Organizing Community and Labor Coalitions for Community Benefits Agreements in African American Communities: Ensuring Successful Partnerships

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Community benefits agreements are a relatively new tool in the economic justice movement. This article discusses community-labor partnerships in efforts to win community benefits agreements in African American communities, with implications for other communities of color. Union and African American organizing strategies are explored and two community benefits campaigns are examined: the Figueroa Corridor Coalition for Economic Justice and the One Hill Community Benefits Coalition. Clashes emerging around divergent world views are reviewed along with strategies to address potential challenges in order to build and maintain successful cross cultural coalitions.

KEYWORDS community benefits agreements, organizing, African Americans, community revitalization

The United States is experiencing a "back to the city movement" that is fueling redevelopment efforts in disadvantaged communities across the country (Janis, 2008). Because disadvantaged African American and other communities of color are likely to have large percentages of vacant land or land and buildings with low market value, these communities have become ripe with opportunities for land banking by developers, who seek to create new housing and retail spaces close to central business districts (Gibbons & Haas, 2002). These urban re-development efforts promise to revitalize

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communities by reducing vacant housing, fostering new businesses and increasing the local tax base (Janis, 2008).

Yet many activists, academics, and neighborhood residents are concerned that these revitalization efforts will mean the economic exploitation and displacement of low-income, disenfranchised African, Latin, Asian and Native American (ALANA[1]) people (Anthony, 2008; Clarke, 2008; Fullilove, 2004). Many of those concerned are troubled by the fact that the displacement and exploitation of poor people of color are being subsidized by municipalities, via the gift of public land and public dollars (Baxamusa, 2008; Clarke, 2008; Cummings, 2006; Gross, Leroy & Janis-Aparicio, 2005; Leavitt, 2006).

For labor unions and community groups, community benefit agreement (CBA) campaigns have become important tools for combating the use of public dollars to support resident and worker exploitation (Partnership for Working Families, 2008). These campaigns have also provided opportunities to highlight the mutual interest of workers and community residents in improving quality of life in the work place and in the neighborhoods in which workers live (Haas, 2002). The potency of labor-community collaboration for economic justice has been shown in the community benefits agreements won by disadvantaged ALANA communities from Los Angeles to Washington, DC (Baxamusa, 2008; Cummings, 2006) and in mid-sized cities such as Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Yet, several critical questions emerge around how to build strong and effective labor-community partnerships in African American and other ALANA communities. What happens to coalitions if ALANA community groups and labor unions clash around the goals and strategies to be employed in CBA efforts? What are the foreseeable disagreements? How can organizers avoid potential challenges in forming or maintaining labor-community partnerships, or correct problems that develop (Arguelles, 2005; Bronfenbrenner &Warren, 2007; Fletcher & Hurd, 2000). This article answers these questions by presenting a review of literature describing (a) CBA campaigns, (b) labor-community partnerships in CBAs, (c) organizing perspectives of unions and African American community groups and (d) strategies for successful partnerships in CBA campaigns; along with (e) the application of these strategies to an examination of two CBA campaigns.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Community Benefits Agreement Campaigns

Across the country community benefits agreements campaigns typically begin when community or labor organizations become aware of proposed developments that will be sited in or near residential communities, and that will have a significant negative impact on their target constituency, as in workers and/or residents (Cummings, 2006; Gibbons & Haas, 2002; Gross et al., 2005; Haas 2002; Leavitt, 2006). CBA coalitions gain the leverage to protect

workers and community residents by taking advantage of the opportunity structure (Sellers, 2007) created by municipal policies, which mandate public hearings around large commercial projects involving the use of public funds and/or public land (Baxamusa, 2008; Gross et al., 2005). Labor and community partners use their leverage through the threat to mobilize *en masse* to oppose the approval of developments during these public processes (LeRoy & Purinton, 2005). Via these means, disadvantaged African American and other ALANA community residents, and their labor allies, have forced municipalities and developers to make formal commitments that guarantee measurable contributions to workers and communities. Such agreements between developers and communities have come to be known as community benefits agreements (CBAs), which are legally enforceable contracts between commercial developers and community coalitions. The following section will discuss labor-community partnerships in CBAs.

Labor-Community Partnerships in CBAs

EMERGENCE

Typical labor-community CBA partnerships emerge as fairly broad coalitions, as organizations recognize the opportunity created by a development and launch an effort to ensure that the members of their bloc benefit. The primary goal of the labor and community partners is to form a cooperative agreement with the developer, in exchange for their support, e.g. lack of opposition, during the public approval process (Gross et al., 2005). Members of CBA coalitions must begin by exploring municipal timelines, and possible leverage points in the public approval process for the proposed development. At the same time, the coalition must work to communicate their efforts to the community members, union members and the general public in order to mobilize support. Labor and community partners also work in concert to identify, vet and otherwise prioritize the constituent issues that will form the basis of the CBA. In most cases, labor-community coalitions are obliged to complete their CBA proposal and present it to the developers and local redevelopment planning bodies for vetting. All the while, the coalition must pressure developers to formally agree to the CBA proposal within the timeframe set by municipal guidelines which steer the public approval process. Moving from discussing the process coalitions undergo to win concessions in CBA campaigns, it is important to explore the internal process of coalition formation.

INTERNAL PROCESSES

To begin, a core strength of labor-community partnerships is that each group brings to the table a desire to promote economic justice and social change. In addition, both labor unions and community groups bring a

specialized savvy about how to achieve social justice. These groups must work expediently to establish a working partnership that pulls together this savvy, in a manner that avoids forming an amalgamation of groups with disparate missions and foci (Frege, Heery, & Turner, 2003). Because of the time demands placed on coalitions to form and take action, coming together flawlessly can be a real challenge. When labor and community groups join together with little time to understand each other, they may operate with divergent views on the goals and strategies each intends to use to structure and carry out the CBA campaign (Arguelles, 2005; Dubro & Feller, 2005; Miller, 2004). Rivas (2006) explains that such challenges may be due, in part, to an overreliance on assumed commonality.

Types of Coalitions

Although labor and community groups seek partnerships, in many cases, organizers have not thought through how the partnership should be constituted. To clarify coalition formation options, Rivas proposes a classification typology, as Table 1 illustrates.

Table 1 shows Rivas's conceptualization of the core issues shaping labor-community partnerships. These include relationship building, common interests and partner dominance. Rivas concludes that only those coalitions that (a) provide for long-term relationships, (b) have formally developed shared interests and (c) have mutually beneficial campaign objectives are true labor-community partnerships. For Rivas, relationship building refers to whether the focus of the coalition is to foster long-term or ad hoc associations between the coalition partners; whereas dominance is conceptualized as the degree to which one partner's interests dominate the alliance. Under her typology, dominance is empirically reflected by determining who sets the coalition agenda. Dominance also refers to which partner controls the resources supporting a coalition.

TABLE 1 Rivas' (2006) Typology for Labor-Community Coalitions—Modified

	Focus on building relationships and achieving objective	Relationships ignored/focus on achieving objective
Partners share interests	*Partnership coalition* Community and labor organizations have developed shared interests. The coalition is structured to provide for long-term relationships.	*Ad hoc coalition* Community and labor organizations have shared interests, but relationships are not seen as important or are taken for granted. The coalition works toward the goal.
One partner's interest dominates	*Support committee coalition* Relationship is cultivated; Subordinate partner interests are not taken for granted.	*Letterhead coalition* Subordinate partner endorses dominant partner's agenda, but provides limited support.

Rivas (2006) points out that partnership coalitions provide the strongest foundation for social movement unionism, as such coalitions foster the shared interests, equality and power sharing necessary to keep partners motivated to work together over the longer periods of time typically necessary to promote social change. She asserts that because many true partnership coalitions have not been formed, additional work is needed to uncover strategies for developing this type of coalition. Seemingly, an important area to explore surrounding her first criteria, shared interests, would be an examination of the potentially differing perspectives labor unions and community groups bring to coalitions.

Labor and Community Organizing Perspectives

Community organizations and labor groups share an orientation toward social justice yet, beyond this, may hold divergent perspectives on organizing in terms of goals, strategies and power. When adding the dynamic of culture (race), additional differences may emerge. The following section provides some detail on labor union and community organizing perspectives with emphasis on African American community organizing.

UNION ORGANIZING

Unions have tended to focus on "bread–and-butter" issues in the work place (Fletcher & Hurd, 2000) such as the right to organize, wage increases or affordable health benefits. Yet, as union membership has dropped nationally, progressive union organizers have begun to explore innovative approaches to reaching out to communities (Frege et al., 2003). Labor scholars identify these two approaches as business unionism (focusing on the bread-and-butter issues), and community unionism (incorporation of community issues), respectively (Kelber, 2003; Tattersall, 2007; Turner & Hurd, 2001).

In business unionism, organizing has been characterized as efforts of union leadership to work out a package of worker privileges and benefits with the employers using the "carrot" or inducement of non confrontational union tactics, along with the "stick" or implied threat of mass mobilization and disruption of the work environment. Under this organizing model negotiations take place between labor representatives, who are professional organizers from a similar class background and/or status, as corporate representatives (Kelber, 2003; Milkman & Voss, 2004; Sellers, 2007; Tatterstall & Reynolds, 2007). Business unionism has avoided worker mobilization; where mobilizing workers becomes necessary, those unions with a business unionism approach are more likely to use professional organizers, who are less likely to have direct experience as workers in the target industry (Lopez, 2004). Because this organizing model focuses primarily on the work place, purveyors are considered less likely to become involved in community

coalitions (Lopez, 2004; Tattersall & Reynolds, 2007). When business unionists do become involved in community efforts, they view labor-community coalitions purely in terms of short-term opportunities for growing union membership and or increasing negotiating power at the bargaining table (Frege et al. 2003; Rivas, 2006). In this regard, labor-community coalitions built on a business unionism model may be likely to function as letterhead coalitions as described by Rivas (2006).

In contrast, Milkman and Voss (2004) posit that community partnerships seem to fit best with unions embracing missions centered on the promotion of social justice. This union organizing approach is labeled community unionism. According to Tattersall (2006),

> community unionism is defined as the range of strategies that involve unions "reaching out" to the community. These include labor-community coalitions [reaching out to community groups], broadening the frame of union campaigns to embrace "community concern" [reaching out to community issues], and campaigns that seek to control place [reaching out to local communities]. (p. 1)

Community unionism also involves capacity building efforts that empower workers to take active roles in organizing for both work-place and community-based economic justice. Unions which take a membership growth view of CBAs, may focus their efforts on partnering with communities to increase their leverage for ensuring that developers and succeeding hiring organizations commit to card check neutrality (not opposing a unionize labor force), yet may struggle to partner beyond worker issues (Arguelles, 2005; Bronfenbrenner & Warren, 2007; Sellers, 2007; Tattersall, 2006). Coalitions using less ambitious forms of community unionism may be likely to act as support committee coalitions or ad hoc coalitions.

A third union organizing model is social movement unionism. Some scholars see community unionism and social movement unionism as synonymous (Milkman & Voss, 2004), while others see the focus on social justice, grass roots organizing and worker empowerment beyond the work place as distinct (Frege et al., 2003; Rivas, 2006; Worthen, 2004). Social movement unionism uses a capacity building focus targeted at building workers' and community residents' capability to combat oppression on their own behalf (Turner & Hurd, 2001). Because this model targets social injustice, the organizing strategies employed are more likely to have a long-term focus indicative of a true partnership. Of the three types of unionism described, social movement unionism may correspond best with the empowerment and self-help focus, which has characterized much of organizing in urban, disadvantaged ALANA communities. The following section highlights some cultural dynamics which may impact labor-community partnership building with African American community groups.

AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

Countering oppression and realizing social and economic justice has been the *raison d'être* of African American organizing (Akbar, 1984; Kelley, 2005; O'Donnell & Karanja, 2000; Schiele, 2005; Young Laing, 2009a). This is reflected in examinations of African American community organizing in the progressive era (Burwell, 1995; Carlton-LaNey, 1999; Carlton-LaNey & Burwell, 1995; O'Donnell, 1995), as well as those of key social movement organizations (Young Laing, 2009a) and in contemporary organizing in disadvantaged urban African American communities (O'Donell & Karanja, 2000; Young Laing, 2003). The anti-oppression/pro-justice stance of Black organizing is based in the fact that the subjugation of African Americans has occurred from all levels of American society from governmental institutions, (Davis & Bent-Goodley, 2004; Rasheed & Rasheed, 1999; Young-Laing, 2003) to workplace groups such as unions (Kelley, 2005; Fletcher & Hurd, 2000).

Examinations of effective efforts to counter oppression have shown that African American organizing has included some of the following six components: (a) world views acknowledging the impact of racism on African American's psyche, social reality and economic opportunities; (b) problem definitions that reflect a conflict oriented perspective on the macro social environment; (c) an orientation to transformative macro-level social change; (d) efforts to increase personal efficacy, cultural esteem and critical consciousness, (e) assets-based efforts to promote collective self help by identifying and employing community strengths; and (f) the development of community-based and controlled institutions that address community defined needs (Young Laing, 2009b). These foci are reflected in the following contemporary models of African American community organizing.

Young Laing (2003) uncovered three core organizing models that are being used in contemporary progressive African American community organizing. These may help labor partners better understand community organizing perspectives in this milieu, i.e., political action, resource and capacity development and cultural empowerment.

Political action organizing is centered on drawing power and resources into the community. Purveyors of this model view African American communities as resource deficient in regard to remediating community problems, but as resource rich in terms of the power to apply social pressure to force external systems to take action to address community needs. Political action organizers see force as a necessary tool in community problem solving and may come to labor-community partnership desiring to have their organization in a lead role. Thus, the political action organizer may be most amenable to serving in a partnership coalition or in an ad hoc labor-community coalition as described by Rivas (2006). Political action organizers may also be comfortable in steering coalition or letter head coalition where they are the dominant partner.

Resource and capacity development organizers focus on developing community based intuitions to address community needs, thereby limiting dependence on hostile or indifferent macro institutions. Adherents of this model assume that community power lies within the collective resources and capacities of community members to address their own needs; and in drawing in economic or educational resources from supportive external organizations. Yet, resource and capacity development organizers have an ultimate goal of self-reliance. Promoting mutual aid among community members and formalizing relationships into institutions is the chief change strategy used by resource and capacity development organizers. Additional strategies would include collaboration and coordinated community problem solving, community education, technical assistance, philanthropy and leadership development. In terms of participating in labor-community partnerships, the type of coalition these organizers would be most comfortable with might primarily be influenced by the degree to which the partnership would foster institution building and community autonomy. Partnerships would also be influenced by the level of trust, connection and mutual interest held in common with a labor union partner. Thus, resource and capacity development organizing may be best suited for a partnership coalition or steering committee coalition.

Cultural empowerment strategies have centered on countering internalized oppression, as in self blame and self hate, through cultural consciousness building initiatives. The goal of cultural empowerment organizing is to build critical consciousness. For cultural empowerment organizers, power lies in individual and communal efforts to resist denigrated and powerless stereotypes of African descended people. Thus, change strategies center around exploring African and ALANA history to build cultural appreciation. Cultural empowerment organizers use culture as a tool for fostering resistance and liberation. Of the three approaches to community organizing, this one may present significant challenges to labor-community coalition building, unless a significant number of the union members and organizers are culturally similar.

In all cases, labor-community coalitions will be influenced by the history of labor unions in African American and other ALANA communities. This may be of concern, as Kelley (2005) points out that unions have at times played a key role in African American worker oppression, as a both foe and an ally. In his review of literature on unions and African American communities, he details ongoing discrimination against Black workers and reticence to address African American community issues. At the same time, he describes powerful partnerships to organize majority Black locals and highlights efforts such as the Service Employees International Union's (SEIU) Justice for Janitors campaign.

In sum, Kelley and others (Benson, 2008; Fletcher & Hurd, 2000; Himeda, 2006; Hunter, 1997) observe that Black communities may have

ambivalent perceptions of unions that should be explored in coalition building efforts. Fortunately, various practitioners working in cross-cultural community/ union milieus have provided insights on key considerations and strategies for coalition building. The following section details such strategies.

Strategies and Tactics for Effective Cross-Cultural Labor and Community Partnerships

As shown in Table 2, a review of literature offering practice wisdom for strengthening cross-cultural labor-community partnerships yields five key factors: (a) assessing community strengths (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Young Laing, 2003); (b) developing a shared vision, shared goals and strategies (Arguelles, 2005; Baxamusa, 2008; Sellers, 2007; Tattersall, 2007); (c) establishing a basis for long-term relationships (Cummings, 2006); (d) discussing and addressing conflict (Arguelles, 2005, Gibbons & Haas, 2002); and (e) sharing power and responsibility (Arguelles, 2005; Cummings, 2006).

TABLE 2 Strategies for Building Partnership in African American and Other ALANA Communities

Strategy	Guiding question(s)	Actions
Assess partner strengths. (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Worthen, 2004; Young Laing, 2003)	What do unions bring to the table? What do community groups bring to the table? (Worthen, 2004)	Focus group. Community assets map.
Develop shared perspectives, shared vision, and strategies. (Cummings, 2006)	How has this community been challenged? Did unions play a role (helping/ hurting)? What do unions want? What do community groups want? (Worthen, 2004)	Visioning session. Focus group. Appreciative inquiry.
Establishing a basis for long-term relationships. (Arguelles, 2005; Gibbons & Haas, 2002)	How can we learn each other better? How can we build relationships beyond an active campaign?	Training across expertise, e.g., Union train community in negotiation. Community trains unions in community dynamics or diversity.
Discussing and addressing conflict. (Arguelles, 2005; Gibbons & Haas, 2002)	Are we in agreement? Are any unaddressed issues simmering in the coalition?	Planned open discussions. Checking in around conflict. Mediation. Conflict resolution.
Sharing power and responsibility. (Arguelles, 2005; Cummings, 2006)	How is power shared? What mechanism allows all voices to be heard? How is input valued? What resources can we share?	Executive committee. MOUs. Mini grants. In-kind support. Staff sharing.

Table 2 shows five core coalition building strategies derived from some of the collective wisdom of organizers involved in cross-cultural community-labor coalitions and/or CBA campaigns. Overall, these authors' recommendations suggest that CBA coalition building can be a very complex task, which demands more than a passion for social justice. Organizers working to craft successful coalitions will need to attend to the issues of dominance, conflict and power by promoting equality, mutual respect, shared influence and shared resources. To facilitate the practical application of these insights, Table 2 includes questions to guide organizers' thinking around the coalition building process that might be used in discussions with partnership members. Also included in the table are general action steps that can be undertaken to facilitate coalition building. This table represents only a beginning framework for developing a model for labor-community partnerships. Additional detail on each strategy is provided next.

ASSESS COMMUNITY STRENGTHS

Unions seeking to enter communities to build relationships or launch an organizing initiative should know community strengths and resources. Likewise, community organizations should know their own strengths and those of the labor partner. This could be accomplished by using such techniques as assets mapping and interviews with key informants (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993).

DEVELOPING A SHARED VISION, SHARED GOALS AND SHARED STRATEGIES

Baxamusa (2008) recommends discussion between divergent groups forming coalitions to develop shared vision and shared goals to aid coalitions in becoming more cohesive. Baxamusa also recommends holding open discussions to help community and labor groups forge common perspectives. Other authors recommend including discussions regarding (a) issues (Tattersall, 2007), (b) values (Sellers, 2007), and (c) strategies (Baxamusa, 2008; Tattersall, 2006) and resources. In terms of cross-cultural coalitions, gaining shared perspectives may also involve exploring the history of oppression of or within the target community. Likewise, it may be helpful for union coalition partners to understand internal community conflicts, so that these can be addressed as part of developing a shared vision.

ESTABLISH BASIS FOR LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS

A key lesson learned by Cummings (2006) from his work in an Los Angeles CBA coalition is that labor-community partnerships are strengthened where community and labor have had an established relationship prior to the CBA

effort, and where the coalition plans to stay together over the long haul. In this coalition, unions developed relationships with Latino workers in the neighborhoods where they lived (Gibbons & Haas, 2002; Haas, 2002). Thus, at the time when the community benefits opportunity presented itself relationships had already been established and familiarity and trust had been built.

DISCUSS AND ADDRESS CONFLICT

Gibbons and Haas (2002) suggest that it is critical to the success of the coalition for leaders to have open discussions of hot-button topics. For Arguelles (2005), such issues include race/culture, class and power/ownership issues. Baxamusa (2008) recommends that when differences emerge in CBA coalitions partnering organizations should shift focus to broader more generally agreeable goals. Alternately, groups with divergent foci may choose to work together where there is agreement and undertake separate efforts where there is no consensus. With this choice, partners can still increase their power on issues of agreement, while having other avenues to address what they see as critical issues.

SHARED POWER AND RESPONSIBILITY

Arguelles (2005) discusses the importance of shared power:

> The relationships between union and community can be very strong, but I think that an impediment to becoming a real alliance has been that labor sometimes . . . imposes something new instead of making alliances with groups that have already been recognized and worked for many years on that issue. That is one of the major tensions. (p. 1)

It is important that coalition building begin with all partners at the table to shape the agenda and that partners share resources to support their work in the campaign, such resources could include money or in-kind support, such as staff.

Moving beyond hypothetical discussions of labor-community partnerships, the following section, examines two actual coalitions-the Figueroa Corridor Coalition for Economic Justice and One Hill CBA Coalition to illustrate the realities of labor union partnership strategies in implementing CBA campaigns. Descriptions of One Hill CBA Coalition were garnered through personal communications, meeting minutes, records from One Hill's on-line discussion group, as well as via participating as a member/organizer of the coalition. Accounts of the work of FCCEJ were gathered from primary and secondary sources rather than through first-hand knowledge of the coalition building process. Yet, the description of the work of FCCEJ is instructive for similar efforts across the country, and is derived from sources including

documents on the FCCEJ website, case studies, and articles written by key organizers in academic literature on the work of the coalition.

The Figueroa Corridor Coalition for Economic Justice

The first labor-community partnerships for community benefits agreements came together under the umbrella of the Figueroa Corridor Coalition for Economic Justice (FCCEJ) in Los Angeles, California. The Figueroa Corridor is a 40-block neighborhood that houses the University of Southern California (USC), entertainment venues such as the Staples Center, cultural institutions, and residential neighborhoods with long histories of blight (Cummings, 2006; Haas, 2002; Leavitt, 2006). Residents are primarily poor working Blacks and Latinos, significant numbers of whom work in service positions at USC and in the hospitality, entertainment, and cultural institutions surrounding the corridor (Haas, 2002; Figueroa Corridor Coalition for Economic Justice [FCCEJ], 2008).

The CBA won by the FCCEJ remains the most comprehensive agreement won in the country. The FCCEJ CBA coalition was initiated by community groups and was the outgrowth of a previous effort to address worker rights and residential displacement issues at the University of Southern California. In that effort, community groups partnered with the unions that represented many of the community residents working at USC to use coordinated pressure tactics, under separate negotiating efforts, to win just salaries and a university expansion policy that minimized the displacement of community residents. An FCCJE organizer, Enrique, recalls the early days of the coalition:

> I remember when we started this Staples campaign, and I learned who the owners were [Rupert Murdoch]. In the back of my head I said, "These are the people who are really responsible for the displacement-we have to get more than relocation benefits for the community." (FCCEJ, 2003, p. 16)

The Figueroa Corridor encompasses a number of groups of organized residents, particularly tenants rights groups (FCCEJ 2003; Haas, 2002). These groups mobilized to empower themselves to control revitalization efforts affecting their lives (Cummings, 2006; Haas, 2007) and to ensure that residents would have influence at the table where developers, redevelopment organizations and construction unions have often shut out meaningful community input (Goodno, 2004). Here we see the value of groups having a shared vision and long-term relationships. Because the coalition that formed was built upon previous efforts, labor and community partners in this coalition had a strong sense of what each partner was brining to the table in terms of assets. Unions knew who the active community groups were, and visa versa. The mutual awareness of assets was strengthened by the fact that the coalition also consisted of many residents who were also union members.

Consequently, it may have been easier for community and union partners to see their mutual assets and interests. The union member/community resident connection was also important in helping coalition members to feel connected beyond the immediate effort. Community members were also likely to be familiar with the unions, their goals and strategies. Conversely, the union organizers may have been better able to connect with the issues of the community, because their members shared the same cultural background and were directly affected by the displacement, environmental pollution and other issues that surfaced in the neighborhood.

The connection also aided the coalition in sharing power and avoiding conflict. Another critical feature of the Figueroa Corridor for Economic Justice Coalition was the shared power and control dynamic. The members of coalition first came together around a mutual interest in proposed USC food service layoffs (Cummings, 2006). Union collaborators who entered the coalition advocated *with* the community groups and not *for* them. Thus in this coalition, power relationships were balanced.

In regard to addressing conflict, within the coalition community partners found they had some interests which were uniquely community issues, such as asbestos and vermin in housing (FCCEJ, 2003). Instead of broadening the focus of the coalition efforts to address community concerns beyond the CBA, FCCJE convened meetings to address issues of import to community members. In addition, the SEIU and HERE formed the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE), an organization focused on labor concerns in regard to the CBA. The two separate organizations were able to pursue divergent foci, while still jointly serving as members of the original coalition.

Although race was not analyzed in several examinations of the FCCEJ, authors noted Mexican immigrant rights as a core theme to empower workers and community residents. As a result, FCCEJ saw negotiating successes as skirmishes in a long term battle for social change that would need to go far beyond the CBA campaign (Cummings, 2006; Gibbons & Haas 2002; Leavitt, 2006).

Unfortunately, not all coalitions come together smoothly, as the One Hill case shows.

One Hill CBA Coalition

The One Hill CBA Coalition formed in the Hill District, a predominately African American disadvantaged neighborhood in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The Hill District has high rates of vacant land abutted by the University of Pittsburgh and the city's central business district, and thus has been a target for residential and commercial development. Interestingly, the Hill District has been portrayed as an exemplar for redevelopment done poorly due to the displacement of some 8,000 Hill District residents and dozens of businesses in an earlier development effort, which extended the central business district into the Hill District (Murphy, 2004).

A key challenge in the One Hill CBA coalition building effort was that it was formed amidst a contentious environment between community groups, which extended into the association with their labor partners. Fortunately, the coalition held together and later learned to work together effectively. Part of the contention can be explained by the fact that this labor-community partnership was preceded by community organizing around a casino which was planned to be located in the neighborhood. A small set of neighborhood groups launched, then won, a campaign to block the casino to the dismay of a larger set of community groups who wanted the Casino and the resources its developer promised to the community. Friction emerged between these neighborhood factions and created ongoing intra-community conflict. After the casino development was rejected, a development project for building a new arena for the Pittsburgh's hockey team received preliminary approval. The Penguins received a large donation of public land and a $300 million subsidy to build the new arena. Some members of the Hill District factions agreed that a CBA campaign needed to be launched. However a high degree of jockeying took place around who would lead the CBA organizing process.

Around the same time, SEIU Local 3 became interested in launching a CBA campaign-via a newly formed community unionism arm of the local called Pittsburgh United. Pittsburgh United was awarded a CBA organizing grant by local foundations and took on the task of trying to mediate the neighborhood's intra-community conflict. Pittsburgh United was unsuccessful in its mediation efforts. The effort to build a CBA coalition went forward with one CBA faction (One Hill) aiming to build a very broad coalition of community members and allies to in order to win a CBA. The broad coalition effort was also used to counter the influence of the group which formed to thwart the casino. This group, which became known as the Hill Faith and Justice Alliance, was also working to win a CBA by using small group of highly influential community members and political leaders to win community benefits.

One Hill's campaign strategy was designed to foster trust and dispel some of the conflict around the CBA organizing effort. Pittsburgh United decided to support the effort of One Hill by partnering and sharing resources. Yet conflict soon emerged between Pittsburgh United and One Hill. One Hill organizers viewed mobilizing residents to turn out *en masse* to support the CBA negotiating efforts as the key campaign strategy. Pittsburgh United focused on using SEIU Local 3 members and their allies from sister unions to fill out mobilizations. SEIU organizers also felt they could win community benefits on the strength of the union's political power. In early mobilizations at public meetings, One Hill members turned out in large numbers, while Pittsburgh United's union representation was very small. This eroded community confidence in both the competence and veracity of Pittsburgh United union staff.

Further conflict emerged around the control of the resources to support the campaign, with One Hill seeking to control its own resources to wage the campaign. Pittsburgh United denied this request. One Hill organizers viewed this as an assault on their autonomy and Pittsburgh United came to be seen as inhibiting community empowerment.

This conflict provides an example of the central importance of shared vision and shared power. Access to resources was a critical tension point between Pittsburgh United and One Hill. Some community members resented the level of power afforded to Pittsburgh United, because of its control of funding resources. Key community members saw the denial of the request for direct access to resources as evidence of paternalism and an orientation to exploit community disadvantage for the advantage of the union. This perspective was voiced openly to Pittsburgh United and was the subject of much community discussion. But without mediating and problem solving discussions, the partnership never arrived at an acceptable resolution and the conflict became an ongoing source of distrust and hostility. Fueling this conflict was some anti-union sentiment derived from African American men's experience of being discriminated against by building trade unions. These unions are perceived as racist, thus some community partners expected Pittsburgh United staff to be so as well. An open discussion of the conflict may have brought resolution to this issue.

Adding fuel to this fire was a seemingly lack of understanding of the African American focus on empowerment. Pittsburgh United seemed to enter the partnership to act as a steward. This may have been fueled by viewing the community as "disadvantaged". An assessment of strengths may have given Pittsburgh United staff a more positive sense of community capacity. For instance, One Hill's membership possessed a wealth of community organizing and organizational management experience and understood the importance of developing a sense of empowerment as part of African American community organizing approaches. Pittsburgh United staff had primarily organized in the workplace and brought these sensibilities to their community organizing.

Conversely, One Hill members' lack of full awareness of Pittsburgh United's skills in negotiation, and the discounting of their political and philanthropic clout caused the community members to attempt to minimize the role of the unions in the negotiation process. Community members chose negotiators they felt comfortable with, which resulted in One Hill failing to have the most experienced and proven negotiators fighting to gain community benefits. If Pittsburgh United and members of One Hill would have had the opportunity to assess each other's strengths and needs, and to use these assessments as the basis for developing a shared vision and strategy, some of the conflict that characterized the coalition may have been avoided. In this case, a core part of Pittsburgh United's vision and strategy was to become a recognized resource for forming and implementing CBA campaigns.

While some community members saw Pittsburgh United's effort to take a visible leadership as solely patriarchy or internalized dominance, Pittsburgh United's approach was motivated by the need to fulfill its commitments to funders and other stakeholders. If Pittsburgh United staff had been more aware of the assets of the community organizations they were partnering with, they may have found ways to adjust their campaign vision and strategies to operate on the basis of their mutual interests.

This approach to gain shared understanding and mutual respect might have aided in identifying and addressing potential conflict and in forming power sharing strategies to minimize conflict. It is essential that mainstream (predominately White middle/upper class) institutions develop an assets-based mutual respect orientation when entering ALANA communities. This case example shows how critical it is to recognize assets and needs, a shared vision, goals and strategies, as well as shared power. Fortunately, as Pittsburgh United and One Hill CBA Coalition move to the implementation and monitoring phase of the CBA campaign, power sharing mechanisms have been formed. The coalition is moving to a becoming a true partnership coalition and now meets to discuss goals and strategies.

It is fortunate that despite the high level of contentiousness within the coalition, One Hill was eventually able to win a CBA with the support of Pittsburgh United. The coalition is still together, as it moves to the implementation and monitoring phase of the CBA process. With lessons learned, and staff/membership changes, this labor-community partnership has begun working together more effectively.

CONCLUSION

Many scholars of unionism see the future of labor organizations as intimately connected to social movement organizing and community benefits agreements as valuable tools for bringing labor and communities together in the advancement of social justice. In order to be effective, both labor and community partners must think critically about the CBA coalition building *process* to the same degree as they do the intended *outcome*. This examination should begin with recognizing the perspectives each partner brings to the coalition, as well the various types of coalitions that are possible. The coalition building process should continue by assessing the strengths and assets each partner brings to the coalition and continue with the development of common vision, strategies and structures for sharing the work of the CBA and ensuring equitable access to power and resources. As labor and community partners work together they must also search for and address conflict.

Equally important, considering that a core component of social justice is equalizing power and privilege, is that labor organizations will need to

consider the influence of issues of racism, dominance and power in coalition building. This should include being openly self-critical about the ways in which union power and privilege may be used in ways that become (or are perceived as) oppressive to community partners in African American and other ALANA communities. To thwart unintended dominance, labor partners in CBA coalitions should embrace an empowerment orientation to organizing in CBA coalitions, whereby they aim to recognize community strengths and assets, while also addressing power differentials, by transferring portions of their knowledge, financial and human resources, along with some of their accrued political influence to ALANA community groups. Empowerment organizing efforts would pair well with the long standing African American tradition of struggle and self help, aimed at having Black and other ALANA communities be sufficiently resourced to become non-dependant on external help. On the whole, there is a need for continuing examinations of the complex dynamics at play in CBA coalitions, in order to advance our understanding of best practices for labor-community partnerships in CBA coalitions. In closing, taking the FCCEJ as an exemplar, it seems that ultimately, labor community partnerships seem to work best where unions and community residents use social movement unionism strategies.

NOTE

1. ALANA is a term gaining usage in non-White communities across the United States. It is meant to capture more specifically the ethnic and cultural affiliations of non-White Americans (Oslin, 2004). ALANA is meant to be synonymous with, or to replace, the more generic term *people of Color.*

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