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Sandwiched between Patronage and Bureaucracy: The Plight of Citizen Participation in Community-based Housing Organisations in the US

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Abstract

This article examines how directors of community-based housing organisations (CBHOs) in the US define the role of citizen participation in their organisations. In particular, it describes how local political and administrative structures affect the scope of citizen participation in the governance and decision-making processes of CBHOs. This is an important topic since these organisations implement housing and community development programmes in urban neighbourhoods, and citizen participation has been considered important to the legitimacy of these efforts. The analysis is based on in-depth interviews with CBHO executive directors in Buffalo, New York. In particular, the executive directors of CBHOs that concentrate their efforts on the management, development and rehabilitation of affordable housing were interviewed. In addition to data from in-depth interviews, data from fieldnotes, the US census, IRS 990 forms and informal conversations with local government officials and representatives of intermediary organisations were used in the analysis. Existing theories concerning citizen participation and non-profit administration are elaborated upon and applied to CBHOs. The extent to which these organisations create opportunities for grassroots planning is considered and recommendations for expanding citizen participation are proposed.

1. Citizen Participation in Community-based Housing Organisations

There is growing interest in how well democratic processes work at the local level in contemporary society. In part, this interest has emerged in the wake of works by scholars such as Putnam (1993, 2000), Fung and Wright (2001), Wuthnow (2002) and Roberts (2004). This interest is also reflected in recent US and international scholarship

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that examines the role of community-based organisations in local political processes and the manner in which their political influence is shaped by emerging governance structures (Stoecker, 1997; Docherty *et al.*, 2001; Coaffee and Healey, 2003; Martin, 2004; Marwell, 2004; Newman and Lake, 2006; Uitermark and Duyvendak, 2007). For instance, Marwell (2004) has forwarded a case for the embeddedness of community-based organisation in local patronage systems. From her perspective, community-based organisations can leverage governmental resources by mobilising constituencies that benefit from the services they provide. In contrast, other scholars have argued that contemporary urban governance structures have shifted the focus of community-based organisations from grassroots advocacy to programme implementation (Stoecker, 1997; Swanstrom, 1999; Bockmeyer, 2003; Newman and Lake, 2006). This perspective suggests that community-based organisations have been co-opted by public officials and larger non-profit organisations. As a result, the role of grassroots advocacy has been diminished in community-based organisations.

This article examines democratic processes at the local level in the domestic non-profit housing sector in the US. The goals of this article are threefold. First, it will identify the effects of local political and administrative structures on the scope of citizen participation in the non-profit sector. Then, this analysis will be drawn from to examine critically Marwell's (2004) argument for embedding non-profits in local patronage systems. Finally, recommendations for expanding grassroots control in the areas of housing and community development policy will be made.

This article examines the scope of citizen participation in non-profit community-based housing organisations (CBHOs) in the City of Buffalo, New York. For the purposes of this analysis, CBHOs include any local non-profit involved in affordable housing activities. The focus on CBHOs in a single city is advantageous, since it allows for citizen participation to be examined without losing sight of how it is shaped by the institutional context in which it is embedded. The case of Buffalo is of added interest since it represents a city where community development decisions have historically been made through a local political patronage system (Dillaway, 2006). Although this local patronage system has remained intact through the contemporary period, political reform and growing professionalism in the non-profit sector have strengthened the local administrative system. Consequently, the case of Buffalo provides an opportunity to contrast the effects of traditional patronage systems and new governance structures on how CBHO directors practise citizen participation in their organisations.

A major shift in relation to the implementation of Buffalo's community development policy occurred in 1999 when the city adopted a new charter which created the Office of Strategic Planning. According to the Office of Strategic Planning's website

> The Office of Strategic Planning provide[s] centralized, broad strategic assessment and management of general planning, economic development, housing and other policy issues … expeditiously utilizing technical information generated by the Office of Strategic Planning for the purpose of facilitating the pursuit of long-term and priority projects (City of Buffalo, 2007a).

The creation of the Office of Strategic Planning initiated the process of centralising and depoliticising many community development decisions. The new charter also required the executive director of the Office of Strategic Planning to

> hold a post-baccalaureate degree in business management, public administration, public finance or planning from an accredited

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> college or university, or at least 10 years of experience in those fields and … have at least five years of supervisory experience in public administration (City of Buffalo, 2007b).

These requirements were intended to professionalise decision-making surrounding affordable housing policy and to weaken the local patronage system.

As a result, Buffalo's community development decisions are increasingly guided by the professional norms of administrative actors, rather than solely by the political agendas of elected officials. These trends towards centralising and depoliticising community development decisions were reinforced when the city faced growing fiscal constraints during the years following charter reform. In 2003 the city's financial affairs were placed under the control of the Buffalo Fiscal Stability Authority and in 2005 Erie County's financial affairs were placed under the control of the Erie County Fiscal Stability Authority. The Buffalo Fiscal Stability Authority and the Erie County Fiscal Stability Authority are both New York State public benefit corporations created to regulate the financial affairs of local government. These authorities added new layers of administrative oversight and promoted professional reform in local government. Moreover, fiscal constraints have resulted in a smaller pool of resources to be distributed through the local patronage system, increased calls for professionalism in the local non-profit housing sector by local administrators and funding agencies, and the consolidation of local housing services (Patterson and Silverman, 2005).

1.1 Citizen Participation and Community-based Development

The current wave of research on local democracy is well within the tradition of past scholarship on citizen participation and community-based development. Two of the most widely read authors in this tradition are Alinsky (1969) and Arnstein (1969). Over 35 years ago, both argued for stronger forms of resident participation and direct democracy in decision-making surrounding local community development. Since their work, several other scholars have helped to develop this school of thought. The works of Clavel (1986), Capek and Gilderbloom (1992), Medoff and Sklar (1994), Silverman (2005) and Hardina (2006) are examples of scholarship examining the role of citizen participation in housing and community development. This school of thought has produced research on a breadth of issues related to the role of citizens in grassroots organisations, neighbourhood association, local non-profits, electoral politics, public administration and municipal governance. Coinciding with such scholarship has been a growing body of work aimed at developing techniques for expanding the scope of citizen participation in local planning and decision-making (Jones, 1993; Thomas, 1995; Peterman, 2000; Sanoff, 2000; Simonsen and Robbins, 2000; Fung and Wright, 2001; Richards and Dalbey, 2006).

This article focuses on a specific area of citizen participation, the extent to which residents have access to decision-making in the local non-profit housing sector. CBHOs are of particular interest because these organisations must balance their physical development and community organising activities. However, limited resources and a lack of incentives to promote citizen participation from government have increasingly circumscribed the role of residents in CBHO decision-making (Goetz and Sydney, 1995; Swanstrom, 1999; Bockmeyer, 2003). The analysis of this dilemma is informed by the broader body of work on citizen participation in the fields of community development, planning, public administration and urban studies. This body of work argues that expanding the scope of citizen participation produces local policies that are more responsive

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to residents, particularly minorities and the poor. As a result, citizen participation is argued to be an important ingredient in efforts to promote urban development patterns that are sustainable and equitable. Provisions for meaningful citizen participation in decision-making processes that impact communities can also reduce negative externalities associated with urban development. One of the most cited examples of negative externalities linked to urban development processes devoid of meaningful citizen participation is the mass displacement of low-income and minority group members during the urban renewal period in the US.

Without losing sight of the benefits associated with incorporating citizen participation into the decision-making processes of local non-profits and planning bodies, it is important to recognise that broader institutional constraints also shape the scope of decision-making in these organisations. Some scholars have argued that the decentralisation of federal housing and community development policy, and its implementation through the non-profit sector, have enhanced community control (Clavel *et al.*, 1997; Yin, 1998; Rubin, 2000; Kluver, 2004; Martin, 2004). In part, this perspective suggests that new governance structures exist where non-profit foundations and other funding agencies allow local non-profits to operate semi-autonomously from local political pressures. However, others have challenged this viewpoint. This body of scholarship argues that local non-profits have been transformed from grassroots advocacy organisations into service delivery organisations that implement programmes for governmental agencies and philanthropic organisations (Stoecker, 1997; Swanstrom, 1999; Silverman, 2001; Bockmeyer, 2003; Silverman, 2003b; Ilcan and Basok, 2004; Newman and Lake, 2006). In essence, this critique suggests that community-based development organisations have been embedded in new governance structures and co-opted by non-profit foundations and funding agencies. Although this body of literature is important, its emphasis on changes in federal policy has resulted in a void in the literature. This void is most apparent in relation to the effects of local political and administrative structures on the scope of citizen participation in the local non-profit sector.

1.2 Citizen Participation and the Administrative Response to Local Patronage Politics

A somewhat eclectic body of literature has examined the manner in which local politics shape citizen participation in local non-profits. This body of work suggests that the relative strength of local patronage systems, administrative systems and the local non-profit sector can have noticeable effects on the scope of citizen participation. In settings where the non-profit sector is relatively strong, scholars argue that community-based organisations have impacted local community development policy through coalition building and broad-based participation strategies (Goetz and Sidney, 1995; Clavel *et al.* 1997; LeRoux, 2007). In contrast, as the relative influence of local patronage and administrative systems increases, strained relationships between local officials and members of the non-profit community can reduce the impact of coalition building and grassroots activism (Bockmeyer, 2000; Silverman, 2003b; Betancur and Gill, 2004; Howard, 2004).

Recently, another perspective has emerged in this body of literature. Scholars such as Marwell (2004, p. 269) have argued that community-based organisations can fill the gap left by "defunct political party organizations in poor neighborhoods" and "take on an electoral organising role at the neighborhood level" . In essence, Marwell suggested that community-based organisations can act as middlemen in local settings, delivering votes in exchange

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for government contracts. Although one might anticipate that such a suggestion would stimulate hearty academic debate, few scholars have attempted to respond to the political tactics Marwell recommends for local non-profits. This silence has been in sharp contrast to the reaction to earlier arguments to reconstitute the spoils system at the federal level of government (Durant, 1998; Goodsell, 1998; Knott, 1998; Maranto, 1998; Murray, 1998).

This article will offer alternatives to Marwell's argument for non-profit participation in local political patronage systems. The analysis will focus on the degree to which the scope of citizen participation in CBHOs is affected by competition between political and administrative systems which control the distribution of community development resources. In particular, the influence of these systems on the definition of CBHO boundaries will be discussed, along with the implications such boundaries have on the scope of participation in local non-profits. In essence, Buffalo will serve as a critical case study to assess the merits of Marwell's argument for increased non-profit participation in local political patronage systems. The article will conclude with a discussion of the challenges new governance structures present for non-profits, given their embeddedness in broader political and administrative systems, and will propose grassroots reforms.

2. Methods

The data for this article come from telephone interviews ($N = 15$) with executive directors of CBHOs in Buffalo, New York. Interviews with executive directors were conducted between May and August 2004. During the interviews, informants were asked a series of open-ended questions about how citizen participation was conceptualised and practised in their organisations. The questions were drawn from an interview guide that consisted of 13 items and 26 probes. The research instrument focused on a core set of questions examining issues concerning how citizen participation was conceptualised and practised in the regular operation and decision-making processes of CBHOs. In addition to this information, data were collected concerning the demographic characteristics of each organisation's staff and governing board. Each interview was administered by telephone with the executive directors of CBHOs during normal operating hours.[1] The interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 1 hour in length. To supplement the interviews, field notes, data from the US census, IRS 990 forms, other documents from CBHOs and informal conversations with local government officials and representatives of intermediary organisations were collected.[2]

Efforts were made to interview all of the CBHOs in the City of Buffalo. In total, 15 organisations were identified using lists of non-profit housing organisations compiled by the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal, NeighborWorks® America, the Western New York Regional Information Network and the Centre for Urban Studies at the University at Buffalo. The 15 CBHOs in Buffalo included five neighbourhood housing service (NHS) organisations, three community development corporations, and seven other non-profits identified as community-based housing services organisations.

Data were analysed using grounded theory techniques (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Emerson *et al.*, 1995; Lofland and Lofland, 1995). Through this process, interview transcripts were coded and emergent themes were identified. These themes were then used to develop a descriptive framework for further analysis of archival materials. Through this process, an understanding of the scope of citizen participation in Buffalo's CBHOs was obtained. Moreover, the relationship

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between political and administrative structures, and citizen participation emerged through this inquiry. The use of qualitative inquiry in this analysis was important because it produced a thick description of emergent concepts that can be tested empirically in future research.

3. Barriers to Community Representation

Together, Buffalo's CBHOs formed a patchwork of organisations that impacted virtually all of the city's neighbourhoods. Most of the organisations were founded between the mid 1970s and the early 1980s. In fact, only two of the organisations identified in this research were formed after this period. This pattern of CBHO development is in contrast to national trends in community-based development organisations, which experienced rapid expansion during the 1990s (NCCED 1998, 2006). However, other characteristics of Buffalo's CBHOs were similar to national trends.

Compared with organisations nationally, Buffalo's CBHOs offered programmes addressing a similar range of housing and other community development needs. The scope of programmes offered by these organisations was reflective of the trend towards non-profit embeddedness in new governance structures accompanied by a growing emphasis on service delivery and a de-emphasis on grassroots advocacy (Stoecker, 1997; Newman and Lake, 2006). During interviews, the executive directors of Buffalo's CBHOs identified the following programme areas in which they were engaged: housing programmes, senior programmes, youth and education programmes, economic development programmes and social service programmes. On average each organisation was engaged in two programme areas at the time the interviews took place. Typically, one of these programme areas involved housing and, in most cases, the housing activities of Buffalo's CBHOs focuses on moderate and emergency rehabilitation efforts or housing counselling activities. A small number of these organisations included new housing development among their activities.

The scope of activities that Buffalo's CBHOs were engaged in was notable given the relatively limited and unstable resources that these organisations relied upon. According to IRS 990 forms submitted in 2003, the average CBHO in Buffalo had less than $650 000 in annual revenue. Although three of the organisations operated within their budgets in 2003, the average organisation ended the fiscal year approximately $39 000 in debt. Moreover, 90 per cent of CBHO annual revenue was from government grants and contracts, and over 50 per cent of organisations' expenditures were related to personnel costs. In the face of budget constraints, the typical organisation hired about six employees during the year. Notwithstanding the relatively high percentage of organisational expenditures dedicated to personnel, the average executive directors earned only $37 000 per year. Buffalo's CBHOs were similar to community-based development organisations nationally, in terms of programme, budget and staff characteristics (NCCED, 1998, 2006). As a group, they also confronted the same factors Rohe and Bratt (2003) identify as contributing to the failure, downsizing and merging of CBHOs nationally.

Despite their similarities to community-based organisations nationally, Buffalo's CBHOs were imbedded in a distinct political and administrative context which had been shaped by decades of entrenched political patronage and sporadic attempts at administrative reform. The implications of this context and the turf battles that it generated were manifest, particularly in relation to how service boundaries were determined. Ideally, one might expect CBHOs to establish their boundaries based on the identification of distressed communities within relatively

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small and distinct neighbourhoods. However, in Buffalo, organisations defined their boundaries in response to cues from the local political and administrative systems.

Many of Buffalo's CBHOs were ambiguous about their organisational boundaries and indicated that they oscillated based on available funding sources. However, when pressed, it became clear that service boundaries were shaped by Buffalo's political and administrative systems. Seven of the CBHOs indicated that their boundaries were identical to those used to demarcate common council districts in the City of Buffalo. Drawing boundaries in this manner allowed their organisations to be aligned with local elected officials for patronage purposes.

In contrast, eight other CBHOs were designated as community housing development organisations by the City of Buffalo's Office of Strategic Planning and assigned boundaries. Under federal regulations, community housing development organisation status is granted to local non-profits after they meet criteria to receive federal funding to develop affordable housing under the HOME block grant programme.[3] In accordance with HOME requirements, the Office of Strategic Planning used its administrative authority to divide the entire city into 10 community housing development organisation areas and assigned an organisation to each of them.[4] It is noteworthy that, when the Office of Strategic Planning created its community housing development organisation boundaries for HOME block grant administration, those boundaries did not correspond with common council districts. In essence, the Office of Strategic Planning used its administrative authority to create an alternative to the existing patronage system for CBHOs that were willing to meet specified professional criteria. One element of these criteria included a requirement for citizen participation in community housing development organisation governance; however, no specific definitions of participation or related performance measures were included in the Office of Strategic Planning's evaluation of applications for community housing development organisation status.

Whether CBHO boundaries were based on common council districts or community housing development organisation areas, combined the boundaries of these organisations encompassed the entire city. The implications of the creation of such broad and encompassing boundaries for CBHOs are discussed in greater detail later in this article. However, one repercussion that such broadly constructed boundaries had for CBHOs as a group is that the city as a whole became synonymous with the environment in which they operated. Unlike other cities where CBHO activity is concentrated in the most distressed neighbourhoods, activity in Buffalo was spread across the entire city. Thus, for the purposes of this discussion, city-wide characteristics are used as benchmarks for assessing the scope of citizen participation in Buffalo's non-profit sector.

3.1 The Urban Masses are Blocked from Participation in CBHO Decision-making

The scope of citizen participation was extremely limited in Buffalo's CBHOs. In part, participation was hampered by the broadly defined service boundaries of CBHOs which diluted the visibility of the city's most distressed neighbourhoods in discussions of affordable housing. This situation was aggravated by the lack of grassroots organisations in the city that operated outside the existing patronage system. The scope of citizen participation was further limited by the narrow range of techniques used to bring residents into the process of administering housing programmes. Of course, the limited scope of participatory techniques was an outgrowth of the ambiguous manner in which administrators defined citizen participation requirements and the lack of funding for

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community organising activities. This is not a dilemma unique to Buffalo. It is representative of the general trend towards emphasising physical development and programme delivery as opposed to community organising in contemporary public policy (Stoecker, 1997; Newman and Lake, 2006).

In this context, executive directors conceptualised and practised citizen participation in a circumscribed manner in their CBHOs. They identified their governing boards as the primary mechanism for citizen participation in their organisations. To participate in CBHO decision-making, individuals could either pursue membership of an organisation's governing board or interact with boards and their members. Executive directors also identified their organisations' staff as an important source of citizen participation. They indicated that citizen participation was promoted by hiring staff who lived in their organisations' service areas and had networks in the communities their organisations served. Since many of these organisations' service areas mirror common council districts, these networks often included ties to the local patronage system.

Representation is only skin deep. It is often argued that residents achieve virtual representation in local non-profits through an organisation's staff and governing board. Such representation is one indicator of resident access to the decision-making process of an organisation. There was mixed evidence to support this claim in relation to Buffalo's CBHOs. Table 1 compares the demographic characteristics of Erie County, NY, with the City of Buffalo in 2000.[5] In general, this table shows that, in comparison with the metropolitan area in which it is embedded, Buffalo is a city with substantially larger African-American and Latino populations, noticeably higher poverty rates, visibly lower income and housing values, and larger concentrations of rental and vacant properties. Given these population and housing characteristics, it is important to

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of Erie County and the City of Buffalo in 2000

	Erie County	*City of Buffalo*
Total population	948 252	292 648
Percentage male	48.4	48.4
Percentage female	51.6	51.6
Percentage White	79.6	54.6
Percentage Black	15.8	38.2
Percentage Asian	1.2	1.2
Percentage other race	3.4	6.0
Percentage Latino ethnicity	3.5	6.7
Percentage below poverty level	14.6	27.8
Total households	380 890	122 672
Median income (US$)	$36 988	$23 688
Total housing units	415 110	145 574
Median value (US$)	$80 247	$57 019
Percentage owner (in occupied units)	62.5	43.0
Percentage renter (in occupied units)	37.5	57.0
Percentage vacant	9.3	16.1

Sources: US Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census (2000).

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understand how well the staff and governing boards of Buffalo's CBHOs reflected the demographic characteristics of the city.

Similarities between population, staff and governing board characteristics would lend support to arguments that residents' concerns are reflected in the programmes and policies of local non-profit housing organisations. Of course, similarities along the lines of race and gender would not be definitive proof of virtual representation, since these characteristics do not always correlate with political and economic interests. Nevertheless, they can serve as a starting-point for examining the degree to which virtual representation is present.

Interviews with the executive directors of Buffalo's CBHOs indicated that there were contrasts and similarities between community demographics and the composition of CBHO staff and governing boards along the lines of race and gender. These characteristics of the staff and governing boards of Buffalo's non-profit housing organisations are summarised in Table 2. In terms of contrasts, the information in Table 2 indicates that Whites and African Americans were underrepresented on the staff of Buffalo's CBHOs, while Latinos were overrepresented. However, it should be noted that this contrast was largely the by-product of a single organisation with a sizeable Latino staff. When staff composition was considered with this organisation removed from the analysis, the racial composition of CBHO staff was similar to the racial composition of the city as a whole. When the composition of executive directors was examined, another contrast between community demographics and CBHOs came to the surface. African Americans were underrepresented among the executive directors while Whites were overrepresented in this group. Similarly, women were somewhat more likely to hold positions as executive directors, while the gender distribution of CBHO staff reflected the composition of the city's population as a whole.[6]

In contrast to staff positions, the racial composition of CBHO governing boards in Buffalo was strikingly similar to the city's population as a whole.[7] It is noteworthy

Table 2. Staff and governing board characteristics of Buffalo's non-profit housing organisations ($N = 15$)

	Staff	*Executive director*	*Governing board*
Total number	197	15	176
Mean number	13	—	12
Median number	6	—	11
Percentage male	48.7	40.0	44.3
Percentage female	51.3	60.0	55.7
Percentage White	47.2	60.0	56.3
Percentage Black	27.9	26.6	39.8
Percentage Asian	2.1	—	—
Percentage Latino	22.8	6.7	3.9
Percentage other race	—	6.7	—

Source: This information came from open-ended interviews with executive directors of CBHOs in Buffalo, NY. When asked about race, respondents treated Latinos as a racial group in their responses. This is an important discrepancy to note when comparing data in this table with US census data where Latinos are treated as a separate ethnic group.

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that 11 of the executive directors indicated that anywhere from one-half to two-thirds of their governing board members were residents of the communities that their CBHOs served. Moreover, eight of the executive directors indicated that their organisations' by-laws required that at least 51 per cent of their governing board be composed of residents. In most cases, the directors attributed the adoption of requirements for resident control of governing boards to mandates and administrative requirements passed down to their organisations by governmental and other funding sources. Yet, most of the executive directors could not identify a specific statute or funding requirement mandating resident control of their governing boards. When pressed, executive directors indicated that having governing boards which were resident controlled was strongly "encouraged" by funding sources. It is important to note that the executive directors indicated that the source of pressure for expanded citizen participation came from actors in the administrative system and not elected officials. This highlighted an important contrast between the historical patronage system in Buffalo and the emerging administrative system.

Despite pressure from the local administrative system for greater resident involvement in the governing boards of Buffalo's CBHOs, there was still a predisposition for boards to be made up primarily of middle-class residents and professionals from the community. Although board members shared ascribed traits with other residents, they represent divergent social and economic interests. When discussing the composition of their organisations' governing boards, the executive directors were quick to point out that in addition to residents their boards included representatives from the banking and insurance community, university faculty and administrators, representatives from local government, members of the clergy, local business leaders and other professionals.

It was common for CBHOs to designate up to one-third of their governing board seats for such institutional members. Moreover, local political interests were taken into consideration when designing governance structures and selecting governing board members. For example, one CBHO director said that on her 19-member governing board

> The Mayor gets 2 appointments, our county legislator gets 1 appointment, our [common] council member gets 1 appointment, the [local] business association gets 1 appointment, and the [local] senior nutrition group, they get to appoint 1 person.

In addition to the creation of governing board seats that were designated for political and institutional members, many of the other board members in Buffalo's CBHOs were drawn from middle-class and professional residents. For instance, one executive director described this predisposition in his CBHO's governing board

> Some of the seats we have, we have financial seats and we have commercial seats. So those 4 seats tend to come from, the financial background, from banks. They're usually in a part of the bank that is focused on community revitalisation or some kind of giving back to the community. That's typically the same with the commercial seats. They're community based. We try as much as possible for the commercial seats to find people that own businesses in our service area or close to it, or that do a lot of work in our service area. The other residents, they vary. A couple work at [a local university] and most of the others have some kind of housing, or non-for-profit work, or banking. Those seem to be the three things that most people seem to touch on.

Direct representation of low-income and minority residents was limited on the governing boards of Buffalo's CBHOs. Although many organisations required that community

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residents make up a majority of governing board seats, these seats tended to be occupied by more affluent and professional members of the community. The remaining non-institutional resident members of governing boards were often retirees and homeowners. This pattern was a reflection of the degree to which CBHOs were structuring citizen participation in response to pressures from local administrators, non-profit foundations and other funding agencies. Given the governance structure in which CBHOs were embedded, few incentives existed actively to recruit governing board members who represented a broader spectrum of the community's interests. Instead, citizen participation was circumscribed and concessions were made to institutional sources of support.

The tendency for governing boards to be composed primarily of institutional actors and middle-class residents was reinforced by the adoption of relatively expansive boundaries based on common council districts and community housing development organisation areas defined by the Office of Strategic Planning. The adoption of relatively expansive boundaries, which encompass as much as one-tenth of the city's land mass, diluted the access of low-income, minority residents to decision-making in the organisations. As a result, while institutions and the middle class were well represented on governing boards, none of the executive directors indicated that renters, the poor or other indigent groups were highly visible. On the surface, it appeared that governing boards provided a broad spectrum of residents with access to the decision-making processes of CBHOs. However, a closer examination revealed that groups most in need of representation were at a disadvantage.

It is frequently argued that renters, the poor and other indigent groups are less likely to participate because members of this segment of society face added constraints to participation. For example, members of the working class and working poor must juggle childcare, work and other responsibilities. These responsibilities reduce the amount of time individuals have for civic engagement. Although these issues represent real barriers to participation, it should also be recognised that institutional representatives and individuals from the middle class also face similar constraints to participation. Yet, society provides these individuals with greater incentives to participate. For instance, institutional mechanisms, such as the use of governing boards as the primary vehicle for participation, provided professionals and institutional representatives with a familiar setting from which to operate. Also, adopting broad service boundaries for CBHOs shapes the agendas and outcomes pursued by organisations. As a result, citizen participation is often focused on producing benefits that accrue to these interests. On the other hand, the poor and indigent groups are not provided with technical assistance to put them on an even playing-field in such a participatory process and the likelihood of actualising benefits at the parochial level is low.

4. Barriers to Meaningful Citizen Participation

4.1 Barriers to Constructing Representative Governing Boards

CBHO boundaries and other factors limited the degree to which governing boards were representative of all socioeconomic groups in Buffalo. Nevertheless, the executive directors of Buffalo's CBHOs consistently identified their governing boards as core components of their organisations' citizen participation strategies. Although most of the organisations' by-laws required that residents make up a majority of governing board members, there were no uniform strategies for recruiting board members. Instead, various approaches to electing and appointing governing board

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members were utilised. For example, the executive directors of 10 of the CBHOs indicated that their governing board members were elected. Under this format, processes were in place for annual meetings to be held for the purpose of electing governing board members. For instance, one of the executive directors described how she and her staff recruited potential board members

> Every year when we get ready to do our board elections and open board seat nominations, we just ask for names of those who might be interested in participating, and we send them an invite letter to the annual meeting. They have an opportunity to ask questions, certainly to decline the invitation, and then the annual meeting is when the slate is prepared and people are elected. So we do invite people, but it's always an open door policy. Anyone who expresses interest, just needs to submit a letter of interest and their resumé so that we can ensure that their expertise isn't something that we are duplicating or something of that sort.

For many CBHOs, annual meetings were open to members of the organisations and the general public. Members voted on a slate of candidates for their organisation's governing board. Although voting was restricted to members of a given CBHO, joining the organisation typically required an individual to "come in and fill out a form" and in a few cases individuals were asked to pay a small membership fee.

Executive directors of the few organisations that did require a membership fee emphasised that it was nominal and not intended to block citizen participation. For instance, one executive director made this comment about her CBHO's membership fees

> Membership is extremely affordable, at $5 for an individual and $10 for a family for the year. If you have no dollars to spare, you're there. But we get a lot of members to sign up so they can come down and have cookies and vote on the board. Some come down for the cookies; some come down for the vote.

Even in the most structured CBHOs, electing a governing board was characterised as an 'open' process serving both organisational and social ends. Electing a governing board was also characterised as a somewhat perfunctory process. As one executive director stated, "to tell you the truth, I don't think we've had a contested election for a board seat in quite a while, because it's hard to get people to commit to get involved". Despite being accessible, a limited emphasis on community organising and recruitment led to low levels of interest in serving on governing boards among the poor and other disadvantaged groups.

The situation was similar in the five CBHOs that appointed, rather than elected, members to their governing boards. In these organisations, board members were either recruited from the local business community, block clubs or institutions with ties to a CBHO's target area. Once recruits were identified, they would be asked to join an organisation's governing board. In the comment that follows, an executive director described the appointment process to her CBHO's governing board

> We have a gentleman coming in on the 6th at our board meeting who another board member suggested would be very good. I've met him before, he's a part of the [local] community association. To be a board member I think people have to have an interest in the neighbourhood to begin with. He's coming and they have a process where they meet him and they vote to accept him and then he's a member of the board.

Under this more insulated structure, the governing board becomes self-selecting and self-perpetuating. Unlike the process where board members are elected by the full membership of a CBHO at annual meetings, the existing governing board screens potential new members. Although this approach is more efficient and may produce a more

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internally cohesive board, it is also a less democratic process. In essence, appointed governing boards were less accessible to grassroots interests and less likely to give the poorest members of a community access to board membership.

The internal dynamics that shape the development of CBHO governing boards in Buffalo are similar to those in other places. For instance, Prins (2005) discusses how race and class structures shape the governance of community-based organisations. However, when these dynamics are considered in the context of the local political and administrative structure, additional barriers to broad-based citizen participation in decision-making linked to local community development come to the surface. These barriers become more discernible through an examination of competition between political and administrative interests over the definition of CBHO boundaries. As a by-product of this competition, organisational boundaries tended to oscillate as the ground rules under which CBHOs operated became increasingly ambiguous.

4.2 Barriers Due to Competition Surrounding CBHO Boundaries

Defining CBHO boundaries as a strategy to strengthen the political patronage system. The manner in which CBHOs define the boundaries of their target areas can either facilitate or become an obstacle to citizen participation. The executive directors of seven CBHOs in Buffalo indicated that their boundaries were based on common council districts. When asked why organisational boundaries were drawn in this manner, executive directors indicated that the common council played a strong role in assisting with the early development of the city's CBHOs. The influence of the common council on CBHO boundaries is best illustrated in comments made by executive directors and others concerning the creation of the city's five NHS organisations.

NHSs are a type of CBHO which receives financial support from NeighborWorks® America, a national intermediary.[8] Buffalo is unique among cities in the US, having five NHS organisations. Most cities that receive funding for such organisations have only one. In fact, Buffalo started out with a single NHS, but elected officials intervened and lobbied NeighborWorks® to support additional organisations. One CBHO director described how that change was brought about during the early 1980s as a result of pressure from the former Mayor of Buffalo, James D. Griffin

> We started [with one] NHS in Buffalo, and then the Griffin administration thought it was in the interest of the community to break up that organisation. [NeighborWorks®] extended individual charters to five other NHSs. Their actual founding dates I'm not quite certain of, but they were founded in the mid 1980s … It is my understanding that, as one thing led to another, [the original] NHS lost its charter with [NeighborWorks®].

Each of the five NHS organisations defined its boundaries according to common council districts and was institutionalised in the local political patronage system. This was advantageous to the organisations when they applied for community development block grant funds from the city, since these funds were historically distributed through the local patronage system.[9]

As this system of funding CBHOs developed, common council members in districts without NHS organisations began to encourage the development of additional non-profits. Subsequently, a network of CBHOs developed in Buffalo with boundaries corresponding to common council districts. In many cases, the organisations were named after the common council districts in which they were located. In effect, local non-profit housing organisations developed under the watch of the local political patronage system. One executive director made the

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following comment about how the network of CBHOs evolved

> From what I've been told, particularly with NHSs, but also the other [CBHOs], is that many years ago [common] council members were given community development block grant funds to administer in their council districts, and there were some housing non-for-profits that did a particularly good job of addressing housing-related issues in their service areas. So, as time went on, council members decided that they kind of wanted that in their neighbourhoods. So they were kind of the rallying-point for establishing the 501(c)(3)s and getting them the funding status. And, from what I've been told, that's kind of the reason we have so many agencies within the city limits doing housing activities.

Another executive director said that historically CBHO boundaries were "determined by the City, and since there are so many of us we just stick to that for all of our programs". This was an understandable strategy, given that Buffalo's community development block grant and other funds were traditionally distributed through the local patronage system by common council district. It was also an effective strategy for decreasing competition between CBHOs, since there was an unwritten understanding among organisations to respect each other's turf in exchange for reciprocity from the common council when community development block grant dollars were distributed.

The alignment of CBHO boundaries with common council districts had important implications for how organisations were perceived by the general public and, subsequently, the scope of citizen participation. Some executive directors complained that their organisations were frequently mistaken for government offices. For instance, one executive director made this comment

> A lot of people in the neighbourhood confuse us [with the city], they believe we're a government agency of some sort. It's sort of a misconception that we try to correct, that we're really not a government agency or a city agency, but we're a private non-profit. So we try to correct that and get people involved, let them know that we do need their help, and their input counts.

The perception that CBHOs were part of the local patronage system fostered an agency–client relationship between the public and organisations; as a consequence, this discouraged the development of broad-based participation. Instead, residents perceived CBHOs as being controlled by elected officials, rather than functioning as vehicles for grassroots empowerment. This set of relationships weakened neighbourhood identity, contributing to the dearth of neighbourhood-based advocacy organisations in the city.

This perception also generated requests from residents for a variety of services that were traditionally within the domain of government. Executive directors indicated that residents contacted them with requests for governmental services such as sidewalk repairs, trash collection, the renewal of property tax exemptions, Section 8 vouchers and other neighbourhood services. As a result, perceptions that CBHOs were an extension of the political patronage system altered their role in the community. Rather than being non-profit advocacy organisations and centres for grassroots organising, Buffalo's CBHOs were co-opted by local government and transformed into programme and service providers.

CBHOs were the implementers of a variety of municipal housing and community development programmes. They provided housing finance assistance, winterisation and various educational and training programmes. They also acted as intermediaries between city government and neighbourhood-based groups. One executive director described his CBHO's role in this manner

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> We have administered a matching grant for the City of Buffalo where block clubs can get up to $2000 to do different activities on their street. Most were either putting up block club signs, flower planting, clean up, that kind of thing. We also facilitate with them for the Great American Clean Up, Neighbors Night Out, things like that. And we leave our building, I shouldn't say open, but we allow them access to the building after business hours and on the weekends, so they can have meetings, different community events, some of them have their Christmas parties and stuff here. Just about any group that's community-based and looking for space, we can make it available for them.

The focus of Buffalo's CBHOs on programme implementation and service delivery reinforced the perception that these organisations were an extension of local government. This perception was further reinforced due to the manner in which Buffalo's CBHOs historically functioned in relation to the boundaries of common council districts and the local patronage system. Moreover, the captured nature of Buffalo's CBHOs was magnified by the absence of a strong advocacy role for these organisations. In fact, only one of the executive directors indicated that his organisation had a staff member in place responsible for community organising. The other CBHOs relied on local universities and colleges, initiatives sponsored by the Office of Strategic Planning, elected officials, block clubs and other non-profits to provide support for community organising.

Defining boundaries as a strategy to strengthen the local administrative system. Many of Buffalo's CBHOs gained access to resources by working with elected officials on the common council. However, others were able to find more autonomous funding from other sources, such as the state and federal government, local and national foundations, and professional administrators inside city and county government. One CBHO executive director discussed the benefits of not being "beholden to the common council"

> We have been as apolitical as we can be … I try really hard to stay out of [politics] and I think it's a detriment to developing housing. It doesn't win us a lot of friends on the common council though … [In the past] they've purposely excluded us … I think it's because they couldn't control us. They couldn't tell us 'this is what you have to do, this is who you have to hire, this is how much money we're going to give you, and we want you to spend it this way'.

Increasingly, executive directors have found an alternative route to gaining access to municipal resources by collaborating with the newly created Office of Strategic Planning. In fact, competition between the traditional patronage system and professional administrators over the control of local community development resources has intensified in recent history. This is illustrated by growing efforts to redefine CBHO boundaries.

The contemporary battle over CBHO boundaries began in 2001 when the Office of Strategic Planning created the Good Neighbors' Planning Alliance, which was intended as a neighbourhood-based planning initiative linked to the city's new comprehensive plan. A key element of the Good Neighbors' Planning Alliance was the manner in which the boundaries for planning communities were drawn. Under the direction of the Office of Strategic Planning, the city's 10 planning community boundaries were drawn in a manner that did not correspond to common council districts. Following these new boundaries, neighbourhood councils were charged with the task of developing action plans that would guide future community development block grant and HOME allocations. Of course, the Good Neighbors' Planning Alliance has been woefully underfunded since its inception. Yet, it has become the foundation for a number of ensuing initiatives by the Office of Strategic Planning.

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One of these initiatives involved the formalisation of a process for designating community housing development organisation boundaries. In 2003, the Office of Strategic Planning published a new map designating these boundaries. At the time of this study, eight CBHOs had their community housing development organisation boundaries designated by the Office of Strategic Planning. Each was assigned to boundaries that were based on one of the 10 Good Neighbors' Planning Alliance planning communities.[10] Once granted community housing development organisation designation and assigned boundaries by the Office of Strategic Planning, organisations had increased access to community development resources. Of course, there are conditions tied to maintaining their community housing development organisation status. For instance, community housing development organisations must set aside a proportion of the seats on their governing boards for community residents, participate in the Office of Strategic Planning's monitoring process which was formalised in 2004 and use community housing development organisation funds for projects within their designated boundaries. In essence, the Office of Strategic Planning created an alternative route to funding. In contrast to the local patronage system, funding decisions were based on the level of professionalism in a CBHO, the presence of targeted development activities and measurable outcomes.

The increased emphasis placed on designating community housing development organisation boundaries that differed from common council districts can be interpreted as an effort to weaken the local political patronage system and create transparency in local decision-making. Still, the manner in which this approach was implemented is not completely complementary with efforts to expand citizens' access to decision-making within local non-profits. In part, this is because the Office of Strategic Planning adopted an approach to community development which was heavily influenced by a relatively centralised comprehensive planning process. To some degree, the creation of the Good Neighbors' Planning Alliance represents an effort to decentralise this process, but this was constrained by the expansive boundaries that the Office of Strategic Planning created for planning communities and the limited resources committed to this undertaking. In addition, the planning communities, and the community housing development organisation boundaries based upon them, were not determined by residents or local community-based organisations. Instead, they were simply drawn on a map by planners in the Office of Strategic Planning.

Although the Office of Strategic Planning implemented administrative reforms that offered an alternative to the local patronage system, these reforms lacked a grassroots focus. Instead, the reforms created a new governance structure that emphasised programme and service delivery and provided little support for community organising activities among CBHOs. Definitions of citizen participation used by administrators remained ambiguous, governing boards remained the primary mechanism for citizen participation in Buffalo's CBHOs and little emphasis was placed on community organising activities by the Office of Strategic Planning when making funding decisions. As a result, the voices of low-income and minority groups remained diluted in discussions concerning community development policy, as well as in the governance of local non-profits that increasingly implemented such policy. Even if the reforms adopted by the Office of Strategic Planning succeed in dismantling the local patronage system, there is no reason to believe that resident participation will expand in Buffalo's community-based organisations. In order to address this problem, local administrators

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need to advocate for additional reforms that decentralise planning and implementation related to local community development.

5. Rebuilding Local Housing Policy from the Grassroots

Several factors came together to limit the scope of citizen participation in Buffalo's CBHOs. Most of the executive directors of these organisations viewed community involvement in the ratification of their governing boards as their primary form of citizen participation. Although there were examples where community residents were well represented on governing boards, most of Buffalo's CBHOs had governing boards predominantly composed of institutional representatives and middle-class professionals. Low-income groups, minorities and renters were not well represented in CBHO decision-making processes. Other efforts to expand citizen participation in Buffalo's CBHOs were severely hampered by the lack of staff engaged in community organising activities. The absence of a strong emphasis on community organising and advocacy was, in part, a reflection of general trends in the non-profit sector (Swanstrom, 1999; Bockmeyer, 2003). However, it was also a by-product of Buffalo's CBHOs being embedded in local political and administrative structures that were not responsive to grassroots interests. In essence, disincentives existed for CBHOs to pursue community organising and advocacy work, since rewards came from conforming to decision-making processes that were centralised, either in the common council or the Office of Strategic Planning. One way that this dynamic manifested itself was through the establishment of boundaries for CBHOs. In large part, this activity was usurped from grassroots interests by political and administrative actors.

These findings raise serious concerns about arguments advanced by scholars such as Marwell (2004) and Maranto (1998). Calls for a return to local community development policies entrenched in patronage politics are flawed since they ignore two key issues. One is that patronage politics are based on reciprocity between individuals and organisations who accept spoils from local political machines. Under the logic of patronage, decision-making and agenda setting are predominantly top–down processes where dissent from the grassroots is not well received. Moreover, patronage systems are driven by informal and ambiguous rules. Consequently, they lack elements such as formal mandates for citizen participation in community-based organisations, incentives for empowering the poor, bureaucratic monitoring systems and transparency in decision-making processes. Buffalo's non-profit housing sector represents a critical case of Marwell's (2004) thesis, since its patronage system is marred with many of the limitations identified earlier.

At the same time, the administrative response to political patronage in Buffalo's non-profit housing sector also lacks mechanisms to encourage citizen participation in the community development process. Granted, local administrators have begun to remedy this problem with new requirements for resident participation on CBHO governing boards and increased monitoring of organisational outcomes.[11] However, these remedies have been limited in application and scope. In addition, the assignment of expansive community housing development organisation boundaries and the emphasis on the city's comprehensive planning process over grassroots agenda setting have pushed calls for increased citizen participation further to the periphery.

Nonetheless, growing professionalism in Buffalo's community development process offers some hope for the future. The emerging administrative system offers an alternative to past community development practices

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which were dominated by patronage politics. This emerging system is characterised by administrative rules, a depoliticised process and transparency in decision-making. Promoting citizen participation, accessibility and the empowerment of disenfranchised groups can help to legitimise administrative reforms occurring in Buffalo. In light of these observations, two groups of recommendations are forwarded to augment citizen participation in cities like Buffalo. One focuses on CBHO policy reforms aimed at expanding the scope of citizen participation. The other focuses on additional reforms to political and administrative structures aimed at augmenting grassroots planning and implementation in local community development policy.

5.1 CBHO Policy Reforms to Encourage Citizen Participation

As non-profits in Buffalo, and across the country, are delegated greater responsibilities for programme implementation and service delivery in urban neighbourhoods, there is a need to take proactive steps to expand the scope of citizen participation in these organisations. This will require greater uniformity in mandates, administrative rules and funding requirements at all levels of government. At the federal and state levels of government, uniform mandates for citizen participation are required in legislation and funding guidelines for housing and community development programmes. In addition to uniform mandates, programmes should include specific requirements for citizen control which emphasise the inclusion of the poor and disenfranchised groups. In order to ensure that mandates and requirements for citizen participation are obtainable, these aspects of housing and community development policy should be funded as line items in programme budgets and independently monitored throughout a programme's life.

At the local level, many of the mandates that Brody *et al.* (2003) recommend to expand citizen participation in planning activities should be adapted to fit the needs of housing and community development policy. For instance, mandates should be attached to federal and state legislation requiring local governments and community-based organisations to promulgate administrative rules and prepare written plans for citizen participation in order to be eligible to receive public funding. These citizen participation plans should be updated regularly and include a variety of participatory strategies and techniques. These techniques would include activities focusing on leadership training and the empowerment of disenfranchised groups (Mills, 2005; Hardina, 2006). In addition, citizens' groups should have the ability to challenge participation plans in administrative hearings. Mandates should also be in place requiring local governments and community-based organisations to formulate strategies that ensure full access to the poor and disenfranchised groups. This goes beyond the concept of 'maximum feasibility participation', by making citizen control a right which governments and their agents are obligated to take proactive steps to protect. Through such mandates, greater balance can be struck between the roles filled by community-based organisations as programme implementers, service providers and community advocates.

In essence, more specific legislation concerning the definition and role of citizen participation in housing and community development policy is necessary in order to protect and expand local democracy. It is equally important to back up such legislation with mandates for the promulgation of administrative rules and the creation of citizen participation plans at the local level.[12] Combined with additional local political and administrative reforms aimed at expanding grassroots agenda setting, the reforms outlined

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earlier can curb existing shortcomings in housing and community development policy such as: the disenfranchisement of the poor, the co-optation of community-based organisations by local political machines and the diminishing role of advocacy in non-profit organisations.

5.2 Local Political and Administrative Reforms to Promote Grassroots Control

As CBHOs assume a larger role in the implementation of community development policy, there is growing competition over who will shape the core values in the non-profit sector. Local administrative reforms are needed to discourage the development of patronage systems and to promote professionalism in non-profit administration. This is true in cities like Buffalo, and more generally, given recent calls for new patronage relationships in American cities by scholars like Marwell (2004).

In part, administrative reforms must focus on removing decisions about the distribution of community development resources from political patronage systems. However, administrative reforms must go further and transfer greater control of community development decision-making to grassroots organisations. One model for such reforms entails the re-assignment of resource allocation decisions to local administrators and intermediary organisations. In the past, this approach has taken the form of public–private housing partnerships which are linked to housing funds (Nenno, 1991). A shortcoming of this approach is that decision-making can become dominated by professionals in the public and non-profit sectors, while grassroots interests remain on the periphery. Another model for such reform represents an incremental step in the direction of addressing this problem. This model entails the transfer of resource allocation decisions to state or local administrators and formally linking decision-making to grassroots planning efforts. For example, the Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program allocates state funds through local agencies for the implementation of neighbourhood-driven development plans by local neighbourhood organisations and non-profits (Martin and Pentel, 2002). Similarly, the current charter of the City of Los Angeles mandates that decisions about the allocation of community development funds be guided by citizen participation processes through a system of newly organised neighbourhood councils (Cooper and Kathi, 2005). In both cases, community-based organisations have a mandated, formal role in decision-making processes.

In cities like Buffalo, the development of grassroots agenda setting would be promoted by adopting neighbourhood governance strategies like those found in Minneapolis and Los Angeles, decoupling community development funding decisions from the common council and placing democratic controls on administrative decision-making. Such changes would be reinforced with the creation of new public–private housing partnership organisations and mandated funding for the City's Good Neighbors' Planning Alliance. Of course, these reforms should be guided by the principles of deliberative democracy (Fung and Wright, 2001) and emphasise increasing the role of community-based organisations that empower low-income and disenfranchised minority groups in community development decision-making.

A major component of increasing the grassroots focus of community-based organisations involves redrawing organisational boundaries. In order to create the conditions for greater citizen participation, particularly among the poor and disenfranchised groups, organisational boundaries must be drawn narrowly. In cities like Buffalo, reforms are needed in relation to the process for establishing organisational boundaries, as well as their size. In terms of the process for establishing organisational boundaries, models used in cities like Minneapolis and Los Angeles

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are instructive. In both cities, residents and community-based organisations control the process of defining neighbourhood boundaries, rather than local administrators. As a result, more discrete organisational boundaries are formed. Cities like Buffalo need to encourage CBHOs to draw their community housing development organisation boundaries more narrowly and target community development efforts in places where disenfranchised groups are concentrated. In essence, decisions about how community housing development organisation boundaries are determined should be transferred to grassroots organisations. Under such a system, rather than drawing community housing development organisation boundaries on a map without public input, professional planners and administrators would establish uniform guidelines for community-based organisations to identify their own target areas. This type of reform would introduce additional checks and balances between grassroots interests and public-sector professionals into the community development process.

Buried in the sub-text of these reforms is the notion that the role of local administrators in the community development process must change. For the scope of citizen participation to expand, their roles would have to shift to a focus on facilitating and monitoring systems designed to expand grassroots control of local community development. This shift is the key to insulating CBHOs from local patronage systems and empowering citizens in the local community development process. This shift also represents a move towards curbing the overbureaucratisation of local public policy and avoiding what Zanetti and Adams (2000) have referred to as the 'potential for administrative evil'. This is argued to flourish in settings where democratic processes and social equity are subordinated to the narrow interpretation of administrative rules focused on enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of public programmes.

Notes

1. One executive director could not participate in the telephone interview. This individual responded to the interview questions in writing.
2. The non-interview data were used to add context to the case study. For instance, IRS 990 forms included information on CBHO budgets and governing board membership that was used to verify information collected through interviews. CBHO documents, such as the by-laws of organisations, were used for this purpose.
3. The HOME Investment Partnership Act is the largest federal block grant programme for state and local government with a focus on affordable housing. The HOME programme was created in 1990. HOME funds are distributed by formula to state and local governments and 15 per cent of HOME funds are earmarked for local community housing development organisations.
4. At the time of this research, the Office of Strategic Planning had not designated a community housing development organisation for two of the community housing development organisation areas.
5. Erie County represents the metropolitan area where Buffalo is located.
6. It is noteworthy that the distribution of men and women in CBHO staff positions was an outgrowth of the types of jobs that these organisations hired individuals to do. There were a number of manual labour positions linked to housing production, rehabilitation and maintenance, as well as a variety of positions liked to administrative work and programme delivery. Although the workforce in CBHOs was similar to that of the population of the city as a whole, gender stratification existed across various positions.
7. In the aggregate, the racial composition of governing boards parallelled the racial make-up of the city as a whole. However, it should be noted that many neighbourhoods in the City of Buffalo, and areas served by CBHOs, are highly segregated. The racial segregation of neighbourhoods was reflected in the make-up of CBHO governing boards. For instance, five CBHOs were located in areas that were predominantly White and the governing

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boards of these organisations were 100 per cent White. Similarly, three CBHOs were located in areas that were predominantly African American and the governing boards of these organisations were 100 per cent African American.

8. In 1978, the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation was created by an act of Congress (Public Law 95-557), in 2005 the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation changed its name to Neighborworks® America.
9. The community development block grant programme is a federal block grant programme established in 1974 to provide communities with a flexible source of funds to address community development needs in impacted communities. Community development block grant funding is distributed to localities by formula by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
10. At the time of this article's writing, the Office of Strategic Planning was in the process of assigning additional CBHOs to the remaining two planning communities.
11. Neighborworks® and similar intermediary organisations also require resident participation on governing boards and monitoring as a condition of receiving funding. However, these requirements were described as being broadly defined and their enforcement was not consistent across organisations.
12. This argument for increased mandates for citizen participation in the non-profit sector and increased monitoring of organisations is based on a different rationale from one examined recently by Renee Irvine (2005). This rationale is based on an argument for such measures as a mechanism to increase grassroots access to the non-profit sector and transparency in decision-making, while Irvine's focuses on monitoring programme outcomes.

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