

# Networks and Fragmentation Among Community Environmental Groups of Southeast Chicago

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## Abstract

This research report discusses community level organizations in Southeast Chicago. We focus on differences in framing and prioritizing of environmental issues among two different ethnic groups' communities, and information flow and access to institutional resources among those communities.

The goals of the field research, carried out from August 1999 to January 2000, were to identify community organizations with environmental interests and to delineate information flow among community groups and between community residents and government agencies or other official sources. Our methodologies included observation of organizations' meetings; 'snowball sampling' of social networks; open-ended interviews with individuals; and review of relevant documents.

Although residents of Southeast Chicago widely acknowledged the presence of industrial waste and pollution, relatively few were environmentally active. Local perceptions of priorities for community mobilization did not always coincide with those of organizations more directly focused on environmental issues and wetlands preservation, such as the EPA and nature-conservancy oriented groups. Community participation in formulating environmental policy was constrained by information flow relating to environmental issues among various community sectors and organizations, and was affected by technical knowledge, political agendas, and the existence of brokers who mediated and translated among multiple organizations and constituencies.

Southeast Chicago is a distinct community within Chicago. There are different neighborhoods within Southeast Chicago and there has been a history of ethnic

conflict among its residents. It is important to this study to recognize the nature of the local, neighborhood communities that can be the basis for social and environmental action.

There was a distinct disjunction between the networks of White and African-American organizations. There were differences in the emphasis and expression of environmental concerns among community groups reflecting different constituencies: groups based in predominantly African-American neighborhoods emphasized health and environmental justice; groups drawing from predominantly White neighborhoods spoke more of heritage and quality of life; environmental activists from national and regional organizations spoke more of natural resource conservation. In keeping with these different priorities, White and African-American based community groups tended to have connections with very different governmental and nongovernmental agencies. The fact that there was little integration of these communities' groups was probably due to these differing priorities as well as existing ethnic separation. Nevertheless, there were significant points of intersection among community group interests, such as making industry responsible to local people and building sustainable communities.

Information flow among groups helped to define lines of communication, important sources of information, and delineate significant community and extra-community organizations. One of the salient means by which information was transmitted among groups was through people we call 'brokers.' These are people who are strongly committed to the environmental cause and therefore disseminate information. They also have multiple links among many or all of the types of groups discussed earlier. Brokers, because of their position, often served as translators of information between levels. Because of this structural position, they were potentially very important links to the community for government agencies.

## Table of Contents

- Section I. Introduction
  - Genesis and Purpose of Study
  - Target Area: Calumet Area and Surrounding Neighborhoods in Southeast Chicago
  - Sources of Pollution
  - The Wetlands
  - US-EPA's CBEP Place-Based Strategy and Southeast Chicago as a "Place"
  
- Section II. Methodology of Study
  
- Section III. Calumet and Southeast Chicago as Communities
  - Definitions of Calumet and Southeast Chicago
  - The Calumet Region
  - Southeast Chicago
  - Southeast Chicago in the Context of the City of Chicago
  - Boundaries
  - Community as Enacted Through Community Groups
  
- Section IV. Not Good at Partnering? Framing of Information and Priorities
  
- Section V. Relation of Information Flow and Brokers to Groups and Group Meetings
  - Information Flow Among Groups
  - The Broker Role — Translators and Networkers
  - What Do Brokers Do?
  - Constraints on Volunteerism
  - Brokers as Gatekeepers
  - Information Flow and Community
  
- Section VI. Implications for Access to the Community
  
- Section VII. Recommendations
  
- References

## Section I. Introduction

### *Genesis and Purpose of Study*

The work of the United States Environmental Protection Agency in environmental planning and problem solving includes environmental justice analyses and planning processes; Superfund site identification and remediation; and Community-Based Environmental Protection. Each requires an awareness of how different community groups value and interact with the environment and with each other, as well as structural mechanisms that allow meaningful representative participation in planning and problem solving processes. As anthropologists, we aim to apply our discipline's understanding of the social and cultural dimensions of the community to the challenges of environmental policy makers in identifying significant social groups, understanding their environmental values and helping environmental professionals to work more effectively with those groups. We focused on Southeast Chicago because it is an area of Chicago of interest to US-EPA staff due to both existing environmental problems and significant resources. Furthermore, it is also an area of complex community structures, including multiple interest groups and internally recognized neighborhoods as well as significant class and ethnic diversity. We sought to demonstrate the value and use of other applied social science methods, particularly ethnography, to contribute information and perspectives useful in identifying ways in which environmental professions can practically define "the community" in terms of groups, organizations, and individuals who are potential partners in broadbased environmental planning and action, including groups who may not have identified themselves as environmental actors.

The EPA Region 5 Chicago Team, following the EPA policy of CommunityBased Environmental Protection, has been coordinating their regulatory and remediation work in the Calumet area across media – air, water, soil, etc. – and also conduct community outreach activities, linking with locally-based groups. Our project was to take our own look as anthropologists at community organization and existing resident-based environmental concerns in the area: specifically, to assess the diversity of local social/political organization in Southeast Chicago and its current links to participation in environmental planning as well as opportunities for expanding those links. We had the advantage of being able to build on the work of anthropologist Elizabeth Babcock and other consultants who had already identified groups and interviewed key actors involved in local environmental activism. We proposed to base our analysis on data collected through attending meetings of local community organizations and groups, in order to 1) get a picture of the range of groups that are involved or potentially involved in shaping local stakes in the Calumet environment and their relation to local residents' social networks; 2)

understand how issues or concerns relevant to environmental action are framed in these local discussions, which may be different than the way EPA professionals or outside activists frame the issues; and 3) examine the flow of information related to environmental awareness and action, where people get information from and where it goes (which is connected both to how issues are framed and people's social networks). We attended, between the two of us, 24 meetings and conducted supplementary open-ended interviews and conversations with participants, both to identify relevant meetings and to understand what went on at them. We also examined newsletters, flyers, local newspapers, and educational brochures put out by the EPA and other government agencies. We had no single community partner in this project. Our methodology and the groups whose meetings we attended are discussed in Section II.

Target Area: Calumet Area and Surrounding Neighborhoods in Southeast Chicago

These social science technical assistance goals were particularly salient to the situation in the Calumet Region. Southeast Chicago is a critical environmental area for the US-EPA due to its combination of severe industrial pollution and unique wetlands environment.

### *Sources of Pollution*

For over 100 years, the Calumet Region was a major industrial center; its steel mill industry was the most important in the world. The wetlands and its location on the shores of Lake Michigan made it well-suited to receive shipments of iron ore and coal, to ship out its product, and to use streams and wetlands for cooling and waste disposal. Astounding amounts of solid and liquid wastes resulted from industry. Acids and heavy metals leached out of these wastes and flowed widely because of the rivers, lakes, and high water table. Heavy industry also resulted in severe air pollution; stories of the dust and grit everywhere are near-legendary. After the close of the mills in the 1970s and 1980s, waste disposal per se became explicitly important in the local economy. This was not, however, a new use of the wetlands – in the era preceding industrial development, farmers in the Calumet Region transported produce to the city of Chicago and carted back urban waste to dump in the wetlands. Today, the residents of Southeast Chicago have to deal with the residual effects of over one hundred years of industry as well as more recent dumping, both legal and illegal. More recently, industry has returned to Southeast Chicago, but present day residents and the government at all levels are more concerned with environmental protection, as evidenced in such processes as the Good Neighbor Dialogues to negotiate remediation. The goal is safe and sustainable economic development.

## *The Wetlands*

Despite the severe pollution, the Calumet Region remains a unique ecosystem. It is an important site for migratory birds. Copses of oaks in marshes (both natural and artificial) support black-crowned night herons, snowy egrets and common egrets. Other wildlife can be observed as well. There are rare prairies, oak savannas, and marshes, rivers, and lakes. Other endangered or threatened species (Illinois listed) found here include: piedbilled grebes, common moorhen, and yellow-headed blackbird (NC News December 1999/January 2000). The wetlands, as part of a larger hydrological system and habitat for migratory water birds, thus are important to the ecological health of an even larger region in the north central United States. These features have attracted the interest of regional and national environmentalists as well as local community members, all hoping to preserve and enhance these areas for future generations. Conserving these features requires limits on the industrial and commercial uses of these areas, but also has potential for generating local economic resources through ecologically sustainable recreational facilities. Therefore, these interests must be considered in the economic development plans made for Southeast Chicago.

### *US-EPA's CBEP Place-Based Strategy and Southeast Chicago as a "Place"*

The Calumet Region can be defined as a place ecologically and geographically. In addition, it is a socially significant region to its residents. Southeast Chicago is a sub-unit of that place, defined by political, social, and economic factors. Southeast Chicago is part of Chicago, and as such is incorporated into the political processes of the City of Chicago as well as the State of Illinois. Furthermore, Southeast Chicago is marked by a shared economic history of steel mills and unionism. The concepts of Calumet and Southeast Chicago as 'places' will be further discussed in Section III.

The US-EPA and other organizations have recognized the importance of communities in addressing pollution through the integration of the Community-Based Environmental Protection (CBEP) into its activities. For the purposes of this study, CBEP is significant for the following core principles: it focuses on a definable geographical area; works collaboratively with a full range of stakeholders through effective partnerships; assesses the quality of the environmental resources in a place as a whole; and integrates environmental, economic, and social objectives and foster local stewardship of all community resources (EPA 1999b: 6). The idea is to support communities' efforts to use, protect, and restore natural resources (EPA 1999a: 2). A key element in the process is to ask whether the EPA's involvement can produce tangible results, which requires that they be able to assess community capacity and readiness, as well as the availability of EPA resources (ibid.: 3).

Clearly, the concept of community is intrinsic to the carrying out of this framework. But ‘community’ can be difficult to define; it is, perhaps, best defined in practice. For instance, the main CBEP document states the following:

The definition of community endorsed by EPA for CBEP efforts includes places and people that are associated with an environmental issue(s). The community may be organized around a neighborhood, a town, a city, or a region (such as a watershed, valley, or coastal area). It may be defined by either natural geographic or political boundaries. The key factor is that the people involved have a common interest in protecting an identifiable, shared environment and quality of life. Any ‘community’ will include a variety of differing values, perceptions, priorities, and complex interrelationships around environmental protection, as well as other issues. CBEP practitioners are encouraged to define and understand the appropriate scope of ‘community’ for each particular place (EPA 1999b: 5).

The definition given in the glossary is similar to what might be found in a social science textbook, but perhaps less useful for people in the field:

... components and attributes of social interaction, common ties, mutual satisfaction of needs, and shared territory or place. More specifically, individuals may define and understand what is meant by community in any particular situation. As such, any ‘community’ includes a variety of differing values, perceptions, priorities, and complex interrelationships around environmental protection as well as other community-based issues (EPA 1999b: 38).

This study seeks to develop the analytical tools needed to better define “community” and better understand the social and cultural environment of Southeast Chicago, where the EPA Region V has been an important actor for several decades, in order to facilitate the inclusion of local place-based stakeholders in environmental policy making and implementation. The development of sustainable environmental policy and practice requires the input and involvement of a diverse population of stakeholders. Yet in culturally and organizationally diverse urban populations such as Chicago, there is too little knowledge of sociocultural characteristics and of the structures by which meaningful participation in planning and problem-solving can take place. Identifying ‘community’ at a local level in such a diverse social context can be difficult, but that does not mean that community has disappeared. Community is enacted in informal social networks of friends and family, as well as various local organizations or groups. Furthermore, the local sense of community can be made more complicated by the fact that significant community relations in Chicago, as in other American cities, are not always geographically based. For instance, many inner-city church congregations or ethnic associations are supported by members in the

suburbs. This may make them stakeholders in geographically specific environmental concerns.

We will first discuss our methodology, then the Calumet Region and Southeast Chicago as communities and the groups involved in environmental activism in Southeast Chicago. In the following section, we will discuss the different framings of environmental priorities among the different communities in Southeast Chicago. The next section discusses information flow and how that delineates communities. That also affects ways in which agencies such as the US-EPA can make connections with the communities we delineated. Finally, we make specific recommendations for improving communication and involvement in environmental activism.

## **Section II. Methodology of Study**

### *Goals of Field Research:*

Identify community organizations with environmental interests

Delineate information flow among community groups and between community residents and government agencies or other official sources

### *Methodologies Used:*

Observation of organizations' meetings

'Snowball sampling' of social networks

Open-ended interviews with individuals

Document review of relevant materials

Our first goal was to identify community organizations that had environmental interests. We focused on those organizations that were (a) community-based in the sense of having strong connections with residents or business owners, and (b) had goals of community empowerment and support of quality of life in the community. Many different types of groups might be involved; we selected groups of various types in order to reflect the range of interest and expression found in these communities (see discussion below, and Table 1 for details). Assessing the potential of organizations for community-based environmental partnerships included identifying possible common interests and goals between these organizations and existing government programs, and the analysis of their framing and representation of community concerns that had implicit as well as explicit connection to environmental issues.

Once we had identified specific community groups, we observed their meetings and conducted open-ended interviews with key members to get fuller background information on the genesis of the group, its organization, and its community

connections. Through these referrals from one interviewee or organization to others, we were able to construct a picture or map of community groups, their social networks, and the relations with each other and external groups (national environmental organizations, government agencies). This method is known as “snowball sampling.” It is a flexible methodology, designed to address the high degree of organizational and cultural diversity that exists in urban communities.

Why were meetings a crucial element in our field research? Because, at the local level in Chicago and other urban American communities, going back to the time of De Tocqueville, meetings are a primary venue for enacting community, for forming and implementing collective agendas. Chicago has a formal political organization that extends down to the level of the aldermanic ward, but aldermen are mainly involved in coordinating existing city services within the ward and providing a base for local party politics. They are important players in zoning and hence land use decisions, however, their direct impact on environmental activism is limited because they do not provide a conduit for federal and state agencies or funding. Nor do they usually facilitate face-to-face interaction among neighbors — it’s more the other way around, that neighbors who organize themselves can help support or undercut an alderman’s career. Chicago, as an urban society in which work and home are separated, presents not ready-made structures but opportunities for creating community and assuming local leadership through mobilization around perceived problems – a pattern long ago observed by De Tocqueville. There is no a priori mandated organization for face-to-face coordination of collective action. Effective local community action also has to involve broader levels of community and associated institutions — city, state, and federal agencies, outside interest groups — because first, that is where the resources are and second, the agendas of these agencies and groups affect local development, e.g. through land use regulation and development plans. Meetings represent the context in which meaningful participation in planning and problem-solving can take place, and local residents can create links to resources and decision makers in city, state, and regional institutions. The advantage of this research’s focus on meetings is to provide an ethnographic data base rooted in how community relations are carried out in practice. Meetings provide a public forum in which it is possible to observe group processes that help to describe and create community and relationships between local and wider levels of community.

The technique of snowball sampling was also especially well-suited to examining information flow in order to map environmental awareness and identify local perceptions of environmental and other priorities. The impetus for focusing on information flow was our perception that local people might well have environment-related concerns not communicated as environmental concerns per se, e.g., health concerns.

Information flow tells us things such as how people form their ideas about the environment, and thus their environmental values and levels of activism. Where do people in the community get their environmental information from? This requires consideration not only of information gained from official or scientific sources, but information gained from newspapers and popular sources, shared among neighbors, and derived from personal experience. All of this has profound consequences for peoples' level of environmental activism. For instance, personal experience of coal dust or shared perceptions of illness caused by environmental pollution may motivate community action more than abstract scientific reports, because it is more immediate. Media and information campaigns may be influential in disseminating information and forming opinions. But such information does not go into communities as on to a blank slate. Information is accepted or ignored based on existing ideas (e.g., about pollution, its intensity and consequences, the perceived reliability of the source of information) and motivates action based both on that and social relations. We sought to examine this in this study.

Analysis of information flow concerns community organization and residents as sources of information as well as recipients of information. the social and organizational networks through which such information flows among groups, and relevant concepts and representations such as the desired or disapproved characteristics of the environment, and how they differ among community groups, and between community residents and government agencies. Tracing information flow is not separate from the issue of defining community boundaries, but rather is integrally connected to it – where information flows or is obstructed indicates and shapes the existence of community networks and their boundaries. Delineation of information flow entailed use of snowball sampling, open-ended interviews, and document review of materials such as neighborhood newspapers, newsletters, city-wide media, and EPA outreach materials.

Our initial idea of the types of environmental organizations involved in the study site was derived from discussion with US-EPA Region 5 staff, particularly a social scientist in the Office of Strategic Environmental Analysis and the Chicago Team. The EPA has been involved in this region for some time because of the high levels of waste dumping and industrial pollution in a geographical region of great ecological uniqueness and significance. As a result, they had working relationships with many researchers and activists in the region. One of the most important initial contacts was with faculty at Chicago State University who led the Lake Calumet Ecosystem Partnership, an umbrella organization of environmental organizations involved in strategic planning for the Calumet region. Attending those meetings introduced us to a wide variety of players from national and local organizations, as well as government agencies from the city to state to federal government. By following these links, we eventually attended the meetings of

local civic or neighborhood associations. However, as will become clear in the following pages, the network thus revealed left out significant communities of the Calumet region. It therefore became necessary to start from a different center-point, the Greater Roseland Health Coalition, and sample out from there. This revealed not geographically separate neighborhoods, but communities with a very different framing of environmental issues and, as a result, different connections with government agencies.

Participant observation and open-ended interviews, rather than surveys or structured interviews allowed us the flexibility to follow these threads of contact. We were especially fortunate to observe several particular processes in action as local communities and government agencies sought to solve specific problems. Observing several processes also meant that we did not have one primary community partner, but several. These allowed us to observe how local people made contact with relevant government agencies; which agencies and community groups they chose to partner with; how problems were defined; and how funding found. Our specific findings are discussed in the following sections.

### **Table 1. Categories of Groups Working in Southeast Chicago**

#### *Government Agencies*

Examples: EPA and other agencies (HUD, Cook County Dept. of Public Health, etc.) whose mandate includes environmentally-related concerns

Roles: Regulation, provision or facilitation of mandated services

Position in community: Collaborations with local residents and stakeholders to accomplish goals and implement programs; negotiation with industry to remediate environmental damage

#### *Externally-based Environmental Interest Groups\**

Examples: Audubon Society, Sierra Club, Citizens for a Better Environment. This category can also include groups that include environmental concerns within a wider mandate, e.g. sustainability (Center for Neighborhood Technology).

Roles: Advocacy, including influencing policy makers and public education

Position in community: Information and outreach to local residents, sometimes through local resident members, affecting environmental actions of local residents and stakeholders.

#### *Community Advisory Councils or Planning Groups (Agency-supported)*

Examples: Greater Roseland Community Health Council, Lake Calumet Ecosystem Partnership

Roles: Planning and/or coordination of existing services and activities

Position in community: Instigated or supported (e.g., through planning grant) by government agency to facilitate community outreach and connections. Councils

supported by agencies other than the EPA (HUD, Dept. of Public Health) include environmental concerns (brownfields, environmental health hazards) as only part of their mandate. Usually include variety of stakeholders — representatives of various agencies, service providers, interest groups, universities, and/or other local institutions. Includes representatives of local residents (may be requirement) but strength of linkage to local residents varies. When linkage to resident-based groups is strong, position in community is similar to that of locally-based umbrella organizations.

*Local Umbrella Ecological Organizations (cross-neighborhood)\**

Examples: Southeast Environmental Task Force, Calumet Ecological Park Association.

Roles: Advocacy, coordination of environmental action in area beyond specific neighborhoods, public education, members are neighborhood improvement associations and community organizations (see (F) below).

Position in community: Have members representing other groups active in neighborhoods, e.g., civic groups, disseminate information and coordinate action through these members. Like the local EIG's, often led and organized by a committed activist and broker.

*Resident-based Local Environmental Interest Groups (neighborhood-based)\**

Examples: People for Community Recovery, Environmental Committee of Victory Heights/Maple Park/West Pullman Advisory Council (a civic organization)

Roles: Advocacy on behalf of local residents' concerns and inclusion in policymaking, educating local residents, influencing local stakeholders

Position in community: Groups often form around one passionate, activist/broker resident. Leader and members work to increase awareness of other residents and mobilize action. Leaders also work to establish relationships with government agencies and funders. Groups can be instituted as sub-group or committee of wider-interest civic group or agency-instigated local advisory council. Special-purpose groups can start as part of particular action, e.g. Good Neighbor Dialogue groups.

*Neighborhood-Based Civic Organizations*

Examples: Fair Elms Civic League, East Side Pride, Pullman Civic Organization, Victory Heights/Maple Park/West Pullman Advisory Council

Role: Cover a wide range of neighborhood residents' concerns: housing and commercial development, zoning, city services, crime and safety, recreation, quality of life

Position in community: Provide a forum for community residents to get together and voice common concerns and decide on joint action; the strength and history of these organizations varies with the neighborhood. Often include more homeowners than renters. Block clubs perform similar role on a smaller scale.

*Bi-State Working Groups\**

Examples: Calumet Heritage Partnership, Friends of Wolf Lake

Role: Coordination of environmental planning and/or advocacy in region that crosses state boundaries.

Position in Community: Similar to (C) or (D) above, but work across state boundaries.

\*These categories include only primarily environmentally-focused groups or organizations; tiers are more fully explained in Section IV and Figure 4.

Tier 1

Tier 1

Tier 2

Tier 2

Tier 3

Tier 3

(Tier 2)

## Section III. Calumet and Southeast Chicago as Communities

Calumet is a distinct region in the upper Midwest, definable geographically, ecologically, and socially

Within that region, Southeast Chicago is a distinct community marked by its history, social relations, and by a shared position vis-a-vis the City of Chicago.

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to think of Southeast Chicago as a community in and of itself. It is heterogeneous; there are different neighborhoods within Southeast Chicago and there has been a history of ethnic conflict among its residents. It is important to this study to recognize the nature of the local, neighborhood communities that can be the basis for social and environmental action.

There was a distinct disjunction between the networks of White and African American organizations; the geographical separations between neighborhoods magnifies this segregation, but can not say that this is the cause.

### *Definitions of Calumet and Southeast Chicago*

#### *The Calumet Region*

The Calumet Region is a region at the southern tip of Lake Michigan. For many, it is defined first and foremost as an important industrial region. It extends beyond the City of Chicago and the State of Illinois into northwest Indiana. Despite these political boundaries, there is a sense of community among residents of the Calumet Region, as evidenced by local support of the Calumet Heritage Corridor, the Calumet Heritage Partnership, and the "Calumet 101" conference. It is worth considering this larger 'community' here because it underlies some of the self-definition of community by the residents of Southeast Chicago. What, then, is the self-definition of Calumet residents?

One is a sense of being on the frontier (Mendelsohn 1996; Calumet 101 conference). This carries over into the sense of being 'peripheral' to the main centers of political power in their states, although many recognize its importance as a transport hub (e.g., iron ore over Lake Michigan, coal up the river from downstate Illinois; commodities transported in and out via rail). The sense of periphery derives in part from the fact that this area experienced urban development later than other parts of Chicago; the wetlands made it unappealing for residential expansion, but in turn made it suitable for industrial expansion. In the Calumet region, the city found the ideal spot for industrial expansion: within their municipality but away from existing residential centers where citizens might complain of public health nuisances. The Calumet Region, thus, is seen as the fringes of the metropolitan area, the repository of heavy industry, waste and dumping. Outsiders view the area as noxious and dirty, and residents are well aware of this.

Southeast Chicago has been relatively isolated from the gentrification process so common in the north and northwest sides of Chicago and areas closer to the Loop (the central business district). While this may be due in part to outsiders' perceptions of the area, it may also be due to the relative transportation isolation of parts of the Southeast. For whatever reasons this isolation has occurred, it contributes to the strong neighborhood identity we noted in many parts of Southeast Chicago. Yet other factors first put this strong identity into force, such as labor history. We believe that plans in the 1980s for an airport that would have cemented over significant parts of the Lake Calumet region and its neighborhoods in Chicago was a major catalyst for community activism.

Their identity as an industrial region is very salient to Calumet residents, and it is a matter of pride. There is pride in the immigrant history and the solid economic base that gave so many a chance to live relatively well. People identify as hard-working and as able to survive hard times – the working conditions at the mills, hard-fought strikes, and finally the close of the mills and collapse of the economic base. Another set of values concerns community and family: they speak of themselves as people with cohesive communities, family-oriented, with strong neighborhoods and parishes. They contrast their housing conditions – single family homes, owner-occupied, on lots large enough for yards – with those of tenement-style housing found closer to the city centers. It is an area of open spaces, not dense and crowded. In short, this is a region that has been good for working-class people, a community with urban amenities. Finally, there is pride in the progressive tradition of unionism.

### *Southeast Chicago*

Figure 1 shows a map of Southeast Chicago. Figure 2 shows the communities we included in our investigations of Southeast Chicago, labeled on the map as areas 49-55. They are: Roseland, Pullman, West Pullman, South Deering, East Side, Riverdale and Hegewisch. Our northern cut-off point was 95th Street. This corresponds in general to the community's sense of social boundaries, if not ecological boundaries; in addition, a large and complex planning process by the City of Chicago for South Chicago (Southworks, a former mill, abandoned like so many others in the 1970s and 1980s) is already underway, which changes some of the dynamics of environmental activism in the area. Therefore, we did not carry out research there.

These neighborhoods correspond to community areas used by Chicago city planners and local nonprofit organizations, designating neighborhoods that have some sense of a local identity and history, and associated class and ethnic characteristics of the resident population. These community areas were originally devised by University of Chicago sociologists (the "Chicago school" of

ethnographic sociology) in the 1920s and only roughly reflect contemporary reality because of economic and population changes since then. Existing boundaries reflect the physical boundaries of newer expressways as well as the long-standing railroad tracks, canals, and river beds. The extent to which those community areas reflect contemporary reality is partly a result of self-fulfilling prophecy in that these areas have been used for planning and implementing city services and allocating resources such as parks and other public facilities, as well as for organizing the efforts of nonprofit organizations and resident activities. An alternative depiction of community areas is shown at the Chicago Historical Society's web page on Global Communities: Chicago's Immigrants and Refugees (<http://www.chicagohistory.org/global/imap.html>).

Nevertheless, such communities do have greater salience in the Southeast of Chicago than in other parts of Chicago because of the settlement history; it is an area marked by ethnically separated contiguous neighborhoods. As documented in the accompanying table of 1990 Census data, there are marked differences in the ethnic and economic status of these neighborhoods. Hegewisch and East Side are practically all White; Roseland, Riverdale, and West Pullman are practically all Black; South Deering and Pullman are more mixed (see Table 2). These patterns arose in part from mill hiring practices (Kornblum 1974) with changes arising in the post-WWII period with the building of public housing, civil rights and open housing laws, and the economic devastation of the mill closings. At first, African American laborers were hired, if at all, for low-paying and custodial jobs. When they gained more secure union jobs and eventually able to buy homes, restrictive housing policies prevented them from buying in the eastern neighborhoods, so their areas of settlement tended to be further west. There was also a tendency, common throughout the city, for younger people to move out of the neighborhood as they found jobs in other areas.

**Table 2. Selected 1990 Census Data for Southeast Chicago Community Areas**

Community Area	% White	% Black	% Hispanic	% Below Poverty
49. Roseland	.9%	0.989	0.4%	18.8%
50. Pullman	15.2%	0.788	0.8%	18.7%
51. South Deering	23.3%	0.590	28.2%	18.4%
52. East Side	77.7%	0.000	39.5%	13.0%
53. West Pullman	1.8%	0.937	4.3%	19.3%
54. Riverdale	0.8%	0.972	1.7%	62.9%
55. Hegewisch	87.1%	0.007	11.0%	7.7%

Although there has been a Hispanic population living in Southeast Chicago for several generations, there has also been a more recent influx of Spanish-speaking people, not all of them immigrants. This can be documented by looking at the languages used at local churches; all have English services, and many have services in an eastern European language such as Polish as well as Spanish. Hegewisch, East Side, and South Deering now have significant Spanish-speaking populations attracted, like other working class people before them, by the low cost of relatively good quality housing. Many work outside of the area.

Many neighborhoods have more specific communities locally recognized and named within them, and these may be more recognizable and significant than the official designations. Furthermore, significant ties may exist between communities that make each more salient in local categories than in other communities. For instance, Hegewisch includes three neighborhoods, Avalon Trails, Harbour Point Estates, and Arizona. It is, however, a relatively unitary community as evidenced by organizations such as the Hegewisch Chamber of Commerce. Hegewisch also has very close ties across the state border with Hammond; these are as significant, if not more so, than connections with other neighborhoods. East Side can be divided into the Upper and Lower East Side; it also contains a sub-community or neighborhood called Fair Elms, which has an active civic group. Riverdale contains Altgeld Gardens, with a very active community group concerned with public housing and pollution. Locally, North Pullman is recognized as a separate neighborhood from Pullman proper, which has a higher percentage of White residents. South Deering contains Jeffrey Manor, Veteran's Memorial Park, Irondale, and Slag Valley; these derive in part from the fact that new immigrants settled close to the mill in which they worked (Kornblum 1974). The primarily African-American neighborhoods surrounding Roseland (Roseland, Altgeld Gardens, West Pullman, Morgan Park to its west, and Calumet Park to the south) are referred to by local churches and community activists as "Greater Roseland" and served by such groups as the Greater Roseland Development Corporation and the Greater Roseland Health Council. Some of the community area names are more regionally salient than others. For instance, Pullman, originating in the planned community built by railway tycoon George Pullman, is more recognized than Riverdale; Riverdale is more recognized as the site of the Altgeld Gardens Housing Complex. Finally, neighborhoods are locally delineated on the basis of association with parishes as well. And although peoples' closest ties are to those they interact with most frequently – family, work, church, block clubs – they do identify with the area of Southeast Chicago and its environmental amenities as a whole, as well as with the Calumet Region (see Figure 3).

Therefore, community and community-based activities occur on many different levels, from the very localized neighborhood of a few blocks, up through

designated neighborhoods in the city system (which may correspond to wards in some cases), and encompassing, in some contexts, the entire 'Southeast Chicago' or 'Calumet' community. How and when each sense of community is activated depends on the social context. We will examine these different levels of community, how they interconnect in our discussion of the different kinds of groups we encountered, and how this affects environmental involvement or activism in Southeast Chicago.

### *Southeast Chicago in the Context of the City of Chicago*

Indeed, there is a sense in the city of Chicago that the South side in general is peripheral to the city. To Southeast Chicagoans, this reads as neglect. In terms of spatial layout, Southeast Chicago has both a more dispersed settlement pattern and is almost the farthest distance from the City center of any city neighborhoods. The Southeast is not served by the city's elevated train system; taxis do not serve the streets as regularly as the dense North. This area was not fully connected to the municipal water system until the late 1980s, and then only because of agitation by the People for Community Recovery (Mendelsohn 1996).

In some cases, being peripheral is read as a benefit. For instance, white ethnic residents of the East Side and Hegewisch view their communities as distinct and separate from the City of Chicago. They particularly note the history and heritage of their communities and are concerned about its dilution due to ethnic and economic change. Environmental activism occurs in the context of building sustainable economies in order to preserve those communities. Many express concern about young people moving out. Members of East Side Pride have been lobbying for more patrol cars because they live on an "island," and if the bridges over the river are up when a call goes out for police protection, patrol cars may not be able to get to them. People in Hegewisch believe that "substandard maintenance has contributed to declining interest in local sports leagues" (Babcock 1998: 10).

Nevertheless, it is a hallmark of the current city administration that more city resources are being put into economic development and environmental rehabilitation. And Southeast Chicago is fully integrated into the political structure of Chicago. The ward structure affects both local level politics and activism. It is a system of patronage that was essential to immigrants in decades past. It is a way of life in most of the city. It has important implications for activism, not only in terms of getting things done, but also for how people interact in pursuit of civic goals and how they prioritize different goals. In the ward structure, it is quite straight forward. If you need something like better garbage pickup, more patrol cars, or streets paved, you take it to the alderman (often via a contact such as a

precinct captain). It should get done; if it does not, if the request is denied, it may mean that you or your contact have insufficient clout – or that there’s a specific political reason why it will not be done. It is a system that provides a sense of control in terms of a high degree of understandability in marked contrast to environmental issues, which can take a much longer period of time to resolve, because of the profound nature of pollution, the lower visibility of pollution, and the difficulties of enforcing federal rules and regulations.

Environmental regulation entails long periods of collecting data and then negotiating equitable and workable resolutions. This contrast has important implications for local commitment to environmental activism. When local environmental problems are not immediately resolved, local people may be inclined to look for political reasons for this. For example, a group of East Side residents had recorded data on dust emissions from a local industry under the guidance of a local environmental activist. When the problem did not appear to have been remedied or even addressed, residents had a number of theories as to why it had been neglected, prominent among them regarding the activist’s supposed political and kinship connections and why the activist had decided not to press their concerns. All of these had to do with relative clout, and little to do with what probably was the reality of documenting problems and negotiating resolutions in the context of the appropriate government agency. It simply appears harder to get things done environmentally.

### *Boundaries*

Neighborhood dynamics are also demonstrated in terms of who gets to use what resources when and where. These are based not just on ethnic segregation, but class as well. For example, in Morgan Park, a neighborhood outside of our study area, the City of Chicago acquired the right-of-way to the abandoned rail corridor needed to connect what will become the Conrail Bike Way. Not long after taking ownership, the City cleaned out the neglected corridor, cutting down weeds and brush and unwittingly mowing down one of Chicago’s long standing barriers between two economically disparate communities: Sheldon Heights, a middle-class, predominantly African-American community and the Racine Court Cooperative, a tenantmanaged residential complex and former public housing project. For years, the right-of-way had helped enforce the separation between Sheldon Heights and the Cooperative, acting as a buffer zone between different standards of living and the crime Sheldon Heights residents felt dominates the other side of the tracks. Residents of Sheldon Heights worried about crime increasing as a result of the destruction of the barrier. Conversely, residents of the Racine Court Cooperative had requested the clean-up as the weeds and brush were considered an eyesore and a danger to local children (Chicagoland Bicycle Federation 1998).

Southeast Chicago benefits greatly from having a great deal of land that is thought of as 'public space,' where residents can hunt, fish, and boat. These are 'working class parks' (Hurley 1995; see also Mendelsohn 1996). Wolf Lake was the classic example of a working class park. Wolf Lake then became categorized by residents as a park used by outsiders who made the atmosphere rowdy and crowded. The surrounding community has done a great deal to bring about the banning of alcohol and late night partying and locals once again think of it as 'their' lake. At other locations, there has been concern about gang activity; Fishing Buddies, whose fishing activities occur in Beaubien Woods, was one way to combat gang activity in the park. These concerns probably reflect local concerns about changes in their communities. It is particularly true in the White ethnic neighborhoods that there is an aging population, as young families have moved out in search of jobs; in African-American communities, the middle-class has often moved out, leaving a disproportionate share of the poor behind. The in-migrating population is young and Hispanic; there seems to have been both generational and ethnic contestation of use of these public spaces. In fact, African-Americans who complained of ethnic conflict in the parks cited incidents with Hispanic youth.

While we were unable to observe much use of public space because this study took place in the winter, people mentioned ethnic segregation of use of these resources, whether of parks or fishing locations. There is spatial segregation: people visit parks in which they feel comfortable, so few African-Americans cited a preference for Wolf Lake. In addition, there is temporal segregation. One African-American woman told Gillogly that "Black people don't like to go out in the mid-day sun and bake; you won't see them in the middle of the day, they like to go in the late afternoon and evening." Hurley mentions this temporal difference in park use in Gary (1995). Nevertheless, the history of racial exclusion here and elsewhere may still inform how and when minority people use public parks; it may also factor into their rejection of more explicitly environmental causes – early middle-class environmental activism also served to protect the 'purity' of the neighborhoods, both in terms of class and ethnic composition (Hurley 1995).

### *Community as Enacted Through Community Groups*

As stated above (Section II), meetings held by community groups are a primary venue for enacting community in urban America. By enacting community we mean groups of people coming together to form and implement collective action. Acting together, whether through organizing block parties and neighborhood festivals, or formulating proposals or requests for submission to political leaders or government agencies, creates or reinforces social ties among neighbors or people with shared interests, including people with interests in particular places who may or may not live nearby. People who take the initiative in this sort of collective

action — community activists — see themselves as affecting and in fact do affect the lives of people beyond the activists themselves. That’s why they speak of themselves as creating or belonging to “community” groups or organizations. How wide or inclusive the community is that they attempt to affect varies. Community in urban America can be enacted or built at multiple levels of inclusion in geographic terms, from the very local (block associations), to neighborhood (as variously defined, e.g., parish, aldermanic ward, or Chicago community planning area), to region within the city (Southeast Chicago, South Side Chicago), on up to the city, county, state, and nation.

For community groups and organizations, the relationship between the level of community they see themselves as representing and higher levels of politically-constituted community (city, state, nation) is often a key part of their agenda, as they try to affect the policy decisions at those higher levels which control the distribution of resources to their more local community. (“Organization” is usually taken to refer to a more formally constituted body with bylaws, legal status, etc., as opposed to the more inclusive term “group”, which includes less formal bodies.) In this effort, local community groups and organizations interact with formal organizations whose mandate is defined at higher levels of community (e.g., city, state, or national government agencies).

The accompanying diagram and typology (Table 1 and Figure 4) describes the range of organizations relevant to environmental action that we encountered in Southeast Chicago, and their position in regard to various geographic and governmental levels of community: neighborhood, Southeast Chicago as a city region, the city, the region, and the state. The diagram can be used as a tool to envisage the intersections (or lack thereof) that various community organizations or groups have with the informal social networks of friends and family that are the backbone of community in the sense of strong and enduring social ties (the social theorists’ *gemeinschaft*) on the one hand, and the formal bureaucracies of government and national organizations on the other. The types of organizations and advisory councils labeled “Tier 2” in the table and figure play an important role in linking state and national agencies to neighborhood and other more local and informal groups.

In Southeast Chicago, we found that some specifically environmentally-action oriented organizations connect with resident social networks through neighborhood-based civic organizations (see Table 1, Figure 4). Some of these environmental action groups function as umbrella organizations whose scope of operations goes beyond specific neighborhoods, using representatives of civic organizations to connect with neighborhood residents and the broad range of neighborhood issues and concerns that the civic organizations represent. The

seven types of groups and organizations outlined in Table 1 can connect to each other and to informal social networks in multiple ways, summarized in terms of organizational “tiers” in the diagram.

The diagram indicates the possibilities for the differences in interconnections, but does not reflect the differences in the interconnections and their density that we found in the Greater Roseland neighborhoods versus the eastern neighborhoods. We found that there was very little overlap between the networks of environmentalists and civic organizations on the eastern side of Southeast Chicago and the environmental/health and nonprofit organizations found in the Greater Roseland neighborhoods. To get information on these networks required going through two different ‘entry points’ in order to make contact and begin sampling. Furthermore, the “Tier 2” and “Tier 3” organizations in the Greater Roseland area had a more limited and different set of connections to “Tier 1” agencies: the East side groups had stronger connections to specifically environmental agencies and groups (Region 5 EPA, Illinois EPA, Illinois Dept of Natural Resources, Audubon Society, etc.) while the Roseland area groups with environmental interests were pursuing ties to health and social service agencies (Cook County Dept. Of Public Health, Illinois Dept. Of Human Services).

Regional and national environmental groups are also very important in looking at environmental activism in Southeast Chicago. Many activists are associated with regional branches of national groups such as the Audubon Society and the Sierra Club. As such, they often play an important role as catalyst in getting information to people, developing plans, and organizing action. Some live outside the region; some come from the region but now live in other parts of the city; and still others are local. Nevertheless, we found little evidence of resentment of ‘outsiders’ being involved in environmental issues in SE Chicago, perhaps because some have been effective in improving conditions for residents; there appears to be a congruency between environmentalists’ interests and those of local residents, at least in the 1990s (see below for further discussion of the role of activists or advocates).

For all of these groups, “community outreach” is not a task limited to government agencies. Neighborhood-based groups are also involved in mobilizing their neighbors and increasing active membership. Roseland activists, for instance, emphasized the importance of community education, and Fair Elms Civic League members were concerned about the need to involve new residents, as was East Side Pride.

Figure 1. Street Map of Southeast Chicago

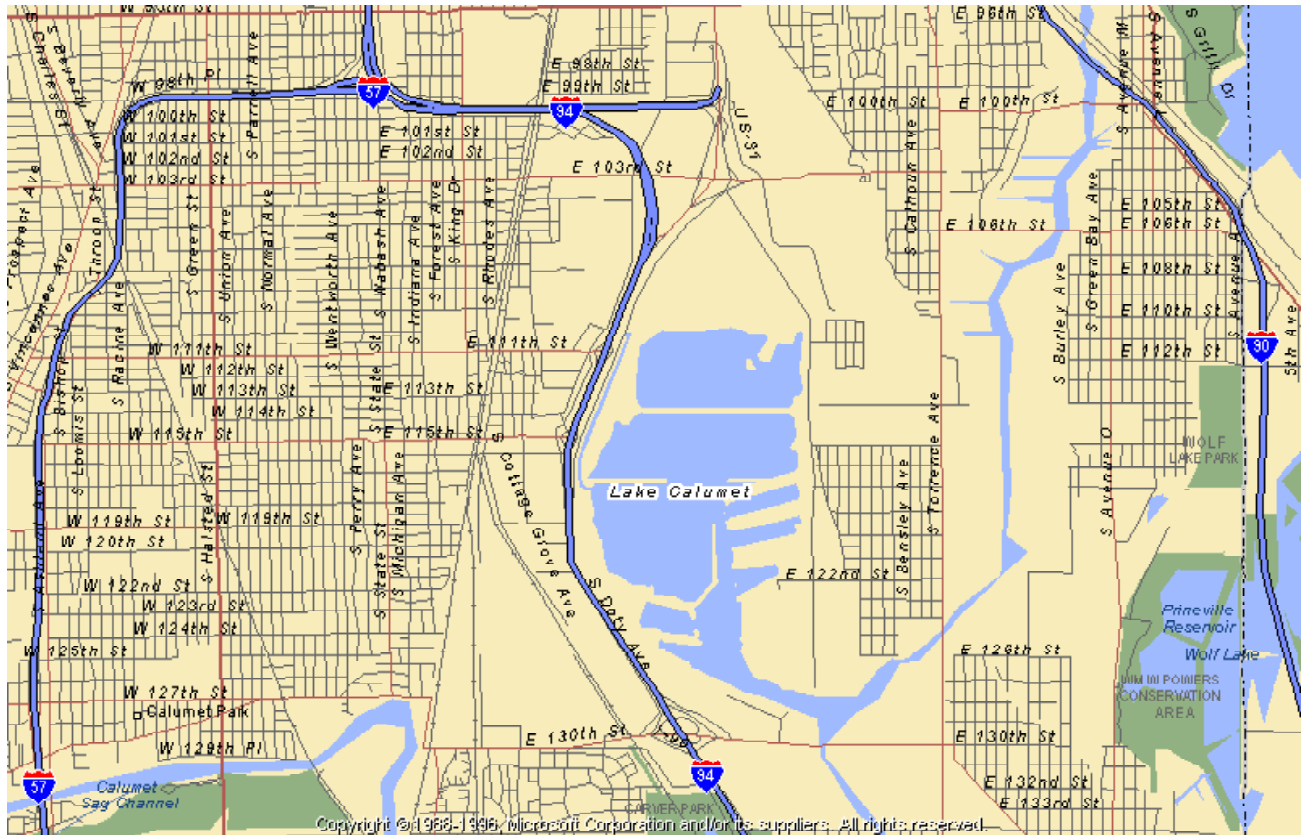


Figure 2. Chicago Community Areas

Figure 4. Environmentally Active Groups in Relation to Levels of Community

## Section IV. Not Good at Partnering? Framing of Information and Priorities

There are differences in the current emphasis and expression of environmental concerns among community groups reflecting different constituencies: groups based in predominantly African-American neighborhoods emphasize health and environmental justice; groups drawing from predominantly White neighborhoods speak more of heritage and quality of life; environmental activists from national and regional organizations speak more of natural resource conservation.

In keeping with these different priorities, White and African-American based community groups tend to have connections with very different governmental and non-governmental agencies.

The fact that there is little integration of these communities' groups is probably due to these differing priorities as well as existing ethnic separation.

Nevertheless, there are significant points of intersection among community group

interests: making industry responsible to local people and building sustainable communities.

The profound segregation that is widely recognized between the White, African-American, and Hispanic immigrant ethnic communities exists in how environmental concerns were expressed and acted upon. People worked in very different community groups and networks of those groups. This reflects and reinforces differences in framing, that is, in the priorities that constrain or facilitate participation in partnerships or coalitions. Here, we examine the differences in priorities and action taken by the White and African-American community groups we encountered. There are strong environmental activists in both the African-American and the White communities. However, the linkages between them are weak, reflecting the social divisions, differing perceptions, and segregated residence patterns in the area. Basically, we found that the White environmental activists have closer connections to the US-EPA, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the City of Chicago Department of the Environment, the National Park Service and outside environmental interest groups, while the Greater Roseland activists have or are developing closer connections to health agencies such as the Greater Roseland Health Council and the Chicago Department of Public Health, and have not been as involved in area-wide environmental planning and land use efforts.

This is partly due to the differences in the way environmental concerns have been framed and expressed in the different networks, as well as to perceptions of where to find resources for solutions to problems; perceptions of available resources influence how concerns are framed. Differences in framing result in differences in what's perceived as relevant information and how it is acted upon (or not). To briefly summarize overall general patterns (of course there are individual differences): The Greater Roseland activists emphasize the physical health effects of environmental toxins on area residents, environmental justice and its relation to civil rights, equitable economic development, and cleaning up the environment to make it safe and healthy for people. Cleaning up the environment to make it safe does not preclude developing commercial activity and jobs: Looking out from high in the Pullman Bank Building, from where you can see landfill, a chemical factory, railroad tracks, and Lake Calumet, the director of the South Side Health Consortium, one of the local African-American activist leaders, said, "Look! We've got everything — waterfront, industry, transportation — this could be a center for economic development, we could develop this area like other places have developed their waterfront areas."

This activism is based on a civil rights model of activism. As one activist put it: "There's three models of activism. One is the Saul Alinsky model, but that depends on an outsider and we want to do it ourselves. Another is the union

model, but we don't have jobs! The third is what we need – the civil rights models. If we can't organize ourselves and get ourselves straight, we can't be partners in other folks' projects; we can't be partners if we're not equal.” Thus, environmental pollution concerns are put in a frame of fairness and equality. This is a frame that many Whites interpret as confrontational. It is also put in a frame of cleaning up their own community, and as such touches on issues such as disease and a healthy body, both individually and as a community. Unhealthy people can not make a healthy community. For instance, lead poisoning is a big concern, especially as the physical effects of lead poisoning are seen by some residents as resulting in the behavioral problems of young men (poor impulse control, lower intelligence, violence) that then leads to gangs and gang violence.

For these reasons, the African-American community tends to draw on support and funding from health-oriented and social service agencies rather than explicitly environmental agencies. Furthermore, the dollar amounts offered for funding from state and federal agencies dealing with health issues have tended to be larger than what the federal and state EPA or the Illinois Department of Natural Resources can offer for community-based projects. Given the limits in the staffing and resources currently available to many of the African-American organizations based in Chicago's South and West sides, it makes sense to put more effort into establishing connections with health, housing, and human services agencies on the federal, state, county, and city levels to get the funding and assistance they require. This is one of the reasons that African-American activists participate less frequently in environmental activism.

It is true that these activists express more pressing concerns, issues that are of a higher priority, such as unemployment, inadequate health care, gang violence, and drugs. Nevertheless, we did not find that the people we interviewed were uninterested in environmental issues or do not see relationships between environmental issues and these other concerns. Neighborhood-based organizations such as Fishing Buddies and Reduce Recidivism by Industrial Development (RRID) show a mode of environmental activism that emphasizes the relationships between environmental and other urban issues. (Fishing Buddies was established to give young AfricanAmerican boys the opportunity to fish and use the natural resources available on the Southeast Side as an alternative to less desirable activities. The founder of RRID is trying to call for attention and further research on the possible connection between environmental toxins, mental health, and criminal behavior). These organizations are framing environmental issues differently than the White environmental activists, emphasizing their connections to priority issues such as health and youth violence, which leads them to partner with very different agencies. Activists' time and resources are taken up with these efforts to such a degree that they rarely have time or incentives to attend meetings focusing on issues such as longer-term regional environmental planning and land use, meetings

that are seen as mostly discussion with little immediate return in terms of funding or action.

One example of a venue in which environmental activism takes place is the Greater Roseland Health Coalition. This community also includes Altgeld Gardens, the home of Hazel Johnson, founder of People for Community Recovery (PCR) and known in the media as the “Black Mother of the Environment.” Johnson and PCR have campaigned publically and in the courts to have the toxic wastes surrounding Altgeld Gardens – what they call the “toxic donut” – recognized and redressed as an environmental justice and civil rights issue. Although Altgeld Gardens, like the East Side, Hegewisch, and South Deering, is close to Lake Calumet and surrounding old industrial development, PCR has closer ties to community health activists in the Greater Roseland area than it does to the environmental activist groups in East Side and Hegewisch. Pullman, however, and the Good Neighbor Dialogue groups that have begun meeting with local industrial companies in that area, is one venue where there has been some overlap and networking between African-American based groups such as PCR and the Committee for Economic Recovery (West Pullman) and White activists.

The White local environmental activists, on the other hand, focus more on aesthetics, heritage, and the quality of life and the kind of economic development that can result from these kinds of resources, as well as commercial or industrial development that will not further pollute the environment; neighborhood control and the protection of the natural environment are commonly invoked themes. The issues of heritage and quality of life/sustainable economic development are especially salient in the context of what’s perceived as a dwindling and aging population. As stated previously, residents of Southeast Chicago are well aware of the perception of their neighborhoods as dirty and noxious. Through environmental activism, they hope to attract suitable development that will keep young families in the neighborhood, thereby preserving the community and its heritage. There is a very strong impetus towards protection of natural or restored areas. This is probably in contrast to attitudes a decade or more ago; and there may still be a tendency to see an abandoned site rather than a reviving prairie or marsh. Nevertheless, few seem to see economic development and environmental preservation as antithetical; they see them, rather, as complementary.

In this, the White and African-American activists have similar frames of reference: by improving the quality of life, they hope to improve economic conditions by attracting business. Probably the biggest difference is White groups’ focus on place and an outer physical environment for recreation and aesthetics; and the emphasis on maintenance of community and heritage. In this, there is sometimes a hint of ethnic conflict in concerns about ‘outsiders’ taking over ‘our’ parks. Nevertheless, the specific incidents mentioned to us concerned conflict with the

Hispanic immigrant population. Nothing was specifically racial; everything concerned local control of space.

In keeping with their priority on more explicitly environmental issues, these groups had far-ranging and substantial connections with a number of environmental agencies on the national, state, and city level. Gillogly had the good fortune to observe three separate processes in which communities or community representatives, non-profit environmental groups, and government agencies cooperated in planning and/or remediation (Lake Calumet Ecosystem Partnership, Wolf Lake Bi-State planning, and Cluster Site clean-up). In each of these cases, the number of people local groups could draw together, including government agency staff and regional environmental representatives was phenomenal (see Table 3, Figure 5).

Non-neighborhood-based environmental activists, on the other hand, generally do not emphasize local control but do speak of the importance of conservancy and the preservation of natural resources — as a resource for all, whether in or out of the community. There are concerns and themes common to all these groups: making industry responsible to local communities, health and the quality of life (e.g., no bad odors in the air) as a concern of both Black and White neighborhood residents, and the creation of sustainable communities. But class and racial barriers come up in discussions specifically involving who these communities are for and who has access to the resources within them, as in the Conrail Bike Trail in Morgan Park. Nevertheless, there are points of intersection among the interests of most parties in environmental activism: making industry responsible to local communities; health and safety; and sustainable communities.

The primary concerns expressed by environmental activists involved in the Southeast Side, then, can be broadly summarized as follows:

*Groups based in predominantly White neighborhoods*

aesthetics

heritage

quality of life

local control over places

*Groups based in predominantly African-American neighborhoods*

environmental justice (fairness, equality)

health, removal of toxins

jobs and economic development

*Outside environmental activists*

conservancy and the preservation of natural resources as a resource for all

*Common interests*

Making industry responsible to local communities; health and safety of residents; sustainable economic development

In summary, the predominantly white environmental groups of the east side of Southeast Chicago take a more explicitly environmental view, and as such have a wide range of connections to many and various governmental and national or regional environmental groups. They are able to work through these to carry out activities in their neighborhoods. As can be seen in Figure 5 (following section), leaders in these neighborhoods have extensive contacts with people in the government and regional level who give them access to resources they need to get things done.

The situation in African-American communities of the west side of Southeast Chicago is rather different. There, the pool of leaders is much sparser and their contacts not quite as extensive. Those they have tend to be with organizations and agencies that are less explicitly environmental, in part because they find these a better source of funding as well as one more appropriate to their concerns. The fact of fewer (often over-burdened) leaders and organizations, as well a different framing of concerns, likely accounts for outsiders' assessment of these organizations as 'not good at partnering.' This has been acknowledged by at least one African-American leader, with his diagnosis that organizations in his community can not be good at partnering until their organizational structure and thus economic conditions are better.

**Table 3. Organizations Involved in Three Environmental Activities, White Communities**

Processes

Site-based Wolf Lake – natural resource management by/for community

Cluster Site – site cleanup, remediation and rehabilitation

Planning-based Lake Calumet Ecosystem Partnership – regional planning (SE Chicago)

Agencies and Organizations Involved in all Three (see Figure 5 for details)

Calumet Ecological Park Association local, umbrella/partnership

Center for Neighborhood Technology local (city-wide), project

Southeast Chicago Development Commission local, project

Washington High School local, education

Calumet Environmental Resource Center local, education and information

Northern Indiana Birding Network\* local, environmental

Openlands Project\* regional (NE IL), environmental  
 Sierra Club\* national, environmental  
 Audubon Society\*national, environmental  
 US-EPA national, government (various departments)  
 City of Chicago local government, various departments (Environment, Planning)  
 Agencies and Organizations Involved in Two Processes  
 Southeast Environmental Task Force\* local, umbrella  
 Hegewisch Chamber of Commerce local, business  
 South Lakefront Coalition local, environmental  
 Calumet Heritage Partnership local/bi-state, environmental/heritage  
 Citizens for a Better Environment regional, environmental  
 US Army Corps of Engineers national, government  
 IL-EPA state, environmental

\* Denotes prominence in part due to the activism of an individual who attends most of the meetings in the area and is deeply involved in planning

Table 4.

Local Organizations Leading Southeast Chicago African-American Involvement in Environment and Health Related Issues:

Activities involving Two or More of these Organizations in 1999-2000

(A) Chicago Specialities Good Neighbor Dialogue, Pullman (sent representatives) \*

(B) Health Forums, sponsored by Greater Roseland Health Council

Processes

A. Chicago Specialities Good Neighbor Dialogue, Pullman

B. Health Forums sponsored by Greater Roseland Health Council

1. Committee for Economic Recovery

(A, B) local (West Pullman), brownfields sites, economic development and remediation

2. People for Community Recovery

(A, B) local ( Altgeld Gardens based but with broader agenda), environmental justice

3. Victory Heights/Maple Park/ West Pullman

Advisory Council, Environmental Committee/ RRID (Reduce Recidivism by Industrial Development) [Committee and organization have same leadership] (B) local, environment and health

4. Greater Roseland Health Council

(A, B) community health, interest in environment and health, taking role as umbrella organization — fostering networking through local forums

5. Southside Health Consortium (B) umbrella, health services providers

Other Organizations Potentially Relevant to Environmental Coalitions:

- 6. Fishing Buddies      Local, youth and environment, violence prevention
- 7. Developing Communities Project   Local, (church coalition), economic development, leadership development, land use — clearing playlots
- 8. Greater Roseland Development Corporation      economic development

Organizations 3, 4, 5, and 8 have overlaps or strong links in leadership.

.      Ongoing attendance at local meetings is desirable, not just showing up at public forums. In keeping with developing relationships, an end-run can not be done around this; developments take time and repeated exposure to develop. The Lake Calumet Ecosystem Partnership is a good example of the effort needed to develop strong working relationships before carrying out significant projects. The Friends of Wolf Lake is also a group that had longstanding social relationships before undertaking their project. Continuing series of meetings are used to develop relationships; relationships affect how information is received.

.      Given the very real constraints of time, personnel, and legislative mandates on achievable goals for EPA community outreach, the existing staff allocation of time for attending community meetings and public fora should be examined, with an eye to figuring out what is the most effective long-term investment for available staff time. Suggested guidelines in choosing meetings to attend and organizational relationships to foster:

1.      Ongoing partnerships or coalitions the Region 5 office is participating in should continue to have consistent EPA representation.
2.      Consider explicit agreements and procedures among Illinois EPA, Region 5 EPA, and/or Chicago Dept of Environment staff for sharing information on community meetings attended, to maximize staff investment when not all parties are able to attend. We were told information is shared, but on an ad-hoc basis.
3.      If current partners in explicitly environmental coalitions do not reflect the range of ethnicity and/or income shown by target area demographics (e.g., in Southeast Chicago African-Americans are underrepresented), consider as possible partners organizations involving these underrepresented constituencies that link environmental issues to other expressed priority concerns, such as health or economic development. Look for opportunities to attend events or meetings sponsored by these organizations. When attending broad-based community events with multiple committees or interest groups (e.g, Congressional District town meetings), don't send all available environmental professionals to "environment" committee: look to link to environmental concerns in other interest groups such as health, youth, or recreation/tourism.
4.      Prioritize contact with those groups, organizations, and organizational leaders or brokers who show evidence of inclusivity rather than exclusivity in collaborating with others, that is, themselves are trying to build networks and

create opportunities for information-sharing and joint action, including across ethnic and class boundaries. When maximizing available resources for relationship-building, it makes sense to concentrate on those groups and brokers who are themselves central to existing networks, with multiple ties to others.

5. Use of locally-based civic organizations to disseminate to or gain information from neighborhood residents and businesspeople not necessarily focused on 'environment' as an issue. Source of support and entree: brokers who are already linked to those organizations.

6. Prioritize contact with meetings and organizations (e.g., community advisory councils; civic organizations, as above) that include neighborhood residents and not only externally-based interest group members. (Externally-based environmental interest groups already have strong channels of communication to the EPA).

7. Consistent records should be kept of meetings attended and organizations contacted (see E below). The Chicago Team and/or others involved should regularly review the range of organizations and groups contacted and the attendance of staff at community meetings in target areas to determine if it currently meets EPA goals in community outreach and these guidelines.

. Look for ways to collaborate with other agencies and service providers, including health service providers, to get at areas of mutual concern and widen participation in environmental planning.

. Foster development, training, and support of new brokers and staff of existing organizations (in cooperation with foundation and educational partners?) who can outreach to previously unreached or under-represented groups within target neighborhoods.

. When asking for information from local residents (e.g., reports of bad odors in air) make clear to whom information is reported, what happens to it, and report back on actions taken. People are reluctant to contribute information if they do not know what the result will be or if anything will result; many communities need to see a clear benefit to themselves, because they have been on the powerless or over-studied end for so long.

. Keep publically accessible records, organized and retrievable by neighborhood or community area, of EPA community outreach efforts, to facilitate evaluation (and documentation of achievements to celebrate, as in G below). Such records should include:

1. Community meetings and other public fora attended, with summary minutes.

2. Notes or reports of follow-up actions taken in response to suggestions at public meetings or other requests from community residents (e.g., reallocation of site remediation funds to reflect community concerns; there have been such follow-up actions, but no consistent or accessible documentation of them).
3. Reports on any specific community outreach programs, including information dissemination or gathering (e.g., odor reporting program), including goals, project plan, who was involved, actions taken, and results.
4. Records and reports on any other actions taken to form collaborations or implement joint action with local groups and organizations.

. In order to bring more and younger people into environmental activities, environmental activities should be family-focused. This has been found to be important by other social scientists working on similar issues on environmental activism (Monica Hunter, SfAA/EPA fellow, pc, March 2000). Young parents may want to be involved, but their time with their families will generally take priority. Scheduling activities that are fun and on holidays/weekends should help to widen the base of participation in environmental issues.

. Finally, celebrate successes publicly! Currently, we find that even many aware and fairly active residents are not aware of what successes have been brought about. Yet, when we consider environmental conditions in Southeast Chicago a mere 20 years ago, the improvements have been considerable. A more recent example of an uncelebrated success is the stabilizing and capping of Paxton II as part of the Cluster Site process. It's important for people to have a sense of empowerment, to know that their concerns are indeed addressed, and that their activism has results.

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