

**NEIGHBORHOOD BASED ORGANIZATIONS, LATINOS, AND THE COMMUNITY  
AT LARGE: A CASE STUDY IN WALLA WALLA, WASHINGTON**

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December 18, 2008**

## Introduction

Have you ever walked around your neighborhood and noticed its characteristics? Do you see a sidewalk? Maybe a park with playground equipment? Some crosswalks and stop signs? Do you feel safe and in your surroundings, and do you trust the people who live there? If the answer is yes, imagine having to say no to all those questions. Imagine a neighborhood with no sidewalks, crosswalks, or parks. Imagine feeling scared of constant crime and uneasy with children walking home from school, and also scared that a car might hit them because sidewalks don't exist. Imagine not knowing or trusting your neighbors, and feeling uncomfortable about asking neighbors for a favor, even though you may have lived next to them for over ten years. This scenario is obviously real throughout neighborhoods in the United States. Yet it is hard to appreciate the amenities of a neighborhood until we imagine them gone. Sidewalks and parks are not easy to obtain, and citizens can feel utterly powerless about their neighborhoods because they feel that authorities are ones that make the changes, not them.

This research project is about neighborhood-based organizations (NBO) and their efforts to empower citizens to take control of their neighborhoods. The question I am asking and answering is, "*How can Neighborhood Based Organizations show they have a clear and positive role in the general community?*" My sub-questions include, "How can NBOs best make their community-wide impacts better understood?" and "How are Latino interests served through the work of NBOs?". Although I focus on NBO action, my specific focus is on how these organizations play a role in improving race relations between Latinos and Non-Latinos, and how they encourage participation among isolated, disenfranchised groups of people. Ultimately I research the relationship these low-income, racially diverse neighborhoods maintain with the general community. My research centers on the city of Walla Walla, Washington, and I take a close look at Commitment to Community (C2C), an NBO dedicated to creating healthy neighborhoods. These questions are important because they determine whether Walla Walla is an inclusive community that wants to create higher living standards for all, or whether it accepts the disparity in neighborhoods that arises from differences in income, culture, ethnicity, and language. Is the community extending its support to the revitalization of powerless neighborhoods?

Currently, C2C has had enormous success in empowering the neighborhoods and mobilizing Latinos and non-Latinos to decide for themselves the future of their neighborhoods. Two goals are emphasized by C2C: creating visible threads through improving public spaces, while creating invisible effects by forging new, healthy, relationships between residents and their surroundings. My research recognizes the accomplishments C2C has produced along these lines, yet part of my research will provide further evaluation of these two effects. While their goal is to build healthy neighborhoods in order to build a healthy community, C2C still experiences trouble gaining general community wide support. The organization wants to figure a way that to gain recognition by finding an appropriate means to communicate what is at stake for the community by working with poor, racially diverse neighborhoods. My project aims to tackle these concerns insofar that I provide a way to think critically about the relationships they have with the community.

My community partner, Teri Barila from the Walla Walla Community Network, helped me conceptualize ideas and articulate the problems C2C faced. I start my research by analyzing scholarly literature that is relevant to this issue. I then look to see how important C2C is to these neighborhoods: what do the residents see in C2C? How have the neighborhoods changed? I then examine how these changes might have an effect in the general community. Is crime down? Does education improve? Are neighborhoods happier because other neighborhoods are (a ripple effect)? Lastly, I look at the present levels of support of C2C by the community (through public and private entities) and try to understand their concerns and reasons for supporting or not supporting C2C.

By means of my main research findings, I find that C2C is an adequate vehicle for isolated and poor residents to partake in civic engagement, specifically for Latinos here in Walla Walla. I find that they have already produced changed sentiments on issues regarding empowerment, pride, relationships, and quality of life. NBOs have a multitude of impacts throughout the community; however, they must spend the time and energy in creating data that measures this impact. This requires adequate funding and C2C does a good job advocating for funds among private and public donors. Conceptually, public donors are extremely supportive of C2C as it promotes participatory democracy—though in reality, they provide conflicting reasons for why financial support might not be chosen. I find that the local government should spend more time understanding the processes of C2C and other NBOs and suggest they use NBOs or NBO practices for neighborhood development policies. Lastly, I argue that both C2C and the local government need to bring Latino related issues to the forefront of policy making decisions because with a Latino population at almost 20 percent (a much higher percent located in C2C's neighborhoods), Walla Walla cannot afford to isolate such a large minority group, and the health of the community at large depends on their health. In doing so, racial tensions that may exist could be solved while also showing the Latino community that Walla Walla promotes providing equitable resources and services to all the citizens.. Ultimately I find that NBOs are currently an adequate organization in tackling racial tensions, but I strongly advise C2C or any other social service organization to help develop opportunities in the Latino community for an organizations that works specifically for Latinos.

## **Literature Review**

My research through scholarly literature focuses on NBOs and their issues. A multitude of sources exist that address the efficiency and strategies in working from the bottom of society (the household) up, a strategy common among grassroots organizations. My literature review strives to clarify the relationships that exist between donors, NBOs, Latinos, and neighborhood characteristics. Few bodies of literature address the significance of NBOs working with Latino populations, in which I hope to contribute to with my own research. I've categorized the bodies of literature to address issues of NBOs, capacities of neighborhoods, strategies of NBOs, and the relationship between government agencies and NBOs.

### ***Effects/Issues of NBOs***

NBOs affect a variety of categories in society. They intentionally address specific problems or issues to work on, and sometimes unintentionally, they help or affect an issue that

wasn't the original purpose. This ripple effect can produce unimaginable changes for a neighborhood without the neighbors or the NBO realizing the amount of progress made. Significant scholarly research exists that recognizes the effects and benefits of NBOs. This section looks to answer what problems NBOs can address, how these problems change through their help, and what relationship they forge with Latinos. I have found three noticeable categories that scholars have analyzed that traditionally change for the better through neighborhood improvement initiatives. An organization's capacity for reducing barriers to economic success and mobility is the first category. This links directly to the second category of increased social capital through the help of community organizations. Lastly, the category regarding social indicators such as crime rate and educational achievement tests are directly linked to neighborhood quality and can improve or deteriorate from a neighborhood setting. Using literature, these categories are applicable to Latinos and race in general in addition to impoverished communities as a whole.

Political mobilization has been hard for Latinos due to cultural and racial opposition by the United States. Douglas Massey et al. exemplify the discussion of Latino families in contemporary United States. The authors highlight the distinctiveness of Latino families and communities from other races, criticizing scholars who lump all races under a study of African-Americans or as one racial entity. They lay out unique features of Latinos and then offer strategies in ways research can be directed to take the features into account in order to change family policies that encompass the Latino culture. They argue, "Theories must be modified to recognize the unique interplay of immigration, poverty, and family structure among Hispanics" (Massey et al. 1995, 196). First, language is seen as a large barrier for political mobilization among Latinos. The authors explain that Latinos maintain an attachment to their language. Although there are benefits for bilingualism, Hispanics who show lack of English proficiency reduce their ability to access higher-level jobs, which affects the position of Latino families in social and economic structures of the United States (Massey et al. 1995, 196). Nonetheless, each new generation born in the US achieves higher socio-economic status and language proficiency. Massey et al advocate for policy makers to better understand Hispanics in the United States through a thorough comprehension of their cultural and historical situation—therefore programs can be created that truly contribute to the social well-being of Latino families.

The success of an economy depends upon the wealth of communities and individuals. Latinos have directly added to the welfare of the economy even though they've faced constant struggles to formally enter into the economy. Their obstacles in achieving economic success are linked to the quantity of social services available. Meizhu Lui et al compares the economic mobility of Latinos in the United States. Their study offers a comprehensible analysis of the wealth divide by race in the United States, focusing on specific races and their position within the US economy. The book offers a tremendous bank of statistics and data that can be helpful in my analysis, as well as propositions to improve some of the wealth disparities in the United States. Their recommendations explain that a serious problem exists in which it is the tendency of policy makers to ignore the work of community advocates and grassroots organizations. "...[They] are creating collaborative and innovative programs and alliances that exist below the research radar and are not included in policy-making dialogues. Our reliance on empirical data has brought us a deficit mentality when crafting policies that are meant to address social and economic injustice" (Lui et al 2006, 172). Their approach, which allows processes and local

issues formed by community based organizations to be a focus rather than relying on statistical outcomes important to political bureaucrats, is essential for Latinos who are trying to make an improvement to their economic mobility and success.

Although Lui et al discuss the importance of shifting emphasis from statistical outcomes to the processes and relationships that address and help Latinos and their communities, a link still exists between outcomes and these processes. This link can be defined as social capital and civic engagement. Susan Ostrander and Kent Portney present a composition of chapters by different authors that specifically address questions pertaining to civic engagement. It explains how civic participation in America can exist on numerous levels and why it is important to keep promoting civic engagement in every context. I focus primarily on the chapter “Neighborhood and Social Capital” by Kent Portney and Jeffrey Berry; this chapter brilliantly clarifies the relationship of the neighborhood and the community, relating it directly to my research question. The authors choose four case studies of large urban NBOs situated in different parts of the nation and relate how their success serve as models for other organizations. Each location offers a different way in which a NBO forces recognition and responses from local government. Although they focus their research on an urban setting, their method of linking the organizations to the social capital of the general community is central to understanding some of the problems that NBOs may face when presented with a separation between neighborhoods and their larger community.

There are two definitions I use from this book in my project. First is the definition of a community; which is important for understanding social capital. Taken from Amitai Etzioni’s *The Golden Rule*, the authors explain:

[Communities are] ‘...defined by two characteristics: first, a web of affect-laden relationships among a group of individuals, relationships that often crisscross and reinforce one another (rather than merely one-on-one or chainlike individual relationships), and second, a measure of commitment to a set of shared values, norms, and meanings, and a shared history and identity—in short, to a particular culture’ (Portney and Berry 2007, 23).

This definition highlights the relationships that are essential to every community. Instead of a traditional linear map that shows the government at the top and individual household at the bottom, a different picture is established. Here we see a spider web of entities with the supposed community in the center and lines that connect the different entities together and represent the various relationships. Big communities can be formed of smaller one, such as the Latino community in Walla Walla, or neighbors that share values and ideals for their specific neighborhood. My second definition revolves around a neighborhood. Rather than focus on the exact geographical context of neighborhoods, which is different in each city, I chose a definition that evolves out of the relationships neighborhoods could foster. “Neighborhoods represent roots and family, our most enduring and deeply felt identities. The financial investment in our homes or apartments makes the viability and future of this physical and emotional terrain of supreme importance to our well-being” (Portney and Berry 2007 21). This citation is interesting because it brings to light the misconception that neighborhoods are the way there are for ‘natural’ reasons—people living in nice neighborhoods take for granted the amenities it provides. An

awareness of neighborhood quality does not develop until crime, drug trafficking, and isolation become the defining characteristics of a neighborhood.

‘Social capital’ is a term that is very important to the type of work NBOs perform. As noted before, it links important statistical outcomes to the process and work that goes into changing a neighborhood. Portney and Berry refer to two different types of social capital: localized and generalized. Localized social capital is characterized by informal interactions between individuals within communities (such as talking to a neighbor), while generalized social capital is when one specific group interacts with another. For example, when a NBO creates relations with a school board, the result is a bridged community (Portney and Berry 2007, 28-31). Neighborhood based organizations are one of the most productive organizations in creating localized and generalized social capital. The question Portney and Berry try to answer is how participation in a NBO can lead to a heightened sense of a unified community among its members. Through their study, they find that NBOs can successfully encourage further civic engagement and participation in public life. In a later chapter, the authors noted, “Participation affords opportunity for the free exchange of ideas and allows individuals to further their interests more effectively by joining with others with common interests and goals. Organizations themselves offer countless societal benefits...” (Ostrander and Portney 2007, 108). In other words, without participation in building social capital, a community would cease to function on a social level, and possibly more detrimentally, on an economic level.

Similarly, Silverman, offers an account of the impacts and relations between social capital and community-based organizations (CBOs). The book compiles different case studies of CBOs and how they foster social capital for their community. Silverman credits Jane Jacobs and James Coleman for the creation of the term and describes social capital as such: “Social capital means relationships of trust embedded in social networks...Participants can rely upon one another to uphold social norms and to reciprocate favors” (Silverman, 2004, 20). Social capital, the authors argue, is an abundant democratic resource that is available to all, and communities are enhanced through the use and promotion of social capital. This definition fits in with Portney and Berry’s idea of social capital; however, they fail to highlight the notion of trust as well as Silverman is able to do. Another key idea formed in this book that parallels ideas with Portney and Berry is the notion that an organization can transcend class and color lines within a community and create common values and goals to work towards. Lastly, a prominent idea that relates closely with my research is that of funding. Who should fund a NBO? This book looks closely at some of the cons that are linked with funds from government entities. It provides useful insight applicable to C2C as it tries to gain financial support from local government. I detail this relationship later in the literature review.

The increase of education success through the pathway of the neighborhoods is another factor that NBOs can address. The improvement of neighborhoods could possibly lead to the improvement of socioeconomic indicators and related statistics—although the outcomes aren’t easy to measure, some literature addresses the improvement of neighborhoods in direct relation to improvements made in other sectors, such as education. Mary Eamon discusses the effects of stable and healthy neighborhoods arguing they prove to impact the reading achievement of Latino youth. Basing her hypothesis on a previous empirical study by Catsambis and Beveridge, Eamon notes “Disadvantaged neighborhoods can provide inadequate informal and institutional

resources to assist parents in socializing their children and providing them with educational opportunities” (Eamon 2005, 165). Eamon conducts her own study, focusing solely on Latino youth in between 10-14 years old. She picks a random sample of Latino youth across the nation. Her results found that reading achievement was directly linked to neighborhood quality. She concludes that the neighborhoods environment, parenting practices within the home, and socio-demographic setting, all contribute to the educational success of Latino students (Eamon 2005, 170-172). This data is very useful in proving the importance of neighborhood stability and health to the overall education of Latinos—and to youth in general.

Directly related to Eamon’s study is James Ainsworth, who argues the neighborhood context affects educational outcomes as well. Instead of providing his own research, he critically exemplifies other scholars’ work upon the subject, aiming to prove that the topic deserves much more attention than neighborhood research scholars have produced. A main argument is that different levels of neighborhood quality can affect a student due to the low number of role models available and the negative impact of traits common in poorer neighborhoods. He claims, “...students who are monitored less, given fewer activity options, and are subject to more influential peer subcultures, may be more likely to develop anti-school attitudes and behaviors” (Ainsworth 2002, 47). The development of social capital and control would further this idea because the more relationships and trust played part in the environment, more control over deviant behavior and furthered role models would exist. Eamon contributes to Ainsworth demand; however, literature and research still lacks in the subject.

Lastly, crime poses a serious problem for neighborhoods, especially those with lower socioeconomic indicators because crime has consistently been linked with poverty (Eamon 2005; Silverman 2004). Michael Greenberg comments that little scholarly literature exists that proves a direct link to crime neighborhood quality and the needs associated with that quality. He conducted a survey in a neighborhood in New Jersey that measured the neighbors’ perspective of important components to a healthy neighborhood; crime defined itself as number one on their lists. He explains, “Crime and physical deterioration are the most critical factors associated with poor neighborhood quality. When both crime and serious blight are present, a neighborhood is rated as poor or fair quality, irrespective of other characteristics” (Greenberg 1999, 607). Furthermore, Greenberg notes that the improvement of other neighborhood characteristics--such as schools, parks, trust, and social capital—increases only once crime is controlled. Linking this study to the above literature, he highlights the imperative for NBOs to maintain a close relationship with the police and the residents to order to find sources for the crime common in neighborhoods. Finally, he concludes that residents in poor and fair quality neighborhoods usually mistrust the government or local authorities, thus creating a hostile setting for crime to flourish (Greenberg 1999, 619). These issues are important because they came straight from the perceptions reported in his survey, rather than from outsiders stating what signifies a healthy neighborhood.

### ***Neighborhoods’ Capacity***

The section above elaborates on many scholars’ reflection of the deficits in urban and rural neighborhoods throughout the US. Although these authors recognize that neighborhoods are perfect arenas to improve education, social capital, and economic success for the overall

community, the fact that these neighborhoods need specific help from NBOs is highlighted through these authors. In other words, scholars carefully word that some neighborhoods need charity from organizations because they have too many deficits to change. Other literature exists that focuses upon a neighborhood's capacity to contribute to a larger community through their own characteristics. These neighborhood features also show that NBOs should access and promote them in order so they can reach their potential. Although this is applicable everywhere, I narrow in upon the ability of Latinos, race, and culture as interconnecting positive traits that could boost a neighborhood.

Latinos face many obstacles, but their presence and labor also enhances and beneficially changes American communities. William Flores and Rina Benmayor explore Latino's "citizenship" in the United States as a lifestyle that reinvents the meaning and implications of an American citizen. They show that cultural citizenship represents Latinos emerging from shadows to claim rights and spaces in the US, reintroducing "American" ideals like social justice democracy to support their cause (Flores 1997, 276). The authors investigate some benefits of Latino culture, ultimately concluding, "This country is strengthened, not weakened, by the vibrancy brought to it by immigrant and non-white communities" (Flores 1997, 5). In their definition, citizenship is not a matter of what official documents or status an individual has, but is defined by actions and interests in relation to a community. Not only has Latino music, celebrations, and food been integrated into American society, but values central to Hispanic lifestyle have also influenced communities at large. Part of the definition of citizenship, "...involves the right to retain difference, while also attaining membership in society. It also involves self definition, affirmation, and empowerment" (Flores 1997, 262). This concept of citizenship differs greatly from more traditional concepts; nonetheless, it remains consistent with the democratic system of government.

Susan Oboler, who traces the impact of Latinos in the United States while using different theories and case studies to support her arguments, further analyzes the idea of citizenship in relation to Latinos. Likewise, she challenges the notion of citizenship only as a right to vote rather than as active participation and empowerment. She avidly argues, "Latino/as are simultaneously contributing...to the reconfiguration of the meaning of belonging to a collectivity—and hence of citizenship in its broadest sense—through their struggles against ongoing exclusion and for social justice and the affirmation of human dignity" (Oboler 2006, 11). The similar arguments from Oboler and Flores indicated that the idea of Latino citizenship, and Latinos' ability to reshape the definition of citizenship, are critical for all sectors of the community to recognize, because their impact on overall community success can be monumental.

A further way Latinos would demonstrate citizenship through the tools offered by voluntary civic organizations can be shown if we look directly at values that have been strong in Latino culture. As most scholars have noted, 'Latino' refers to people all around Latin America, and yet there are many cultural and historical differences between Latinos from different countries. Aida Hurtado, along with many authors who present different case studies, maintain the objective to demystify the Latino family in the United States. She relays how certain relations are rooted into Latino culture, pointing out that ethnic identity, familialism, and Spanish-language maintenance are three relevant constants. Of family, Hurtado notes that family ties are



often challenged by a socio-economic and Chicano feminist angle; however, “Latino families living in trigenerational households are not uncommon, and appreciating this fact will become increasingly important for understanding Latino family life” (Hurtado 1995, 50-51). Community ideals promoted by Latino values is also presented within this literary work. The authors discuss how the hardships Latinos face in the United States reinforce the need for Latinas to value their close social networks. Flores and Benmayor add, “In their memory, poverty, hardship, and the traumatic experiences they produced, were somehow tempered by the sense of connectedness to community... The quality of interaction and mutual support they spoke about represented an extension of *valores de familia* to neighborhood and community” (Flores and Benmayor 1999, 187). The proximity of neighbors and frequent interaction among neighbors provides an easy vehicle through which Latino neighbors can exhibit their sense of community and respect for individual families.

Lui et al also make the connection to the economic benefits of a community by tapping into the cultural diversity of the nation. They argue that although Latinos face struggles due to historical oppression, their cultural identity within the United States cannot be ignored since they predict by 2010, 38 percent of the United States will consist of people of color (Lui et al. 2006, 158). The authors explain that many current policies contrast with values common to Latino families. For example, a family with children for Latinos was averaged at five people while Caucasian families with children average three members. Unfortunately, the United States property, housing, and financial contracts values the individual, which delineates from communal asset-building activities that are prominent among Latinos (Lui et al 2006, 162). Offering a solution, the authors advocate, “If instead of deficit thinking policies, we approach multilingual and culturally diverse children as assets to and in the educational process, we can then build educational spaces and places that reflect our communities, that make use of the communities’ real resources, and that recognizes the global nature of what communities contribute” (Lui et al 2006, 168). This comment really gets at the heart of the “deficit mentality”; by addressing at large policies that encompasses culture, communities could experience a general improvement in economic and social well-being from cultural values flourishing rather than being suppressed.

It is evident that resources exist within many neighborhoods, regardless of their poverty level. Nonetheless, neighborhoods are most likely not going to work their way out of poverty without a push. Michael Stoll examines how participation within community and neighborhood organizations differs according to race and to poverty level. Unfortunately for my project, this article focuses its “race” analysis on participation among blacks, but it offers insights that explain why some races might participate less or more than Caucasians. The ethnic community model is a theory the author discusses, stating, “The ethnic community model argues that residence and membership in subordinate minority communities leads people to develop strong feelings of group consciousness and attachment” (Stoll, 2001, 531). This model was generated in the 1970s and 1980s, after the fervor of the civil rights movement, so Stoll questions whether the claim is still legitimate. Stoll explains that high poverty neighborhoods experience less participation due to lack of resources. His primary resource is the Los Angeles Survey of Urban Inequality (LASUI), which contains data on participants’ participation in civic organizations as well as their household location. This article is useful for my question because it illustrates how important participation in civic participation is within a community, while recognizing how

neighborhood characteristics – wealth, ethnicity, and race – can deter that very participation. While neighbors carry individual traits that add to the picture, these traits will never truly emerge without some external help.

### ***Standards and Processes for NBOs***

Although each neighborhood is unique, there are strategies and processes that NBOs should strive to use in order to achieve success. This success should be less measured by statistical outcomes (as stated by Lui et al), but rather on how neighbors change their perceptions. If neighbors can see the importance of sustaining a healthy neighborhood and possessing healthy relationships with other neighbors, then the neighborhoods will reach statistical outcomes on its own. Prior scholarly research discusses these strategies by using different case studies as a means to judge what works and what does not. From this research, have taken the most important ideas that lead NBOs in the right direction to empower the residents they work with.

As stated in my introduction, ownership of a neighborhood's amenities is a concept that many NBOs strive to promote. Ownership means that NBOs encourage residents to do the work themselves, which then fosters sentiments of pride and value to that work among neighbors. The chances of degradation and destruction to neighborhood improvement projects decrease dramatically once neighbors invest their own time, money, and energy in creating something that they can call their own. Lisa Robinson presents an excellent case study that discusses some of the processes used by NBOs that lead to empowerment and success. She writes about Market Creek Plaza, situated in the city of San Diego and consists of around 88,000 residents, primarily consisting of a variety of different minority races. She explains, "Like many communities of color, these neighborhoods had experienced decades of under-investment" (Robinson 2005, 13). The plaza was a result of a neighborhood initiative to revitalize the neighborhood in a specific manner, where the residents were the key actors in the project. One of the purposes of the article is to lay out specific strategies for residents to realize their dreams for their neighborhoods. These consist of defining four strategies that are, I argue, keys for a NBO to create initial acceptance into neighborhoods. First is outreach and relationship building. This involves walking neighborhoods, going door-to-door. NBO employees will ask neighbors what they feel is wrong with their neighborhoods and what they want to see improved upon (Robinson 2001, 15-16). The strategy is crucial in getting neighbors to trust the NBO and is also a strong component of social capital. Forging relationships of trust, generalized and localized forms of social capital are executed through outreach (discussed by Portney and Berry). The second strategy is to garner continual support in participation from the residents. This involves truly valuing the work and ideas that residents offer. Third is to build and leave skills and capacities in the neighborhood and community. This means offering training programs that address important tools needed to be active in changing a neighborhood. This also means providing trainings that are available for different ESL residents. The last strategy is about initiating ownership—a concept I believe NBO's should emphasis in order to see sustainability. In this case study, the NBO models ownership "...on the Native American tribes' 'theory of thirds'—a third for profits for individual benefit, a third for community benefit, and a third to be reinvested in ongoing development" (Robinson 2005, 19). This allowed the residents to actually own a part of the plaza. Ownership is a concept that leads to sustained healthy neighborhoods; however, I see the concept being

enacted through various forms of work and literally “owning” an amenity does not allude to the idea of changed sentiments from neighbors. As I stated before, pride is another sentiment that shows neighbors have ownership.

The case study makes a point of addressing issues of race that arise from working in racially diverse neighborhoods. Robinson iterates, “Community meetings sometimes become venues for the expression of racial tension. Open dialogue about different experiences of privilege and exclusion has helped build greater understanding and insight into these issues among community members” (Robinson 1995, 26). This statement is important because tensions between races are still apparent in every community, whether in schools, work environments, or neighborhoods. Closing the book on race issues only furthers the problems and the ability of minorities to feel connected to the community, and this case study openly tries to solve this. Portney and Berry further this discussion with results from their case studies. They state, “We concluded that the neighborhood association system facilitates interaction between predominantly minority, predominately white, and mixed neighborhoods. Over the years, neighborhood associations appear to have played a significant role in reducing conflict and antagonism among racial lines” (Portney and Berry 2007, 40). Massey et al. also advocate for programs of all kinds to truly understand the Latino community before they attempt to create welfare initiatives. They explain that the programs must be flexible and responsive to the community being served (Latinos), and “the incorporation of personnel at all levels of the organizational structure who can design and implement programs in relation to the needs of the Latino target population” (Massey et al. 1995, 202). Along with the other four points mentioned, this issue is also crucial for harmony to exist between neighbors.

Jim Diers presents a different case study of neighborhood organizations in Seattle while offering practical lessons that leads to participatory democracy. Diers uses his 30 year successful experience with Seattle neighborhoods to advocate the rewards by changing communities through empowering neighbors and neighborhoods. Diers essentially presents important processes that are necessary for a NBO to succeed. He furthers the discussion of civic participation that previous scholars have focused on to encompass “empowerment” of the people. Diers presents three valuable themes that can serve as strategies to help direct action for NBOs. First, organize people around *their dreams* rather than what the NBO thinks their dreams should be. This concept is much more oriented around the neighbors’ vision than Robinson’s case study. She emphasized making the specific project centered on the insights of neighbors. In contrast, Diers argues that the neighbors specific dreams should be those implemented. Projects arise out of the dreams rather than bringing a project to a neighborhood and have neighbors contribute to the makeup. Second, organize people around issues that *are achievable* in order so they understand how collective power can help them accomplish tangible goals. Lastly, organizers must develop an understanding of *self-sufficiency* in order to eventually leave their neighborhood with the power and determination to create change themselves (Diers 2004, 25-26). This goal is similar to Robinson’s concept of ownership but it provides a different version. He combines her third point (of giving resources and tools) with the idea of sustainability so neighborhoods can be healthy on their own. Seattle’s success in neighborhood action can serve as an instrumental guide for overcoming obstacles and building specific strategies for NBOs.

One important idea I pursued was the idea of community organizing—on a more general level of the community, as well as the neighborhood level. Judith N. Desena underlines the way community organizations empower ordinary people by presenting case studies and detailed analyses of each study. Desena claims, “Participation in community organizations empowers residents to direct and challenge government and corporations, and thus, influence the outcome of policy decisions regarding municipal services and the future of neighborhoods” (Desena, 1999, 1). She uses the neighborhoods of Greenpoint and Williamsburg in the early 1980s in Brooklyn to illustrate her points and through the case study, I picked out underlying strategies she focused on that are important to NBOs. The neighborhoods she specifies are multi-ethnic which parallels with Robinson’s case study. Like Robinson, Desena reiterates the importance of providing resources for race relations and tensions that appear in the neighborhood context. Within Greenpoint and Williamsburg, the neighborhood started a coalition board. Desena explains that by mandating all races within the neighborhoods be represented on this board, the neighborhood is required to acknowledge racial issues that are specific to each race. Leadership training was another goal that her case study acknowledges. The Coalition set out goals to find leaders who would mobilize other people in neighborhoods and throughout the community. Although implicit in Diers and Robinson, Desena specifically addresses the effectiveness of having actual residents bring their issues to the forefront of the community rather than the community organization.

Flores and Benmayor also explain the importance of space for Latinos, both physical and creative. Space can represent a physical public park or it could symbolize a liberty to think certain thoughts; either way, the meaning invokes sentiments of safety and inclusion (Flores and Benmayor 1997, 15). Communities are constantly reshaping their interests, and Latinos need to be included in these processes. Vicki Ruiz also argues the importance of Latinos claiming space, especially in relation to Latina women. Her book tracks the historical journey 20<sup>th</sup> century of Mexican woman in developing their capacity to claim private and public space in the United States. She uses the stories of different Hispanics who have shown an ability to exert power in home, at work, and in neighborhoods and communities. She recognizes the difficulties Latinos have faced: “Claiming public space can involve fragile alliances and enduring symbols, rooted in material realities and ethereal visions... On a situational, grass-roots level, informal and formal voluntary organizations do serve as conduits for women’s collective identity and empowerment” (Ruiz 1998, 128). She brings up an interesting point in showing that grassroots organizations can provide an access for women to express themselves in a way that is different from other institutional entities (church, government, etc). Moreover, they channel different versions of citizenship explained by Flores and Benmayor. Ruiz argues however, that once claimed, people must sustain this space, explaining, “Struggles for social justice cannot be boiled down to a dialectic of accommodation and resistance, but should be placed within the centrifuge of negotiation, subversion, and consciousness. Building community is both a legacy and a responsibility” (Ruiz 1998, 145). This consciousness must be aware that there is space to claim and the motivation to fight to keep it claimed, and NBOs should use this as a defining characteristic for Latino populations

In recapping some strategies and processes that scholars promote and elaborate upon, I’ve created a list that summarizes the key strategies that NBOs should address in order to

achieve some success with their relationships in neighborhoods. These are not laid out in any order—just as long as they are important to the NBO.

- Build social capital through outreach: Many neighborhoods are isolated from even their next door neighbors. NBOs ought to aim to forge as many relationships—neighbor-to-neighbor, neighborhood-to-community, and so on.
- Offer the resources and tools for residents to take control of their neighborhood's future.
- To be constantly aware of the social demographics and racial relationships existing in neighborhoods. Racial tensions and problems could lead to less social capital and consequently, less productivity among neighbors.
- Treat neighborhoods as assets rather than deficits: This implies in general and specifically to racially diverse neighborhoods. Flores and Benmayor illustrate this point in writing, "Continuing to characterize people in terms of deficits does not promise to yield any more equitable arrangement than that which prevails today. Conversely, acknowledging diversity as an asset opens the way to discovering the resources different cultural communities have to offer" (Flores and Benmayor 1997, 205). NBOs must open the doors for what race has to offer. This also means focusing on the process rather than the outcome.
- Promote public spaces and ownership: Sustainability arrives only if neighbors see themselves in the project accomplished.

### ***NBOs and Local Support***

If officially a non-profit, NBOs are eligible for both private and public funding. Scholars have commented on the benefits and disadvantages from receiving funds from both sectors of the community. Nevertheless, NBOs must receive funding and the more they prove their impact, the more they receive. Much of the public funds come from government entities and the relationship of both is never clear. Usually, NBOs will not want all their funding to originate from the government because that would mean they are essentially directed by it. I aim to clarify this relationship in order to find a balance that suits the goals and motives for NBOs.

Diers sets a standard for a relationship between the government and a neighborhood organization. He explains that the relationship between the local government and the community needs to be one of mutual understanding. He believes that many governments treat their citizens as customers, which turns citizens into taxpayers rather than engaged, caring, community members. He states, "True partnership requires government to move beyond promoting citizen participation to facilitating community empowerment...[this] means giving citizens the tools and resources they need to address their own priorities through their own organizations" (Diers, 2004, 21). NBOs are a strong advocate in providing these tools and resources with or without the help of the local government; however, Diers argues that this support is the responsibility of the government as well. He advocates, "Governments must learn to see neighborhoods not only as places with great needs, but as communities with tremendous resources. Communities can do so much that government cannot, and working together, communities and government can do even more that could not be done otherwise" (Diers 2004, 172). This refers back to the "deficit mentality" that governments and NBOs both must eliminate to be as productive as possible.

Even though he advocates partnership, he warns NBOs from becoming dependent on government funds because history has proven that budget cuts are very probable.

Portney and Berry present specific examples that NBOs forged relationships with the local government in order to get their issues heard and funded. They describe that many neighborhood associations are maintained through their organizational structure—“where representatives from neighborhood associations meet to discuss, decide about, and resolve issues. This mildly hierarchical structure provides a formal vertical bridge to city officials” (Ostrander and Portney 2007, 32). There are many venues where residents can work with the local government, and the authors stress a structure that allows both horizontal and vertical relationships. Horizontal bridging refers to the engagement of residents in various government and public activities ranging from electing an official that they see fit, to attending a neighborhood picnic. Vertical bridging, as explained above, is more formal, for example when different tiers are formed in the community who serve as channels for communication (example: City hall speaks with the Advisory Board and then that Board communicates with residents). As long as both vertical and horizontal forms of bridging to the local government are created, the structure of the NBO is less important. In contrast with Diers, they do not put responsibility on the city government to fund NBOs as they focus on NBOs forging their own relationships; however, they provide adequate reasons for funding should go to NBOs.

Silverman, while making similar arguments from Diers, Portney, and Berry, creates a progressive model for formal institutions to use in order to create and sustain social capital through community-based organizations. He uses three elements that he finds appropriate that address various policy implications. First, he writes, a “call for legislation to be enacted at the federal, state, and municipal levels of government to earmark a portion of revenues from property, sales, and income taxes for democratically-structured, community-based organizations” (Silverman 2004, 192). This, he claims, leads to economic stability for CBOs or NBOs, as they do not have to constantly apply for grants. He also notes in an earlier chapter that community organizations should be financially independent from government agencies in order to keep their original task at hand without kneeling to the interests of the government (Silverman 2004, 184). He appears to veer from that point with his “progressive model for mobilizing social capital” but NBO’s should always be aware and concerned with whose interest they serve. Silverman’s second element involves increasing the organization’s input on policy making regarding areas of development that affect people on a neighborhood level. He argues, “Progressive reform would give residents the power to vote in community referendums on proposed community development projects” (Silverman 2004, 193). Giving power to the residents to choose themselves what they want in terms of development of a neighborhood is an essential component to ownership processes described above for NBOs. Lastly, Silverman advocates for the grassroots organizations to include all sectors of the neighborhood when making decisions, particularly the various races that are part of the neighborhood. With the promotion of diversity as a forefront issue, policy changes concerning community development will be driven with a principle in addressing racial issues (Silverman 2004, 194). Again, Silverman connects NBOs processes with actual change implementation.

In general, Latinos do not experience much representation from the political spectrum. Here, it is possible to go grass why or why not a government might support a NBO. Rodney Hero

analyzes the difference between cities that experience Latino political representation in government (with a Latino possessing an elected position), and those that do not. He uses the case study of Pueblo and Denver during the 1980s, two cities in Colorado who both have high Latino populations (Pueblo with 41 percent and Denver 21). Hero explains that despite Pueblo's high Latino population, Latino political mobilization and organization is higher in Denver as shown with the elected Mayor, Federico Pena (Hero 1997, 249). Not coincidentally, political incorporation of minority representatives is also high, which is due to the progressive regime that stressed racial/ethnic awareness. In contrast, Pueblo is a smaller town with conservative representatives in political positions and much less minority representation. This accounts for the lesser progress Pueblo has made. Hero argues that the segregation of neighborhoods helps get minorities elected to government positions. He states, "Residential segregation may actually foster the minority representation on the city council that is a prerequisite for incorporation--and in turn, policy responsiveness" (Hero 1997, 254). Hero's findings serve an explanation for why some NBOs, working in racially mixed neighborhoods, will not receive the funding they deserve. Without political representation, government policies will not attach itself to the improvement of racial/ethnic concerns.

### ***Conclusion***

Through this discussion of scholarly literature, I have shown that neighborhoods are the best local context for Latinos to express active participation and citizenship. This literature indicates that we ought to judge an NBO's success in part by the degree to which it reduces barriers to economic and educational success while simultaneously increasing social capital, as defined above. Although concrete goals should be set, it is evident that neighborhoods possess capacities of their own, and governments and NBOs must look at neighborhoods from that perspective in order to allow the resources of a neighborhood to really flourish. This approach also means opening up the dialogue between Latinos and non-Latinos in order to eliminate racial tension and encourage more productive work for both groups. Lastly, NBOs should follow a process that leads them to empower neighbors rather than to merely projects, because sustainable, healthy neighborhoods will only arise from the will of neighbors, not from the desires of external entities, however well-meaning and effective in the short-term they may be. Through this empowerment, scholars believe a relationship between NBOs and the local government should be one of mutual respect, as each complements the other in achieving goals. My project looks to gather this information and present it in a way that addresses the gap between projects initiated externally and the creation of internal ability and will to develop projects from the inside out. While this sustainable neighborhood reinvigoration should be the long-term goal, NBOs can serve adequate vehicles to push Latinos and impoverished citizens to participate in the community, while also improving the community at large in a generalized way (through social indicators and civic engagement).

### **Research Methods**

As stated before, my research question "How do Neighborhood Based Organizations prove they have a clear and positive role in the general community?" looks not only to address the benefits of NBO's on neighborhoods, but also to investigate how NBO's can benefit the general community. To answer this and subordinate questions, my research took three pathways:

1. To understand the impact of C2C on specific neighborhoods and the Walla Walla community. Social indicators measure this impact, as well as the opinions and potential changed sentiments of residents affected by the help of C2C. I'm also examining this impact specifically on the Latino population that lives in the neighborhoods.
2. To understand the processes, strategies, and ideologies used by C2C that can eventually lead to statistical outcomes and civic engagement for the community of Walla Walla.
3. To understand general opinions about C2C within the Walla Walla community, and evaluate opinions of C2C as a mechanism through which to judge the value and importance of the various problems C2C tries to address. Does C2C tackle issues important to the different sectors of the community—and is that important in their work?

Before I tackled the research, I gathered as much data as I could on the background of C2C. This information was gathered by reading C2C's Business Plan, their Grant Application to the Donald and Virginia Sherwood Trust (for the year of 2008-2009), a draft of indicator results for the Sherwood Trust, and field notes from meetings with Geof Morgan from the Whatcom Network. I also used information gathered from the interview I conducted with Nancy Carter.

My first goal I undertook to measure the impact of C2C was to grasp the problems with Latino participation, specifically in Walla Walla. The goal is to prove that minority groups in communities deserve recognition and access to resources due to their historical struggles with oppression in the United States. Ostrander writes, "Large numbers of low-income people and people of color, and sometimes women, have less access and opportunity for a variety of reasons to actively participate in public life. This inequality of access...is the real crisis in need of attention" (Ostrander et Al. 2007 4). Although these struggles are very real, it's important to recognize in my methods to separate methods that reinforce the deficit mentality explained by Lui et al., and those that promote capacities and find resources in neighborhoods. I observed in participant observation to see if C2C supported the resources of neighborhoods rather than focus on problems of the neighborhood. I used the Census Bureau and other statistical databases from to retrieve my statistics on Latinos in Washington State and Walla Walla to look at level of poverty. Many limitations exist with Census statistics. For example, civic participation or any statistics regarding organizational participation is not included so it is hard to truly realize the "lack" of Latino participation when numbers that measure it do not exist. Although my secondary sources provide case studies that measure these forms of participations, contextual situations make it hard to apply the data to Walla Walla. I relied on my survey (described below and participant observation to provide the results.

Another method of research I gathered to measure the impact of C2C was to choose specific indicators that show or have the ability to show effects of C2C on the community at large. One specific data piece I analyzed was crime rates from the Police department, separated by neighborhoods. The Summary of Indicators, drafted by Barila, also provides a guideline of what C2C hopes to accomplish in the statistical sector. It also includes statistical outcomes that C2C had already affected, such as increased feelings of trust in the neighborhood. I attended the Walla Walla Children's Forum, where a Data book that contained many statistics that related to



youth was at my disposal (the Children’s Forum distributes one every year to get a perspective of the health of children in the county). A specific indicator I tried to focus on was education achievement related to neighborhoods, as thoroughly discussed in my literature review. Previous literature notes the importance of the quality of neighborhood in the achievement of youth, specifically in relation to Latinos (Eamon 2005 165). I met with Ron Higgins, the Director of Assessment for the Walla Walla Public Schools, to discuss the plausibility of gathering performance data on kids by their neighborhood. His reaction was extremely positive, and he provided me with the data by collecting data on children from the EC neighborhood’s Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) scores. The WASL has limitations, notably that it has only been a required test for one year. This means that students who took it before were not forced, and consequently, may not have tried as hard since it did not mean much. Since I was only able to gather the statistics in one neighborhood, there was no comparison of other neighborhoods (maybe wealthier) that reflected educational success paralleled with neighborhood context. In order to create some sort of comparison, I picked schools located in affluent or wealthy neighborhoods, where a greater percentage of students derived from wealthy neighborhoods, and compared their WASL scores with the EC neighborhood. This information of the public schools was available through a government website.<sup>1</sup> C2C has not yet looked at their impact in other sectors besides crime through working in the neighborhood context. By focusing on two strong indicators that are important to the welfare of a community, I can create possibilities for C2C to reach out to develop and maintain their impact on a statistical level. Each statistic will be analyzed in a neighborhood-to-neighborhood context and then measured in context of the whole Walla Walla community.

Lastly, but just as important, a different form of primary research I used to measure the impact of C2C was to conduct a survey in the Edith and Carrie (EC) neighborhood. I chose the EC neighborhood over the other neighborhoods C2C has worked with because it was the most isolated, thus needing the most resources, it had a large based Latino population, and it was in the middle of completing a community center. The reason I decided to implement a survey was to measure the progress C2C has made in changing the sentiments of the neighbors. The questions I asked were divided into two categories. The first section pertained to a resident’s personal perception of the neighborhoods—whether the neighborhood was safe and whether they had relationships with their neighbors. As Greenberg noted in my scholarly research, perception of crime is a leading factor into the deterioration of neighborhoods. People are less likely to create relationships in their neighborhoods if they constantly feel unsafe. The second section concentrated on their perceptions of neighbor empowerment since C2C’s involvement. These questions focused on their change in attitude towards feelings empowered and how important that change was. As scholarly literature has shown, empowering neighbors can lead to sustained neighborhoods since residents see the importance and benefits of living in a healthy environment. My survey hopes to measure this “empowerment”. I passed out my survey at a barbeque at the almost finished community center on the evening and then walked the neighborhoods a couple other times with Federico, walking the neighborhood. “Walking the neighborhoods”, often done by C2C, is a method of outreach, as explained by Robinson in her case study. Outreach furthers social capital and relationships of trust. I also analyzed 160 anecdotes that C2C collected in walking the neighborhoods. When an outreach worker noticed a

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us>

change in the neighbors' sentiments or took part in an interesting scenario, they would write it down. Key sentiments can be seen through these anecdotes.

My second pathway describes the processes that NBO's use to develop their relations with neighborhoods and how they empower neighbors to create change themselves. This section included two different methods. First, I use my secondary research to help me create an effective "way" to organize neighborhoods. My purpose is not to state an objective and perfect model that all NBOs should follow, but to find patterns within case studies that lead to effective organizing by neighbors without the NBOs taking control themselves. Second, I use participant observation to confirm the processes used by C2C that relate directly back to patterns identified. With this method, my goal was to see if C2C implemented the key strategies that have been laid out by Diers, Robinsons, and Desena—were they lacking in any process or standard? Had they created a new one of their own that proved successful? As explained in my literature review, I use these authors to create a basis for establishing a model that NBOs can follow. These include outreach (social capital), identifying and creating open dialogue for race tensions and relations, resident ownership, empowerment, offering the tools and resources to create leaders but never doing for neighbors when they have the ability to do it themselves, and bridging horizontal and vertical relations with the local government. These can be seen as the best practices used by NBOs; again, I do not claim in creating the perfect model. My participant observation included attending a neighborhood meeting in the Jefferson Park neighborhood, attending the barbeque at EC, and walking the neighborhood with Federico. I interviewed Nancy Carter, an employee of C2C, on November 6<sup>th</sup> around lunchtime in a Café in downtown Walla Walla. I wanted to get the perspective of a C2C employee on how C2C accomplishes its short term and long-term goals. My questions included those on the history of C2C, types of processes used, and funding of the organization.

My third research method was to understand the perspective of the community outside of the neighborhoods C2C worked in: Walla Walla in general. Were the values promoted by C2C also values that pertained to the general community? Interviews consisted of my main method for answering this question. I divided my interviews into two categories: local and state government representatives and sectors of the community who may have an interest in C2C. Among local and state governmental representatives, I interviewed City Council, County Commissioners and Port of Walla Walla Commissioners because they controlled the money flow of tax dollars in Walla Walla. It would be their decision for the city, county, or port to financially support C2C. I asked members of the city council relatively the same questions; questions about the city's role in funding organizations like C2C, what the city's interest in C2C might be, how C2C can improve, and the importance of C2C in light of their action with large Latino based populations in these neighborhoods. For the County Commissioners, I questioned them about the County's relation to the city and their responsibilities for the up keeping of neighborhoods; many of the questions were similar to those I asked the council members. Lastly, for the Port Commissioner, other than ask on similar topics as the other two agencies, I aimed to understand the Port's goal of improving the "Quality of Life", in order to see how C2C could fit in. My main objective for these interviews was to comprehend what reasons motivated the local government to support or refuse support for C2C, and to see what role the Latino population played in their decision-making. Diers reinforces the importance of a mutually compatible relationship between the NBOs and the local government. He states that the government should act "more as a

facilitator than as an expert” (Diers 2004 172). This idea underlines that the government is working for the interest of the people—my interviews also serve to judge if local representatives are working with or above the citizens of Walla Walla.

To compare some of my results with opinions of the community, I used a survey completed by the local newspaper that mapped citizens’ priorities for how they wanted their tax dollars spent. This survey was available to whoever wanted to take it in the community (minus age restriction of 18). There are important limitations for using this survey as a primary source. First, the newspaper is published in English so it excludes anyone who is unable to read English, cannot read, or does not prefer newspapers. The survey article makes no reference to offering a Spanish version and only makes reference that the respondents tended to be more affluent. In addition, since the survey was self-motivated and voluntary, most likely it attracted responses from people motivated and interested. As a result, disadvantaged and marginalized groups are underrepresented in this survey. Although these groups are who I speak for in my research, my goal is to also see if the community at large works to include them into public life, so these limitations prove useful in understanding this concept.

To represent other sectors of the community, I interviewed a representative from the Police Department and Child and Family Services Department of Walla Walla. Both parties were extremely supportive of C2C, and I wanted to understand how their support translated into the representation of a need for the community. Both sectors have large investments in the community and are important for the health and function of Walla Walla. In relation to crime, I wanted to explore the idea of community policing, an idea that has grown in many Police Departments in the United States (including in Walla Walla). As Diers conceptualizes, “Strong communities can also play a major role in crime prevention. No amount of public safety spending can buy the kind of security that comes from neighbors caring and watching out for one another” (Diers 2004, 172). With this idea in mind, I asked questions that would link the work of policing to the work of C2C. I originally was hesitant to interview Children Services however I realized that their responsibilities linked to a state-wide department which is useful when I look at C2C from as a state issue rather than a local city issue. I focused my questions around how the state could support neighborhood initiatives through resources or finances. I also offered the idea of looking at C2C action through the lens of Children services to see if C2C influences their work or helps their cause.

My research methods have allowed me to answer my research question from a multitude of perspectives. I tried to tackle the question first without assuming that NBOs, and specifically C2C, are the correct tools for neighborhood revitalization and Latino participation in a community. This approach opened up possibilities for alternatives or approaches that C2C has yet to address.

## **Analysis of Results**

### *Background of C2C*

Commitment to Community, as previously stated, is a grassroots organization that maintains the initiative to “build a strong community through building strong neighborhoods”

(Business Plan, 1). This initiative commenced in 2004 at a community forum hosted by Blue Mountain Action Council (BMAC) and the Donald and Virginia Sherwood Trust. BMAC is a non-profit agency that looks to provide services and opportunities for low-income families and individuals. The purpose of the forum was to develop solutions for major concerns of poverty and neighborhood stability. “The top three priority solutions focused on reducing the blight and deterioration, creating or strengthening neighborhood identity, and developing youth/community centers and activities” (Business Plan, 1). Based on scholarly literature they conducted, C2C evolved from these solutions to become an organization that focuses its efforts on the desires of the residents, rather than address specific outcomes that must result from their work. Right now, C2C’s team consists of five people: Nancy Carter, Louis Gonzalez, Federico Diaz, Kariann Savelesky, and Teri Barila (my community partner); however only 2.25 people are paid for their work.

To date, C2C has offered their help to three different neighborhoods in Walla Walla: Jefferson Park neighborhood, Washington Park neighborhood, and the Edith-Carrie neighborhood. They took Jim Diers’ mantra “Start where the people are” to heart and started to offer their support to the Jefferson Park Neighborhood. Members of this neighborhood were already angry because their park was completely degraded and their “...initial concerns focused on drug activity, speeding, and the perceived deterioration of the park itself to vagrancy, loitering, and drug use” (Business Plan, 3). After nine months of planning with neighbors, they all started working on installing playground equipment in the park, and cleaning up a couple drug houses in the neighborhood. Currently, the Jefferson park group is working on a “Life Fitness Trail” for the park and neighborhood, and cleanup of run down houses.

The second and third neighborhoods C2C work with began with previous relationships with the residents. The residents expressed interest and desire in using the help of C2C, and they possessed strong potential for leadership building within the neighborhood. The EC neighborhood is the most isolated out of the two, thus resulting in lack of formal or informal networking among the residents. Contrary to popular belief, the residents are long-term residents (ten years or more in the neighborhood), and before C2C joined with the neighbors, most did not know their next-door neighbors. The neighborhood had no sidewalks, no park, and none of the lights that are common in most neighborhoods around Walla Walla. This creates serious problems of safety and crime without these amenities. The neighborhood is located right next to the Washington State Penitentiary and the roads experience fast traffic from the prison employees. C2C met with residents in to gain perspective of these problems and help decide what route would best benefit the neighborhood. Remarkable progress has occurred. C2C, with the help of financial support of the Sherwood Grant, bought out 11 properties (mostly trailer homes) that were owned by a landlord who was practically out of business, and in their place created a neighborhood community center. They enlisted the help of the Pomegranate Center (a non profit organization located in Issaquah, Washington dedicated to the design and creation of meaningful gathering spaces for communities) to help the residents generate “common space” ideas. After spending almost two years developing the space for the center, they started working in early September, spending a week to create a framework for the center. Children from the neighborhood provided artwork that is displayed in many fashions in the area. The project is still ongoing, as neighbors must find and create resources that help them add different elements to the center as they see fit. The progress has been fast and steady and C2C hopes that the neighbors

will feel empowered to keep the progress up.

The last neighborhood that C2C has been involved with is the Washington Park neighborhood, of which has a large Latino population. Here, too, they worked to revitalize the park that had been degraded due to graffiti and drug use. A collaborative effort with the children of the neighborhood resulted in a children's art wall and the neighbors facilitated a general cleanup of the park. Beautiful playground equipment was then installed the following year (2007), and started an after-school program in March, 2008, which closed during the summer but re-opened in September. Neighbors are concerned about their children's activities after school—putting a strong emphasize on their kids having the opportunity to have constant role models to push them to succeed outside the family setting.

Each neighborhood has a 'team' or 'council' that consists of residents who will meet to discuss the priorities and needs of the neighborhoods. C2C helps facilitate these meetings; however they emphasize the importance of keeping the work they do as a neighborhood effort rather than having outsiders coming in to do the work for them. Since the three neighborhoods they have worked with have been rather low-income, mixed neighborhoods, they offer the resources for Latinos to participate with bilingual employees and trainings that address culturally different aspects that may exist between neighbors. The funding for C2C has primarily been through the Sherwood Trust; however, C2C is required to find alternate means of funds for the year of 2009. They have requested funds from the City Council, County Commission, and the Port of Walla Walla—the large sums have been denied but the budgets are not finalized and C2C is waiting to see if any public entities will include some financial support into their budgets.

### *Change within Neighborhoods*

To provide a logical analysis of my results, I will proceed by evaluating my methods in the same order presented above. First was my understanding of the impact C2C has upon the neighborhoods they work in and the following impact upon the Walla Walla community. This work was completed through surveys and interviews of residents of the targeted neighborhoods and interviews of the C2C employees. Since C2C's goal is first to empower residents to take control of their neighborhoods in order to realize their dreams, I also first focus on understanding if C2C has or is on the right path to making that impact. Next, I focused my attention on specific social indicators that C2C affects or has the ability to affect to see if their impact can be transferred over to impact community issues.

As stated in my methods, I wanted to analyze barriers to Latino participation, specifically here in Walla Walla. The total population of Washington State is 6,395,798 people, with a Hispanic population around 580,000. This converts to a little over 9 percent of the population. Walla Walla County has a 15.7 percent Latino population, while the city's Latino population is around 20 percent.<sup>2</sup> Both these percentages are higher than overall country's percent of 15.4.<sup>3</sup> In 2006, Walla Walla's average individual income was 26,0000, almost 10,000 dollars less than the state's average. The poverty rate in 2005 was at 17 percent in 2007, whereas the state measures

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.wallawallatrends.ewu.edu/graph.cfm?id=112>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.factfinder.census.gov>

at only 11 percent; however 36 percent of the county generate an income that is 200 percent below the poverty line (the state is only at 26 percent).<sup>4</sup> It's clear that poverty is a large and important issue in Walla Walla. With the Latino population rising in Walla Walla, Latino youth account for 31.5 percent of students in the public school system.<sup>5</sup> It's characterized that Latinos' socio-economic status is a strong determinant of what type of neighborhood they will live in. Other factors include the generation and national origin (Zambrana 1995 195). In Walla Walla, many of the disadvantaged and poor neighborhoods have a large Latino population which shows that Latino youth and their educational success is hit hard. Massey et al., explain that poverty and the effects of poverty and the Latino culture have almost become synonyms according to popular US society (Massey et al. 1995, 190). True or not, it's apparent that the large Latino population is hit by the high poverty rate in Walla Walla, which then can lead to a multitude of effects (educational success, crime, etc). Poverty not only hinders political mobilization, but it isolates Latinos not only into their culture but into an economic class. Using participant observation and my survey, I try to measure how much poverty affects their participation levels.

While walking the Washington Park area, Federico Diaz explained that many Latinos don't actively organize because it's against their nature. He said that most often, Latinos would find C2C's cause moving, but would rather express their support by showing up at the work event, not the meeting. Despite his comments, C2C have nominated Latinos to participate in the Sherwood Trust 2008 Community Leadership Class in order to promote civic participation.<sup>6</sup> C2C also collected 160 anecdotes, of which many Latinos experiences were noted to demonstrate changes in attitudes, skills, and knowledge. One Latino resident expressed in regards to C2C involvement, "Oh! I understand what you are doing. You are not coming here telling us what we need or is good for us. You are giving us an opportunity to help ourselves."<sup>7</sup> No matter the barriers they face, Latinos are continually showing excitement and dedication to the help of C2C. C2C workers must not feel deterred or compelled to look at neighborhoods as deficits just because personal experience has led them to think a certain way about Latinos. C2C should conditionally be reassessing and reevaluating their strategies when working in mixed neighborhoods, in order to promote as much mobilization to everyone involved.

C2C conducted a survey in the Edith-Carrie neighborhood earlier in the year. They found that the majority of respondents made under 20,000 dollars a year, while 40 percent of the respondents had not completed a high school diploma or GED. My survey measures some of the participation levels of Latinos and Non-Latinos. The survey I distributed to the EC neighborhood addresses three areas of focus: the residents perceptions of safety in their neighborhood, their perceptions on their own participation in the neighborhood, and how C2C has built empowerment or changed their perceptions of neighborhood participation. This survey emphasizes these changes as they are central for empowerment, which leads to other capacities flourishing (Lui et al.). I have 14 completed surveys from the EC neighborhood, divided equally from Latino and non-Latino participants. This is a small sample and limits the applicability of the results, yet I feel the results note important trends of the neighborhood. The first 13 statements from the survey have a scale from one to five that residents can choose from in their answers

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.indicators.nwaf.org/>

<sup>5</sup> The Valley's Children 2008. A Snapshot of Walla Walla County Children's Data.

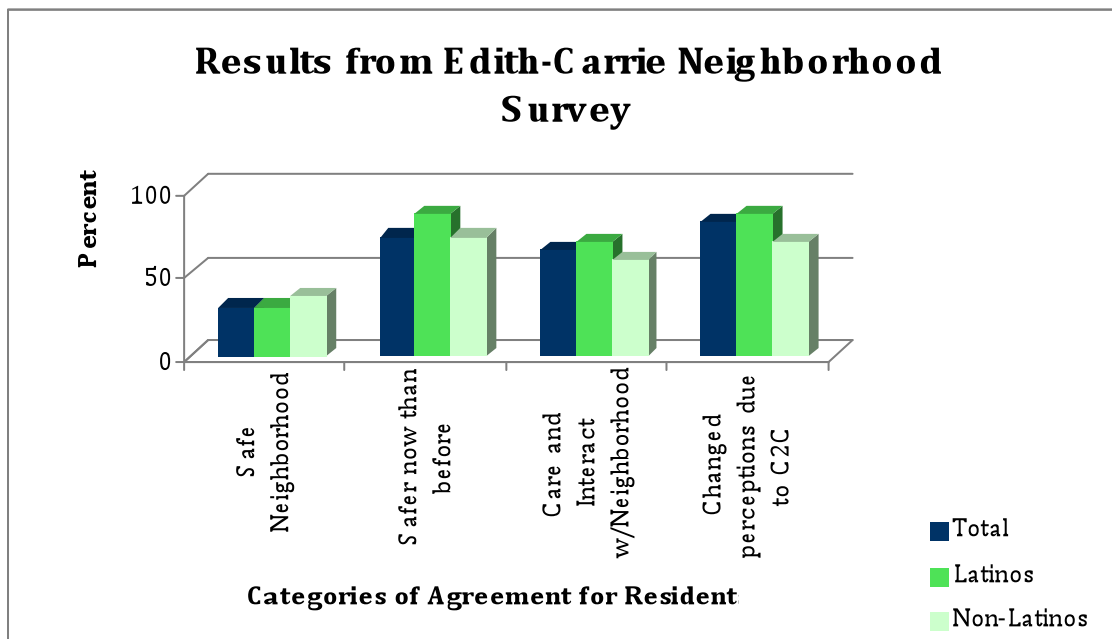
<sup>6</sup> C2C Grant Application submitted to Donald and Virginia Sherwood Trust

<sup>7</sup> C2C Anecdotal Neighborhood Assessment, July, 2007, accessed by author December, 2008.

(one being they strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree). I have categorized answers that mark four and five as a general agreement to the statement, with choices one, two, and three as choices of disagreement. The reason I lumped these three options together was that I wanted to draw a line between definite agreement and other sentiments. So although the option ‘three’ might refer to neutrality, it still does not mean any agreement with the statement. I realize that this limits the scope of measurement of the residents’ sentiments but for practicality and utility, I feel it necessary in order to gain the most comprehensible results.

The results produced mark definite progress from the work of C2C in the EC neighborhood, however also show that significant work is still needed. 71 percent of the responses concluded that they do not feel safe walking in their neighborhood. Conversely, a greater percentage feels that the neighborhood has become safer over the last year. Out of the responses, 71 percent of Latinos felt unsafe walking in the neighborhood but 85 percent feel that it has become safer over the last year. Non-Latino responses show 64 percent feel unsafe walking in the neighborhoods and 71 percent feel safer when compared to the last year. The second set of data from the survey measures their perception on their participation and care for the neighborhood. Overall, 63 percent of the responses noted they care, participate, and are invited to neighborhood functions and events. This percent rose to 68 when focusing in on Latinos response and dropped to 57 in relation to non-Latinos. The third set of statements evokes change that C2C has made in neighbors’ perceptions about empowerment within the neighborhood context. 80 percent of residents that completed the survey agree that C2C has changed their perceptions on how they can make difference in the setting they live in. This percent increases to 85 percent focusing on solely Latino responses while decreases to 68 percent with Non-Latinos.

**Figure 1: Edith Carrie survey results**



To comment on some of the work completed, C2C has made considerable progress in promoting participation in the revitalization of the Edith and Carrie neighborhood. The last three categories on the graph mark high percentages of agreement. To link up some statistics that

reinforce the sentiments felt by the neighbors on safety, the Police Department and code enforcement noted the amount of services in 2006 and in 2007 to compare the crime level before and after C2C started working in EC. The code enforcement calls have decreased by almost 40 percent and while crime has gone down, the community center was not installed until September of 2008, so the rate might not be reflective of the present rate (as it has only decreased by a couple percent)<sup>8</sup>. The fact that the neighbors perceptions of crime match with reality suggests that the right steps are being taken to improve the crime of the neighborhood—the first people to realize the change should be the residents. This also ties nicely with Greenberg’s study on crime in a neighborhood, as he argued that the first change within a neighborhood should be crime and then other changes of neighborhood quality would follow.

The third and fourth categories of the survey measure the most progress in the neighborhood. The third category relates to participation. Analyzing the results, Latinos marked further increase in sentiments about participation and the ability for actual residents to make a difference. As mentioned in my scholarly literature, these results could relate to Latinos’ commonly held values regarding community and identity. Flores explains, “For Latinos, community is essential to survival, not only in terms of neighborhood or geographic locale, but also in terms of collective identity. The struggle for the right to control space and to establish community is a central one” (Flores 1997, 16). As Latinos have historically been faced with oppression and lack of resources, their need for a community within their neighborhood could be the reason why Latinos in the EC neighborhood have a higher appreciation for community involvement. Another reason their change in perceptions is extremely important because it marks citizen engagement within the community. This sort of recognition is important in showing that Latinos feel that they can participate and contribute in the community. A beautiful quote from DeSena illustrates their contribution:

Community struggles are part of everyday experiences of ordinary people. People engage in local actions for all kinds of necessities ranging from the addition to a traffic light on a street corner to tenant management of a building, to altering the city’s budget. This is political behavior. The same people may never vote, and may never actively participate in a social movement, but are nonetheless politically active (DeSena 1999 6).

Scholars and politicians alike may believe that Latinos’ socioeconomic position hinder their ability to partake in political life, but Desena expands the definition to incorporate unique struggles that may prevent individuals from participating in traditional forms of political life (undocumented residents for example). This way, undocumented residents who volunteer to help build a community center at a park demonstrates the same will to show political behavior as a wealthy business man who runs for office. Responses from the survey show that people are taking control in the EC neighborhood because of C2C, and Latinos are just as involved. Without their initial help, EC residents would not carry hope for change in the future.

Although stated before that C2C is a young organization, there are definite impacts that could be made in different sectors of the community. I focused on education in this report, however, I note other socially indicators that could potentially improve through C2C. Again, I

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<sup>8</sup> Statistics from Walla Walla Police Department



focused on the EC neighborhood children; I looked at their achievement scores in the WASL looking at math, reading, writing, and science. Eamon and Ainsworth both reiterated the importance of neighborhood quality and environment to academic achievement. Ron Higgins, Director of Assessment for Walla Walla Public Schools, who graciously compiled a list of scores from students that resided or resides in the EC neighborhood in the past three years (2006-08). Noted in my methods, the WASL has only been a required test for 2008. The WASL includes four levels: one and two are the bottom levels while four is the highest. A student must reach level three in order to meet the standard that has been determined “passing” by the test. Schools use a system where they measure the Index of a level (which requires data on the same students from year to year), but this information was too hard to separate so I just use the “meeting standard” as a means to judge academic performance. The test is required and graded evenly throughout the state, which provides reliability for comparison reasons as I will be comparing the same test for different groups. Each grade is required to take the test, starting at third grade. For practical reasons, I assume that all the public schools have access to the same resources and maintain the same quality of education, which is essentially true.

Since it is prohibited to publish information regarding public students grouped into a category of 30 or less, Higgins grouped students from EC into elementary school, middle school, and high school scores. Even with the groups, some of the numbers were less than 30 so I refrain from speaking about those age levels. A total of 127 public school children are registered in the school database and live in EC; however, many of those are kindergarten, first, and second graders. The first numbers that jump out are the total percentage of children who are not meeting WASL standard. The graph below illustrates the differences between results for EC in comparison with the average Walla Walla public schools results. For each identity (EC or Walla Walla Public Schools), the results represent the average for elementary, middle, and high school combined.

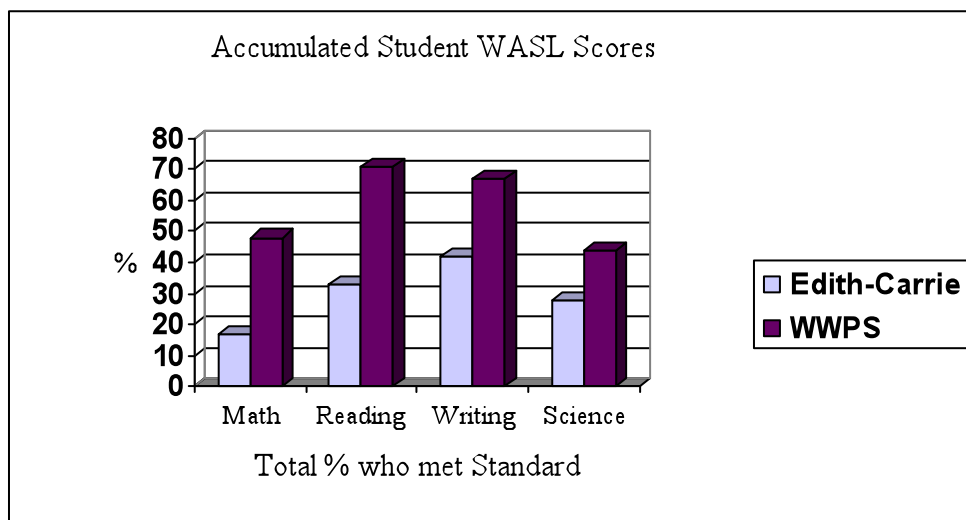


Figure 2: Total WASL Scores

This graph clearly shows that the average public school student in Walla Walla is well ahead of the average Edith and Carrie student in academic achievement. Further data indicates that the

neighborhood environment plays a large part in achievement. Most of the Edith Carrie elementary students attend Prospect Point Elementary school, located at the other side of town, hence the students must travel past other school zones, and through the center of town, to get to school. Prospect point is located in a completely different neighborhood.<sup>9</sup> The Hispanic population is close to 29 percent while 46.5 percent of the study body is on free or Reduced-Priced meals.<sup>10</sup> This meal program is a way that public schools measure the poverty level of the student body. During the 2007-2008 school year, the average total of 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> graders at Prospect Point who met the standard for WASL reading was 69 percent. EC's average total who met standard is 26 percent. While 57 percent of Prospect Point's students met standard for math, only 12 percent met standard in EC. It's evident that those students outside of the Prospect Point area, across town in a poorer neighborhood, fare worse on their WASL scores. Eamon provides some reasons: "Lack of appropriate role models and adult supervision, restricted career and employment opportunities, and unsupportive or unhelpful social networks are among the explanations for the influence of disadvantaged neighborhoods on academic achievement (Eamon 2005, 165). It's important to note that these reasons make note of the physical quality of a neighborhood, rather just the level of resources that are available.

To further the assertion that achievement is directly linked to the environment of the student, I compared these stats with a couple other elementary schools in Walla Walla. Given that all the schools educate the students in the same manner, external factors (race, neighborhood, family situation) serve as the locus for educational achievement. Each external factor should be analyzed closely because for each student, a different unique factor could play into their success. As the Prospect Point case suggests that neighborhoods can deter or promote academic success, I transfer this idea over to other schools and neighborhoods. The Washington park neighborhood primarily feeds into Blue Ridge elementary school. The neighborhood consists primarily of Latinos and Latino families, which correlates to the 64 percent Latino population at Blue Ridge. In the last school year, 47 percent of the students met standard for reading, while only 24 percent met standard for math. Ironically, less than 40 percent of Hispanics taking the test met the standards for reading, and 22.6 percent met math standards. Eamon concluded her study stating that Latinos' achievement in reading was affected by the health of a neighborhood. Her findings suggested that improving this environment would improve reading achievement (Eamon 2005, 171). Conversely, Berney Elementary School is a public school located within middle to upper class neighborhoods in Walla Walla—with 11.5 percent Latino student body. They maintain the highest percentage of met standards, as 74 percent met the reading standard and 51 percent reached the math standard. Since they have such a small percent of Latinos, statistics for their scores existed only for the third grade. Compared with Blue Ridge Hispanic third graders, 20 percent more of Berney's third grade Hispanics met the reading standard, and 25 percent more met the math standard.<sup>11</sup> These statistics confirm that neighborhoods strongly determine the achievement of Latinos. Still, although Latinos at Berney

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<sup>9</sup> These zones will change fall 2009 so Edith Carrie residents will not have to pass through other zones to get to school.

<sup>10</sup> <http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/>

fares better than those at Blue Ridge, whites averaged much higher scores—thus putting importance on cultural factors as well.

These statistics are not breathtakingly surprising. Most would assume that wealthier neighborhoods produce children who academically succeed. I provided these statistics for two important reasons. The first is to show statistical connections here in Walla Walla linking neighborhood environment to educational success. I don't doubt that family structure plays a significant role, but the family and neighborhood are both intimate venues that are closely linked. Neighborhoods possess the resources to bridge household or family issues into those belonging to the neighborhoods. Once social capital (trusting relationships) exists, the family is less hesitant to relieve some of their burdens onto neighbors who are willing to help. This directly links to my second reason. C2C can use this data to show progress made. It would be interesting to see if EC student WASL scores have improved in a few years. If it had to a noticeable degree, evidence would show the importance of NBOs in providing resources to neighborhoods to improve education. Not only does this impact the lives of the residents, but the economy and quality of life of Walla Walla in general will improve through these statistics.

It would be beneficial for C2C to look at indicators in all important sectors to fully realize their impact on residents as well as the community at large. This idea sprouted from my interview with Barbara Clark, a City Council member. She said, "Lots of the numbers could come out of the neighborhood. For example, kids graduating from high school, teen pregnancies, calls to children's protective services, did I mention truancy... Whether the neighborhood looked well cared for, whether people said that they felt safe in their neighborhood".<sup>12</sup> As stressed before, tangible statistical outcomes isn't the goal or priority of C2C, though stakeholders (I attended a stakeholder meeting for C2C who invited any potential donors both private and public) have expressed interest in having C2C expand its efforts to have a larger impact on the community at large rather than just three specific neighborhoods. Available data allows me to analyze whether an impact has been made on crime through the presence of C2C.

As noted before, the EC neighborhood experienced a drop in code enforcement calls in 2007. Vandalism in Washington Park decreased by 90 percent and calls to the police decreased by 13 percent from 2006 to 2007. Jefferson Park crime decreased by 27 percent while vandalism is down 90 percent as well. These numbers could be due to the police department's work but in the same year, crime in general increased in Walla Walla.<sup>13</sup> From 2006 to 2007, property crime<sup>14</sup> rates increased from 33 to 38 people per 1000 who experience property crime. This shows that then neighborhoods that C2C concentrate on have improved crime rates while the city as a whole worsened. Whether or not C2C is directly related is unclear through these statistics, however, the neighborhoods themselves are seeing factual improvements. Whatever the cause, this decline saves money for the police department as less time and resources are used to address code enforcements, vandalism, and general property crime.

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<sup>12</sup> Barbara Clark, interviewed by author, October 20, 2008.

<sup>13</sup> Walla Walla Police Department.

<sup>14</sup> Walla Walla Trends defines property crime: as taking another's property that results various harmful consequences.

Education and crime are two important social indicators that may change due to changes within a neighborhood. Many others exist and I hope that C2C can find sustainable measurable standards that map these progresses. These indicators have implications on a state and federal level as each indicator leads into the representation of the state and federal statistics. Even so, none of these social indicators will change without the changing neighbors' perceptions on their ability to invoke change in their neighborhood. After that, outcomes reach a tipping point insofar that they become noticeable. The next section lays out the processes of C2C to see if their methods align with those I've addressed in my literature review.

### *Processes of C2C*

C2C has an extremely local vision when they choose a neighborhood to work within. Although each neighborhood is unique and carries its own issues and set of values, C2C uses similar strategies and techniques in all. I lay out many processes. One of the first techniques is that of **outreach**. Robinson elaborates on this concept in her case study and also emphasizes that this step must begin early on, before projects have commenced (Robinson 2005, 150). This is the first step for C2C. Nancy categorized this process as gaining the trust of the neighbors as well as educating C2C employees the make and priorities of the residents. She explained, "You have to build that relationship with people. So we began walking the streets, talking to people, asking them how it's going, and what's going on in the neighborhood. People got use to them and then they started confiding in them".<sup>15</sup> This strategy is in contrast to a top-down approach, where people in power decide what programs are best suited for neighborhoods. That approach is more concerned with outcomes, for example targeting rates of truancy or reduction of crime. Lui et al critique this method, arguing that it's inefficient in marking change or progress for communities with large Latino populations. The method fails to actively involve citizens. With outreach, the value is shifted onto the actual desires of the neighbors. This process can help identify cultural barriers that exist in a neighborhood that's discussed by scholars. Hurtado and Flores and Benmayer all discuss the importance of trust and family values that is common among Latino communities. In her Summary of Indicators draft, Barila noted that the outreach workers learned that Latinos have a fear of getting involved with organizations and government services due to cultural implications. If Latinos feel untrusting of the local government and community, most likely they will isolate any community kindness to just those who they trust. Outreach involves delving into these cultural traits to bring them out into the neighborhood where everyone can benefit. Outreach workers want to overcome the cultural barrier, and three of the C2C workers are bilingual, which serves as an added bonus for creating trust. This trust allows C2C to fully understand the core of what residents want while also bringing to the surface cultural assets.

I walked the neighborhoods a couple times with C2C worker, Federico Diaz, as he tried to promote the Christmas party C2C hosted for Washington Park and Edith Carrie neighborhoods. In the Washington Park area, residents know Federico rather than the organization of C2C. Even if any resident did not know him, he would introduce himself and explain a little about the event he was promoting. The Christmas party served as another outreach method because it brought neighbors together for fun. Relationships can be created through fun events like that, where the focus is eating and enjoying each others' company; or

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<sup>15</sup> Nancy Carter, interviewed by author, November 11, 2008.

through working experiences and sharing meaningful accomplishments. Either way, C2C emphasizes the importance of initiating relationship building among neighbors, leading to that social capital valued by Portney, Berry, and Silverman. One aspect of outreach that Robinson comments on that C2C does well is developing outreach methods that address the surrounding private sector of the neighborhoods (Robinson 2005, 16). At Jefferson Park neighborhood meeting, neighbors suggested to involve the surrounding businesses in the planning of their annual Christmas party (separated from EC and Washington Park Christmas party).<sup>16</sup> While EC is isolated from many businesses, C2C collaborated with the State penitentiary to build the community center, as part of the land used belongs to the prison. The penitentiary generously rented the land (due to legal matters, it was impossible to buy part of the land), for one dollar every century. These cases show the neighborhoods creating generalized social capital that Portney and Berry highlight, where organizations develop relationships with other organizations. Outreach also promotes localized social capital, such as the Christmas party and walking the neighborhood.

A step that ensues is providing the residents with the capacities to tackle a neighborhood project. Leadership training is offered to find neighbors that can organize and lead the residents in the direction they want. This step correlates with Robinson's third strategy: to give the tools and resources for neighbors to achieve success. Carter offered an example. For EC, they provided a proactive leadership training session at the community center the neighbors had created. They separated the group into two sections and gave them five thousand dollars to create a project that would enhance the center. One group decided to spend their money on lights for the park; however, the cost would much higher than what they had. C2C carefully laid out suggestions, not solutions. They explained that the neighbors always had the ability to ask other organizations or entities for help. The group asked the City for help and a volunteer came and installed lights for just over 50 dollars. C2C encourages residents to think about their capacities, and gives them access to ways to develop a network of friends willing to help. Self-sufficiency is the word that Diers used to describe this process. Don't do anything for the residents if they can do it themselves.

Encouraging neighbor participation is a result of outreach. Every time a work party is planned or an event is coming up, those involved in outreach make sure to invite all the neighbors to participate. Slowly and surely, participation starts to increase as residents become more involved and attached to the cause. In the EC neighborhood, C2C hosted a week work party where they invited the Pomegranate center to come help create the community center.<sup>17</sup> Although C2C had already outreached to the neighborhood, residents were hesitant at first to come lend a hand. On one of the first days, September 2nd, only 18 people showed up to help out. By the end of the week, 46 people were recorded participating in the center's creation on September 7<sup>th</sup>.<sup>18</sup> This process eventually turns into a feeling of **ownership** of projects because a sense of accomplishment and pride arises out of one's own work. Carter emphasizes that when the neighbors create and work on their own projects, the chance of vandalism drops

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<sup>16</sup> Participation observation by author, November 9, 2008.

<sup>17</sup> Explained under section headed Background of C2C.

<sup>18</sup> Data collected from C2C attendance book.

dramatically.<sup>19</sup> Neighborhoods don't want to destroy something they created. This ownership takes all shapes and sizes for different projects. C2C opened a homework club for low-income residents near Edith and Carrie and Washington Park neighborhoods (it's not exclusive to just those neighborhoods), and they are thinking about asking for a membership fee. This fee wouldn't necessarily be money, but maybe a requirement of 10 hours of volunteering per month for the club. This way, parents will see the necessity of the club and the value homework can have on their children because they will experience their child's progress with their own eyes. Although this form of ownership differs from Robinson's case where the residents literally owned a share in their project, the important aspect is that feelings change to where residents care about the unique characteristics of their neighborhood.

According to C2C anecdotes, this sentiment is experienced by both non-Latinos and Latinos together. One Latina remarked, "People asked me why I live in such an ugly area, now I will be able to talk about how beautiful my neighborhood is."<sup>20</sup> Neighbors care about the appearance and comfort level of a neighborhood. They start to brag and feel proud of their neighborhood once it sees improvement. One woman from EC commented that she had never seen so much positive sentiments coming from the neighbors about the neighborhood.

I synthesized in my literature review that NBOs should treat neighborhoods as assets (Flores and Benmayor), in general and specifically in relation to race. I found that C2C believes neighborhoods possessing large capacities for resources and truly promotes neighbors to dig deep in order to access these resources. C2C also is very aware of the racial compositions and relationship in neighborhoods. Both Federico Diaz and Teri Barila have explained that in the Washington Park neighborhood, they run into many undocumented Latinos who are too scared to get involve due to their vulnerability. Although they recognize this problem, not many solutions have been produced that addresses this problem that is specific to the Latino immigrant community. In their Business Plan, C2C references neighborhoods with "high ethnic diversity" but fails to provide the meaning of this. Massey et al. elaborate on this point, stating, "Immigration lies at the heart of population dynamics, and it is impossible to make a firm statement about the social, economic, or demographic position of Latinos in the United States without taking this movement into account" (Massey et al. 1995, 195). Based on how many neighborhoods live in the neighborhoods they work with, I do feel that C2C could put more of an effort in promoting Latino participation and finding solutions to Latino based issues. They retain the resources to communicate and develop trusting relationships with the Latino community, but an extra push is needed to really find leaders within Latinos to serve as role models for the rest of the neighborhood. With all three neighborhoods that C2C work in having close to 50 % Latino or more<sup>21</sup>, central Latino issues transform into those issues central of the neighborhood.

### *Perceptions from the Community*

My third method was to understand how the Walla Walla perceives the work of C2C. I've found that many people have not heard of C2C but the type of processes and issues C2C

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<sup>19</sup> Nancy Carter, 11-11-08.

<sup>20</sup> C2C Anecdotal Neighborhood Assessment, 02/08, accessed 12/08.

<sup>21</sup> Nancy Carter, 11-11-08.

tackles are those that most everyone can understand and appreciate. Through my interviews, I found that virtually everyone is in support of C2C and their efforts. Whether this support translates to tangible support (financial or a distribution of resources) is the question I'm trying to answer. Additionally, I question how supportive Walla Walla's local government representatives are in facilitating community empowerment, as recommended by Diers? I interviewed city council members, a county commissioner, and a Port of Walla Walla commissioner. I've identified reoccurring themes in most of the interviews that connect with scholars' perceptions of the relationship between the government and a NBO.

A common theme of the performance of C2C and how appreciative the interviewees are of the work C2C has completed was extremely apparent. All four expressed complete support for the direction that C2C is heading, and several had suggestions to improve C2C's work. City Council member Fred Mitchell expressed great admiration for C2C by stating, "I think C2C is very important, mainly because it involves citizens in their neighborhoods, get citizens together, gets to know one another, they work together and it just strengthens the neighborhood".<sup>22</sup> This theme of direct benefits for the neighborhood repeats itself among government representatives. C2C sparks civic engagement and fosters citizenships, but I wanted to see if the government representatives thought this benefit was for the community at large or more narrowly effective. Greg Loney, a County Commissioner, recognized this expansion of benefits. When asked how the County profits from C2C, he introduced three important factors. The first was financial: once crime goes down, the County saves money, because the county is responsible for dealing with misdemeanors and felonies. Also, the value of neighborhoods will eventually increase from improvement projects, thus increasing the value of surrounding areas and the county as a whole. Loney argues most importantly, "Taking away all the financial and the impact of law, it makes it better place to live because neighbors are talking to neighbors and they are taking ownership and pride in the neighborhoods. That in itself is a benefit to community as a whole".<sup>23</sup> By mentioning ownership, Loney puts real governmental importance (real equal existing in Walla Walla) on the process used scholars advocate and C2C uses. Paul Schneidmiller, Commissioner at the Port of Walla Walla, reiterated these concepts: "I think that the benefits are enormous. When you empower someone in a grassroots like to better their neighborhood, better themselves, take pride in their neighborhood, I think that can only have positive prospects".<sup>24</sup> As both claim this process is the most important out of the outcomes, it shows that the County and Port at least puts face value to the objective of C2C—rather than focusing only on what benefits the community financially and statistically.

One common suggestion for improvement was that C2C expand their efforts to impact more neighborhoods in Walla Walla. Jerry Cummins of the Council explained, "They've been effective in certain areas: Jefferson park area, in Edith-Carrie they are effective, and also the Washington school area. When they were originally organized, they wanted to broaden their area and I don't think they've met that goal".<sup>25</sup> This quote faces confliction with Loney's quote on the benefits of C2C. They both agree that C2C has been very valuable for the neighborhoods

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<sup>22</sup> Fred Mitchell, interviewed by author, November 19, 2008.

<sup>23</sup> Greg Loney, interviewed by author, November 18, 2008.

<sup>24</sup> Paul Schneidmiller, interviewed by author, December 16, 2008.

<sup>25</sup> Jerry Cummins, interviewed by author, October 28, 2008.

they work with, however, Cummins applies the “deficit mentality” that is used towards neighborhoods for his critique of C2C. His vision runs along the lines of C2C creating projects in all the Walla Walla neighborhoods, and they “failed” at expanding. Nonetheless, C2C has been around for three years, and time and money are both needed for C2C to expand in way that would involve gaining trust in neighborhoods before they could have an impact.

A second them, less focused on the merits of C2C was to correct the notion that government maintains the responsibility to fund and support social services. The theme was echoed by almost all of the local government representatives. Should the state be more indicative of a welfare state or should that role diminish to where the role of the government for public issues would be transferred to other voluntary organizations and the private sector? Cummins explained that the root of this ideology goes back to the formation of communities. “The reason why communities are formed is for sharing of services, for safety and protection, for utilities, water, garbage collection—these types of services that an individual themselves cannot necessarily provide—that’s why communities were formed. People pay taxes to pay for services”.<sup>26</sup> These necessities are what the city must provide, and that becomes the most important role of the government, according to representatives. To clarify this argument, they like to situate the topic in terms of priorities. They have a certain amount of dollars for the wellbeing of the infrastructure of the city. Funding C2C would require cut backs to other government services like the police and fire department. Cummins rearticulates this point, saying, “Washington, Edith-Carrie, and Jefferson, those are areas that need attention—they are probably on the lower socioeconomic level. What we can do in kind to support those things is great but do you terminate a firefighter, terminate a police officer, a paramedic? An animal control officer? Library funding, street repair?”<sup>27</sup> Cummins does not appear to acknowledge connections that are made between different sectors of the community, and the effect C2C has in ameliorating the sectors. The promotion of social capital that many scholars deem extremely valuable for the well-being of communities (Portney and Berry, Silverman, Desena), and that Greg Loney claims more important than any other outcome, is ranked below all the priorities that Cummins lists in the quotation.

Although Commissioner Loney is in support of C2C, he attacks the issue of funding the organization from another angle by critiquing the efforts of the government to try and solve social issues (also made by Barbara Clark and Fred Mitchell). “If the government gets involved in social services, we don’t do a very good job. It doesn’t work from the top down.”<sup>28</sup> This statement conflicts with his previous statement that complemented the benefits C2C has on Walla Walla in general. Essentially, if the government funds C2C, this would transform the grassroots efforts of C2C into an effort by the government, which is inefficient. Often, the government relies on other organizations to provide social services not only because it’s more financially feasible, but also because they recognize that the process of inspiring local citizens to initiate projects themselves is much more valuable than having the government implement a program. Loney fails to recognize that C2C is that grassroots organization that empowers citizens to participate and realize their goals. It appears that the government representatives are

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<sup>26</sup> Jerry Cummins, 10-28-08.

<sup>27</sup> Jerry Cummins, 10-28-08.

<sup>28</sup> Greg Loney, 11-18-08.



confusing their ideologies. They want to stay away from funding social services due to the stigma that governments fail to do the job adequately; however, they also recognize the benefits of C2C existing as a grassroots, autonomous, organization that fulfills specific goals without getting stuck in government bureaucracy. Schneidmiller opens up discussion and supports the idea of private public partnerships for C2C: “I’ve been big into private public partnerships. There are private dollars there to be uncovered and publically, they should cover all the rocks: Locally, state-wide, and federally. The more sources that can come to the table, the more momentum you’ll have to try to move this project forward.”<sup>29</sup> This idea is actively pursued by C2C and promoted by Diers and Silverman as well. They both advocate increasing government support while still keeping solid autonomy from the government’s interests.

A theme discussed that relates closely with the ideas of priorities is that of tax dollars. Besides providing essential services, the city is responsible for deciding where the tax dollars of the citizens are allocated. Usually priorities lie within the ones Cummins mentioned above and Loney explained how the city funds projects that the citizens want. “If it’s in their desire and they want to fund those things, that’s fine. But I’m not one to talk about taxes without the voters’ approval.”<sup>30</sup> In early October of 2007, the Union-Bulletin ran a survey about the city’s needs and asked citizens of Walla Walla to vote on where and what they wanted their tax dollars to be spent. Although only three percent of the city completed the survey, the results indicate some community sentiment. Alasdair Steward describes the results. Street reparation was the number one choice by a large margin, the aquatic center was second, and the police department polled third.<sup>31</sup> As I explained in my methods, many limitations exist to this type of survey, most importantly under representing disadvantaged citizens. Nonetheless, the City Council must take these results into consideration when deciding how to divide up the money. Although the infrastructure of the city may be deemed the priority for many citizens, the way in which C2C affects these sectors is important for the government representatives and the community at large to consider.

The last commonality between the interviews was when I asked the importance of having organizations that provide resources for Latinos to experience a connectedness to the community. Although C2C doesn’t work specifically for Latinos, they recognize that many of their neighborhoods have a significant population and acknowledge the barriers that are created through historical race relations. Most of the interviewees maintained an informal color-blind approach: organizations should be available to all, regardless of race. Greg Loney’s perspective characterizes this idea:

I believe that if I move from a country it’s my responsibility to learn the language and guidelines and laws of that particular land. We’ve done a disservice to the Latino and other populations by catering to them where they hadn’t absolutely had to learn some of the culture and language and actually be morphed into the culture in some ways. We need

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<sup>29</sup> Paul Schneidmiller, 12-16-08.

<sup>30</sup> Jerry Cummins, 10-28-08.

<sup>31</sup> Stewert, Alasdair. Survey voters say: Fix streets!. (2007, October 8). *Walla Walla Union-Bulletin*, Cost of Community section.

to develop programs for all, not just Latinos, and encourage any group to participate in the community and encompass the culture.<sup>32</sup>

This idea brings the idea of assimilation to the forefront. The process of assimilation involves the disappearance of a cultural identity in order to become absorbed into the culture. Nonetheless, in Walla Walla, it is true that assimilation isn't the direction that many Latinos take, however much the local government would like them to do so. Schneidmiller argued avidly against assimilation, avowing, "One of the things we don't want to do is that we don't want to change their culture. It's not our job to tell them how they should run their lives, but we want to give them tools to make improvements. Latinos have some wonderful things that they do—they are big into families—they have things they value that maybe the rest of us should take a look at."<sup>33</sup> Even if this just represents a personal assessment, it's evident that the local government is not structured in a way that firmly acknowledges their stance on the Latino community in Walla Walla. Schneidmiller mentioned how he strongly advocates providing services and assistance specific to Latino needs. He believed that the pay off will amount to so much more since they would feel more involved with community life. This is not the general opinion of local representatives as Greg Loney illustrated. Race relations can be very fragile and brittle; those between the government and the Latino community in Walla Walla are especially so. Cummins noted how disproportional minority relations are apparent with the police. "I think we have disproportionate minority contact with the police, and as much as I hate to say it, I think we have to disproportionate amount of minority arrests because of socioeconomic reasons...I will always ask, is code enforcement provided equitably throughout the city?"<sup>34</sup> Cummins was the only one to note the tension of equality and neighborhoods and race. Overall, my interviewees tended to avoid putting the focus on Latinos, expressing support for community rather than one race.

Schneidmiller described some cases where the Port tried to improve neighborhoods through the goal of improving the quality of life. He explained that the Port was initiating a neighborhood renewal initiative close to the EC and Washington Park neighborhoods. Silverman's elements about involving organizations and residents in these policy decisions regarding development can be hoped for from the Port. The Port is initiating a development project called the Warehouse District. Simply, they are taking a couple rundown warehouses and turning them into businesses that offer decent wages to blue-collared workers while also renewing the neighborhood. Schneidmiller printed a copy of the Master Plan for the project, which states, "The concept is to create a neighborhood where small businesses can produce and sell their products out of one location. Uses may include wineries, brew pubs, copy shops, light manufacturing, and second floor residential" (Master Plan, 1). The Master Plan makes no reference to the existing neighborhoods in the area and the effect of the Warehouse District on them. In relation to Latinos, Schneidmiller said the Port recognized that the neighborhood was largely Latino populated. He said, "I've been an advocate of a real neighborhood type of meeting to just get them up to speed to get their input on this, to see if they would support our vision. At least we should have a meeting to show them the concepts—but we haven't done anything

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<sup>32</sup> Greg Loney, 11-18-08.

<sup>33</sup> Paul Schneidmiller, 12-16-08.

<sup>34</sup> Jerry Cummins, 10-28-08.

yet.”<sup>35</sup> The Port’s effort has been disrespectful to the residents of that neighborhood. Even if this project does nothing but provide benefits to the welfare and quality of life, the residents ought to have a say in the development program.

The local government’s structural organization when it comes to C2C and Latino based issues does not appear to follow any guidelines that Diers and Silverman lay out. This is in part due to the lack of Latino based organization that is recognized by the local community and its leaders; while C2C’s goal is not to promote Latino issues, they serve the Latino community as one of the only social service and outreach organizations with the resources to understand and take action on the issues. Hero describes political representation and government structure as factors that lead to the consideration of minority interests in policy-making. Even so, governments should know their citizens regardless of their racial background, not the other way around—and with 20 percent Latino in Walla Walla, an effort increase from government representatives needs to happen so these neighborhoods can keep seeing success. The government has shown to actually go against some of the key processes valued by C2C (such as obtaining ideas, projects, inputs from neighbors), while simultaneously agreeing with the type of results C2C produces (citizenship, empowerment).

As the Police Department garnered support from both the citizens who took the Union-Bulletin survey and the City Council, I interviewed Police Chief Chuck Fulton to understand how the police department viewed the work of C2C. Fulton explained that the Police Department fully supported C2C, largely due to their idea of “community policing”. The department received funding in 1999 so start this approach of policing which focused more on preventive work rather than reactive. Although law enforcement was very good at being reactive, it never solved the problem—and preventive work was the solution. Fulton said, “I’ve feel that C2C is continuation of part of community policing because community policing isn’t just the police—it’s everybody working together to accomplish something and C2C is bringing those neighborhoods together and we want to be part of that”.<sup>36</sup> C2C being a part of community policing equals their participation in making the Walla Walla community at large a safer place to live. Essentially, C2C is already doing their job. He insists, “I selfishly look at C2C as part of community policing. That is part of us. That is what community policing is all about. Bringing the community together. C2C is block watch on steroids”. Fulton has only good words to say about C2C and believes that the Council shouldn’t think twice about funding their efforts. “I think we should give them the money. It’s 30,000 bucks. We have around a 30 million dollar general fund budget, what’s 30,000 dollars? That’s not very much money.” First, many of the government representatives used the example of firing a police officer in order to fund C2C. This adamant support from the police chief links the elected representatives’ concern about city protection to the impact C2C has on crime, however reps failed to link the support from the police department as . The money is well worth spending in order to continue some of the results that have already been produced.

Another subject we touched upon was Latino leadership in Walla Walla. Fulton maintained the idea that C2C offers their help to everyone in a neighborhood and does not focus

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<sup>35</sup> Paul Schneidmiller, 12-16-08.

<sup>36</sup> Chuck Fulton, interviewed by author, November 9, 2008.

on a specific race. He identified a problem however, in that the Latino community does not possess the leadership as of now that demands recognition from the City. He clarifies, “The Hispanic community has been splintered, and has no leadership. They’ll have leadership and then all the sudden it will disappear. There’s not the consistency that they should have. That has not been something that the Latinos do, they have not come to the city council for asking for help”. Although C2C includes everyone into their process, he doesn’t believe Latinos or any specific group should be of focus.

Similarly supportive is the Children and Family services Department. I spoke with Sonia Cole about this and she explained that C2C’s efforts are extremely compatible with the department’s Family to Family Initiative started by the Casey Foundations. Family to Family is seen as more of an ideology rather than a program though at the State level; Washington has allowed Children services to allocate money from the budget into reaching the goals of Family to Family. Like the Police Department’s “community policing”, they want to shift their action to encompass more preventative work rather than reactive. Their core principle is to provide safety to children, but the strategy for this is to develop the neighborhoods within the community in order to maintain foster and kinship families. This requires getting to know the community at large and building lasting partnerships with organizations. Currently, the department is trying to foster this relationship with C2C. In this regard she states, “They [C2C] *are* living Family to Family, but we are the ones that are suppose to be implementing this? There’s no reason not to hook up and learn what we can from them. We don’t need to try to invent how this is to be done, we just need to enter right in and support the effort, and if they’ll let us, be part of it”. Since the State is supporting the Family to Family Initiative in some way (they are making space for the project however there is not an increase of money), it shows that this process is deemed important on the state level.

## **Synthetic Discussion of Findings**

Like many other parts of my research, my findings will follow a systematic form of reasoning that guides me through C2C’s impact on neighborhoods and the community at large, their processes and strategies based on prior scholarly research, and finally, outside institutional perceptions of C2C’s legitimacy. Throughout my research I have found interesting policy suggestions that link my research together as well.

C2C has made a literal impact on the three neighborhoods they work with through the visible murals, parks, and community centers they have put time and energy to help create. Invisibly, they have impacted so much more. They are impacting levels of Latino participation and attitude in the neighborhood context, they are impacting levels of safety (as deemed most important by scholars and neighbors themselves), and lastly, they are creating the potential to affect so tip social indicators for the community that increases the well-being of neighborhood and Walla Walla alike.

Through this impact, I have specific recommendations that C2C could elaborate upon in order to best realize their own capacity as a grassroots organization. Keeping up survey work and anecdotes of neighborhoods is a good start because those can lead to more knowledge regarding the change of perceptions on empowerment and ownerships—two key concepts that the whole

community values. I started the process to gather educational statistics for EC, and I advocate that C2C continues a open relationship with the Public Schools to see if they could gather identical data for the other neighborhoods (Washington Park and Jefferson Park), and sustain this flow of data as long as possible. As I learned from the stakeholder meeting, donors love to see these outcomes. C2C must be careful though to not change motives with goals to achieve outcomes solely based on stakeholder concerns. I also see outcomes in Children services, as a decline in reports or interventions is, very possibly ,due to neighborhood change. Sonja Cole expressed her interest in helping find this data. Crime has reduced dramatically, without it being a goal, so I encourage C2C to work closely with the Police Department to sustain these statistics.

For processes that C2C uses, my first finding is that C2C promotes and creates social capital, which serves as an essential function of a community and an avenue leading to participatory democracy. They promote the ideas of civic engagement and support neighbors participating in events and civic processes, which many may tend to avoid. The fact that neighbors from the Edith-Carrie neighborhood went to the City Council meeting and spoke about their stories and enrichment through the help of C2C is an indicator that participatory citizenship is working. The average American has not presented his or her case in front of a City Council, let alone has the power of the average citizen undergone transformation. Through their priorities of friendship, trust, and communication, they have opened up the doors for multiple social relations to form. Their work underlines the importance of outreach, getting to know one another before figuring out what is necessary. “Without community members engaged in their own self-defined and self-determined choices, sustainable community development has little chance of succeeding. The key to opening asset building opportunities for communities of color is to fully recognize that every community is unique” (Lui 2006, 174). C2C’s neighborhoods have created countless partnerships and relations with existing bodies throughout the community, proving that each neighborhood deserves the time and support from the surrounding communities. That being explored, C2C can still improve in fostering open dialogue for racial issues and tensions that may exist in neighborhoods. Silverman, Robinson, and Massey et al, all promote organizations to understand the issues that are at the core of ethnic groups. Massey et al, in particular, emphasis separating poverty from Latinos. With Latinos, it’s difficult to surpass cultural differences without fully understanding their roots with immigration, historical and current. Silverman state the importance of including all representations of the neighborhood when dealing with advocating policy reform. C2C maintains an all encompassing approach, almost similar to that of the City Council who supports organizations who work for all rather those that work for a specific ethnicity/race. I find that C2C must get over their reluctance to highlight some Latino assets that the City should address. This way, the large Latino base in the three neighborhoods might see specific improvements due to a focus on their culture.

Although not in the processes, I find C2C creating the type of relationships with the government both Diers and Silverman promote. They are covering all angles, as Schneidmiller worded. They attend meetings and really try to create a collaboration of funding resources. C2C does a great job in promoting vertical and horizontal bridging to city officials. We see the vertical bridging arise from their involvement in City meetings—with neighbors stepping up to express the importance of C2C in their neighborhood, or holding a stakeholder meeting (for both public and private entities), to explain their goals. Horizontal bridging is rampant with their organization, as they invite city officials to many of their events they hold (Christmas party,

work parties, barbeques). As I've mentioned before, they must be careful of whose interests are being represented as their objective is to empower the neighbors.

C2C is striving for private, public, and non-profit support. There are problems associated with only public funding. "There is a need for community organizations to be fiscally self-sufficient instead of falling victim to the funding whims of government and foundations" (Silverman, 2004, 184). Allowing one sector to financially support a NBO can limit their actions and processes in how neighborhoods are revitalized. Before anything, the needs of the residents should be addressed, then any stakeholder. Council member Cummins introduced an idea of giving a certain amount to each neighborhood in the city (say 5000), and then letting them do what they want.<sup>37</sup> This approach eliminates the overall importance of having a NBO in the first place. "Neighborhood disadvantage, characterized by lack of social resources, such as people with money, education or jobs, and institutions that serve neighborhoods, place barriers on the ability of residents to start and maintain voluntary associations" (Stoll, 2001, 534). Some neighborhoods just don't possess the leadership or resources to organize, which is why NBO is so important in the process.

I have found that a primary reason for lack of will to financial support C2C from the public sector is due to ideology on the role of the government. Their perceptions of C2C are overall nothing but positive thoughts but social services are seen as something the private or non profit sector should address because of the inefficiency of the government. Although this may be true on some levels, the government should still finance some of these social services in order to show that they aren't completely dropping them as a responsibility. C2C is not a government agency, so if the officials took to heart what they said, funds would be flowing to the organization. Diers explains that governments have a responsibility to acknowledge the tremendous resources and assets in neighborhoods (Diers 2004, 172). The fact that the police department has full support of C2C shows that C2C is doing a good job in impacting issues that are important to society. Government's can stay away from creating social service organizations themselves however it's very crucial to fund other organizations that address services that are required. The police, fire, and health departments are all necessary for a community to function but no bridge between these services and the common citizen would exist without social organizations working to empower citizens. I fully recommend that the city, county, and port of Walla Walla fund C2C, as it's a necessity for the betterment of the community.

Although assimilation might be the choice for the local government when looking at the race issue, it is unrealistic to assume that it is the best solution for the community. While certain expectations are always good (knowledge of English, abide by the law), leaving neighborhoods isolated and left behind because they don't possess all the resources is unacceptable for a community, regardless of races. I have found that C2C offers training, staff, and other resources for Latinos in order to bridge the race relation gap, even if they still need work with concentrating on specific issues. Unfortunately, I have yet to see that bridge being crossed by any other public identities, and certainly not the City Council. Until the Council and County recognize that these neighborhoods are mixed and race can be a root for some problems, progress will be slow. "Policy proposals much be approached with a race lens... Using a race lens would

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<sup>37</sup> Jerry Cummins, 10-28-08.

mean that government and public bodies would attempt to weave policies of equality of opportunity and non-discrimination into the fabric of decision-making” (Lui et Al, 289). Nonetheless, C2C has gained progress within the Latino community. They gain trust and realize that Latinos and Non-Latinos might not have the healthiest relationship within a neighborhood. Carter has explained their intention to have a cultural workshop, allowing neighbors to express their worries about cultural barriers. Through these barriers, C2C has still managed to help both groups work together—to form a common neighborhood identity and common goals. These healthy race relations only exist if they are put under the spotlight and identified. I suggest that the local government become more active in promoting Latino participation in any way possible. Just like many minorities, Latinos sometimes have mistrust of the government due to historical oppression and cultural differences. Any way that the government can gain their trust will only benefit the community as a whole.

Through their lack of involvement with the Latino community, I find that they sometimes use development practices that aren’t considerate of these disadvantaged and isolated neighborhoods. The Port has planned a revitalization project near EC and Washington Park, but it appears that they’re intentions are to enhance the economic vitality of Walla Walla Valley, not to involve these neighborhoods in the process. These processes are essential to foster social capital and relationships of trust between the government, NBOs, and residents. Although their intentions are good, with goals that may prove very beneficial to the neighborhood, their distance from the neighborhoods allowed them to think in the “deficit mentality”. These neighborhoods needed help, and this was their solution. I suggest that government entities review and take into consideration important processes and strategies that I have laid out in my literature review that lead to success in neighborhood improvements. Silverman strongly advises that governments allow residents to have a large say in development policies of their neighborhoods. I second this process. Government officials should take time to walk the neighborhoods, and evaluate C2C’s standards through their own eyes. Maybe their own practices will change after really getting to know these strategies, and change from a deficit mentality to that of asset building.

C2C does its best ability to address neighborhood issues as a whole. That being said, as none of the neighborhoods are of just one race, they do not bring race issues to the forefront of their mission. A strong organization that caters to some of the problems of Latinos should exist in Walla Walla in order to heighten their voice in the same manner C2C does with neighborhoods. Although many of the issues might be the same, it is not the goal or interest of C2C to continually differentiate between groups. An organization that works for Latinos is important for them to emerge from the social, racial, and economic problems they face and move towards changing the structural system of viewing Latinos as community always plagued with deficits. Additionally the sooner the community sees strong leadership from the Latino community, the sooner they will develop the confidence to elect Latinos to political offices. As Hero presented in his case study of Denver and Pueblo, representation can lead to enormous political progressions for minority rights and issues.

Lastly, the extra advice I have for C2C is to get their name out there. Many people have not heard of C2C but fully agree with the type of work they do. To get community support, you have to make your cause known. It’s not enough for just the large public entities to be aware of C2C; businesses, organizations, and regular citizens all should be aware of their efforts—then their

relationship can truly affect the whole community at large.

## Appendix A

Chuck Fulton: November 9, 2008, approx. 45 min, at his office. Recorded, notes, transcribed.

Nancy Carter: November 11, 2008, approx 1 hr., in café downtown. Recorded, notes, transcribed.

Barbara Clark, October 20, 2008, approx. 35 min., at her office. Recorded, notes, transcribed.

Fred Mitchell, November 19, 2008, approx. 20 min., at his home. Recorded, notes, transcribed.

Jerry Cummins, October 28, 2008, approx 45 min., at City Hall. Recorded, notes, transcribed.

Greg Loney, November 18, 2008, approx 27 min., at his office. Recorded, notes, transcribed.

Paul Schneidmiller, December 16, 2008, approx 25 min., at his office. Recorded, notes, transcribed.

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