

CHAPTER 6) INCORPORATION AS SPATIAL NEGOTIATION

The results of this study build a stronger understanding of the circumstances and conditions that are correlated to particular strategies for community development organizations, directly addressing a gap in community development literature. This is accomplished through a comparison of neighborhood cases in three distinct country contexts: Spence and parts of the West End in Winnipeg, Canada, Olneyville in Providence RI in the US, and Nørrebro in Copenhagen, Denmark. The present study also contributes to an emerging literature examining the intermediary character of community development organizations through their role in the incorporation of immigrant residents (Theodore and Martin, 2007; Trudeau and Veronis, 2009; Martin, 2010). Finally, by comparing these three case neighborhoods and focusing on community development, the study also contributes to a growing body of literature that addresses immigration in place and examines how immigrant residents are incorporated into a political economy at the local scale. In keeping with a relational approach to urban comparisons, this study focuses on understanding the quality of an object or set of relationships and the work they do in context rather than establishing specific rules for causal relationships (Ward, 2010). In this case, the focus is on the work of country-specific circumstances in shaping and conditioning the strategies used by community development organizations in their work with states and migrant communities.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SPLIT STRATEGIES

Other research on the role of community development organizations as intermediaries in incorporation has considered the work of these organizations in a quite unitary fashion. These analyses describe the work of organizations as either providing services and contesting government frames (Theodore and Martin, 2007) or providing services and translating government frames (Trudeau and Veronis, 2009). The present study adds nuance to this

discussion through a disaggregation of the work of community development organizations. I explicitly examine organizations' strategies in terms of their relationships up to states and down into communities as well as vernacular negotiations over the production of particular places. The comparison of Spence, Olneyville and Nørrebro in this study is especially instructive, affording the opportunity to examine a diverse range of contexts and strategies.

In the case neighborhoods considered in this study, organizations differ in important ways in terms of their strategies towards states, as opposed their strategies towards communities generally and immigrant residents in particular. In both the US and Danish cases, the general trend is for organizations to specifically **contest** government frames around immigrant residents, settlement and community development, while in the Canadian case, the relationship of organizations to state actors is primarily one of **acceptance** and **cooperation**. In the other direction, in both Canada and Denmark, there is a relatively **limited participation** on the part of immigrant residents, with residents primarily in client roles. In the US, there is a tendency towards **greater participation** of immigrant residents, with organizations relying on residents to play stronger and more varied roles within organizational strategies, including entering into leadership positions and building relationships outside the organization.

One way of understanding this split between strategies towards states and residents is to consider context – especially government policy and programs – in terms of both resource and interpretive effects. Resource effects are the spoils and incentives created through policies, including changes in administrative capacities, organizing niches, and financing (Pierson, 1993). Interpretive effects are the ways in which policies act as “sources of information and meaning” (Pierson, 1993: 596) and work to shape and condition possibilities for participation and membership (Skocpol, 1992; Mettler and Soss, 2004).

In the US and Danish cases, the contestation towards states is correlated with negative, neglectful and politicized state frames around immigration and immigrant residents, while Canadian government frames towards immigrant residents during the study period were focused primarily on economic growth. Staff at various organizations explicitly described the ways in which state frames worked to create meaning and to direct organizational strategies. For example, towards the end of an interview in Denmark, staff involved in the *helhedsplaner* began to talk about their desire to better connect their work to discussions and debates in broader Danish society. They explained that this new perspective was necessary because of the switch in government perspectives from “warm hearts to cold hands” (Copenhagen, s1), that is, from a perspective of help and care to a more punitive and administrative approach to governance.

The relationships between organizations and residents are better understood through resource effects. In the Canadian and Danish cases, the greater proportion of state funding correlates with greater professionalization in these organizations and fewer roles for immigrant residents, particularly when compared to the US case. Intra-case variation, however, also suggests that further study of the correlation between added resources and lower participation would be a fruitful avenue of research. The two focus organizations in Olneyville – Olneyville Housing Corporation (OHC) and Olneyville Neighborhood Association (ONA), for example, have increasingly divergent reconfigurations of their administrative capacities, organizing niches, and financing over the course of the study period. This correlates with both a divergence in levels of government support and the type and level of immigrant resident participation. ONA increasingly rejects government funding, growing increasingly member-run, while OHC marginalizes its resident engagement programs in favor of a development agenda supported through programs such as HUD's Choice Neighborhood initiative.

A relational approach to urban comparisons is in many ways also a contingent approach, and so while this study adds nuance to our understanding of the processes it examines, it also suggests new puzzles. Primary among these is the need to better understand and characterize the trade-offs between resources and opportunities for participation in the work of community development organizations, and to better characterize how these relationships might work across contexts.

RESIDENTS NEGOTIATING IN PLACE

Residents in all three cases have a sense of the commitment to place that developed over time, whether their migration had been voluntary or out of necessity. Residents also have critiques of places in which they live, and of the resources available to them. These critiques are, however, infused with care and attachment. Echoing the findings of other research (Banting, 2000; Leitner and Ehrkamp, 2006), resident critiques were related to the desire to gain greater access to local political economies and to their ability – or lack thereof – to increase their participation in negotiations over spatial production. Additionally, residents offered critiques that specifically identified aspects of receiving institutions that limited residents' ability to gain access to resources and information and to participate fully. Finally, resident critiques and suggestions identified a type of DIY-T (do it yourself-together) ethos in terms of how people described what self-sufficiency or independence might look like for them, including taking care of family members from different generations, and a desire to contribute and to give back to the programs, organizations, and institutions that had helped them along the way.

Specifically in terms of housing, one important finding was the quite limited focus residents put on the economic or fiscal aspects of their homes. Housing was referred to as an investment particularly in the Canadian case, but primarily as an investment in place and as a

claim to citizenship and belonging, as opposed to a purely financial investment. Particularly in the US case, housing was also described as something to worry about in terms of finding affordable and acceptable housing, and finding the means to keep and maintain it. In the Canadian case, the myth of homeownership through debt (Stone, 2006) was prevalent, as residents struggled to purchase homes, seeing this as the only tenure option for stable, secure housing. In Denmark, where a wider variety of housing tenure types is available, the focus on owning a home outright is much less prevalent; access to different tenure types, however, also appears to be increasingly limited, with people being filtered according to the country from which they have migrated and according to their access to informal networks that help to connect people to formal resources including housing. Again, while living separately is not *a priori* problematic for a polity or community, the challenge in terms of incorporation and moving towards membership lies in the differences in resources for and narrative around these different housing types. This is especially true in terms of the actions of non-immigrant residents, organizations, institutions and the state.

In spite of limitations and challenges, immigrant residents in all cases are creating opportunities to produce spaces and places they need and want, even if these are at quite intimate scales within their own homes, cultural communities, or within organizations. In terms of participation in processes at a more general scale, immigrant residents, and particularly immigrant residents living in these predominantly low-income neighborhoods, are less able to participate fully in negotiations over spaces of incorporation. In the US case neighborhood, limitations include the lack of resources in place, as well as the ways in which scenes and communities are developing along increasingly separate lines. In the Danish case neighborhood, small, stable places are being created, for example through the *helhedspalner*, where residents can engage in productions of space. These spaces are, however, increasingly and specifically

separated from discourses and negotiations over immigration and social welfare undertaken by state actors and citizens at the scale of the city and country. The Canadian case neighborhood is the most contradictory in some ways. There is specific support for settlement, and this is the case where state frames around immigration and immigrant residents are the least hostile. It is, however, also the case where immigrant residents are in many ways the most isolated from general negotiations over space and from opportunities to participate in political communities, to offer critiques, and to engage meaningfully in the production of the places they need and want.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

In many ways, this project has chronicled a moment at the zenith of neoliberalization, dealing with the impact of policies that boldly promised to reinvent governments, and that, even in the Nordic region, were unapologetic in their insistence on private solutions to social questions. This has also been a period that has seen liberal actors take on increasingly conservative and nationalist perspectives and partners to maintain order, and sustain their governments. For example, we see this in increases in welfare chauvinism, particularly in the US and Denmark, during the study period. Moving out of the study period and into the present moment, however, it would appear that liberal actors have perhaps underestimated their more regressive partners as we enter what appears to be an age of rampant and unapologetic conservative austerity. We see this most clearly in the UK with the austerity programs of the Conservative-Liberal Democratic coalition government at Westminster defunding council housing, along with general social welfare supports. We also see this in the shifts in rhetoric around immigration in Canada with, for example, the current Conservative government enacting legislation to limit the ability of private actors to sponsor people as refugees, and with legislation attempting to limit health care provisions for many immigrant residents, particularly people who arrived as refugees.

Examining shifts in government policies through the settlement and incorporation of immigrant residents is important because of the ways in which many immigrant residents, particularly those with lower incomes or less wealth, are disproportionately impacted by regressive urban policies. However, studying the lives, experiences and evaluations of immigrant residents also sheds light on membership, urban and community development more broadly. This is because 'immigrant' is one of the social formations most strictly defined by and through state actors, state actions, and nation-state boundaries, and as such provides an explicit view of the ways in which government actions impact urban residents more generally.

Much of the success of neoliberalization, and the subsequent move towards conservative austerity, has been facilitated by a retreat from engagement with states on the part of actors supporting left radical and critical initiatives. However, the comparison in this study provides a wide variety of models, ideas and combinations of engagement with states and communities that suggest new possibilities for an engagement with the state that moves towards greater equity and deeper democracy. The work of some organizations in Denmark is particularly instructive. Far from simply translating neoliberal frames into everyday experiences and negotiations (Trudeau and Veronis, 2009), these organizations are in a sense 'mistranslating' these frames. For example, resident interactions with the Ghetto Plan in Mjølneparken and Mimerskvarter are filtered through the work of community development organizations to strengthen frames around states as institutions of solidarity and care rather than support individual enterprise and risk. In these ways the work of these organizations also broaden rather than narrow possible definitions for membership and belonging.

The addition of the voices, narratives and evaluations of immigrant residents is a key contribution of the current study, and this addition suggests new avenues and perspectives for

research. Particularly salient are the ways in which immigrant residents in this study describe their homes as places of security, identity, and as places that link people to the polity, thus helping them to stake a claim in place. This suggests the need to reorient political work and critical research away from 'the house' and towards 'homes spaces' in order to build understanding and ultimately policies and programs around the aspects described as most important and desirable by residents. To facilitate this reorientation, towards the end of every resident interview, I asked residents to describe their perfect place to live. Throughout the interviews, residents described a variety of settings, most of which extended beyond their own front doors and into their streets, communities and cities, centering on the idea of having stable, safe places to live. Residents spoke about not having to struggle through every day, having enough space for family to come and visit or stay, or living in a neighborhood where you knew, spoke to and worked with neighbors. And so I'd like to hand over the last words to residents, and specifically to one resident in Winnipeg whose response encapsulates the importance of home first as shelter, but also as a key site for social and political reproduction:

Home is a very big thing – like the house physical house – to me. It's just, you know, those are the main things that you need for living, right: home, food, and you know, where you sleep, and, you know, your clothes, you need the clothes, right. [...] the house problem, as you know, in general in Winnipeg is big. There's no rental thing, and I wish I had money, I'd buy those boarded houses and renovate them, and provided for those people. [...] *the first year of where you stay, where you live is what's gonna make you be what you are later. I think first year is the golden year of anyone who is coming as new.* It doesn't have to be Black, white, anyone. And so, uhm, yeah, I think my perfect world would be at least that one year of anyone who is coming new to Canada should have the opportunity to feel that best house, the best support, the care. Because that stays in their heart, and they become that person. And I think that's what happened to me – although I seeked for it – *I think the care that was given to me, I feel like I have to give it back.* So any time I am doing anything, I'm doing a simple job with someone and I'm seeing them smile, I'm like 'Yes I give them back.' (Winnipeg, r5)