

CHAPTER 1) INTRODUCTION

In 2010, the Danish government announced its new Ghetto Plan (*ghettostrategi*), aimed at reducing by half the number of ghettos in Denmark. The accompanying report “From the Ghetto Back to Society: Confronting Parallel Society in Denmark” (*Ghettoen tilbage to samfundet: Et opgør med parallelsamfund i Danmark*), reiterates the official definition of ghettos as “... areas where many of the residents are out of work, where a disproportionate number have been convicted of serious crimes, and where there are many residents who have immigrated from, or are the children of people who have immigrated from non-Western countries”¹ (Denmark, 2010:5). The report also describes these ghettos as areas “...where Danish values are no longer respected/supported.”² (Denmark, 2010: 5) parallel societies where radicalism and criminality are threatening the “safe, rich, free society” Danes have built over generations.

In 2012, I visited some of these so-called ghettos to speak with staff and observe the activities of the organizations that have grown or been developed primarily through new mandates and funding made available by legislation like the Ghetto Plan. I also met with residents of these estates, and in one conversation spoke with a resident who was heavily involved in programs run by a local community development organization. This resident was able to explain the work and goals of the organization, and describe its complex and somewhat convoluted funding arrangements in language that was more clear and informative than some of the responses I received from program staff. When I asked why change had occurred and what had brought about these new organizations and resources in the area, this resident's understanding was that the government “...wanted people to have more opportunities and more social resources” (Copenhagen, r7).

¹ author translation

² author translation

The Ghetto Plan was promoted through popular nationalism, and additionally justified by the supposed threat from radicalized immigrant youth. One of its main policy goals was the dispersal of migrant residents with minimal additional government expenditures through privatized social service delivery. Yet, through the work of the local community development organization, the program became – at least in this resident's experience – an opportunity to gain new resources, to express and explore cultural traditions, and engage more meaningfully in programs in the housing estate. Additionally, this resident perceived it as a program that came from a state with the best interests of immigrant residents at heart.

While the policies and programs of the Ghetto Plan are particular to Denmark, they connect in many ways to larger trends in social welfare and urban policy. Over the past three decades, government actors, supported by economic elite actors, have dismantled much of the infrastructure for social welfare provisions in favor of privatized and market-based solutions to social questions (Hackworth, 2007). These changes have also entailed a rescaling of competencies (Brenner, 2004), with local community development organizations taking on a larger share of responsibility for social welfare. In some cases this is by design, with governments devolving responsibilities directly to these organizations, and in others it has been primarily out of necessity as a perceived need grew in cities and neighborhoods. These are some of the key characteristics of shifts generally described as neoliberalization (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Hackworth, 2007).

The privatization and rescaling of social welfare competencies has directly impacted community development practices. Yet with few exceptions (see Ilcan and Basok, 2004; Martin, 2004), there is still an important gap in the community development literature, with little research connecting the shifts in government policies and programs to changes in community

development practices and strategies, and further to impacts on the residents served by community development organizations. Instead, work focuses on the practices of organizations in relative isolation, or on the influence of government actors on local development. This dissertation explicitly addresses the intermediary role of community development organizations with links both “up” to state actors and institutions and “down” into communities and everyday and vernacular negotiations over spatial production. There is a need to better understand how the contemporary context is impacting the character of community development work, including organizational relationships with residents, and the opportunities for resident participation and leadership within organizations, or in communities at large.

The results of this study build a stronger understanding of the types of circumstances and conditions that are correlated to particular strategies for community development organizations, directly addressing the gap in community development literature. This is done through a comparison of case neighborhoods in three distinct country contexts – Canada, the US and Denmark – where it is expected that community development organizations will differ in terms of their navigation of these links up to state actors and institutions and down into communities and everyday and vernacular negotiations over spaces of incorporation. The study also contributes to an emerging literature that examines the intermediary character of community development organizations through the role of these organizations in the incorporation of immigrant residents (Theodore and Martin, 2007; Trudeau and Veronis, 2009; Martin, 2010). Finally, by comparing and focusing on community development, the study also contributes to the growing literature addressing place in incorporation, and examining how immigrant residents are incorporated into a political economy at the local scale.

COMPARING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND INCORPORATION

Community Development and Housing

Community development is in many ways the work between physical planning and individual social work. It is social planning ideally aimed at improving an area in ways that increase economic equity, as well as the beauty and sustainability of the places where we live, work, and play. Additionally, the hope is that community development efforts will offer strategies that deepen and expand democracy. However, community development organizations now range from small community-based and controlled organizations to large development corporations that may be only tangentially connected to the residents of the neighborhoods in which they work. Additionally, the ideals for community development are constrained by the context in which community development organizations and practitioners work (DeFilippis, Fisher, Shragge, 2010). In the contemporary moment, the political, economic, and material conditions produced through policies and programs promoting privatized solutions to social welfare concerns. This is a key characteristic of what is described as neoliberalization, and has become the key institutional context for much community development work. In many settings, researchers have observed increased competition between organizations as they struggle to gain funding and to present their work as a viable and efficient option for urban development (Stoecker, 1997; DeFilippis, Fisher, Shragge, 2010).

In this study, I focus on community development organizations working in the field of housing. Housing is a particularly strong component of community development to examine because of the ways in which housing sits at the intersection of economic, political, cultural and physical concerns. Additionally, housing and home spaces have been at the core of community development work both as the object around which community organizing campaigns have focused, and as the site where community is built. Finally, housing, which is discussed as the

wobbly pillar of social welfare, has been an important target of policies and programs supporting neoliberalization in urban development.

For this project I began with a preliminary round of research examining forty-one organizations working in the widest possible range of community development in each case neighborhood, or with a strong presence or influence in the case neighborhoods. From this group I selected eight focus organizations – each working in housing – for further attention and study. These are the Olneyville Housing Corporation (OHC), and the Olneyville Neighborhood Association (ONA) in Providence; the Spence Neighbourhood Association (SNA), IRCOM (the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba) and New Journey Housing (NJH) in Winnipeg. In Copenhagen the focus organizations are Rabarberland, and the Mjølneparken and Mimerskvarter *helhedsplaner* (comprehensive/holistic projects)³.

Immigration and the Local Scale

Examining shifts in community development practices and the ties to government policies through the settlement and incorporation of immigrant residents is important because of the ways in which many immigrant residents, and particularly those with lower incomes or less wealth, are disproportionately impacted by regressive urban policies. Additionally, studying incorporation through community development provides an opportunity to examine processes of incorporation for immigrant residents at the local scale. In this way, the study also contributes to a growing literature examining the role of place in incorporation (Bolt, Özüekren and Phillips, 2010). This approach supports a relational perspective towards incorporation, considering it as an ongoing process with roles for both immigrant and non-immigrant residents, institutions and organizations (Jones-Correa, 1998; Povrzanović, 2002; Anderson and Black, 2008; Simonsen, 2008).

³ Please see Appendix A for an extended explanation of case selection and methods.

The intermediary role of community development organizations make them an important site to help understand the incorporation of new immigrant residents, and the ways in which the relationships, encounters and conversations in processes of incorporation relate to negotiations over local spatial productions. In the next section I introduce the three case neighborhoods giving a sense of the distinct contexts in which the community development organizations in this study work.

Case Neighborhoods

The case neighborhoods in the study are Spence and parts of the West End in Winnipeg, Manitoba in Canada, Olneyville in Providence Rhode Island (RI) in the US, and Nørrebro in Copenhagen, in Denmark.

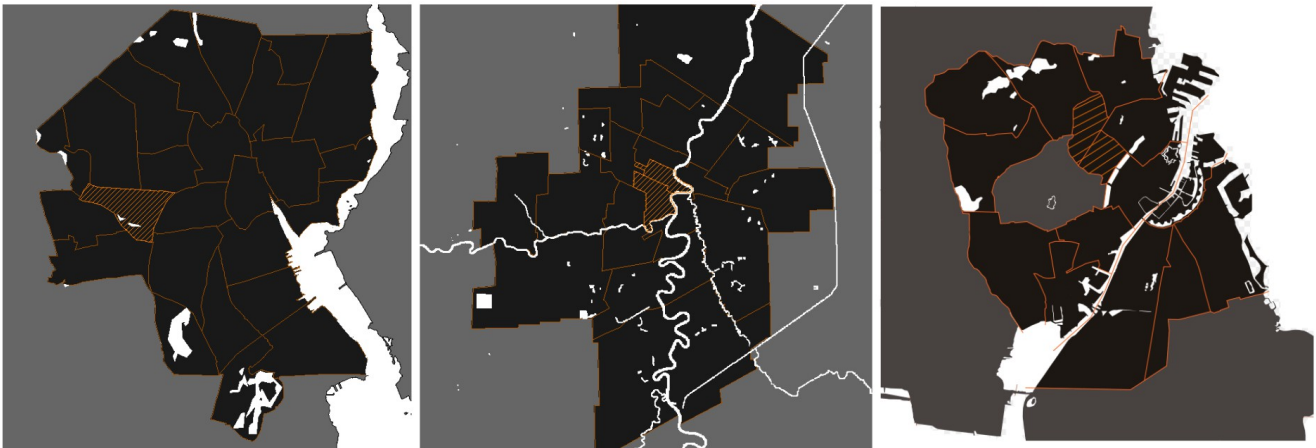


Figure 1: L: Olneyville in Providence, US; C: Spence and the West End in Winnipeg, Canada; R: Nørrebro in Copenhagen, Denmark

Neighborhoods are a particularly salient scale for this study of community development and incorporation. They are not simply small spaces but "uniquely linked unit[s] of social/spatial organization between the forces and institutions of the larger society and the localized routines of individuals in their everyday lives" (Hunter, 1979: 269). Neighborhoods are places produced through the negotiation over interests, use, and visions for future development between individual

and institutional actors at various scales (Martin, 2003).

Each case neighborhood was selected through a combination of inductive and deductive methods. Each case neighborhood is in a city where immigration has rapidly increased during the past ten to fifteen years driving population growth (Figure 2). These are also cities where government and non-governmental responses to immigration and incorporation are changing rapidly. Additionally, the growing immigrant resident population is concentrated in the case neighborhoods, diversifying the area. As such large proportion of residents in each case neighborhood could be impacted by state actions in processes of incorporation. Each case neighborhood also houses predominantly low-income residents, making them areas where economic need and disparity are apparent, and where development interventions can be influential. Finally, each neighborhood is near the city center, and so real estate pressures are high and housing interventions, for example programs supporting affordable housing, are highly visible.

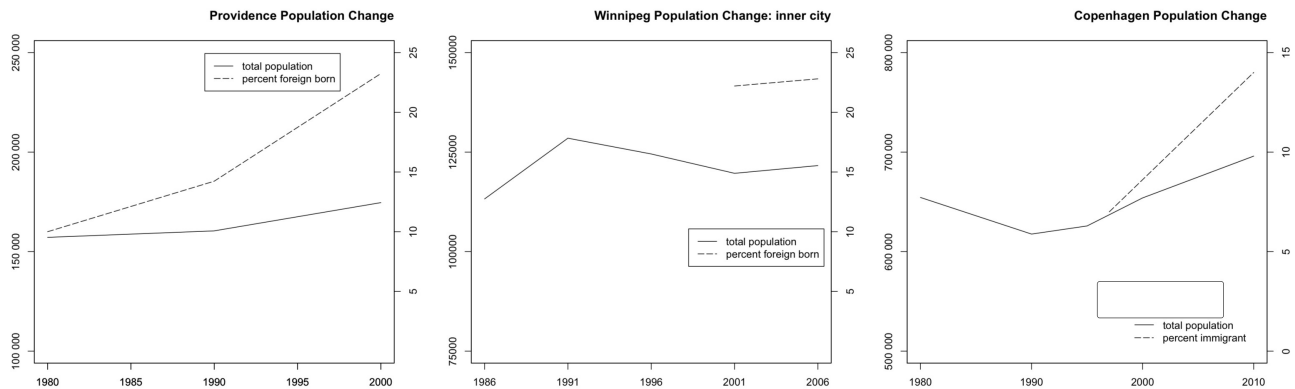


Figure 2: Population and Migration Patterns

I use a mixed-methods approach in this study to understand the current work of community development organizations and their links to government actors and immigrant residents. First, I

use quantitative spatial analysis to set the stage for this study of incorporation and community development, to understand variation across the metropolitan areas of each case and to examine the relationships between settlement and other variables such as the location and costs of different housing types. Additionally, information gathered through in-depth interviews with immigrant residents is used to map the social and emotional geography of the case neighborhoods. I then focus on the governmental and non-governmental institutions that are shaping conditions of incorporation by analyzing government documents. I combine these with secondary data on the neighborhood from policy documents and NGO publications, to better understand the resources and meaning-making involved in actions around immigration and housing by public agencies and private non-governmental actors in each case neighborhood. Finally, I incorporate the understandings, along with the experiences of migrant residents, through in-depth narrative interviews primarily focused on residents who have immigrated since 2000.

RELATIONSHIPS TO STATES AND RESIDENTS – FINDINGS

In an early framing of the hypothesis for this project, I started with the simple idea that increased government resources for housing, community development and settlement would lead to greater resources for community-based programs and to greater cooperation between organizations and communities. Based on this hypothesis, I expected the US and Danish cases to be the furthest apart, and for recent government changes in Canada, including the devolution of housing competences, would mean the Canadian case neighborhood would be moving closer to conditions in the US case.

Instead, there are striking similarities between the US and Danish case neighborhoods. In both cases, organizational staff identify negative, neglectful or politicized frames of states towards

immigrant residents as leading their organizations to take a politicized approach to their work and their relationship to governments, specifically contesting government frames around immigrant residents, settlement and community development. In the Canadian case neighborhood, the relationship of organizations to state actors was primarily one of acceptance and cooperation during the study period.

In terms of the relationship of these organizations to communities and immigrant residents in both Canada and Denmark, the on-average greater resources for community development with immigrant residents has supported greater organizational professionalization, correlated with limited participation of immigrant residents beyond client roles. Even as public and private actors in Canada and Denmark continue to describe these organizations as a more democratic alternative to state run initiatives, because of community development organizations' supposed proximity to communities and residents. Residents in these cases also identified this correlation between professionalization and a lack of participation. In the US case, the general lack of resources specifically correlated with greater participation and organizations relying on residents to play stronger and more varied roles within organizations, including leadership positions. In terms of the role of community development organizations, these findings describe a situation in which, across these three cases, the organizations with the strongest ability to negotiate are also often the least connected and accountable to immigrant residents. As such the organizations with greater resources are also least likely to provide opportunities for residents to be able to engage deeply in spatial negotiations, and to facilitate an active incorporation into local political economies.

In many ways, these results are unexpected, first in terms of the ways in which organizations' relationships to states and communities are internally divided. Danish and US

organizations are largely in a position of contestation with the state, while Canadian organizations are in a position of acceptance and cooperation. In their relationships with immigrant residents, Canadian and Danish organizations generally exhibit lower levels of meaningful participation, while in the US case, community development organizations are more likely to offer immigrant residents varied roles including leadership positions. Secondly, the negative correlation between available resources and levels of cooperation is an unexpected finding. The results of the study add nuance to the understanding of the conditions that correlate with particular community development strategies, by complicating our understanding of the relationships between the context of community development work – especially in terms of state policies and programs. As such the results also raise new questions and puzzles for future research. Foremost among these is the need to better understand and characterize the apparent tradeoffs between obtaining resources and providing opportunities for participation for residents in the work of community development organizations, including a stronger understanding of how these tradeoffs develop over time.

THE DISSERTATION'S STRUCTURE

The dissertation is divided into five further chapters. In Chapter 2) I extend the discussion of current understandings of community development. I examine literature that addresses the impact of the institutional context on the work of community development organizations and practitioners. As well examining studies that address the relationships between community development and the incorporation of immigrant residents.

In Chapter 3) I begin by describing the conditions in each case to give a sense of the material conditions in which negotiations over space and incorporation are taking place. Section 1) focuses on the built environment and population geographies of the case neighborhoods, their

cities and metropolitan areas. I begin by looking at the amount and location of housing that is affordable to low income residents and accessible and acceptable to immigrant residents. I then examine the concentration of immigrant residents, and finally analyze the covariance of selected characteristics with the settlement patterns of new immigrant residents. In Section 2) I turn towards the social and emotional geographies of these spaces of incorporation, drawing primarily on information from in-depth resident interviews to gain a stronger understanding of the experiences of immigrant residents in each case. This also serves as a starting point to understand the ways in which policy and programs are shaping spaces of incorporation. This includes the role of housing and neighborhoods in conditioning the possibilities for individuals and communities to participate in negotiations over spatial production and use, and to act and create partnerships to produce the places they need and want.

Chapter 4) examines the multi-scalar processes shaping and conditioning the spaces of incorporation discussed in the previous chapter. Here the focus is on the ways in which shifts in state actions and state-non-state relationships – shifts described as neoliberalization – are impacting the material outcomes in terms of urban and housing development; the increasing role of community development organizations; and the roles community development organizations are offering to immigrant residents in terms of participation in negotiations over spaces of incorporation. The first section of the chapter specifically examines the changes in government policy and programs at various scales in terms of housing and settlement, examining the shifting resources as well as governance and organizing opportunities and niches that are arising. The second section examines the role of local housing and community development organizations in processes of incorporation. Here the focus is particularly on the role of community development actors in mediating and translating between states and communities under shifting circumstances.

Chapter 5) draws on data from in-depth interviews with immigrant residents in each case, providing insight into resident perspectives on the institutions shaping and conditioning their lives and the spaces in which they live, work, and play. Additionally, examining their understanding of the ways in which they are being disciplined by policies and programs, and the ways in which they can engage with formal institutions and organizations. Additionally, these interviews provide insight into political behavior in terms of both formal and informal actions, and finally the ways in which residents are framing their own work, along with the role of states, non-profit organizations and their homes, both in their own lives and in terms of their opportunities for participation and membership.

Finally, Chapter 6) provides a synthesis of the results of the study, highlighting the varied strategies of community development organizations in terms of their links up to state actors and institutions and down into communities and everyday and vernacular negotiations over spaces of incorporation. While neoliberalization has reshaped government programs and incorporation in each case neighborhood, there are also opportunities to work with governments in ways that will support deeper engagement of immigrant residents. This is particularly important as this study chronicles a period that could be described as the zenith of neoliberalization, and as we find ourselves moving into a period of unabashed conservative austerity.

The conclusions in this dissertation open new puzzles, especially the mismatch between organizational resources and the engagement and participation of immigrant residents. There is a need and opportunity for further research addressing necessary and possible policy, programmatic and organizational shifts to address this mismatch and enable deeper immigrant resident control over negotiations over their homes and neighborhoods. In addition to raising these questions for further investigation, the study adds significant nuance to the debate around

the role of community development organizations in incorporation and the conditions under which particular combinations of strategies are adopted. Finally, through the inclusion of immigrant resident voices, the dissertation also opens new and exciting avenues of research in community development and incorporation studies. 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 most important and desirable to residents themselves.