

Building Community Citizens: Claiming the Right to Place-making in the City

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Summary. This paper examines how citizenship operates in urban community-building programmes, particularly in the comprehensive community-building initiative (CCI) model. We argue that the current context shaping cities today gives rise to flexibility in citizenship and that this flexibility emerges as a key component by which resident and non-resident stakeholders position themselves to make claims to participate in CCIs. We posit that, while the CCI model is committed to being ‘resident-driven’, the operative function of citizenship creates a hindrance rather than an opportunity for local resident involvement. We fortify this thesis with a case study from our experience in CCIs.

Introduction

In this paper, we argue that an emergent notion of flexible citizenship is demonstrative of the ways that power operates in shaping many changes in cities today. This thesis is geared particularly to community-building practices that are part of larger urban revitalisation schemes in the US.¹ We hold that those who are willing and able to access flexibility in citizenship can have greater influence on how urban areas take shape and that the power relations between those competing for the right to urban space serve to hinder many people’s ability to achieve the status of being flexible citizens. We argue that citizenship is a powerful discursive mechanism that interpolates and articulates an identity for those claiming rights to urban areas. The discursive engagement of flexible citizenship represents real power relations

among participants in community-building initiatives and contributes to material conditions of everyday life, especially for impoverished neighbourhood residents who are receiving even fewer guarantees from society in the post-welfare state. A key component of this argument is that the meaning of citizenship has shifted from being a given status to being a performative act.

More discretely, citizenship has always been a hybrid between being a given status and performative act. What this paper sets out to explore is how community-building provides an example of a larger trend that shifts the balance of that hybridity. We argue that there has been a shift in the meaning of citizenship from being primarily guaranteed as a status (although a status dependent on certain performative acts) to being primarily

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guaranteed as a performative act (although still only accessible to those of a certain status). In moving towards the performative, the notion of flexibility takes on importance and does the ideological work to reframe who can be a citizen, what a citizen can do and how citizenship is important to claim one's right to the city and the production of that space.

This shift parallels changes in the political, economic and cultural spheres as to how space and place are produced. By space and place, we mean both the locales in which structural and agentic processes give rise to the morphology and social meaning of locales (place), as well as the means of production of locales (space). We draw these meanings from Lefebvre (Lefebvre, 1976, 1991, 1996; also see Gottdiener, 1994). While we do not see an easy distinction between space and place, we do not think that the context of this thesis allows for a collapsing of the two concepts into a unified (but not unitary) 'splace' (Doel, 1999). In this sense, place-making is participation in both the production of meaning and in the means of production of a locale. Lefebvre frames the struggle of place-making around the rights to the city. We see this as a contested process in which citizenship plays a key, mediating role.

Post-industrial Place-making in Devolution

Cities are important nodes in the post-Fordist social formation, characterised in part by a regime of flexible capital accumulation and the information networks of a globalising world (Fainstein and Campbell, 1996; Harvey, 1989; Logan and Molotch, 1987; Sassen, 1994). This form of globalisation relies upon the spatial mobility of capital, information and resources through mobile networks of accumulation as well as a cultural economy of symbols and status. Crises in capitalism are mediated through this mobility and flexibility by a 'cool' connection to place (Gottdiener, 1986; Turner, 2000). As modes of accumulation have become more

and more flexible, a political economy of place has emerged to mediate the competition for capital among different places (Scott, 2000). This political economy of place is a process by which cities compete to draw capital to a place and in effect puts places in a market.

Public-private ventures in urban areas have been at the forefront of this political economy of place by regenerating city infrastructure specifically to attract capital. Examples include: building convention centres and sports complexes, gentrifying older industrial areas and housing, creating Business Improvement Districts and other policy-backed mechanisms for privatisation of services and providing direct monetary incentives for businesses to locate in urban centres. Such efforts take advantage of political, economic and cultural shifts in contemporary society that legitimate providing an outlet for flexible modes of accumulation which provide material benefits to political, economic and cultural élites (one example would be the rise of artists' co-operative districts and the subsequent revalorisation of neighbourhoods devastated by deindustrialisation, such as SoHo in New York). Paradoxically, this political economy of place and its material rewards emerge because of spatial flexibility, while attempting to achieve fixity upon modes of accumulation by setting them in place (Harvey, 1985). This fixity emerges as a mechanism of regulation in this new mode of accumulation. This fixity is expressed both discursively through representations of place (New York City as 'The Capital of the World') and the material infrastructure built into places (such as the post-war skyline of New York City that houses multinational corporations in finance, insurance and real estate (Fitch, 1993)).

But the desire to regenerate urban areas has not been solely a manifestation of political-economic restructuring. Urban areas have held an ambivalent position in the American imagination: often representative of centres of physical, psychological, environmental and moral decline and simultaneously sites of democratic liberation (Bauman, 2001;

Beauregard, 1993; Donald, 1999; Martin, 2000; Smith, 1996). A part of the cultural meaning of cities has been the struggle to define what cities mean and subsequently whom cities are for. This struggle has often emerged as a struggle over space, particularly as a struggle over place-making. In the post-industrial city, these struggles are often mediated through culture, using culture as a basis from which to position different interpretations of what cities mean. Such cultural struggles have been and continue to be expressed through race (urban street culture racialised as the culture of young Black criminals as well as Whites' 'return' to the city to reclaim lost space), gender (cities as unsafe zones particularly for women, in part a strategy to maintain a gendered divide between public and private space), class (cities as loci fostering a culture of poverty and cities as nodes in elite global capital exchange) and sexuality (cities as spaces of clandestine encounters and communal places of marginalised people). Urban revitalisation, particularly in the form of community-building and calls for civic engagement, has heightened the cultural struggle over the meaning of cities. Furthermore, cities emerge in these debates as centres of cultural control by reframing questions about whom belongs to the city and who the city belongs to (i.e. the 'rights to the city' of Lefebvre).

The trend towards contemporary urban regeneration has been encouraged by the dominant meaning given to urban areas. This meaning has been informed not only by cultural representations, but also by certain management practices of public policy, including the conservative turn of the largely suburbanised voting public that have 'escaped' declining cities initially via the FHA and VA Acts (Levine and Harmon, 1992; Schuman *et al.*, 1985), the perceived failure of the welfare state (Gilens, 1999) and the counter-history of successful local action for progressive and lasting neighbourhood change working outside traditional, representational politics (Alinsky, 1971; Medoff and Sklar, 1994).² The current policy trend to revitalise US urban areas is part of rearticula-

tions and rerepresentations of urban areas from places of pathology to spaces of hope (Harvey, 2000). These spaces of hope speak to the hopes of various interests, many competing, but dominated by the political, economic and cultural interests that vie for the fixity of space in place. Part of this effort at fixity is attempted by localising the governance of cities to allow easier passage into the networks of globalisation (Gottdiener, 1987; Knight and Gappert, 1989). This localisation is realised through the trend towards devolution and neoliberal governance.

Contemporary anti-poverty policies in the US are forged in this discursive practice of devolution.³ A process underway since the 1970s, devolution not only refers to the efforts of regions to maintain political autonomy in an era of supranational realignment (i.e. the cases of Scotland or Wales; see Mackintosh, 1968), but also refers to a reformulation of local power in which the federal government decreases its role in the protection and provision of public goods, particularly social services (Conlan, 1998; Liner, 1989). In the US, such a context has given rise to community-building as a key strategy to transform impoverished neighbourhoods through privately sponsored initiatives, particularly in the form of the comprehensive community-building initiatives (CCI). CCIs have become legitimate solutions to poverty in large part because of the connection provided by citizenship to these larger material and discursive practices in terms of who has the right to the city and to place-making more generally.

Much of the policy-based rejuvenation of cities that has occurred has relied upon a shifting sense of who can make claims upon urban areas. More specifically, this has transpired to a hegemonic expression of who has the right to place-making in cities. This expression develops a discursively proper definition for cities: cities are to be nodes of globalisation.⁴ This definition comes as an articulation of who is responsible for the past, present and future of cities. Those responsible for the decline of cities lose the rights to the city. Subsequently, those re-

sponsible for the revitalisation of cities gain rights to the city. Such questions are particularly salient in regard to poverty, particularly in how the discourse informing a belief in the culture of poverty has been employed to represent the social decline of cities (and, concomitantly, the people living there) (Harvey and Reed, 1996).

Since the Nixon administration, the responsibility of administering large-scale anti-poverty programmes in the US has undergone a process of devolution from the federal government to local public- and private-sector partnerships, often dominated by private-sector funding and concerns (Conlan, 1998; Judd and Swanstrom, 1998; Liner, 1989). In tandem with the devolution of jurisdiction, responsibility and funding has been a rise in concern for local control over anti-poverty programmes and for increased community-building as both a demand that the poor pull themselves up by their bootstraps and an opportunity to do so (Duffy and Hutchinson, 1997). But this opportunity is not unlimited. Community-building, framed around an ambiguous and shifting notion of what community means (Evans, 1994; Talen, 2000), provides people with seemingly limited choices: either participate in the building of community or allow those who will to do so. In this context, those who build community do so because they are responsible citizens and therefore have legitimate rights to the city. Those who deviate from community-building—itsself ideologically constructed as populist and democratic even while being generated by well-endowed foundations that have accrued mass wealth from capitalist expansion, such as the Carnegie Foundation or the Annie E. Casey Foundation (Fraser, Lepofsky *et al.*, forthcoming)—are interpolated as part of that class of undeserving poor. Undeserving, in this case, of place-making, even in places they might call home.

Why Citizenship?

It is important to note why citizenship is a key concept for community-building in terms

more important than just semantic switching of terminology. Citizenship is a significant concept to interrogate for several reasons. First, a premise made in much of the current globalisation discourse is that the sovereign power of the nation-state has dissolved (Hardt and Negri, 2000; Harvey, 1989, 2000). The ambivalent status of the nation-state, the guardian of traditional citizenship rights, gives insight into new articulations of civic participation and ways in which people imagine themselves as beholden to others in a globalising world. Secondly, citizenship is always connected to space and place (Isin, 2000). While one acts as a citizen of a sovereign power, this power is always defined through place (both representational and material). Furthermore, through participation as a citizen, one connects to an imaginary community through space (Anderson, 1991; Sharp, 1996), particularly when engaging in the language of rights to ground desires for social betterment. Thirdly, the notion of citizenship maintains a strong, positive value in the discourse of American public life ((Boggs, 2001; Etzioni, 1998; Putnam, 1995); see particularly the concept of social capital (Barbalet, 2000; Lin, 2001; Putnam, 2000; Sampson, 1999)). Finally, citizenship remains a mechanism by which people make claims on space and place. Citizens publicly lay claim to ownership of space and place through the sanctioned privileges of citizenship rights.

Understanding citizenship in such ways allows one to see that rights are not only statuses conferred upon individuals by the state. More and more, citizenship is entering the realm of civil society. Just as the public and the private have become conflated with regard to the management of cities, so too have the state and civil society conflated as the objects of people's claim for rights. This is particularly salient with respect to urban place-making.

Shifting Citizenship

In times of more stability for the nation-state as a sovereign power, citizenship could more

easily be construed as a status given by the state to the citizenry. While the meaning and content of that citizenship remained essentially contested (Vandenberg, 2000), the notion of citizenship as a status maintained relative stability. Turner (2000) argues that this stability was in part provided because citizens received entitlements as members of society and membership was expressed through family, work and war. However, shifts in nation-states such as the US and the UK have significantly decreased the power of entitlements and crises have arisen in the meanings attributed to family, work and war. Dominant meanings that constituted a common-sense understanding of the performative acts embedded within practising family, work and war became increasingly challenged through 'new' social movements, changes in technology and medicine, and global political economy. Furthermore, the post-modernisation of identity—i.e. the recognition that notions such as 'class' do not just occur out of capitalist exploitation but emerge out of a hegemonic articulation (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985) along with the hybridisation of identities that conflate roots and routes (Gilroy, 1987)—has destabilised the basis for traditional formulations of citizenship that depend on an essential group demanding rights from the state (i.e. T. H. Marshall's (1950) classic theory of citizenship). This means that the relationship embedded in citizenship shifted from being a status one could have (obtain either through birthright or naturalisation) towards a more flexible citizenship that is based in performative acts.

Such performative acts are often articulated through the flexibility of the marketplace and the marketplace is becoming a dominant metaphor to understand democracy.

This transformation from citizenship as possession to citizenship as capacity is embodied in the image of the active and entrepreneurial citizen who seeks to maximise his or her lifestyle through acts of choice, linked not so much into a homoge-

neous social field as into overlapping but incommensurate communities of allegiance and moral obligation (Rose, 2000, p. 99).

While the marketplace is still a dominant metaphor through which such flexibility is articulated, flexibility is something in need of critical examination to explore the power relations that feed into who has access to this flexibility. In other words, further work is needed to examine who, and under what circumstances, can access the choice provided by a world of flexibilities. Such a critique can be framed by examining community-building as an anti-poverty strategy.

Building Community, Building Citizens: The CCI Model

Community-building efforts during recent decades have been informed in multiple ways by the discursive and material devolution of federal responsibility and jurisdiction to states and municipalities, as well as by how shifts in citizenship have shaped community work (Shaw and Martin, 2000). Further, there has been a proliferation of argumentation around the idea that devolution to the community level represents the possibility of increased democratic participation and governance by the citizenry even in areas characterised as depleted of an adequate social infrastructure (Clavel *et al.*, 1997). Governmental and philanthropic organisations, representing the primary funding mechanisms for community development initiatives, have reflected this optimism in their funding priorities as well as the stated structure of their programmatic efforts (Fulbright-Anderson *et al.*, 1998; Kubisch *et al.*, 1997). These efforts have shifted the rhetoric of community development from a focus on institutional responsibility for service provision to one of community-based, grassroots organising by localised efforts of community-based organisations. While these local organisations have been flanked by intermediary organisations at the national scale (such as the philanthropic foundations

that generate many private community-building initiatives or their corporate sponsors), the paradigm of community development has been altered to expand the role of local organisations, such as community development corporations (CDCs), to include a variety of activities that are premised on the belief in the value of simultaneously addressing the multiple issues faced by poor neighbourhoods and people. It is from this foundation that CCIs have emerged in the community development field and in public policy arenas dealing with place-based poverty.

The comprehensive community-building model for neighbourhood improvement and community-individual wellness is additionally based on practices that have their origins in communitarian theory (Sites, 1998). Thus, a focus on residents taking responsibility to build their capacity, as a community, is central to the activities of these initiatives (Chaskin *et al.*, 2001). Proponents of this formulation stress the benefits of civic participation on an individual, organisational and community level. Indeed, some argue that this building of social capital is the backbone of US democratic politics (Putnam, 2000). These community-building initiatives ask residents not only to be actively involved in the process of taking care of their neighbourhood, but also to be leaders of these initiatives in the sense of creation and governance (Kubisch *et al.*, 1997). Nevertheless, some authors have noted that the assertion of many community-building professionals, that residents ‘drive the train’, is not an accurate portrayal of what really happens in the efforts (Stone and Butler, 2000). One indicator of this is that private foundations often drive the conceptual development and initial organisation of CCIs despite the ‘resident-driven’ language surrounding these efforts (Chaskin and Garg, 1997). We contend that issues of citizenship are central explanations as to why and how residents are hindered from effectively making claims on spatial processes that affect their neighbourhoods and, further, how place (i.e. the neighbourhood) is given collective meaning.

CCIs, and community-building overall, re-

quire a display of citizenship in a different way from that which state-sponsored entitlement programmes have sought. Such efforts engage local impoverished neighbourhood residents to act as citizens of their neighbourhood, transforming that neighbourhood into a community, according to the CCI model. Such a conception of citizenship—as something that one does, more than something that one has—marks a shift in the overall meaning of citizenship as articulated through the discourses surrounding devolution. This rearticulation of citizenship simultaneously limits the scope and meaning of citizenship for local neighbourhood residents while expanding the scope and meaning of citizenship for professional community-builders, including academics and researchers. In this engagement that interpolates residents into the role of active citizens, the CCI model becomes a mechanism by which residents’ rights to the city become based more on what they do as active citizens than who they are as urban neighbourhood residents. Concomitantly, as residency status loses significance with increased attention placed on civic participation, those non-resident stakeholders—who always already are civically engaged by their very participation in a CCI—gain legitimacy in their claim to place-making rights. While residents must demonstrate involvement, non-residents are always already involved.

We posit that community-building provides neighbourhood residents with a right to place without the more process-oriented right to space, a right designated to professional community-builders. This designation of activities does not guarantee that certain stakeholders will act in certain ways, but we feel that this clarifies why local residents are not full participants in community-building efforts, contrary to suggestions that residents are either unwilling or incapable drivers of community-building. This distinction relies on and attempts to maintain an artificial distinction between space and place, and limits the ability for residents to actualise change without professional community-builders.

While this position does not disavow the

agency of local residents to engage in progressive, grassroots community-organising as ‘counter-work’ to the community-building we are analysing, we note that community-building has become a leading model to restructure cities. We believe that current community-building efforts’ particular reliance on citizenship not only prevents a realisation of a fundamental community-building goal (to be locally lead initiatives), but also justifies the status of community-builders over local residents in the struggle to improve impoverished neighbourhoods, privileging the professional over the local and reifying neighbourhood residents as lacking the ability to change their situation. This thesis recognises that the democratisation of community work and place-making must be a deliberate process and cannot be assumed to be taking place because of discursive shifts in favour of ‘community’.

Performative Citizenship, Flexible Citizenship

Our argument focuses primarily on the construction of citizenship in today’s urban realm. While the claims one can make as a citizen to shape space and place are traditionally based in some residential status within a particular locale, shifts in the geography of citizenship challenge residency as a viable underpinning for citizenship. Following Rose (2000), we argue that the processes of flexible accumulation of capital, the cultural economy of place and devolution converge to reimagine who is capable of making claims to urban areas and that this convergence occurs through the dominant cultural conditions available that make citizenship the accessible discourse by which the rights to the city get articulated. In part, this is because the flexibility inherent within the post-Fordist social formation, towards which many US cities are moving, uncovers a general unease about the meaning of community in general (Bauman, 2001). This unease can be seen in the communitarian concerns about a loss of community and the need to return to community as the natural basis of social

interaction (Bellah *et al.*, 1985; Putnam, 2000). However, the ability to return to community (if it is something that we have moved away from and need to return to all) is in part indicative of power relations operating to shape how people can participate in making community and, subsequently, making place.

Within this context of flexibility in citizenship, we suggest three categories of citizens as useful devices to examine the power relations between those competing for the right to place-making in the city: flexible citizens—fluidity of claims-making spanning multiple scales; durable citizens—fixed identity based upon locality; and non-citizens—the lack of any legitimate claim to space or place. Community-building initiatives may provide access to any of the three types for residents, but we note that in practice there seems to be a focus on interpolating two types of people who live in target neighbourhoods: durable citizens who are willing to constitute their citizenship with civic participation activities that primarily deal with the very local scale; and, non-citizens, who are defined as not participating in these efforts or even resisting them. We posit that, through a process of articulation that serves to interpolate stakeholders into certain positionalities (a process that never finishes or achieves full closure), identifying stakeholders through the contingency of residence in the local neighbourhoods allows non-residents greater ability to engage in a flexible citizenship.

Flexible citizenship, the ability to make claims to space and place at multiple levels, is accessible to many ‘external’ stakeholder groups because they always have a decision-making role in any private/public community-building initiative, even though they are not residents of the particular target neighbourhood. This may be interpreted in several ways. This flexible citizenship is achieved by virtue of material resources available to non-resident stakeholders, particularly as non-residents make use of experimental over experiential knowledge (Fischer, 2000). In addition, it is achieved

discursively by employing rhetorical strategies that highlight the impact of a locality on a larger metropolitan area and simultaneously dismiss the impact that larger areas have on particular neighbourhoods. Furthermore, professional community-builders are representative of a class of people for which 'global citizenship' makes sense because they maintain the cultural capital to navigate globalising cities, as they are part of an emerging group of people that sees itself as placeless and global (Bauman, 2001; Turner, 2000; Urry, 1995; 2000; Zukin, 1995).

Flexible citizenship is at heart the ability to access the collective discursive practices that legitimate one's claim to participate in place-making, regardless of traditional markers of identity with a place, such as residency. This accessibility relies upon the discursive formation of a romanticised notion of community as a universal expression of social interaction and a marker of belonging—a notion articulated as constituted *a priori* by a distinction between community members (i.e. residents) and non-members (i.e. non-residents). Such a notion remains ambiguous and shifting and therefore ephemeral and literally placeless (Talen 2000) and allows one discursively to connect to place via a mythical 'sense of place' that may or may not exist for residents of a locale. That is not to claim that there exists a real community that non-residents ignore to impart their own vision of community, but rather that the very idea of an 'indigenous' sense of place does not matter, because the flexibility of contemporary citizenship transcends such borders of resident or non-resident, local or global.

This seemingly contradictory articulation (community based in belonging and a civic engagement with community that flexibly transcends such identity formations) is resolved in the logical meaning of community for communitarian community-builders: community is something that should exist everywhere because it is the natural basis of social interaction. In places that are wrought with the problems of an alienating modernity (such as impoverished urban areas), it is

apparent that community is faltering or lacking. Because community is an unquestioned notion of the good, those seemingly without strong community are articulated as in need of community. Since they have thus far been unable to build this community on their own, community-building is an effort to assist them in generating and maintaining community in order to stave off the problems of a post-Fordist social formation (such as endemic poverty). This is a cursory unfolding of the logic of community-building, yet it provides a summary of the discursive practices that inform material reality expressed in the operations of a CCI.

Being that community in this sense is much more an essence that should be inherent in every place, rather than a substantive practice of everyday life that is dependent upon the historical and geographical context in which it might arise, membership to any given community becomes a flexible matter: membership is given to those with the desire to build community. Because community is discursively construed to exist in every place, building community is a legitimate practice everywhere. Thus, building community does not necessitate membership in a locality through residency, because membership is not something given, but something one does through a desire to be involved. One is not a member of a community *per se*; one participates in community. Belonging to community becomes much more of a contingent positionality that is ensured by the civic participation, or citizenship, one performatively expresses to the community. Such community is simultaneously global (in the sense of being articulated as a universal expression of place as well as openly infiltrated by spatial practices) and local (being practised and given meaning in a place).

Flexibility in citizenship reconciles this global sense of place (Massey, 1994) by opening the door for legitimate participation in place-making for stakeholders who can access this flexibility. The flexibility of citizenship not only administers how residents of a neighbourhood participate in the local

activities of place-making, but also allows those who are seemingly more and more placeless in our contemporary global world the basis for participation in a supposedly local, bottom-up strategy. Such participants include: scientists and academics, politicians and corporate élites. Understanding flexible citizenship provides some insight into how these stakeholders have always been implicated in place-making practices and therefore offers a critical assessment of the spatial flows of urban development. It also allows clarity that there are stakeholders—namely, resident groups—who often are not afforded a broad role in the spatial production of place. This aspect can be seen in community-building enterprises in which residents are interpolated into durable citizenship roles by the discursive practices of the ‘external’ actors aforementioned. In this way, the discourse of community-building works as an ideological device to hinder local residents from full participation in place-making. This is enforced through the symbolic and material resources that many non-resident stakeholders (such as philanthropic foundations) have. Ironically, it is precisely the contextual conditions that give rise to flexibility in citizenship, by which non-residents can make legitimate claims to place-making in places they do not call home, that are a roadblock to resident-driven CCIs.

This logic hinges on an operative contradiction: residents of target neighbourhoods are not provided the same access to constructing a flexible citizenship. Resource-rich stakeholder groups use material assets to motivate residents to focus on developing community at the neighbourhood level and expressing citizenship in a parochial, narrow manner. Unfortunately for many residents, this process occurs within the context of greater globalisation of the spatial production of place. Hence, the goals of a community-building initiative may be in conflict with residents’ own sense of how to engage the world effectively. In one way that flexible citizenship works, residents of a neighbourhood identified as in need of community-building are interpolated through the CCI

into being durable citizens of the place. Hence, local residents can participate as viable stakeholders to give meaning to the community being built. What is disrupted is their ability to participate in the means of production of that space.

Durable citizens are those neighbourhood leaders, active residents, activists and all others whose participation in place-making is contingent upon an ability to express their own locality. Such stakeholders often participate in limited decision-making roles and contribute to the engagement of other local participants. What is key is that the citizenship of those articulated as durable citizens remains bound to the place. Such stakeholders provide the local knowledge to community-building practitioners and assist in making the community-building a locally specific project. However, it is important to note that the agency involved in the activities of citizenship prevent the durability from achieving full closure into an impermeable structure. In other words, the durability is strong and reflective of the power relations between different stakeholders, but maintains its own level of flexibility. It is precisely at the boundary of the flexible and the durable citizen that the struggle over place-making transpires.

It is through this agentic struggle for flexible citizenship that the rhetorical goals of community-building and the actual practices are negotiated, and the access to flexibility resolved. While the claims to place-making are not necessarily made upon residency status, often the resolution to the negotiation of place-making between various stakeholders relies upon the material accessibility of flexibility. In other words, while many community-builders are flexibly involved in abstract legitimation for their participation and hegemony, it is important to note that these community-building exercises take place in some people’s homes. To highlight how the conditions of flexible, durable and non-citizenship can operate, we turn to an example from our experience in community-building programmes.

Case Study: The Midnight Crew

In 1998, local foundations, a non-profit organisation and the City of Chattanooga initiated a neighbourhood revitalisation initiative under the auspices of the Community Impact Fund (CIF). Five neighbourhoods were chosen to participate in this project that was to be a multiyear endeavour to improve neighbourhood indicators around issues of crime, education, employment, housing and resident (family-child) quality of life. We discuss aspects of this initiative in detail elsewhere (Fraser *et al.*, 2002). For our present purposes of illustrating the different types of citizenship and how citizenship identity is fluid, we provide an account of events that occurred when a group of residents from each neighbourhood gathered—unknowingly to the sponsors of the CCI—during an initiative-sponsored trip. The purpose of the trip was to have the stakeholders in the CCI, particularly the local residents, learn about what other community-building activities were occurring in other cities in the US. We choose this example to highlight how citizenship and rights to place-making are significant categories of abstraction to understand community-building and the CCI model, but also to demonstrate that the logic of community-building is never fully closed: it remains open by the contestations and struggles that emerge in practice and the articulations of and interpolations into certain citizenship roles that are never not resisted or resistible.

Our example is framed by three years of participant observation, dozens of interviews with neighbourhood associations, CIF staff and residents, as well as secondary data in the form of documents produced by different stakeholder groups including the CIF. Our role in this project was that of survey researchers for the CIF and subsequently evaluators for a city-wide housing non-profit operating in the target neighbourhoods. This example glosses over methodological issues pertaining to each set of data we have collected, since this example is given to elucidate the theoretical points of this paper, not to report methods and findings.⁵

The time-frame is one year after the beginning of the revitalisation initiative, 1999. A key point of interaction between resident and non-resident stakeholders and the main mechanism for residents to participate in decision-making for the CCI were regular planning meetings. The first year of the initiative included these planning meetings, called learning exchanges, which residents from each neighbourhood were required to attend to maintain recognition as participating stakeholders by the CCI sponsors. During these all-day events, held on weekend days, CIF staff and consultants presented the academic trends in the substantive area of interest (i.e. housing, crime, employment) and shared different ways that other community development initiatives had developed plans of action to achieve positive changes for their neighbourhoods. This commentary was married to survey data, collected in 1998, which demonstrated trends in the target neighbourhoods. Altogether, neighbourhoods were expected to engage in a year-long planning process to decide which areas they wanted to focus on. Further, neighbourhood residents had to develop concrete strategies for achieving positive outcomes in six of nine domain areas in order to continue receiving funding allotments from the CIF.⁶

The initial activities and expectations of the CIF engendered mixed results. The target neighbourhoods were areas of Chattanooga that, while distinct, were in need of improvement and many residents recognised that positive change would improve people's quality of life. Those holding this perspective, many times also expressed patience with the CIF during the initial planning process even though neighbourhoods were not getting the promised funding to carry out 'resident-driven' goals. Yet, there was an increasing uneasiness that grew among active residents that focused on the manner in which they were being treated by the CIF. For example, some neighbourhood leaders claimed that the CIF came to their neighbourhoods with the belief that the CIF would

‘run the show’. This concern is expressed in the following narrative

It was a growing process for CIF. They came in here and started to boss people around, telling us how our neighbourhood was going to be revitalised, but that didn’t work, really, we have been organising for over 10 years and they have money but not the experience. CIF tended to be a little strong-armed in the beginning. Maybe they just didn’t know better. They came with that attitude towards the neighbourhoods at the beginning but the neighbourhood said “No, you will not tell us what to do”. There will always be a struggle sometimes. (Neighbourhood leader No. 1).

Over time, many active residents became tired of the planning process altogether, citing a lack of action on the part of the CIF to play an effective role in creating neighbourhood change. Non-resident stakeholders recognised this growing discontent and, during one board meeting with the CIF and organisational leaders of the sponsoring agencies (i.e. philanthropic foundations and the city), there was acknowledgment that there needed to be some signs of positive neighbourhood change that would legitimate the continuation of the initiative. As the lead foundation president stated: “We need to focus on the low-lying fruit in these neighbourhoods. Some initial achievements”. Little did the board members or staff of the CIF know, this issue of tangible change as well as issues of who should have the power to make decisions about neighbourhood place-making were about to come to a head.

Not long after this board meeting, residents from each neighbourhood took part in a CCI-sponsored trip to Atlanta in order to learn about some community development activities they might be interested in employing. During that meeting, they had time away from the CIF staff and took the opportunity to meet in one of their hotel rooms as a collective. During that gathering, the residents developed a list entitled “Neighborhood Concerns” that they presented to the CIF staff. The 5 categories of

concern included: issues of communication, planning, financial, empowerment, and other. Out of these 5 categories, there were 44 concerns in all about the direction of the CCI and the lack of opportunities for residents to participate in planning and decision-making. Many of these concerns focused on the need to lead neighbourhood development, be informed of other agencies activities and have access to material resources necessary to improve their own neighbourhoods. The document also included one line that read “CIF does not know where they are going, how can they lead us”. We suggest that what happened in Atlanta (later to be known in the CCI as a day in which the entire initiative stopped and changed direction) emerged out of an expression that recognised a differentiation of citizenship status among resident and non-resident stakeholders, and was an effort to change this situation.

We believe that, through understanding how citizenship operates in contemporary community-building, one can clarify what happened in Atlanta and why this moment took on such a mythical status in the CCI. We contend that these residents, recognising that the CCI was interpolating them into the role of durable citizens, were able to articulate that this was indicative of certain discursive and material practices of articulating their neighbourhoods as in need of something that they did not necessarily feel they needed (community-building) and to express a desire to participate in place-making outside the logic of community-building. What happened in Atlanta became possible in part because residents recognised how citizenship and the subsequent rights to the city maintained an uneven geographical development, in favour of those identifying as non-residents, and upheld through the power relations between resident and non-resident stakeholders. Hence, these residents recognised that the CCI was asking them collectively to increase a commitment to place without receiving the corresponding access to the discursive and material resources needed to enact the spatial production of that place.

In this instance, we contend that these residents, calling themselves the 'Midnight Crew', communicated between themselves and the CIF staff that they would not be relegated to a durable citizenship status that did not afford decision-making authority, access to resources, or power to determine what activities would be enacted in their communities. While this may be viewed as important counter-work, it is not a guarantee that flexible citizenship rights would be achieved and that such counter-work would endure. Indeed, while the Midnight Crew created a significant immediate effect in the CCI, the long-term outcomes barely register this activity beyond the myth that still remains. (This seems in part because of the lack of resources available to continue such resistance in the face of the resource-rich CCI.)

It is said to be true that, when the CIF staff leader recognised the creation of the Midnight Crew and read the neighbourhood concerns document, she decided to halt the initiative in order to restructure the way things would work. In fact, for some of us who have been involved in the initiative, there has been an entire mythology created around 'the day the initiative stopped to restructure'. Interestingly, the actions of the residents in Atlanta have been mythologised as a crisis-point in the CCI; it can be argued that similar collective actions of non-residents (such as the aforementioned board meeting among non-resident stakeholders) constituted the 'normal' functioning of the CCI. This particular crisis was around gaining legitimacy for the revitalisation initiative from neighbourhood residents as well as from board members of funding agencies. The actual 'realignment' that took place in the structure of the initiative included placing CIF staff liaisons in every neighbourhood (which residents ambivalently viewed as support or increased surveillance) and eventually focusing the initiative away from the original indicators of success towards marketing the neighbourhoods for 'reinvestment'.

CIF still wanted residents to develop commitment to place but not be in on the de-

cision-making related to the production of space. One indicator of this type of situation comes from resident accounts of CIF-related activities and who is in control of making decisions about place-making.

There is a lot of improvement going on. The [private developers] do a good job but they scare me a little bit. They come from Atlanta. The part that scares me is that they do a great job and then market to people in Atlanta. These people get excited about the prices. But, as they remodel these houses and sell them for over a \$100 000 to folks in Atlanta, then this will price out elderly in the neighbourhood. My neighbour lives on social security and she will not be able to pay her taxes. We have a variety of families. (Neighborhood resident No. 34).

We find it interesting to note that while this resident might be indicative of how some others felt, there has been no visible act of resistance to address the continuing lack of decision-making authority provided to the majority of residents in these neighbourhoods. We do not claim that these residents have had all resistance measures crushed or have all given explicit consent by any means. Another way to understand this situation is to consider that perhaps some resident groups did achieve flexible citizenship on a more regular basis while other residents decided to drop out of the process. In essence, our tentative response to the often-asked question—Why don't community-building (development) initiatives engender greater participation on the part of residents?—is that it is the wrong question. A more meaningful query is to ask: how can these initiatives be considered 'resident-driven' when most residents are constructed as non-citizens or durable citizens in the logic of community-building? Or, more directly, how can democratic participation for residents in community-building be achieved and maintained when residency becomes less significant in the logic of the model? This seems to be the inherent contradiction of the CCI and citizenship: residents are expected

to participate (and often in ways that require performative expressions of their participation in terms defined by the sponsoring agencies) when the very ontological status that legitimates their participation—being local residents—is placed in an ambivalent state. One way to view how this contradiction moves towards resolution is that many of these initiatives only require ‘buy-in’ from a small segment of the neighbourhood population. An explicit example of this comes from Chattanooga, in a narrative between the city-wide non-profit housing provider and the CIF which illustrates our point

And, you can never have enough buy-in, and everybody, I mean, this isn’t an ordinance. People are not going to vote on it. Umm. But what’s important is that enough people who sort of get the idea and are able to carry out the functions that are laid out in here that it begins to provide its own momentum. And, it becomes you know, the disinvestment tipping-point changes and becomes an investment tipping point ... (CIF consultant No. 5).

While it is not the purpose of this paper to comment on which sub-population would be able to achieve flexible citizenship more than others, we note that residents who were positioned to benefit from the development activities associated with this ‘revitalisation’ initiative were likely to construct themselves as being empowered and were more likely to participate in both aspects of place-making. Those who questioned the development activities and the decision-making processes were often interpolated and treated as durable citizens. They care about their neighbours and their neighbourhood but do not sense that they are driving the community development ‘train’.

Conclusion

We posit that the processes currently altering cities operate in part because of the ways in which such processes call upon people as citizens to carry out certain activities in the name of civic engagement. This call for civic

action is a rearticulation of citizenship in its relationship to democracy and spatial production, and creates discursive practices in which one must articulate a desire to participate in the production of urban space through the activities of citizenship. In this way, democracy is formulated as an activity which one can engage in to participate in place-making, but leaves aside the need to democratise the production of space.

This paper has been an initial attempt to theorise what is happening in contemporary urban anti-poverty work, particularly as it hinges upon notions of community and citizenship. In contrast to some beliefs that a global citizenship has emerged in the wake of globalisation, we believe that this form of citizenship shifts the scale of citizenship and bases power in community. This shift is not only one of scale, as the content of citizenship shifts from citizenship given as a status, to citizenship given through performative practice, or an identity to be accessed, possessed and utilised. However, the flexibility of this citizenship is unevenly distributed and can lead to forms of durable citizenship or even a class of non-citizens. The constitution of citizenship as flexible, durable or non-existent is indicative of power relations between (perceived and actual) positions among social actors. Further work is necessary to give firmer empirical grounding to these ideas, particularly focusing on how residents actively alter these forms of development and use citizenship and community for their own purposes in more organic community-organising efforts.

Notes

1. Our focus is on community-building as a form of community work that employs professional community-builders and is germinated outside the community seen as in need of building. We distinguish this from more organic community-organising efforts, even though such efforts sometimes utilise ideas similar to community-building.
2. The FHA and VA Acts (Federal Housing Authority and Veteran’s Administration) were parts of a larger body of New Deal legislation that provided federal subsidies to

assist middle-income families to purchase single-family homes. This legislation has been identified as a contributing factor to 'White flight' from the cities to the suburbs by keying in on class-based interests conjoined with race-based interests to allow the newly formed White middle class to leave urban areas seen as being 'taken over' by Blacks (many of whom were in-migrating from the southern US to get away from sharecropping and *de jure* racism, and to take advantage of migratory possibilities and economic opportunities provided by the wartime industrial boom).

3. We engage the discourse as well as the practice of devolution because we believe that the discourse is at times more powerful (as an ideological device) than the policies themselves that constitute political devolution. This is not to disregard the actual efforts of conservative and neo-liberal lawmakers to divest the federal government's responsibility to the citizenry (however the citizenry is defined), but rather to highlight the contested nature of devolution and to show the ways in which it is enforced as hegemony and law.
4. Such a definition further assumes that cities will be used for globalisation-from-above, even though the demonstrations of Seattle, Prague, Genoa, Washington, DC and Seoul—to name a few—have shown otherwise.
5. A full disclosure of methodologically related issues may be obtained from the authors or found in forthcoming articles and existing reports (Fraser *et al.*, 2002; Fraser and Kick, 2000).
6. The allocation of CIF resources to neighbourhoods was predicated on the residents achieving positive movement on a set of nine indicators that were developed by funders and the lead foundation prior to the initiative's implementation. Therefore, neighbourhoods only receive an allocation of financial resources if CIF directors and funders assess that 'progress' is being made. Neighbourhoods were initially invited to select six indicators as their comprehensive agenda for change. CIF said they would provide results-based incentives for improvements. The comprehensive list of measurable indicators for social action included: increasing the percentage of kindergartens scoring above 'at-risk' levels in all three categories on the First Step Screening; increasing the percentage of 3rd graders passing the reading competency test; increasing the percentage of youth under 21 who are in school or have graduated from high school; increasing the percentage

of families who have at least one wage-earner; decreasing the percentage of births to teenagers; decreasing the percentage of births to single parents; decreasing the percentage of total crime in each neighbourhood; increasing the number of new or rehabilitated houses and businesses; and, improving the physical appearance of the neighbourhood.

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