1 Organizations Advocating for Youth

ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS ACTING in the interests of youth play an especially vital role in our nation's urban centers. Because youth are non-voters and must rely on others to speak on their behalf, advocacy organizations are critical representatives for them—particularly when it comes to America's poorest youth, who have little representation or effective voice.[1] As prominent members of the "third sector"—the nongovernmental or nonprofit organizations that operate between market and state to pursue a "third way" to address public problems—advocacy organizations undertake private action in the public good (Giddens 1998). Organizations advocating for youth share features of advocacy organizations generally; but, as we will elaborate, they also face particular challenges as they work on behalf of youth. In this chapter, we describe the opportunities and obstacles such organizations face as they strive to improve conditions for youth in urban areas, before turning in subsequent chapters to our contextualized case analysis.

Advocacy Organizations: Their Functions and Challenges

Organizations advocating for social change take up problems that individuals cannot resolve on their own and amplify the voices of underrepresented, marginalized, or special interests. In doing so, they contribute in unique ways to the representation of pluralistic interests in a democracy and enhance the character of civil society (Andrews & Edwards 2004; Fung 2003). Such groups have played pivotal roles in the development of various areas of human rights and social issues, including civil rights, women's rights, environmental issues,

and, more recently, children's rights and child and youth services. By giving voice to these issues, advocacy groups have paved the way for more supportive legislation, worked to provide more and better services to their constituents, and struggled to reframe public opinion about the issues that shape debate, policy, and programs.

The word *advocacy* derives from the Latin word *advocare*—coming to the aid of someone (Reid 2000, p. 1), but advocacy activities are only loosely defined.[2] The term *advocacy* implicates a broad range of activities, causes, and organizations, from mobilizing political participation, to action on behalf of others, to service provision, and often is used synonymously with *lobbying*. Advocacy organizations and community organizers often function as educators, informing policy makers and citizens about the issues that frame their mission and providing individuals with the knowledge and skills they need to take part in the political process (Warren 2001). They can also serve as a check on the political establishment and provide a channel through which individuals can press for action on public concerns. Because advocacy organizations can express opinions and push for issues in a more powerful way than can most individuals acting alone, they can provide the benefits of direct citizen participation without the limitations of personal time, access, or resources. In this way, advocacy organizations potentially enhance both the quality and the consequences of representation and broaden political discourse.

Between Movement and Establishment

As our title suggests, we see a primary contextual factor shaping organizations advocating for youth in urban communities as their state of "betweenness." Advocacy occurs in diverse venues—at the grassroots, as gadfly at work with other community organizations, and as external critic or participant within public agencies at all levels of government. To be effective in any venture, they must engage society's institutionalized preferences and the organizations that enact them: the establishment. We base our examination of advocacy organizations on the idea that these groups exist in the middle of a continuum between social movements and stable organizations and institutions, which we call here "the establishment." The groups we study may have emerged from a loosely coordinated reform movement but have found ways to transform themselves into organizations with a relatively stable structure; or they may have developed from the efforts of a collection of entrepreneurial "do-gooders," one or more individuals committed to social change. Alternatively, they

may be the franchise of a national organization that has decided to establish a branch in a particular community. Whatever the specifics of the origin, such groups have evolved from the stage of mobilization and movement formation to that of viable organization—with a locus of operations, a staff, a budget, and a director.

This transformation represents a dynamic process through which social movements assume some attributes of formal organizations to stabilize their reform efforts. Organizations specialize in erecting durable, reliable, and accountable systems that provide valued goods and services (Hannan & Carroll 1995). By contrast, social movements emerge out of unorganized, inchoate collections of individuals. They exist to challenge established systems of power and authority, and they seek to change the bases on which decisions are normally made and the ways in which activities are routinely conducted. Their aim is to destabilize existing governing structures and dominant social logics within a field and to substitute other players with different cultural frames and modes of acting.

Despite their independence from the establishment, social movements ultimately depend on action by governmental or other established structures such as corporations to create and oversee programs to meet their demands. Their work requires ongoing, open interaction among state, market, and nonprofit sectors and positions advocacy organizations and community organizers as links between and critical observers of institutions of government, business, and other nonprofits (Boris & Mosher-Williams 1998; Salamon 2002). In this way, they "deepen the ways in which people are represented and participate in democracies" (Reid 2000, p. 3). Others argue that "many of the innovations in American politics can be traced to decades of efforts by popular associations to link policy outcomes to citizen concerns" (Clemens 1997, p. 320).

However, movements that begin to enjoy some success find that they need to become more like organizations—locating a more reliable source of income, selecting and differentiating among participants, establishing ways to coordinate efforts—if they are to survive and persist as viable systems (Zald & McCarthy 1987b). Moving in the other direction, organizations, for their part, have had to become more flexible, focusing more on differentiated and specialized services, and more capable of responding to rapid changes in their environments. Just as movements have become more organized, organizations have become more flexible and movementlike in their structures and behavior (Davis et al. 2005).

This greater fluidity between movements and organizations leaves advocacy groups with an ongoing tension to negotiate. They are fundamentally *intermediary* organizations, and their function is to mediate between the weak and the more powerful, the unannointed and the legitimate, the have-nots and the haves, the disenfranchised and the entitled. They are subject to the danger of becoming radicalized to the point of engaging in illegal and rebellious actions—or to the opposite trap of becoming co-opted by the establishment and serving as an apologist for entrenched powers. Productive, responsible, and effective actions must be sought somewhere between these poles.

And, more so than most organizations, advocacy groups position themselves quite self-consciously between past logics and practices and future possibilities. In this sense of "betweenness," advocacy groups are condemned to sit on the cusp of social reform, reflecting on the past and attempting to shape the future. But while advocacy organizations struggle with their condition of betweenness, they also benefit from it. As nonsystem actors marginal to existing regimes, they are more likely to develop and advance alternative ideas and programs.[3]

Advocacy: Forms, Functions, and Challenges

Advocacy organizations working between movement and establishment embrace several different forms and functions (Andrews & Edwards 2004). Although each type of advocacy group differs in its general strategies and mission, each also pursues a collective good framed in terms of the public interest, but they do so in different ways. Some are membership organizations, some have no individual members but include only organizations, and others are a mix. Some are interest groups, lobbying on behalf of special interests, professional or personal—the American Medical Association or the National Rifle Association, for example—where members participate by means of a checkbook. Andrews and Edwards (2004) observe that interest groups often exhibit a social class bias in favor of the individuals or professions with easier access to resources and prestige. Some are social movement organizations, another type of advocacy group that typically operates outside the mainstream to press for change in established priorities and institutionalized patterns of decision making. Civil rights, feminist, and environmental groups exemplify social movement organizations.

Nonprofits working on behalf of groups not well served by either market or state comprise yet another form of advocacy—for example, the Child Welfare League of America, a group that functions to improve services and protection

for foster children. These groups serve as watchdogs for their special interest groups but do not push for fundamental social change as do social movement organizations. Grassroots organizations in the community organizing tradition pursue another form of advocacy. They operate somewhat differently and often have a different purpose than professionally run advocacy organizations. Nevertheless, they serve important advocacy functions, particularly as they help community members become advocates for themselves. Typically, organizing groups act as generalists that mobilize and train community members to act in their own right to advance their concerns, whether it is with respect to housing, public safety, or education. Community organizing groups are often based in affinity groups such as churches (for example, the Industrial Areas Foundation; see Shirley 1997) or what Jenkins (2006) calls "cooptable social networks." Others are local affiliates of national groups, such as PICO (formerly the Pacific Institute for Community Organization), a national faith-based organizing network with twenty-nine organizations in sixty-five cities, or ACORN, which has 850 neighborhood chapters in seventy-five cities across the United States.

Advocacy groups also differ in their relationship to the establishment. Some advocacy organizations prefer to align themselves more with those groups that work outside of and, frequently in opposition to, the establishment, whereas others are more willing to move within the halls of power and create enclaves within the establishment that reflect their values and agenda. There are differing locations along the tension lines separating the empowered and the disempowered. Some organizations will be more likely to engage in adversarial and confrontational politics; others will be more prone to attempt mediation and compromise, and still others will seek alignments with entrenched powers that critics will label cooptation (or "selling out"). Alternatively, the same organizations can use all these positions, varying their stance by issue or over time.

Among the chief obstacles advocacy organizations of all stripes face is that of funding. Funding for nonprofit advocacy and organizing groups comes from a number of sources (see Reid 2001). Many organizations engaged primarily in providing service—nonprofit charitable organizations, faith-based groups—receive government funding either directly, through grants or contracts from public agencies such as health or social welfare, or indirectly, in their role as junior partners to recipients of government grants, such as those community-based youth organizations included in the federally funded 21st Century Community Learning Centers. Some social change advocacy groups

make a public point of their refusal to accept public funding, under the belief that such support undermines their independence. The Children's Defense Fund's mission statement announces, for example, "We have never taken government funds."[4] Political advocacy efforts associated with professional or trade organizations are supported by members' dues. Foundation support has played a critical role for advocacy associated with social change agenda such as education reform, enhanced health care services, or environmental protection, though such sources tend to support moderate rather than more extreme advocacy positions.[5] Philanthropic support has been key to the growth of professionally staffed advocacy organizations at the end of the twentieth century and central to solidifying the gains made by social movement organizations, such as environmental and civil rights groups (Andrews & Edwards 2004) and organizations advocating for youth (Yee 2008).[6]

Regardless of funding source, nonprofit advocacy organizations and community organizing groups have few dependable, stable sources of support and for the most part survive through their own fund-raising efforts. Especially at the grassroots level, this funding picture creates a hand-to-mouth existence and limited life span for the average local advocacy group. Such organizations typically lack the size, infrastructure, or slack in resources to respond effectively to swings in philanthropic fashions, government initiatives, or donor interests (Galaskiewitz & Bielefeld 1998). Low-income constituents lack the deep pockets to provide significant financial support to the groups that represent them. Unstable funding for advocacy groups, particularly those speaking for poor and marginalized individuals, carries significant consequences for local political access and social resources. While large, national advocacy organizations such as the American Association of People with Disabilities or the Children's Defense Fund feature prominently in high-profile national policy debates and so are attractive to donors with similar concerns, the small, freestanding grassroots nonprofits that comprise the "backbone of U.S. civic activity" (Reid 2001, p. 121) remain the most vulnerable. In fact, local advocacy groups account for the lion's share of American's political participation. Research on political activity found that 92 percent of individual political activity (that included more than voting) was connected to such local groups (Reid op. cit.). And for these local groups, though funding is critical to their survival, success in securing support can be a two-edged sword when it may create conditions that deflect the organization from its mission or strings that compromise the organization's core principles. From this broad overview of

the chief functions and challenges of advocacy organizations, we now turn more specifically to how organizations working on behalf of youth operate, the issues they address, and their evolving role in urban centers.

Advocating for Youth

Advocacy organizations working in the interests of youth vary in focus, location, size, and strategy. Some exist for advocacy purposes only; some are hybrids and also provide services and supports for their target population.[7] Some advocacy organizations are issue specific and focus, for example, on health issues—such as groups involved in promoting funding for AIDS research and treatment, for mental health, or for diabetes. Other advocacy organizations are constituency specific, advocating for rights and resources for groups possessing limited political voice in the American democratic system—gay, lesbian, and transgendered individuals, for instance.

Advocacy organizations for youth have proliferated at all levels of the policy system. At the national level, organizations such as the Children's Defense Fund and Voices for America's Children have vigorously pursued national policies and programs aimed at improving conditions for children and youth. State-level organizations typically target types of issues that have particular salience to a specific state. In California, for example, the California Association for Bilingual Education has worked since 1976 to promote educational equity for the state's large population of multilingual, multicultural students. Yet the majority of advocacy groups operating in America today are freestanding, grassroots creations working to effect change at the community level. In Chicago, for example, Designs for Change compelled the Chicago Public Schools to decentralize governance to school site committees. In Oakland, California, the group Books Not Bars pressured policy makers to abandon plans for an expensive new prison and direct funds instead to needed school reform.

Whatever form and focus advocates for youth assume, the need to change public perceptions of youth, especially poor urban youth, presents a fundamental challenge to their work. Negative media portrayals contest advocates' messages about what youth need and deserve and about the responsibility of government to meet their needs. These challenges facing advocates for youth are then compounded by ever-evolving and contested conceptions of the role of the state in child welfare and adolescent development, which we turn to next. We offer a brief policy history of child welfare programs and supports

in the United States to understand the lineage of the contemporary advocacy organizations we study.

The Evolving Role of the State in Child Welfare

Public ideas about government's responsibility for the welfare of children changed in significant ways throughout the twentieth century. Only since the 1970s have the distinct needs of children been formally recognized by the legal system and public institutions (Rodham 1973). Changes in public ideas about children's needs and guardianship have in large part been a result of the efforts of child advocates. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the well-being of children was held to be the responsibility of families, and children's interests were assumed to be synonymous with parents' interests. To the extent that public institutions were involved in providing for the welfare of children, they took a largely punitive stance toward misbehaving or troubled youth. Those lacking parental support became "wards of the state" and were provided only minimal care in almshouses and orphanages, where many died or encountered substantial abuse. In reaction to the mistreatment of children, anticruelty societies sprang up late in the nineteenth century to advocate for laws protecting the health and public safety of children, and by the beginning of the twentieth century more than 300 anticruelty societies worked on behalf of children (Carson 2001, p. xiii).

These advocates were central to the development of what Theda Skocpol calls a "maternal welfare state" in the Progressive Era, during which welfare policies for dependent citizens won out over proposals for a more paternalist social service regime and were justified as a "universalization of mother love" (Skocpol 1992, 1995). Maternalist policy victories included the creation of a Children's Bureau in 1912, which disseminated information on child rearing, sponsored health conferences and prenatal services, and conducted home visits. The Sheppard-Towner Infancy and Maternity Act of 1921, administered by the Children's Bureau, was the nation's first explicit social welfare legislation and aimed to reduce infant mortality. Advocates were also instrumental in passing the 1935 Social Security Act, which provided aid for widowed and deserted mothers and funds for states to develop child protective services. This legislation created a number of categorical programs targeting support for children lacking families (adoption and foster home care) and for "broken" families (aid to single mothers). Federal support for such programs waned after World War II, however. Grants-in-aid to states throughout the middle

third of the twentieth century led to decentralized and uncoordinated services for children that varied greatly across states (Bremner 1974).

Despite federal retreat from the project of a fully developed maternal welfare state, the children's rights movement in the 1960s and 1970s did secure additional supportive policies and programs at the federal level. In 1963, a landmark national child advocacy bill was enacted: the first statute mandating child abuse reporting.[8] Other legislation followed (including Head Start 1964; Child Abuse and Treatment Act of 1974; Social Services Block Grant 1975; Family Preservation and Support Initiative, 1993) that recognized the welfare of children and youth as a concern of the government at federal and state levels and broadened the policy focus to include a range of factors that influence children's well-being, families, schools, neighborhoods, and communities (history from Carson op cit.). The early child advocacy organizations—the anticruelty societies—and their successors can take credit for launching the ongoing shift in the state's responsibility for the welfare of young people.

A Changing Youth Policy Agenda

More recently, youth advocates have continued to push for state support in light of changing conceptions about adolescent development and responsive policies. This evolving perspective about youth often means that organizations advocating for and with youth find themselves pushing not only for *more* resources but in many instances for *different* ones, as they embrace new conceptions of youth and their needs. Demands that established institutions work differently to better support the youth in their community often meet with stiff resistance. Contemporary shifts in thinking about youth that motivate advocates' current work also implicate established ways of operating and public investments. Along with changing ideas about the role of the state in the lives of youth and their families, ideas were shifting about the fundamental nature of adolescence and the policy issues presented by that age group. Throughout much of the twentieth century, policy and research conceived of adolescence as a time of upheaval and strain and regarded youth as a risk to themselves and to others. G. Stanley Hall's 1904 book *Adolescence: Its psychology and its relations to physiology, anthropology, sociology, sex, crime, religion and education* launched the study of adolescent development and set out a theory that conceived of adolescence as a period of "storm and stress." Hall saw adolescence as a stage in human development when people evolved from

being untamed animals to being civilized. Adolescence was understood as a time of "overcoming one's beastlike impulses" (Lerner 2005).

Many adolescents, in this view, exhibited "deficits" in their behavior. Millions of public and private dollars were spent to address the problems thought to be caused by youth's alleged deficits—dysfunctional behaviors such as unsafe sex, teenage drinking, drug use, academic failure, crime, and violence. Researchers, too, used this model of adolescent development to understand youth's behavior and conceived of a young person's second decade in individualistic terms of invariant, stage-based development. This view paid scant attention to interactions with adolescents' highly varying social and institutional contexts. Thus a significant body of science related to adolescent development supported policy and programs that set out to "fix" discrete individual problem behaviors through intervention, remediation, or punishment.

Beginning in the late 1980s, both youth policy and research on adolescent development entered a new phase, one that departed from a narrow emphasis on remedying "deficits" with uncoordinated institutional supports and instead focused on the broader context of healthy development and enhanced integration of youth services (Pittman, Irby & Ferber, 2000). Reformers and practitioners experienced in working with young people pointed out that the needs of youth are complex and interwoven. They contended that policies and programs intended to benefit youth should strive for continuity across sectors (such as education, social service, and juvenile justice) and over time. This view contrasted sharply with traditional Balkanized youth services and institutions that operated in isolation from one another, with little communication or coordination of resources.

The early 1990s saw a similar shift in models underlying the scientific study of adolescence. Neuroscientists, physicians, developmental psychologists, and others engaged in clinical research on adolescent development began to move to an ecological model that viewed youth as embedded in multiple contexts that influence their behavior and development—most especially contexts of families, communities, schools, and peer networks. Research began to examine how elements in a young person's environment—family background, neighborhood poverty, public resources—influenced their development for better or worse. As a dynamic model of person-environment gained ground, many researchers, like practitioners, began to replace a deficit perspective with a youth development paradigm that incorporated contextual factors and assumed variability and plasticity in human development (see Public/Private Ventures 2000). This

shift carries important implications for policy and practice: A youth development perspective takes a comprehensive rather than a compartmentalized view of the supports and opportunities youth need to thrive and features positive rather than deficit-focused supports for development. A youth development stance thus advocates for greater integration and coordination among those youth-serving institutions traditionally operating in isolated silos.

Simultaneously, articulate advocates for positive youth development were at work at all levels of government. Karen Pittman, Executive Director of the Forum for Youth Investment and a major voice for a changed policy stance, popularized her slogan "problem-free is not fully prepared" and rallied supporters from all segments of the youth-serving sector to press for a more comprehensive, positive policy approach to youth programs. Leaders in youth development urged movement away from an "anti" stance—antidrug, antigang, antidropout, anti-teen pregnancy—to focus on resources and opportunities that could assist young people in taking positive steps toward healthy futures:

> The (youth development) movement's fundamental assumption [is] . . . that enduring, positive results in a youth's life are most effectively achieved by tending to basic needs for guidance, support and involvement, and not by surgical interventions aimed at removing problems. (Public/Private Ventures 2000, p. 9)

Programs and policies consistent with a positive youth development point of view acknowledge the broader social and institutional contexts that actively influence individual outcomes and development. This changed perspective directs attention from a single-minded focus on individuals to include families, schools, and other community-based resources as targets for intervention and opportunities to enhance youth well-being. In doing so, a positive youth development stance broadens the playing field for youth advocates as they seek a variety of resources across sectors—supportive adults, an engaging school environment, opportunities for youth leadership in local government, for instance—in addition to seeking remedies for problems.

Influential voices from many sectors have demanded this reinterpretation of youth's needs and have reminded policy makers that "quick-fix" programs seldom result in enduring benefits for youth or society. They have called for a comprehensive system of integrated and ongoing resources for young people and a shift away from categorical, domain-specific resource streams. Health, welfare,

education, housing, and other programs, too long functioning in isolated silos, required reconfiguration to more effectively serve youth. Researchers engaged in questions of adolescent development buttressed this policy position with evidence about the value of a comprehensive web of programs and opportunities at the community level—findings supporting the generalization that the more supports youth have, and the more they are aligned and integrated, the better youth outcomes are likely to be (National Research Council & Institute of Medicine 2002).

Challenges to a Youth Development Stance

Ideas about youth and society's responsibility for them influence the changing role of the state in policies affecting youth. Though many policy makers and practitioners embrace youth development principles for ideological reasons, deeply rooted establishment constraints associated with funding streams, oversight, and responsibility have slowed the broader policy uptake. In addition, conceptions of youth policy remain contested. Organizations advocating for and with youth encounter ambivalence or disagreement about social investment in youth. Adolescents, some feel, have grown beyond the protection society assures its most vulnerable young; others go so far as to describe youth as "superpredators . . . the youngest, biggest, and baddest generation any society has ever known" (Bennett, DiIulio, & Walters 1996).

Challenges to enacting a youth development perspective also stem from the relatively rigid institutional boundaries, professional assumptions, and partisan battles for resources. Entrenched logics of action, diverse institutional histories and mandates, and distinct sources of authority separate rather than integrate youth-focused resources. Educators, for example, draw famously tight lines around schools. Youth advocates have struggled, with little success, to bring educators into young people's broader domain and link them to after-school and other community-based activities. In this fragmented institutional context, organizations advocating for youth find it difficult to bring all the players and establishment interests to the table to negotiate their collaboration.

Though not all organizations advocating for youth operate within a youth development framework, most seek resources and policies supported by positive youth development principles. These organizations are at the heart of much of the policy change that affects youth, and they continue to take on these challenges in their work.

Organizations advocating for youth thus operate in the context of a changing social logic about what youth need to thrive and how best to provide those resources, and they can become critical actors in reframing opportunities and resources for youth. Although youth development cannot yet be called a coherent "organization field" with the stability and recognition of established fields such as medical care, indicators suggest that a social movement is taking hold that lends authoritative support to advocacy for positive youth development resources.[9] We next describe this movement's progress and setbacks at different levels of government.

Responses to a New Youth Policy Agenda

Much of new youth policy and legislation since the 1960s has focused on the unique rights of children (for example, protection from abuse and rights to shelter and education). However, efforts to promote policies that embrace a positive youth development approach began to gain ground in the 1990s at all levels of the policy system.

At National and State Levels

A key turning point in the framing of national policy for youth occurred in the 1990s, as service providers, funders, and analysts began incorporating data from studies that identified important predictors of youth behavioral outcomes across service sectors. The 1997 21st Century Community Learning Center's support for after-school programs constituted prominent federal response to this evidence. In 1998, the Mott Foundation partnered with the U.S. Department of Education to provide grants to schools, community and faith-based organizations, and youth development agencies to provide high-quality, expanded learning opportunities outside of regular school hours. In his 1999 budget proposal, President Clinton detailed an $800 million increase to the program as part of a historic initiative to improve child services. Support from the White House, the efforts of grassroots groups and advocates, as well as the tremendous response from the field, helped the program grow to $846 million in the 2001 federal budget. The federal No Child Left Behind Act, passed in 2000, continued momentum for after-school services; the program reached a level of $2.7 billion in fiscal year 2007. Nonetheless, progress toward a youth development agenda that integrates federal programs serving youth has moved at a glacial pace.

Although advocacy organizations have proliferated and additional federal programs have been generated at the national level, an important countertrend

has been underway since the early 1980s. For ideological and economic reasons, the movement known as "devolution" has gradually shifted discretion and funding for social welfare programs to state and community levels. Federal programs are increasingly implemented by states and local communities, under the assumption that states and communities are better able to target local needs. Although this strategy allows for some local discretion, most programs remain categorical with funding restricted to targeted problems and populations. In many ways, these categorical restrictions impede youth advocates' efforts to coordinate and integrate services across sectors.

Despite the fragmentation of services and funding at the federal level, some states have developed the capacity to collaborate across service sectors and geographic regions in accordance with a positive youth development perspective. For example, at least twenty-eight states have established collaborative youth councils in an effort to coordinate youth programs and services (Foster, Gieck & Dienst 2005). New York and Iowa are among a handful of states that have advanced statewide policy for youth expressly based in a youth development stance. These states have been able to leverage funding for youth programs, forge links across political silos, and move the center of youth policy debates from a punitive to a more positive developmental outlook.[10] However, most states continue traditional operations, and there has been little movement across categorical lines or agency boundaries to take up a new youth policy agenda. States, by and large, have not to this point become major players in the design of youth development programs and services and youth advocates struggle to broker collaborations across sector and special interest boundaries. In many states, political interests remain tied up in categorical concerns tied to subgroups of youth defined by special needs or ethnicity.

At the Local Level

The most important action for youth takes place on the ground, in neighborhoods and communities. Communities have become integral to reform efforts in large part because families experience the direct effects of failing schools, ineffective drug control programs, and overcrowded jails and juvenile halls at the local level. It is individual parents and kids who suffer from the fragmentation of services, when real problems are artificially disaggregated into distinct and uncoordinated slices and when actual needs fail to map on to categorized, specialized services. And it is here, because of the emergence of vigilant local advocacy groups, that parents and youth experience the empow-

ering effects of participating in actions aimed at improving their well-being and opportunities.

The most innovative and consequential developments for youth are found on the ground, in communities across the country. Youth advocates point to a number of significant changes in policy investments and programs at the local level as evidence that organizations advocating for youth are making concrete differences. Increased public and private investment in after-school programs provide the most dramatic example of attention to youth's needs more broadly considered. Groups such as LA's BEST (Better Educated Students for Tomorrow) in Los Angeles and The After School Corporation (TASC) and Partnership for After School Education (PASE), both in New York City, provide substantive and political leadership around youth development. National youth organizations such as Boys and Girls Clubs of America and Girls, Inc., have moved from the backwaters of youth policy to gain support from both public and private funders as partners in community youth development.

Some public funds at the local level support an approach promoted by youth development activists. The Beacons programs, begun by the Youth Development Institute of the Fund for the City of New York and now operating in cities around the country, offer all-year programming for youth and in many instances to parents and community members. Change in youth policy can also be seen in other cities around the country. Communities such as Savannah, Georgia, Hampton, Virginia, and Redwood City, California, have adopted youth development goals for their youth programs and have used "youth mapping" and "youth budgets" to document the nature and cost of community resources for youth. They place youth in key decision-making roles and support them in carrying out these responsibilities. These examples represent the commitment of significantly more resources and improved organizational relationships to advancing positive youth development principles; nonetheless, they do not yet represent mainstream practices.

Youth Advocacy on the Ground

Organizations advocating for youth at the local level provide the structure for micromobilization to take place. At this level, one does not see social movements on a grand scale. At the local level there are smaller groups organizing around issues of local concern, although, as we will emphasize, such groups are attentive to and influenced by wider social forces. This micromobilization occurs in grassroots organizations and by way of "any small group setting in

which processes of collective attribution are combined with rudimentary forms of organization to produce mobilization for collection action" (McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald 1988, p. 709). As a site for these processes, organizations advocating for youth and community organizers serve as the bridge between different levels of the system—between community members confronting their problems and agency officials from whom they seek assistance or, at a higher level, to elected officials who oversee and allocate resources. In this manner, these organizations often serve as a vital link between the citizen and the state—or between movement and establishment, as our title highlights.

Analytical Levels

We have already pointed out that local organizations are connected to wider systems of organizations. As detailed in the next chapter, we make use of analytical distinctions developed by organizational sociologists to distinguish among the different levels at which organizations operate. This provides us with a more precise language for discussing the linkages between micro and macro levels of activities. We view advocacy organizations as operating simultaneously in interaction with their immediate exchange partners and targets—their "organization set"—in relation to other organizations in the community engaged in the same type of work—their "organization population"—and in relation to wider circles of organizations, including state and national levels that play a role in youth concerns—their "organization field" (Scott & Davis 2007, chapters 9 and 10). Increasingly in modern social systems, local organizational structures and activities are embedded in and penetrated by distant processes and forces. All of the organizations we studied relate to and collaborate with other organizations. Some are connected to large, relatively stable networks that provide support in the form of information, training, and financial resources. And every organization attends closely to what other similar organizations are doing—via direct observation, newsletters, mass media, and the Internet—as they decide how to configure and reconfigure their structure and what strategies and tactics to pursue.

Themes and Contributions

Our focus on organizations advocating for youth provides a useful lens on a relatively under-studied area—youth policy at the local level—as shaped by their local context and more distant forces. Young people grow up in communities, not in programs or categorical initiatives, and local decisions about the re-

sources associated with youth-focused policies and programs—whatever their origin—ultimately matter most in the kinds of experiences they have and the opportunities afforded them. Communities are the settings in which the situated and specific needs of youth can be understood and addressed; communities are the places where professionals, politicians, and civic leaders can establish priorities for investments in their young people, define locally meaningful indicators of positive outcomes, and push for greater integration of resources across sectors, agencies, and age groups. Communities offer the occasion to embed youth programs and resources in a broader local youth development agenda. The local level is where categorical resources are unbundled, monitored, and used. Decades of implementation research demonstrates that, despite the rhetoric, regulatory systems, mandates, and other trappings that accompany categorical state and federal policies, the "policy" that ultimately matters most is the one made and enacted by local officials and service providers (McLaughlin 2006; Pressman & Wildavsky 1973; Weatherley & Lipsky 1977). Youth advocates must confront and maneuver around particular obstacles as they navigate establishment interests to generate supports for young people.

Our local vantage point illuminates an important gap as well. At the local level, many advocacy and community organizing groups press for services in areas where government and the market have fallen short of need, give voice to local concerns, and encourage changes that benefit community residents. Although the lion's share of advocacy efforts occur at the local level (Reid 2001), little systematic attention has been paid to activities at the local level. Most research undertaken on advocacy organizations has focused on national-level groups and their impact on policy formation, especially as seen in congressional debates (see Andrews & Edwards 2004; Boris & Mosher-Williams 1998).[11] Yet, as we have seen, action and actors at micro or local levels differ in consequential ways from those at macro, or state and national, levels. Local political contexts differ as well in terms of partisan alignment, issues, and access (see, for example, Stone 2001). The experiences of the youth advocacy organizations featured here provide insight into the character of advocacy on the ground—its politics, processes, and parameters. What kinds of agenda are local advocacy groups suited to advance? What are the opportunities and constraints particular to the local level? How do local groups engage pluralism and privilege in advocacy for youth?

The focal cases presented here provide concrete examples of strategies and tactics organizations advocating for youth employed in the different urban

contexts of San Francisco and Oakland, California, and so contribute important perspective about how it is possible to advance a positive policy agenda for urban youth. These Bay Area settings present different political opportunity structures, material conditions, youth demographics, and cultural constraints. In short, our approach calls attention to the ways in which *localness* affects the organizations studied.

This research on local youth advocacy also presents an opportunity to consider critical questions that are unexamined by the general literature on advocacy organizations. To understand the built-in tensions confronting advocacy organizations functioning as intermediary organizations, we ask two foundational questions about the work of advocacy and community organizing groups: *What are the structures and strategies that enable organizations advocating for social change to mediate the quicksand of social reform—to operate between movement and establishment? And, what are the opportunities and challenges particular to advocacy for youth at the local level?* The general literature on advocacy organizations provides little guidance on questions of *how* they operate to affect public opinion and public policy. Sociologists have looked at questions of individual participation in social movements and advocacy groups; political scientists have focused on how political institutions and culture influence advocacy and its outcomes (see Andrews & Edwards 2004; Child & Grønbjerg 2007). Neither line of inquiry has considered how advocacy organizations move between citizens and the state, between the powerless and the powerful. In our analyses, we ask how advocacy organizations manage their condition of *betweenness* as they work in the space separating movements and the establishment.

These cases also introduce an issue central to the outcome of advocacy efforts but about which little is known, what we call the *handoff*. Each of our cases uses "outsider" strategies in its efforts to change policy and secure new or different resources for youth. As such, advocacy groups are "frontloaded"; they rely on political, organizational, or other inputs to change the routines of governments and policymaking (Fung 2003). Scholars who examine advocacy efforts, for example, feature influence on agenda setting, shifts in priorities and resource allocation, and entrée to decision makers (see Andrews & Edwards's 2004 synthesis). Yet social policy studies underscore the discomfiting reality that policy adoption (or passage of legislation or acceptance of a new program) does not portend implementation consequences as intended by reformers. Though an essential first step, much more is required to move

policy or practice in the desired direction, especially at the local level—will, capacity, and, especially, tenacity. Advocacy groups' nonsystem or third-party status is both a strength—they can push issues in ways elected officials or bureaucrats cannot—but also a liability in that they cannot honcho the critical implementation phase. No studies of advocacy efforts have, to our knowledge, looked beyond political or bureaucratic acceptance of advocates' demands for change to consider what happened next. Did anticipated changes result? Was implementation true to advocates' mission? What standing do advocates' causes continue to have on the public agenda?

Social movement scholars focus on the mobilization of marginal people and groups around the pursuit of a common issue. Organization scholars concentrate their attention on the operation of established organizations by authoritative officers (McAdam & Scott 2005). Little attention is afforded to the process by which an issue passes "from the streets to the suites"—from the rallies and protest movements occurring in the neighborhoods into the corridors of power and the boardrooms of the establishment.[12] Once an advocacy campaign succeeds at the local level, organizations advocating for urban youth "hand off" their mission to bureaucrats or politicians to carry out. New kinds of actors with different repertoires of action take over. Although we do not follow advocates' agenda into the suites, we do attend to issues local advocates confront as part of the hand off. We consider the constraints and opportunities they encounter as they strive to ensure positive establishment response to their efforts and continued fidelity to their intent.

Youth advocacy and organizing work happens in a particular time and place, within a specific organizational field, and in particular political and social environments. We examine the ways in which the contexts within which organizations work shape what they are able to do on a local level. All of these organizations are immersed in a rich, rapidly changing lattice of ideas, models, opinions, and pressures. We turn in the next chapter to consider in more detail three contexts that affect youth advocacy on the ground and to describe our approach to understanding how the structure and strategies of these organizations work between movement and establishment to create improved opportunities for youth in urban areas.