structure that a CDC designation could offer was important for all three organizations at different points in their evolution. LTSC started in response to social service needs (bilingual counseling and senior support services) but initiated a separate CDC in 1995. Both organizations merged in 2004 to streamline operations and provide a more holistic approach to services. CCDC had 5 different identified focus areas (facilities, parks/open spaces, public transportation, housing supply and rights of public housing residents) at their inception, but started the Chinatown Community Housing Corporation in 1978. The two organizations merged in 1998 to form the CDC. InterIm CDA was formed with small business interests in mind, but created the ID Housing Alliance in 1975 and the InterIm CDA, a CDC in 1979. Both organizations were combined in 2012 to utilize “a deeper and more strategic approach to community development that strengthens the link between the bricks and mortar
of housing development with the human and social capital that make a neighborhood, and a community, vibrant and healthy” (InterIm CDA, n.d.). The turn to a focus on housing was a natural and inevitable revelation that the displacement occurring within these neighborhoods could only be addressed if the community controlled the resources. The preservation of and development of low-income and affordable housing establishes a long-term commitment to low-income residents and their right to the city.

This claiming of ethnic places could be considered within the context of Harris’ (1995) idea of Whiteness as property. After decades of mistreatment and relegation to second-class citizenship, AAPI communities have become more sophisticated in terms of their demands upon local government. By examining their status vis-à-vis the standard of White citizenship, activists critiqued inequities and demanded change. By securing land and asserting a right to the city for low-income and multi-racial residents, these practitioners are asserting that human rights should prevail over property rights.

Defining and Asserting Mission and Values. The key stakeholders of the organizations defined the mission and values of the organizations within a social justice context that was critical of the dominant neoliberal climate of economic and social development policy. Liberal ideology such as the myth of meritocracy encompasses several themes that are pertinent to the racialization of low-income AAPIs. These themes interact with color-blind racism to simultaneously uphold AAPIs as model minorities while placing them in a second-class tier of citizenship. LTSC, CCDC and InterIm CDA challenge the dominant discourse on the poor and the greater Asian American community by addressing two concepts head on. The first is the idea of the “deserving poor.” The second is the myth of Asian American’s status as the model minority.
Woven throughout the interview responses and the reviewed documents (newspaper articles, strategic plans, annual reports and memorandums) was the perspective that low-income families are suffering from a system that actively disenfranchises groups of people. This understanding comes from their origins in the critical perspective gained during the Asian American movement as well as personal experiences as immigrants and/or as children or grandchildren of immigrants. Since their focus is on systemic forms of race and class disadvantage, their work focuses on policy, resource allocation, monitoring use of space and leadership development. Services to individuals and families are still crucial and are provided as an important function of the agencies, but are framed in terms of resource allocation and client access to services (e.g., the need for multi-lingual mental health services or better access to public transportation). In other words, services such as mental health and housing counseling are provided because they are not accessible to low-income AAPIs within the mainstream system of social service provision. Framing this as a resource issue, rather than pathologizing the community or exploiting deficiencies in the community, is an important perspective that illustrates the values of the organization. This underlying belief that the low-income residents deserve housing, healthcare, educational opportunities and social services, is counter to mainstream notions which separate out populations amongst the “deserving” and the “undeserving poor.” Policy decisions are also decided on this basis - attention is focused on systemic issues rather than policies and programs that target individual responsibility for poverty or “blighted” neighborhoods.

Another narrative that guides their work against racialized perceptions of the group is the emphasis on low-income and diverse AAPI populations. As the approved model
minority, AAPIs have been utilized as pawns in the narrative that upholds the United States as a nation built on hard work and equal opportunity. Again, the origins in the Asian American movement inform the CDC practitioner’s perspective on this idea. The founders of the organizations were activists during the 1960s and 1970s, thus they were aware of the fallacy of the model minority myth at its inception. They witnessed or experienced poverty, lack of health care, discrimination in education and housing in AAPI communities. Thus, from the start they battled conceptions that accompanied the model minority status. Despite their statements, the idea of Asian American success is being reaffirmed in the current political realm, thus, their work against these ideas is important in combatting the color-blind racism that attends these notions.

**Approaches that reinforce values.** The organizations utilized different approaches in reinforcing these values over time. First, they attracted and recruited people to the organization (staff and board) by identifying individual who were “like-minded.” The staff and board described instances in which they would attract student volunteers (many of whom became staff) or individuals working for other organizations within the community, based on shared communal values and a commitment to preserving the ethnic places. Second, at times this “like-mindedness” would be facilitated by sharing the context and history of the neighborhoods so that individuals could be oriented to a critical perspective of place. For example, the tours given by Watanabe, Chin and Santos emphasized the displacement and political upheaval within the neighborhoods, while also mentioning the social justice protests that were waged by community members (even though all three are retired, they all still give these tours to student groups, elected officials, funders and new staff). The tours are one way in which a new generation of student activists and volunteers
are attracted to not only the organizations, but to connections with their ethnic neighborhood. The third way that values and mission are reinvigorated into the organizations is through staff meetings. New staff members are provided with orientations that include presentations about the history at LTSC and CCDC. At InterIm CDA and CCDC, staff meetings include short speeches by the Executive Directors in which current program and policy issues are tied back to the mission of the organization. Finally, the values and mission are enforced informally through social interactions that include communal-style lunches in office spaces, happy hour gatherings and shadowing of veteran staff and leadership (informal mentorship).

Maintaining Grassroots Methods through Professionalization. The final research question is the most controversial as some would argue that these organizations no longer represent a grassroots movement purely based on their size, budget and the increased professionalization of staff (evidenced by education levels, skill sets and function). Another aspect of this question is whether their impact is revolutionary or reformative. The answer to these questions is that AAPI CDCs lie somewhere in the middle. Their impact can best be described as transformative rather than revolutionary or merely reformative. The commitment to community engagement, the connection to low-income residents and the broader AAPI community, and the prevalence of community organizing techniques still indicate a grassroots orientation to community development practice while simultaneously cultivating a professionalized staff and method. This discussion should be situated in a power analysis of the role of the AAPI CDC in the broader community.

Developing Inside/Outside Skills. When asked about strategies to develop power in city politics, Santos from InterIm CDA mentions the use of a quiet inside voice and a loud
outside voice. Yoshimura from LTSC and Yeung from CCDC echo the need to be strong in both techniques. Although the organizations began within the context of social protest and confrontation, this changed over time. The CDCs became sophisticated at developing organic leadership that assumed key roles in the community and then calling on this co-ethnic leadership to discuss pertinent issues. Realizing the need to obtain a voice in electoral politics and demand rights afforded to other citizens, these organizations worked to produce AAPI activists who then independently worked to support campaigns for AAPI politicians and other politicians of color that were sensitive to community needs.

Successful campaigns meant gaining a de facto seat at the table (in city, county, state and federal government) to achieve goals in citizenship laws, land-use and support for development projects. Sometimes, key allies were the AAPI field representatives of elected officials or AAPI staff in government agencies (city planning, HUD). Many times these staff representatives were produced by these organizations entirely, in the sense that they provided community-based internships and volunteer opportunities that developed leadership within certain individuals.

Although the ability to attract the attention of power brokers within the city and nationally grew dramatically over time, the use of “outside” tactics is still utilized by all three organizations. CCDC regularly educates and informs tenants to the significance of ballot measures on affordable housing and AAPI focused issues. Their community organizing staff work to mobilize residents throughout the year. LTSC and InterIm CDA are less visible in terms of ongoing protests and social actions, community engagement and activist development, yet both express that this technique is still important to their
organizations. Knowing when to utilize each strategy is a delicate balance that is constantly being negotiated and decided by case-by-case basis.

Other forms of power include the ability to set the agenda in terms historic preservation and housing development in their neighborhoods. For example, during LTSC’s current engagement with transit-oriented development, the Metro and the City of Los Angeles interact with LTSC and respond to the organization as the voice of the community. Coalition building is one of the central strategies used by most CDCS, but in the case study organizations, this was a central strategy to gain more power and influence over the political agenda.

**Critical Coalition Building.** Critical coalition building is made up of two components. The first is forming coalitions within the neighborhood to get things accomplished within the ethnic community. The second is to conduct multi-scalar organizing so that coalitions across the city, county, state and nation are working towards community development goals at all levels. Chang (1994) discussed the importance of acknowledging the way Asian Americans “are differently situated historically with respect to other disempowered groups” but that finding commonality in shared oppression is still possible and important in doing anti-racist work (p. 1249). Although the interviewees did not use the term “intersectionality” when they described their work, their paradigm clearly included solidarity with communities facing similar race, class and gender-based discrimination.

All three organizations were formed as a result of a coalition of local, grassroots efforts to improve services in the local neighborhood. Stakeholders bargained, negotiated and gave concessions in order to form the organizations for the greater good of the community. Leadership continued its focus on this type of collaboration as the years went
on. Neighborhood coalitions were followed by city-wide and other regional efforts to join forces with multi-racial groups to work on behalf of low-income communities of color. National coalitions were formed when leaders saw that AAPI populations were missing out on key funding and on national policy discussions.

All the interviewees described the multi-racial nature of their community and the need to build solid coalitions for housing and immigrant rights across the greater city. All the interviewees discuss labor rights issues and the conflicts within their neighborhoods when workers are exploited within the hotels and restaurants in their community. Finally, all the interviewees discussed the importance of taking a stance against discrimination towards the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community. Although not mentioned in their mission statements or objectives, discrimination against individuals who identify as LGBT was viewed as an important injustice. The community-based practitioners interviewed for this study discussed involvement in this movement since the 1970s, much earlier than the current, more widely accepted wave of LGBT rights’ struggles.

The transfer of power that was facilitated by these organizations can support the claim of the transformative nature of their impact. This power includes acquisition of land and property in historic ethnic neighborhoods, the ability to set the agenda in issues related to neighborhood development, the success of AAPI elective officials that support ethnic-based community development and development of youth leaders and community activists, who hold the commitment to community for the future.
Implications for Practice: Developing A Model for a Race-Conscious Approach to Transformative Community Development

While the practitioners that were interviewed for this project may not define their approach as “race-conscious” or “race-based,” it was clear that they center the history and context of racial oppression and contest the color-blind perspective on neighborhood development policy. Moving beyond the hegemonic constructs of a multi-cultural approach, the anti-racist approach is employed within each of the case organizations. The values, strategies and people guiding these agencies are deeply rooted in the history of place, and this context includes a consistent theme of racial oppression and racial justice resistance. Characteristics from the case organizations are presented below to inform a model for transformative community development. The literature from Critical Race Theory, Empowerment, Social Justice and Transformative Community Development frame the cases to present a model of Race-Conscious Development.

Figure 9.1 Developing a Race-Conscious Model of Transformative Community Development

Programmatic Strategies. Two concepts that guided programmatic strategies are community cultural wealth and the critical pedagogy of place. By recognizing the community cultural wealth in their neighborhood, the organizations focused on issues that
are pertinent to the preservation of the neighborhood (preservation and development of low-income housing, establishing gardens and parks) as the service needs of local residents. Issues relevant to the broader ethnic community (not necessarily within the geographic boundaries of the neighborhood) are pursued as a second level of programming. In addition, values of cultural awareness, inclusivity and culturally relevant programming assist the organizations in addressing the needs as demographic needs shift.

The critical pedagogy of place refers to the commitment to the history of the neighborhood and the importance of place. This is reflected in the strategies to maintain and expand the boundaries of the neighborhood, to address historic preservation and ethnic continuity in development projects and to facilitate development of cultural institutions.

Organizational Strategies. Two shared characteristics in the staffing and structure of the AAPI CDCs that were seemingly organic, although strategies within each group facilitated them, are the racial representation of the workforce and the uniquely horizontal leadership structure. Individuals that identify with the target ethnic community predominantly staff all three organizations. This type of representation amongst staff and leadership has been important in cultivating relationships with community members as well as establishing legitimacy from outside of the organization. Although these organizations are open to diversifying the workforce, the values behind having a connection to the neighborhood is central. For example, LTSC has had some success in recruiting Latino staff members, which is seen as important given the demographics of the residents of their low-income housing.
This representation should not be confused with the multi-cultural approach to service provision, in which services and staff are matched to the target population with a sole focus on service provision. Instead, it is a commitment to anti-racist work with a critical place-based focus. The connection to the ethnic neighborhood and its context and history is the key element in its staffing. Formal and informal methods to orient new staff to this connection to place are in place at each organization. An orientation on history of neighborhood, tour of neighborhood led by community leader, research and reading material provided to new staff and mentorship by key leadership were the primary methods for new staff. Lunchtime and happy hour conversations also added to this culture. Thus, a recommendation for community development practice is to cultivate and recruit staff that has this type of connection to the neighborhood and its residents and to have orientation, training and mentoring that can cultivate this connection when it does not exist.

The horizontal leadership style is the second characteristic of organizational structure that is shared by the organizations. All three organizations have visionary, recognizable leaders (Chin, Fong, Santos, Watanabe) who have a long-standing reputation in the community. However, they all created a relatively horizontal leadership structure and spent time and resources in developing leadership across their programs. Staff members feel comfortable engaging with board members and developing direct relationships with agency leadership at all levels. Staff members are also encouraged to develop direct relationships with key players outside of the organizations. Thus, when city officials or funders call on the organization, they have strong relationships with a variety of leaders within each group. This technique is extremely efficient, as decisions can be made
without constant communication with the Executive Director. It also allows for a wide array of organizational priorities that are maintained by a large executive staff.

In addition, these leaders spent energy and valued cultivating leadership outside of their organizations by supporting young individuals (usually college students) to facilitate a wide network of community leaders. Matsubayashi and Akita are relatively new leaders for LTSC and InterIm CDA respectively, but have willingly adopted this value of shared leadership. This attention to develop other individuals, organizations and coalitions, without the need to take credit for the work that comes out of these entities, is a strong value that is tied to the origins of social justice. Creating opportunity, supporting others and a commitment to the “greater good” are the beliefs that ground this type of behavior. A recommendation for transformative community practice includes this type of leadership cultivation and youth development.

Political Strategies. Political strategies included a focus on coalition-building at the local, regional and national level as well as a balanced approach made up of inside and outside political techniques. The organizations were founded after a group of grassroots groups decided to join forces to form one community-based organization. Next, they formed coalitions with other groups in the neighborhood and in some cases, provided incubation of grassroots groups to address various program areas. Collaboration with regional (usually multi-racial) and national collaboration is a standard way of doing business for all three organizations. By caring less about who gets the credit and more about the “greater good,” the leadership in these organizations are open to developing power for other organizations, both within and outside of the ethnic community.
Balancing inside and outside political techniques was a skill that the organizations were continually refining. Inside techniques relate to building strong relationships with key players in political offices and funding institutions. Outside techniques refer to the community organizing strategies that the organizations utilized to varying degrees.

**Implications for Existing Literature**

The planning literature includes discussions of place-based development and the intersection of race and development. Missing from existing literature is the voice of AAPI communities and their work in the fight for the right to the city. Also missing is a CRT analysis of planning issues.

The model above illustrates a race-conscious approach to transformative community development, one that was developed with a CRT-based planning analytic frame. This proposed frame, adapted from Solorzano and Yosso (1998, 2001), utilizes five concepts from the CRT literature to be applied to community development practice: 1. Centering community cultural wealth, over a deficits approach; 2. Valuing the clients and practitioner’s voice in establishing best practices; 3. Utilizing a social justice perspective that challenges the dominant narrative regarding low-income communities; 4. Importance of critical coalitions; and 5 Critical reflexive practice.

Literature using a CRT perspective is also missing a distinctive AAPI voice. Since race is often conflated with ethnicity and indigeneity when discussing AAPIs, a clear voice in AAPI CRT has not yet been developed. Wu’s (2014) recent book, *The Color of Success: Asian Americans and the Origins of the Model Minority*, provides an entry point for AAPIs to develop a new area of the literature that deconstructs the model minority myth through continued investigations of how AAPIs experience racism on a daily basis and how a
history of racialized harm has remaining consequences for historic ethnic neighborhoods. Utilizing the CRT-planning analysis described above will deepen the understanding on the centrality of race to the AAPI experience.

This study has shown that CRT provides a useful frame for interpreting AAPI community development models. First, by providing the justification for a race-conscious strategy, this study has shown the importance of moving beyond a multi-cultural approach to service provision and community development towards a critical, race-conscious perspective. The CRT model delegitimizes discourse that places AAPIS as the model minority in competition with other disenfranchised groups, and instead focuses on similarities of experience that result from structural racism and a history of exclusion and displacement. This model is also more appropriate, since it analyzes color-blind policies that have disparately impacted AAPI communities. It also is fluid, as it is useful to apply to emerging AAPI communities such as structural oppression due to citizenship status of South and Southeast Asians and criminalization of Pacific Islander communities. Thus, this model can shed new light on place-based approaches that focus on social justice outcomes.

Limitations. The organizations represented in this paper focused on organizations that served the first wave of Asian immigrants, mainly Japanese Americans, Chinese Americans and Filipino Americans. The literature should address the proposed model for Asian immigrant and Pacific Islander Americans who have a different historical context and relatively newer community development corporations. Identifying existing strategies that addresses the racialization attributed to these communities, such as those related to refugee status, undocumented status and indigeneity, will provide a much more complete view of AAPI community development.
The story of AAPI CDCs spans over 4 decades, hundreds of staff and thousands of residents of historic ethnic neighborhoods. The scope of this project was intended to focus on the relatively more established Asian American communities, and thus, regrettably, there was not sufficient attention paid to Pacific Islander nor to South and Southeast Asian communities. It is hoped that future research can focus on the important work done by these groups. For example, in reviewing the pilot case study on Ma'o Farms on the island of Oahu in Hawai`i, further research is needed on the role of historical trauma as it relates to social and economic development for Native Hawaiians. In relation to Southeast Asians, research is needed to elucidate relevant issues for various groups, including Vietnamese Americans rebuilding in New Orleans and Hmong Americans doing economic development in Minnesota.

The merits of a race-conscious approach in this age of neoliberal policy have been stressed in this project. Future research should test the legitimacy of this strategy. Quantitative research should include Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping of properties to show the spatial impact of AAPI CDCs, a national survey of mainstream and ethnic-based CDCs to create a profile of the current landscape of neighborhood development. Quantitative methods can also compare AAPI CDC models with other models of community development, documenting patterns in leveraging resources, units of housing produced and numbers of clients served to illustrate comparative impact on neighborhoods. Future qualitative research should include the voice of the clients – residents of low-income ethnic enclaves to determine their views on community needs in their neighborhoods.
Conclusion

There are many facets to AAPI historic ethnic neighborhoods that are missed in the current conversations in the literature and in the public arena. These communities are rarely portrayed as the multi-ethnic places that they are. They are not viewed as neighborhoods in which youth attend school, play basketball in the afternoon and volunteer to help their elders. They are not seen as places in which intra-ethnic conflict is common, where co-ethnics exploit each other for cheap labor or over land use. They are not remembered as cultural home spaces, in which subsequent generations drive in from the suburbs to attend to religious practices, or to visit beloved businesses and family members. These communities are stripped of their complexity and at the same time they are robbed of their normalcy. As living, vibrant neighborhoods that contain families, elders and workers, these cultural home spaces require reexamination so that community development interventions can be utilized for equitable and just outcomes. In the quest for the right to the city, the folks that live and work within Asian American ethnic enclaves are not often visible to outsiders.

The CDC movement is facing a crucial moment in its trajectory. The new political economy that includes the domination of neoliberal policies on community development, have eroded sources of funding and public support. If mainstream CDCs looked to AAPI CDCs as models of success, they would find vibrant examples of strong organizations fueled by the values and beliefs of social justice and racial and economic equity. They would also find the effectiveness of race-based approaches that deconstruct the relevance of color-blind remedies to poverty and development. A strong field of AAPI community
practitioners will continue to lead the way, the question remains if anyone else will notice enough to follow.
## Appendix A – List of Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinatown CDC</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Title/Role</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Date of Interview</th>
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<td>Angela Chu</td>
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<td>Community Organizing Manager</td>
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<td>8/29/14</td>
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<td>Wai Ching Kwan</td>
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<td>Planner&lt;br&gt;Senior Planner&lt;br&gt;Planning Coordinator&lt;br&gt;Programs, Administration and Youth Manager</td>
<td>1993-Present</td>
<td>8/29/14</td>
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<td>Photo: Asian Weekly</td>
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## Appendix B – Real Estate Portfolios of Case Organizations

### Little Tokyo Service Center Real Estate Portfolio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Population Served</th>
<th>Opened</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angelina Apartments</td>
<td>Apt</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>Families</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Pedro Firm Building</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>Low income households</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casa Heiwa</td>
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<td>Low income households</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Pacific Health Care Venture, Inc.</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Non-profit care provider</td>
<td>1997</td>
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<td>Silverview Apartments</td>
<td>Apt</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Mixed Section 8 and Person with Aids</td>
<td>1997</td>
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<tr>
<td>Union Center for the Arts</td>
<td>Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Center for the Pacific Asian Family Transition Shelter</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25 bed shelter / homeless</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cesar Chavez Gardens</td>
<td>Apt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Far East Building</td>
<td>Apt</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Mixed Homeless / Mental disabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kosumosu Transitional Housing</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Homeless</td>
<td>2003</td>
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<td>Sammy Davis Jr. Manor</td>
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<td>2003</td>
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<td>Pacific Bridge Adult Residential Facility</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7 bed group home very low income disabled adults</td>
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<td>Pacific Housing Development</td>
<td>Apt</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mentally disabled</td>
<td>2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>Palm Village Senior Apartments</td>
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<td>60</td>
<td>Low income households</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHD Apartments</td>
<td>Apt</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>Low income households</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36th and Broadway</td>
<td>Scattered sites</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Transition youth and families</td>
<td>2011/2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Epworth Apartments</td>
<td>Apt</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Transition Age Youth</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larry Itliong Village</td>
<td>Apt</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Homeless domestic violence survivors</td>
<td>2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Menlo Family Housing</td>
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<td>67</td>
<td>Low income seniors</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casa Yonde</td>
<td>Apt</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Low income/homeless</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HFL Sequoia Apartments</td>
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<td>Low income families</td>
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<tr>
<td>LDK Senior Apartments</td>
<td>Apt</td>
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<td>Mixed Low income families / transitional youth</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budokan of Los Angeles</td>
<td>Athletics</td>
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### Chinatown CDC Real Estate Portfolio

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<tr>
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<th>Type</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>665 Clay</td>
<td>SRO/Apt</td>
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<td>Mixed</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1150 Grant</td>
<td>Apt</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
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<td>1370 California Apartments</td>
<td>Apt</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayside Elderly Housing</td>
<td>Apt</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Seniors</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadway Family Apartments</td>
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<td>81</td>
<td>Families</td>
<td>2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Broadway-Sansome Apartments</td>
<td>Apt</td>
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<td>Homeless families</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
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195
<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Office</td>
<td>n/s</td>
<td>Rehabilitation</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
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<td>Consorcia Apartments</td>
<td>Apt</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Families</td>
<td>1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crescent Cove</td>
<td>Apt</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>Mixed Low income families</td>
<td>2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>Golden Gate Apartments</td>
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<td>72</td>
<td>Families</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamlin Hotel</td>
<td>SRO</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Hotel</td>
<td>Apt</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>Very Low Income Seniors</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larkin Pine</td>
<td>SRO/Apt</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Seniors</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Helen Rogers Senior Community</td>
<td>Apt</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Homeless Seniors</td>
<td>2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Namiki Apartments</td>
<td>Apt</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Seniors</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notre Dame Apartments</td>
<td>Apt</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>Seniors</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkview Terrace</td>
<td>Apt</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Seniors</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Clare Residence</td>
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<td>Families</td>
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<td>Families</td>
<td>1993</td>
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<td>SRO</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Individuals / Small family</td>
<td>1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans Commons</td>
<td>Apt</td>
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<td>Very Low Income Seniors</td>
<td>2012</td>
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<td>Wharf Plaza</td>
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<td>Families</td>
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<tr>
<td>William Pen Hotel</td>
<td>SRO</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>Homeless Adults</td>
<td>1993</td>
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**InterIm Community Development Association**

**Real Estate Portfolio**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Population Served</th>
<th>Opened</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gee How Oak Tin</td>
<td>SRO</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Mixed use</td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NP Hotel</td>
<td>Apt</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Mixed use</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rex Hotel</td>
<td>Apt</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Mixed use</td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International District Village Square</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International House</td>
<td>Apt</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>Section 8 senior</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bush Hotel</td>
<td>Apt</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>Mixed use</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Hotel</td>
<td>Apt</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Mixed use</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highland Gardens Family Project</td>
<td>Apt</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Large refugee families</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese Cultural and Community Ctr</td>
<td>Center</td>
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<td>Community Center</td>
<td>2003</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lao Highland Community Center</td>
<td>Center</td>
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<td>2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nihonmachi Terrace Family Housing</td>
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<td>Large Family with disabled member</td>
<td>2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Samaki Commons</td>
<td>Apt</td>
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<td>Large Family / transitional housing / disabled</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyrabayashi Place</td>
<td>Apt</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>Mixed use</td>
<td>2015</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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