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Organizing for community control is much more difficult than talking about or hoping for it. As a concept, community control is extraordinarily appealing to many. Community control can be romanticized and it can form the basis for much rhetoric. Indeed, romance and rhetoric can become impediments for those who seek to organize with communities to confirm and extend their authority.

Community control does not just come about. It cannot be created by intentions or good wishes alone. It must be organized. "Community is, in effect, organization," Ronald Labonte notes (p.87). Community control must be built on a foundation of available resources and people. If it is to be successful, it must be based upon clear goals. It must be crafted to resist and overcome the influence of forces, both internal and external, which will work against it. It must be reconciled with, and sometimes it must overcome, the power of public and private agencies which represent interests beyond the community.

In this article, the art of organizing for community control is briefly described and assessed. This is done on the basis of a selective review of the literature on community development and participation. Community participation is a particularly important focus for those who seek to organize or understand the process of organizing for community control. Consequently, this subject will receive special attention, as the varieties and the dynamics of community participation will be explored. The roles that governments which extend beyond the community can and do play in relation to community control will also be highlighted. Finally, the possible limits of efforts to foster community control will be discussed. Before proceeding, it is necessary to examine some of the benefits—both real and perceived—that can arise from community control, with particular relevance to small rural communities.

The Benefits of Community Control

Community control can provide opportunities to shape and deliver social and health services. It can give communities opportunities to

keep and take proper care of their children, to treat their elders with respect and to design their educational provisions so true learning can take place. It can contribute important economic benefits to communities that also seek to establish a healthy sustainable environment. These and other assertions are frequently made in the literature to support the idea of community control over economic, social and political matters. More specifically, it is asserted that community control works because:

- People are more sensitive to their own needs.
- Community organizations have more access to local information; they frequently "have the advantage of a long memory and of the collective family histories of those most deeply involved" in various activities.
- Commitment to and the chance of success are greatly strengthened when those who have to live with the outcomes of governmental activities are involved in decisive ways in such activities.
- The need for transactions between external and local parties is reduced, and, as a result, programs and services tend to be more appropriate, efficient and effective.
- More integration between government strategies, programs and services takes place, as citizens rather than bureaucracies assert their needs.
- Involved publics are more aware of community problems and the resources which might be available to address them.

These arguments can be particularly compelling in the North, especially in small, rural communities. They may be even more persuasive in communities where aboriginal peoples form a good part of the population and place a high degree of emphasis "on self-determination and exercising greater control over those aspects of life which they consider to be vital to their survival and development as a people" (Wolfe:p.64). Such communities often face a "dauntingly full array" of problems, as they seek to sort out the stresses and strains of different cultures and lifestyles (Wolfe:p.65-66). Community control, based upon indigenous values and institutions, may hold the promise, in such circumstances, of fundamental change for the better.

As Stephen Conn has shown in his analysis of Inuit village councils, institutions which accommodate and encourage community control tend to be more sensitive to indigenous political cultures and such cultures can be a basis for effective governance (p.48-51). Conn notes that the Inuit councils could mobilize and focus village

opinion because the gap between leadership and membership was not extreme and there were frequent opportunities for "public and overt endorsement" of council authority. "Consensus formation," Conn writes, "was guided and directed in lengthy council deliberation with community members. Villagers had ready access to council deliberations through attendance at general meetings and through village social networks" (p.51-52). Village council government, Conn concludes, faced many problems but it "performed along lines understood by villagers. At its worst, it kept in touch with their felt needs and their aspirations."

It may seem that the benefits of community control can be felt more easily in small rural communities because of their lack of complexity, but this may not necessarily be the case. Small rural communities are not as simple as some might suggest. They can be very complicated, requiring intricate and precise organizational responses to their unique characteristics. Many small communities in the North, for example, contain Indian, Metis and non-aboriginal people all within their boundaries. Such demographic characteristics can defy the efforts of the most skilful organizers. Moreover, smallness and rurality can themselves create special constraints and possibilities for those who seek community control. As Wicker has noted, people in small communities more frequently are called upon to serve in responsible positions, respond to the important actions of others, engage in difficult and vitally important activities for themselves and their communities, and deal with a large range of problems and issues (Wolfe:p.70). Smallness may result in many demands upon an active, small leadership. This is true, for example, for those communities which are involved in the implementation of land claims agreements. As the James Bay Cree found, such agreements may result in creating a daunting array of demands upon a small, if effective group of leaders.

"Rurality," Wilkinson notes, "also presents special constraints to the emergence of community" (p.6). People who live in rural communities frequently have a problem in meeting many of their daily needs with resources that can be generated within a close proximity. As a result, community development and control may be restricted. As Wilkinson notes:

The reasons for this effect are summarized by the terms "dependency" and "distance." A population that is too small to provide essential services itself, for example, must rely on larger centres, and distance from larger centres limits access to the needed resources. Rural dependency . . . tends to be associated with such conditions as poverty, community

instability, and malintegration, with or without any conscious policy of exploitation of rural people by urban people. (p.7)

To overcome these constraints, Wilkinson advocates an approach which focuses upon the removal "of the constraints to community associated with rurality while building upon the potential for community development also associated with rurality" (p.9).

Wilkinson's insights into the relationships between community development and rurality have interesting implications for those who want to organize for community control in small rural communities. Such communities frequently experience a lack of necessary resources and have a dependency upon external agencies. They are often "left in the dark", as they suffer from a lack of information. They do not have a large paid bureaucracy at their disposal. Nor do they have a broad array of professional expertise to draw upon. These conditions also can create organizing possibilities.

People in small, rural communities can experience a potentially strong amount of solidarity, as they face the realities of the larger, more aggressive world "out there". They tend to have more of a common frame of reference. Because of their very locality, their closeness, they often have strong information networks. They have a better chance to know each other's strengths and weaknesses. They have more ready access to face-to-face meetings where they can craft or communicate goals and related strategies. The Innu people of Labrador have provided a very good instance of process, as they have organized to fight the dangers of NATO low level test flights. So too have the Algonquins of Barriere Lake in Québec who have attempted to change resource depletion and mismanagement in their community into a consistent strategy for sustainable development. Many more examples could be cited of instances in which communities used their closeness, solidarity and knowledge of one another to counter large external forces.

People in small rural communities use isolation and shared experiences in their communities to create and foster community control. As they do so, they need to organize and they must organize in a particular way. They must organize for community participation, for participation by a relatively large proportion and broadly representative number of people. Control means power and one of the greatest sources of power that a small rural community can have is the concentrated energy of those who live and work in the community. Such concentrated energy may be generated by active and meaningful participation in cooperative enterprises.

Integral to the notion of community control is the idea of active participation by citizens in meaningful and successful efforts to shape their own lives. Participation and power are critical for communities that seek to organize. Drawing on the work of Streeck and Schmitter, William D. Coleman has argued that different kinds of organizations have distinctive guiding principles. "The guiding principle of the market," Coleman maintains, "is dispersed competition, that of the community is spontaneous solidarity, and that of the public bureaucracy is hierarchical control" (p.420). Solidarity is built upon and reflects participation. Solidarity is important for those who seek to organize for community control, but it cannot remain spontaneous, rather it must become concentrated, informed and structured. This needs to be done through organized participation. The organizational principle of community control is participation. Without participation and the power it creates, a community cannot have and maintain control.

Community participation is a difficult phenomenon to define. With reference to low-income housing projects, Yap Kioe Sheng suggests that "Community participation is the involvement of the community in planning and decision-making rather than in merely contributing labour" (p.57). Yap goes on to quote Paul, who, with particular reference to housing projects involving the poor, defines community participation as "an active process by which beneficiary/client groups influence the direction and execution of a development project with a view to enhancing their well-being in terms of income, personal growth, self-reliance or other values they cherish" (p.57).

Yap and Paul focus on important goals of community participation—power, involvement and, indeed, control in relation to important decisions that affect daily living conditions—but they use the term participation too specifically. They exhibit a tendency to assume that all participation is what they might see as meaningful participation. They overlook, at least in these statements, the possibility that participation may be less meaningful, in the sense that it does not lead to real and significant control. Such a fact is particularly important for people who may enter into various resource co-management regimes or alternative just systems.

Organizers often exhibit a similar lack of clarity about the benefits of participation for those who seek community control. A resulting danger may well be a lack of clarity on the part of community members and those who are more active among them about the

various levels or modes of participation. A positive bias regarding the virtues of participation in all situations can lead to an uncritical and unproductive understanding of participation in a given situation. Communities need to be able to distinguish between different kinds of participation. This is true for several reasons. Increased opportunities for participation in a community may be no more than manipulatory tactics on the part of powerful external interests. They may be only a part of an effort, for example, to obtain token representation from a community on boards and committees in order to keep the community satisfied or, minimally, quiet about unpleasant conditions.

As the literature indicates, participation may take many forms. It may be pursued as a way to educate people or to obtain information from them. It may be no more than consultation, without the sharing of real power. Proceeding along these lines, Arnstein has provided one of the classic descriptions of the different levels of participation, distinguishing between various forms on "a ladder of citizen participation" ranging from manipulation, therapy, informative efforts, consultation and placation to partnership, delegated power and, finally, citizen control (p.58).

Another author who has written about community participation, Francis Bregha, stops short of the idea of citizen control, as many of those who speculate on the topic do, but he joins Arnstein in including "delegated authority" in his list of participatory techniques, which includes, on a continuum, information, feedback, consultation and joint planning, as well as delegated authority (p.14). The latter, Bregha notes, "refers to the situation in which government transfers some of its authority and responsibility to a private group of citizens" (p.25).

There are other distinctions that need to be made in the forms of community participation. There are significant differences, for example, between community participation in government policy formation and planning, on the one hand, and administration and program implementation, on the other. Coleman notes that participation in policy formation may involve the generation of the guiding principles or general rules of a policy, of the actual text of the policy or of the regulations and rules that flow from it. Participation in policy implementation, by way of distinction, may entail the day-to-day administration of the policy, the supervision of those who implement the policy, the sanctioning of those who transgress the rules, or the handling of appeals (Coleman:p.418-419). As Bregha and others have shown, policy and program development are very

different kinds of activities that require different levels of understanding on the part of citizens, as well as different commitments of time and resources (p.15-16). Organisers need to be aware of these realities. Those who, for example, are working for more self-government have to be aware of the levels at which various proposals are put forward. A proposal which assumes the current federal government framework and looks to the implementation of federal policies is quite different from one that assumes that self-government means a change in the nature of the basic framework of governance.

Participation does not automatically result in power and control. One of the most useful approaches to defining the relationships between participation and power has been taken by the political theorist Carole Pateman. Pateman argues that there are important differences between what she classifies as "pseudo participation", "partial participation" and "full participation". In the first instance, participation might be used to persuade the powerless to accept decisions that may be made by the powerful in any case. In the second, joint decision-making may take place but the final power to make a decision still rests with only one party. When "full participation" is involved, each interest has an equal chance to determine the outcome.

This, again, is an important set of distinctions for those who would seek to organize for community control. It should be recognized that most external bureaucracies and governments will want to take an approach which emphasizes "pseudo" or "partial" participation, in Pateman's terms. By way of contrast, many of those in the community will advocate equal power, at least. Indeed, many proponents of community control in the North will advocate more than equal power. They will want *final* power. Only participation which leads to that power will be seen by such people as meaningful. Participation and power of this nature is not a matter of spontaneity nor mere intention. It is an outcome of effective organizing.

Organizing Participatory Processes

Those who want community control seek to create more opportunities for participation that will lead to building and maintaining real authority. To do so, they need to organize participatory processes. Such processes do not usually start with full participation or actual control. In fact, a particular community control effort may involve the use of a variety of participatory formats, including consultation committees, open forums, joint planning efforts and

day-to-day administration of government programs as well as other activities. Such efforts may require judgements concerning possible involvement in processes that others have designed as exercises in pseudo participation or partial participation.

Some who seek actual community control might argue that efforts which fall short of actual and full control are not of any real worth and may indeed be dangerous because they might mislead community members into thinking they have significant power when they do not. From an organizing perspective, however, various forms of participation which fall short of actual control may be useful in building toward such control, if these involvements increase available information, build solidarity on the part of community members, generate needed expertise, and, generally, lay the basis for further, fuller participation. Many Indian communities have found, for example, that limited initiatives with reference to education or child welfare have led to the generation of the skills and experience which have led to more comprehensive efforts to achieve self-government.

Community participation may not always be as beneficial as it might be expected to be. All forms of participation are not equally satisfying for all people. It is important for those who seek more community control through participation to realize that people participate in public settings for a variety of reasons. As Kenneth Bryden has noted, participation can be instrumental, that is, primarily directed to the achievement of other ends or it can be an end in itself (p.94). Bryden argues that, "participation as instrumental is based on the idea of *taking part* in political life in order to protect and advance one's individual interests in a competitive situation. Participation as an end in itself involves *sharing* in a community by cooperating for a common goal, thereby fostering the participant's development and self-realization" (p.94).

Organizers need to be aware of the motives and aspirations of those with whom they participate. For this reason Bryden's distinction is a useful one, but it is also troubled. It recognizes individual but not community interests. As a result, it does not leave much room for the idea that people can cooperate for the common good in order to advance their shared interests in a circumstance where others might want control over limited resources. Such participation may be both instrumental and an exercise in self-realization. It may be aimed at getting something done, and it may contribute to a sense of satisfaction and increased community solidarity. Indeed, it may only be instrumental, that is, a practical effort to get results. Despite his lack

of clarity on the matter, Bryden's is an important distinction because it points to the fact that people participate for different reasons and with differing motivations. It is critical to remember this in community settings.

Those who organize for community control need to be aware of many dynamic organizational factors as they build processes which will bring more power into and maintain power within the community. They must, for example, accept the reality that the character of participation and its meaningfulness for those who are involved can change over time. For instance, Peter Nientiel, Sadok Ben Mhenni and Joop de Wit have shown in their analysis of squatter settlement projects in Karachi, when the term community participation was first used in that community in 1977, it was linked with the idea that residents should be fully involved in planning, decision-making and implementation, and that projects should go forth primarily on their initiative. By 1983, community participation had come to mean something quite different. It now meant that residents should cooperate with government agencies, as these agencies made decisions. Participation had changed in character as it had moved from being seen as a vehicle for citizen control to becoming a mechanism for the reinforcement of governmental authority.

At whatever level at which they occur, such changes in the actual significance of participation are not entirely rare. Community participation frequently has a dynamic of its own and this dynamic can overtake those who seek to use it to enhance community control. Community participation tends to come in waves. People tend to concentrate their participation at particular times. At other times, they may be more passive about involvement in public events. As Kenneth Wilkinson notes:

Communities act, but only under special conditions. Specifically, community action occurs when unusual events threaten local residents. When this occurs, an identity of interest can produce a more or less unified process of collective action among people who seem otherwise to have few, if any, common interests.

Timing may be a critical factor in mobilizing support and energy for critical decision-making. Issues are also important. Some occurrences may become "issues", that is, matters which attract significant attention and give rise to differing viewpoints. Others may not. Those who seek community control need to "organize around the issues" and to link issues—with a sense of timing—so they build toward concentrations of community power. The Inuit have been

particularly adept at organizing around issues in recent years. The Inuit Circumpolar conference, for instance, has organized around issues such as the sealing, language and arctic policies.

Because communities act only under certain conditions and, because of the importance of timing and issues, it is crucial for those who organize for community control to realize that the process of gaining and maintaining control never takes the same course in one community as it does in another. Nor does it always follow the same stages. Often needs are not fully articulated until the implementation of plans begins. Frequently serious planning does not take place until after the reassessment of activities. Sometimes community energy is not mobilized until an activity, project or service is evaluated. Whatever the case, it is critical to crystallize community involvement when it occurs and turn it into more lasting community control at some point; community control must be structured so it can be maintained.

There are many other practical matters that those who organize community participation processes need to keep in mind. For example, the organizers associated with the ground-breaking Oregon Health Decisions project, which sparked a large and open public debate over complex health issues, noted that the progress of that project had shown that those who seek to organize for community control must strive to make sure they create and foster structures which:

- Are broadly based and non-partisan.
- Have an independent public identity, and are not seen as just one more "program" of the sponsoring organization or identified with a particular power.
- Have a functional independence from any single sponsoring organization, as far as governance, staffing and finances are concerned.
- Are connected to *existing* networks of active volunteers and community leaders at the local level. (Jennings: p.8, 9, 12, 13)

Other experiences and analysts have suggested that the possibilities of real community control are enhanced when citizens are served by structures which consistently provide accurate and meaningful information (Crosby et.al:p.171). Networking as a problem-solving method is particularly important to organizers. As the Native Women's Association of the NWT (NWA/NWT) has noted: "The importance of networking lies in not only making but *keeping up* contact with family, friends and professionals who can *mutually*

support and share information to solve problems” (p.42). The NWA/NWT has successfully used networking and similar techniques over the years since its founding in 1977 to organize around issues such as alcohol abuse, health, culture and employment of women.

Many commentators place an emphasis on the need for appropriate organizational structures. David Marsden and Caroline Moser note that it is important to understand the actual dynamics of various organizational forms and to avoid the tendency to conceptualize community, non-governmental organizations and government in “monolithic homogenous terms” (p.4). With special reference to community economic development, David Douglas notes that some structures, such as “native economic development vehicles”, are more conducive to community-wide participation (p.37). Some are also more subject to community control and accountability. Development cooperatives, Douglas suggests, may provide opportunities for extensive control. By way of contrast, “the structure of municipality” provides fiscal accountability but only “indirect (e.g. through elections) access/control” (p.37).

Douglas argues that various factors will determine the most appropriate form of organization for a particular organizing effort, including the roles and attitudes of local governments or municipalities, the broadness or specificity of objectives, the orientation of related federal and provincial programs, the need for continuity, and legal and financial requirements. Rural communities have specific requirements. In such settings, in particular, organizational structures must be efficient. Streamlining is necessary; duplication is to be avoided, and simplicity is desirable.

The Role of Central Governments

In general, there must always be a good “fit” between a structural form and the social, cultural and developmental priorities of a community (Douglas:p.37). This is just one aspect of understanding the dynamics of the organizing processes which underlie successful efforts to achieve actual community control. Another aspect relates to the need to understand the roles that governments with more general jurisdictional powers can create in relation to such efforts. Sometimes governments which have jurisdictional powers beyond specific communities recognize this responsibility, but the involvements of such governments in community control efforts are matter of great delicacy. They can do much to help, but they can also do much damage.

Increased community participation may frequently be part of governmental efforts to decentralize the administration of services or programs. As Adam Herbert has written:

Administrative decentralization generally refers to the delegation of authority from higher to lower levels within an organization. Clearly, decentralization neither assumes nor implies participation. However, governments can decentralize to facilitate such participation. (p.622)

In most circumstances where increased community participation accompanies decentralization, there will be an augmentation to some degree of community control. The delegation of governmental authority to community, Francis Bregha asserts, may be appropriate, from a governmental viewpoint, when services and programs can be set up on a "people-to-people" basis. He cites four such instances, including ones where: 1) there is an element of self-help or mutual aid; 2) the level of expertise needed is thought to be generally available; 3) the administration of facilities can be entrusted to groups of users and 4) the service or activity is on a fairly small scale.

It is interesting to note that Bregha's list of instances does not lend itself readily to circumstances in which natural resource management or development is concerned. Nor does it recognize that many communities do not believe they need *delegated* authority to control their own affairs. Many aboriginal communities in the North, for example, assert their inherent and independent right to govern themselves, in the fullest sense of the term. For them and other northerners, delegated powers are not sufficient. They want and, indeed, they believe they have their own power to control their communities. All they want is recognition and the resources to do so. Many central governments usually will not be easily convinced that they should provide such recognition.

Larger governments frequently find efforts to create more community control to be challenging, frustrating . . . and threatening. As Mary Grisez Kweit and Robert W. Kweit have noted, resistance on the part of larger governments to the drive for community control tends to be embedded in their nature as bureaucracies:

In the ideal bureaucracy, there is no place for citizen participation. Citizens will often lack technical expertise, will almost certainly be unfamiliar with bureaucratic routines, and will probably be emotionally involved in issues of concern, rather than being detached and rational. Citizens are outside the hierarchy and therefore hard to control. (p.22)

Many factors tend to encourage more central governments to shy away from community control. John Montgomery points to the

symptoms of "bureaupathology" in the local context including the tendency for some bureaucrats to develop patron-client relationships with local leaders, to trade-off local objectives for more central ones when apparent or real conflicts arise, and to regard or treat all local organizations the same way (p.62).

Yap observes that "most authorities are reluctant to give power to the people, as they fear people may become too demanding and will start making demands for additional powers" (p.62). Nientiel, Mhenni and Wit note that "A government may also feel it is rather cumbersome to embark on community participation; it will be time consuming, requires more manpower and will lead to slower implementation" (p.53). Other factors which may encourage public servants to be cautious about or hostile to efforts to enhance community control may relate to the tensions and conflicts involved in weighing citizen needs and demands against those associated with professional norms, administrative standards and normal operating procedures. Such factors have come into play when communities such as Champagne/Aishihik in Yukon have sought to take control of their child welfare and family services.

It is not just administrators and bureaucrats who resist community control. It is often politicians. As Yap comments, "Politicians believe that they should represent communities as they have been elected by popular vote ... (They) may also feel that grassroots leaders will become their rivals in the next ... elections" (p.62). Elected office holders may also be concerned about the answerability of governing agencies being disrupted, when real community control is established, as accountability is inevitably redirected toward the community and away from more central or formal governments. The federal government, for example, has often stressed such concerns in its efforts to introduce Alternative Funding Arrangements for Indian governments.

There is another aspect to the accountability issue. As Clague, et.al. have shown in their analysis of the community resource board experiment in British Columbia in the mid-1970s, accountability can become a difficult matter when, as often is the case, the more central government is responsible for raising funds and setting ceilings on budget requests, and community organizations and leaders "are the articulator and advocate of community needs, constantly pressing for more funds" (p.272).

Despite all of the stresses, strains and potential problems that can arise as more central governments and citizens who seek community control encounter one another, it is important to note that sustained,

appropriate and competent support by professional bureaucracies can be an important aspect of the movement to community control. Citing a series of studies of local participation in rural development by Cornell University, Montgomery argues that organizational support by professional administrators made the difference in success or failure. While he may well overstate his case, Montgomery places great stress on the roles that administrators can play in establishing the criteria for local organization, providing guidance and training for local leaders and advising them on procedures for local decision-making (pp.60, 62).

Central governments can have a positive influence in communities which seek more control. They can help, for instance, to establish a baseline for social and health services, so all citizens experience some level of equity in their access to these services. Central governments can do this and more, but it is also important to recognize that they can intervene in community processes in ways which will impede rather than help community control. Using the rhetoric of community development, they can in actuality deflect legitimate opposition, as they undermine community leaders by channelling and controlling participation to contain discontent and reinforce their own power (Gilbert and Wade:p.921). Moreover they can use the rationale of devolving power and control to the community, of "self-help" and other related notions, to avoid their own responsibilities. As Jean Panet-Raymond has argued with regard to community development activities in Quebec in the 1970s:

... in using the community rational, the state is opting out of a collective responsibility, attacking the concept of universality, of democratic rights and putting the burden of social costs on individuals and the family. This inevitability means that women are forced to go back to roles they had started to relinquish ... The state is closing up institutions and "dumping" on to families and communities "their" elderly and "their" handicapped. (p.281)

As governments and communities work together to augment citizen participation, the drive for community control should not become a movement away from governmental responsibility. Panet-Raymond's pessimism about the contemporary community development movement in Quebec may be no more of a balanced assessment than Montgomery's optimism about the role governments can play in facilitating community participation, but both writers point to some of the challenges of community control. Extreme moves in the direction of community control can encourage central governments

to refrain from fulfilling their obligations to citizens. This may not be a desirable state of affairs when the fulfilment of these obligations is in the best interests of people in the communities or when the devolution of financial resources does not follow that of administrative responsibility. The relationships between communities and central governments continually create challenges for those who seek more community control.

The Challenges of Community Control

Beyond the potential pitfalls that may be encountered as governments engage in efforts to foster community participation or control, the major challenges that efforts for community control face most often are encountered within communities themselves. This may particularly be the case as communities attempt to clarify their real goals in relation to the control of governmental services, programs and functions.

Community control can be an exercise in self-management, as communities administer and, to some extent, design their own programs and services. Opportunities for such self-management may arise only within the parameters set by central governing authorities. This may not be sufficient for many who seek more community control. Many communities may want to have an authoritative role in determining the policy parameters within which programs and services are implemented. In such instances, community control can also be an exercise in self-government, as communities come to control their own authoritative decision-making units.

Community control can be even more extensive. It can be a manifestation of self-sufficiency and self-reliance, as communities grow to depend upon themselves to provide what they need. Most importantly, community control can mean self-determination, the power to control cultural, social, political, and economic conditions that characterize a community. Community control can mean many things, but it is important to realize that it is a concept that has limits. One of these relates to the idea of the "community" itself. "The community is elusive as a scientific concept," Wilkinson notes, "and it is elusive as a social phenomenon" (p.1).

Douglas notes that: "By 'community' we refer, in the main, to the geographically contiguous community who share common territory, who interact regularly as residents and (socio) economic agents and who share bases of cultural identity, continuity and affiliation" (p.28). This definition corresponds to the conditions in some

localities in the North, but it does not describe many others, where there is not a common cultural identity, continuity or affiliation. There are some critical obstacles to community control in communities with diverse cultural patterns. These obstacles may be overcome through the development of clear goals and the use of appropriate and effective organizing processes. Nevertheless, it is important to realize that there are some problems with the notion of "community", in general.

Even in communities with common cultures and regular interaction, there are most often local elites who hold much power and poor people who hold little. Because people who are better off can exert more power, community control can often mean perpetuated control by a small portion of the community. The idea that community control may mean only more control for those who are already most powerful in the community is emphasized in the literature over and over again (Clague et.al.:p.279, Yap:p.61, DeSario and Langton:p.107). In many cases, Yap notes, the only persons who can afford to be active in the community are businessmen, shopkeepers and landlords (p.61). Those who are active, Rosenbaum adds, represent organized interests likely to have been previously involved in community affairs. They also tend, he notes, to be spokespersons of various government agencies and to be well-educated, affluent members of the middle to upper classes (p.355). "The clearest finding," Michael Reagan and Victoria Lynn Fedor-Thurman conclude in their study of the California energy policy experience, "is that public participation ... does not mean participation of the general public" (p.107).

An awareness of the varieties and dynamics of community participation, of the need to disseminate information broadly, of the advantages and disadvantages of various kinds of organizational structures can help those who organize for community control to make sure that it is, to the greatest extent, control by a large and significant part of the community. Nevertheless, community control will always, except in the rarest of cases, mean more control for some than others. This is where accountability to the community by community leaders and organizers needs to come to the fore.

If accountability is to be real and thorough, the community leader and organizer must understand the larger social, political economic context within which the community action takes place. Most importantly, in order to avoid the dangers of what Montgomery aptly terms "acute localities", those who organize for community control must temper their quest for the decentralization of government power with a recognition that most economic and social policy

is national and trans-national. "Local decision-making," Montgomery notes, "is unlikely to include substantial control over economic interests" (p.88). If this is not to be the case, then interests beyond the community must be understood and addressed by those who seek to locate control within the community. Unless people who act locally are willing to act as well as think more broadly, they may, unwittingly and unfortunately, forego any chances they may have to exert control over the very forces that ultimately shape the destiny of communities themselves.

As this brief and selective review of the literature has hopefully indicated, the challenges of organizing for community control are indeed daunting. These challenges will face every service's effort at community control. Those who organize for community control cannot ignore this fact. If they do, they do so at the peril of the communities they seek to foster.

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