CHAPTER 2) COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS
– A BRIDGE BETWEEN STATES AND RESIDENTS

Community development is in many ways the work in between physical planning and individual social work. It is social planning ideally aimed at improving an area in ways that increase economic equity, through sustainable methods to produce more healthy and beautiful places for us to live, work and play. Additionally, the hope is that community development work will also involve strategies that deepen and expand democracy. The day-to-day practices of community development, however, are shaped and conditioned by the context of the work and the history of the field. Compromises are always made between the idealized goals of community development and the possibility for practice and outcomes at any given time and place.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES IN CONTEXT

The history of community development as a separate field from public health, physical planning or labor organizing can in many ways be traced to the rise of the settlement house movement during the 1900s (Gittell and Shtob, 1980; Sandercock, 2003; Vitiello, 2009). The settlement house movement started in the UK but spread to continental Europe and Canada and took root to a great extent in the US. Settlement houses were primarily founded in growing industrial cities and in neighborhoods with large rural migrant and international immigrant populations. Volunteers in the settlement house movement – often young, educated women – were encouraged to make their homes in target neighborhoods and were instructed to moved away from programs focused simply on moral uplift and towards literacy training, nutrition courses, vocational training, and services oriented towards resident needs, including daycare services (Gittell and Shtob, 1980; DeFilippis, Fisher, Shragge, 2010). While the remnants of the

settlement house movement can still be seen in many US cities, in Europe, and to a certain extent in Canada, much of the work of these early community development professionals was eventually folded in to state-supported welfare programs in the 1900s and especially during the post-WWII period.

In the US, the period after the Second World War is described as an anti-canonical moment for community development, with local organizing and urban policy supporting anti-democratic initiatives (DeFilippis, Fisher, Shragge, 2010). This was the period of white-flight, when white, heteronormative, and middle-class families were incentivized to move into newly-built suburbs. At the same time, redlining, as well as restrictive convents, kept others, especially families of color, out of the same areas. Meanwhile, in central cities programs such as Urban Renewal – a program that James Baldwin described as Negro-Removal – reshaped cities across the US, often bulldozing African-American neighborhoods to build the very highways that would enable suburban dwellers to abandon the inner-cities (Hayden, 2004).

Community development in the 1960s and 1970s was in many ways a response to the reactionary period of the 1940s and 1950s and continues to influence contemporary community development practices. Community development in the 1960s was rooted in resident actions and organizing within neighborhoods that were heavily impacted by chronic disinvestment and race-based discrimination. This often led to an oppositional style of organizing that also attracted young activists and organizers from outside of the affected communities (Stall and Stoecker, 1998). This grassroots organizing style of community development was also facilitated by a brief window of place-based policies and programs from the federal government (O'Connor, 1999). Even here, however, programs were selective with particular cities and neighborhoods receiving funding based on external perception of need, or internal abilities to self-advocate leading to

competition between cities and groups within cities. Further, these programs were specifically residual and served to further materially and rhetorically separate economic development – including housing development – aimed at equity from economic development aimed at growth. This division has proscribed political support for equity programs, and helps to divert attention away from the state funding that continues to support so-called private development (O'Connor, 1999; Hayden, 2004).

A proliferation of registered non-profit community development organizations began in the 1980s and 1990s. While some organizations were new, others were the formally authorized and professionalized remains of past community-based organizing groups. This professionalization was in many cases a response to the increasing complexity of community development work, which adopted, for example, an increased focus on large-scale real estate development. The formation of recognized non-profit organizations also allowed organizers to take advantage of resources and funding from both the public sector and private foundations. The professionalization of these community development organizations has in many cases resulted in a narrowing of their scope, with a greater focus on real estate development, service delivery, or economic community building. The shift has also often resulted in a blunting of more overtly political or oppositional community development work (DeFilippis, Fisher, Shragge, 2010).

CONTEMPORARY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND NEOLIBERALIZATION

Since the 1970s state actors have dismantled much of the infrastructure for social welfare provisions in favor of privatized and market-based solutions to social questions. This shift was undertaken with the support of economic elite actors, and through narratives of government failure and inefficiencies (Hackworth, 2007; Hackworth, 2009). These changes have also entailed a rescaling of competencies (Brenner, 2004), with a greater focus being placed on "the local" as

the most appropriate scale for social welfare provisions (Hart, 2004). These shifts and realignment of social welfare competences are some of the key characteristics of what is described as neoliberalization (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Hackworth, 2007).

A key internal contradiction of neoliberalization is that the new structures and political cultures necessary to promote processes of neoliberalization do not develop simply through a retreat or reduction of state expenditures and services – a roll-back phase. Instead there is a need for processes of "destructive construction," including a roll-out phase where state institutions are reformed and resources are redirected to serve the aims of neoliberalizing actors (Brenner, 2004; Peck, Theodore and Brenner, 2009). This leads to a "variegated capitalism" where in spite of common motivations, processes of neoliberalization act as an add-on to local political cultures and institutions resulting in a patchwork of place-specific policies and programs (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Peck and Tickell, 2002; Christopherson, 2011). As such nation-states remain an important site not just of study, but also of action and contestation shaping and conditioning possibilities for action at various scales (Christopherson, 2011).

As in previous periods, the economic, social and political context of community development work, including the levels of both private and public support, and the animating spirit of that support, is shaping and conditioning community development organizations' work. Context impacts organizational configurations, programmatic and staffing choices, and the political perspectives an organization articulates (Martin, 2004; DeFilippis, Fisher, Shragge, 2010). With neoliberalization as the contemporary institutional context for community development, there has been a rise in the number of community development organizations, as these organizations take on a larger share of responsibility for social welfare. In some cases, this larger share of responsibility came about by design, with state actors at various scales shifting

responsibilities on to these organizations. In other cases, non-profit actors are taking on new responsibilities in response to observed growing needs. Organizations often work without the needed resources, or without the ability to raise the resources sufficient for their news roles and responsibilities (Silver, 2011). Further, these shifts, particularly in terms of funding, have been observed to increase competition between organizations and make cooperation more difficult (Newman and Lake, 2006).

While there is a growing literature on the impact of neoliberalization on organizations and the relationships between organizations, with a few exceptions (Ilcan and Basok, 2004; Martin, 2004) there is still little work available which examines the impact of neoliberalization in terms of the role of community development organizations as intermediaries. In other words, the impact of neoliberalization on the up-and-down work of community development organizations and practitioners in translating between state policies and programs and the everyday and vernacular experiences and negotiations of the residents. There is a need to better understand how the contemporary context is impacting the character of community development work in terms of organizational relationships with residents and the opportunities for resident participation and leadership within the work.

CONTEMPORARY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND INCORPORATION

The social, political and economic incorporation of migrant residents was one of the earliest concerns of community development practitioners (Vitiello, 2009). In the contemporary moment, with high rates of international migration and new destinations for settlement, community development practitioners and researchers are again turning their attention towards migrant communities.

In terms of community development research, previous studies have examined

participation in more formal settings including, for example, community planning processes (Hum, 2010; Kondo, 2012), or the large-scale political protest and mobilization of immigrant residents (Varsanyi, 2005; Benjamin-Alvarado, DeSipio and Montoya, 2009). Others focus on the responses of those formal institutions to these new populations (Clavel and Kudva, 2004; Jones-Correa, 2008; Marrow, 2009; Martinez, 2011; Kondo, 2012).

Other research explores an expansive range of participation and engagement of immigrant communities and immigrant-resident serving organizations. This work looks beyond classic and formal civic and political participation to critique the notion that increased diversity in cities has led to less civic engagement (Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad, 2008). For example, research has been undertaken which examines the links between the work of service organizations in strengthening the social networks of immigrant communities, bridging between communities and outside institutions, and allowing for advocacy around further resources for immigrant communities (Cordero-Guzmán, 2007).

Little research, however, directly addresses the role of neoliberalizing processes in shaping and conditioning the work of community development organizations as intermediaries between governments and immigrant residents. Additionally, the small amount of literature that explicitly addresses these questions has produced varied analyses and conclusions in terms of the role of community development organizations. In some cases, researchers have characterized the work of these organizations as a new 'immigrant civil society', "an increasingly important political force that frames policy choices, articulates political demands, and carries out a variety of forms of political action" (Theodore and Martin, 2007: 283). In the work focused on community development organizations as part of an immigrant civil society, organizations such as day labor centers in the US are identified as representing immigrant residents and facilitating immigrant

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community participation in various aspects of formal engagement with states, including direct lobbying or engagement with the political state, participation in urban and regional planning processes, and protests (Theodore and Martin, 2007; Martin, 2010). Other literature concludes that the work of community development and service organizations, for example settlement organizations in the US and Canada, is disciplining migrant residents in patterns of neoliberal citizenship/behavior. This is specifically observed in terms of a focus in the work of these organizations on resident economic self-sufficiency, and on residents taking on greater personal risk and responsibility around questions of social welfare (Trudeau and Veronis, 2009; Veronis, 2010). There is a stalemate between these two perspectives on the one hand – community development organizations are described as agents of contestation, and on the other translation of frames supporting neoliberalization.

A major contribution of the present study is the work it does to untangle some of these conflicting findings. It does so by strengthening our understanding of what conditions are correlated with various organizational responses in community development to both neoliberalization and the needs of immigrant residents. I find that organizations seldom simply accept and translate state frames, instead attempting to influence government actors and institutions. These attempts can not, however, always be described as confrontational, and additionally organizations with greater resources also often do not include residents as participants in their encounters with state actors.

INCORPORATION AND PLACE

Examining incorporation and opportunities for membership and participation for immigrant residents in community development also offers important possibilities for understanding the role of place in immigration and incorporation. Studying the role of

community development organizations also helps to move away from the practice of focusing primarily on the actions of immigrant residents and communities in measurements of incorporation. It is insufficient to concentrate exclusively, or even primarily, on the choices or individual cultures of immigrant communities to understand or evaluate incorporation processes. Indeed, to do so ignores the role of expressly exclusionary structures and institutions in place, such as racism or welfare chauvinism (Banting, 2000; Povrzanovíc Frykman, 2001; Bolt, Özüekren and Phillips, 2010). Instead, there is a need to understand the role of non-migrant institutions, organizations and residents in raising or lowering the costs of incorporation (Jones-Correa, 1998; Banting, 2000; Povrzanovíc Frykman, 2001; Anderson and Black, 2008).

A relational approach to incorporation takes into account the idea that incorporation is an ongoing process of interactions, encounters and conversations with roles and responsibilities for both immigrant and non-immigrant actors. Two major types of interactions involved in incorporation are described as structural incorporation, which takes place between immigrant residents and states, and cultural incorporation, which takes place between immigrant and non-immigrant individuals and communities (Emerek 2003; Frieders, 2008; Simonsen, 2008). It is important to note, however, that much of the process of incorporation also occurs in the interstitial spaces between the structural and cultural, and through institutions at the mezzo-scales that immigrant residents can "use to assist them in the settlement process" (Veronis, 2010: 179). Community development organizations often fall into this mezzo-scale, bridging between states and communities, and as such could play an important place-specific role in the incorporation experiences of immigrant residents.

The second major contribution of this study is to examine questions of immigration and incorporation in place by considering community development organizations as bridge

institutions between states and residents. In this way, the study provides an opportunity to examine how local non-profit institutions in varied state contexts influence the process of incorporation.

HOUSING AND HOME SPACES

As I describe above, community development practices cover a wide variety of areas including youth engagement, labor development, environmental justice and political organizing; however, in the current research project, I focus primarily on organizations working in and around housing.

Housing provides a particularly strong lens through which to understand the role of community development organizations as intermediaries between state programs and policies and immigrant resident incorporation. Sitting at the intersection of economic, political, cultural and physical concerns, housing has been a particularly important target in processes of urban development informed by neoliberalizing ideals. Social housing in particular – already described as the wobbly pillar of the welfare state – has been targeted by new urban policies. In many jurisdictions the outcomes of recent housing policies and programs has been that state-owned and non-profit housing have been variously privatized, actively neglected, and re-commodified. These initiatives have resulted in an increase in privatized responsibilities around housing, particularly for low-income residents (Crump, 2002; Flint, 2006; McKee, 2011), as well as direct dispersal and displacement of low-income residents and social housing units (Slater, 2008; Goetz, 2011; Silver 2011). Finally, these processes are producing spaces in which new social-spatial norms are introduced and enforced, and as such, even residents who are not directly displaced experience spatial disenfranchisement (Uitermark and Duyvendak, 2007; Larsen and Lund Hansen, 2008; Brown-Saracino, 2010).

Despite, or in fact because of, the many forces confronting them, housing and home spaces, have also been sites of resistance for urban residents and organizations. Various strategies resisting urban development have focused on property, with the promotion of collectivized ownership (Wright, 2006), the targeting of private developers through community stabilization funds, and other set-aside programs (Theodore and Martin, 2007; Walczak, 2008). In other cases, the focus has been on the social aspect of housing, promoting the ability of residents to rebuild from within and set their own community development goals (Sousa and Quarter, 2004; Silver, 2011), or developing approaches for everyday political engagement and resistance (Williams, 2004; Baranski, 2007; McKee, 2011). There is, however, a limited understanding of how, when and where any given responses might arise, or what connections exist between government actions and the type of actions residents pursue, as well as the scale, timbre and sphere of residents' behavior. In the present study I address these questions by examining housing community development organizations, looking at them as intermediaries between state policies and programs and resident actions.

CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I situate the current research project within a body of literature on community development, focusing on the ways in which context – including state policies and programs – have influenced the work both historically and in the contemporary moment. At present, neoliberalization has come to characterize the institutional context for much community development work, impacting the programmatic choices and structures of many community development organizations. There is, however, currently little research explicitly examining community development organizations as intermediaries between state policies and programs and the everyday and vernacular experiences of residents. The current research project sets out

to fill this gap in our understanding by comparing community development housing

organizations in case neighborhoods in Canada, the US and Denmark and examining the role of

community development in the incorporation of immigrant residents.

In the next chapter, I begin to examine the case neighborhoods, describing the conditions

in each through quantitative spatial analysis, as well as an analysis of the descriptions,

understandings and experiences of immigrant residents in each case neighborhood.