

THE ROLE OF IMMIGRANT SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS IN THE
TRANSFORMATION OF CULTURAL CAPITAL

by

ANA MOTTA-MOSS

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City
University of New York

2007

UMI Number: 3283154

UMI[®]

UMI Microform 3283154

Copyright 2007 by ProQuest Information and Learning Company.
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest Information and Learning Company
300 North Zeeb Road
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Susan Saegert

Date

Chair of Examining Committee

Joseph Glick

Date

Executive Officer

Leanne Rivlin

Nicholas Freudenberg

Julian Wolpert

Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract

THE ROLE OF IMMIGRANT SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS IN THE
TRANSFORMATION OF CULTURAL CAPITAL

by

Ana Motta-Moss

Adviser: Professor Susan Saegart

This study examines the environment of immigrant service organizations as precursors of the transformation of immigrant culture into social resources. Specifically, it is proposed here that immigrant service organizations present an interesting case connecting cultural capital and adult immigrants' acculturation and related learning processes; that certain aspects of the cultural environment of immigrant service organizations contribute to the development of social resources among immigrants; and that these environments mediate the effects of unequal distribution of cultural capital inherent in capitalist societies, thus having strong implications for the health and well-being of immigrants. Bourdieu's cultural capital theory offers a conceptual framework for the examination of these processes of reproduction and transformation of culture among immigrants. Three case studies were conducted with organizations forming the immigrant service delivery system in East New York, Brooklyn: an informal neighborhood-based immigrant taxi drivers' association; a legally constituted community-based organization with a 501(c)3 status; and a large metropolitan-level service provider that have immigrant clients. The findings illustrate how the experience of recent U.S. immigrants – especially those from a Latin background -- requires further understanding, as people struggle to maintain a sense of themselves and their cultural values

while adapting to new geographic, socio-economic, and cultural environments. The analysis of selected immigrant service sites as fields of action generated information that is consistent with main arguments of the literature on immigration. Structural and resource-based arguments propose that factors both macro and internal to immigrant groups influence these groups' self-definition and identification processes, their ability to organize and support members of their community, the strength with which they attach to ethnic traditions, and the socio-cultural practices of their members. Combined, study results suggest that immigrant service organizations constitute an intermediate-level of social institutions, linking practices of grassroots Latino immigrant enterprises (e.g. Botanicas, bakeries) with those of larger social institutions (e.g., hospitals, universities, government agencies). These organizations form unique environments within which Latino immigrants in East New York not only define and redefine themselves as individuals; but also seize existing opportunities for survival, learning and development, and well being.

Acknowledgments

This dissertation benefited from the ideas of several people. The Dissertation Chair, Susan Saegert, and Committee Members, Leanne Rivlin, Joseph Glick, Nicholas Freudenberg and Julian Wolpert, exemplify the high quality scholarship to which I aspire. Each individual provided insights that guided and challenged my thinking, substantially improving the finished product. I am especially indebted to Nicholas Freudenberg for trusting me when I doubted myself, and to Michelle Fine, Suzanne Ouellette, David Chapin, and John Seley for being supportive of my academic and career goals.

I am grateful to all of those with whom I have had the pleasure to work during this project. Each of the staff and clients of the studied immigrant service organizations offered me extensive guidance and taught me a great deal about both scientific research and life in general. I would especially like to thank the respondents of my study. Their comments and insights created an informative and interesting project with opportunities for future work.

Nobody has been more important to me in the pursuit of this project than my beloved son, Fernando, who provides unending inspiration, being wise beyond his years. I owe him a great deal of who I am today. I also wish to thank my father, in memoriam, and my mother, whose love and guidance are with me in whatever I pursue.

Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgments	v
List of Tables	vi
Bibliography	viii
 CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
The Concept of Cultural Capital	2
Assimilation Models	3
Contextual Factors and Cultural Capital Theory	4
Closure of Organizational Environments	5
The Role of Community Organizations	6
Study Questions	7
2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	9
Cultural Capital and Immigration	10
Habitus and Place	12
Assimilation and Immigrant Culture	14
Immigrant Service Organizations and Social Capital	17
Social Support and Culture	19
Study Goals and Specific Questions	23
3 METHODS	27
Research Design	27
Study Sites	28
Gaining Access and Building Rapport	29
Data Collection Plan: A Multi-Method Approach	30
Organizational Assessment	30
Participant Assessment	31
Face-to-Face Interviews	32
Recruitment of Participants	33
Focus Group	35
Ethnographic Observations	36
Analysis of Data	37

4 STUDY RESULTS	40
A. Organizational Profiles	40
Organizational Formation and Missions.....	41
United Community Centers (UCC)	41
Project Street Beat of Planned Parenthood of NYC (PSB)	46
New Lots Taxi Drivers' Association (NLTA).....	49
State of Flux of Organizational Fields.....	50
The Position of Players in the Field.....	58
Fields of Action Enabling Different Forms of Capital	63
Fields of Action as Opportunities for Social Networks.....	68
Investment in the Field or the Stake of the Game	71
Programs Feeding into other Programs	72
Participation in Community Organizing.....	72
Providing Direct Suggestions	73
Contributing to <i>The Link</i>	74
Doxa Conditions	77
Immigrant Service Environments: A Multi-Faceted Concept.....	82
Ranges of Cultural Capital.....	83
B. Immigrant Learning Practices	85
Organizational Principles and Habitus	86
Ontological Complicity	89
The Generative Capacity of Dispositions	92
Duality of Experiences	95
Environment and Consciousness	98
Community Participation and Community Development	102
C. Health-Related Organizational Practices	108
Characteristics of the East New York Population.....	110
Health Profile.....	111
Health Access and Health Care Practices	112
Alternative Health Practices	114
Religious Influences on Health Practices	116
Bridging Cultural Traditions.....	118
Housing Conditions and Health.....	119
Nutrition and Health Education	123
Social Support.....	125
Instrumental Support.....	126
Emotional Support	127
Informational Support.....	128
Supporting Diverse Cultural Frameworks	130

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.....	132
Intermediate-Level Social Institutions.....	133
Flexibility of Structure and Leadership	135
Immigrant Representation and Participation	141
Service Access and Linkages to Larger Social Institutions and Systems.....	146
Socio-Cultural Influences on Adaptation to the New Country and Active Citizenship.....	150
Social Support, Health and the Transformation of Culture	154
Immigrant Cooperation Strategies.....	155
Characteristics of Immigrant Network/Support Systems	156
LIST OF REFERENCES.....	159

The Role of Immigrant Service Organizations in the Transformation of Cultural Capital

Ana Motta-Moss

The last century has seen a great number of people move to countries other than their own, largely in search of better economic conditions and more hope. The recent immigrant experience is widespread and requires understanding, as people struggle to maintain their sense of themselves and their values while adapting to new geographic, social-economic, and cultural environments.

The literature on immigration can be organized along two main lines of argument: structural (Aldrich and Waldinger, 1990; Massey, 1999; Portes & Zhou, 1994; Wilson, 1993) and resource-based (Feldman, 1990; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Jenkins, 1992; Ward, 1984; Miller et al., 1993; Rumbaut & Weeks, 1993; Zhou, 1999). The structural argument usually refers to macro factors – i.e., those external to the ethnic group, such as unemployment rates, immigration policies, and discrimination. The resource argument often includes factors internal to the ethnic group, such as its self-definition and identification processes, its ability to organize and support its members, its ethnic traditions, and the social practices of its members. Combined, these arguments suggest that immigrants must not only define themselves in a new environment; they must also be able to seize existing opportunities for survival, learning and development in contexts where power and ideology are central to differential achievement.

Since societies organize the distribution of material resources hierarchically, ruling groups have generally attempted to characterize the thinking and acting capacities of other social groups in restrictive ways (Bourdieu, 1986). Those in dominant social positions have developed elaborate ideologies and theories, which have served to legitimate their own superiority and the lesser rights and motives of those beneath them. The laboring classes, women and minority ethnic groups have all typically faced both restricted access to empowering material resources and demeaning portrayals of their inherent intelligence and other abilities as naturally and inevitably diminished in relation to ruling classes, men and dominant racial groups, respectively. In other words, according to Bourdieu, in a capitalist society where the economic infrastructure is stratified and based on inequality, social institutions will always be forced to turn out individuals who can be differentiated in ways that fit them into the economic structure.

Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital – a class-based set of values, beliefs, norms, attitudes, and experiences that equip people for their life in society -- is based on Marx's analysis of capital as an accumulation and reproduction process (Calhoun, 1993). Bourdieu developed a structurally grounded model of class differences in cultural sensibilities and linked them mainly to differential social effects of institutional (schooling) processes. In Bourdieu's language, social institutions constitute a field of action in which cultural reproduction, and to a lesser extent cultural change, takes place. Consistent with this perspective, social status, access to resources, language and social expectations can all be seen as

forms of cultural capital, based on which immigrants will be differentiated and excluded from participation in the social sphere.

For many years, scholars on immigration assumed a linear assimilation model based on cultural reproduction (Perlman & Waldinger, 1999). It was believed that over time, members of immigrant groups would abandon their ethnic identity and assimilate with their host country. Assimilation referred to a move by the immigrant away from the social associations, values, norms, and institutions related to their country of origin and into the associations, values, norms, and institutions of the host country. In the last decade, however, some researchers (Gans, 1992; Alba & Nee, 1997; Portes 1996; Zhou, 1997; Rumbaut, 1997) turned the assumptions of traditional assimilation around by proposing a scenario of second generation decline among immigrants. In general, they suggested that second generation immigrants who are restricted by a lack of economic opportunities and racial discrimination to poor inner-city schools, low-wage jobs, and shrinking economic ethnic enclaves would experience downward mobility relative to their immigrant parents. Assimilation, in this context, was viewed as a process that would either result in 'joining the street culture of the urban ghetto' or less assimilation by refusing to become American and staying tied to their parents' ethnic communities (Zhou, 1997).

While individual and family variables are important, the context that immigrants encounter upon arrival plays a decisive role in the course that their lives will

follow. The research on contextual factors and immigration includes such broad variables as political relations between the sending and receiving countries and the state of the economy in the latter (Perlman & Waldinger, 1999; Gans, 1992; Portes 1996; Zhou, 1997; Rumbaut, 1997), and such specific variables as the degree to which the immigrant group finds a pre-existing ethnic community and institutional/organizational support (Alba & Nee, 1997). The central argument is that individual and macro-structural factors interact with specific immigrant social patterns and group characteristics to shape the fates of immigrants.

Bourdieu's cultural capital theory offers a theoretical framework that allows for the examination of structural, organizational, and individual processes of reproduction and transformation of culture in immigrant communities. Consistent with this theory, our cultural inheritance can be translated into social resources (things like wealth, power and skills) and the cultural capital we accumulate from birth can be "spent" in the social system as we try to achieve things that are considered to be culturally important (e.g., educational qualifications, but also status derived from attending prestigious schools, institutional membership and participation, etc.).

While most scholars have accepted the importance of social participation in organizational settings as an important predictor of social capital among immigrants, and at least one aspect of this relationship is included in recent research on immigration (Hirshman, Kasinitz, & DeWind, 1999), most studies

have focused on the role of individual membership and participation in ethnic institutions, with little attention to the cultural patterns that shape social relations in those environments. An immigrant's original culture consists of an entire way of life, including languages, ideas, beliefs, values, behavioral patterns and all else those immigrants bring with them to their new country (Zhou & Bankston, 1994). This way of life is likely to persist and reproduce itself in the social field of immigrant organizations (*habitus*, in Bourdieu's language), following a process of production (i.e., dispositions to action) and consumption (i.e., classification schema) while individuals learn new cultural patterns in these environments.

Furthermore, the social closure of the organizational environment is important for cultural capital to be effectively reproduced and transformed. Closure helps facilitate norms and creates trustworthiness, allowing for the proliferation of obligations and expectations. In an open community, groups are less able to sanction behavior because of the absence of mobilizing forces and reduced consensus in regards to standards (Coleman, 1988). Similarly, in Australian work on social capital, Cox (1995) and Latham (1997) make the point that family life may limit world-views and sociability. Secondary associations with civic society through organizations such as sports clubs and mutual aid societies, they suggest, are likely to have a greater social utility from a capital perspective.

Most researchers agree that community organizations play an important role during the entire immigration process, and in the social, economic, cultural, and

political integration of immigrants. While some researchers (Massey et al, 1987; Coleman, 1988) emphasize the importance of immigrant networks to the development of communities, others have focused more directly on the role of community-based organizations and political representation among Caribbean and West Indian populations (Kasinitz, 1992), and the role of ethnicity in social service provision and social work practice (Jenkins, 1992).

Following these theoretical approaches, we can argue that community-based organizations providing services to immigrants reproduce general cultural knowledge, vocabulary, and information that are consistent with mainstream values and cultural traditions. At the same time, however, through a variety of practices and specific activities, these organizations allow for the creative agency of immigrants in conditions pre-structured but also full of unpredictable and dynamic venues (Collins, 1993). These activities might provide an opportunity for adult learning in the ordinary world of the host society at the same time that they might facilitate the practices of competent individuals to reproduce and change specific historical and cultural material contexts.

This study examines specific aspects of the environment of immigrant service organizations as precursors of the transformation of immigrants' culture into social resources. Specifically, it is proposed here that immigrant service organizations present an interesting case connecting cultural capital and adult immigrants' acculturation and related learning processes; that certain aspects of

the cultural environment of immigrant service organizations have a strong contribution to the development of social resources among immigrants; and that these environments may mediate the negative effects (differentiation and exclusion) of unequal distribution of cultural capital inherent in capitalist societies, thus having strong implications for the health and well-being of immigrants.

In addition, this study explores these associations in a low-income, primarily Latino immigrant community. A preponderance of evidence suggests that more low-income immigrant families suffer from the differential distribution and valuing of cultural capital, particularly in terms of health and educational achievement, than their affluent counterparts (Ogbu & Matute-Bianchi, 1986; Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Previous studies on immigration have explored these findings in the context of learned behaviors and stress (Massey, 1999; Portes & Stepik, 1993), ethnic identity and discriminatory practices (Steinberg, 1996; Waters, 1994); and the relationships of individuals and families with ethnic institutions (Foner, 1999; Pessar, 1999).

Overall, these studies suggest that immigrants, particularly those from the working classes, often take the burden for their relative failure within a social system characterized by situational constraints that hinder their assimilation into mainstream society. These findings urge an exploration of how social institutions help perpetuate social and economic inequalities across immigrant generations.

The greater the understanding in this area, the greater the possibilities for developing effective interventions to address the needs of low-income immigrants.

CHAPTER TWO

Theoretical Framework

In reviewing the literature, my purpose is not to review the numerous existing studies of immigrant assimilation, ethnic enclaves and social relations, and psychological well-being or distress. Nor do I intend to discuss the relationships between social ties and specific health or educational problems or the role of urbanization/modernization in relation to immigrants' social network and support. Instead, my purpose is to highlight distinct issues that emerge from the literature on cultural capital and immigration. First, I will summarize the main concepts of Bourdieu's cultural capital framework, as they apply to the immigrant experience. Second, I will examine findings on how immigrant places create networking infrastructures that encourage the formation of social and cultural capital. Third, I will describe the relevance of the concept of social support in this area, drawing on the findings regarding its effect on the health of immigrants. Last, I will examine modifications on the relationship between social ties and well being according to specific cultural characteristics of immigrant places and practices.

Cultural Capital and Immigration

The theory of cultural capital is based on Marx's analysis of capital as an accumulation and reproduction process (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu developed a structurally grounded model of class differences in cultural sensibilities and linked them primarily to differential social effects of schooling processes.

Bourdieu's emphasis seems to be focused on the embodied cultural knowledge, sophisticated vocabulary, and precise information about how social institutions (e.g., schools) work that children from higher social classes acquire from their families and social environments. The possession of these cultural tools is assumed to lead to their greater success in institutional relations than working class children. Bourdieu emphasizes the importance of viewing cultural capital in the context of other forms of capital: economic and social. Cultural capital works not on its own but within the context of networks and social practices that reproduce the class structure and unequal distribution of material resources.

Bourdieu appears to make an analogy between capital assets and human learning capacities — children of the affluent classes, familiar with mainstream cultural forms at home (through parental knowledge, manners and linguistic forms), possess the means of appropriating similarly oriented school knowledge relatively easily. In contrast, working class (and most immigrant) kids find their unfamiliarity with these cultural forms to be a major obstacle to successful school performance. In sum, he has delineated the cultural reproduction of inequality within fixed institutional forms.

Cultural reproduction means, in this context, the way social institutions, in conjunction with other social systems, help to perpetuate social and economic inequalities across generations. In cultural capital theory terms, the class that dominates economically will also dominate all other classes culturally and

ideologically, with social institutions and organizations being the main agencies of cultural and ideological transmission. The dominant economic class (owning the means of production) dominates culturally through the transmission of its cultural values through social institutions. In other words, in a capitalist society where the economic infrastructure is stratified and based on inequality, social institutions will always be forced to turn out immigrants who can be differentiated in ways that fit them into the economic structure.

This process of cultural differentiation and exclusion is achieved in two main ways: 1) through a system based on examination or merit designed to progressively fail or exclude those from the lower classes; and/or 2) through self-exclusion, a process by which members of the working class quit being a part of the institutional society, as they realize that social systems offer them little that is culturally useful, and that their chances of success and achievement are small.

The very phenomenon of geographic, cultural and social dislocation experienced by immigrants would make them especially vulnerable to these differentiating and exclusionary processes in the American society.

According to Bourdieu, these processes result in each social class developing an associated “class culture” which involves specific ways of seeing the social world, ways of doing things within the world, how to behave, what to dress, and so forth. Language, social status, access to resources, and social expectations are all seen as forms of cultural capital, which are specific to, and develop out of, each class’

experiences in the social world. In Bourdieu's terms, this set of social experiences, values, and beliefs represent a form of cultural capital. This perspective supports the argument of segmented assimilation, according to which immigrant children are not socialized into mainstream values of the host society but rather into the culture that corresponds to their social class.

Habitus and Place

Bourdieu's cultural economy opens up the notion of agency with the perceptions, classifications, and dispositions of the "habitus" -- understood as a system of dispositions common to all products of the same social conditioning. Though it is impossible for all members of the same class to have had the same experiences, in the same order, it is certain that each member of the same class is more likely than any member of another class to have been confronted with the situations most frequent for members of that class. In Bourdieu's words, "through the always convergent experiences that give a social environment its physiognomy, with its 'closed doors', 'dead ends' and 'limited prospects', the objective structures that sociology apprehends in the form of probabilities of access to goods, services and powers, inculcate the 'art of assessing likelihoods', as Leibniz put it, of anticipating the objective future, in short, the 'sense of reality', or realities, which is perhaps the best-concealed principle of their efficacy" (1999, p.113).

The notion of habitus as these rules and frameworks, which are learned through social relations in structured environments, though not formally described as such, is consistent with notions about how specific aspects of the environment helps children become socialized into a culture (Valsiner, 1987). Valsiner's transactional model portrays the developing child as embedded within a meaningful, organized physical environment that functions as a medium for the transmission of societal norms and values as well as providing a setting for which the child interacts and transforms his or her culture. He describes this process as occurring through a structured set of boundaries that influence the child's interactions with objects and the physical environment. Valsiner's description of the boundaries of the environment as 'zone of free movement' (environmental parameters set by the caregiver that establish opportunities for action and choice) and 'zone of promoted action' (environmental opportunities oriented toward the development of new skills) delineates the spatial and material boundaries within which socialization and internalization of cultural values and norms occur.

Similarly, Bourdieu views habitus as the product of environmental forces -- both in the family and the social setting -- in which a child grows up, which produces the experiences that form that person's view of the world. On one side (as consumption), the habitus acts as cultural capital enabling the reception of certain types of symbolic goods. On the other side (as dispositions), it acts as cultural capital enabling the production of symbolic goods. As habitus, the cultural environment of immigrant service organizations has the potential to fulfill this

dual function: it might provide immigrants with a stronger sense of community, social status, and access to resources (as consumption), at the same time that it might allow for the exchange of information, experiences, ideas, values, language, and support (as production).

Assimilation and Immigrant Culture

The theoretical controversies surrounding assimilation have generally focused on how immigrants adapt to the American society and with the forces that promote or impede their progress. Immigration scholars have approached assimilation issues from different perspectives: a) by focusing on cultural changes brought about by a new environment and how immigrant generations gradually move away from their original cultural traditions (Gans, 1992; Alba & Nee, 1999); b) by emphasizing immigrants' continuous process of reshaping and redefining their original cultural practices as an integral part of the assimilation process (Fukuyama, 1993; Zhou, 1997; Garcia, 1996); and c) by affirming that the extent to which immigrants adopt host-country ways (and the benefits derived from doing so) depends on the socio-economic structures of the host country (Barth & Noel, 1972; Zhou & Kamo, 1994; Rumbaut, 1994). Although each of these standpoints has significantly contributed to our understanding of the adaptation process of recent immigrants, the discrepancies in outcomes of this process have not been fully understood.

The classical assimilation theory was challenged when applied to the more recently arrived non-European immigrant groups in the beginning of the 1960s. Instead of the eventual integration of these groups into mainstream social spheres, as predicted by the theory, recent findings revealed discrepancies in outcomes, primarily in the area of intergenerational assimilation -- the children of immigrants are coming to share many of the values and perspectives of their American peers but that the lack of economic opportunities of earlier immigrants would make this outcome undesirable. Assimilation, in this context, is often viewed as a process that would either result in 'joining the street culture of the urban ghetto' or less assimilation by refusing to become American and staying tied to their parents' ethnic communities.

Portes and Zhou (1993) summarize these ideas in their conceptualization of "segmented assimilation." They argue that the particular means by which the first generation of immigrants makes its way in America help to determine the types of opportunities and social networks available to their children. Three different pathways are identified by this model: a) traditional assimilation, which typically predicts upward mobility and economic success; b) oppositional assimilation, which refers to patterns of acculturation to the underclass of urban cities rather than to middle class norms and values; and c) segmented assimilation, which suggests maintaining the ethnic culture and identity while striving for educational and economic upward mobility. In sum, this model suggests that, those immigrants who identify most closely with American minorities may adopt an

oppositional ethnicity. In contrast, those with strong ethnic networks, access to capital, and limited ties to U.S. minorities experience a continuity of ethnic identification that would create networks of social ties and provide access to job opportunities while reinforcing parental authority and values.

This view of assimilation as segmented has been reaffirmed in studies on a variety of issues, including ethnic identity processes (Waters, 1990), economic mobility (Portes, 1998; Zhou, 1997), ethnic identity (Sorensen, 1998), and health (Rumbaut, 1997, Massey, 1998). Combined, the results of these studies highlight the relevance of ethnic places and identifications in predicting positive outcomes among immigrants. Immigrant groups often recreate social-cultural practices in environments with a certain degree of service or entrepreneurial specialization. Since immigrant group cultures are at least in part influenced by the new contexts migrants live in (Portes & Zhou, 1994), such specialization seems associated with the immigrants' need to develop independent economic activities consistent with both market opportunities in the new country and the skills of ethnic group members.

Portes and Zhou (1993) make perhaps the strongest case for preserving ethnic cultures as a way of developing social capital, even at the expense of acquiring fewer connections to the host society. They see ethnic language retention, for instance, as a positive advantage since it facilitates participation in the ethnic community and economy, where opportunities may exceed those in the

mainstream economy. Some of the processes through which immigrant networks and service organizations may facilitate social capital include mentoring, job networking, and mutual support, which are assumed to lead partially to educational improvement, economic mobility, and self-reliant economic development without need for government intervention (Zhou, 1997).

In summary, those who view assimilation as detrimental to upward mobility and health are skeptical about the ability of contemporary economies and social institutions to provide opportunities for the integration of new immigrants. They emphasize the role of ethnic networks, immigrant service organizations, and transnational ties as sources of social and cultural capital by providing support for education, health, confidence in political institutions, and satisfaction with government and political engagement (even if in the home countries).

Immigrant Service Organizations and Social Capital

Emerging research on the theory of social capital (Brach, 2000; Saegert, in press) explores the extent to which a community's history and its underlying organizational structures, beliefs, and levels of trust may mediate the success or failure of immigrant efforts. Social capital is often defined as 'the processes and conditions among people and organizations that lead to accomplishing a goal of mutual social benefit.' These processes and conditions are manifested by four interrelated constructs: trust, cooperation, civic engagement, and reciprocity.

This study will focus primarily on those resources inherent in relationships established in immigrant service organizations that facilitate cultural practices and action. These resources include trust, norms, and networks of association representing an immigrant group that gathers consistently for a common purpose. A norm of a culture high in social capital is the establishment of supportive relationships, which encourages bargaining, compromise, and having options. Another norm is belief in the equality of citizens, which encourages the formation of cross-cutting groups (Coleman, 1988).

The capacity to assess levels of capital in an organizational setting within specific communities could have important methodological and policy implications for health promotion. Currently, in spite of the extensive literature pointing to the social, economic, and political determinants of contemporary health problems, very few resources are directed towards building or strengthening immigrant communities' capacity to maintain organizational structures or the community interventions developed by these organizations. If research has shown that different aspects of an immigrant community's organizational structure are linked to significant improvements in the health conditions of populations (particularly through the concepts of social network and support), the question remains as to what is the association between cultural practices that take place in organizational settings and the development and maintenance of social support in immigrant communities.

Social Support and Culture

It is generally agreed that social ties play a beneficial role in the maintenance of psychological well-being and physical health (Cohen, 2002; Cohen & Wills, 1985). Almost 20 years of psychosocial research (mainly in the field of sociology and social psychology) show an important association between social support and health. Despite differences in terms of directionality of effects, for instance, smaller social networks, fewer close relationships, and lower perceived adequacy of social support have all been linked to poor psychological well-being. Most researchers share the belief that people live happier and healthier lives when they have access to rich, rewarding, and supportive social relationships (Callaghan & Morrissey, 1993; Helgeson, 2003).

In addition, a large body of research has explored the role of psychological and social factors in immunity and physical health (Cohen, 1999; Glaser et al., 1999; Feldman et al., 1999; Miller et al., 2001; Taylor & Aspinwall, 1996). Much of this work focuses on social support and the risk for infectious diseases, although some studies also address the associations between stress, asthma and cancer (Cohen & Rodriguez, 2001; Wright, Rodriguez & Cohen, 1999). Overall, the findings suggest that diverse ties to friends, family, work and community help to reduce susceptibility to a variety of illnesses, being an important factor in maintaining health.

Despite its extensive use, the concept of social support has been understood in a variety of ways, each emphasizing a different aspect of the social relationship.

For instance, some researchers argue that social support should be best understood in terms of properties of networks of personal relations (Hirsch, 1981; Wellman, 1990) while others believe it should be best understood as an interpersonal coping resource (Gottlieb, 1985) or an interpersonal communication (Albrecht, Burleson, & Goldsmith, 1992). Despite their differences, most researchers accept the conceptual framework proposed by Cohen and Wills (1985) to explain the mechanisms by which social ties influence health outcomes: the main effect model and the stress-buffering model.

The main effects model proposes that social relationships have a beneficial effect regardless of the occurrence of stressful circumstances, whereas the stress-buffering model asserts that social relations are associated with well being only for persons under stress. These two conceptualizations are not mutually exclusive, and they may help to explain the influences of different aspects of social ties on psychological well-being. For instance, it has been suggested that structural aspects of social relationships (e.g., social networks, social integration and social influence) operate through main effects while functional aspects of social ties (e.g., perceived acceptance/appraisal, availability and/or received support, increased coping) operate through a stress-buffering process.

Although existing conceptualizations of social support are helpful in describing the pathways through which social relationships impact health, most researchers define social support as a ‘thing’ (something given, done or said) that one person can offer to another, or as an individual state (a perception, an expectation, or a character trait) – an isolated phenomenon, rather than a dynamic unfolding process (Duck, 1994; Gottlieb, 1985). These definitions of social support imply something that is removed from the everyday experiences of individuals – in fact, while traditional research has tried to isolate social support from its context and measure it in an objective way, immigration research has been struggling to understand the role of social support in the complex process of building social relationships.

Most of the literature on immigration suggests that social support is a dynamic social activity, achieved through the back-and-forth actions (talk, gestures) of people working together to create satisfying social relations. This way of thinking about ‘supporting each other’ as a process instead of a commodity frames social support as a shared meaning created and negotiated through social interaction (Botschner, 1996). This conceptualization implies that a person does not ‘give’ or ‘receive’ social support, but instead, collaborates actively with another to create a shared understanding with that person about one’s concerns around a particular experience (for instance, that the experience of immigration is tough, threatening, sad, challenging), and what may be needed to cope with that experience (for instance, physical or financial assistance, encouragement, esteem-boosting). This

shared meaning is constructed through a number of structured interactions occurring during or outside of the context of stress.

A consequence of this way of thinking about social support among immigrants is that we no longer try to identify specific instances in which one person provides support to another. Instead, we think about supportive relationships, made up of many incidental day-to-day interactions that take place in structured settings, and that, taken together, give immigrants a sense of mutual support. Supportive relationships can be defined then as those in which each participant shows that s/he is sensitive to how the other would like to be treated – being supportive may mean signaling a shared understanding of one another's preferred identities. Furthermore, it may mean supporting that preferred identity all the time, incidentally or indirectly, and not only at times when direct expressions of help or understanding are required.

Supportive relationships are an important part of the processes through which people create cultural frames of reference (Fukuyama, 1999, Putnam, 1993).

When we act in supportive ways, we are also sending a message about how we would like others to perceive the social context. Supportive transactions tend to be those within which the various threads of context that participants weave into their conversation are in sync (aligned) with one another. The way that others see us depends partly on the kind of backdrop that we position ourselves against. But because the creation of this backdrop requires the cooperation of others, we are

dependent on them for the kind of cultural identity that we can develop at any time.

In sum, two main points can be drawn from the review of this literature. First, a supportive relationship is one in which immigrants are attuned to each other's needs to express a particular identity/aspect of their identity at a particular moment. Being supportive means affirming these expressions of identity as valid and appropriate in an ongoing way, through casual, day-to-day interactions. Second, there is no single right way to be supportive. What counts as supportive depends very much on the socio-cultural context. In fact, attempts to be supportive, whether they succeed or fail, can have enormous impact on how we (and those around us) culturally construct the relationship, or bring meaning to the situation at hand. Maybe our most satisfying relationships are those that offer us multiple ways of relating, or being with, one another.

Study Goals and Specific Questions

The overall goal of this dissertation is to describe and analyze environmental processes of reproduction and transformation of culture in immigrant communities. While most immigration scholars emphasize the importance of participation in organizational settings for the development of social capital, little attention has been paid to the cultural patterns that shape social relations in these environments, which may mediate the immigrants' ability to learn, support

themselves, and assimilate into their new culture. This is the focus of this research.

Following the theoretical perspectives discussed above, we can argue that community-based organizations providing services to immigrants function as catalysts of social resources (in the form of grants, information, services, employment, local financial exchanges, etc.). The overall mission of these organizations is to generate these resources and to distribute them among their constituents and the communities in which the organizations are located.

Specifically, it is expected in this study that certain organizational characteristics such as geographic location, levels of revenues and expenditures, leadership and staffing patterns will establish the structural conditions in which immigrant service organizations might develop a habitus that supports the distribution of cultural capital. It is expected that immigrant service organizations be embedded in the communities they serve, mediating the relationship between the immigrant community and the society at large.

As any other social institution, immigrant service organizations can be expected to reproduce cultural knowledge, vocabulary, and information that are consistent with mainstream values and cultural traditions. At the same time, these organizations might also offer opportunities for collective practices and activities that allow for the creative agency of immigrants in unpredictable, dynamic ways. These activities might provide an opportunity and support for adult learning in the

‘ordinary world’ of the host society at the same time that they might facilitate and support the practices of competent individuals to reproduce and change specific historical and cultural material contexts. An important goal of this study is to delineate what characteristics of immigrant service organizations facilitate information sharing, support, and collective action among participants in these organizations. It is expected that both structural (e.g., organizational programs/activities, leadership roles, membership/clientele structure, institutional network) and functional (e.g., shared values, trust, and social support) factors will influence the participants’ learning practices in these environments.

Finally, this study aims to explore the learning experiences that take place in immigrant service organizations, especially those experiences related to acculturation processes, social support, and health. This inquiry is based on evidence showing that more low-income immigrant families suffer from differential distribution and valuing of cultural capital than their affluent peers. It is expected that immigrant service organizations help mitigate social and cultural inequalities across immigrant generations by providing a safe space for adult learning in areas that directly affect these individuals and their families (e.g., health care system, school system, legal system).

Specifically, the following questions will be addressed in this study:

1. What types of structural and functional factors of immigrant service organizations demarcate behaviors, relationships, and social networks in

these environments? To what extent are these organizations embedded in the community and what level of resources do they generate?

2. What kinds of cultural reproduction and change practices take place in immigrant service organizations? What characteristics of place facilitate or hinder the development of these practices? Under what circumstances do cultural reproduction and change practices occur?

3. What specific learning processes take place in these organizational settings, and to what extent are they associated with segmented assimilation processes and collective actions?

CHAPTER THREE

Methods

Research design

In order to understand the cultural processes that take place in immigrant service organizations, it is necessary to confine the research to specific sites or case studies. A case study necessitates the research occur within a bounded spatial and cultural context in order to examine, in depth, a particular process – in this instance, the transformation of immigrants' culture into social resources. For the purposes of this study, the spatial and cultural context is defined as the environment of immigrant service organizations.

Study Sites

This research is carried out at selected organizational sites. The site selection is based on previous categorization of immigrant service organizations by immigration researchers (Cordero-Guzman, 2003; Foner, 2001). Three broad types of organizations and/or groups are identified in the literature as forming the immigrant social service delivery system: informal neighborhood-based immigrant groups, clubs and associations (comprised of 75-100% immigrant members or clients); legally constituted community-based organizations with a 501(c)3 status (comprised of 30-75% immigrant members or clients); and large

metropolitan-level service providers that have immigrant clients (comprised of up to 30% immigrant members or clients).

The study sites and their organizational types are: a) New Lots Taxi Drivers Association (NLTA), an informal, neighborhood-based immigrant association; b) United Community Centers (UCC), a formally incorporated community-based organization, and c) Project Street Beat of Planned Parenthood of NY (PSB), a metropolitan-level provider serving immigrant clients in the same area. These organizational sites are located in East New York, Brooklyn, a geographic area that has experienced intense demographic changes over the last decades, resulting in a large concentration of immigrants from Latin America. Taken as a group, these organizations provide a wide scope of social and human services, providing access to local (NLTA), borough (UCC), and citywide (PSB) service networks.

Gaining Access and Building Rapport

Preliminary contacts with representatives of these sites were pursued in the initial phases of the study. The main purpose of these preliminary contacts was to verify feasibility of access to the three immigrant service organizations. In addition, it was necessary to delineate the social cultural environments of the three target places (e.g., spatial location, type of organization, populations served) and to explore basic subtleties in how immigrants utilize these spaces to deem them appropriate for the present study.

As with any research study, how one gains access and establishes rapport with the participants of the study is crucial to its ultimate success. Aside from the potential cultural, social and economic contrasts of immigrant service organizations that make these case studies so appealing, the researcher has also worked with one of these organizations, UCC, for the past few years as a consultant in their HIV prevention initiative. Through this work, a collaborative relationship has been developed with the director of community services, and a positive rapport has been established with organizational leaders, program coordinators, receptionists, teachers, parents and other community stakeholders. I have attended community events such as health street fairs, community forum, a mothers' march against AIDS, and a summer community festival. These experiences enabled me to build trust with organizational representatives, and to develop a considerable knowledge-base of the community prior to conceptualizing this study.

As a result of this previous experience, I have gained access to a *gatekeeper* – i.e., “the individual who the researcher must visit before entering a group or cultural site, and from whom the researcher must receive approval” (Creswell, 1998, p. 247). This gatekeeper is the Director of UCC, an immigrant woman from Peru who has worked in the community for several years. She knows and/or has personal connections to most community leaders, either because she has worked with the particular individual, or because she has helped them in one way or another, at some point in time. She is respected and well liked in the East New

York community, as witnessed in many activities and meetings she has implemented.

Choosing to work with the East New York community is also based on the concentration of immigrants from Latin America in that area as well as UCC's stated commitment to social change. The organization has a long history of serving its community, and provides a variety of needed services to low-income immigrants in East New York. Moreover, UCC managers and staff have worked collaboratively with the other two research sites in a variety of occasions and capacities.

Data Collection Plan: A Multi-Method Approach

Organizational Assessment. Based on Bourdieu's idea that behavior is always situated within a *'field of action'* (rules of the game that influence the development of skills or dispositions), structured in-depth interviews were conducted with two key organizational leaders at each site (manager and staff providing direct services) to generate three organizational profiles, one for each site. The selection of the interviewees was based on their knowledge of organizational history and current projects or activities.

The main purpose of the organizational profiles is to delineate the relationships and networks that exist among the organizations and their constituents as well as

among the organizations and other social institutions. Specifically, the profile covers structural (i.e., the organization's origins and development, membership/clientele structure, institutional linkages) and functional factors (i.e., quality of member participation, organizational culture and capacity, type of activities/programs, relationship of leader to members and community) of immigrant service organizations that demarcate behaviors, relationships, and social networks in those environments. In addition, the profile examines the extent in which the organizations are embedded in the community and the level of resources they generate and distribute.

A modified version of the *Organizational Profile Interview Guide*, developed by the World Bank is utilized (see attached). Other relevant documentation from the immigrant service organizations (e.g., mission statement, financial statements, etc.) is also examined for its importance in analyzing and interpreting the data. The analysis of data from the organizational profiles seeks to identify patterns and generate an organizational typology based on the organization's socio-cultural resources.

Participant Assessment

A multi-method approach was adopted in this research, with the overall goal of gathering multiple views from participants of the immigrant service organizations about the topics of this dissertation, and to triangulate information that verifies the validity of themes and observations in the data. Primary methods include: 1) in-

depth face-to-face interviews, 2) focus groups, and 3) ethnographic field observations.

1. Face-to-face interviews. Based on Bourdieu's view that research on cultural capital must attend to the capital that each individual has in a specific social field, as well as each individual's ability and skill in activating their capital (consumption and production skills/practices), in-depth interviews were conducted as the primary method to gather information about the learning processes of participants in immigrant service organizations.

According to Creswell (1998), in an interpretive biographical approach, the researcher asks individuals to recall particular events and experiences from their past. For the purposes of this study, individuals are asked to recall events and experiences related to their participation in the organizational settings, including their experiences with other organizational members and staff. Since this study is concerned with immigrants' learning experiences in the context of service organizations, a variety of cues and techniques are employed during the semi-structured interviews to elicit environmentally-specific learning experiences (see interview guide). The associations between these learning experiences and segmented assimilation and collective action practices are also explored.

Previous research (Warren, Thompson & Saegert, 1992; Morris, 1984) has highlighted that, as a structural aspect of communities, social capital is rooted in

the cultural traditions and institutional forms of the communities – “people who trust each other and cooperate within a group for a specific purpose may have a general resource available for some other cooperative endeavor” (pg.7). This research has also called attention, however, to the fact that, unlike financial resources, the trust and cooperation developed for a specific purpose do not necessarily transfer to other purposes. A process-oriented approach may allow for an examination of the actual practice of the various forms of capital and their associations with collective action.

Recruitment of Participants. Potential study participants include adult (ages 18 and older) immigrant men and women contacted while attending activities offered at the community organizations (e.g., community events, ESL classes, waiting room at the taxi drivers association headquarters). Arrangements were made with organizational staff for site visits, during which time potential study participants were invited by the researcher to participate in the study. These individuals were explained the objective of the study and its confidential nature, their role in the study, and how the information would be used in the future. Interested individuals set up an appointment for a future interview with the researcher. Participation was voluntary, and individuals who agree to participate in the life history interviews were asked to sign Human Subjects consent forms. No identifying information was attached to interviewing materials. Attempts were made to have equal gender ratios (5 females, 5 males) in each site, and to include

adult participants from different Latin nations, so that the sample reflects the diversity of members in the organizations.

Data were collected through 10 face-to-face interviews at each research site (N=30), using a semi-structured interview guide (see attached). Each interview took approximately 45-60 minutes, and was conducted by the researcher primarily in English. Translation to Spanish was made available by the researcher (with the assistance of a Spanish-speaking peer leader from UCC), upon language preference of the interviewee. Participants did not receive financial incentive for their participation in this study.

In the interview, participants are asked to recall primarily experiences from their participation in the selected organizational settings. Specifically, the interview protocol covers demographic information (e.g., gender, age, education, country of origin), organizational experiences (e.g., frequency of use of place, type of activities attended), social exchanges facilitated by place, relationship with organizational staff, cultural practices (accumulating and non-accumulating practices), learning processes at the organizational sites (e.g., about self, others, how things work), value of things learned (e.g., things that have helped with family matters, business/job, school, doctor), and community organizing and action experiences (e.g., participation in marches, political forum, petition).

Field notes were kept throughout the interviewing process to document the context of the interviews and unusual events or circumstances. These data are analyzed in combination with information from the ethnographic observations described below.

2. Focus groups. Individuals who share their life stories were also be asked consent to participate in two future focus groups. The purpose of the focus groups was to present back to participants the initial analysis of data (e.g., patterns or themes found) and to brainstorm reasons for and speculations about these patterns (e.g., social, economic, and cultural changes, historical events, policies). In addition, the focus groups helped the researcher verify the validity of her initial interpretations of the data, at the same time that it built on the participants' perspectives about their own learning processes. Informed consent to participate in the focus groups was included in the consent form used for interviews. The focus groups include topics that either directly reflects the main study themes/patterns or that provide insight into the influence of environmental factors on these themes/patterns. Some of these topics are: descriptions of a "typical day" at the organizations; cultural and other contextual influences on activities/services; cultural or contextual influences on social relations (including social networks and support); and cultural or contextual influences on learning processes.

3. Ethnographic observations. According to Bourdieu, practice in the field of interaction is shaped by multiple, interacting forces, including the *rules governing the field* and the *relative position of players in the field*. It is thus important to create opportunities for the observation of the relationships established in each particular context, the levels of support among different players, as well as how each player is defined/positioned in that field (e.g., member, client, participant, volunteer, etc.).

The notion of capital exists in Bourdieu's method of viewing the world. In his approach, different forms of capital – social, economic, cultural – have various values, and the values of these resources can take many forms. Thus, it is important to pay attention to the symbolic value of various displays of capital in each specific environment. The perception of differential values placed by managers/staff/educators on “dominant” and “non-dominant” cultural capital may influence how culture ultimately affects the prospects of mobility for lower status social groups (Carter & Adolphs, 2003).

Detailed ethnographic observations were conducted by the researcher during the study period in order to document staff-member and member-member interactions. The main methods of data collection include: a) participatory observation of targeted activities (e.g., leadership group meetings, English as a Second Language (ESL) class gatherings/lunch hour, dispatch/waiting rooms, community events), b) observation of interactions in particular organizational

spaces that seem relevant to the research study (e.g., lunch room), and c) informal conversations with staff and members (to clarify observations, identify patterns, and elucidate exchanges). Data gathered through these methods are described in field notes taken by the researcher.

Special attention is paid to the following dimension of observation:

- Language of communication
- Patterns of relationships/exchanges (i.e., quality of participation, affirmation/challenge of cultural identities, vertical/horizontal nature of interaction)
- Access to/exchange of informational or other forms of social support (e.g., mentoring, job networking, emotional support)
- Practice and valuation of dominant and non-dominant cultural capital (e.g., clothing, food, objects, music)

The information from ethnographic observations allows for the identification of patterns of social interactions among members and staff, and for the association of these interactions with specific aspects of material culture of immigrants.

Analysis of Data

The process of collection and analysis of data from the research participants adopts a grounded theory approach, according to which data collection takes place until there is saturation of information, and data analysis (e.g., identification of

relevant topics and themes) occurs while information is being collected (Kirby & McKenna, 1989; Strauss & Corbin, 1997).

Qualitative research data (i.e., in-depth interviews, ethnographic observations) were analyzed using established content analysis procedures. The credibility of the information is indicated by the consistency of information provided across the different narratives, and field notes data collected during the research process. Information from different organizational sites are compared to discover consistent themes or topics, either embedded or explicit, and to triangulate the events and points of views expressed by the participants. Wherever possible, interpretations of the data were shared with participants to verify the validity of the analysis.

Analysis of the data occurred throughout the entire research process, and followed several steps recommended in the literature (Creswell, 1998; Kirby & McKenna, 1989):

1. A general review of all the information gathered (e.g., observational field notes, interview transcripts, maps, notes about activities), to gain an overall sense of the data, and sort out the information.
2. Obtaining feedback on the initial themes found in the data, by presenting the data back to the participants to verify the validity of the data, and of the researcher's interpretations. This was accomplished primarily in the

focus group sessions, which were designed to encourage the informants' participation in the theory building process.

3. Reducing the data, by generating conceptual diagrams, tables, maps or other tools that can organize ideas by theme, case or subject. Qualitative data analysis software was not utilized in this study.

Data analysis themes were referred back to the theoretical framework and discussed in relation to findings of previous research on immigration and cultural capital. Additional theoretical and empirical literature and studies were reviewed to help explain patterns found in the data that were not previously anticipated.

CHAPTER FOUR

Study Results

A. Organizational Profiles

An important goal of this study is to examine structural and functional aspects of three types of immigrant service organizations previously identified in the literature as part of the immigrant service delivery system: a neighborhood-based immigrant association (New Lots Taxi Drivers Association); a legally constituted, community-based nonprofit organization (United Community Centers); and the satellite of a large metropolitan-level service provider that have local immigrant clients (Project Street Beat of Planned Parenthood of New York City). The main purpose of the organizational assessments is to identify organizational patterns based on the organizations' origin/mission, leadership characteristics, activities/programs offered, and socio-cultural resources. These organizational patterns constitute what Bourdieu called *fields of action* in which immigrant practices occur.

One of the central ideas of Bourdieu's cultural capital theory is that behavior is always situated within a *field of action*, which he defines as *the rules of the game* that influence the development of individual skills or *dispositions* (habitus). In his view, fields are systems of objective relations that are constituted by various types of capital. Positions in a field are related to one another, not directly through interactions or connections, but in terms of relations of difference (e.g., who has more English skills), especially in regards to efficient forms of capital in a

particular time and space. Thus people who have little interaction with one another can be grouped close together in social space. Bourdieu conceives of fields as vertically and horizontally differentiated, so that similarly autonomous fields (social, economic, religious, and/or cultural) are at any moment in time, more or less irreducible to one another.

Fields are frequently defined through the metaphor of games -- it integrates the stakes of the game (*illusio*) and one's ability to play it (*habitus*). Each field, like a game, is only possible given players who *know-how* to play and are inclined to play. As described below, the process of formation of the three studied organizations, their guiding principles, the challenges they faced in establishing their services in the community, their staffing/membership characteristics, and the activities/services they offer situate each organization as a specific 'field of action' in the community. As such, each organization forms a unique environment within which individual clients or members enact their skills/dispositions.

Organizational Formation and Mission

United Community Centers (UCC). The United Community Centers (UCC) was organized in 1954 and incorporated in 1959 as a nonprofit, charitable and educational organization. Its founding members were residents of two newly-constructed public housing projects in East New York. These members attempted

to give direction to their community organizing practices with an explicit theoretical and value system. The main concept from which their ideas were born was that the forces of political economy are the most important forces affecting people's lives. They analyzed how these forces work (both beneficially and harmfully), and how to change the ways in which they are harmful. The founding members believed that social life could be critically reflected upon and re-created, guided by democratic principles. Their conceptual and value system addressed the importance of developing the consciousness of working people and their ability to act upon the social forces affecting them, based on an American Marxist and democratic philosophy.

Using this theory as a guide, the founding members of UCC believed that the only way to create the necessary changes towards a better, more equal world was through large population efforts, in particular through the creation of an organized and united working class. They believed that one of the major obstacles preventing this unity were the ideas that people held about one another across difference, especially differences of race and ethnicity. This group, therefore, committed itself to changing people's ideas and to fighting for integration and democratic planning of social life outside the workplace.

In 1954, when UCC was founded, East New York was a predominantly White, lower middle class, and working class neighborhood. By 2000, it was predominantly Black and Latino, working class, immigrant, and poor. As the

racial and ethnic make up of East New York changed, so did UCC's membership. In the early years, the organization defined itself as a problem-oriented, social change organization, not as a service organization. Nevertheless, as a community center, much of the agency's energy was taken up with providing services, including programs in day care, summer camping for youth, services for the elderly and the disabled, and a wide range of social, cultural, and educational programs. Over time, leaders and the more involved members used what became their value system as a guide for elaborating the content of the internal programs they developed for youth and adults. Central to this value system was the idea of "the richness of difference" as a guide for struggle and social life.

Along with its continuous investment in the provision of services, the agency informed residents about community problems. They also attempted to give direction to the political decisions made about the community. Leaders and members fought for integrated schools and housing, for traffic lights, playgrounds and bus routes. During the 1960s and 1970s they participated in the anti-war movement and organized in opposition to budget crisis in public services, including Blacks, Latinos and Whites. At the same time, their theory and practice recognized that most of the problems that the community faced – segregated and inadequate schools, racial prejudice, and unemployment – could not be resolved within the borders of the community because these problems were consequences of larger economic and political structures.

UCC leaders and members combined their class analysis and value system to struggle with relative consistency for their ideas throughout the first two decades of the agency's foundation. In the late 1960s, after being revived by the civil rights movement, UCC's racial integrationist practices propelled it into conflict with Black Nationalism in the community and on two CUNY campuses. In the 1970s, its political economic practices provided the basis for the organization's opposition to the NYC fiscal crisis and its broader political meaning. Also in the 1970s, the agency developed an elaborate social, educational, recreational, and political range of activities with a considerable participation of community resident volunteers. By the mid 1980s, despite this wide range of activities, the agency ceased to be able to recruit members willing to take on responsibility for the organization. At the end of 1990s, the organization had become a service organization dependent upon foundation and government funding for its survival. This late organizational practice is still in place in 2005.

Throughout its early decades, UCC struggled for an atmosphere of equality between men and women within the organization. Both male and female leaders insisted upon the importance of women's leadership and dignity, fighting those members who opposed this equality. For the founding members of UCC, a conscious political and social life was a step toward an unpredictable future. They had to learn to live with small and local victories in the context of much broader political failure because evidence of broader success was scarce.

The legacy of UCC's history is its impact upon the social development and character of its members and those who participate in its programs. Although they might learn it elsewhere, somehow, UCC is the place where they learn to think of themselves as members of a larger world with many different kinds of people for which they carry responsibility. UCC is also a place where they have learned how to listen to and hear from people different from themselves -- socially, ethnically, and culturally-wise. They also learn how to use ideas to deal with conflict across difference in a democratic fashion. Some of UCC's ideas and practices seem to still have some pertinence within a context of immigrants' diversely constituted cultural capital.

The founding members defined their mission as two-fold. They sought to create an arena for social, recreational and educational services for themselves and their children that would not be segregated by race, religion or ethnicity. They also sought to create a social vehicle with which local residents could act collectively to address community problems and search for democratic solutions. The creation of the East New York Day Care Center by community parents was an outcome of this mission. The Center is located on New Lots Avenue, at the heart of East New York.

UCC's formation and mission is consistent with that of other settlement houses in New York City. Historically, the goal of settlement houses was to bring about a community life in which individuals seek solutions to their concrete and local problems. Although the community remains the focus of the settlement's

attention, it is through the personalized and direct involvement with the individual, often throughout a lifetime, that the settlement fosters values of friendship and mutual support. Consistent with this mission, UCC has provided a broad range of services for families, including children, teenagers, and adults. The Center has also organized youth and adults to participate in a broad range of social efforts to resolve problems in the areas of public education, health care, the environment, crime, racial and ethnic conflict, and housing.

UCC programs, community events and campaigns evolve within a process of close interaction among staff, members, diverse community residents, and organizations providing services in the community.

The other two immigrant service organizations examined in this study (which are also a part of UCC's institutional linkage), Project Street Beat of Planned Parenthood of NYC and the New Lots Taxi Drivers' Association, were formed approximately 35 years after the establishment of UCC in the East New York community.

Project Street Beat of Planned Parenthood of NYC (PSB). PSB was founded in 1988, as a unique mobile service model. This program model was based on the belief that in order to improve access to services it was necessary to make them available to disenfranchised populations on community streets. PSB neighborhood-based mobile health education and health promotion programs have

a special focus on HIV prevention, providing health education and screening, medical services and referrals, and case management to adolescents and adults.

Although PSB offers services at the neighborhood level, it relies on the resources and oversight of its citywide umbrella organization, Planned Parenthood of NYC, for overall administrative, fiscal, and policy guidelines and monitoring. As stated by UCC staff, this reliance on a large, citywide headquarters organization as a source of financial and political resources positions PSB as the *'rich cousin'* among local service providers. The organization is perceived as rich in resources beyond the immediate services provided, making it very attractive to local agencies that need or wish to tap into these resources.

A good example of the level of resources of PSB is its mobile medical unit. The unit is a 31-foot customized vehicle staffed by a medical provider and outreach workers. This team can offer: a) basic survival services—such as food, clean clothes, condoms; b) HIV/AIDS testing, education, counseling, and prevention interventions; c) harm risk reduction counseling; d) testing and treatment for common sexually transmitted diseases; e) hepatitis C testing and referrals; f) pregnancy testing, prenatal counseling, and referrals for services; g) contraception; and h) primary health care. The agency's ability to offer such a variety of services in one single vehicle at different locations and times of day makes their association very appealing to local providers.

The PSB staff also makes regular rounds of the neighborhood in minivans. They offer health screening, testing, and transportation to other service organizations. They work both day and night shifts, targeting the places where people meet and hang out. Because PSB staff works on the streets and other community sites, they reach their clients primarily through formal or informal linkages with local agencies and organizations. These agencies broker PSB's relationship with the community, and connect PSB staff with potential clients. After outreach workers build trusting relationships with a client, they may provide other types of assistance like referrals for regular medical attention and/or office-based counseling. The staff believes that *"this approach helps clients move from day-to-day survival on the street into a safer, healthier lifestyle."* This approach may also be necessary since only a few clients receive scheduled office-based services, and PSB's office space is located outside the East New York community.

Because the needs of their target populations kept growing, PSB found they were unable to meet or provide all needed services through their mobile units. Instead of turning people away, PSB sought out other organizations not only to access target populations, but also to assist them in providing needed services. Among other local organizations, UCC was a natural organization for PSB to work with in East New York because of their expertise, wealth of programs, and access to different community groups, particularly immigrants. UCC is perceived by PSB staff as a *"facilitator, a mediator and an all around community resource."*

New Lots Taxi Drivers' Association (NLTA). Just a few years after PSB had established services in the community, a group of approximately 30 drivers from different taxi bases in East New York began meeting at a local Dominican bakery to form their own agency. The organizers were mostly Dominican immigrant drivers who encountered difficulties paying the required weekly fees at the taxi agencies for which they worked, and who sought to have greater input in the decision-making and operations of their own taxi base in East New York. As stated by the vice-president of NLTA, "*we had no choice: creating our own association was a matter of survival for us and our families.*" The New Lots Taxi Drivers' Association is thus created in 1991 as a private entrepreneurship.

Several planning meetings took place before the organizers gathered enough information about how to create the association and build consensus on how to structure it. The vice-president of NLTA is strong in his indebted gratitude to UCC during this organizing period. He says that the former executive director of UCC assisted them in uncountable ways, from offering space for their meetings to gathering needed information to vouching for them with City officials and government agencies. NLTA is located on New Lots Avenue, a few stories down the street from UCC's headquarters.

As their organizing activities progressed, the founders of NLTA faced resistance from several segments of the East New York community, particularly from its community board. Most members of the community board were African

American and White Jewish middle class individuals who did not know anyone in this group comprised mostly of immigrant men from Dominican Republic.

According to NLTA's vice-president, "*the community board members feared that the taxi base would be a cover up for drug dealing in the community.*" Again, the former executive director of the UCC played a crucial role in this negotiation process by sponsoring meetings, making introductions between drivers and community board representatives, and providing letters of support for the taxi base to establish itself. The drivers in turn committed to enhancing the level of taxi services in the community by keeping all their appointments, arriving promptly to pick up passengers, and providing 24-hour services.

State of Flux of Organizational Fields

Bourdieu emphasizes that the game and its stakes must be understood as the relationship of players on the field and their varying ability to play the game. Thus the field is always in a state of flux as players struggle for command of the field. In terms of capital, the game metaphor points out why *'being able to score a goal in soccer does not count as winning in chess.'*

In the case of immigrant services in East New York, the organizational by-laws of UCC state as the purpose of the organization "to organize people to take an active interest in community affairs and to become involved in the improvement of the community, borough, city, state, nation, and world." According to its executive

director, today and throughout its history, the purpose of the organization has remained the same. UCC is a non-sectarian organization that has provided a broad range of services for families, including children, teenagers, and adults. In addition, UCC has organized youth and adults to participate in a broad range of social efforts to resolve problems in the areas of public education, health care, the environment, crime, racial and ethnic conflict, housing, and other areas.

UCC is located in an outstanding building designed by Robert Mangurian and Lester Walker, who transformed the interior of a former garage into a series of spaces, including a play area on the rooftop. The Center is across the street from the New Lots Reformed Church, a landmark building, and is near the New Lots branch of the Brooklyn Public Library and the New Lots Community Church and Day Care Center. These and other community organizations have been very active in the community. One of their joint accomplishments includes getting four-way stop signs put up at Schenck and New Lots in March 1997, after 20 years of pressure and demonstrations, including blocking the street for traffic.

Three major projects in the organization's history exemplify its ability to implement its mission, i.e., the joining of values, activism, and practice. In 1956-1958, with a grant from the Muscular Dystrophy Association, and even before efforts to mainstream disabled children were widely accepted, UCC was the first organization in the country to integrate muscular dystrophic and 'normal' children in a day camp setting. In 1965-1968, with grants from the U.S. Office of Juvenile

Delinquency (OJD), UCC conducted a demonstration project for redirecting delinquent youth away from socially destructive behavior into social initiatives for social action. The U.S. OJD considered the results of this initiative exemplary, widely distributed them, and replicated them in at least two other locations. UCC applied the approach developed in this initiative in other organizational work with teenagers with grants from the NYC Department for Youth Services/NYS Division for Youth for 20 years through the present.

Between 1989-1996 and 2000-2005, with grants from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, UCC carried out HIV/AIDS prevention projects. The projects aimed to involve community residents in changing their attitudes and behaviors to adopt HIV risk-reduction practices. The main strategy used to achieve this goal was to involve residents in organizing socially to address the social conditions that promote the spread of HIV, and change community norms to favor HIV prevention. As the leading organization in HIV prevention education in Eastern Brooklyn, UCC has conducted several educational workshops (in English and Spanish) annually with parent and staff groups of day care centers, tenant and block associations, public schools' parent-teacher associations, taxi cab drivers, high school students, churches, and individuals with their friends and neighbors. Further, UCC developed leadership groups to help define HIV as a community problem, urge other groups to practice risk-reducing behaviors, and organize annual community events such as a 'Mother's Day March Against AIDS' and a

‘5K Run to Stop AIDS.’ This project has succeeded in involving several thousand adult and youth residents, many of whom recent immigrants, during the course of its implementation.

Until 2003, UCC was directed by a Jewish man who was one of its founding members. According to the current executive director, most of the success of the organization in the last decades is a result of its embeddedness in the community, the generosity of its board members and their families, the support from private foundations and firms, and the interpersonal connections established by its former director over the years. Unlike nowadays, she says, public funding streams also used to provide support for operating costs, which created opportunities and resources for community organizing. This situation has changed.

In 1993, the current director of UCC applied to the position of Community Organizer/Health Educator that had been advertised in the New York Times. She had no prior knowledge of the agency or the East New York community. Her mission was to engage Latinos in community organizing and HIV prevention initiatives at UCC. At the time, she affirms, “*all UCC staff had a common title which began with ‘Community Organizer’*”. The second part of each staff’s title was determined by the type of funding for the position (e.g., health education, environmental protection, etc.). This title structure was meant to express the agency’s commitment to community organizing which “*should always come first,*” as expressed by the executive director.

Originally from Lima, the director had previously worked as a psychologist for the Peruvian Navy while organizing peasant women who had moved into shanty towns to access needed services, deal with government bureaucracies regarding social benefits, and address police brutality. Although she lacked knowledge and experience specifically focused on HIV (her actual position was funded through an HIV Prevention initiative), her community organizing background matched UCC's values and community approach. For the last ten years, the director has worked with and engaged Latino immigrants from East New York in community actions and services. An example of this engagement is the work with local public schools to address the stereotypes associated with violence and ethnic conflicts among African American and Latino teens. The director worked closely with parents and teachers to develop a series of activities to tackle these issues in the community.

Unlike UCC, PSB is not positioned in the community because of its office space or its history of community organizing and service. PSB is a mobile organization most often known for its administrative, financial and political power, which results in an ability to bring services and other resources into the community. In addition, PSB's economic and political capital makes it very appealing as a partner in fundraising and program implementation initiatives among community organizations, and they have fulfilled this function frequently, particularly in the last years, when the City underwent economic restrictions.

The relationship between PSB and the local East New York community is two-folded. On the one hand, the agency needs access to local organizations, associations and groups (such as UCC's drama club, YMCA's after school program, local Beacon programs, etc.) to provide services locally. PSB invests a great deal of resources to the provision of such services and needs community partners to implement them. On the other hand, the agency's ability to provide these services in East New York and other neighborhoods in New York City paradoxically maintains the umbrella organization's economic and political capital in New York City as a whole. Some of the benefits resulting from their association with local organizations are expressed by staff at PSB:

Our association with UCC and other community groups has been essential to our provision of services in East New York. Initially, UCC asked us to come in to facilitate youth workshops. Little by little, they ended up providing support and any assistance possible to both our staff and clients. Now our services in Brooklyn are better than the ones offered by PPNY in the South Bronx.

Through our association with UCC, there has been more communication, sharing, socializing, and participation, creating things together, and seeking out of information by our members. UCC managers and staff are so committed... They are not just working from 9:00 to 5:00, but aggressively concerned about the community. They are available during the evenings (and sometimes during the weekend) to make a difference.

As opposed to PSB, the NLTA was perceived by community members as lacking in resources or having unwanted ones. According to the president of the organization, this perception was primarily based on the fact that this was “*a group of working class immigrant men from Dominican Republic with limited English skills and no social or political connections.*” The founders understood the fragility of their position in the community and made it their motto to provide safe, reliable community services. In order to do that, they developed rules of conduct for their drivers and their organization.

Fourteen years after its creation, the organization’s by-laws are a “living” document used by the members to regulate their business and the individual behavior of members. According to its by-laws, the executive committee is comprised of five members of NLTA (President, Vice-President, and three representatives). These five individuals share nationality, ideologies and friendship. They function as the administrative and disciplinary council. The organizational structure is clearly defined, with statutes, rules and regulations that are strictly enforced because the leaders have a strong concern for the image and reputation of the association in the community. The general assembly, which includes all members, meets once a month. The council meets regularly, as needed. The organization has had two official presidents, who have remained in office, alternatively, for four years each. These two individuals are part of the group of founders of the association, and they are seen as experienced

administrators by most drivers. This leadership ensures their re-election through a democratic voting process every four years.

As a private membership association, the NLTA requires people to buy shares in order to become partners of the association. Being a partner entitles one to a reduced base fee. Partners are also involved in making the decisions that affect the organization. Upon their detachment from the agency, partners are “bought out” at a higher rate than they paid in. This rate is calculated using a fixed formula that is pre-established by the executive committee and ratified through vote by all members. Partners are also eligible to hold or vote for executive committee positions. Executive committee members do not pay a base fee. If a member-at-large needs clarification on the issues being presented by the board, s/he would ask one of the three representatives to call for general meeting to address their concerns.

The developing phase of the agency involved approximately 30 drivers who were expected to contribute \$300 to become a partner. These partners put their money together to buy a “*big, antiquated dispatch radio.*” They also hired a dispatcher who earned \$25 for a six-hour shift. Initially, their consumer calls were very low and the partners felt extremely concerned since, without clients, they could not survive. The partners then became aggressive about their advertising and recruitment. They printed flyers and distributed them throughout the community. More people and other drivers (friends and family) started coming over. Some

drivers came to the association without being able to afford the member's fee, yet they offered to drive for the agency. After four years, the partnership fee increased to \$4,000 and the association had 60 partners. The dispatcher's wage also increased to about \$100 per shift.

The main service provided by the association is the call service. Dispatchers are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Each driver is self-employed, and usually owns their car. In addition to the call service, the association provides a type of 'back-up' service once a consumer call is placed to a specific driver so that, if there is a problem while that driver is serving a passenger, s/he may call the dispatcher and have another driver pick up that passenger. Each driver is responsible for the maintenance of their own cars (e.g., mechanical services), and car insurance. Informally, he says, "*people also help each other out, if needed.*"

The Position of Players in the Field

In Bourdieu's view, the structure of the field is determined by the position of players in the field, and this is determined by the overall volume and type of capital that each player has. Capital, in his terms, is whatever has an effect, existing and functioning in relation to the field. Thus what has an effect in one social world may not have an effect in another. According to this perspective, fields are the locus of relations of force in which individual agents struggle to conserve or transform what counts as capital. Furthermore, the game analogy

forces us to conceptualize “the rules of the game” from a practical standpoint – i.e., these rules are embodied as a readiness to respond skillfully to the ever changing nature of the game. It makes no sense to say that a taxi driver needs to have a doctorate (or even read one book, for that matter) to enable him/her to drive a car.

This relative nature of capital is exemplified in the following excerpts from the NLTA. In the words of its vice-president, “*the association provides very limited services to its members.*” He believes that the single most important service provided by NLTA is employment – “*these guys have no other means of making a decent living for themselves and their families when they arrive here [in NY]. The requirements for the driver’s job are somewhat minimal, and most adult Dominican men already come to the US knowing how to drive a car anyway. They just need to get a driver’s license, and rent or buy a car. The fact that “all of us speak Spanish” helps that process [at NLTA]*” he says, as opposed to jobs in mainstream taxi driver associations and/or other social organizations and agencies, where one would at least be required to demonstrate some level of mastery in English.

This reality is supposed to change, though. According to association staff, the City is changing its regulations, and plans to require taxi associations to keep track of their drivers’ immigration status on a daily basis. The vice-president finds this situation unbearable because the NLTA, like most taxi associations,

does not have any control over the immigration status of their drivers (let alone manpower for daily checking). However, the association will be penalized to the point of losing its license (medallion), if caught in liability. He says that the members of the executive committee are very concerned about this situation and do not know how or if they will be able to cope, if these changes come through.

Similarly, the structure of players at UCC has changed overtime. According to the by-laws, organizational members are supposed to elect a board of directors which hires the executive director. The membership also passes on policy and votes on the annual budget. In between membership meetings, the board meets on a monthly basis to discuss organizational problems, propose solutions and develop new policies for the membership's discussion and approval. The staff, under the direction of the executive director, carries out the policy and programs on a daily basis, often with the help of the organization's members and other volunteers.

Membership at UCC has been open to anyone who wants to join, and dues cost about five dollars per year. Most of the currently registered members (approximately 60) and Board of Directors (14 persons officially listed) are lower middle income and working class African American and Latino men and women who live in the community, broadly reflecting the demographic characteristic of the community. Over the years, the organization has lost some of its most

affluent board members who moved out of the neighborhood and/or retired after many years of service to the organization.

Currently, UCC managers and staff use the term ‘members’ in a loose manner – they do not clearly differentiate members from program participants. Although registered organizational members are notified of and invited to participate in the membership meetings, program participants and influential members of the community at large are also invited. The executive director believes that the organization is equally accountable to its members and the community at large. She thinks that this change in practice may ultimately lead to change in the organizational by-laws to reflect this new reality.

Conversely, at PSB there is no membership structure. The president of their umbrella organization, Planned Parenthood of New York (PPNY), oversees the different satellite sites, including PSB. Each satellite site has a vice-president who provides direct supervision and guidance to a group of program directors, who are directly responsible for local staff and the implementation of services at the local level. A select group of clients (primarily HIV+ individuals, gays and lesbians) are members of the advisory board of the organization, which entails representation of PSB during quarterly meetings at the headquarter site of PPNY.

The hierarchical structure under which PSB operates requires individual staff and clients to follow somewhat strict guidelines for appropriate and effective

communications and behavioral practices. For instance, although PPNY has excellent written materials describing the organization and its services, including services offered at the satellite sites, the materials are somewhat outdated. The staff from PSB, however, cannot make changes on any of these materials without going through a lengthy and labor-intensive process of offering suggestions for changes that must still be approved by different sectors of the umbrella organization. Moreover, PSB is not allowed to produce any type of written materials describing services or activities offered (not even a flyer announcing an upcoming event) locally without undergoing the process of approval with its headquarters. According to a manager, *“this situation requires a lot of planning on the part of the staff and also, at times, creates challenges to their ability to advertise their activities in the community, and recruit clients to participate in them.”* If, on the one hand, they have the resources to produce high-quality written materials (which are reviewed by professionals in the communications, education, policy, and other departments at PPNY), the process of producing them is so arduous and time-consuming that the staff end up restricting the transmission of information about the agency and its activities to word of mouth.

Fields of Action Enabling Different Forms of Capital

According to Bourdieu, it is also by and through the field of action that each form of capital becomes efficient. The implication is that something counts as capital

only to the extent that possessing it incurs an ability to use it (i.e., to access profits specific to the field).

The ways in which country of origin, language spoken, and level of education or job experience affect the relationship among members of the NLTA provide good examples of this practical, applied aspect of cultural capital. “*Since its creation,* says the president, *the NLTA has been a niche for male Dominican immigrants to learn about the way things work here in the U.S., share information, and socialize with each other. It is clear, however, that the most important thing for all of us is to make a living. In that sense, we will do whatever it takes to maintain our ability to do that.*” He goes on to explain that nationality has played a role in their ability to make a living through the association.

A few years after its formation, NLTA accepted drivers from Haiti as members. The Association’s president believes that although these men shared immigration experiences with their Dominican counterparts, Haitian drivers not only spoke a different language (Creole or French), which created some communication problems with Spanish-speaking dispatchers, but also held different values and ethics regarding the autonomous (self-employed) nature of their work. In his view, Haitian members expected more assistance from the Association (whenever they had a problem with their cars, for instance), and were not satisfied when faced with the limited nature of their membership. He believes that “*different nationalities made it harder for those guys to trust each other*” and accept that

their welfare depended on the welfare of the Association as a whole. He says, “*this is a private membership association...it requires trust among members for it to survive and grow.*”

A similar issue has arisen lately with the recent arrival of large groups of Mexicans in East New York. Although these newcomers (and their search for jobs) offer a renewed and constant source of labor and resources to NLTA, the members of the association decided to limit the number of new members of the Association. The newcomers can still work as drivers, says a manager, but that does not give them the right of vote or other benefits associated with membership at NLTA. Some of the reasons given by the manager for this differentiation based on nationality include: *it is easier to manage the organization if “there are fewer voting members”, “most of the Mexicans have not been here long enough to understand how things work”, and “we need to keep up the level of services we offer because our image in the community is very important.”*

Furthermore, levels of educational achievement and/or organizational experience are also important forms of capital at NLTA. As stated by a manager, “*the two guys who have been alternatively elected president and vice-president are also the guys with higher levels of educational achievement and/or organizational experience among members.*” The members trust these men’s ability to understand the rules of the world outside the association, to obtain information about new regulations affecting their association and how to meet them, and to negotiate

with social institutions (e.g., City officials) on their behalf. Furthermore, the manager explains, most drivers are men who have had limited opportunities to pursue their education prior to (or after) migrating to the U.S., and they feel embarrassed because of it. *“No matter how much money they have been able to make throughout these years, their level of education is a very touchy subject,”* he affirms.

Similarly to NLTA, cultural heritage plays a role at UCC. The Latino background of the current executive director of UCC, including her ability to speak Spanish fluently, has played an important role in her ability to take over the directorship at the organization, and manage its finances in moments of economic constraints. The director is aware of the fact that UCC intends to reach out to the newly arrived Latinos in East New York, and that *“having an executive director represent that target group not only facilitates the engagement of this target population into services, but also makes the organization more attractive to funders because of this cultural match.”*

In addition, the executive director is also able to use her heritage as capital by astutely managing the organization’s finances in such a way that parts of her salary can be written off through a variety of grants targeted to Latino immigrants – i.e., part of her salary is covered by the position of peer educator in the HIV initiative targeted to Latinas, another part is covered by the position of peer counselor in the English as a Second Language program, while yet another part is

covered by the position of immigration counselor in the Immigration Service initiative. The director believes that by doing things this way, she can cover her salary, and also avoid hiring another staff until each salary line (and the expenses associated with benefits, etc.) is guaranteed. Her Latino heritage is perceived by the director as a personal characteristic that affords the organization a certain flexibility that is not possible with the non-Latino (English-speaking) staff.

By contrast, the English proficiency of staff/members also opens up different opportunities for them at UCC. These staff/members are often called upon for editing documents/materials, coordinating ESL programs, public meetings or committees, interpreting ambiguous policy messages from City government, foundations, and/or other organizations, contacting public officials, and conducting fundraising.

Another aspect of UCC that functions as effective capital is its community embeddedness. While UCC's categorization as a local multi-service provider somewhat limits its access to citywide resources, its strength as a local partner allows it to form relationships with PSB/PPNY, PACE University, United Neighborhood Houses, and other citywide social institutions. These relationships are seen by UCC as a means of supporting their HIV prevention program, the community food garden, and other local initiatives.

For PSB, the local connection allows them to capitalize on what they do best -- provide mobile services. What they lack in depth, they abound in scope. The agency's ability to transport clients, provide varied health screenings, and offer multiple crisis intervention services makes it a needed, desirable partner to local organizations.

Language is not an essential requirement of staff at PSB. Although one of the program coordinators speaks Spanish, this language skill is not as valued at PSB as her physical appearance (e.g., dreadlock hair, French manicure, fashionable clothing). This staff's 'cool' appearance is believed to enhance her ability to communicate and contact with different constituencies, especially youth, cutting across ethnic lines – the staff could be identified as Black or Latino.

As opposed to NLTA, where cultural traditions make sexual practices and HIV taboo issues, sexual orientation and HIV status can be an efficient capital at PSB. According to program managers, PSB staff members who openly identify as gay/lesbian and/or HIV+ are often engaged in different aspects of the decision-making process at the organization, since PPNY makes a special effort to ensure representation and voice to this constituency. In addition, they have their opinions valued by their peers and their suggestions followed through by managers (at least at the local level).

Fields of Action as Opportunities for Social Networks

The difference between a field and a social network is especially important to keep in mind. A field is defined by differential relations between properties while networks are defined by actual connections. Because anything can be made the object of struggle or a weapon in struggle there are an infinite number of possible differentiated fields (more likely in highly differentiated societies). Fields work for Bourdieu very much in the way they do for the Gestalt: the whole is a system of relations that cannot be defined in terms of its parts. The parts take their properties from their relationship to other parts.

This issue is illustrated at the NLTA. The statutes of the association have been modified to better support and address the needs of its constituency. A ‘special emergency fund’ has been established to respond to crises, such as car repairs, illness. This fund is maintained by a small deduction from each base fee. An additional ‘death fund’ also provides drivers and/or their families financial support in the event of death of an immediate family member. When a driver has a death occur in the family, other drivers are expected to contribute for this fund, if possible.

The taxi base has not only been the place of work but also a social outlet for many of the drivers. A core group of 20-25 men stop by the base on a daily basis. There they play a few games of billiards, dominoes, watch television, or simply

have conversations with each other. Other community members and local shops capitalize upon this gathering of potential customers by wheeling carts with home-cooked food, coffee and/or cake to this group.

In addition, interagency transactions also occur. NLTA used to advertise in the UCC newspaper, *The Link*, in the past. The current president plans to resume that practice. Also, UCC conducted health education workshops at NLTA about four years ago, and the current president recalls that these workshops included topics such as HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases.

Similarly, UCC has often relied on NLTA for the implementation of a variety of community events, including condom distribution by drivers during Valentine's Day, participation in community marches or demonstrations, and providing taxi services to staff when they implement workshops at distant locations in the evening. Moreover, in several instances, UCC has also had to negotiate with funders in order to include the taxi drivers as a target sub-group in their interventions in order to provide needed services to this group.

Internally, UCC also has had to adjust to the shifting needs of the community. Changes in types of funding and in the demographic characteristics of the neighborhood in the last 10 years have required the agency to switch from an 'organizing/advocacy' orientation to a more 'service-oriented' approach. Staff believes that it is still possible to organize but it needs to be done in the context of

service provision – our current target populations have immediate needs that must be met while (or before) they can engage in organizing activities. As stated by the program director, *“people need to receive what they need first, develop trust in the organization, and then maybe participate in other volunteer activities.”*

As much as possible, UCC uses the service context to foment social interactions among participants, and also promote organizing activities. Last year, for instance, staff organized a group of ESL students to participate in a demonstration at Washington Square against cuts in federal funding for ESL classes and books. These students prepared billboards and other demonstration materials to display at the event and, later, pictures and verbal accounts were reported back to other ESL students at UCC. The staff believes that participation in these activities *“empower immigrants because they see that they are not alone – it gives them the bigger picture.”*

UCC has also collaborated with PSB and other agencies in the implementation of several community activities. PSB, specifically, has played a very important role in the implementation of activities such as World AIDS Day, Valentine’s Day, Safer-Sex Party, and Leadership Group Retreat. Both staff and clients have contributed to the planning and execution of these activities in the last years, and the organization has put financial resources generously available for catering, hotel accommodations, and travel required to make these events a success for staff and clients.

Investment in the Field or the Stake of the Game

In Bourdieu's view, it is the fundamental belief in the stakes of the game that allows a game to be played at all. It is an investment in the field, understood properly as an inclination and an ability to "play the game." Conceptualized this way, a field is conceived of as a game with stakes, where action is fundamentally guided by struggle.

"Players agree, by the mere fact of playing and not by way of a 'contract,' that the game is worth playing" (Bourdieu, 1992: 98). There is a tacit recognition of the value of the stakes of the game and a practical mastery of its rules. Thus to play a game such as soccer, it means having invested time and body into generating a specific value (skill) which functions both as an ability to play and an inclination - one can only be good at soccer, and hence play, through participation.

There are four main channels through which UCC members participate in, learn about, and influence organizational processes:

a. Programs feeding into other programs. The Day Care Center at UCC functions as 'entrance point' for community residents to gain access to and participate in other services and activities at UCC. For instance, someone comes to UCC looking for child care, and finds that they might also benefit from English as

Second Language (ESL) classes, after-school programs for children (e.g., pre-teens, computer skills, and drama club), job training, HIV education, etc. UCC usually advertises its programs and services among Day Care parents who, in turn, provide the organization with their own demands for services and/or suggestions about existing activities.

b. Participation in community organizing. UCC community organizing activities have often required a fair amount of networking and collaboration with other local and citywide organizations. For instance, safety and crime were relevant community concerns in the recent past, and needed to be addressed with regards to violence in local parks and at the local library. In addition, ethnic conflicts among African American and Latino community teens required that UCC work with local public schools to address the stereotypes associated with violence and ethnic identity/background. Several activities were developed at the local schools, including vigils, basketball games, educational workshops, panel discussions with public officials to inform community residents about violence, ethnic group culture, etc. Some of these activities were developed jointly by UCC staff and school parents and teachers (e.g., Community Forum to Address Ethnic Conflict and the Mothers' March Against AIDS), while others were developed by UCC staff to address community concerns expressed during organizing activities.

Current concerns in the community include: immigration, taxi drivers' health insurance, and cuts in funding for ESL and children and youth services. UCC

believes that networking with other community groups creates a higher level of credibility for UCC interventions and also helps the organization to address time and staffing restrictions.

c. Providing direct suggestions. UCC is proud at stating that they welcome participants' suggestions at all times. The staff and managers have plenty of examples of situations in which they changed a program activity to address a participant suggestion or comment. One example of such member participation refers to the distribution of female condoms in the agency's HIV prevention initiative. At first, UCC (like other HIV prevention organizations) only displayed and distributed male condoms, until one day a female workshop participant questioned why only male condoms were shown if most participants were females. The UCC staff and managers reflected upon this comment and realized their contradiction, which made them obtain female condoms for distribution to program participants.

Another example of participants' direct suggestion is the immigration assistance program, which began after multiple requests from immigrant families, leading to the creation of an advocacy group, several citizenship drives, and initiatives for petitions of family members.

Some of the challenges to addressing participants' suggestions include the limited resources available to UCC that are not 'grant-based', the lack of volunteers who

could assist staff in exploring new venues and strategies, and the fact that most community members have only their churches as institutional links, which limits their ability to network on issues that are not religious-based or supported by their faith organizations.

d. Contributing to *The Link*. UCC members and participants contribute to the agency's newspaper, *The Link*, on a regular basis. In fact, staff strongly encourages specific groups of participants, such as members of the leadership group and interns in the farmers' market, to contribute their views to every issue of the newspaper. In addition, parents and teachers of local public schools, participants in any of the agency's programs, and organizational partners are often asked to contribute to the *Link*.

The newspaper has been a vehicle not only to advertise existing programs or events, recruit program participants, and report on achievements, but also for raising community awareness about a specific topic or concern. For instance, the newspaper has published articles and cartoons discussing transportation problems ("The Misadventures of the #3 Train"), environmental health concerns ("Planting Trees for Better Breathing"), and educational challenges ("High School for Civil Rights Passes First Year") affecting the community.

According to managers from both PSB and NLTA, not only are the target populations of these organizations benefiting from the associations with UCC but

the employees of the organizations are as well. All are eager to continue their collaborative efforts. The effect of this type of community collaboration has been to make all participants more community conscious and responsible. Many feel that their association has resulted in people who are better educated about their health and their lives. They have instilled confidence, developed leadership and peer mediation skills so the people they serve are empowered and know what to do in order to get their needs met. As expressed by an interviewee, *“as UCC assists the people of East New York in expanding their horizons, they are making for a better community.”*

Making for a better community is a high stake for NLTA. In the view of its vice-president, when New Lots Taxi Association transports a passenger it is not just for financial gain. They are providing a quality car service that is reliable and trustworthy at a fair rate to the people of East New York. In addition to providing much needed services to the residents of East New York, NLTA has lent support to many causes by participating in several community-wide events. Taxi drivers have been active in rallies against budget cuts, vacant lots, and building of incinerators; in vigils to stop violence; and in marches to stop the spread of AIDS through community awareness. They have helped in community campaigns or signed petitions demanding socio, economic, and environmental changes in their neighborhood. Most have represented their organizations during street fairs to engage the community at large. Others have chosen to give financial support to community efforts such as a local little league team.

Although participation in and co-sponsorship of community events has also been a practice at PSB, their staff believes that the most important contribution of the agency to its clients relies on the usefulness of their mobile services. Delivering services in a mobile unit, however, requires that the staff actually invests a great deal of time and effort into developing the skills required to contact and engage community members on the streets and/or through organizational sites. An example of the engagement of the body into generating a specific skill is provided by an interaction between PSB staff and a few clients.

While getting ready to co-facilitate a meeting with young members of the leadership group, both program coordinators from PSB were being quizzed by the youth about different aspects of their bodies and clothing. One coordinator was approached by the teens about her vibrant lime-green coat. Some of the comments included, “*Wow, this is cool...where did you get it from?*” “*How much did it cost?*” “*Turn around, let me see the back...*” The other coordinator was examined physically by the teens with regards to her very long French-manicured nails, her dreadlocks, and tattoos. It seems like these interactions function as a sort of ritual through which PSB staff establishes a connection with their target population. Also, since PSB uses the mobile unit as their office space, many clients sit around the unit at the end of the shift to chat with staff – the physical proximity within the small space available might also favor the use of the body as a means of establishing or maintaining relationships.

Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar, in which their position in the objective classifications is expressed or betrayed. (Bourdieu, in Distinction)

Doxa Conditions

Furthermore, Bourdieu calls our attention to certain conditions (or moments) of the fields of action in which there is a coincidence between habitus (individual dispositions) and the structure of the field itself. He calls this condition “doxa,” which he defines as a society taken-for-granted, non-questioned truth. He claims that “doxa” masks the arbitrary nature of social reality by allowing the structure to meet the expectations of individuals.

In the case of immigrant service organizations, these moments of “doxa” could be understood as those in which immigrants practice the cultural traditions of their countries of origin, or the habits of their main reference group (e.g., gay/lesbian/HIV+) as if they could be taken-for-granted. These practices may happen naturally in the fields, despite of how these traditions may be understood by the larger society, and are only acknowledged as ‘special/different’ if or when they are noticed by outsiders.

An example of “doxa” practices at UCC is the sharing of ethnic food during the break of ESL classes. Since classes take place in the evenings, most students have

not had a chance to eat dinner prior to coming to UCC. Unlike the common individualistic tradition of mainstream American classrooms, it is customary for each UCC student to bring something that he/she will share with other students, the teacher, and whoever else stops by. These foods are typically ethnic – tortillas, salsa, Dominican cake, tamarind, tacos, empanadas, etc. With the exception of a few Middle Eastern/Asian students who might be curious and inquire about the foods, nobody seems to notice the ethnic nature of this practice. Even the ESL teachers, mostly White Americans, seem to take for granted that ethnic food will be available during breaks, and some have actually learned to enjoy these snacks.

In addition, UCC also offers an opportunity for preparation of ethnic foods during weekend cooking classes. Many immigrant clients come to UCC on Saturdays to participate in the cooking classes, either by teaching each other how to prepare the ethnic recipes or to share someone else's food tradition with them. The fact that most of these foods are from their countries of origin is a given, and participants enjoy not only preparing the different dishes but also sharing meals with each other, and giving out recipes.

Another form of “doxa” practice at UCC refers to the mannerisms in social relations. During the two evenings per week in which ESL classes are offered, the executive director needs to monitor the front door of the building, since most staff are already gone for the day. She greets all ESL students in Spanish; makes

jokes about their clothing, their hair, and their partners; reprimand them if they are running late; tease their children before they are taken to child care (or she just takes upon herself the responsibility of overseeing the children); and requests kisses and hugs from adults and children alike. None of these practices are perceived as uncommon or inappropriate by the students, whom in fact smile back, greet the director on a similar mode, and give and/or receive kisses and hugs. When asked about these practices and the students' reactions, both the executive director and program coordinator stated that no client has ever expressed discomfort with these practices. In fact, the opposite seems true -- ESL students seem to perceive these actions as a welcoming gesture, making them feel like they belong there.

Along the same lines, UCC promotes musical traditions and dances from different countries during the annual Street Fair/Musical Festival, and also during smaller celebrations at the agency (e.g., ESL end-of-year party, Thanksgiving, Christmas Holidays, etc.). The executive director says that she strongly tries to include music and dance from diverse countries, but that she suffers some pressure from the Dominican clients who want to see more of their own traditions played out. She also likes to use these opportunities to promote knowledge of and familiarity with different cultural traditions without value judgment, "*one culture is not better than the other, and the richness is in the difference,*" she says. According to her, "*the integration of immigrants into a new society requires a constant*

movement of in and out of one's own culture," and she tries to promote that practice at UCC.

At NLTA, similar “doxa” practices based on cultural traditions occur. The association’s base (i.e., headquarters) is located on a store-front building in East New York. The layout of the building includes an office for the dispatcher, one for the president and the vice-president, and a bathroom on the ground floor, a large membership meeting room on the basement floor, and an open backyard. The backyard has multiple uses, according to the vice-president. It is there that the drivers raise and train roosters for cockfights, keep encaged birds, and cook barbecues for members. Although cockfights have been outlawed in the US, they are a common occurrence all over Dominican Republic and Mexico, as popular as bull-riding rodeo activities and very common as late-night entertainment during village fairs and festivities, drawing crowds of men and women alike to place their bets and watch their chosen gamecock either rise to glory or bite the dust. In both countries, cockfights are a legal activity, regulated from a central entity in the federal district which licenses the sponsor and gives them the right and responsibility of assuring the regulations are followed and that order is maintained.

In addition, speaking Spanish is taken-for-granted at NLTA. The drivers communicate easily with one another in Spanish, the dispatcher sends and receives messages in Spanish, the neighboring merchants/vendors commonly used

by members speak Spanish, and the visitors speak Spanish in order to communicate with drivers. When English-speaking customers are picked up, there is very limited communication between drivers and customers (i.e., desired location and fare price). Thus, nobody seems to remember that outside the NLTA people speak English in New York City.

At PSB, 'doxa' practices are a little more centered on issues of sexual orientation and HIV status than nationality and culture. Perhaps because of their service focus, the agency has achieved a great deal of comfort with diversity, especially regarding gay/lesbian/transgender persons and HIV+ individuals from different cultures. There is an active effort to recruit staff members who represent these constituencies, and these staff are not only open about their orientation and/or status but also often participate in agency-wide advocacy committees and/or meetings as advisors because of their orientation or status. According to program staff, *"these practices at PSB are very different from the common practices of gay/lesbian/transgender and HIV+ persons in other environments."*

The pervasive cultural practice at PSB is that of "being cool," and that may mean being unaffected by one's sexual orientation or HIV status, but also by one's nationality, social class, and ability to speak English. The Spanish-speaking staff readily translates to others what Spanish-speaking clients need or ask for, and the English-speaking staff repeats words and/or expresses knowledge of certain expressions in Spanish when dealing with those clients. These practices seem to

be well received by the clients who smile, acknowledge the effort, and obtain needed services. Clients do, however, seem to acknowledge that English is the primary language spoken at PSB, which seems to limit their interactions primarily to the delivery of specific services.

Immigrant Service Environments: A Multi-Faceted Concept

In this chapter, structural and functional aspects of the three immigrant service environments under study are examined. As described above, these environments form unique fields of action for immigrants in East New York. NLTA represents the most ethno-centered of the three environments, where leaders clearly represent their constituents' values and traditions, and are elected by members themselves. The Association is somewhat embedded in the community at large and strives to maintain the positive image they have established in the neighborhood.

UCC combines ethnic values with mainstream practices and beliefs, where leaders represent working- to middle-class aspirations in both the Latino and American cultures. Although UCC offers several channels for community participation in decision-making at the organization, they are strapped for funding and these opportunities have dwindled overtime. Currently, UCC still upholds its history as a community organizing force in East New York, on behalf of the needs, ideas and resources of the community as a whole.

Conversely, PSB represents the most mainstream cultural values of the three studied environments, with leaders revealing a multitude of characteristics and practices reflected in the established American culture, ranging from middle-class to working- and lower-class values and aspirations. The mechanisms for community participation are formally established, and in most cases, issue specific (HIV, sexual orientation). PSB is not embedded in the East New York community, and is granted access through its collaborative relationships with local organizations and groups. The diagram below summarizes the main characteristics of these three environments.

Ranges of Cultural Capital				
Organizational Fields	Cultural Values 1=Ethnocentric 2=Multiethnic 3=Mainstream	Leadership Representation 1=Low 2=Medium 3=High	Community Participation 1=Low 2=Medium 3=High	Community Embeddedness 1=Low 2=Medium 3=High
NLTA	1	3	3	2
UCC	2	3	2	3
PSB/PPNY	3	1	1	1

The findings characterize immigrant service environments as different fields of action in which certain *habitus* are enacted by the immigrant community of East New York. In Bourdieu's view, the notion of habitus eliminates the false controversy between analysis of objective structures and subjective knowledge -- habitus is a schemata of perception, an "appreciation, and action that result from

the institution of the social in the body” (1992: 127). Consistently, the habitus is viewed as constituted by the field in which it is created (i.e. social and economic conditions of existence) and in turn is constituted as meaningful by the schemata of thought embodied in individual agents. It should be noted that, although true to Bourdieu’s conceptualization of cultural capital and habitus, I extend the use of these concepts here to examine immigrant organizational structures and ways of functioning. By virtue of their missions and guiding principles, these organizations attempt to be more inclusive than more mainstream social institutions, thus allowing for practices that integrate varied types of habitus. An examination of the different types of habitus developed in these three immigrant service environments will be the focus of the next section.

B. Immigrant Learning Practices

The previous discussions demonstrate that organizations providing services to immigrants in East New York function as catalysts for a variety of social, economic, and health resources. The overall mission of the three organizations includes the generation of resources (including services, jobs, and educational opportunities), the distribution of these resources among their constituents, and the improvement of the community in which the organizations are located. Specific organizational characteristics such as cultural values, leadership representation, community participation, and embeddedness seem to foment the development of different kinds of habitus which support varying levels of distribution of cultural capital among participants.

Bourdieu maintains that the social construction of reality is not carried out in a vacuum. Cognitive structures have social origins, and the habitus entails these social origins. It refers to deep structural classificatory and assessment tendencies, socially acquired, and manifested in outlooks, opinions, and embodied phenomena such as manner, posture, ways of walking, talking, sitting, spitting, etc. From this standpoint, each individual is equipped with a set of dispositions that is shaped in formative years by their home culture and is modified throughout life, based on his/her experiences. As such, the individual habitus bears affinity to a larger referential group or class habitus – which, according to Bourdieu, may be understood as collective phenomena reflecting group adaptations and adjustments to historical necessities and struggles.

The practices of immigrants in the studied environments reflect these adaptations and adjustments -- perceiving subjects, via the organizing and classificatory principles of the habitus, seem to have a world of common sense that is based on principles from both the society of origin and the new host society. These classificatory principles contribute to the development of a social world that seems self-evident to participants, within which they learn, work, establish social relationships, and challenge and/or support each other.

Organizational principles and habitus

The *modus operandis* of the drivers at NLTA illustrates this process. On a daily basis, drivers come to the taxi base, park their cars, and hang outside the headquarters while waiting for dispatch calls. Most drivers hold coffee on their hands and stand outside the taxi base. They chat with each other and with the salesperson at the bakery next door, check out visitors to the base, monitor the people who pass by, and sometimes play dominos (usually at the end of a slow day). Although this routine might feel idle to many native New Yorkers, the drivers from the NLTA find it absolutely common and familiar. It is also in this context that they develop a sense of membership within the association (e.g., discussing upcoming elections and which candidate best represents their interests), share personal experiences (e.g., how much they make on a given week; a house they may have purchased), and exchange support or information (e.g., about auto mechanic places in the neighborhood or outside).

Since most drivers immigrated to the United States as adults, they had already developed a set of skills or modes of being/behaviors that were common among their reference groups in their countries of origin (i.e., based on gender, education, social class, etc.). Data from interviews with NLTA drivers exemplify how different aspects of cultural capital are negotiated in the context of immigrant service environments such as ethnic groups or associations.

In describing the similarities and differences between values from the home country and values from the host society, *Mario*¹ states that since his immigration to New York, he has always been very busy trying to support himself while studying and trying to learn as much as possible about his new environment. These activities left him with little energy and time to socialize with his peers (i.e., go to bars, dance), or date anybody. He says that his lack of excitement about dating one or several women (as expected by his friends) led to a suspicion about his sexual orientation – most drivers thought Mario was gay. He said he could not tell how many times his friends at NLTA would discuss ‘*gay things*’ (i.e., life style) with him in conjunction with things that Mario did or experienced. He said he did not take them seriously at first, but noticed the tease and the suspiciousness on their part. He affirms he felt a little estranged from his peers at times because of these interactions, and thought he would have to address the issue with the other drivers at some point. During the same period, however, Mario met his future wife and the other drivers began to directly disclose their

¹ To protect the confidentiality of interviewees, all names mentioned here are fictional.

suspicions that he was gay. They laughed about it together, and Mario let the issue pass, resuming his 'normal' interactions with his peers.

Mario attributes the difference in ways of thinking between him and his peers to several things. He believes that his higher level of educational achievement and family background (he has a college degree, is married to a registered nurse, and has a step-daughter in medical school) gives him a way of looking at things ('*way of thinking*') that is different from his peers – "*education opens up your mind, makes you understand that there are different ways of thinking and looking at things. Honestly, dating was not that important to me...*"

In addition, Mario believes that his immigration to the U.S., his marriage, and his children's immersion in the American lifestyle have required an adjustment in his own lifestyle as well. "*I am more liberal now, after I came here,*" he affirms. He thinks his peers are still hanging on to the values of working class men in Dominican Republic – i.e., their routine of life is to work, drink with peers, and date as many women as possible. '*That is what is considered a 'masculine' life style over there,*' he says. Things are different here, '*my wife and children would never accept that,*' he says smiling.

Mario believes that nowadays the drivers are a little more open about sexual orientation issues. He remembers the discomfort most men felt in discussing anal sexual practices and HIV risk, when they attended an HIV workshop a few years ago. He states, '*you see, a man in Dominican Republic (particularly adolescents) might have anal sex, but he would not think of himself as gay, as long as he takes*

on an active [insertive] role. But things are different here... At the time of the workshop, the drivers could not even talk about sexual orientation – they feared that talking about it would be an admission that they had had those experiences before (or even recently during their visits to Dominican Republic).’ Mario thinks that the other drivers have changed because they have learned that they can at least talk about these issues now, despite any prejudices or stereotypes they might still hold about sexual identity and/or gender roles. He accredits these changes, in part, to the fact that NLTA has offered the drivers opportunities to have their beliefs challenged by people who hold different views about these topics.

Ontological Complicity

This interpretation is consistent with Bourdieu’s view of the habitus as a system of dispositions acquired through a relationship to a certain field of action.

According to this approach, the habitus serves to economize psychic energy.

Individuals just need to let themselves follow their own ‘social nature,’ what history has made of them -- that is, to be ‘naturally’ adjusted to the historical

world they are up against. In this sense, the habitus developed at the New Lots

Taxi Association enables a certain collusion of beliefs among its members.

Bourdieu calls this fit (or the sense of being “at home” in a familiar milieu) an

“ontological complicity” between embodied history in the habitus and objectified

history in institutional roles.

Although the habitus developed at PSB seems to enable beliefs and preferences radically opposed to the ones developed at NLTA (at least with regards to sexual identity and gender roles), the same principle of ontological complicity seems to apply. As described earlier, PSB is a program of a larger umbrella organization that is very much immersed in and represents mainstream American values (albeit more liberal ones). As such, values of gender equality and sexual behavior freedom are taken for granted at PSB. It would be difficult for a client of PSB to hold values and beliefs such as those shared at NLTA without being directly challenged by other clients and/or staff. In fact, according to interviewees, having a gay/lesbian/transsexual orientation is so natural at PSB, that individuals can comfortably disclose their identities at the organization and during events in the community “*without having to think about it.*” Furthermore, clients have extended this habitus to other fields (such as religion) through certain practices sponsored by PSB – e.g., transgender clients carry on prayers during PSB events such as the ‘World AIDS Day,’ participate in local church choirs, etc. These practices seem to strengthen a sense of sexual identity as ‘given,’ which does not appear to conflict with the clients’ religious beliefs and/or community practices.

Heterosexual clients also express ways of being and behaviors that are consistent with PSB’s mainstream orientation. In comparing the beliefs and values held at PSB with those held in other environments, a young interviewee from the Caribbean stated, “*We [young women clients] all know that we are the ones who need to take care of ourselves. My mother does not understand that though...She does not understand that she has no say on whether or not I want to date this or*

that guy, want to have sex, want to continue to study or go to work, or about the way I dress myself. She doesn't understand these things because she still behaves the way other parents do in the Caribbean – parents are supposed to decide their children's future. But that is not true about how things are done here...She and I fight a lot because of that.” Cassandra has adopted a physical appearance that is very similar to that of the African-American young women with whom she hangs out at PSB (e.g., hair in dreadlocks or under a straight-hair wig, large golden earrings, long artificial fingernails painted in a variety of ways and patterns, chewing bubble gum while talking, etc.). The way she expresses herself verbally (her English has no foreign accent) as well as her mannerisms suggest little of her Caribbean heritage.

The practices of members at NLTA and PSB suggest different ways of negotiating cultural capital, depending on the field of action created in the environments in which the practices take place. While NLTA members maintain values and beliefs that are more consistent with their country of origin than with their new social milieu, PSB members have crossed that border and seem to sustain beliefs and dispositions that are more consistent with their host country. To a great extent, certain structural and functional aspects of these two environments (as described earlier) promote and support diverse practices among their members and clients.

The phenomenon of ontological complicity seems a little more complex at UCC. Whether we examine the role and history of the executive director or the daily

struggles of program participants, it appears that there is a certain tension in the experiences of these players – it is as if existing forces in the field of action allowed members to develop a common understanding of their experiences and, at the same time, pushed members in different directions. This tension might require the development of new skills and practices, which exemplifies what Bourdieu calls the “generative capacities of dispositions.” The analysis below illustrates this point.

The generative capacity of dispositions

As described earlier, the current executive director of UCC was first hired to the role of community organizer/health educator. Some of the reasons for hiring this staff included her Latino immigrant experiences, her history of community organizing with Latino women, and her public health academic background. These skills and dispositions have been extensively used in the course of the last ten years, and they have allowed the organization to “naturally adjust” to the demographic shifts in the community throughout this period. Throughout this time, UCC has been very effective in securing resources (in the form of government contracts and private grants) to serve Latino immigrants in East New York. At the same time, organizational resources offered the staff possibilities for growth and development, which culminated with her promotion to the position of executive director two years ago. In this sense, the history of the current executive director at UCC is an example of ontological complicity in that it illustrates the embodied nature of her experiences in the organization at the same time in which

it shows her objectified history as the organization's staff and director. These experiences have served both the individual and the organization well throughout these years.

Her current experiences as the agency's executive director, however, show a different level of fit. According to the director, the economic constraint faced by the City and the competition for available resources has intensified after 9/11. In addition, as the availability of community organizing grants dwindled and private donations declined, UCC has been forced to apply for contracts or grants to provide specific services to the East New York community (instead of relying on the more generous donations for operating support, typical of their past). The demands of the new situation have somewhat disrupted the existing level of fit between the director and the organization. Those skills and dispositions of the director that had served her and the organization so well in the past do not seem to perfectly fit nowadays to meet the demands of her new institutional role.

Although the organization still maintains many of its government contracts to provide child care services and English as a Second Language classes, its community organizing component has been reduced by the loss of several grants and lack of success in securing new ones.

The director acknowledges the difficulties faced by the organization at the moment. She attributes them to external economic factors (e.g., reduced available resources), internal economic factors (e.g., reduction in the level of private donations/contributions to the agency due to death of donors or other reasons),

internal structural factors (e.g., the lack of support from the Board, currently comprised of community folks who do not belong to an influential network in New York City), and internal functional factors (e.g., service-based grants do not fund development staff). As a solution, she claims that the organization needs to recruit new board members – i.e., individuals who occupy positions of influence and/or have the financial resources to assist her with fundraising, and increase donations.

We can argue that her new role as executive director requires a set of skills and dispositions that are geared ‘outside’ (to the financial capital of the host society) as opposed to her role as community organizer/health educator, which required skills and dispositions geared ‘inside’ (to the immigrant community of East New York). Unlike her predecessor and former board members, the current UCC director does not share an embodied history in the City’s influential social networks nor does she share an objectified history in its institutional roles. According to Bourdieu, a proper grasp of ‘practice’ or action requires transcendence of dualisms such as structure-agency. In his view, no doubt individuals construct their vision of the world. But this construction is carried out under structural constraints.

The UCC director is currently addressing these structural constraints in different ways. She has engaged the former executive director in networking activities outside East New York, enlisted UCC as a member of United Neighborhood Houses (an umbrella organization for settlement houses in New York City, which

provides access to citywide resources and technical assistance), sought technical assistance for strategic planning from a mainstream consulting organization in NYC, and used personal contacts to reach out to private corporate donors (one of her family members works for the Deutsche Bank and has introduced the director to a few individuals in the financial market in NYC). The demands of her new role have required the director to learn new skills and practices. The fact that she has been able to creatively meet the challenges seems to indicate that these new skills and practices are within her repertoire of capacities in the field of action created at UCC. This ability to create new solutions through active practice is conceptualized by Bourdieu as the generative capacity of dispositions.

...I wanted to insist on the generative capacities of dispositions, it being understood that these are acquired, socially constituted dispositions.... I wanted to emphasize that this “creative,” active, inventive capacity was not that of a transcendental subject in the idealist tradition, but that of an active agent... (Bourdieu, 1990, 12-13)

Duality of experiences

Another example of tension comes from the experience of members and/or program participants at UCC. Members often convey a certain duality of experience. On the one hand, they share values and beliefs with their peers inside the organizational environment which provides them with an intense sense of “belonging,” “being at ease,” “being understood.” On the other hand, they are

exposed to the requirements and realities of the host society inside and outside UCC, which requires constant learning and readjustment on their part.

This is illustrated by the following excerpts from interviews with UCC participants when the issue of language was discussed. Interviewees expressed that speaking Spanish/being spoken to in Spanish within the agency is very important, and provided several reasons for why this is important. At the same time, participants revealed an awareness of the need to learn English in order to adjust to life in the U.S., and open possibilities for future growth and development.

Hablando espanol me hace sentirme comodo porque no he aprendido suficiente ingles [I feel comfortable speaking Spanish because I have not learned English well enough] – (young Mexican female)

Yo siento algo como que tengo mas libertad de expresione si me hablo en Espanol...studio ingles porque no hay nada para uno aqui si el no habla ingles [I feel that I have more freedom of expression if I speak Spanish...I study English because there is nothing for a person here if s/he doesn't speak English.] – (adult Mexican female)

Lo nivel de comunicacion es mejor en espanol...entendo mas claramente las cosas que me hablan [The level of communication is better in Spanish...I understand what I am told more clearly.] – (young Mexican male)

Siento algo como una ambivalencia: es buenoque hablemos espanol aqui...Es mas comodo e me siento entendida. Pero creo que hablar espanol solamente hace la adaptacion de uno en el Estados Unidos mas dificil [I feel something like ambivalence: it is good that we speak Spanish here...It is more comfortable and I feel understood. However, I believe that to speak Spanish only would make one's adaptation in the U.S. more difficult.] – (adult PR female)

Porque hablando espanol en el centro me hace recordar lo significado de ciertos eventos/tradiciones en mi pais, cosas que tienen sentido solamente en espanol. [because speaking Spanish at the Center makes me remember the meaning of some events/traditions from my country, things that only have meaning in Spanish.] -- (adult Dominican male)

These excerpts again seem to refer to experiences that reflect ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ dimensions. While the habitus at UCC is experienced as a ‘safe haven’ where one feels comfortable, accepted, clearly understood, within one’s own cultural traditions, etc., it also allows participants to experience the demands of the world outside that habitus. In a way, these outside demands (e.g., one needs to learn English to have a better chance of integration in the American society) are present at the habitus at UCC, and they require that participants actively create new solutions to address them (i.e., demonstrate the generative capacity of their dispositions – i.e., their ability to learn a new language in this case).

Although some participants will learn English better than others (as well as some will learn about American institutions, the way things work in the U.S., etc. better than others), they all seem aware of the need to learn about these aspects of the host society. The practices of participants at UCC suggest a habitus in which there are adaptations and adjustments – while individuals share a world of common sense based on principles from the home society, they also learn about classificatory principles of the new world. It is in this dual-sided environment (i.e., inside/outside, ethnic/mainstream, Spanish/English) that participants learn, work, develop social relations, challenge and/or support each other.

Bourdieu sees the contextualization of a cultural product (e.g. a spoken language), as the result of an individual's trajectory and strategies in his/her personal and class (collective) habitus in the field of cultural production (e.g., immigrant service organizations) which, in turn, is placed in the larger field of power (i.e.,

larger society). While delineating the complicated interactions in the field, Bourdieu avoids seeing the individual as either forced or autonomous, or society as social apparatus or an aggregate of individuals.

When the habitus created at UCC is compared to the habitus at NLTA and PSB, it is possible to ascertain that the ‘single- or dual-sided’ characteristic of the habitus entails social possibilities and constraints on what is ‘thinkable/unthinkable’ for the immigrants endowed with each particular habitus. According to Bourdieu, while the social constraints of one’s formative environment are inscribed in the habitus, transformation of habitus can result from environmental change (e.g., migration) and/or learning practices (“pedagogic action”) of such a nature as to alter consciousness.

Environment and consciousness

UCC program participants express several examples of practices that potentially alter consciousness. Some of these practices and the ways in which they seem to help participants learn or change their ways are summarized below.

My sister told me about UCC, a place where I could learn English. I came here and met the staff...although I felt comfortable, my main feeling was fear: fear of everything and everybody. For example, if I felt sick, I didn't want to go to the hospital. Little by little, I began to see that things are not 'eight or eighty:' there is some middle ground...I learned to question my own ability to express myself in different ways, I learned to communicate with others and not be so insecure...I learned to say what I think and/or what I want in ways that others can listen...I began to participate in the leadership group and organize activities for other women...I helped the staff during community events...I became a member of UCC. Sometimes I

think that my ability to express myself improved as my English skills developed (although I was shy while speaking Spanish also...). Other times I feel like I have developed as a person: I know more, I like to learn new things, and I want to learn more and do more...My problem now is not to talk too much! The way I feel now reminds me of my youth in Mexico, when I participated in activities to help poor children during major holidays by distributing toys in the mountains through my participation in a program supported by a Carmelite order of nuns... (adult female)

The most important value that I bring with me [from Mexico] is the respect for others, particularly the elderly (e.g., grandparents, uncles) and a sense of equality, justice...These values were passed on to me by my parents, who taught us to ask for their blessings, ask for their permission before making important decisions...I try very hard to pass the same values to my son, and I find it necessary to speak with him in Spanish in order to remind myself of the meaning of certain traditions from Mexico. Here at UCC, I feel these values are present when I speak to other students in the ESL class, to my teachers, or to other women who are older than me. I believe that in my church we also relate to each other this way: there is a strong connection among people, and they call you if you don't show up, etc. At the same time, we know that each person is responsible for him or herself: each one of us needs to be informed and make his/her own decisions. This is a very important message in our HIV peer education work. The situation is very different at my son's school, though: over there, the US values are stronger – it is each person by him or herself...[smiles] But all in all, we need to learn about that too... (young adult male)

At UCC, the staff facilitates client expression through charisma... Sometimes, we get here feeling tired, sad, discouraged. Then the staff, or one of the teachers come in and make a joke, tease you, poke fun out of nothing...That sort of thing encourages you to speak up, talk about your problems, and find solutions. Of course, they also help you with objective things, like immigration papers; petition to get your family here, housing, clothing for children, etc. But I think it is the charisma what really makes us open up, say what we need, show what we do not know, and get help or learn about what to do. That somehow sets the way for us [participants] to relate to one another at UCC. (adult female)

For poor immigrants, language is the main barrier for getting jobs – UCC has helped a lot with ESL classes...There are not too many places in this neighborhood where one can take English classes in the evening...and we work. Besides the classes, UCC offers opportunities for us to share information about a variety of things like where to go for housing, specific health care services (e.g., mammogram), legal assistance (including immigration for sure, but also how to get the landlords to fix our apartments), school for the children, etc. It is a place where we can go to if we have a problem, and the staff will try to help us out. (adult female)

I like the way my teacher challenges us to speak English. She is very understanding when we don't know how to say something in English but, at the same time, she pushes us to speak English most of the time...The way teachers and the other people here treat us is very different from the way people treat us in other places...for instance, my boss at the restaurant used to speak English with me all the time: he made the effort to communicate with me in English and I tried very hard to communicate with him as well. However, once I told him that I was studying English (i.e., actually taking classes), he began to speak with me in Spanish (which he cannot speak very well!). I thought that was strange because I expected the opposite to happen...then I realized that he probably felt a little threatened by my studying English and tried to put me down by showing off his own skills in Spanish with me. Also, by speaking Spanish with me, he does not allow me to practice my English with him...that way I think he believes he will prevent me from getting better and better. (adult male)

I was raised in Mexico by parents who were very strict, particularly my father. He did not allow me to go too far from the house [i.e., limited spatial freedom]: I could only go to church and go out to parties accompanied by my brothers. When I first came to UCC, I did not move around that much: I knew very little of the neighborhood and did not go to Manhattan at all. After a while, I started to participate in different activities sponsored by the center – mothers' march against AIDS, health fairs, demonstrations at City Hall against cuts in funding for child care, political forum prior to elections, etc. Those things made me more familiar with going around, speaking up, fighting for my rights [giggles]. Now I go anywhere -- even if I don't know where something is located, I will find out and go there. It feels good. (adult female)

It is interesting to compare the practices described by UCC participants with those described by members of the NLTA in terms of *'levels of consciousness.'* As previously described, the founding members of NLTA faced strong community resistance at the time when they were establishing the organization. When these members talk about their experiences, they mention the way they sought help and support from UCC and other community organizations, the way they addressed the concerns of community members, the way they strived to succeed, their organizing efforts, their pains while learning about rules and regulations affecting their business, etc. In their descriptions, NLTA members include gender and ethnicity when they analyze stereotypes and prejudices associated with their 'male Latino heritage,' and language when they describe the limitations in their ability to communicate outside their ethnic group. In addition, they make reference to a somewhat limited spatial dimension which seems to encompass primarily the East New York community, while for participants at the UCC this dimension generally refers to the entire New York City or the U.S. as a country.

Furthermore, NLTA members do not perceive their incorporation experiences and struggles as 'political.' According to their view, political aspirations and practices are defined differently in Dominican Republic and in the United States: party politics and representation is emphasized in the former while civil action and participation is encompassed within the 'political' domain in the latter. Since, in general, the worldview of NLTA members is focused on their country of origin; they don't see civil action and participation as political.

NLTA members believe that the political aspirations and practices they had, which were rooted in the Dominican Republic, are now curbed in the United States. Several NLTA members mentioned that “*Dominicans have a strong history of political participation and activism.*” These practices are seen as ‘excluded’ from their realm of experience in the U.S. primarily because of their limited English skills, which makes for their political aspirations [i.e., participation in party politics] to be relegated to the next generations. As stated by one of the NLTA interviewees, *‘we cannot exercise this part [political] of our history here, the history of who we are as people... But our children will.’*

Community participation and community development

The reorientation of social policy to civil society in the U.S. has enhanced the role of the community and voluntary sector in the economy of care. This process is reflected in the growing emphasis on community participation and the incorporation of community development practices in a range of new strategies related to local and neighborhood service provision and management, to local economic development, and to the resolution of ‘community problems’ associated with social exclusion, crime, poverty, housing, environmental degradation, and health (McClenaghan & Robson, 1996b; Cowen, 1999). Marketing forces and contracting arrangements have drawn the community and voluntary sector into the business world, and turned the various forms of caring and altruism into commodities (Drake, 1998). Roles and responsibilities have been reconstituted, transforming volunteers into employees, and community members into

consumers. It is within this context that the transferability and convertibility of informal learning becomes highly significant, not least for individuals, as the members of NLTA, whose motivations for civic engagement relate to their struggle against economic and social processes that have disadvantaged them and their communities.

Limited access to formal educational qualifications, different cultural traditions, and social and financial constraints hamper the NLTA drivers from availing of opportunities where they may exist. It may also serve to exclude not only significant proportions of community members from full participation in socio-economic development processes, but also experienced but formally 'under-qualified' community activist struggling to give voice to different kinds of knowledge and experience concealed by more powerful interests. The awareness of these processes and their likely implications in relation to economic opportunity arising from community action seem to accredit a range of competency-based practices that would encompass informal and prior learning.

In contrast to NLTA, PSB and UCC have emphasized the social benefits of active citizenship for individuals and communities. This emphasis has positioned the agencies in partnerships with local, state, and citywide bureaucracies, and a whole range of other social institutions, broadening the organizations' network structure, facilitating access to social-economic and cultural resources, and building upon existing competencies of their constituencies. At the same time, this process has allowed managers, staff and participants at UCC and PSB to break down

professional demarcations and isolation to accommodate different individual dispositions as well as varying community development functions.

It should be noted that, opposed to NLTA, women comprise the majority of both UCC and PSB member/client population. These women are mainly African-American and Latino immigrants, in their late twenties through early forties, mainly mothers, and mainly unemployed or with odd jobs. Almost all of the interviewed immigrant women have completed high school, and are literate, with a small minority having completed college. Almost all of them plan to go back to work if they can make proper childcare arrangements, or secure legal immigration status. In the main, these women accept and do not question a division of labor in which they assume responsibility for child-rearing and household keeping. Like other women of their generation, many participants have experienced a sense of independence, self-reliance, and of making choices for themselves (and their children) because their experiences demanded it of them. They expressed a kind of hunger and a desire to work hard for a sense of their own worth, knowledge of their competence and growth as effective human beings, new skills, human relations with friends and partners, a sense of being related to exciting new developments in the community. They want to fulfill their responsibilities as mothers and wives, but want more than these roles have permitted them. They also want to grow and be recognized, and to accomplish all this in relation to meanings that make sense to them.

If these meanings can be realized in a process that affirm their roles as mothers and wives, and also met their desires for growth, recognition and social relationships, they are, even if apprehensively, willing to seize their chance. They often tackle challenges to self and to their intellectual and emotional limitations that such processes entail. That includes struggles with husbands or partners who are jealous of their wives' new involvements and wary of their wives' developing assertiveness.

By stressing the understanding and desires of immigrant women, and their responsiveness to opportunities they see, I mean to highlight these women as the collective energy that develop and sustain the community. By affirming this, I do not mean that the men, such as the drivers at the NLTA, are not equally responsive. They too have lived through the experiences that cause them hidden and not-so-hidden injuries based on ethnicity and class. Despite their apprehensions as working class and lower middle class men, they too seek opportunities to develop themselves and their sense of worth, and to be recognized for their competence and their ability to reason and deal with ideas.

A common theme of discussion among the women, however, is how to negotiate the objections of their partners or husbands to their own assertiveness and independence. Some of the women drag, push, and persuade their partners to accompany them to social and community events. They try to figure out ways to limit the nagging and aggravating objections of their partners. And sometimes,

they succeed -- both men and women are able to engage themselves and assume significant civic responsibilities for their organizations and/or their community.

The results analyzed here suggest that immigrants do not necessarily rid themselves of their previous cultural traditions and values, including their languages and gender roles, and adopt those of the host society to take full part in it. Instead, immigrant groups may lean on these unique cultural characteristics to facilitate their adaptation in the new country. Whether culture is an advantage (i.e., it is enacted and transformed to generate capital and/or resources) or a handicap (i.e., it hinders the growth and development of immigrant groups) seem to be associated, at least in part, on whether the environment of immigrant service organizations enables or frustrates the integration and social mobility of their constituencies in the new society.

The idea that language, as at NLTA for instance, can contribute to success by reinforcing ethnic identity and providing access to ethnic resources is consistent with the works of Matute-Bianchi (1986) among Mexican Americans, and Sung (1987) and Ogbu (1990) among Chinese Americans. An important argument of their work is that immigrant groups (i.e., "voluntary minorities") have systems of social relations that are geared to adaptation to a new environment, in contrast with "involuntary minorities" (such as African Americans) whose group identity is geared primarily to coping with racism and institutionalized discrimination. In addition, these authors have highlighted the role of social structures that facilitate

consciousness and action, and how they may contribute to the cognitive development of individuals.

In the context of immigrant language skills, there are two main views: the view that insists that English-language skills compete with non-English language skills, and should therefore be discouraged (Chavez, 1992; Sowell, 1991; Browning, Harley & Rodriguez, 1985; Dillion, 1994); and the view that supports bilingual education programs as ‘crutches’ to enable members of linguistic minorities to overcome their language difficulties gradually and become full members of the mainstream society (Epstein, 1992; Brisk, 1991). The findings that ethnic and language skills offer concrete benefits provide a more secure basis for promoting support for ethnic culture while encouraging the achievement of proficiency in the language, values and traditions of the host society. Furthermore, as suggested by the trajectory of the executive director of UCC, social network and social support systems may provide additional benefits, including health benefits, and are integral components of the sustainability of immigrant service organizations. An examination of the different types of social network and support systems sponsored by each of the three immigrant service environments and their implications for health and well-being of immigrants will be the focus of the next section.

C. Health-Related Organizational Practices

It is generally agreed that social ties play a beneficial role in the maintenance of psychological well-being and physical health. As previously reviewed, psychosocial research in the last decades show an important association between social support and health. Most researchers agree that people live happier and healthier lives when they have access to rich, rewarding, and supportive social relationships. Furthermore, findings from the research exploring the role of social factors in immunity and physical health suggest that diverse ties to friends, family, and community help to reduce susceptibility to a variety of illnesses, being an important factor in maintaining health.

Factors associated with poor health, such as poor access to medical care, risk-taking behaviors, and poor living conditions, are more common among certain economic and ethnic groups than in the population as a whole. While examining health disparities among New York City residents, several researchers (Karpati et al. (2004), Macera et al. (2001), Saegert & Evans (2003)) assert that illness and premature death affect the poor as well as African-Americans and Latinos disproportionately. Health factors related to poverty include: the quality of medical care accessed by the poor, few opportunities for physical activity and good nutrition in poor neighborhoods, low-quality housing (exposing residents to lead paint and other environmental hazards), and low wages (limiting the ability of poor families to access adequate services, including child care).

Beyond economic disparities across racial/ethnic groups -- a higher proportion of Latinos and Blacks are poorer than Whites and Asians (Karpati et al., 2004) -- some of the health factors associated with race/ethnicity include: experiences of discrimination which may result in increased stress and poor physical/mental health, and limited access to a variety of services (e.g., health care, housing, recreation, etc.). Moreover, cultural traditions also play a role in the health of the poor and minorities, since certain normative standards (particularly among recent immigrants) affect behavioral choices regarding, for instance, the type, quality and quantity of food ingested, smoking patterns, health beliefs, and sexual practices.

In this section, I will summarize relevant health characteristics of the East New York population, particularly along dimensions of demographics and health. This summary will then lead to an examination of different health-related practices -- including, health care, nutrition, housing, and reproductive health practices -- within studied immigrant service environments. It should be noted that the distinction between the needs of the people who walk into these environments and the organizational practices they enact is somewhat blurred since the organizations have become what their constituents have made of them. The chapter will conclude with an analysis of the characteristics of social support in each of the immigrant service organizations, focusing particularly on how the organizational context, as field of action, influence, support, and reinforce the relationships established among participants in these environments.

Characteristics of the East New York population

Information from the Census 2000 indicates that approximately 174,000 individuals live in East New York, Brooklyn. This number, however, is not likely to include undocumented immigrants who live in the area. More than a third of the people in East New York are children, almost 90% identify as African Americans and Latinos, and one in three was born outside of the United States -- with the top three countries of origin being Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Guyana (Karpati et al., 2003).

In terms of the vulnerability of the East New York population, Karpati et al. (2003) point out that many residents have not graduated from high school, and about a third live in poverty. The table below² shows specific percentages of residents in each category for both East New York and New York City as a whole.

² Table adapted from *Snapshots from the Census, NYC Community Health Profiles*, Karpati et al., 2003.

Population Characteristics	East New York (%)	New York City (%)
Age		
0-17 years	34	24
18-64 years	59	64
65 years +	7	12
Ethnicity		
Latino	39	27
African American	50	25
White	2	35
Asian	3	10
Other	6	3
Foreign-Born		
Yes	33	36
No	67	64
High-School Degree		
Yes	57	72
No	43	28
Living In Poverty		
Yes	34	21
No	66	79

Health profile

Karpati et al. (2003) also report that about one third of East New York residents rate their own health as “poor” or “fair”. This self-assessment of community residents is consistent with the authors’ overall assessment of the health of East New York residents as compared to 41 other New York City neighborhoods. Their findings indicate that East New York falls among the bottom 10 neighborhoods (below average) in terms of general health, access to medical care, maternal and child health, infectious diseases, and chronic diseases. Furthermore, the overall death rate in East New York is 25% higher than in the City as a whole, with heart disease, cancer, AIDS, and diabetes as the leading causes of death.

In terms of sexual and reproductive health practices, the NYC HIV Epidemiology Program 2nd Quarter Report (April, 2005) indicates that 80% of new HIV diagnoses are among Blacks and Hispanics. The largest increases in new AIDS diagnoses are among Hispanic women (26%) and White men (29%). In 2004, women accounted for 32% of all new HIV diagnoses, with Black and Hispanic women accounting for 82%. Heterosexual practice was identified as the main risk for HIV infection among the women. AIDS was the third leading cause of death for residents of East New York in 2001, and East New York had a death rate from AIDS 95% higher than the rest of New York City, according to the 2003 Community Health Profile report by the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. In 2005, East New York had the second highest rate of people living with HIV in all of Brooklyn and the tenth highest in New York City as a whole.³

Health access and health care practices

In a number of disciplines, there has been growing interest in how different attributes of place impact health. The main argument has been that contextual factors operating within specific environments -- particularly social network and support systems -- have an impact on the health of individuals, communities, and cities. This argument seems especially relevant for cities like New York, where there is a large immigrant population with reduced access to mainstream health-related network structures and support systems. Evidence of reduced access to mainstream health-related services, and/or exposure to unhealthy circumstances

³ NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene. [HIV/AIDS Surveillance Statistics 2004](#), September 2005

and practices, is given by participants in all three studied environments, and is described below.

While discussing health and health care practices, most interviewees from NLTA stated that they do not have a primary care doctor – “*our doctor works in the emergency clinic at Kings Hospital,*” one of them says jokingly. Most drivers do not have health insurance coverage, relying primarily on emergency room services of neighborhood hospitals. Furthermore, the cost of health care imposes further limitations on their ability to regularly obtain health screening (e.g., diabetes, high blood pressure) and other preventive services (e.g., colonoscopy, eye exam).

In addition to financial constraints, most NLTA drivers associate mainstream health care with disease treatment instead of prevention or health promotion – “*I am not sick,*” answers one driver when asked if he has a primary care doctor. This association between mainstream health care services and disease treatment was also apparent among UCC participants. One of UCC interviewees, a pregnant woman in her thirties, did not believe she would need prenatal care until recently. In fact, she found out that she was pregnant when she was referred by UCC to a local clinic for a free mammogram offered during their Women’s Celebration month. A similar reality is experienced by some of the females served by PSB -- they sometimes have their choices limited (e.g., about whether or not to continue a pregnancy or have an abortion) due to late access to care. These examples suggest that mainstream health care is either accessed by chance by the

participants or it is accessed late, i.e., in more advanced stages of their health conditions, when the patient may be sicker or at a higher risk, and the disease may be harder to treat.

The question then becomes whether or not participating in immigrant service organizations help these individuals to take care of themselves and their health, and if so, how. Several interviewees expressed that NLTA is a place in which most drivers discuss their health symptoms and/or concerns with one another, and also where they obtain advice about how to handle these symptoms/concerns, and where to go for help. As stated by one driver, *“you know, we are mostly men here, and we can check things out with each other prior to going to talk to a doctor,”* implying that NLTA is a resource for drivers in terms of health information and discussions about sexually transmitted infections and other sexuality concerns.

Alternative health practices

When asked about how they handle their health problems, one interviewee said that *“most people here [at NLTA] go to the Botanica [ethnic herbal store] first,”* referring to an herbal establishment situated two stores down the block from the Association. He explains that they go there for a variety of health needs, including dermatological problems (e.g., acne, rash), gastrointestinal discomfort (e.g., upset stomach, excessive gas), respiratory tribulations (e.g., coughs, colds, and asthma), relationship/sexual problems (e.g., betrayal, impotence), headaches, and hair care (e.g., thinning hair, oily hair).

The shared belief among drivers seems to be that the Botanica specialist is helpful. She prescribes and/or sells herbs for medicinal tea, homemade creams or lotions for skin and hair problems, special salts (sometimes aromatic) and tonics for headaches, and a variety of other products. Some of these products include castor oil, coconut oil, chamomile, and lavender. It is also at the Botanica that, sometimes, drivers can purchase products from the Dominican Republic that they have used for years to cure some of their discomforts and/or illnesses.

Similarly to NLTA members, most UCC participants indicate partial or complete reliance on alternative health care practices. Only one of the interviewees, a female in her sixties, reported using mainstream health care services regularly, covered through Medicare. This participant, however, also indicated that she uses herbal tea, vegetable/plant roots, and nuts on a routine basis to “*maintain myself healthy*” and/or “*treat minor health problems, like indigestion.*”

Both NLTA and UCC participants seem to share a cultural understanding about the ingestion of certain natural products as a form of health promotion and/or health care. Whether based on myth or reality, they strongly believe that fruits, plants/roots, herbs, and/or vegetables such as carrots, beets, garlic, ginger, chamomile, ginko, ginseng, guarana, eucalyptus, etc. have medicinal effects, and they rely on these products for strength, well-being, and overall health. These beliefs are exchanged with new members as they join the organizations, disseminating and reinforcing this common cultural understanding. In turn, this shared understanding generates practices of health promotion and health care

among immigrants, which are reinforced in the fields of action constituted by immigrant service organizations. Ethnic and community-based immigrant service organizations then seem to serve as the mid-point between these grassroots initiatives (i.e., Botanica, bakery) and larger social institutions (i.e., health clinics, hospitals, universities), facilitating the fluidity with which Latino immigrants access existing health care resources.

These findings are consistent with previous research on the role of folk healers and Botanicas as an alternative health care option among Latinos (Balick & Lee, 2001; Viladrich, 2006). These authors agree that the financial and cultural barriers to health care services faced by this immigrant group reinforce the importance of ethnic stores as part of their health care network. In addition, Viladrich (2006) suggests that the shared healing beliefs become a meaningful means by which Latino immigrants are able to construct a community of interest that goes beyond their individual differences. As she points out, "although botanicas are legal business registered under the rubric of "religious stores" or "candle shops" selling "herbal products", they uncover a surrogate economy in which off-the-book transactions are subjected to informally shared terms within fluid healing networks. To a certain extent botanicas' owners and employees support a parallel network of resources that operates within a labile economy of healing. Healers do not have official degrees, are known by word of mouth, and build their reputation on the basis of their clientele's esteem and popularity (see Bailick et al., 2000). In addition, they work both within and outside a mainstream

capitalistic economy, which helps them support informal healing webs that grant them with social recognition.”

Religious influences on health practices

Furthermore, it should be noted that these ethnic health practices are seemingly reinforced by religious beliefs about the symbolic meaning or effect of fruits, roots, and tree leaves. At the local Botanica store, the researcher found a bag of tea, with the following inscription:

*Aromatic green tea with exotic spices mildly stimulating
A rich, Biblically inspired, aromatic blend of herbal ingredients.*

This description of the tea was followed by a citation from the Bible:

*And the fruit thereof shall be for food and the leaf thereof for healing
(Ezekiel 47:12)*

When a few participants at UCC and NLTA were asked about this Biblical citation on a beverage, they revealed no surprise. On the opposite, most participants said *si, si, claro, este conocimiento es algo muy antiguo, todos lo sabemos...* [Yes, yes, of course, this is very old knowledge, we all know about it]

The participants assured me that the belief about the medicinal properties of fruits, roots, and herbs among Latinos is based on the knowledge of generations of people before us, including the native people of Latin America.

This strong system of belief about the medicinal property of natural products was not as apparent at PSB. Although a few participants share similar cultural health

knowledge and belief systems, an important issue expressed by female participants at PSB was reproductive health. This emphasis on reproductive health might be a reflection of the needs of the population served by PSB -- mostly females and young adults. Moreover, PSB was created to specifically bring sexuality education and reproductive health services to the communities with which it works, reinforcing the relevance of these issues within the agency and among their clients.

Younger participants at PSB expressed concerns about sexually transmitted infections (STIs), the menstrual cycle, pregnancy prevention, and abortion. Most respondents expressed that PSB and UCC were the two settings in which they could learn about and discuss issues related to female anatomy, sexuality, and women's health. According to their reports, schools, churches, and families are not part of their information network, particularly regarding the reproductive health issues that are most relevant to them.

In addition, most participants indicated that they receive health-screening services directly from PSB (e.g., pregnancy, STI, HIV, tuberculosis). According to interviewees, they may be referred to other agencies with which PSB have links for those services not offered at the organization (e.g., gynecology, pre-natal care, abortion). Moreover, PSB provides participants with an array of contraceptive devices, including birth control pills, intrauterine devices (IUDs), diaphragm, male and female condoms; creams, and jellies. In addition to these

contraceptives, PSB may also provide prescriptions for other pregnancy prevention methods.

Bridging cultural traditions

In sum, immigrant service organizations seem to differ on how they bridge ethnic-based beliefs and cultural traditions and mainstream health promotion and health care access. These practices may be influenced by the gender composition of members/participants and the specific needs they bring to the organizations that serve them. NLTA, for instance, offers an environment in which members exchange information and experiences about ethnic-based strategies for overall health promotion and care. Its mostly male driver population perceives and utilizes mainstream health care practices, services and networks as last resources; when and if alternative treatments are not effective. Similarly, UCC offers its mostly adult female participants space for exchanges about ethnic-based strategies of health care, but it also provides a variety of health promotion services (e.g., HIV prevention workshops, cooking/nutritional classes, female hygiene lectures, condom distribution), and acknowledges the need to connect participants with (and it actually provides referrals to) mainstream health care services with a special focus on women's health and wellness. In fact, according to UCC managers, they constantly make a special effort to identify free screening, testing, and health care services in the community to which they can refer their constituencies.

Contrary to NLTA and UCC, PSB does not support alternative strategies of health promotion. Instead, the agency has invested a great deal to provide direct mainstream health promotion, screening, and testing services to the community (particularly female youth) through its mobile units. PSB also provides referrals to other health care facilities through its extensive network of social service and health organizations, mainly for reproductive health care and HIV treatment.

The differences described above could be rooted in the fact that these immigrant service organizations are attempting to meet the specific gender needs of their constituencies. As opposed to PSB which serves primarily females and young adults concerned with reproductive health issues, the NLTA is basically comprised of Dominican males for whom issues of entrepreneurship and labor organizing (Jones-Correa, 1998; Grasmuck & Pessar, 1991) are historically most relevant concerns; or the UCC which, according to its managers, “*serves a mix of males and females concerned mostly with overall survival issues such as learning English, getting a job, securing appropriate housing, and accessing needed health care services*”.

Housing conditions and health

In addition to practices that take place in the three studies environments, immigrant service organizations, particularly multi-service community-based organizations, seem to also play a role in helping participants address health issues related to other environments in their lives (e.g., poor housing conditions, overall air pollution in the community), as illustrated below.

One of UCC participants, a Mexican female in her thirties, was able to secure a copy of her apartment's violation summons that had been given to her landlord. The participant sought help from UCC's Spanish-speaking program director to translate the document. She explained that she and her sister had been struggling to get their landlord to fix a variety of things in their housing apartment, with no success. "*Getting hold of this court order,*" she says, "*will allow us to continue our fight with more bargaining power, since now we are backed up by City regulations.*" Because her English skills were still very limited, she could not quite understand what was listed as violations in the summons.

The court ordered the landlord to fix a wide range of housing-related violations. These violations included: lead paint on the walls, chipped lead paint walls, exposed live electrical wires, missing faucet in the bathroom, leaky faucet in the kitchen, broken wooden portal with sharp edges exposed, extensive presence of mice and other insects, and lack of a working heater. These housing violations posed a serious threat to her health and that of her family.

After translating the document for the participant, the UCC director instructed her about the meaning of the summons, where she should go if the landlord did not fix what was listed, and referred the participant to a housing program in the area for further support. In addition, the director provided an array of health-related information, including the danger of lead paint (particularly for the children), how mice, roaches and other insects might be triggering asthma episodes in children, and how dangerous the exposed live wires are for all residents. She also provided

immediate advice on how to reduce the health-related risk exposure for the whole family (e.g., shutting down electricity in the apartment before securing exposed wires, not touching wires while handling water-related problems, explaining to the children that they should not touch the walls or play with the chipped paint, telling the participant to take the children to play in the park as much as possible, etc.).

According to the UCC manager, this type of problem is unfortunately very common among East New York residents, especially immigrants. In her view, immigrants' housing difficulties are associated with a variety of factors, including their low income (which makes them seek affordable housing), immigration status associated with limited English skills (which makes them fear and have difficulties complaining about poor housing conditions), and lack of knowledge about housing regulations in New York City (which hinders the participants' ability to negotiate better living circumstances). She says that several participants have shared similar experiences, and many have taken advantage of housing programs offered in the area. In fact, she says, with the support of a specific housing program UCC has linkage with, some participants have been successful in holding their landlords responsible for housing violations during legal proceedings, and a few have had their apartments fixed up to livable, healthier conditions.

The UCC director acknowledges that housing is still a big problem among East New York residents, particularly immigrants, having serious implications for the

health of community members. She says that UCC has previously worked on environmental justice issues (e.g., mobilized the community against the installation of an incinerator in East New York) and community development programs (e.g., neighborhood clean up, housing renovation projects, etc.). More recently, their work has focused primarily on air pollution/air quality, urban agriculture, and food cooperative initiatives. Most of these community-based initiatives have been implemented by UCC in collaboration with other community agencies, including the Local Development Corporation, PSB, and NLTA (PSB and NLTA are not equipped to handle social services directly and rely on UCC and other agencies for referrals). The UCC director affirms, however, that in an attempt to better meet their clients' needs, they intend to refocus some of the agency's efforts to address housing more fully in the near future.

Nutrition and health education

The degree to which interviewees in each of the studied environments valued ethnic food and/or healthy eating as an important aspect of their habitus differed. Some included having ethnic foods, such as '*Dominican cake*,' '*pasteles*,' '*pastelitos*,' '*café con leche*,' and '*rice and beans*' as very important to making them feel at home in their environments. Others valued improving eating and exercise habits as important practices. Yet, others emphasized non-nutritional activities such as quitting smoking or reducing stress in their lives, as health practices supported in the three immigrant service environments.

One interviewee, an older Puerto Rican woman, described her preference for '*lo pastel PuertoRiqueno*,' her favorite dish. She claims that '*lo pastel has a high value in taste, is easy to make, you use yucca, arroz con gandules (rice and beans), etc... but it needs to be done in Puerto Rican style, wrapped in a leaf of platanos*' to be really good. When her husband was alive, she used to cook more of these kinds of food but things have changed after his death. Although she has taken ethnic food to her children's school regularly, her daughter does not like to cook and, "*the tradition is lost,*" she says.

Consistently, this participant has brought roasted pork, Puerto Rican style, to UCC parties many times. She believes her food tradition is highly valued at UCC, but not in the community at large or the US as a whole – "*people put Puerto Rican food down,*" she says. In California, where son lives, she cannot find Puerto Rican food at all, only Mexican, she affirms. In East New York, she believes that many Blacks don't like Puerto Rican food. As a consequence of this cultural devaluation, she thinks that although most participants still maintain their food traditions at home and at UCC, they do not necessarily do so in other public spaces.

As opposed to NLTA and PSB, UCC offers nutritional seminars and cooking classes to its members. These programs provide an opportunity for health education within the cultural context of the participants, i.e., in accordance to the practices they already have in place. Furthermore, UCC's urban agriculture

program reaches out to youth and adult community members, educating the community about the nutritional value of different products, making nutritional products locally available, and lowering the cost of fresh, organically grown food in the community.

According to program staff, some general points have surfaced during discussions about nutrition and dietary guidelines with UCC participants. These include: a) participants need to apply the guidelines to their individual lifestyles, and educators should not assume that they engage in negative behaviors; b) participants follow recommendations if they feel they can trust the source; c) participants often express confusion about various healthy eating recommendations and terms, even those they have heard before; d) additional information is frequently requested but it needs to be simply stated and meaningful to participants.

These points seem consistent with Bourdieu's assertion that the habitus functions as the practical generative source of a universal capacity such that individuals act inventively when they encounter conditions identical or analogous to those producing the habitus in the first place. Capacities to *size up* a social situation and produce an appropriate innovation such as a new recipe derive from a particular habitus. Bourdieu (1990) says that "agents to some extent fall into the practice that is theirs, rather than freely choosing it or being impelled into it by mechanical constraints" (p.90).

Social support

Social networks refer to social relations and their morphological and functional characteristics. The form with which social relations structure daily behaviors and are mobilized in specific circumstances, characterizes the social integration of an individual. Social support, however, is usually focused on social practices among individuals, and is categorized according to its instrumental, emotional and informational functions. Social support is understood here as social practices that are made possible and shaped by the habitus of individual participants within specific social networks/environments.

In this section, an attempt will be made to specify the predominant types of social support derived from each immigrant service environment. It should be noted that the distinction between support from peers and support from the organizational settings is not the main objective of this study and, in fact, it is considered somewhat artificial in this context. As illustrated below, different types of support are available from different social interactions at immigrant service environments, depending on the needs of their constituencies, the characteristics of the organizations, and the types of practices established within each of those environments.

Instrumental support

At NLTA, participants depend on each other for survival or to build a living. Despite disagreements and competition, this interdependence seems to foster cooperation practices among the drivers. Their cooperation is expressed primarily by sharing instrumental support – including financial assistance, signaling each other for distress calls, helping each other fix something in their cars, borrowing each other's cars, accompanying someone for needed services, and performing translations. According to the vice-president, although instrumental support is most pressing, emotional and informational exchanges among members also occur, and are relied upon by the members, particularly informational support, which helps them deal with issues that affect their daily lives (e.g., information about City regulations, housing, etc.).

Emotional support

Similarly, UCC participants exchange different levels of support amongst themselves and with staff. In general, the overall welcoming attitude of staff is viewed by participants as more important to their well being than the ethnicity of the staff. As stated by a participant, *'although ethnicity facilitates the initial contact, an attitude of respect and patience (expressed by the way of greeting, listening, and/or answering to what participants have to say or need) is what really matters.'*

The environment at UCC is perceived as one that provides for companionship, understanding, and identity affirmation. As expressed by a participant, certain practices -- *la amabilidad, salud mutual siempre que se encontra uno con el otro; el tener una sonrisa en la cara; el hecho de que uno se saluda ao encontrarse; el espirito de ayuda entre nosotros* (the personable/friendly nature of people; having a smile on our face; the fact that people greet one another every time they meet, the spirit of help and support between participants and staff) puts people at ease during the first contact of an immigrant with the agency.

These practices confirm the view that a supportive relationship is one in which individuals are attuned to each other's needs to express a particular identity or aspect of their identity at a particular moment. At UCC, being supportive means affirming these expressions of the Latino identity as valid and appropriate in an ongoing way, through casual, day-to-day interactions. In addition, participants believe that the overall attitude of UCC staff sets the tone for how participants keep their relationship going among themselves. These relational practices seem to highlight how UCC foments an environment in which emotional support particularly is exchanged among staff and participants, as well as among the participants themselves.

Informational support

At PSB, participants often refer to the easy access to and quality of the information about specific health resources (e.g., mammogram, diabetes screening, pap smear, health insurance, health care referrals). Because the organization focuses on providing local services through its mobile unit or providing referrals to other providers, PSB foments high levels of information exchange among its members and staff. This practice contributes to the participants' perception of PSB as a solid source of informational support.

In addition to providing access to needed resources and information, the social support exchanged at immigrant service organizations is invested of importance because of its resulting feeling of acceptance, love, and valuation among immigrants in the absence of the former familial and social relations from the home country. The feeling of belonging to groups where communication and reciprocity are exchanged without (or with low) stress seem to result in decreased isolation and anonymity for these immigrants. It seems that a crucial role of immigrant service organizations is to facilitate the development of new social relations among recent immigrants, at the same time in which the organizations respect the individual choice inherent in each person's life project.

Overall, the findings presented here suggest that the social-demographic and cultural make up of immigrant groups in New York City promote a variety of daily practices that are not integrated into health education and health promotion

efforts, contributing to health disparities. The daily practices of immigrants in each studied environment reflect their adaptations and adjustments to life in the new country, and their health-related practices follow suit.

In general, the interviewees conveyed a message of assimilation that is ambivalent, at best. Rooted in their cultural trends and preferences while facing a social reality of poverty and exclusion so common during migration, participants revealed both an acceptance of and a resistance to the transformations in their lifestyles. They share a world of common sense that is based on belief systems from their societies of origin. At the same time, however, they are influenced by principles from the host society and learn how to *play the game* from their position of exclusion (e.g., to use emergency room services when one doesn't have health insurance; to use Botanica products to promote health and well being). These classificatory codes (i.e., old beliefs, new principles) are enacted at immigrant service organizations and contribute to the development of a social world that is accepted by participants, within which they learn about health-related issues, establish social connections, and inform and/or support each other.

Supporting diverse cultural frameworks

As stated by Fukuyama (1999), supportive relationships are an important part of the process through which people create and transform cultural frames of reference. When a person acts in supportive ways, s/he also sends a message about how s/he would like others to perceive the social context around them. The

support provided to participants by the staff at UCC, for instance, illustrates how social relationships tend to be perceived as supportive when various aspects of the context of the participants' relationships are in sync with one another (e.g., language used, facial/body expressions, and gestures). The findings presented earlier illustrate how different immigrant service environments promote and/or support diverse cultural frames of reference and practices, and how these practices affect the health and well-being of the immigrants they serve.

The findings also suggest that individually owned ethnic businesses (e.g., Botanica, Bakery), which are not usually categorized as part of the immigrant service network, play an important role in the health practices of immigrant communities. Although these businesses are not necessarily membership or client oriented, they offer direct services (e.g., alternative medications, nutrition), culturally-defined spaces for networking (e.g., taxi drivers holding conversations and exchanging information at the local Bakery while waiting for a call from the dispatcher), and significant opportunities for the exchange of resources (e.g., buying and selling of products (including medication, automobiles and real estate), finding jobs, housing, etc.). As such, these spaces represent unexplored spaces (and missed opportunities) for health-related interventions among immigrants.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion and Conclusion

As previously stated, the overall goal of this dissertation study has been to analyze processes of reproduction and transformation of culture in immigrant communities. This research is focused on social-cultural practices that take place in immigrant service environments, which may mediate the immigrants' ability to learn, support themselves, and/or assimilate into the new culture.

An immigrant's original culture consists of an entire way of life, including languages, ideas, beliefs, values, behavioral patterns and all else immigrants bring with them to their new country. This way of life is likely to persist and reproduce itself in the social field of immigrant organizations, following a process of production (i.e., dispositions to action) and consumption (i.e., classification schema) while individuals learn new cultural patterns in these environments. Bourdieu's cultural capital theory offers a conceptual framework for the examination of these processes of reproduction and transformation of culture among immigrants. An important principle of his theory is that our cultural inheritance can be translated into social resources (things like wealth, power and skills) and the cultural capital we accumulate since birth can be "spent" in the social system as we try to achieve things that are considered to be culturally important (e.g., educational qualifications, status, institutional membership, and participation).

The findings presented here illustrate how the experience of recent U.S. immigrants – especially those from a Latin background -- requires further understanding, as people struggle to maintain a sense of themselves and their cultural values while adapting to new geographic, socio-economic, and cultural environments in the United States. Cultures are not fixed in place. It is well acknowledged that all associations of place, people and culture are social and historical creations to be explained. It is these creations, rather than pre-conceived cultural-territorial formations, that are studied here.

Intermediate-level social institutions

The analysis of selected immigrant service sites as fields of action generated information that is consistent with main arguments of the literature on immigration. Structural and resource-based arguments propose that factors both macro and internal to immigrant groups influence these groups' self-definition and identification processes, their ability to organize and support members of their community, the strength with which they attach to ethnic traditions, and the socio-cultural practices of their members. Combined, study results suggest that immigrant service organizations constitute an intermediate-level of social institutions, linking practices of grassroots Latino immigrant enterprises (e.g. Botanicas, bakeries) with those of larger social institutions (e.g., hospitals, universities, government agencies). These organizations form unique environments within which Latino immigrants in East New York not only define

and redefine themselves as individuals; but also seize existing opportunities for survival, learning and development, and well-being.

In this chapter, I will first discuss findings from organizational assessments, with a particular emphasis on how immigrant service organizations constitute intermediate-level social institutions, or fields of action where rules and practices are outlined, influencing the development of immigrants' skills or dispositions (*habitus*) to assimilate into the American society. Secondly, I will discuss how immigrant groups lean on their unique cultural characteristics to facilitate their adaptation in the new country, and the social benefits of active citizenship for individuals and communities. Following Bourdieu (1977), I will stress the active practices of social agents, who do not simply enact culture but reinterpret and reappropriate it in their own ways in different time and space. Thirdly, I will argue that the different types of social network and support systems sponsored by each of the three immigrant service environments have important implications for the health and well-being of the immigrants they serve, and that supportive relationships are an important part of the process through which people create and transform cultural frames of reference.

1. Immigrant service environments as intermediate-level social institutions

Overall, the findings presented here suggest that immigrant service organizations share with other social institutions the function of reproducing general

knowledge, vocabulary, and information that are consistent with mainstream cultural traditions of the host society. At the same time, through various structural and functional practices, these organizations allow for the agency of their constituencies in diverse ways, offering opportunities for learning through ordinary activities at the same time in which they facilitate the practices of individuals to reproduce and change their specific cultural material contexts.

Three interrelated practices of immigrant service organizations -- flexibility of structure, representation of target population and participation in organizational life, and linkage to larger social institutions -- seem essential for the integration of immigrants as competent social agents in their new environment. These practices are discussed below.

1.a. Flexibility of structure and leadership

Overall, founders of the studied organizations were motivated into action by a convergence of needs – their own and/or that of other members of their community – and shared democratic principles. Over time, in addition to specific services, each immigrant service organization studied also began to deliver other types of assistance to the community. The notion of quality services meeting the needs of community members and delivered in the community was prevalent across immigrant service environments. As previously described, the three studied immigrant service organizations range along a continuum in terms of

flexibility of structure, according to which the roles of manager, staff, and client are interchangeable, and role definitions such as “participants”, “members” or “clients” are desirable.

In Bourdieu’s view, the structure of a field is determined by the position of players in the field, and this is determined by the overall type of capital that each player has. Capital, in his terms, is whatever has an effect, existing and functioning in relation to the field. According to this perspective, the findings suggest that in the field of immigrant service organizations, the more ethnic an organization is, the more its members struggle to conserve or transform what counts as capital by diluting formal role definitions and the hierarchy they imply and sustain. From a practical standpoint, at NLTA for instance, what counts as capital is a readiness to respond skillfully to the ever changing need of their constituencies, not the transitional role of president, vice-president, or dispatcher.

According to Bourdieu, it is through the field of action that each form of capital becomes efficient. The implication is that something counts as capital to the extent that possessing it incurs an ability to use it (i.e., to access profits specific to the field). The ways in which country of origin, language spoken, and level of education or job experience affect the relationship among members of the NLTA (and their relationship with the host society) provide good examples of this practical, applied aspect of cultural capital among immigrants. In the words of its president, “*the NLTA has been a niche for male Dominican immigrants to learn*

about the way things work here in the U.S., share information, and socialize with each other. It is clear, however, that the most important thing for all of us is to make a living. In that sense, we will do whatever it takes to maintain our ability to do that.”

The findings suggest that, contrary to mainstream social institutions, the structure of players at immigrant service organizations also tend to accommodate some level of flexibility to reflect organizational practices over time. At UCC, for instance, organizational members initially have a much more influential role in decision-making, from electing the board of directors to carrying out policies and daily programs. Over the years, the organization has lost some of its most affluent members and the resulting structure does not differentiate members from program participants. Although registered organizational members are notified of and invited to participate in membership meetings, program participants and influential members of the community at large are also invited. The executive director believes that a shift from a community-organizing to a service-oriented organizational approach has made the organization equally accountable to its members and the community at large. This example suggests that changes in decision-making practices at immigrant service organizations may ultimately lead to changes in the organizational structure (e.g., by-laws) to reflect the new reality faced by these organizations. Moreover, as illustrated by the case of UCC in East New York, practices that take place in immigrant service environments can potentially promote the participation of different segments of the community,

mobilize community members to participate in advocacy and/or other policy-related activities in the host society, and offer an important channel for the involvement of isolated community members in civic society.

Opposite to NLTA and UCC, PSB illustrates an immigrant service environment that adopts a clearly hierarchical structure, with no membership composition. The president of the umbrella organization (Planned Parenthood of New York City) oversees the different satellite sites, including PSB in East New York. Each satellite site has its own internal staffing structure to provide services to clients and supervision to staff but is restricted by overarching organizational protocols and regulations.

The hierarchical structure exemplified by PSB has its advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, satellites of larger, multimillion, citywide organizations rely on expansive resources that allow them to provide a wide range of needed services to the community. On the other hand, the headquarters' protocols guiding the provision of these services, materials used, and the local staffing structure imposes a unidirectional (i.e., top-down) quality to the relationships among clients, staff, and managers. An example of this constraint is given by PSB staff who cannot make changes in written materials locally without undergoing a full approval process with its headquarters, which interferes with the local staff's exchanges with the community. To compensate for these barriers, PSB ensures that representatives of their target populations are hired by the

organization to provide direct services to the community. Also, a select group of clients (primarily HIV+ individuals, gays and lesbians) are members of the advisory board of the organization, bringing up issues that are important to the community during quarterly meetings at the umbrella organization.

Although varied, structural and functional features of immigrant service organizations are based on values that guide and support the practices of leaders at these environments, establishing the *rules of the game* in each field. These values become an integral part of the field of action within which immigrants will redefine themselves, learn new skills, and develop social relationships. Next, we will discuss some of these values and the questions they raise.

As seen in data from interviews with staff, an important value at immigrant service environments is to hear what others need and want without imposing one's own views on them, whether they are board members, staff, and/or participants or clients. This ability to listen and empathize with others seems to characterize the practices of individuals at immigrant service organizations, no matter what organizational role they play. Since both members and leaders perform a variety of roles on a daily basis, including manager, advocate, organizer, member, fundraiser, and direct service provider, these findings raise the question of what type of leadership characteristics (or combination of) would be ideal in order to achieve desired outcomes among this population.

Furthermore, immigrant service environments are characterized by a wide diversity of participants. Since these organizations usually serve multiple generations of immigrants and are characterized by a variety of programs for diverse populations, they are places where interactions with people who differ on the basis of age, socioeconomic status, race/ethnic background, sexual orientation, disability, and educational level is common. If, on the one hand, this diversity is an example of strength of immigrant service environments, on the other hand, it is likely to require an optimum level of skills among members and leaders that need to be further explored.

By definition, jobs at immigrant service organizations require flexibility and a willingness to work outside of one's job description. As exemplified by the professional experiences of UCC's executive director, this is a challenge; but these experiences can also lead to professional growth and career development. Often, members and staff of immigrant service organizations are faced with new situations and on-the-job challenges that push them towards learning new skills. An exploration of the potential benefits of technical assistance and other types of help might mitigate the stress among staff, increase their levels of skills, and avoid burn out.

Despite their limitations, immigrant service environments seem to use these values as a guide to encourage their members, participants, and staff to develop the commitment for and create the necessary changes towards a better, more

equalitarian and productive community. These efforts are essential for the integration of immigrants as competent social agents in the new society.

1.b. Immigrant representation and participation

The process of providing representation to any community is complex and has several components. Overall, the studied organizations reveal high levels of integration of immigrant populations among their members, staff and/or managers. This integration and the values they embody seem to allow immigrants to freely express themselves in their native tongue, to earn a living, to access needed services, and to relate to each other in ways that are consistent with their cultural background. At the same time, these immigrants learn new concepts, take new actions, and adopt new ways of thinking consistent with their new society. This dual dynamics and the practices they entail seem to facilitate the distribution of cultural capital and the consequent integration of immigrants in the host society.

As exemplified by NLTA, the most ethno-centered of the three studied environments, practices based on ethnicity are an important facet of representation and participation for immigrants, and are not necessarily in total contradiction with American mainstream values. At NLTA, Dominican leaders (elected by members themselves) share nationality and language with their constituents, in addition to upholding similar cultural values and traditions. To a

certain extent, the ethnocentric practice at NLTA turns the Association onto itself, sacrificing stronger embeddedness in the community and an easier integration of the drivers into society at large. Nonetheless, this shared ethnicity gives drivers a sense of identity and collective strength that allows them not only to earn a living for themselves and their families, but also to maintain a positive self-image in the neighborhood and to support different community actions, while providing needed transportation services to community members. These functions are very much aligned with the functions of nonprofit organizations in American civil society -- i.e., the realm of private voluntary associations, from neighborhood committees to interest groups to philanthropic enterprises, that have come to be seen as an essential ingredient in both democratization and the health of established democracies (Walzer, 1992). In this sense, NLTA foments values and practices that represent Dominican taxi drivers in a manner that is consistent with the democratic practices of the host society.

Furthermore, the Association provides an outlet for political actions, even if the participants do not define or recognize these actions as political. For instance, NLTA drivers strive for better work regulations and conditions, and they fight for their rights as immigrant workers through participation in community marches and demonstrations, signing petitions, and meeting with City officials to advocate for services, and/or more community resources. It is very unlikely that these practices would be a part of the drivers' experiences in the United States if it were not for their participation in the NLTA or similar environments.

In a more comprehensive manner, multi-service immigrant organizations such as UCC tend to combine ethnic values with mainstream practices, where leaders and members hold aspirations consistent with both ethnic and American cultures. The Latino background of the current executive director of UCC (including her ability to speak Spanish fluently) combined with the skills she carried over from her professional experiences in Peru, exemplifies how one's own cultural capital can be made effective in a new environment. The director has been able to turn her cultural heritage into an effective resource to meet the demand of the organization's board of directors to reach out to the newly arrived Latinos in East New York. Using her shared cultural background; the director not only facilitates access of target groups to services but also makes the organization more attractive to funders by organizing ethnic-based advocacy groups and other community actions. These practices are consistent with Bourdieu's view that cultural capital only counts if it is effective within a certain field of action.

Despite being currently strapped for funding, UCC still offers diverse channels for community participation, programmatically (through the provision of a variety of education and health services), culturally (through the promotion of an assortment of events focused on arts, music, food, and crafts from different nations), economically (through skills-building and job preparation efforts), and politically (through the sponsorship of a myriad of advocacy efforts; community forums, demonstrations, and marches; and on-going networking encounters with elected officials and other City representatives). These practices occur in a field

characterized by a friendly, informal atmosphere established on the basis of ethnic background, Spanish-speaking communications, and a shared history of migration and/or oppression.

By contrast, PSB illustrates the practices of more mainstream immigrant service environments, with leaders revealing a multitude of characteristics reflected in the established American culture, ranging from middle-class to working- and lower-class values and aspirations. Because satellite organizations such as PSB need to follow protocols recognized by their headquarters, the mechanisms for community participation are formally established and, usually, these mechanisms mirror the hierarchical structure of the organization. In some cases, as exemplified by PSB, these immigrant service environments mobilize to address a specific issue (e.g., HIV/AIDS, immigration, housing) of concern to local communities, and thus are required to adjust some of the characteristics of their structure to provide appropriate services.

For instance, PSB is granted access to community networks through its collaborative relationship with local organizations and groups. To ease their access to these local networks and engage community members into programmatic activities, PSB adopts a policy of hiring representatives of their target populations – i.e., HIV+, gay and/or lesbians, youth, immigrants – and/or individuals with specific language skills (e.g., Spanish-speaking, Creole-

speaking) to fulfill specific direct service lines, and facilitate the engagement of particular clients they have been funded to serve.

Opposed to NLTA and UCC, language is not an essential requirement of staff at PSB. Although a few current staff members speak Spanish, this language skill is not as valued as her “cool” physical appearance. This appearance is what is believed to enhance the staff’s ability to communicate and contact with different constituencies, especially youth, cutting across ethnic lines. A common understanding about the engagement of community members in programmatic activities at PSB is that these individuals often work outside mainstream social institutions, and commonly serve as connectors between populations that have been traditionally underserved and mainstream providers. In fact, community members working for PSB often bring issues up to the attention of organizational headquarters, assisting with the identification of hot-button issues, access to hard-to-reach sub-groups, and the prioritization of community service needs. The hiring of community workers is not a simple task, however, particularly in immigrant communities. Uneven program effects and high levels of frustrations experienced by community members (and providers) suggest that such an effort must be thought out carefully.

While most discrete services provided by immigrant service organizations are common to non-immigrant environments, participants in immigrant organizations bring with them specific service needs and challenges that need to be addressed.

As previously discussed, some of these needs include non-English language skills, lack of knowledge about social and health services, cultural barriers to care, unusual methods of service utilization, and particular financial constraints. While most organizations treat discrete needs, immigrant service organizations also help participants to negotiate existing bureaucracies and mainstream institutions. In this sense, they help immigrants learn about the service infrastructure, and how to negotiate the City's social and service infrastructure more fully. This should not be understood only as a process of acculturation but rather as a complex process of adapting to a new environment while simultaneously retaining elements of practice and action that emanate from the rules, practices, and cultures of their countries of origin. In sum, the findings discussed above characterize immigrant service environments as fields of action in which certain *habitus* are developed and/or enacted and/or changed by local immigrant communities.

1.c. Service access and linkages to larger social institutions and systems

Beyond providing representation to the immigrant community and opportunities for participation to its members, the three studied organizations also illustrate how immigrants can be organized to influence service access, availability and utilization. Community building and service advocacy efforts (particularly in the areas of immigration, education and health) are somewhat common practices undertaken in immigrant service environments.

Previous research suggests that the poor and immigrant families suffer more from the differential distribution and valuing of capital, particularly in terms of health and educational achievement, than their more affluent counterparts. Overall, the findings indicate that immigrants, particularly poor immigrants, often take the blame for their relative failure within the new social system, without considering the situational constraints that hinder their assimilation into mainstream society. The low level of educational achievement of drivers at NLTA (which creates literacy challenges for learning English and other skills, limiting their integration in different sectors of the larger society), and the low wages earned by most immigrants served by UCC and PSB (which limits their ability to access safe housing, health care, and daycare services) suggest some of the effects of differential distribution of capital.

The community-building practices of immigrant service organizations, however, appear to mitigate these detrimental effects of differential distribution of capital. Frequently, participants in these organizations are offered opportunities to organize and/or take actions in a way that values the forms of cultural capital they bring with them from their home countries or those they develop at the organizations themselves. For instance, the administrative practices at NLTA illustrate how organizational experience is an important form of capital -- members are elected to perform administrative functions on the basis of the trust they have on each other's ability to understand the rules of the world outside the Association, to obtain information about new regulations affecting their

Association and how to meet them, and to negotiate with larger social institutions on their behalf.

Similarly, the experiences of program participants at UCC exemplify how immigrant service environments serve as the ‘entrance door’ for accessing a myriad of services that mitigate the needs of individuals and families. For instance, participants in the HIV prevention program are also offered immigration services (e.g., citizenship drive, family petition services, etc.), free TB screening, and referrals for housing placement, job training, and other activities.

Moreover, this service access is essential for community organizing among immigrants as well as for health promotion efforts. For example, through their participation in the English as a Second Language classes at UCC, immigrants are also invited to sign petitions and/or participate in demonstrations requesting that ESL funds be maintained at the federal level, and to organize and/or participate in health campaigns such as the Mothers’ March against AIDS.

PSB represents yet another level of service access and linkage to larger social institutions for immigrant communities. Its network infrastructure and level of resources allows the organization to bring mainstream services to local neighborhoods through their mobile unit. The agency’s ability to transport clients across different service locations, to provide varied health screenings, and to offer multiple crisis intervention services makes it a needed provider to local immigrant

groups. Moreover, immigrants bring their own needs to the table, increasing awareness of their issues and concerns among managers of the citywide umbrella organization.

In addition to providing access to and opportunities for participation in their own programs and services, immigrant service organizations also connect their members to the larger infrastructure of social services, educational institutions, and health care facilities. An important implication of these practices is the resulting network that is formed between grassroots Latino immigrant enterprises (e.g. Botanicas, bakeries), the various types of immigrant service organizations, and larger social institutions (e.g., hospitals, universities, government agencies).

Because of the multitude of needs of their target population, immigrant service organizations promote an integrated model of service delivery. By providing services to different members of the same family or to meet different needs of the same person, immigrant service environments promote a view that does not categorize people into distinct problems. For instance, if a person is homeless, he/she might also need English as a second language classes, legal services, entitlement counseling, and job training in addition to housing. And, the fact that these different services can be accessed with the assistance of staff or peers at immigrant service environments may improve this person's access to needed services, and his/her ability to feel whole again.

2. Socio-cultural influences on adaptation to the new country and active citizenship

As previously acknowledged, immigrant groups lean on their unique cultural characteristics to facilitate their integration into civil society in a new country. They bring with them a wide range of experiences – e.g., collective action for community development, social justice movements, and political democratization – which influence their decisions about who to work with and how to build their lives in the U.S. The findings discussed here are consistent with Bourdieu's (1977) view that social agents do not simply enact culture but reinterpret and reappropriate it in their own ways in different time and space.

Often, Latino immigrants find themselves excluded – economically, socially and politically – both in the United States and in their countries of origin. Commonly, they work in labor markets that are ethnically segregated, which consigns them to the bottom levels in terms of civil engagement and participation. In the social sphere, beyond the recognized set of obstacles that confront Latino immigrants, especially those without documentation, they also face ingrained racist attitudes and discrimination from other ethnic groups as well as from members of the dominant society. In the dominant political culture, these immigrants are perceived as less than full citizens, which allow governments to resist regularizing the status of millions of individuals now residing in the U.S.

In face of this reality, Latinos as well as other immigrants to the U.S., have developed a variety of assimilation strategies over time, including the development of civil society, voluntary organizations, including ethnic-specific associations (e.g., neighborhood groups, cultural clubs, community leagues, etc.) and coalition-building organizations (e.g., financial/trade entities, multi-service organizations, lobbying groups, network agencies, etc.).

Currently, there is a growing emphasis on community participation as a strategy for local economic development, and for the resolution of community problems associated with social exclusion, poverty, housing, and health. Marketing forces have turned the various forms of caring and altruism into commodities. It is within this context that the transferability and convertibility of informal learning at immigrant service organizations becomes very significant, not least for individuals as the taxi drivers of NLTA, whose motivations for civic engagement relate to their struggle against economic and social processes that have disadvantaged them and their communities for some time.

Limited access to formal educational qualifications, different cultural traditions, and social and financial constraints hamper immigrants such as the drivers at NLTA from availing of opportunities where they may exist. It may also serve to exclude not only significant proportions of community members from full participation in socio-economic development processes, but also experienced but formally 'under-qualified' community activist struggling to give voice to different kinds of knowledge and experience concealed by more powerful interests.

Awareness of these processes and their implications in relation to economic opportunity arising from community action requires the recognition of a range of competency-based practices that encompass informal and prior learning enacted by immigrants. As illustrated by the drivers at NLTA, notions about one's country of origin has often served as symbolic anchors of community for immigrants. The concept of homeland, for example, remains one of the most powerful unifying symbols for immigrants. As such, ethnic associations like NLTA seem to provide a channel for civic participation and community organizing among those most at the margins of society.

In contrast, immigrant service organizations such as UCC and PSB seem to strongly emphasize the social benefits of active citizenship for individuals and communities. This emphasis has promoted partnerships among these organizations with local, state, and citywide bureaucracies, and a whole range of other social institutions, broadening the organizations' network structure, facilitating access to social-economic and cultural resources, and building upon existing competencies of their constituencies.

At the same time, this process has allowed participants in these organizations to break down professional demarcations and isolation to accommodate different individual dispositions and identities as well as varying community development functions. The newly appropriated identities that emerge in the process of migration create new opportunities for collective action that are expressed in a variety of civic and political actions which might differ from their actions in their

countries of origin. In addition, individuals who might have come from rival countries or regions develop a sense of solidarity through their shared experiences of class and/or ethnic exclusion as immigrants.

Overall, findings from this study suggest that immigrants tend to maintain their previous cultural traditions and values, including their language skills, while adopting those of the host society. The idea that language, as at NLTA for instance, can contribute to success by reinforcing ethnic identity and providing access to ethnic resources is consistent with the works of Matute-Bianchi (1986) among Mexican Americans, and Sung (1987) and Ogbu (1990) among Chinese Americans. An important argument of their work is that immigrant groups have systems of social relations that are geared to adaptation to a new environment, in contrast with “involuntary minorities” such as African Americans whose group identity is geared primarily to coping with racism and institutionalized discrimination.

In addition, these authors have highlighted the role of social structures that facilitate consciousness and action, and how they may contribute to the cognitive development of individuals. Whether this cultural heritage is enacted and transformed to generate capital and/or resources or it hinders the development of immigrant groups seem to depend, at least in part, on whether the environment of immigrant service organizations promotes or frustrates the integration and social mobility of their constituencies in the new society.

The findings that ethnic and language skills offer concrete benefits provide a secure basis for promoting support for ethnic culture while encouraging the achievement of proficiency in the language, values and traditions of the host society. Furthermore, as illustrated by the trajectory of the executive director of UCC, social network and social support systems may provide additional benefits, including health benefits, and are integral components of the sustainability of immigrant service organizations. An examination of the implications of social support in the distribution of cultural capital will be discussed in the next section.

3. Social support, health and the transformation of culture

An important contribution of the literature on social network/social support is that the type and extent of social relations are key elements of health, particularly among poor populations and immigrants. As previously reviewed, recent research has emphasized not only the importance of describing immigrants' demographic characteristics but also the role of social network/support systems in shaping access to resources, housing and employment, and the assimilation in the new country.

Studies of social network and support systems among first-generation immigrants (e.g., Koreans (Light, Kwoun and Zhong, 1990); and Chinese (Light and Rosenstein, 1995)) suggest that some immigrants come across established ethnic enclaves with resources that may meet the basic needs of their communities.

These immigrants are found to develop cohesive community ties and extensive links to the mainstream economy, despite the potential conflict of having to choose between ethnic and non-ethnic social ties for economic success (Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993).

In contrast, other immigrant groups (e.g., Mexicans) have not been able to develop strong cohesiveness despite having a large ethnic community that could offer them economic resources and social opportunities. Potential explanations for this low level of community cohesiveness include the lack of a solid ethnic economy to generate opportunities for its members; and the large numbers of transient, recent arrivals, and/or undocumented immigrants (Portes, 1995).

Immigrant cooperation strategies

A large literature has now established that immigrant communities often devise various cooperative arrangements to deal with the uncertainties of migration. Generally, ethnic enclaves become less necessary over time, as they successfully provide their members with financial resources and other types of support. As pointed out by Saegert, Thompson and Warren (2002), successful community development initiatives often require linkages to non-community members (i.e., outside institutions) to be forged incrementally. In this study, we have described and discussed some of the processes through which these links are forged among

Latinos in East New York. Future research is required to explore similar processes with different ethnic groups and/or in different immigrant communities.

Like other groups before them, recent Latino immigrants cope with diverse challenges by using their social network/support systems in conjunction with whatever personal assets they might have. However, these network/support systems are often comprised of just a few family members and friends, who also face challenges of their own. Therefore, as exemplified by their reports, Latino immigrants rely heavily on the relationships they establish with others at immigrant service organizations. These relationships are frequently forged on the basis of the quality of reciprocal links between individuals rather than on familial responsibilities. These connections consist of mutual relationships built on helping people with information, jobs, childcare, housing, health care, and/or financial issues.

Characteristics of immigrant network/support systems

The social network/support systems among Latino immigrants in East New York are not just a mechanism for coping with risk, but also an important source of information, emotional nourishment, and social mobility. Most of these immigrants have come to the U.S. to move ahead, seeking better lives. The social network/support systems created within immigrant service organizations are important to facilitate this growth and development process. Results from this

study illustrate how social relationships tend to be perceived as supportive when various aspects of the context of the participants' relationships are in sync with one another (e.g., language used, facial/body expressions, and gestures). The findings also suggest how different immigrant service environments promote and/or support diverse cultural frames of reference and practices, and how these practices affect the health and well-being of the immigrants they serve.

Furthermore, this study points out how small ethnic businesses (e.g., Botanica, Bakery), which are not usually categorized as part of the immigrant service network, play an important role in the health practices of immigrant communities. Although these businesses are not membership or client oriented, they offer direct services (e.g., alternative medications, nutrition), culturally-defined spaces for networking (e.g., taxi drivers holding conversations and exchanging information at the local Bakery while waiting for a call from the dispatcher), and significant opportunities for the exchange of resources (e.g., buying and selling of products (including medication, automobiles and real estate), finding jobs, housing, etc.). As such, these spaces represent unexplored spaces for health-related interventions among immigrants.

The individual and collective practices that take place within immigrant service organizations illustrate diverse patterns of acculturation, collective action, and social support. In spite of their dispersion along different points of cultural integration, immigrant service organizations manage to sustain the social and

cultural networks that give them cohesion and continuity, within the old and the new cultures. In a way, it is as though they facilitate the broadening and transformation of collective ethnic identities. This open-ended process serves as a reference point for rethinking what it means to be an immigrant in the twenty-first century. The organizational initiatives of immigrants and their rich collective cultural practices open a window on their efforts to build new lives in the U.S., while remaining who they are and remembering where they come from.

Bibliography

- Alba, R. and Nee, V. (1997). Rethinking assimilation theory for a new era of immigration. *International Migration Review*, 31, 826–74.
- Alba, R. and Nee, V. (1999). *Ethnic identity: The transformation of white America*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Albrecht, T.L., Burlison, B.R., & Goldsmith, D., (1992). Supportive communication. In M.L. Knapp & G.R. Miller (Eds.), *Handbook of Interpersonal Communication* (2nd Ed., 419-449. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Aldrich, H. and Waldinger, R. (1990). Ethnicity and entrepreneurship. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 16, 111-135.
- Bailick, M.J., Kronenberg, F., Ososki, A.L., Reiff, M., Fugh-Berman, A., O'Connor, B. Roble, M., Lohr, P., Atha, D. (2000). Medicinal plants used by Latino healers for women's health conditions in New York City. *Economic Botany*, 54, 344-57.
- Balick, M.J. and Lee, R. (2001). Expanding the frontiers of traditional medicine: A case in investigating a prospective therapy. *J. Trop. Med. Plants*, 2, 205-207.
- Barth, E. and Noel, D. (1972). Conceptual frameworks for the analysis of race relations: An evaluation. *Social Forces*, 72, 333-348.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J.G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook for theory and research for the sociology of education*, 241– 258.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education*, Greenwood Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1992). Commentary on the commentaries. *Contemporary Sociology*, 21, 158-161.
- Bourdieu, P. (1992). Thinking about limits. *Theory, Culture and Society*, 9, 37-49.
- Bourdieu, P. (1992). Rites as acts of institution. In *Honor and grace in Anthropology*, J.G.Peristiany and J.Pitt-Rivers (Eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1992). Towards a policy of morality in politics. In *From the twilight of probability, ethics and politics*, W.R. Shea and A Spadafora (Eds.). Canton: Science History Publications, 146-149.

- Bourdieu, P. (1992). Principles of a sociology of cultural works. In *Explanation and value in the arts*, S. Kemal and I. Gaskell (Eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 173-189.
- Bourdieu, P. (1990). The scholastic point of view. *Cultural Anthropology*, 5, 380-91.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction*. London: Routledge.
- Botschner, J. V. (1996). Reconsidering the functional value of male friendships: A social developmental perspective. In C.W. Tolman, F. Cherry, R. van Hezewijk, & I. Lubek (Eds.), *Problems of theoretical psychology*, 242-253. North York, ON: Captus Press Inc.
- Brach, C., and Fraser, I. (2000). Can cultural competency reduce racial and ethnic health disparities? A review and conceptual model. *Medical Care Research and Review*, 57 (Suppl. 1), 181-217.
- Brisk, M. E. (1991). Toward multilingual and multicultural mainstream education. *Journal of Education*, 173, 114-129.
- Browning, H.L. and Rodriguez, N. (1985). The Migration of Mexican Indocumentados as a Settlement Process: Implications for Work. In G.J. Borjas and M. Tienda (Eds.), *Hispanics in the U.S. Economy*. New York: Academic.
- Callaghan, P., and Morrissey, J. (1993). Social support and health: a review. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 18,2, 203-210.
- Calhoun, C. (1993). Civil Society and the Public Sphere. *Public Culture*, 267-280.
- Carter, R.A. and Adolphs, S. (2003). Creativity and a corpus of spoken English. In Goodman, S., Lillis, T., Maybin, J., & Mercer, N. (Eds.), *Language, Literacy and Education: A Reader*. Stoke-On Trent: Trentham Books, 247-262.
- Chavez, L.R. (1992). *Shadowed lives: Undocumented immigrants in American society*. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Cohen, S. (2002). Psychosocial stress, social networks and susceptibility to infection. In H. G. Koenig & H. J. Cohen, *The link between religion and health: Psychoneuroimmunology and the faith factor*. New York: Oxford University Press, 101-123.
- Cohen, S. (1999). Social status and susceptibility to respiratory infections. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 896: 246-253.

- Cohen, S., & Rodriguez, M. (2001). Stress, viral respiratory infections and asthma. In D. P. Skoner (Ed.), *Asthma and Respiratory Infection*. New York: Marcel Decker, 193-208.
- Cohen, S. & Wills, TA (1985). Stress, social support, and the buffering hypothesis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 98, 310-357.
- Cohen, S., Frank, E., Doyle, W.J., Skoner, D. P., Rabin, B. S., & Gwaltney, J. M., Jr. (1998). Types of stressors that increase susceptibility to the common cold in adults. *Health Psychology*. 17, 214-223.
- Cohen, D. and L. Prusak (2001). *In good company: How social capital makes organizations work*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston.
- Coleman, J. S (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital, *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 94, pp. 95 – 121.
- Collins, J. (1993). Determination and contradiction: An appreciation and critique of the work of Pierre Bourdieu on language and education. In C. Calhoun (Ed), *Bourdieu: Critical perspectives*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 116-138.
- Cordero-Guzman, H. (2005). Community-Based Organizations and Migration in New York City. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 31, 889-909.
- Cowen, E. L. (1999). In sickness and in health: Primary prevention's vows revisited. In D. Cicchetti. & S. L. Toth (Eds.), *Developmental approaches to prevention and intervention*, 9, 1-24. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press.
- Creswell, J. W., (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*, 247. Thousand Oaks, Sage.
- Cox, E. (1995). A Truly Civil Society. *Boyer Lectures*. Sydney: Australian Broadcasting Commission.
- Dillion, S. (1994). *Report Faults Bilingual Education in New York*. New York Times, 1.
- Douketis, J., Feightner, J., Attia, J., Feldman, W. (1999). Periodic health examination update: Detection, prevention and treatment of obesity, *CMAJ*, 160, 513-25.
- Duck, S. W. (1994). *Meaningful Relationships*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

- Drake R E. (1998). Review of mental health and substance abuse treatment for patients with dual disorders. *Schizophrenia Bulletin*, 24, 589-608.
- Epstein, J. (1992). School and family partnerships. In *Encyclopedia of educational research*. New York: MacMillan.
- Ezekiel 47:12. *New American Standard Bible*, NASB.
- Feldman, R. M. (1990). Settlement-identity: Psychological bonds with home places in a mobile society. *Environment and Behavior*, 22, 183-229.
- Feldman, R. M. (1999). Participatory design at the grass roots. In *Design and Feminism*, Joan Rothschild (Ed.), 135-148. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Foner, N. (1999). The immigrant family: Cultural legacies and cultural changes. In *The Handbook of International Migration: The American Experience*, C. Hirschman, P. Kasinitz and J. DeWind (Eds.), 257-274. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Foner, N. (2001). West Indian Migration to New York: An Overview. In *Islands in the City: West Indian Migration to New York*, Nancy Foner (Ed.). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Fukuyama, F. (1993). Immigrants and Family Values. *Commentary*, 95, 5.
- Fukuyama, F. (1999). The Great Disruption: Human Nature and the Reconstitution of Social Order. *The Atlantic Monthly*, 2.
- Gans, H. J. (1992). Second-Generation Decline: Scenarios for the Economic and Ethnic Futures of the post-1965 American Immigrants. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 15, 173-192.
- Garcia, C. (1996). Dreaming in Cuban. *A One World Book*, Ballantine Books, Random House Inc., New York.
- Gottlieb, B. H. (1985). Social support and the study of personal relationships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 2, 351-375.
- Grasmuck, S. and Patricia R. P. (1991). *Between Two Islands: Dominican International Migration*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Helgeson V.S. (2003). Cognitive adaptation, psychological adjustment, and disease progression among angioplasty patients: 4 years later. *Health Psychology*, 22, 30-38.

- Hirsch, B. J. (1981). Social networks and the coping process: Creating personal communities. In B. H. Gottlieb (Ed.), *Social Networks and Social Support*, 149-170. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Hirsch, J. (1999). En el Norte la Mujer Manda: Gender, Generation, and Geography in a Mexican Transnational Community. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 42, 9, 1332-1349.
- Hirschman, C., Kasinitz, P., and DeWind, J. (Eds.) (1999). *The Handbook of International Migration: The American Experience*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. (1994). *Gendered Transitions: Mexican Experiences of Immigration*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Jenkins, R. (1992). *Pierre Bourdieu*. London; New York, Routledge.
- Jones-Correa, M. (1998). *Between Two Nations: The Political Predicament of Latinos in New York City*. Cornell University Press, New York.
- Karpati, E. (2003). Census. *NYC Community Health Profiles*, New York Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.
- Kasinitz, Philip (1992). *Caribbean New York: Black Immigrants and the Politics of Race*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Kiecolt-Glaser J.K., Stephens R., Lipitz P., Speicher C.E., & Glaser R. (1985). Distress and DNA repair in human lymphocytes. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 8, 311-20.
- Kiecolt-Glaser JK, Glaser R, Gravenstein S, Malarkey WB, Sheridan J. (1996). Chronic stress alters the immune response to influenza virus vaccine in older adults. *Proc Natl Academy Science, USA*, 93, 3043-7.
- Kirby, S., & McKenna, K. (1989). *Experience, Research, Social Change: Methods from the Margins*. Toronto: Garamond Press.
- Latham, A.S. (1997). Learning through Feedback. *Educational Leadership*, 54, 8, 86-87.
- Light, I., Im Jung, K., and Zhoing, D. (1990). Korean Rotating Credit Associations in Los Angeles. *Amerasia*, 16(1): 35-54.
- Light, I. and Rosenstein, C. (1995). *Race, Ethnicity, and Entrepreneurship in Urban America*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Grouter.

- Macera, C.A. and Ballard-Barbash, R. (2001). Be Physically Active Each Day. How Can We Know? *Journal Nutrition*, 131, 451-460.
- Massey, D.; Alarcon, R.; Durand, J.; and Gonzalez, H. (1987). *Return to Aztlan: The Social Process of International Migration From Western Mexico*. Berkely, CA: University of California.
- Massey, D. (1995). The New Immigration and Ethnicity in the United States. *Population and Development Review*, 21, 631-52.
- McClenaghah, P.A. & ROBSON, T. (1996). Training for community development: the North West experience. In S. Hill & B. Merrill (Eds.), *Access, Equity, and Equality*. *British Educational Research Journal*, 26, 5.
- Michael W. (1992). The Civil Society Argument. In Chantal M. (Ed.), *Dimensions of Radical Democracy: Pluralism, Citizenship, Community*, London: Verso, 89-107.
- Miller, W. R., & Mount, K. A. (2001). A small study of training in motivational interviewing: Does one workshop change clinician and client behavior? *Behavioral and Cognitive Psychotherapy*, 29, 457-471.
- Miller, W. R., Benefield, R. G., & Tonigan, J. S. (1993). Enhancing motivation for change in problem drinking: A controlled comparison of two therapist styles. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 61, 455-461.
- Morris, A.D. (1984). *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change*. New York: Free Press.
- NYC HIV Epidemiology Program 2nd Quarter Report (2005). *HIV/AIDS Surveillance Statistics 2004*, NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene.
- Newman, A.B., and Brach, J.S. (2001). The gender gap in morbidity and mortality. *Epidemiology Review*, 23, 343-350.
- Ogbu, J. (1990). Minority education in comparative perspective. *Journal of Negro Education*, 59, 45-57.
- Ogbu, J., and Matute-Bianchi, M. (1986). Understanding socio-cultural factors: knowledge, identity, and social adjustment. *Beyond Language: Social and Cultural Factors in Schooling*, California State Department of Education, Bilingual Education Office, Sacramento: CA: California State University, Los Angeles, Evaluation, Dissemination and Assessment Center, 73-142.

- Perlmann, J., and Roger W. (1997). Second Generation Decline? Children of Immigrants, Past and Present – A Reconsideration. *International Migration Review*, 31, 893-922.
- Perlman, J., and Waldinger, R. (1999). Immigrants Past and Present: A Reconsideration. In C. Hirschman, P. Kasinitz, & J. DeWind (Eds.), *The Handbook of International Migration: The American Experience*, 223-238. New York: Russell Sage Publications.
- Pessar, P. (1999). Engendering Migration Studies: The Case of New Immigrants in the United States. In *Gender and Contemporary U.S. Immigration*, Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo (Ed.). A special issue of *American Behavioral Scientist*, 42, 4, 577-600.
- Portes, A., and Zhou, M. (1993). The New Second Generation: Segmented Assimilation and Its Variants. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 530, 74–96.
- Portes, A., and Sensenbrenner, J. (1993). Embeddedness and Immigration: Notes on the social determinants of economic action. In *American Journal of Sociology*, 98, 1320-1350.
- Portes, A., and Stepik, A. (1993). *City on the Edge: The Transformation of Miami*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Portes, A., and Zhou, M. (1994). Should Immigrants Assimilate? *The Public Interest*, 116, 18-33.
- Portes, A. (1995). Children of Immigrants: Segmented Assimilation and Its Determinants. In A. Portes (Ed.), *The Economic Sociology of Immigration*, New York: Russell Sage, 248-280.
- Portes, A., and Rumbaut, R. (1996). *Immigrant America: A Portrait*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Portes, A., and MacLeod, D. (1996). Educational Progress of Children of Immigrants: The Roles of Class, Ethnicity, and School Context. *Sociology of Education*, 69, 255-275.
- Portes, A., and Rumbaut, R. (1996). *Immigrant America: A Portrait*. Second Edition, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Portes A. (1996). Introduction: Immigration and its aftermath. In A. Portes (Ed.), *The New Second Generation*, 1–7. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

- Portes, A., and Schauffler, R. (1996). Language and the Second Generation: Bilingualism Yesterday and Today. In *The New Second Generation*, A. Portes (Ed.). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Portes, A. (1998). Social capital: Its origin and application in modern Sociology. In *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24, 1-24.
- Portes, A., and Landolt, P. (1999). The Downside of Social Capital. *The American Prospect*, 26.
- Portes, A., and Rumbaut, R. (2001). *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Portes, A., and Lingxin, H. (2002). The Price of Uniformity: Language, Family, and Personality Adjustment in the Immigrant Second Generation. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 25, 889-912.
- Portes, A., and DeWind, J. (2004). A Cross-Atlantic Dialogue: The Progress of Research and Theory in the Study of International Migration. *International Migration Review*, 38, 828-851.
- Putnam, R. (1993): The prosperous community: social capital and public life. In *American Prospect*, 13, 35– 42.
- Rumbaut, R. (1994). The Crucible Within: Ethnic Identity, Self-Esteem, and Segmented Assimilation Among Children of Immigrants. *International Migration Review*, 28, 748- 94.
- Rumbaut, R. (1997). Assimilation and Its Discontents: Between Rhetoric and Reality. *The International Migration Review*, 31, 923-960.
- Rumbaut, R. and Weeks, J. (1993). Ethnicity, Nativity, and the Paradox of Prenatal Health and Morbidity: An Analysis of Sociocultural and Biomedical Causal Factors. *Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association*, Miami, Florida.
- Saegert, S. (1982). Environment and Children's Health: Residential Density and Low Income Children. In A. Baum and J.E. Singer (Eds.), *Handbook of Psychology and Health*, 247-71.
- Saegert, S., Thompson, J., and Warren, M. (2002). Poverty, Housing Niches, and Health in the United States. In S. Saegert, J. P. Thompson, & M. Warren (Eds.), Social capital and poor communities, *Journal of Social Issues*, 59, 31– 59.

- Saegert, S., and Evans, G.W. (2003). Poverty, Housing Niches, and Health in the United States. *Journal of Social Issues*, 59, 3, 569-89.
- Saegert, S. (2006) Building Civic Capacity in Urban Neighborhoods: An Empirically Grounded Anatomy. *Journal of Urban Affairs*.
- Saegert, S. (in press). Women and Health Disparities: The Intersection of Economic, Cultural, Social, and Human Capital. Special Issue on Health Disparities, *Journal of the American Medical Women's Association*.
- Sorensen, M. (1998). *The Effects of a University Education on Social and Economic Attitudes*. Ph.D. Dissertation (Sociology), University of Alberta.
- Sowell, L. (1991). Cultural Diversity, A World View. *The American Enterprise*, 5, 44-55.
- Steinberg L. (1996). *Beyond the Classroom*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Suarez-Orozco, C. and Suarez-Orozco, M. (2001). *Children of Immigration*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Sung, B.L. (1987). *The Adjustment Experience of Chinese Immigrant Children in New York City*. Staten Island, NY: Center for Migration Studies.
- Strauss, A.L., and Corbin, J. (1997). *Grounded Theory in Practice*. Sage, 280.
- Taylor, S. E., Falke, R. L., Maze, R. M., and Hilberg, B. L. (1988). Sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction among members of cancer support groups. In B. H. Gottlieb (Ed.), *Marshaling Social Support: Formats, Processes, and Effects*, 187-208. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Taylor, S. , and Aspinwall, L. G. (1996). Mediating and moderating processes in psychosocial stress: Appraisal, coping, resistance, and vulnerability. In *Psychosocial Stress: Perspectives on Structure, Theory, Life-Course, and Methods*, H. B. Kaplan (Ed.), 71-119. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Valsiner, J. (1987). *Culture and the development of children's actions*. Great Britain: John Wiley.
- Viladrich, A. (2006). Botánicas in America's backyard: Uncovering the world of Latino healers' herb-healing practices in New York City. *Society for Applied Anthropology*, 65, 4.
- Wallin, D., (2002). State of NYC's Housing and Neighborhoods. *Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy*, New York University.

- Ward, R., and Richard J. (1984). *Ethnic communities in business: Strategies for Economic Survival*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Warren, M. R., Thompson, J. P., & Saegert, S. (2001). Social capital and poor communities: Assets, barriers, and challenges. In S. Saegert, J. P. Thompson & M. R. Warren (Eds.), *Social capital and poor communities*. New York: Sage.
- Waters, M. (1990). *Ethnic options: Choosing identities in America*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Waters, M.C. (1994). Ethnic and racial identities of second-generation Black immigrants in New York City. *International Migration Review*, 28, 795-820.
- Waters, M.C. (1999). *Black identities: West Indian immigrant dreams and American realities*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Wellman, B. (1990). The place of kinfolk in personal community networks. *Marriage and Family Review*, 15, 195-228.
- Wilson, T.D. (1993). Theoretical approaches to Mexican wage labor migration. *Latin American Perspectives*, 20, 98-124. Reprinted in Darrell Y. Hamamoto and Rodolfo D. Torres (Eds), *New American Destinies: A Reader in Contemporary Asian and Latino Immigration*, 47-72. New York and London: Routledge.
- Wright, R. J., Rodriguez, M., and Cohen, S. (1999). Review of psychosocial stress and asthma: An integrated biopsychosocial approach. *Thorax*, 53, 1066-1074.
- Zhou, M. (1997a). Segmented assimilation: Issues, controversies, and recent research on the new second generation. *International Migration Review*, 31, 975-1008.
- Zhou, M. (1997b). Growing up American: The challenge confronting immigrant children and children of immigrants. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 23: 63-95.
- Zhou, M. (1997c). Social capital in Chinatown: the role of community-based organizations and families in the adaptation of the younger generation. In L. Weis, M.S. Seller (Eds.), *Beyond Black and White: New Voices, New Faces in the United States Schools*, 181-206. Albany, NY: State Univ. NY Press.
- Zhou, M. and Bankston, C.L. III (1994). Social capital and the adaptation of the second generation: The case of Vietnamese youth in New Orleans. *International Migration Review*, 18, 821-845.
- Zhou, M. and Kamo, Y. (1994). An analysis of earnings patterns for Chinese, Japanese and Non-Hispanic Whites in the United States. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 35, 581-602.