Drastic changes in the American welfare system and cutbacks in many programs have spurred calls for increased public reliance on congregations and religious-based organizations.

Ram Cnaan and S. C. Boddie (2001, 559)

Although federal legislative policies greatly impact service delivery in local communities because they dictate which organizations will be allowed to participate in federally funded service provision, there has been little, if any, comparative, quantitative analysis of religious and secular organizations within the same geographic context (Vidal 2001). For example, the 1996 Charitable Choice laws, the founding of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives in 2001, and other federal laws display an almost tacit understanding that federal policy must support the work of local religious and secular nonprofit organizations engaging in community development. However, they draw almost exclusively from anecdotal evidence that faith-based organizations (FBOs) are as much or more effective than secular nonprofits or public agencies (Cnaan and Boddie 2001; Monsma 2004). Additionally, planning professionals and professionals from other fields base their engagement of these groups on similar subjective evidence without understanding the strengths and weaknesses of religious organizations in community development. The missing quantitative analysis of religious and secular organizations within the same geographic context is provided in this article.

The article identifies the operational and location similarities and differences between secular community-based organizations (CBOs), religious congregations, and FBOs. It does so to provide additional methods for improved service delivery in low-income urban communities, given decreasing public and private resources and increasing need. The article discusses how the three types of organizations operate in terms of their service delivery, contributions to neighborhood development and revitalization, and how their location relates to their functions. It defines these congregations and small FBOs as “silent partners,” given their unacknowledged and unfunded contributions to local community development. The silent partners create a network of support to the community in areas unfilled by secular institutions and the public sector. The group of silent partners embodies an “institutional capital” that enables individuals to benefit from aggregate resources.

The article is divided into four parts. First is background on the silent work of congregations and FBOs in community development, discussing what planners know about these groups and their service offerings. Next, the lack of discussion in the literature of

Abstract

This article identifies the extent, service offerings, and location similarities or differences among secular community-based organizations, religious congregations, and faith-based organizations that engage in service delivery in low-income urban communities. The literature shows that religious organizations provide significant social services to communities, but little is known about how they compare to their secular counterparts within the same geographic context. Employing qualitative and quantitative approaches together with GIS applications for spatial analysis to survey data from religious and secular organizations in North Philadelphia, this article measures the influence of the religious sector in local community development. The article concludes that religious institutions, specifically congregations and faith-based organizations, have a significant community presence in their offerings, presence, and location and provide a substantial level of service to individuals in that they operate as “silent partners” within communities, providing important—although often unseen “institutional capital” to local development in urban America.

Keywords: community development; faith-based organization; service provision; high-poverty neighborhoods; poverty

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the uniqueness of religious and secular organizations and their service provision leads to three research questions focused on how CBOs, congregations, and FBOs differ regarding their engagement, service offerings, and location patterns. Third, the article describes the research design, including an overview of the study area, and methodology for both data collection and analysis. In the fourth part of the article, the author responds to the research questions and concludes with a discourse on the implications for planning.

**Silent Work of Congregations and FBOs in Community Development**

The work of congregations and small FBOs in local community development has been relatively silent in the planning arena. Scholars from a variety of fields have published a growing body of research on congregations and FBOs in publications such as Shelter Force and COMM-ORG, the online conference on community organizing. Little scholarship exists in planning literature that documents congregations’ and FBOs’ participation and operation. Planners are aware of the secular CBOs and community development corporations (CDCs) that do similar work and receive the majority of the recognition and funding. Central to this work is the recognition and funding of congregations and FBOs in the early 1990s. Cnaan (1999) and Spain (2001) concur that the devolution of service to the local level added a heterogeneous group of groups to local communities. Congregations and FBOs have firsthand knowledge of the needs and strengths embodied therein resulting from the devolution of social welfare services from the federal government down to states and local entities (Cnaan, Wineburg, and Boddie 1999).

Their work is evident today, for unlike other local agencies, the church and other FBOs have not abandoned the inner city; rather they remain committed to their neighborhood, providing hope and stability to its residents, and maintaining a strong physical presence as neighbors to boarded-up stores, single-parent households, and declining schools (Cnaan, Wineburg, and Boddie 1999). Their overall mission of charity emphasizes civic participation and community building, key to sustainable community development (Kretzmann and McKnight 1997).

Location theorists have not yet factored the location decisions of religious organizations remaining in urban communities into their analyses. These scholars focus on balancing public and private facilities within broader governmental, social, and economic systems (Teitz 1968; DeVerteuil 2003; Hall and Joseph 1988; Takahashi and Dear 1997; Takahashi and Smutny 2001; Dear and Wolch 1987). Public facilities were defined in 1968 as “those components of the city whose primary function is to facilitate the provision of goods and services declared to be wholly or partly within the domain of government” (Teitz 1968, 38). Today, the services traditionally provided by government are offered through private religious and secular community organizations (Brudney 1987). This devolution of service to the local level added a heterogeneous set of organizations, including congregations and FBOs that provide an even greater variety of services. These groups are not currently considered in location theory analysis.

**Silent Partners in a Web of Institutional Capital**

Through their consistent service to the poor, congregations and small FBOs behave like silent partners working in similar geographies and on complementary projects alongside the more visible and funded secular institutions. In comparison to secular nonprofits, congregations and small FBOs remain overlooked, receiving little to no publicity or recognition or financial support from public and many private institutions.
The Religious Sector in Local Community Development

This is evident both in the limited discussion of their involvement in the literature and experientially in the development of the organization list for Cnaan’s research. Cnaan (1999) conducted a census on the congregations in Philadelphia, identifying their contribution to social service provision regarding the actual program offerings, recipients, and finances. In so doing, his list of churches grew from 1,700 to over 2,100 congregations, as more groups that were not on a membership list, in the phone book, or in some large study were identified. This continual amendment to his master list of congregations and the limited literature highlight the local religious and secular organizations’ unseen role in local community development and thus their identity as silent partners.

Since the 1980s, congregations and FBOs emerged as important partners in neighborhood revitalization. These organizations are present in many communities, are aware of local needs, and are working to provide solutions (Cnaan 1999; McRoberts 2003; Rusk 1999; Sullivan 1998). While these silent partners provide services unmet by the government or other providers, they do so of their own choosing and on their own dime (Botchwey 2003). Some of these silent partners, primarily the FBOs, developed into very vocal, powerful institutions that are well connected to political and financial resources; it is more difficult for congregations to make this transition because of the public’s general desire to maintain a separation between church and state. Such FBOs no longer in the silent partner category include the Texas Industrial Areas Foundation (Warren 2001a), the Pacific Institute for Community Organization (Wood 2002), various welfare-to-work organizations (Monsma 2004), and Habitat for Humanity (Boddie 2001).

Silent partners are not tied into the formal network, but create a web of resources for residents through what Wood (2003) terms “bridging institutions” (83). Wood (2003) and Wutnow (2003) argue that this set of connections is a form of social capital, functioning through religious institutions. Putnam (2000) defines social capital as the “connections among individual-social networks and the norms and trustworthiness that arise from them” (19). This institutional form of capital is categorized as bridging social capital because it links individuals and communities to resources not readily available through other avenues. Communities possess bridging capital through institutions when they create what Teaford (1993) describes as networks of neighborhood-based services. Here, congregations and FBOs promote social networks and interactions with individuals who inspire trust and enable communities to access resources that will lead to an improved quality of life. Combined, these religious organizations comprise an informal network of service providers, the bridging social capital, which complements the work of the formal sector. This is evident in the African American community, where the congregations are trusted messengers for disseminating health information and implementing health intervention programs (Martin et al. 2004).

Increased devolution of services or the privatization of government dictates a greater reliance on local networks, the impact of which Milward (1996) refers to as the hollow state and Wolch (1990) as the shadow state. The hollow state is a metaphor for the separation between the government and the services it pays nonprofits to provide. Similarly, the shadow state is a metaphor to describe the apprentice-type relationship between government and its silhouette, the nonprofit organizations that receive public funding to serve their clients. These terms both refer to direct funding and oversight relationships with government to care for individuals and families in need. The term silent partner further highlights local groups’ limited or nonexistent access to public resources. Additionally, institutional capital provides insight to the way organizations create bridging social capital through relationships and informal ties—resources otherwise unavailable to residents in need.

Research Questions

Scholars and politicians cite an increasing number of the individual institutions that create a network of institutional capital. These examples are often reports of local organizations engaged in successful community transformations; the majority of these reports are in the form of individual case studies or analyses of individual types of programs (such as welfare to work) on a dispersed geographic scale such as a city, region, or the nation. To date, our understanding of antipoverty strategies comes from a body of literature regarding the structural and behavioral theories that rely on personal anecdotal narratives, metropolitanwide evaluations, and U.S. census studies. While this type of scholarship is valuable, it fails to offer an assessment of the presence of various types of organizations within the same neighborhood, the role and prevalence of the religious sector in community development in poor neighborhoods, or an overview of the activities that various types of organizations offer and their different client ratios.

This article begins to address this gap through a textured analysis of religious and secular organizations, drawn from a community survey of North Philadelphia (see appendix). It considers their multiplicity of offerings and general operation within a common geographic context. Specifically, the article answers the following three questions:

1. To what extent are CBOs, religious congregations, and FBOs engaged in social service delivery and related community development activities within poor inner-city communities?
2. How are these three types the same and different in terms of their service offerings?
3. How does their location relate to their services?
Study Area

The Lower North Philadelphia study area was selected because of its seven contiguous census tracts that report the highest household poverty rates for the city and a significant concentration of CBOs, congregations, and FBOs. These local organizations have been integrally involved in both social and physical community building initiatives since 1919 (Botchwey 2003). Their work addresses much of the abandonment, neglect, and disinvestment that swept over their neighborhoods, as has occurred in other major cities, such as New York, Atlanta, Los Angeles, Chicago, Detroit, Boston, Miami, and Washington, D.C. (U.S. Department of the Interior 2000). Philadelphia is therefore an appropriate place to examine local religious and secular institutions because the economic, social, and political issues are so closely reflective of other densely populated urban geographies. The lessons from this study can be applied in similar contexts.

The Lower North Philadelphia study area equals 1.13 square miles or approximately 400 city blocks and is a high-poverty urban community situated two miles north of Center City and City Hall with a population of 20,832 (see Figure 1). The existing land use is predominantly residential, with commercial development along major streets. Since the 1970s, population loss in this area has been extreme—a 60 percent decline, compared to 30 percent in Upper North Philadelphia and approximately 25 percent in the city. The racial composition in this area, predominantly black since the 1950s, is now 95 percent African American. This is because of migration patterns as well as racial discrimination that excluded this population from housing found in other parts of the city (Philadelphia City Planning Commission 1987). According to 2000 census data, an average of 40 percent (a range of 29 to 60 percent across census tracts) of its households are below the poverty line compared with 44 percent in 1990, vacancy and abandonment rates are high and show a slight increase from 1990 to 2000 (28 percent in 1990 and 29 percent in 2000), and homeownership rates are low and show a decrease from 1990 to 2000 (31 percent in 1990 and 30 percent in 2000); see Figure 2 and Table 1.

Organization Types Defined

In discussing the local-level nonprofit sector, Lester Salamon (1995) notes that “the only way to get a reliable profile of even the national nonprofit sector [religious and secular] is to focus on the local level and examine a reasonable cross section of local areas” (59). This study follows Salamon’s recommendation to study a local-level population of institutions. The three types of organizations are defined below.

CBOs. CBOs are nonreligious or secular nonprofit organizations, including CDCs, comprehensive community initiatives, community-based institutions, nonprofit property developers, adult education programs, job training and placement centers, neighborhood health care clinics, family and youth development and recreation centers, child care centers, senior citizen centers, homeless shelters, domestic violence prevention programs, assisted living programs, and private schools.

Congregations. Congregations include churches, synagogues, mosques, ashrams, and other organized faith groups. According to Cnaan, Wineburg, and Boddie’s (1999) study, such an organization must meet the following seven criteria: (1) a cohesive group of people with a shared identity; (2) a group that meets
regularly on an ongoing basis; (3) a group that comes together primarily for worship and has accepted in common certain teachings, rituals, and practices; (4) a group that meets and worships at a designated place; (5) a group that gathers for worship outside the regular purposes and location of a living or work space; (6) a group with an identified religious deity; and (7) a group with an official name and formal structure that conveys its purpose and identity.

Many religious congregations are involved in community development and poverty alleviation activities. These houses of worship offer extensive services for both their members and nonmembers; however, their primary motivations are worship and spiritual growth followed by neighborhood ministry. Congregations are the only type of organization that have a multipurpose mission in which neighborhood revitalization and community development are secondary purposes.

**Method**

Based on these definitions, the author created a comprehensive list of CBOs, congregations, and FBOs located in the Lower North Philadelphia study area. No such list existed prior to the study conducted in 2002; one was created through a combination of methods outlined below. The initial list was identified by merging records from (1) Penn’s Program for the Study of Organized Religion and Social Work (PSORSW) database on the social services provided by more than 2,100 Philadelphia Congregations (Cnaan 1999), (2) a report on Philadelphia nonprofits from the Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy of the Urban Institute, and (3) membership lists from the Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations. This initial catalog of groups included a total of eighty-five organizations: nine CBOs, seventy-five religious congregations, and one FBO.

The primary listing of organizations was refined following a series of iterative steps, including neighborhood canvassing, mailings, phone calls, and referrals. This process was undertaken to identify defunct or nonoperational organizations and to uncover any organizations that were not represented in the initial list. Overall, forty-one organizations were added to the final inventory and fifty-six were removed; this is a significant revision of the original tally, with the greatest changes in the number of congregations and FBOs. Results are summarized in Table 2. The intense effort put forward to accurately catalog the final seventy neighborhood-based groups highlights the limited attention practitioners and academics give to these local entities and their important work. Of the three types of organizations, congregations and small FBOs are absent from many people’s minds; however, they are present in urban communities, as their numbers and the following discussion indicate.

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**Table 1.**

1990 and 2000 U.S. Census data on lower North Philadelphia study area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population Characteristics</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>Study Area</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>% Change</th>
<th>Philadelphia (City)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>27,346</td>
<td>20,832</td>
<td>–24</td>
<td>1,517,550</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black population</td>
<td>25,878</td>
<td>19,518</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>43.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 18 years old</td>
<td>8,141</td>
<td>6,255</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 65 years old</td>
<td>4,199</td>
<td>3,073</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households below poverty</td>
<td>4,091</td>
<td>3,020</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons per square mile</td>
<td>24,200</td>
<td>18,435</td>
<td>11,241</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Characteristics</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>3,706</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3,104</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner occupied</td>
<td>4,030</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3,203</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median year built</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the seventy surveys distributed to the confirmed list of organizations, 40 percent were completed by U.S. mail, Internet submission, or through face-to-face interviews over a five-month period. Compensation was not provided to participants. The response rate varied by organization type with eleven of twenty CBOs (55 percent) responding as well as twelve of forty-three congregations (28 percent) and five of seven FBOs (71 percent). This represents an above-average response for all categories based on reports by other studies engaged in similar work (Printz 1998; Behr and DiPietro 2002; Hodgkinson and Weitzman 1984).13

**Findings**

Outlining differences and similarities beyond the agreed-on definitions requires an understanding of their engagement in social service provision, the services they provide, and where they are located. This is accomplished with a detailed response to the three research questions based on the Philadelphia case study.

**Table 2.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization Type</th>
<th>Canvasing (added/removed)</th>
<th>Mailings (added/removed)</th>
<th>Calls (added/removed)</th>
<th>Referrals (added/removed)</th>
<th>Final</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CBO</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8/2</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>5/0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congregation</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>15/0</td>
<td>0/32</td>
<td>3/0</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FBO</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7/0</td>
<td>0/2</td>
<td>3/0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net change</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>+28</td>
<td>−34</td>
<td>+11</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CBO = community-based organization; FBO = faith-based organization.

**Table 3.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Type Categories</th>
<th>Specific Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Construction, rehabilitation, management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic development</td>
<td>Commercial ventures, industrial development, entrepreneurial training or small business incubation, banking/credit union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social services</td>
<td>Job counseling, training and placement, day care provision, financial counseling or investment clubs, homeless and poor people services, counseling/programs for families, drug and alcohol abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (adults)</td>
<td>Computer literacy, literacy, GED, functional English translation, tutoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health services</td>
<td>Health fairs/screenings, blood drives/organ donation, health education, medical or dental clinic, drug and alcohol prevention, health insurance programs, maternity programs, nutrition programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community organizing</td>
<td>Meeting space provision, holiday celebrations or fairs, community security, organizing around issues, interfaith/interdenominational collaboration, mobilization, voter registration, recreational programs, neighborhood cleanup/improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth development</td>
<td>Day care (preschool), charter or private school, programs for gang members, youth offenders or runaways, mentoring, after-school and weekend programs, skill development, job training, tutoring/literacy, summer programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior citizen services</td>
<td>Transportation, day care, visitation, meals, exercise, health care, other assistance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the seventy surveys distributed to the confirmed list of organizations, 40 percent were completed by U.S. mail, Internet submission, or through face-to-face interviews over a five-month period. Compensation was not provided to participants. The response rate varied by organization type with eleven of twenty CBOs (55 percent) responding as well as twelve of forty-three congregations (28 percent) and five of seven FBOs (71 percent). This represents an above-average response for all categories based on reports by other studies engaged in similar work (Printz 1998; Behr and DiPietro 2002; Hodgkinson and Weitzman 1984).13

Research Question 1: To what extent are CBOs, religious congregations, and FBOs engaged in social service delivery and related community development activities within poor urban communities?

The three organizations report participation in specific programs within the following set of eight service categories: housing, economic development, social services, education (adults), health services, community organizing, youth development, and senior citizen services. Each category is composed of a different number of programs ranging from three in housing to nine in community organizing and youth development. Table 3 presents details on these categories.

Two measurements are used to quantify service type. The first is a simple calculation of the percentage of organizations that provide services. The second is the service range index (SRI) of the three organization types—CBOs, congregations, and FBOs. The SRI is defined as the relative quantity of programs provided by an organization type and is used for comparison purposes; it is used to measure the average breadth of service for CBOs, congregations, and FBOs. For example, if all CBOs provide one type of health service program...
(health fairs/screenings, for example), then the percentage of CBOs involved in health services is high (100 percent) and the SRI, representing the variety of services, is low. However, if only one CBO provides health services but provides all eight types of programs, then the percentage of CBOs involved is low and SRI is relatively higher.

Overall, a slightly greater percentage of congregations (49 percent) provide services, as compared to FBOs (45 percent) and CBOs (36 percent; shown on the left axis). Similarly, FBOs (.20) exhibit a higher SRI compared to congregations (.16) and CBOs (.16; shown on the right axis); see Figure 3. This means that, although the percentage of FBOs offering services is lower than that of congregations and CBOs, the variety of services they provide is relatively greater. Using two-factor ANOVAs, results show that there is a statistically significant difference between CBOs, congregations, and FBOs in the overall percentage of organizations providing services ($p < .05$) but not in the SRI. This means that on average, a greater percentage of congregations and FBOs provide services than the secular nonprofits; however, each organization type provides an equal variety of services. Noteworthy variations exist in the individual service type category descriptions. These are discussed in the response to research question 2 found below.

**Research Question 2:** How are the three types of organizations the same and different in terms of their service offerings?

Congregations do not participate in housing, but are active contributors in the social services, health services, and youth development offerings with CBOs and FBOs. CBOs report the highest level (36 percent) of participation in housing followed by FBOs (20 percent) with no congregations participating. Additionally, FBOs report a higher SRI (.20) compared to CBOs (.18). This means that although the percentage of FBOs offering housing services is lower than that of CBOs, the FBOs provide a slightly greater variety. On average, CBOs report the lowest level (45 percent) of participation in social services compared to FBOs (60 percent) and congregations (58 percent); however, the three organization types provide a comparable variety of activities with SRI scores of .23 for CBOs, .23 for FBOs, and .24 for congregations. Analysis of health services offerings presents very different participation rates and SRI scores for the three organization types. On average, the greatest percentage of organizations providing health services comes from FBOs (80 percent) followed by congregations (59 percent) and CBOs (27 percent). Correspondingly, a high SRI is observed for FBOs (.30), then congregations (.19), and finally CBOs (.08). This means that a larger percentage of FBOs offer a greater breadth of health services than congregations and CBOs, respectively. Finally, large differences also exist in youth development with congregations (83 percent) reporting the highest percentage of participating institutions followed by FBOs (60 percent) and CBOs (45 percent). However, a higher SRI is observed for FBOs (.33), followed by CBOs (.22), and then congregations (.19). This means that although the percentage of congregations offering youth development is higher than that of FBOs and CBOs, the variety of such programs through congregations is limited. Compared to CBOs, a greater percentage of FBOs participate in youth development and offer the greatest variety of services.

On average, outside of housing, a higher percentage of congregations and FBOs provide services. The variety of services offered by these groups fluctuates across service areas; however, the congregations and FBOs fill needs unmet by CBOs and the public sector.

**Research Question 3:** How does the location pattern of CBOs, religious congregations, and FBOs relate to the services they provide?

Despite its high degree of unemployment, history of social unrest and riots, and resulting disinvestment, the study area maintains a rich civic infrastructure and body of institutional capital. Of the total number of organizations in the study area, twenty are CBOs, forty-three are congregations, and seven are FBOs. CBOs represent 29 percent of all the organizations, as compared to congregations with 61 percent and FBOs with 10 percent. This means that 71 percent of the local organizations in this area have a formal religious affiliation.

These congregations and FBOs are distributed throughout the study area. Figure 5 shows the overall density of all three types of organizations per quarter mile. The dots represent organizations with some groups sharing the same address. Standard deviation ellipses (SDEs) define the dispersion of 66 percent and 95 percent of organization locations by type and
the direction around each group’s mean center. The density breakdown by organization type coupled with standard deviation ellipses reveals significant differences in location. SDEs show CBOs clustered in the eastern portion of the study area with over two-thirds of these institutions found within ten blocks of Broad Street, the eastern boundary of the study area (see Figure 6). Unlike CBOs, congregations and FBOs are evenly distributed throughout the study area, housed in a variety of buildings from elaborate edifices to plain storefronts; FBOs are fewer in number and with greater presence in the southern half of the neighborhood, as evidenced by the SDEs (see Figures 7 and 8).

Findings show that secular organizations select areas close to major thoroughfares, principally Broad Street, the major east-west divider running north to south for the extent of the city. In contrast, congregations and FBOs are dispersed throughout the inner regions of the area interwoven with residential neighborhoods. Major roads with several forms of available public transportation also have the highest degree of accessibility for people residing miles away from the study area. Multiple bus routes and the Broad Street/Orange Line subway travel at greater frequencies, connecting this area where CBOs locate
to people residing throughout the city. Within the study area, residents rely on two main bus routes that run east to west, connecting to and from Broad Street and thus the CBOs (Johnson 2006). Note, the average wait for one of these two bus routes is twenty minutes versus seven minutes for a bus or train at multiple points along Broad Street. This enhanced access for populations outside the study area allows CBOs to more easily serve a wider demographic beyond those residing west of Broad Street. Additionally, data collected on population served show that the congregations and FBOs focus their outreach and service offerings within the residential neighborhood surrounding their buildings, while CBOs intentionally extend their offerings to individuals throughout the city.

**Conclusions and Implications for Planners**

Congregations and FBOs are silent partners serving urban America, often unseen in their contributions to community development but critical, given their extent of service, service offerings, and location in communities. The research shows that three-quarters of the institutions in this urban community are congregations and FBOs. On average, 45 to 49 percent of religious sector organizations participate in service offerings with similar varieties of offerings when compared to CBOs. FBOs and congregations offer a variety of services, most significantly in the form of social services, health services, and youth development programs, and these organizations are located in the heart of the residential neighborhood.

The implications of continued reliance on the contributions of FBOs and congregations with the increasing devolution of services and little restructuring of the welfare state are significant. First, the religious sector may become a primary service provider for harder to reach populations but are currently underequipped to meet their long-term needs. FBOs and congregations locate in proximity to this population and provide immediate short-term relief, but there is little evidence that the services provided can help individuals and families permanently escape poverty. Rusk (1999) notes that an analysis of CDCs' involvement in community development over a ten- or twenty-year period shows overall patterns of increasing poverty and decreasing buying power in the areas they serve. Future work in this area needs to address how the religious sector factors into this analysis and to what extent congregations and FBOs assuage the severity of increased poverty. It also needs to evaluate the total mix of services offered by CBOs, congregations, and FBOs, and potential gaps or significant concentration of services that may exist.

Second, planners should be aware of the silent partners that extend beyond the shadow state. Knowing the organizations that are located in a specific community, their service contributions, and roles enables planners to integrate the congregations and FBOs into a framework that builds on available resources and offers a sustainable asset-based...
approach to social and physical service provision. The challenge is in assessing the prevalence of CBOs, congregations, and FBOs. Following the methods used in this study will allow planners to validate lists of organizations in target communities and to better familiarize themselves with their service areas. The approach outlined above requires a greater deal of neighborhood canvassing by foot, mail, and phone contacts and referrals. While laborious, this approach is advantageous because of the relationships one is able to establish through the process that can further later community development efforts.

Third, these relationships between religious sector and shadow state participants may lead to increased organizational capacity, engagement with clients, and trust, thereby improving the level of social capital within the community. Access to such a catalog of local organizations helps in developing community networking sessions for all interested groups. The organizations in the North Philadelphia study area participate in such a group. Beecm Interplex, Inc., a community development nonprofit, formed in 1990 through a public-private partnership with the Wall William Foundation to improve a 26-square-block area of North Philadelphia. They saw a need for increased communication across the area and thus created the Consortium of Cecil B. Moore Organizations also in 1990. The consortium consists of over fifty-seven agencies that meet three times a year to provide progress reports of revitalization activities and to coordinate interorganizational improvement functions. Floyd Alston, the company’s first president, believes that such regular meetings are indispensable since they allow institution leaders to develop “one-on-one relationships that are necessary in this kind of community development work” (Alston 2002). The networking and relationship building that occurs through these meetings develops an institutional capital that can address the structural components in our society that influence poverty such as joblessness, poor education, affordable housing, economic development, and limited access to quality health care. Further analysis is needed in this area to assess the impact of these types of groups and the criteria that lead to their success.

Planning research and practice will benefit from this study through its lessons concerning inner-city revitalization and the involvement of both religious and secular community organizations in poverty alleviation. This research tests policy makers’ belief that local institutions and citizens’ associations are important contributors to community development, since they directly serve those in need. It provides support for further analysis and policy changes by emphasizing the engagement, service offerings, and location preferences of the local religious and secular institutions in Lower North Philadelphia. The findings have the potential to strengthen the foundation for existing urban poverty and neighborhood development policies by providing empirical data regarding characteristics of local organizations in high-poverty neighborhoods.

►Appendix
Survey Questions

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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Organization Name</td>
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<td>2. Title of Person Completing Survey</td>
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<td>3. Phone: __________; Fax: __________; Email/URL: __________</td>
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<td>4. Is your organization affiliated with any religion, religious institution, or religious congregation?</td>
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<td>5. If yes, what religion?</td>
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<td>6. Which category best describes your organization? (Religious congregation, religious community organization or community development corporation affiliated with a congregation, religious community organization or community development corporation not affiliated with a congregation, neighborhood-based community organization or community development corporation, Philadelphia-based community organization or community development corporation, national nonprofit organization, umbrella organization)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Does your organization have a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit designation?</td>
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<td>8. What area of Lower North Philadelphia do you serve?</td>
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<td>9. What year did you begin serving this community?</td>
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<td>10. Whom do you serve in this community? (Children, youth, elderly, families, people with no or low incomes/poor, people with disabilities, people with addictions, refugees/immigrants, prisoners and/or their families)</td>
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<td>11. On average, how many people from this community do you serve each month?</td>
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<td>12. Does your organization produce an annual report, newsletter, or other materials that are available to the public?</td>
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<td>13. Why do you provide these services?</td>
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<td>14. What types of services do you provide to your service area? (Housing [construction, rehabilitation, management]; economic development [commercial ventures, industrial development, banking/credit union, entrepreneurial training, small business incubation]; social services [job counseling, training, and placement; day care provision; counseling/programs for families, homeless, and poor people services; financial counseling or investment clubs; drug and alcohol abuse prevention and recovery]; education [adults] [computer literacy, literacy, GED, tutoring, functional English/translation services]; health services [health fairs/screenings, blood drives/organ donation, health education, clinic, drug and alcohol prevention, health insurance programs, maternity programs, nutrition programs]; community organizing [meeting space provision, voter registration, community security, organizing around issues, mobilization, interfaith/interdenominational collaboration, neighborhood cleanup/improvement, holiday celebrations or fairs, recreational programs; youth development [daycare, charter, or private school; after-school and weekend programs; summer programs; job training; mentoring; tutoring/literacy; skill development; programs for gang members, youth offenders, or runaways]; senior citizen services [transportation, meals, visitation, day care, exercise, health care])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. What is your annual operating budget?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. What percentage of your annual budget is spent on the following? Administration/personnel (salaries, benefits, etc.); programs (current expenses); building/facilities or operations; and maintenance, supplies, and materials</td>
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Author’s Note: Funding from the Center for Research on Religion and Urban Civil Society at the University of Pennsylvania supported the work that provided the basis for this article. This article was previously presented at the meet-
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The author is grateful to DePaulin Spain, Georgege Poindexter, and David Phillips for their thoughtful comments on early drafts. The author is solely responsible for the accuracy of the statements and interpretations contained in this article. Any errors remain the author’s responsibility.

**Notes**

1. The expanded government-NPO partnerships and business practices focus provided a backdrop for the ten-fold increase from 1970 to 1990 in the number of community development corporations (CDCs) across the country (www.ncced.org).

2. Cnaan and Boddie (2001) calculated the replacement value of services or programs provided by congregations in Philadelphia. The monthly replacement value of one congregation is estimated at $9,821.06 or $117,852.72 annually. Multiplying this out for the North Philadelphia study area congregations and FBOs generates a replacement value of $8,249,690.40. This represents a major contribution by the informal network of “institutional capital.”


4. Rusk (1999) and Wilson (1996) refer to the work of CDC as “in place” responses to poverty and need rather than approaches to address structural inequalities.

5. Lower North Philadelphia is one of twelve Planning Analysis Sections (PAS) designated by the Philadelphia Planning Commission that assembles areawide data. The study neighborhood is located in the west central section of this PAS.

6. From 1950 to 2000, Philadelphia lost over 400,000 residents, leaving it with a population of 1.32 million in 2000. In *A Prayer for the City*, Bissinger (1997) notes that the 1990 population of 1.38 million was the smallest number of city inhabitants since 1910. Settlement trends lead one to believe that in general, people moved to the suburbs. The 2000 census data (U.S. Census 2000) do in fact show city population loss with suburban gain, leaving a doughnut-shaped area of abandonment and poverty surrounding the central city.

7. The 2000 census data (U.S. Census 2000) show that vacancy rates in Philadelphia increased from 10.6 percent in 1990 to 11 percent in 2000. The 1990 census data (U.S. Census 1990) on the Philadelphia Primary Metropolitan Area report vacancy rates of 8.3 percent. This includes Philadelphia County and the New Jersey Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). Mayor Street recently initiated the Neighborhood Transformation Initiative program, which has as a focus abandoned housing removal. It is not clear what impact this program has had on vacancy rates. Homeownership rates in Philadelphia decreased from 55.4 percent in 1990 to 52.2 percent in 2000, compared to 56.8 percent in 1990 for metropolitan areas.

8. Cnaan, Wineburg, and Boddie’s (1999) study of Philadelphia congregations published in *The Neower Deal* is one of the most complete works concerning these religious institutions engaged in spiritual and social ministry. His demonstrated understanding and experience with these organizations validates the application of his definition for congregations to this study.

9. A synthesis of the literature shows that a distinction between FBOs and non-FBOs cannot be based on the organization’s name, activities, partnerships, leaders, members, or funding sources because of the complexity of its operation. Any of these characteristics individually or jointly may create a faulty definition.

10. Faith-based or religious community serving organizations are defined differently throughout legislation. For example, according to the *Community Economic Development Experts Enhancement Act of 2002*, H.R. 3974, FBOs are a type of community-based development organization that complies with the following requirements: (1) has as its primary mission to serve or provide investment capital for low-income communities and low-income persons and (2) maintains accountability to residents of low-income communities through their representation on any governing board of the organization or on any advisory board to the organization. Under the *CARE Act of 2002*, S. 1924, faith groups are listed as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

11. Before Charitable Choice was first enacted, policy makers categorized FBOs as either “religiounly affiliated” or “pervasively sectarian” based on a 1973 case, *Hunt v. McNair*. The “religiounly affiliated” groups in this case had ties to religion but were “set up to perform social services,” while the “pervasively sectarian” were institutions “in which religion is so pervasive that a substantial portion of its functions are subsumed in a religious mission” (*Hunt v. McNair*, 413 U.S. 734, 743 [1973]). The distinction between these two categories resulted in discriminatory treatment by government and other sources of support, and has been mostly abandoned by the U.S. Supreme Court (Unlevel Playing Field 2001); Lupu and Tuttle 2003; Mensa 2002, chap. 1, 13).

12. The first refining step was a thorough neighborhood canvassing. These daily windshield and walking surveys block by block throughout the study area took one month. Survey discoveries were confirmed by personal interactions with residents or organization leaders. This added an additional twenty-eight new organizations to the list and eliminated two defunct or relocated groups. The next step was mailing introductory letters from key leaders in the city and North Philadelphia community to the community-based organizations (CBOs), congregations, and FBOs on the revised list. Letters returned because of incorrect addresses or other reasons were removed from the master list following a site visit to confirm nonexistence. This step eliminated thirty-four groups. An additional twenty groups were removed from this inventory after follow-up phone calls identified disconnected or wrong phone numbers. Finally, one of the questions on the survey asks for a list of groups with which institutions partner or do similar work. Any establishment listed by respondents that was not already contacted received a survey and follow-up phone calls. Eleven valid referrals were added to the subsequently complete record.

13. The survey instrument was piloted to a random sample of organizations in West Philadelphia. This area was selected because it has similar characteristics as those found in North Philadelphia, including a large university presence (the University of Pennsylvania versus Temple University), similar poverty characteristics, and a high concentration of congregations and FBOs. At the conclusion of the pilot study, the survey was revised and readministered in the North Philadelphia study area.

**References**


Alston, F. 2002. Interview with the author on September 19, Philadelphia. (Transcription in possession of author).


