Park Heights Community Project: Enhancement of Public Involvement in Transportation Planning

Maurice St. Pierre, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Department of Sociology
Morgan State University

National Transportation Center
Morgan State University
Baltimore, Maryland

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16. Abstract

The purpose of this paper is two-fold: namely to provide an assessment of the transportation needs of the Park Heights community and to generate a strategic plan focusing on citizen participation in possible transportation-related facilities. The methodology used involved doing a demographic appraisal, an ethnographic overview of the community, and in-depth interviews with community leaders, such as pastors, leaders of community organizations, police officers, and a representative from the Mayor's office. The information from a review of the literature on citizen participation in matters related to transportation facilities, as well as that garnered from the methods used, revealed that, transportation, although of significance to elderly churchgoers and others without cars—who did not wish, or were not entitled, to avail themselves of unofficial transportation facilities, like hacks, taxis, and privately owned vans—was not as important to community residents as crime, drugs, boarded-up houses, trash, and alleged insouciance on the part of elected officials. Factors such as race, crime, homeownership, and, in particular, already-constituted entities (e.g., churches and community organizations) were related to citizen participation. Based on this information, three models were identified as relevant to facilitating citizen participation: (1) the *social disorganization model* that speaks to the mobilization of individuals on the basis of fear; (2) the *public relations model* that seeks to mobilize individuals by way of advertising to techniques used in the mass media to persuade potential customers to purchase a particular product; and (3) the *collective action model,* whereby mobilization occurs by recourse to a variety of resources.

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INTRODUCTION

In cooperation with the Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC), on behalf of the Transportation Steering Committee—the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Baltimore region—the National Transportation Center (NTC) at Morgan State University supported research to analyze public participation in the transportation process in the Park Heights area of Baltimore City. The BMC sought data concerning how public involvement might be rendered effective and what techniques might be used to generate such involvement. The impetus for this paper stems from recent Federal legislation, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) that identifies new aspects in transportation planning, such as regional cooperation, multimodal approaches, and public involvement in the planning process. A major purpose of research of this nature is to understand and develop mechanisms for increased public participation in the planning process that precedes project-level planning. The ultimate goal is to involve nontraditional participants, such as members of low-income communities. The mission statement of the BMC is to identify regional interests and develop collaborative strategies, plans, and programs that will improve the quality of life and economic vitality throughout the region by:

- Providing a forum for cooperative planning
- Providing an opportunity to discuss differences among subdivisions in attaining regional goals
- Collecting, analyzing, and disseminating regional data
- Cooperating and communicating with neighboring regions
- Ensuring cost-effective delivery of services through cooperation with all levels of government
- Participating with citizens and other interested parties in solving regional problems.

Specifically, the MPO wanted information that would form the basis of a strategic plan for public participation with respect to transportation facilities. The reasoning behind this request was that, if it became necessary in the future to introduce new and/or different services in the community, the MPO would have in place a plan that would involve the public in the disbursement of these services and be applicable to other similarly situated (structurally) communities in the Baltimore region. It was expected that the plan would have a number of components and that a video featuring community residents discussing public participation would be provided. This clearly fell within the realm of applied research in that, although social science techniques would be used, analysis and interpretation of the data would be oriented toward the programmatic concerns and policy directives of the sponsoring agency.

Contextually, it should be noted that the MPO made it clear that it was not promising to introduce new or improve existing transportation facilities in the area. This point, which was made as part of the preamble to the interviews conducted to gather information, occasioned considerable suspicion among interviewees who wanted to know (1) why data were needed regarding public participation if there were no concrete plans to improve transportation facilities and (2) why—with all the problems in the community—transportation was being emphasized. These factors, it seems, would be discussed with the question of public participation.

THE RATIONALE

In general, it may be argued that public participation does the following:

- Holds public officials accountable for the programs concern
- Helps to set the direction for the community, as well as learn about and evaluate the results of public programs
- Helps rebuild trust in government
- Helps develop a shared vision of the community's future
- Assists and defines what constitutes value and quality in public services
- Provides a measure of the effectiveness of services being delivered (International City-County Management Association, 1997).

In addition, the real value of public participation lies in its ability to tap the insights, energy, and ideas of the citizenry, build support for implementing decisions that are ultimately made; and help the public understand the complexity of the issues. Thus, if they are well planned and facilitated, public participation programs become an opportunity for education, as well as a vehicle for democratic expression (Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 1994). Consequently, public participation policy will likely result in an informed public on issues affecting the community, public support for planning decisions, the prevention of unnecessary conflict due to miscommunication, and, finally, the cooperation between planners and the community (Metropolitan Planning Organization, n.d.).

LITERATURE REVIEW

From a *prima facie* perspective, it is apparent that there is a relationship between public participation and empowerment: "public participation may be viewed as an antidote to the alienating and disempowering growth of our mass society and its institutions." Thus, it is helpful to distinguish between these two concepts. For example, whereas public participation conceivably constitutes involvement in the decisions regarding the functioning of a community, empowerment concerns the accrual of power that may be the result of participation. Consequently, public participation can be viewed as either an integral component of empowerment, or as both its cause and effect. Also, it should be emphasized that any effort regarding public participation should be concerned not merely with its elicitation, but, perhaps more importantly, with maintaining involvement in community decisions. As a result, key elements of public participation involve (1) the inclusion of state and local governments, the general public, and specific stakeholders in program development; and (2) the establishment of work groups to develop recommendations in addition to a local steering committee to oversee program development activities and decision making (Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 1994).

Although its objective is proactive, public participation is more likely to occur when information is provided in a timely manner (by way of public notice of meetings and activities), access to key decisions is available, and opportunities exist for early and continuing involvement (Roberts, 1996; Virginia Department of Transportation, 1996). Important players in the process of public participation include policymakers, civil servants, representatives of businesses, citizens, tax payers, public interest groups, disenfranchised parties, government, and the private sector (Roberts, 1996; National Center for Geographic Information and Analysis, 1996).

Again, as Taylor (1998) notes, plans and policies are to be judged by the extent to which they further the well-being or the interests of the public. Moreover, for a plan to be in a group's

interest, it must (1) somehow benefit the latter; or (2) if it harms, as well as benefits, the group, then it must maximize the ratio of benefit to harm; or (3) further the group's well-being in comparison with its present situation. However, because their interests may be a consequence of what Gramsci (1978) calls "ideological hegemony," a group may suffer from false consciousness in that it may not always be aware of its real interests; or its expressed preferences or unexpressed grievances may merely reflect the power of social conditioning rather than its real interests (Lukes, 1974). It is therefore important to ensure that public participation is not based on mistaken interests. Additionally, public participation by the disadvantaged may be due to a sense of *fatalism* (it would not do any good to protest) or *fear* (what would happen to us if we did protest) or feelings of *exclusion* from the decision making process (Saunders, 1975, p. 275). When one combines this observation with the aforementioned references to *interests*, it may be contended that plans are loci of conflict, and because they help to connect individuals to places by bringing them together to shape a common destiny, they link past, present, and future into what Neuman (1998) refers to as a "willed history" (p. 214). The element of territoriality with respect to space suggests, then, that planning is never apolitical.

However, because it is useful, also, to look more specifically at the literature on public participation in terms of structural and psychological factors, the upcoming sections will explore these issues in more detail.

Structural Variables

With respect to structural factors, it has been noted that race, age, and socioeconomic status (Sohng, 1995; Julian et al., 1997) as well as life cycle stage (Julian et al., 1997), are considered important variables related to the facilitation of public participation. Race and ethnicity are clearly of much relevance, and it has been noted that, in general, Whites were more likely to participate than Blacks. In this context, Bobo and Gilliam's 1990 study of sociopolitical

participation is of particular significance because it deals specifically with Blacks. The authors identified three theories of Black sociopolitical participation:

1. The *structural* or *standard socioeconomic* model, which suggests a direct relationship between education, occupational status, and income (i.e., socioeconomic status) and political participation.
2. The *compensatory* model, which maintains there is an inverse relationship between exclusion and feelings of inferiority and public participation (i.e., the higher the levels of exclusion and inferiority, the less the likelihood of participation, and vice versa).
3. The *ethnic community* approach, which views public participation as a function of membership in groups of similar ethnicity.

The main findings of the Bobo and Gilliam study were:

- Empowerment increases Black participation, but has no effect on White participation.
- Blacks in high-empowered areas are more active than those in low-empowered areas.
- Blacks in high-empowered areas are more active than their White counterparts.
- Only among the politically discontented are Blacks in high-empowered areas likely to participate at lower rate than comparable Whites.
- Blacks in low-empowerment areas tend to be less active than Whites in similar areas.

Clearly, then, empowerment seems to precede public participation: the greater the degree of empowerment, the more likely the incidence of public participation as far as Blacks were

concerned, although political discontentment is likely to affect Black participation negatively, even in high-empowerment areas.

In addition to the foregoing, the literature reveals a number of studies that deal with ethnographies of various communities. Ethnographies include information on the nature of the transportation system and other information regarding the incidence of bars, churches, boarded-up houses, fast food restaurants, salons, etc. Useful references in this context include Anderson's (1978) *A Place on the Corner*, Drake and Cayton's (1962) *Black Metropolis*, Liebow's (1967) *Tally's Corner*, Valentine's (1978) *Hustling and Other Hard Work: Lifestyles in the Ghetto*, and Wilson's (1987) *The Truly Disadvantaged* and (1996) *When Work Disappears*. For our purposes, however, the most useful of such studies is McDougall's (1993) *Black Baltimore: A New Theory of Community*. McDougall theoretically grounds his analysis using the notion of "base communities," or those internal community constituencies that follow liberation theology in espousing self-worth as an antidote to poverty, hopelessness, disease, and as a way to empower the people (p. 162). Thus, the Bible may be discussed in the *con-text* of the "real-life situation" in the community, but against the backdrop of the *pre-text*, that is to say, the physical conditions of the community (p. 161).

Additionally, other studies emphasize the importance, with respect to public participation, of already organized entities, such as churches and community organizations (Morris, 1984; City Planner, n.d.; Virginia Department of Transportation, 1996; Connor Development Services, Ltd., n.d.; Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 1994; Roberts, 1996). The relevance of these organizations lies in their previously demonstrated capacity to organize individuals to participate in a wide variety of activities. Beyond that, churches—which have traditionally been important institutions in the Black community because they provide political leadership—and community organizations are both dedicated to organizing the poor and the powerless, and serving the needs of their members (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, 1997). The fact

that many church-related activities involve cooperation and going out into the community increases the scope for public participation by this institution.

Other organized entities that are likely to facilitate citizen input include Citizen Advisory Committees; interest groups that comprise, for example, the disabled and the elderly; schools; and private groups that might include employer associations, labor organizations, financial, real estate, development associations, and environmental organizations (National Transportation Library, 1993). It should be noted that, although in and of themselves, these organizations are important, their real value lies in their capacity to make a tangible impact. Thus, if church or community organizations have enabling political connections that are beneficial to their members, not only is their legitimacy maintained and buttressed, but also the likelihood of public participation of their members increases. Arguably, participation without power to influence decisions (i.e., empowerment) is not only viewed as meaningless, but also implies tokenism, which may inhibit efforts to develop consensus around key planning issues (Julian et al., 1997).

Experts, such as individuals knowledgeable in the field of community organization and the use of specialist meetings designed to elicit participation, can fuel neighborhood involvement. However, community residents who, by virtue of their length of residence, have much experience and knowledge in matters concerning the community may also function as experts in the context of participation (University Consortium for Geographic Information Science, 1996).

Community residents in their capacity as experts are particularly beneficial, because they are in a position to successfully employ narratives or life histories of the communities. Such narratives may highlight, for example, the good times and the special strengths of a community or merely chronicle the deterioration of the community. Residents' narratives may also include suggestions for community improvement, by way of public participation. Additionally, narratives create meaning, emotion, memory, and identity. The use of the narrative to frame the community situation in this manner, which has been referred to as *narrative fidelity* (Fisher,

1984), resonates with "stories, myths, and folk tales that are part and parcel of one's cultural heritage and thus function to inform events and experiences in the immediate present" (Snow and Benford, 1988, p. 210).

Moreover, understanding how community narratives are created and incorporated into personal life stories promotes a climate that is favorable to public participation. This approach encourages community leaders and others to listen to, amplify, and give value to the stories of the people they serve. It follows that the more people have the opportunity to tell their story and the more they get the impression that leaders are listening, the more likely they are to participate. Indeed, the aim of narrative theory and research is to understand how (1) community and organizational narratives are created and appropriated into the personal life stories of individuals; and (2) how these stories influence identity and behavior, as well as individual and social change (Rappaport, 1995). The key point is that narratives can be used to create meaning among community participants, which would undergird collective action, such as public participation (Melucci, 1988). Thus, narratives empower already existing organizations that can use this approach to spread their story (Rappaport, 1995). Empowerment is all the more likely if resulting information, from narratives as well as from outside experts, is of a critical and emancipatory nature in that it helps individuals to break away from "assumptions that make [them] lose touch with some deeper reality and that prevent innovation" (Innes, 1998, pp. 58–59).

In another study that is of particular relevance because one of the cities researched was Baltimore (although the authors did identify the specific location within the city), Perkins and Brown (1991) identified a number of variables variously correlated with public participation. In general, the authors found that:

- With respect to crime, those individuals who felt that their neighborhood was becoming more dangerous were less likely to participate.

- Block-level resident and independent rater perceptions of physical incivilities were correlated negatively with participation, as was street width.
- Household income was positively correlated with participation, and homeowners were more likely to participate, than non-homeowners.
- The effect of race was found to be negligible.
- Length of residence was not found to be a significant predictor of public participation, whereas an informal neighboring and involvement in religious and other community organizations were found to be consistent predictors of public participation.
- Community-focused cognitions and behaviors were found to be positively related to participation.
- Crime victimization, perceptions, and fears were not found to be significantly related to participation.
- Defensible space was positively related to participation, because fewer barriers to property allowed neighbors to get to know one another better.

Psychological Factors

In addition to structural variables, personal efficacy and self-interest were found to be contextually relevant. For example, it has been argued that public participation fosters self-efficacy and this, along with self-interest, is conducive to participation in civic associations engaged in solving community problems (Perkins and Brown, 1991). As one author explained, self-interest is a characteristic of public participation in that the need to start at home is an idea that "must be born in individuals in their front yard" (Roberts, 1996). Thus, the more the emotional investment, the greater the likelihood of participating in activities that are likely to influence that investment. Therefore, attitudes toward those perceived to be contributing to the social disorganization of the community are likely to be negative. Community-focused behaviors

and perceptions are likely to manifest themselves in the form of organizations and other interest groups concerned with the containment of, for example, criminal activity. The result is that a sense of civic responsibility and a psychological sense of community have been found to be significant predictor variables of public participation.

Thus, although there is general agreement that organized entities (such as churches and community organizations)—as well as socioeconomic status, homeownership, and its concomitant community emotional investment, the use of specialists (especially those who make use of narratives), defensible space, and fear of crime—definitely affected participation, there was not similar general agreement regarding the significance of race, length of residence, and household income as far as public participation is concerned. However, whereas Blacks—given their history of exclusion from the democratic process—are relatively less likely than Whites to participate in community activities (the higher their occupational status, income, and education), the more likely they are to participate. Thus, for Blacks, there is a direct relationship between education, occupational status, and income on the one hand, and political participation on the other hand; inversely, there is a correlation between exclusion and feelings of inferiority and public participation. Thus, the more Blacks experience a sense of exclusion and feelings of inferiority, the less likely they are to participate in community-related activities. Again, because public participation tends to be proactive, individuals who own houses and who have lived in a neighborhood for a long time are more likely to participate in community-related activities. This is partly because they have the economic resources to purchase houses and upkeep their property. Finally, groups of similar ethnicity are more likely to participate if members felt that the government is trustworthy. Because a better sense of the execution of this project can be gained by reference to the question of methodology, we explore this issue in the upcoming section.

METHODOLOGY

The Participants

Because of the nature of this study, some participants were identified as key informants. Key informants were those individuals knowledgeable of the Park Heights area in general. Also, noted in the literature review, already-organized entities were considered to be very important in facilitating participation because of their *a priori* success in mobilizing individuals in pursuit of specific goals. Thus, efforts were made to identify various community organizations and churches, and to make arrangements to interview their leaders and pastors, respectively. Once community leaders and pastors were identified, a snowballing technique was used in that each was asked to name other individuals in the community who might provide useful information regarding participation. In that manner, in addition to the leaders of community organizations and pastors, I was able to identify other individuals, such as police officers (more will be said about this), a representative from the Mayor's office, top officials of neighborhood organizations, and other citizens who were present during interviews.

Data-Gathering Techniques

It necessary to note that research of this nature requires researchers to go out into a neighborhood in which they are considered strangers, regardless of their familiarity with the area. In other words, not only do the researchers lack a *knowledge* of the culture and functioning of the group that its members possess, but the fact that such knowledge is circumscribed, and is constitutive of the culture of a people, also makes it possible to distinguish those who know from those, like the stranger, who do not. The stranger's status in the group, arguably, is determined by his/her not having "belonged to it from the beginning [and for importing] qualities into it, which do not and cannot stem from the group itself" (Wolff, 1950, p. 402). Therefore, the researcher is likely to be objective and, consequently, to be the recipient of information that is surprisingly open, which sometimes has the "character of a confessional, and which would be carefully withheld from a more closely related person" (Wolff, 1950, p. 402).

A key question, therefore, concerns how the researcher-as-stranger gains entrée into a community, and thus the confidence of its residents, such that the former can collect data in an objective manner. In this instance, especially because of the literature on public participation, entrée, as noted, was achieved first by asking someone who was familiar with the area to name some of its leaders and, once this was done, to contact that community leader. The individual who served this function in the present study, the pastor of an area church, was able to name other pastors, some of whom in turn contacted some of their colleagues.

In addition, information was gathered from census materials, ethnographic data, and focused interviews. The last two methods were particularly helpful in transitioning from the researcher-as-stranger status to that of the researcher-as-data collector.

Census Materials

Information was garnered from two census tracts that comprised the community in question. These provided information with respect to racial make-up, socioeconomic status, sex, age, household type, and housing unit status (owned or occupied, detached or attached, value of owner-occupied units, numerical incidence of renter-occupied units, and so on). Although each of these variables was of intrinsic interest, they were even moreso from a research standpoint because of their putative relationship as independent variables to public participation. Thus, as was noted in the literature review, race is an important factor in understanding participation precisely because Black Americans have a weaker structural position than their White counterparts. Thus, Blacks are more likely to live in inferior conditions, especially in the inner cities of America, and are less likely to participate in community-related projects. Similarly, the likelihood that older Americans are more dependent on transportation provided by others is likely to affect their participation in community-related issues.

Ethnographic Data

In ethnographic data collection, efforts are made to derive a greater understanding of the neighborhood not only in terms of its infrastructure (streets, alleyways, housing, playgrounds,

open spaces, transportation routes, etc.), but also with respect to its economic substructure (e.g., shops, supermarkets, drug stores, fast food restaurants, bars, houses of worship, etc.). The rationale behind this approach is that it can provide the researcher with an understanding of the geography of the community that will lend itself to a better grasp of the factors that are likely to facilitate, as well as constrain, public participation.

Accordingly, ethnographic appraisal was conducted, partially, by driving through the neighborhood on Sundays and during the early part of the weekday when residents were likely to be going to work, as well as during the day. The last-named experience was particularly beneficial in that it provided insight as to how the large contingent of young unemployed males spend their time, the incidence of homelessness, and the extent to which transportation facilities are used. Beyond that, the ethnographic appraisal enabled comprehension, at least minimally, of the social disorganization in the community in terms of garbage in the streets, on sidewalks, and in alleyways and open spaces, boarded-up houses, dilapidated housing, and so on. Finally, this approach allowed the researcher to observe various types of behaviors, such as drug activity (in boarded-up houses), the use of unofficial transportation facilities (such as hacks), and, as would be expected, to become less of a stranger to the community.

Focused Interviews

Because of the relatively small number of participants and the fact that identification of the population was nonproblematic, the focused interview was used to gather information about public participation. This data-gathering technique involves the use of open-ended questions (i.e., those that permit the respondent to reply in any way he/she chooses) and enables the researcher to obtain in-depth information from individuals who have had a particular experience (Merton and Kendall, 1956)—in this case, the opportunity to live and/or work in the Park Heights area for a considerable period of time. In addition, because it provides the researcher with the opportunity to go in-depth into a particular experience, the focused interview lends itself to the possibility of probing on the part of the interviewer (without compromising the canons of

objectivity) as the interview moves into areas not previously determined by the researcher. Again, the focused interview—which is compatible with the school of thought that views information gained in this manner as the product of joint discourse between interviewer and interviewee (Agar and Hobbs, 1982; Mishler, 1986)—is useful in that it mitigates the so-called hierarchical structure of the interview. The hierarchically structured interview, it is felt, some maintain, enacts a communicative hegemony that puts the interviewer in the role of controller and the respondent in the role of what Ann Oakley calls a "passive data producing machine" (p. 48). Information thus gathered is likely to be more forthcoming and meaningful.

Also, the focused interview permits the joint production of data in the form of a narrative that, as was noted, is helpful to the data gathering process and not only permits a free-flowing portrayal of information in the words of the respondent, but also helps in moving the researcher away from the role of the stranger. Because this competence would more easily be acquired if one person did all of the interviews, and also because this reduced the likelihood of differential bias being introduced into the research process in the case of multiple interviewers, as principal investigator, I conducted all interviews. Finally, because a demographic picture adds to an understanding of the makeup of the community, information of this nature now follows.

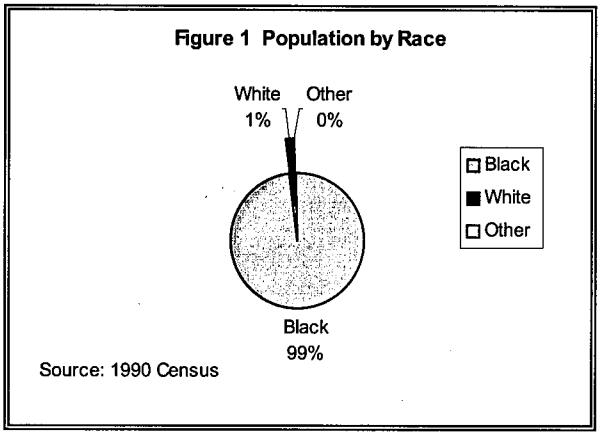
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE AREA

Area Definition

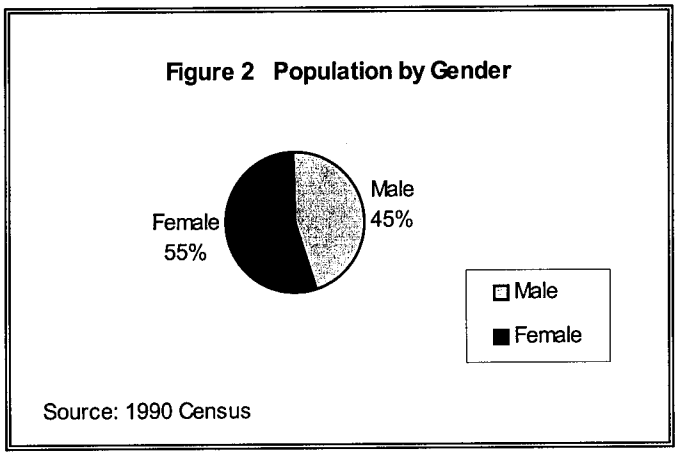
The Park Heights area is geographically located in the western section of Baltimore City. The area is bound to the north by Cold Spring Lane, to the east by Greenspring Avenue, to the south by Druid Park Avenue, and to the west by the Western Maryland Railroad right-of-way. The area in question is represented in Census Tracts 1512 and 1513.

Population

It should be noted, firstly, that the community population is predominantly Black. In 1990, for example, of a total of 13,073 individuals, 12,885 or 99% were Black, whereas 161 or 1% were White (Figure 1).



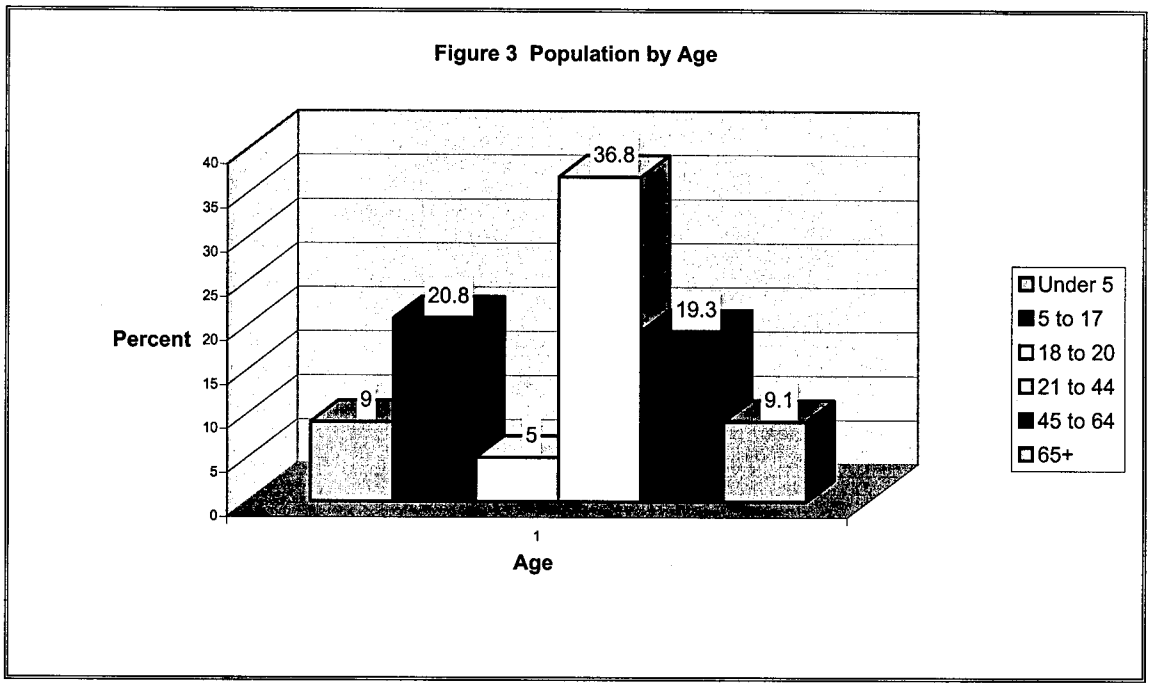
Second, as of 1990, females outnumbered males in that 7,184 or 55% of the population were female, whereas 5,889 or 45% were male (Figure 2).



Third, as Table 1 and Figure 3 indicate, the population is predominantly young; over one-third is in the 21–44 age cohort. However, if we combine this group with those who are between 18 and 20 and those who are in the 45–64 age cohort, it would mean that 7,984 persons or 61% of the population are between 18 and 64 years. This means that not only the ages of two-thirds of the population would fall within the working years, but also that the majority of the population (4,810 or 36.8%) are in the prime of their working years (Table 1). This has serious implications for the introduction of a community-relevant transportation system in that, given the limited prospects for employment *within* the area, it suggests that there is need for reliable and safe transportation to carry prospective workers *beyond* the area in search of employment. Moreover, as others have noted, because the absence of work is likely to have deleterious effects both on the quality of life and on the self-image of those who are unemployed and who are seeking work, the lack of efficient transportation can have far-reaching consequences (Wilson, 1996; Patterson, 1997).

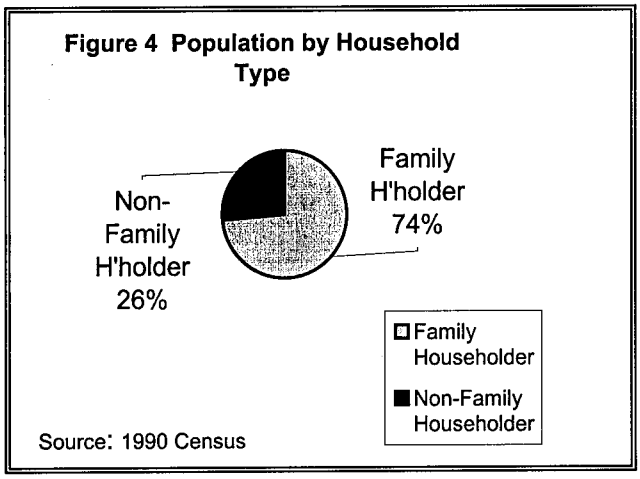
Table 1: Community Profile, by Age

Age Cohort (years)	No.	%
Less than 5	1184	9
5–17	2721	20.8
18–20	654	5
21–44	4810	36.8
45–64	2520	19.3
65+	1184	9.1
Total	13073	100

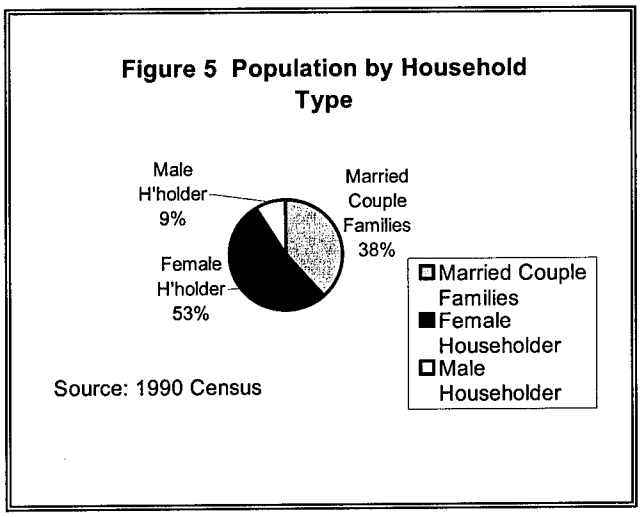


Source: 1990 Census

Fourth, in 1990, 2,938 or 74% of the households were classified as "family" households, whereas 1,055 or 26% were classified as "nonfamily" households (Figure 4).

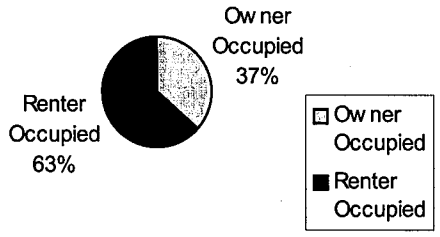


Fifth, in 1990, 1,550 or almost 53% of the householders were female-headed, 1,125 or 38% were married couple families, and 263 or 9% were male-headed households (Figure 5). The fact that over half of the household heads were female means that if, as is likely, this conforms to the national trend, then the majority of these women and their children are probably living in poverty. Furthermore, because these women were probably all Black, the race/class/gender factors that underpin their deprivation would likely reduce political participation, but increase dependence on cheap, reliable, and easily available transportation.



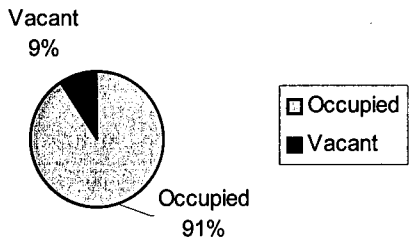
Lastly, the majority, i.e. 2,528 or 63%, of housing units were "renter occupied," compared with 1,465 or 36% that were "owner occupied" (Figure 6). In addition, 3,993 or 91% of household units were listed as "occupied," whereas the remaining 408 or 9% were "vacant" (Figure 7).

Figure 6 Population by Housing Units Occupancy



Source: 1990 Census

Figure 7 Population by Occupancy and Tenure



Source: 1990 Census

Economic Indicators

As Table 2 indicates, the average estimated household income for 1998 was $29,893. This would suggest that if, as is likely, this figure refers to nonfarm households that included four or more individuals, it was a mere $4,000 above the poverty level for that year.

Table 2: Estimated Average Household Income

Census Update Summary	Census Tract 1512	Census Tract 1513	Combined
Average Household Income	$29,492	$30,316	$29,893

Source: Enoch Pratt Free Library/Regional Information Center, Pcensus Project, National Decision Systems, 1998.

Moreover, the fact that the estimated household income (1998–2003) of 53% of the population ranged from less than $15,000 to $25,000, and that 36% of the population had an estimated household income of less than $15,000 indicate that the majority of the population are, and can be expected to continue, living in poverty (Table 3). This is not surprising in view of the fact that as recent as 1997, only 38% of the population was in the labor force (Table 4).

Table 3: Estimated Household Income, 1998–2003

Household Income 1998–2003	Census Tract 1512	Census Tract 1513	Combined
Under $15,000	38%	33%	36%
$15,000–$25,000	15%	20%	17%
$25,000–$35,000	12%	14%	13%
$35,000–$50,000	19%	16%	18%
$50,000–$75,000	9%	13%	11%
$75,000–$100,000	6%	2%	4%
$100,000–$150,000	0%	2%	1%
Over $150,000	0%	0%	0%

Source: Enoch Pratt Free Library/Regional Information Center, Pcensus Project, National Decision Systems, 1998.

Table 4: Population by Labor Force

1997 Labor Force Statistics	Census Tract 1512	Census Tract 1513	Combined
Total Population	6,468	6,605	13,073
Labor Force	2,407	2,529	4,936
Percent	37%	38%	38%

Source: Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation, Office of Labor Market Analysis and Information, 1997 Labor Force Statistics by Census Tract.

It is clear from the demographic picture that the Park Heights population is overwhelmingly Black, predominantly young (i.e., of working age), female, and of a low socioeconomic status. We can, therefore, tentatively hypothesize that it is precisely individuals with these characteristics who are less likely to be politically aware and involved in public participation, but most dependent on public transportation, and perhaps not surprisingly, most in need of empowerment.

FINDINGS

In addition to the demographic data, information from the interviews was even more germane to the study. For example, during the very first interview (with a community leader), questions were raised about the whole study. These questions expressed suspicions that were a recurring theme for interviewees. Specifically, interviewees wanted answers to the following questions:

- What is the Baltimore Metropolitan Council?
- Why was there an interest in transportation facilities when there were other far more pressing problems, such as drugs, crime, boarded-up housing, and unemployment?
- Why was the study being conducted at the present moment, the implication being that it was connected to the November 1998 elections?

In these instances, the researcher attempted to explain that he was a professor at Morgan State University who had been asked to do a study and, consequently, had no political agenda nor to the best of his knowledge did the BMC. As such, the researcher's objective was basically to collect information of a certain nature.

Despite my attempts to answer these questions, the respondents surmised that the purpose of the research was to make the community safe for Pimlico race course (located nearby) patrons, and/or to link the Park Heights area with Baltimore County for the purpose of benefiting the latter economically. In addition, although it was not stated explicitly, it was inferred that, because of his race, residents saw the researcher as a messenger for two interest groups: the BMC, whose Board of Directors is made up of mostly White Baltimore County executives whose interest in the community could never be genuine, and the then mayor of Baltimore City (Mr. Kurt Schmoke) whose inattention to the community typified the broken promises that are the trademark of the politicians who represented the area. Government, it seemed, was viewed as untrustworthy. As one respondent derisively put it in reference to a political candidate, "I see

a lot of pictures of candidates but I don't know who they are. They [the elected politicians] only come around at election time and they don't do anything for the neighborhood."

With respect to transportation facilities, in addition to the previously mentioned official facilities, taxi vouchers enable senior citizens to pay for taxis to transport them to and from their various destinations. In the view of one respondent, however, this was abused by the seniors, some of whom would call for a taxi and then have the driver wait for an unduly long period of time. Needless to say, this led to some tension between drivers and potential customers. In other instances, seniors used vans owned by churches and senior centers to take them to and from their residences, and, more specifically, shopping and to church. Other residents use hacks, that is, privately owned cars that transport individuals from place to place, such as from the supermarket, for a fee.

During other interviews, respondents claimed that the first thing the "mayor [Mr. Kurt Schmoke] did when he got into office was to disband the Park Heights Community Corporation," which they claimed was doing a good job of enforcing community norms by way of citizen participation. However, other informants claimed that the reason why the Park Heights Community Corporation was defunded was because of infighting among leaders and the need to direct scarce funds to underfunded projects. Because individuals tend to act on the basis of their definitions of the situation, what is critical were the perceptions of the respondents rather than what was really "true." Beyond this, some respondents wanted to know why time should be spent on collecting information on transportation facilities, that were not actually being promised. Because the dispossessed are more concerned with the material present than with the uncertain future, respondents seemed to be saying that they believed that area residents were less interested in what *might* be introduced in the future than what is specifically promised. Indeed, they appeared to be saying that there was no *quid pro quo* that would benefit them at the present time.

Again, most respondents indicated that transportation was not a major problem because three public facilities (the bus, the subway and the light rail), although not totally adequate, did exist. For example, it was felt that the bus service tended to be adequate during the rush hours, but not during the day, after the evening rush hour, or on Sundays when older church attendees need to go to church and leave in relative safety. As one minister stated, "Sometimes people who are going in church are accosted by drug dealers. This makes them fearful." During other interviews, respondents indicated that, because of this problem, senior citizens, as noted, are provided with vans to take them to and from church, and sometimes to shopping and medical facilities. Other recurring themes that were also indicative of suspicion, and possibly distrust, concerned fears regarding crime, drugs, unemployment—all of which obviously militated against participation.

With respect to drugs, one respondent noted that the community was well known as a source of drug activity: "People come to Park Heights for good heroin....Drug and crime prevention are inadequate." However, although there are "hot spots" (areas that are specifically designated for police crime prevention attention), one respondent told me that she considered citizen participation in crime prevention activities to be compromised by the perception that there are informers in the Police Department who provide drug dealers with information about residents who report suspected, or actual, drug activity. Whether this perception is accurate or not, it might be contended, is beside the point. What is of greater significance, contextually, is that the respondent and most likely other community members hold this view and are therefore likely to act or not act on this perception with respect to community participation. This in turn negates trust in the very agencies that are assigned the responsibility of protecting law-abiding citizens. Another informant who, within the context of discussing citizen security, declared that when she contacted the police to report "speedsters, like cars and trucks, doing 60 miles in a 25-mile-per-hour area, they laughed at me [and] I never heard anything more about it."

In contrast, the police maintain that families are not doing enough to discourage deviant behavior in their offspring, particularly drug-related activity, and that the courts are too lenient in the treatment of offenders to act as a deterrent. The drug problem, I was also told, "must be treated as health problem" and that more treatment centers (especially in-patient) are needed. In other words, a trilateral approach involving prevention and education, meaningful negative sanctions, and treatment has to be actualized to grapple with the drug problem.

Other important concerns were the relatively high incidence of boarded-up houses used for drug dealing, as I was shown by a community leader. This problem, some respondents speculated, was allowed to continue because boarded-up houses provided a tax shelter for rich absentee landlords. Also, community residents complained of inadequate trash collection, the accumulation of which they attributed to migrants from the "Projects," who had no sense of community and who "brought their bad habits with them" to the Park Heights area, including dumping of trash in alleyways. As one community resident stated, "as soon as I complain and the city clears the alleys, they dump their trash there again."

In addition, the combination of a weak economy and the concomitant drug activity, according to one individual, has led to an increase in meretricious relationships, particularly between older men and younger women, who would also do cleaning for a small amount of money to support a drug habit. Not surprisingly, the combination of drug activity, crime, and high unemployment conduced to a parallel economy that involved, among other things, the use of young people as couriers. As Alfred Blumstein has noted, the active recruitment of teenagers by the drug industry is functional for several reasons. These are "Partly because they will work more cheaply than adults, partly because they may be less vulnerable to the punishments imposed by the adult criminal justice system, and partly because they tend to be daring and willing to take risks that more mature adults would eschew" (Wilson, *When Work Disappears*, 1996, p. 22). This means that not only is this activity likely to continue, but also it will involve young people, like those in Park Heights, who view it as a means of employment. Finally, it was revealed that

there was a history of internal neighborhood strife between two major community organizations whose representative I interviewed.

Whereas the previously described observations were helpful in that they pointed to factors that were likely to militate *against* public participation, it should be noted that there were many statements that were designed to *promote* public participation. These included comments regarding public forums and meetings that would be organized by a group of ministers and other leaders who are held in high esteem by the community. During these proposed forums and meetings, projects such as the introduction of new transport facilities would be described (in narrative form), and in detail and feedback solicited. In this manner, citizens would be informed of activities that would likely concern them and thus reduce the incidence of suspicion that was evident during the interviews that informants had about the activities of the BMC and, of course, the researcher. In addition, public forums could be used to provide citizens with the opportunity to air grievances and make suggestions for improvement. For example, community annexation of a park that was currently being used for drug activity could provide a locale for fairs, which would send a message to the drug dealers that the good citizens were going to repossess their neighborhood. Also, bulletin boards in supermarkets might be used to post suggestions for dealing with problems, and a hotline to provide citizens with an avenue for complaints and suggestions.

Again, it was suggested that efforts might be made to encourage those homeowners who wanted to stay but were concerned that the social disorganization would occasion an ongoing decline in their property values.[1] Also, a group of neighborhood mentors could be deputed to deal with youngsters who have committed offenses by having them come before this group first, rather than automatically entering the criminal justice system by, for example, appearing before a

[1]Attempts to grapple with this problem are being made by introducing a Loan Facade Program, which provides loans to homeowners, for up to $5,000, for refurbishing their properties. 'Repayment of the loan is due should the owner sell, assign or in any manner transfer title' to the property within a five-year period.

magistrate. During their dealings with mentors, these youngsters would be encouraged to consider the nature of their transgressions and the consequences of their deviance by having to confront their victims, especially if they are elderly, and be required to do some community work for their victims for a period of time as a form of punishment.

More to the point, however, was the suggestion that community leaders and other interested persons might want to lobby politicians for the introduction of improved transportation services that would allow regular bus services late in the evening so that single mothers, for example, who might be employed in the surrounding counties, might return to the community to pick up their children from a care provider and then return home safely. This suggestion is a valuable one for a number of reasons. First, it would provide many in the community with the opportunity to find and keep jobs, which are more likely to exist outside of the community. This would have a multiplier effect in that it would strengthen the economic base of the community, provide more opportunities for people to purchase houses and thereby increase the tax base, and, of course, buttress the self-image of the job holders. The provision of this form of transportation, it is contended, would be especially helpful in an area where those who own cars are in the minority.

Again, some respondents spoke freely of this issue and mentioned also that the reason why there are so many community organizations is because there is a tendency for intra-organizational differences to be resolved by the aggrieved party breaking off from the organization in question to form a new organization. This supports our earlier contention about the stranger being given access to group confidences. All of the previously described suggestions are extremely valuable because, conceivably, they speak to a plethora of variables—economic, political, and psychological—that are not only likely to improve the quality of life, but also, by their intrinsic nature, are likely to increase the desire and ability of residents to participate in decisions affecting the area. Beyond that, findings with respect to fear, distrust of the police, suspicion with regard to politicians, and so on, are consistent with the previously stated arguments

regarding fear, fatalism, and exclusion that negatively affect public participation among the politically and economically disenfranchised.

PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

Park Heights Demographics

The Park Heights area, it may be argued, comprises a congeries of interpersonal relationships, which manifest themselves in the form of families, informal groups, in work and non-work contexts, community organizations, churches, political organizations, and friendship cliques. Beyond that, the area may be viewed much like McDougall's (1993) notion of "neighborhoods," which he conceives as "polities, not communities, in which a kind of *social compact* emerges among residents who mutually recognize a common public and ethical space as their neighborhood" (pp. 164–165). Following McDougall, one may also argue that the area, politically and economically, is characterized by a "vernacular culture" (i.e., an entire culture that is indigenous and that undergirds "gender roles, home life, and gossip, as well as community institutions such as churches and civic associations"). This in turn enhances participation in government and the economy by way of "styles of speech, techniques for building relationships, modes of organization and networking" (McDougall, 1993, p. 2). A vernacular culture, to be sure, presupposes a dynamic approach to communities that encompasses ideas regarding structure, culture, history, economic activity, and, quite importantly, politics, by which neighborhoods may also be defined. Community politics includes formal structures but also, and perhaps more significantly, politics of an informal nature such as that found in religious and civic organizations and even in families and among friends within a specific social space. Clearly, then, despite the existence of a number of variables that tend to work against public participation, communities like Park Heights, possess a shared way of life (culture) that is likely to provide a basis for such participation.

With the above in mind, the Park Heights area can be said to comprise four demographic constituencies. First, there are the owners of detached houses, who are generally long-term residents and relatively well off economically. These residents tend to take pride in their neighborhood and homeownership, and seek to keep up both. Second, there are the owners of

attached units, who also are long-time residents and retirees who have the best interests of the community at heart, but who may not be as well-off as the first group. Although these individuals are disenchanted by what they perceive to be the ongoing deterioration of the area and would like to move, they do not feel that their economic circumstances would permit this. Like the first group, however, they are most likely to participate in any plan that would ameliorate the condition of the neighborhood. Third, there are those who live in attached buildings with two or more units and who are renters. This group would include senior citizens living in group quarters. These are less likely than the first two groups to participate in community activities and more likely to remain disappointed that the government has not done more to improve living conditions in the community. Fourth, there are those who might be classified as the 'underclass,' some of whom it is said are migrants from the "Projects," the homeless, and members of the criminal element. Particularly because of their tenuous economic position, members of this group, conceivably, are least likely to participate in community-related activities.

Perception of Transportation as a Problem

Although many of the individuals to whom I spoke did not consider transportation to be a major problem, it does not follow that transportation is not a major problem within the community. Most of my informants were community leaders who tended to have their own transportation and, like the pastors, tended to view any transportation shortcomings in terms of their personal situation (i.e., as they are likely to affect their congregations). However, it is likely that young single mothers who want to look for or go to work, but must consider commuting beyond the community and older citizens who crave the autonomy of visiting friends/relatives outside the area at their discretion would have a different perspective.

Origin of Community Problems

The racially segregated nature of the area and the concomitant limited job opportunities lend themselves to deviant activity, and, also, inadequate informal social control techniques that are

more likely extant in communities and families (such as those headed by Black females) that are relatively low in socioeconomic status. If one takes away the ability of the male to take care of his family, one takes away his sense of esteem and weakens the socialization function of the family. Consequently, young residents, from the perspective of the *differential association theory*,[2] are likely to associate more often with deviant elements than with nondeviant elements. The result is that these individuals are more likely to incorporate the values, attitudes, and norms of the criminal element than those of the noncriminal element. Drug activity, therefore, is more attractive than education and getting good grades. Some feel these conditions are exacerbated by a police department that could do more and by politicians who consistently promise more than they achieve, or indeed plan to achieve. Most importantly, however, the area tends to be composed mostly of lower stratum individuals. This phenomenon was analyzed in Wilson's (1996) *When Work Disappears* and was somewhat different from Drake and Cayton's (1945) *Black Metropolis*, which in a sense mirrored the wider community in so far as it was made up of individuals (Blacks) of *all* social classes.

Community Assets

Lastly, like other neighborhoods, the Park Heights area has enough citizens of goodwill and with the skills, abilities, and drive in the persons of long-time residents, ministers, community leaders/activists, and others working in the various neighborhood organizations, and individuals with an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses, the vernacular culture, etc., to enhance the quality of life. With this in mind, the following suggestions are made toward facilitating public participation.

[2] This perspective maintains that if individuals associate more often with other individuals who commit deviant acts than with those who do not commit deviant acts, because they are likely to abide by norms and values of the deviant group, such individuals are more likely to be involved in deviant behavior. For a discussion of the principles of differential association that involve how individuals learn the various techniques, values, attitudes, and action system, see Edwin H. Sutherland and Donald R. Cressey. *Criminology*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1974, pp. 80–82.

CONCERNING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

First, those who have the trust and confidence of residents must do more to educate the latter, raise their consciousness, and encourage them to take pride in their community. For instance, residents might be taught or might re-learn that those who love their community do not throw garbage on the street, do not sell drugs to anyone, and endeavor to get jobs and support their families. Residents would also be taught that they should register and cast informed votes in elections, after mature consideration of the platforms of the candidates. In this manner, citizens would have no or little grounds to complain about the insouciance of elected representatives, because they can vote representatives out of office if they do not perform satisfactorily. Hopefully, in this way the ethos of participation (political or otherwise) would filter down from the top to the bottom and become embedded in the fabric of the neighborhood as a way of life.

Second, efforts need to be made to strengthen the internal locus of control of young residents so that they would more easily resist being drawn into behaviors that are deviant and counter-productive. Here, neighborhood mentors might teach their charges the value of discipline, deferred gratification, industry, self-help, and love and respect for themselves and, following that, respect for fellow humans. If, as Orlando Patterson (1997) suggests, sporting prowess is associated with popularity with girls (and therefore the increased possibility of sexual activity because athletes are more popular with girls than nonathletes), and, consequently, teenage fatherhood, then these two factors should be disconnected. Here, both males and females would benefit from this disconnection as the "feminization of poverty,"[3] sometimes associated with teenage motherhood, interrupted education, chronic unemployment, and therefore chronic dependency on welfare, would be significantly reduced.

[3]Although there are those who resent this term because it seems to blame the victim (the female) while exculpating a "sexist" system, I use the term in a descriptive sense, merely to connect unplanned pregnancy and motherhood, especially during early adolescence, among poor Black females, with an enhanced possibility of welfare dependency and living in poverty.

Third, neighborhood mentors should make more efforts to release the creativity of the community. Role models from both *within* and *beyond* the community may be used here with good effect, especially those who were similarly situated, but who have managed to rise above their circumstances to lead productive lives and put something back into the communities from which they came. Biographies of such individuals as required reading material might also be very helpful.

Fourth, it is recognized that any effort to mobilize others for a collective good (like a more viable neighborhood) will have to contend with the "free rider": that is, those individuals who want to get the benefits of a safer neighborhood but are unwilling to pay the costs (such as time) of participating in such an effort. Conceivably, however, they may be induced to participate in a collective good by offers of selective incentives such as money, jobs, positions of prominence, etc. Because it may be argued that collective goods are *indivisible* and *non- excludable*, in that *all* community residents would benefit from a more viable neighborhood whether they expended any resources toward this end or not, participation may be realized (much like a motor organization that excludes from its benefits those who do not pay membership dues) by promulgating organizations that will provide benefits only to those who pay the costs of membership. These costs could involve expenditures not necessarily of money, although this is always useful, but of time, energy, knowledge, etc. Neighborhood clubs for young residents would be good example in this context.

Finally, community leaders might benefit from acquainting themselves with the literature on various social movements, especially the civil rights movement. By doing so, they might become familiar with the resources used, and the tactics and strategies employed, by civil rights leaders to educate and encourage their followers to participate, as well as to raise their followers' consciousness. Because already-organized entities, such as churches, were important in facilitating participation in the civil rights movement, these and the various 'submerged networks' as Melucci (1988) calls them, might be pressed into service to encourage participation

in a given activity. Examples of entities relevant in this context include clubs, friendship groups that meet regularly to play cards or to watch a sporting event on television, family members engaged in discussions and conversations, and patrons similarly engaged in barbershops, bars, and hair dressing salons.

It is worthwhile to note that a similar observation regarding social organization was made by Wilson (1996). For him, social organization involves the following:

1. The prevalence, strength, and interdependence of social networks.
2. The extent of collective supervision that the residents exercise and the degree of personal responsibility they assume in addressing neighborhood problems.
3. The rate of resident participation in voluntary associations (e.g., block clubs and parent–teacher organizations), formal organizations (e.g., churches and political parties), and informal networks (e.g., neighborhood friends and acquaintances, co-workers, marital, and parental ties) (*When Work Disappears*, 1996, p. 20).

The overall consequence of these factors would be to enhance the level of social organization in the area, which is inseparably linked with public participation. Having outlined a number of dimensions of public participation from a conceptual perspective, the question that arises is what is its relationship to transportation planning as far as the Park Heights community is concerned. This, then, is the task of the rest of the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Presuppositions

The configuring of any plan is obviously fraught with various concerns. Thus, it is important that reference be made to the premises on which this plan is based. First, it is assumed that planning for transportation will have specific consequences that are likely to ameliorate the condition of the citizens of Park Heights. Second, it should be noted that the recommendations concerning citizen participation in transportation planning in the community in question, although they do not privilege any particular perspective, nonetheless recognize the importance of information (Innes, 1998); a clear articulation of community interests (Taylor, 1998), constraints against political participation, such as fear, fatalism, and feelings of exclusion, particularly among the dispossessed (Saunders, 1975); and the dimensions of power (Lukes, 1974), false consciousness (Gramsci, 1978), and conflict (Neuman, 1998) in the planning process. Third, it is apposite to remember that the community is almost totally Black and this, added to the weak economic position of the majority of the residents, conspires to produce attitudes that undergird a sense of powerlessness that is likely to lead to low political awareness and resistance or, at least, suspicion regarding public participation. Fourth, the information upon which most of the recommendations are based came from a small number of informants who were better off economically than most of the population.

Dynamics

Any plan of a sponsoring agency (like the BMC) involving public participation must begin with the initial step of making contact with community leaders to explain fully the following:

1. The sponsoring agency's plans for the neighborhood with respect to transportation facilities.
2. The sponsoring agency's ideas for implementing these plans in the community in general, as well as vis-à-vis various internal constituencies (such as interest groups, community

organizations, churches, single mothers, senior citizens, the homeless, the transport-dependent, welfare recipients, etc.), in particular.

During these meetings, there should be a clear statement regarding the demographics of the neighborhood, the physical conditions (pre-text), and existing transportation facilities (both official and unofficial). The meetings should enable participants to size up each other in terms of trustworthiness or information according to their own instincts regarding what Innes (1998) refers to as a "sense of the meeting" or a "comfort level" or a "sniff test" as bases of their own intuition. To allay any suspicions with respect to the agenda of the sponsoring agency, the following questions, as much as is feasible, should be fully addressed:

- What is the project all about?
- Why is the information being collected about transportation?
- What transportation services, if any, will be provided? If they will be, why? If not, why not?
- Who will benefit from any transportation services provided?
- Why has the area been chosen?

During these meetings, also, efforts should be made by the sponsoring agency to get those in attendance to tell their stories regarding their experiences in the community of its decline toward social disorganization or its ascent toward social stability. By way of a dialogue, efforts should be made to identify interests of the community and to deal with elements of false consciousness—this is an essential precondition to planning—in the manner previously described with respect to well-being and, in the process, the sponsoring agency should endeavor to obtain support for the intended project. Pivotal interests would concern better transportation facilities and accompanying benefits, such as access to jobs, and reduction in crime and fear. Once this is done, individuals and groups who will benefit from the exercise can be identified and a subsequent meeting, or meetings, arranged to determine the parameters of any

transportation facilities, and, if possible, the details of their support. This is especially crucial because respondents, as noted, do not feel that transportation issues are of paramount importance.

Second, it would be beneficial to identify the various internal constituencies. These would include community organizations, church leaders, government officials, the police, school officials, homeowners, senior citizens, welfare recipients, the homeless, job seekers, other interested groups, and, particularly, the transport-dependent and other users of existing transportation facilities. Additionally, it would be very important to identify, and eventually contact, smaller constituencies who would be critical for purely research purposes. These would include the "pragmatist pastors": that is, those who go out into the community and who cater to the needs of the hungry, the homeless, and the generally disenfranchised, as opposed to the "pulpit pastors," who deal mostly, but not only, with internal church-related matters. Other members of this group would include "zealots" who believe in the intrinsic dimensions of the program, free riders, community activists (who may not be affiliated with any organization), and active retirees and the young residents, who have time that could be volunteered to help in mobilizing others to participate. In addition, some of these individuals could be used as key informants because of their vast knowledge of the neighborhood. A major advantage of this facet of the plan is that it enables the planners to identify those who are likely to lead the drive for public participation. However, because these groups in all probability have staked out their own turf, so to speak, the plan must be cognizant of the possibility for conflict between and within various constituencies, especially intraorganizational differences that have bedeviled collective action in the past. Beyond that, because many of these groups will function as "experts," those most likely to benefit need to ascertain that information about new and/or improved transportation facilities disbursed during these sessions is valuable, especially if couched in "scientific" terms.

Third, a meaningful ethnographic assessment of the community must be conducted. Ethnographic assessment provides those involved in the execution of the project with a feel for the community in terms that may mitigate suspicion and anxiety among residents. In this context, it is especially important for those concerned to become familiar with the transportation facilities, both public and private. Traveling in a van that ferries senior citizens or using the buses, the light rail, and the subway, especially during peak hours, would be particularly helpful.

Again, an ethnographic appraisal allows those concerned to identify various nontraditional groupings, such as patrons in bars, hair dressing salons, barbershops, fast food restaurants, etc., who can be mobilized for community participation. In fact, hair salons, barbershops, bars, parks, and railway stations are critical settings for finding out about the problems of the community in relation to transportation, and how these might be addressed.

Furthermore, how individuals get to and from work would be important as would be the difficulty and danger connected therewith. For instance, ethnography enables those concerned to identify the location of bus stops, the subway station, and the train station, and the added purpose these may serve if functioning telephone booths are nearby, which can then be used by the transportation-dependent to call for a taxi or a relative for transportation to home. Attention should also be paid, however, to the possibility that the booths may attract less desirable behavior, such as loitering that can conduce to crime. Finally, an ethnography alerts planners who are strangers to the community to the community's standards of safe and appropriate behavior. For example, the Park Heights area had few telephone booths and those that did exist were sometimes nonfunctional. As a result, the researcher soon learned that it was not a good idea to upbraid an individual for spending an inordinate amount of time at a functional telephone booth in certain parts of the community. This is because that person might be conducting "business" (e.g., of a drug-related nature), and any interruptions might anger the individual and lead to a violent reaction. Clearly then, care has to be taken in the location of telephone booths.

Fourth, in addition to self-interests, joint efforts involving the community and the sponsoring agency must be made to identify the critical concerns of residents. This approach uses what might be called the *social disorganization* model, whereby residents are mobilized for participation by way of the argument that neighborhood problems are likely to exacerbate if no action is taken to address them. In other words, this strategy of mobilizing community participation is based on *fear*, for instance of crime which, we saw, is a major concern, especially of senior citizens when they travel to and from church. Other concerns, we also noted, involved boarded-up houses, declining property values, disenchantment with the police and politicians, the accumulation of trash, drug activity and its concomitants—crime and general social disorganization—and a further sense of fear.

Fifth, having identified the *who*, *where,* and, in a superficial manner, *how* of community participation, the heart of any plan pivots around the question of disseminating information in such a manner as to induce participation. This aspect of the plan might be divided into three major components. The first concerns what is to be publicized, which involves information about the community in the form of a narrative regarding the fluctuating or declining fortunes of the Park Heights area and the relationship to transportation. Clearly, the social disorganization model speaks to the community's problems and could be used as a spur to cooperation and public participation. Social disorganization could be portrayed by community historians, specialists, the police, and others as a collective bad that needs to be addressed as soon as possible if the neighborhood is to be saved. A particularly essential component of the narrative would be the economic condition and the ongoing consequences that must surely follow if this downward slide is not merely arrested, but reversed and how the provision of adequate transportation facilities might contribute to an amelioration of the situation. Clearly, active job seekers and, to a certain extent senior citizens, would be important constituencies in this exercise.

Sixth, public participation might be facilitated by recourse to what might be termed the *public relations* model, whereby advertising techniques used in the mass media to urge individuals to purchase various commodities or services would be utilized to encourage residents to participate. This model, with its continuing emphasis on *how*, focuses on various techniques that would facilitate participation of residents in any community-related activities and in determining the setting (*where*) that would be chosen. Strategies used to disseminate information (*how*) might include the following:

> faxes, open houses, toll-free telephones, electronic mail, video teleconferencing, public meetings, public fairs and forums, focus groups, surveys, workshops, the Socratic dialogue, task forces, advisory committees, public comment sheets, the use of mailing lists to contact relevant others, database publications, newsletters, speaker bureaus, committee meetings, informational briefings, information on an internet homepage, notification signs, sign posters, newspaper ads, public reviews, public notifications, bulletin boards in supermarkets, and suggestion boxes in churches and community organizations and other locations designated for that purpose.

In addition to supermarkets, churches, senior citizen centers, and community centers, other relevant settings that might be used for public participation and the dissemination of information regarding transportation would include parks, street corners, bus stops, the subway and the train station, and, of course, barbershops, hair salons, and fast food restaurants.

Other techniques for information dissemination might include the following:

- Photo novella (i.e., people's photographic documentation of their everyday lives).
- Theater and visual imagery for the purpose of consciousness raising and to facilitate collective learning, expression, and action (i.e., written songs, cartoons, community self-portraits, and videotaped recordings). The youth could be used to great effect here.
- Development of linkages, exploring real commitments, and creating a vision of self-actualization.

In this context, it is also especially useful to be mindful of the argument that pictures, metaphors, stories, designs, and maps present images, and that images can be used to portray the collective hopes of the community as well as to convert plans into political change agents, thus ensuring empowerment particularly of the dispossessed (Boulding, 1956; Neuman, 1998). Thus, a picture of a group of citizens discussing a pictorially presented transportation issue such as appropriate bus schedules or bus stops that are dangerously located could facilitate consensus building.

Seventh, in addition to the social disorganization and public relations approaches, the *collective action model* that emphasizes the use of resources to promote participation would be concerned with, first of all, efforts to promulgate the expansion of transportation facilities or the thrust toward social organization, especially in the manner previously described by Wilson (1996), as a collective good that would be of benefit to *all*. Emphasis, for example, might be placed on an effort to demonstrate just how improved transportation facilities correlate with values such as economic viability, public safety, tidiness, self-respect, cooperation, pride of homeownership, and so on. On the other hand, attempts will be made to portray crime, boarded-up houses, internal dissension, trash accumulation, drug activity, etc., as a collective bad, that must be excised from the community corpus. In addition, various resources such as time, energy, commitment to civic duty, etc., might be used to induce public participation. For example, the unemployed, retirees, senior citizens, and others who have time on their hands, might be used to prepare flyers and stuff envelopes in an effort to advertise coming events, such as meetings, fairs, and forums. Apart from the obvious benefit, this approach would provide participants with a feeling that something is being done (self-efficacy) and that they are an integral part of that exercise.

Also, other constituencies, such as the homeless, might be impelled to participate in activities that are commensurate with their skills—one should remember here that not only the uneducated and the unemployed become homeless—in exchange for some selective incentive, such as a

place to stay or food. Finally, those with a reputation for toughness, after appropriate re-socialization, might be used at fairs in a previously determined capacity. This direct collaboration with disenfranchised groups would be extremely useful in that it would create the most potential for analyzing and understanding the nature of their experiences and how these might be transformed in the service of a collective good like public participation, while simultaneously stressing the importance of self-definition.

All of the following might be considered as a means of fueling public participation: formal and informal organizations and voluntary associations; individuals with a knowledge of organizing others and of the history and culture of the neighborhood that might be portrayed in the form of narratives; the creative energies of the community; submerged networks; the time, skills, and energies of individuals who might be described as *conscience adherents*[4] and who may or may not reside in the community; and individuals whose intrinsic interest in the betterment of the quality of life in the community would incline them to participate (like experts and university professors).

Finally, various selective incentives might be used to predispose the free rider to participate. These would include the provision of a small stipend, the promise of jobs or positions in organizations (paid or unpaid), opportunities to enhance one's professional career through publications or other forms of recognition of scholarly excellence, opportunities for university students to do research in the community, and so on. In other words, once the goal has been properly defined and packaged as something that would eventually benefit *all*, then efforts should be made, particularly by experts, to identify and usenot only the various constituencies, but also the skills that residents possess, in the service of public participation. The expert constituency, it might be noted, will include those with a knowledge of the law and the relevant

[4]These are individuals who participate anyway, although they are unlikely to benefit from the attainment of a collective good, like improvement of the quality of life in the Park Heights area.

regulations, so that any tactics and strategies used will conform (or at least not violate) with legal, as well as community, norms.

In conclusion, the strategic plan speaks to the critical historical, social, psychological, economic, political, cultural, and legal variables that will inform public participation as it relates to transportation planning. It is evident, furthermore, that although the three models discussed have discrete emphases, their conjoined application is being advocated. And, whereas it is not being suggested that a strategic plan would contain *all* of the previously described elements, the plan is being proffered more in the nature of what sociologists refer to as an *ideal type* that, in its totality, may not exist in reality. Rather, it is meant to be an umbrella referent against which public participation might be judged and, hopefully, actualized. The admixture of plan components, then, would be contingent on the peculiarities, or the *vernacular*, of the Park Heights area. In any event, the more any plan contains the variables mentioned, the more it is likely to be efficacious. It follows, also, that the more public participation occurs, the more empowered neighborhood residents will become.

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APPENDIX

List of Interviewees—All Done in 1998

Dr. Kevin Rogers Pastor, New Fellowship Christian Community Church	8 July
Nellie Taylor Corners Community Association/Organization	10 August
Nathaniel White Classen Avenue Improvement Association	10 August
James Young Myrtle Harrod Catherine Miller PPP Sock and Shirley/Oswego/Keyworth Association	12 August
Jessie Crosier Joyce Tillman Full Circle Neighborhood Association	12 August
Sharon Duncan Jones Park-Reist Corridor Coalition Inc.	4 September
Rev. Theodore Jackson Pastor, Gillis Memorial Christian Church	8 September
Lillian Sydnor West Coldspring Lane Improvement Association	9 September
Sgt. Karolyn Fowler Neighborhood Service Unit North Western Precinct	11 September
Agent Rodney Smith Neighborhood Service Unit North Western Precinct	11 September
Rev. Helen Samuel Cottage Park Heights	14 September
Goldie Mason North West Community Relations Council	14 September
Rev. Powell Lawson Pastor, Zoe Miracle Church	15 September

Dr. Eleanor Bryant Pastor, Agape Fellowship Miracle Church	16 September
Lisa Garry North West Community Relations Council	17 September
Martin Mitchell North West Community Relations Council	17 September
Sgt. Crawford Blackmon North West Community Relations Council	17 September
Diane Frederick Executive Director, Northwest Baltimore Corporation	28 September
Rev. Reginald Johnson Cornerstone Church of Christ	6 October
Rev. Helen Samuel Cottage Park Heights	13 October
Claudia Boths Inez Boone Leroy Rose Volunteers, Cottage Park Heights	13 October
Robert Harrell Cottage Park Heights	13 October
Joyce Nance Neighborhood Project Coordinator, Baltimore City Department of Housing	12 November